

The University of California Retirees Association at Berkeley, UCRAB, has not been very active since April due to the pandemic. In June, we held our annual business meeting where we elected two new board members and reelected our Secretary and Treasurer. At that meeting we had a wonderful Zoom turnout for a talk about the peregrine falcons which nest on the Campanile on the Berkeley campus. Almost 300 individuals registered for the talk.

Later in October, we are hosting a talk by a faculty member from Integrative Biology who will be speaking about the biomechanics of cockroaches, geckos, and squirrels. We are finding that people are interested in talks about critters.

In July, the Renegade Retirees hosted the return of an in-person picnic at Tilden Park in the Berkeley Hills. This annual, pot luck picnic was hosted for several years by the Berkeley Retirement Center, but the campus put a requirement in place that it be catered as a condition of insurance. Instead of being cancelled, a group of retirees from UCRAB, the ExLs and UCBEA got together and organized the picnic instead. Hence the name of Renegade Retirees. This year, it appeared that Tilden Park would remain closed for picnics, but it opened up reservations in late June. We were able to secure our usual site, but within 24 hours of posting the announcement, the number of RSVPs exceeded the site occupancy. We ended up with almost 70 participants from UCRAB, ExLs, UCBEA, and PARRA (Jim Dolgonas manned the grill!) Clearly, there was a desire to get back to “normal”.

As we continue our transition into a non-dues paying association, we are in the process of identifying organizations to which we wish to donate. In the past, we provided minimal scholarship funds to the Oakland Promise which up until a few years ago had an affiliation with the Office of the President. We now want to focus on campus organizations. In order to make a significant difference, it has become clear that we will need to expand our fundraising efforts. Fortunately, our Board includes several experienced fundraisers.

As with the other retiree associations, Covid has required many changes in how business is conducted and has illustrated how dependent UCRAB continues to be on the Berkeley Retirement Center staff for data, mailings, information, mail collection, etc. We want to thank Director Carey Sweeney and Associate Director Camille Koue for their continued support.

Patti Owen  
President, UCRAB