

**Pesticides near schools
regulated for the first time**
Activists' long effort pays off

**Maintenance and ops workers
participate in campus greening**
Lighting the way at less cost

**CFT responds to proposal
for fully online college**
Faculty rejects all three options

CaliforniaTeacher

NOV ■ DEC 2017

THE VOICE OF THE UNION ■ CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFT, AFL-CIO



**Wildfires ravage
communities and
members' lives**

**HOW
YOU
CAN
HELP**

Joshua Pechthalt, CFT President



Missing from the headlines so far are the abuses suffered by working class women in their workplaces and the constraint they feel to tell their stories.

Sexual misconduct revelations demand changes in the workplace and society

The daily revelations of sexual misconduct by men in authority seem like a turning point in the struggle for gender equality. While this appears to be a sea change, we must remember that Donald Trump's claim he could grab women inappropriately without their consent failed to derail his run for the White House. That, however, may have been the opening salvo.

This year has seen an avalanche of sexual misconduct charges, with women courageously stepping forward to speak out about how they had been abused by high profile, powerful men. Women are now being believed — an important first step.

Missing from the headlines so far are the abuses suffered by working class women in their workplaces and the constraint they feel to tell their stories. A 2016 study by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission found that 90,000 women reported incidences of sexual abuse on the job. The EEOC believes this number falls far short of those who have suffered sexual harassment and who are unwilling to come forward.

Even for women who reported such abuse, disclosures seem to go nowhere. One reason is

that according to a recent study, as many as 75 percent of those who have reported sexual harassment suffer some form of retaliation. Those who have a union have greater recourse to report such behavior and see some justice. However, most of the workforce is not unionized.

Sexual harassment was first addressed in California's Fair Employment and Housing Act as part of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. The law was strengthened in 2016 with the requirement that any workplace with 50 or more employees include a training on sexual harassment.

Unfortunately, according to the EEOC report, "Much of the training done over the last 30 years has not worked as a prevention tool — it's been too focused on simply avoiding legal liability." Because of this overemphasis on liability, training can become part of the problem and does not address the underlying culture and power imbalance that produces sexual harassment.

While going public may work when it involves a politician or television star, it will likely have little impact for women in less high profile areas of work. The training needs to include the issue of power dynamics

and why those in power feel entitled to assert their power by demeaning those less powerful, and specifically why men assert their masculinity by demeaning women. Training should cover how to create a culture in which women are empowered to report an abuse and not feel embarrassed by or responsible for the harassment.

Another approach that may lessen retaliation for women reporting sexual misconduct is to create an independent body of individuals trained and well-versed in this issue. Such a reporting board may allow women to feel less hesitant in reporting sexual misconduct.

We do, however, have to be mindful that charges of sexual misconduct have the potential to be used as a way to settle scores or extract payoffs. An independent body would be more likely to discern fact from fiction.

The CFT and all unions should be part of the process that develops these and other just solutions. Ultimately, changing the behavior of men will require more women speaking out, and more women being elected to positions of authority. Clearly, we have a long way to go.

Josh Pechthalt

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OUR MISSION: The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. The CFT represents faculty and classified workers in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California's students.

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11



7



17



16



22

CONTENTS

- 2 **UpFront**
- 4 **All-Union News**
 - 4 Who the CFT endorsed to be our next governor
 - 5 Devastating fire season takes toll on members
 - 7 What Sweden and Norway don't have in common
 - 9 New laws to know in the coming year
 - 11 New book and film about farm workers
 - 13 The struggle for paid maternity leave
- 14 **Divisions**
 - 14 **PreK-12** First statewide regulation of pesticide drift
 - 16 **Classified** Electricians leading way in Prop 39 projects
 - 18 **Community College** Why union rejected online proposal
 - 20 **University** Effective site rep structures pay off
 - 22 **Retired** Why we need Medicare-for-All
- 23 **Local Wire**
- 24 **Rank & Files**

ON THE COVER

Jen and William Ortlinghaus stand before the wreckage of their home in the wake of the devastating North Bay fires. Both are teachers and members of the Petaluma Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1881.

PHOTO COURTESY WILLIAM ORTLINGHAUS

CFT endorses Gavin Newsom for governor

Members heavily favor lieutenant governor in straw poll, opinion poll



Members of the Novato Federation of Teachers with Gavin Newsom at the 2016 CFT Leadership Conference.

“After our extensive outreach, we felt confident that Newsom was the candidate most favored by our members. He’s also the candidate most aligned with CFT values on public education, labor rights, and our progressive vision.”

— Josh Pechthalt, CFT President

2018 IS SHAPING UP to be a critical election for our nation and our state. With Gov. Jerry Brown being termed out, one of the most important elections for CFT members will be the race for governor.

After soliciting member feedback for almost two months, the CFT Executive Council on December 2 endorsed Gavin Newsom for the state’s top office.

Newsom has an impressive track record of public service as the current lieutenant governor of California and the former mayor of San Francisco. During an

interview with the Executive Council, he presented a clear progressive vision for our state anchored by fully funded and supported public schools. He articulated a willingness to continue local control, hold charter schools accountable, and identify further sources of stable revenue to fund public education and vital social services.

Newsom also demonstrated a deep knowledge of the issues facing public sector labor unions in the *Janus v. AFSCME* Supreme Court case and pledged to defend California’s position as a progressive leader on issues like immigration, LGBTQ rights, and the environment.

The CFT took many steps to ensure a fair and transparent endorsement process and to invite member input leading up to this critical endorsement. The union garnered the opinions of rank-and-file CFT members both through an eight-week straw poll that was posted on the CFT website and across social media, and through a scientific member poll conducted by EMC Research.

Also on December 2, the Executive Council held rigorous interviews with the top Democratic candidates after reading their responses to an extensive questionnaire.

In making the endorsement, the CFT Executive Council drew upon the substantial support for Newsom found in the straw poll: Newsom received support from 48 percent of respondents, followed by John Chiang at 22 percent, Delaine Eastin at 12 percent, and Antonio Villaraigosa at 6 percent. The results of the recent opinion poll mirror those of the straw poll.

“After our extensive outreach, we felt confident that Newsom was the candidate most favored by our members,” said CFT President Josh Pechthalt. “He’s also the candidate most aligned with CFT values on public education, labor rights, and our progressive vision.”

In another race important to educators, the CFT Executive Council in June endorsed Richmond Assemblymember Tony Thurmond for superintendent of public instruction. Pechthalt said Thurmond has demonstrated “time and again he is a champion of public education. His policy positions solidly align him with the needs of students, parents, and educators.”

In addition to the governor’s race, the CFT has made several endorsements for other statewide elected offices based on the candidates’ strong support for public education and workers’ rights.

CFT ENDORSEMENTS 2018

Governor Gavin Newsom

Lieutenant Governor

Ed Hernandez and Eleni Kounalakis (Dual)

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Tony Thurmond

Attorney General Dave Jones

Secretary of State Alex Padilla*

Treasurer Fiona Ma

Controller Betty Yee*

Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara

Board of Equalization District 2

Malia Cohen

* Incumbent



Clean up is underway at the burned out home of Jen and William Ortlinghaus, teacher members of the Petaluma Federation.

Wildfires take member homes

Union provides immediate aid and comfort

After the North Bay fires destroyed more than 5,000 homes and killed dozens of people, William Ortlinghaus, who teaches physical education at Kenilworth Junior High and his wife Jen, a teacher at Valley Vista Elementary, were happy to go back to work after school had been cancelled for a week.

“It was the only normal thing we had left,” Jen said, “And my fourth graders were curious to see if we were still alive and our dogs were OK.”

Both Jen and William, members of Petaluma Federation of Teachers, were home on Sunday, October 8, the night the fires started. A power surge woke up William, and they smelled smoke. When William looked out the window, he saw the garbage bins flying down the street because of the strong wind. Their flagpole looked like it would break, so they went outside and saw the street full of cars. Then William got an alert on his phone saying their area, the badly hit Coffey Park tract, was being evacuated so they started packing.

“We thought we were just going on an overnight,” Jen said. “I got my purse and toiletries and the pajamas I was wearing, and we put the dogs in the car. We only had five or ten minutes to get out.”

The Ortlinghauses ended up at a Starbucks parking lot waiting till it opened at 4 a.m. Then they went to a friend’s house where they watched the news all day. It wasn’t good — along with the Ortlinghauses, two other teachers in the district lost their homes. In the end, at least a dozen CFT members from six locals lost homes.

Lisa Adams, a member of the Napa County Federation of Teachers, also ended up in a parking lot on the night of the fire — a Safeway in Rohnert Park — with her adult son and daughter, trying to figure out what was happening.

“There was so much misinformation out there,” she said. “We went to a restaurant for a while, but we learned a friend lost her home, and no one could eat.”

Adams, who teaches at Calistoga State Preschool, was able to move

“We thought we were just going on an overnight. I got my purse and toiletries and the pajamas I was wearing, and we put the dogs in the car. We only had five or ten minutes to get out.” — Jen Ortlinghaus, Petaluma Federation of Teachers

back to her house after two weeks. She spent some of that time volunteering at a shelter in Santa Rosa, seeing people who had lost everything, which she said helped put things in perspective. The entire town of Calistoga was evacuated, so Adams was worried about her students and proud to hear that some of her fellow members in AFT Local 4067 volunteered in a shelter at Napa Valley College.

For Adams, as well as the Ortlinghauses, a bright spot in this horrible time was the support they received from the union. The



Before fire leveled her cabin, preschool teacher Libby Gordon lived in Mendocino County's bucolic Redwood Valley. Below, survivors Libby and Chip comfort each other.



for everything the CFT and local members did. Petaluma teachers volunteered when Casa Grande High School opened as a shelter.

"I was proud to be a union member before, but this was amazing," Larsen said. "It was very meaningful the union was so fast to reach out."

Libby Gordon, a member of the Mendocino County Federation of School Employees, agrees.

"The union has been fantastic and super supportive," she said. "It's pretty amazing that people I don't even know are reaching out and helping."

On the night of the fire, Gordon's landlords woke her up in her Redwood Valley cabin. They all watched the fire in the hills for a few minutes. Then it leapt the valley, and they knew they needed to get out.

"There were 200-foot flames and these mini-tornadoes because of the winds. We were loading stuff when our neighbor's roof blew off," Gordon, a teacher at Mendocino County

"The union has been fantastic and super supportive. It's pretty amazing that people I don't even know are reaching out and helping."

— Libby Gordon, Mendocino County Federation of School Employees

Early Start, said. "I was able to get my animals and personal jewelry and important paperwork, but when you're woken up at 1 in the morning, you're not thinking too clearly."

Like the others, Gordon, who has been staying at the Ukiah winery of a friend, says in the midst of everything, she was glad when her school reopened and she could go back to her job.

"I work with infants and toddlers with special needs, so it puts things in perspective. Some families in our program were displaced and are in shelters and hotels," she said. "My staff is really supportive, and it helps to shut things out and work with the kids."

— By Emily Wilson, CFT Reporter

CFT put out a call for donations to members on social media and, with the assistance of the AFT, set up a fund for members who lost their homes.

Just a few days later, those members got a phone call from the CFT. They were given gift cards to help with immediate expenses, often hand delivered.

"It was awesome," Adams said. "I had to replace all the food, which was a huge expense, and that they reached out was awesome." The Ortlinghauses also used the gift card to buy food.

The North Bay Labor Council provided additional relief funds to union members, and the remaining relief funds from the CFT will be distributed soon.

Sandra Larsen, president of the Petaluma Federation and a second grade teacher at the same school as Jen, was still in shock since her daughter's home was destroyed in the fire, and she was grateful

Help Southern California members who lost homes

AT PRESS TIME, wildfires were still burning in Ventura, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Diego counties. Reports of more member homes being lost were trickling in. With so many regions in the path of the wildfires, thousands of CFT members and retirees are potentially affected. The CFT is launching a fundraising effort so that you may offer your support.

The day after the North Bay wildfires erupted, AFT, together with CFT, launched an interactive text program, to check in on members and identify those members needing help.

The AFT activated its Disaster Relief Fund and CFT members

contributed nearly \$10,000 to help North Bay members affected. Some money has been distributed to members already, with final disbursements to come. The CFT also worked with the North Bay Central Labor Council to distribute additional funds through local unions to provide relief.

Due to the unprecedented need, at its December 2 meeting the CFT Executive Council established a permanent Disaster Relief Fund. You can contribute now to help colleagues who lost homes in the Southern California fires.

> Donate at goo.gl/gjBBhn.

The delegation visited a Stockholm elementary classroom and saw what a fully supported public school can look like.

SCHOOL CHOICE

A Tale of Two Countries

NORWAY AND SWEDEN TAKE DIVERGENT PATHS

By Jeffery M. Freitas, CFT Secretary Treasurer

In October I accompanied AFT President Randi Weingarten and several fellow AFT union leaders on a fact-finding trip to Sweden and Norway. The purpose of the trip was to examine firsthand the approaches taken by the countries to inform our own approach to public education.

At first glance, Sweden and Norway seem nearly identical. Both countries have low levels of income inequality. They fund their schools well and it shows. They both have high rates of union membership and participation. And they both have a relatively high rate of electoral participation.

In Stockholm, we visited a public elementary school, which runs from grades 1 to 6 and includes preschool and before- and after-school programs. As we walked around the school, we could immediately see what a fully-supported public school could look like: We saw a woodshop classroom, a textile classroom, a music room, and a home economics classroom, where students learn about nutrition from an early age. The well-used playground was modern and clean.

Lunch is free to students and we partook in their healthy meal, that included a full salad bar and the daily cooked-from-scratch entree of, yes, Swedish meatballs and rice.



The AFT delegation, from left: Randi Weingarten, president; Larry Carter, president of the Louisiana Federation; Joanne McCall, president of the Florida Education Association; and Jeff Freitas, secretary treasurer of the CFT.

In Norway, we visited an Oslo public high school, where we were equally impressed. After ninth grade, which is part of their middle school, students choose between vocational education or academic studies leading to university. Either track allows for five years of study. The vocational track includes two years in the classroom and up to two years as an apprentice. The academic track can include a year of project work outside the classroom.

Walking into the newly built high school was like walking into the headquarters of a tech company in Silicon Valley. The entryway opened onto a large four-story space with a central quad, café and performance stage.


Reflecting Norwegians' belief in an open and transparent education, the inner walls of the classrooms are floor-to-ceiling glass. There were learning spaces for traditional academics, computer and industrial electronics, and fashion design, as well

as metal, wood, auto mechanic, and autobody shops.

ON THE SURFACE, the schools in these two countries seemed as nearly identical as the countries did. But digging a little deeper, we quickly saw how their divergent approaches to public education are radically altering their schools and societies.

Norway has a unique democratic system for students in public

PHOTOS COURTESY AFT



In Oslo, high schoolers describe the democratic functioning of their student councils.

schools. Starting in the first grade, representatives are elected to a student council that talks to school administrators about their concerns. This system of representation continues into a national council with a parallel group of students on leave to lobby the national legislature. It instills a purpose for democracy.

In the 1990s, Norway considered pursuing a school choice path through open enrollment and vouchers and rejected it. People in many countries then were saying public schools were failing without any real data to prove their point. In Sweden, the narrative caught on. Swedish politicians were sold on the idea and introduced “school choice” in response to the criticism. Since then the differences between the two countries have become more profound.

After a slow start, the voucher system in Sweden really took off. Private schools were deregulated, allowing for-profit schools with little transparency and accountability to compete against traditional public schools.

Over the past 10 years, Sweden has seen its PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) scores plummet, national opinion of the school system decline dramatically, and segregation by class, race, and immigration status within the schools increase. Educators in Sweden lament that not only is the education system faltering, but it is leading to a philosophy that prizes individual achievement over the uplifting of society as a whole through education.

One Swedish teacher told me how this plays out. Parents now move their children from school to school, forcing policymakers

to focus curricula more on individual success rather than community building, distorting the mission of the schools and leading to heightened inequality.

Other educators I spoke with were deeply concerned that this “me first” ethos not only damages public education, but degrades democratic culture and institutions as well. They expressed particular concern about how the individualistic approach is leading the majority to disregard the rights of minorities.

While our visits to Stockholm and Oslo only scratched the surface of the education systems in these two countries, it provided a clear warning about the challenges we face with our current administration.

With Betsy DeVos leading the charge to dismantle the Department of Education and push school “choice” through vouchers, we won’t need to wait years to see what disastrous impact these actions will have.

Unlike Sweden and Norway, we live in a nation with staggering racial and socio-economic inequality, and where public schools are grossly under-

funded and unsupported. Our system is fragile enough without vouchers undermining it.

But like Sweden and Norway, our public schools are the foundation of the American democracy — both in terms of what they represent to individual communities and to the values we hold collectively as a nation. If we don’t stand up to the administration and those who seek to destroy this foundation, our schools and our country will pay a heavy price.



In both Sweden and Norway, the delegation visited a wide variety of non-academic classrooms including woodshop and home economics.



IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE

New laws to know about in 2018 California leads the way in safeguarding students and families

Educators will see many new laws go into effect on January 1. After the first year of the 2017-18 legislative session concluded, the governor had until October 15 to sign or veto bills sent to him by the Legislature. Listed below are the bills the governor signed into law that may affect you, your family, your school or college, and your union.

ALL-UNION

CalSTRS, CalPERS and DAPL

AB 20 (*Kalra, D-San Jose*) requires that, by April 1, CalSTRS and CalPERS report to the Legislature and the governor any information regarding engagement with, and investment in, companies constructing or funding the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Mandates union access to new employee orientation

AB 119 (*Assembly Budget Committee*) provides public sector unions access to new employee orientations with a minimum 10-day notice, and requires employers to provide unions detailed contact information for new employees within 30 days and updated information every 120 days.

Prohibits employers from denying parental leave

SB 63 (*Jackson, D-Santa Barbara*) makes it illegal for an employer of 20 or more employees to deny an eligible employee up to 12 weeks of job-protected parental leave to bond with a new child. It also prohibits an employer from refusing to maintain and pay for the employee's group health coverage during the leave.

Cleaning Product Right to Know Act of 2017

SB 258 (*Lara, D-Bell Gardens*) requires manufacturers of designated products to disclose information about chemicals contained in them on the product label and product website. It prohibits sale of designated products that do not satisfy these requirements and requires employers to make safety data sheets for designated products readily accessible to employees.

Public employers prohibited from union busting

SB 285 (*Atkins, D-San Diego*) prohibits public employers from deterring or discouraging public employees from becoming or remaining members of a union. Public employers include school and college districts, the UC and CSU systems, transit districts, cities, counties, and the state.

Reimbursement of union legal fees

SB 550 (*Pan, D-Sacramento*) authorizes an education union to make an offer in order to settle a dispute alleging an employer's failure to provide wages, benefits, or working conditions as defined in state law, but if the employer does not accept the offer and fails to obtain a more favorable judgment or award, it would be required to pay union legal fees and expenses incurred after the initial offer was put forth.

SAFE HAVENS

Legislature limits immigration enforcement on campus

A movement is underway to protect our most vulnerable students and their families from President Trump's anti-immigrant stance. To that end, several new laws seek to limit immigration enforcement on campus. » Find a complete package of helpful resources in the union's Safe Haven toolkit at cft.org/safe-haven.

Safeguarding college campuses

AB 21 (*Kalra, D-San Jose*) requires the community colleges, the CSU, and other Cal Grant-eligible independent institutions (and requests the UC) to establish and implement policies and actions that safeguard against immigration enforcement activities on California campuses.

Protecting employee information

AB 450 (*Chiu, D-San Francisco*) prohibits an employer, or a person acting on the employer's behalf, from providing voluntary consent to an immigration enforcement agent to 1) enter non-public areas of a workplace without a judicial warrant, and 2) access, review, or obtain employee records without a subpoena or court order. It also requires employers to notify an employee within 72 hours of receiving the federal notice of inspection that his or her I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification form and other records will be inspected by an immigration agency.



Immigration standards for schools

AB 699 (*O'Donnell, D-Long Beach*) prohibits officials and employees of a school district, county office of education, or charter school from collecting information regarding the citizenship or immigration status of students and their family members, except as required by state or federal education programs. It requires timely and confidential reports to the governing board if any law enforcement agency requests access or information for the purposes of immigration enforcement.

California Values Act

SB 54 (*de León, D-Los Angeles*) prohibits local and state law enforcement agencies, including campus police and security departments, from using money or personnel to investigate, interrogate, detain, or arrest persons for purposes of immigration enforcement. It also requires the attorney general, in consultation with stakeholders, to publish model policies for public schools, colleges, libraries, health facilities, courthouses, and others by October 1, 2018.

Governor vetoes paid pregnancy disability leave

BRYAN HIA



«Despite the fact that members delivered thousands of signed petitions to the State Capitol in support of paid pregnancy disability leave, the governor vetoed CFT-sponsored bill **AB 568** (Gonzalez Fletcher, D-San Diego). The bill would have provided faculty and classified employees a minimum of six weeks paid leave for pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth and recovery. » Find the history of maternity leave on page 13.

The governor also vetoed CFT-sponsored **AB 1029** (Weber, D-San Diego) that would have added individuals with expertise in children's social-emotional health to school safety planning committees, and CFT co-sponsored **AB 45** (Thurmond, D-Richmond) that would have funded the creation of affordable housing for school district employees.

TK-12 EDUCATION

Expands English proficiency notices

AB 81 (Gonzalez Fletcher, D-San Diego) requires the notice of assessment regarding a child's English proficiency to include additional information such as whether the child is a long-term English learner or at risk of becoming one. It authorizes schools to send an alternative notice to comply with this requirement.

Ends High School Exit Exam

AB 830 (Kalra, D-San Jose) eliminates the high school exit exam and removes it as a condition of graduation from high school.

Defines purpose of interim assessments

AB 1035 (O'Donnell, D-Long Beach) requires that interim assessments be designed to provide teachers timely feedback so they can continually adjust instruction to improve student learning. It prohibits the results of interim assessments from being used for high-stakes purposes.

Requires charter petitions to specify policies

AB 1360 (Bonta, D-Alameda) requires that charter school petitions contain comprehensive procedures by which a pupil can be suspended, expelled, or otherwise involuntarily removed from the school with an explanation of how the school will comply with federal and state due process requirements. It requires charter schools to send notice that parental involvement is not required for student acceptance or continued enrollment. CFT-SPONSORED

Caps district reserves

SB 751 (Hill, D-San Mateo) provides that, at the end of a fiscal year, a district budget cannot contain a general fund ending balance — combined assigned or unassigned — in excess of 10 percent of total funds. It excludes basic aid districts and districts with fewer than 2,501 students.

CLASSIFIED

Part-time playground aides join classified service

AB 670 (Thurmond, D-Richmond) eliminates the provision in current law that exempts a person employed in a part-time playground position, and who is not otherwise employed in a classified position, from the classified service.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

California College Promise

AB 19 (Santiago, D-Los Angeles) establishes the California College Promise which will — pending program funding — waive the first year of fees for first-time community college students enrolled in 12 or more units and who apply for free Federal Student Aid or the California Dream Act.

Expanded categories in Student Equity Plans

AB 1018 (Reyes, D-San Bernardino) adds homeless, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students to the categories required to be addressed in Student Equity Plans. It also allows for inclusion of additional categories of students as determined by the governing board.

Fair disclosure before administrative leave

AB 1651 (Reyes, D-San Bernardino) requires that academic employees be provided with information about relevant complaints or allegations against them before being placed on administrative leave, with specified exceptions.

UNIVERSITY

Non-resident enrollment qualifications

AB 1674 (Grayson, D-Concord) requests UC, in collaboration with the Academic Senate, to implement admissions policies that ensure the academic qualifications for admitted non-resident undergraduate students generally exceed those of resident undergraduates. It requests the UC to report to the Legislature annually regarding implementation.

— By the CFT Legislative Staff

cft.org/legislative-advocacy

New book illustrates the humanity of people who travel with the crops



DAVID BACON

Writer, photographer and veteran UFW union organizer David Bacon frequently refers to “people who travel with the crops,” agricultural workers who move from place to place to cultivate and harvest California’s fields. They are the subject of his newest work of photojournalism, *In the Fields of the North/En los campos del norte*. Bacon is a frequent contributor to *California Teacher*. Below are excerpts from an interview with *Capitol & Main*. » Read the whole article at goo.gl/U5z9Q5.

Your first chapter describes weeding an organic potato field. Is that healthier for the people who work there?

DB: If no pesticides are being sprayed, workers going through and pulling weeds are not going to get a dose of pesticide. Human labor is required to get those weeds out of the ground. So there’s more work for workers and that’s a good thing.

But wages for workers are way down there on the bottom. And the problems of sexual harassment are the same for workers at organic growers.

Most people in the United States don’t see farm workers, don’t know who they are. This book is a way of trying to peel that back. What we’re doing here is making the invisible visible.

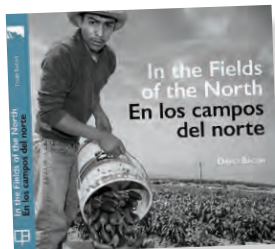
The UFW was founded in 1966, but you still see people bent over double in the fields picking crops. What has changed in all that time?

DB: Some of the things that changed on a more permanent level

are basic improvements in working conditions, like bathrooms and water for people to drink in the fields, which workers didn’t have before the union.

When the union was really strong at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the wages for union farm workers were about two and a half times the wage for a nonunion farm worker. If that were true today, farm workers would be making 25 or 30 bucks an hour, which obviously they’re not.

The union also pushed forward the politics of social change and social justice. The 1965 grape strike was started by Filipinos who were living in labor camps in Delano. Delano was run by growers; the city government was all white. Today, the mayor of Delano is a Filipino. Workers got more power because of the union. They used that power to change the politics of the town.



Are there any ways for consumers to make reasonable choices?

DB: The last chapter covers the strike organized by workers in Washington at a farm producing berries for Driscoll’s, a big berry marketer. The way those workers were able to get the grower to finally agree to negotiate a contract and recognize their union, was by appealing to the people in cities not to buy

Driscoll’s berries until the grower had agreed to do those things.

The United Farm Workers movement taught us how to use our power as consumers to help workers when they need support in order to win. It was effective for the workers in Washington.



Dolores Huerta leads United Farm Workers members and supporters in a march during the 1970s.

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FIVE LESSONS FROM DOLORES HUERTA

Documentary movie features United Farm Workers organizer

1 Ask for help

In the 1960s, most of the lobbyists in Sacramento were white men. But Huerta, a young Latina didn't let that stop her, and she helped pass major legislation including Aid for Families with Dependent Children and disability insurance for farm workers in 1963.

"I found out that I could go to the law library there in Sacramento, and I could do the research on the laws I wanted to change," Huerta said. "Once I found the section of the law I wanted, I would go to one of my friends in the Capitol like the great Philip Burton from San Francisco. They would give me a letter and you go down to the Legislative Council's office, and they would draft the bill for you."

"It was awesome!"

2 Think big

Huerta was the director of the national grape boycott that ended after more than five years with the farmworkers getting contracts that included benefits such as pay raises, medical insurance, and paid vacations.

3 Work together

The United Farm Workers won the grape boycott, Huerta says, by going outside the labor movement and joining with nonprofits, community groups, racial justice organizations and feminists. She urges activists now to get out of their silos and unite.

4 Take credit for your work

Huerta was the only woman on the UFW Executive Board, and she came up with the famous slogan, often attributed to Chavez, "Sí, se puede," which Barack Obama used as "Yes, We Can!" in his presidential campaign. Huerta used to remain quiet, but she says over the years she has come to see the importance of speaking up.

5 Dance!

Huerta loves dancing and music, and she dreamed of becoming a professional dancer before becoming an organizer. Now in her 80s, Huerta is still the last one on the dance floor. In the film, activist Angela Davis says "Despite the fact that Dolores didn't follow her passion to become a dancer, she is a dancer on the stage of justice."

— By Emily Wilson, CFT Reporter

DOLORES HUERTA, an organizing legend who co-founded the United Farm Workers with Cesar Chavez, was a Girl Scout growing up in Stockton. She took seriously the idea that people should help one another and try to make things better. Something that particularly angered her was police officers stopping her and her Latino friends — but not the white people they knew — on their way home from a basketball or football game.

Huerta met legendary organizer Fred Ross when she worked at Stockton's Community Services Organization. When she saw what he had done in Los Angeles — getting sidewalks and street lighting and — most importantly to her — jailing police for beating up Latinos, she realized the power of organizing. Ross introduced her to Chavez and together they started the country's first union for farmworkers.

Now Huerta, 87, and still doing grassroots organizing, is the subject of a new documentary, *Dolores*, executive-produced by musician Carlos Santana. When the movie screened at the San Francisco International Film Festival earlier this year, Huerta talked about some things she has learned from her decades in activism.



Okay, educators, here's a pop quiz: Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Surinam, Tonga, and the United States. What do these countries have in common? The answer is that not one of these has a national paid maternity leave law. Every other nation in the world — 180 of them — has one.

Countries in Northern and Eastern Europe offer up to a year of paid leave for new mothers. The lack of such a law in the United States clearly impacts the lives of working women and, simply put, equals job discrimination.

Even into the 1970s, women would routinely lose their jobs when they got pregnant. Many were treated as temporary workers, assumed to be in the workplace only until they got married and began to



NATALIE FOBES/GETTY IMAGES

The richest country in the world doesn't have what? The struggle for paid maternity leave continues

raise children. So: Get pregnant, get lost. In some places women were (and are) required to show their menstrual napkins to prove they are not pregnant.

The struggle for maternity leave in the United States began in earnest in the 1970s as women broke into traditionally male jobs in the trades and other industries.

only to be vetoed twice by President George H.W. Bush.

But in 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act was finally signed into law by President Bill Clinton. While it remains the basic federal maternity leave law, because of many restrictions, the law covers only about 60 percent of wage workers. The

the opportunity to sign this groundbreaking bill into law. AB 568 would have required school and community college districts to provide a minimum of six weeks fully paid leave to certificated and classified school employees for pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth, and recovery. AB 568 cleared the Assembly and Senate with bipartisan support and reached the governor's desk.

He didn't sign it.

In his veto letter Gov. Brown mentioned two bills that he had previously signed, including last year's CFT-sponsored AB 2393, which grants differential pay (regular salary minus the cost of a substitute) to school employees. So women often "schedule" pregnancies based on the academic year, or may have to deplete their accrued sick leave in order to have a baby. The governor also suggested that such a benefit might be funded through the State Disability Insurance program.

So the struggle goes on.

Mexico passed a paid maternity leave law in 1917. Will Papua New Guinea pass one before us?

— By Bill Morgan, a member of the CFT Labor in the Schools Committee who taught elementary students in San Francisco for 34 years



Representative Pat Schroeder appeared with other members of Congress at a 1990 press conference, held after President George H.W. Bush said he would veto the Family and Medical Leave Act. Three years later, President Bill Clinton signed it.

Under the leadership of Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder (D-Colorado), various AFL-CIO unions and feminist organizers, both houses of Congress passed legislation

KNOW OUR HISTORY



FMLA allows 12 weeks of unpaid leave to new mothers and new fathers, forcing women and families to save enough money to cover basic living expenses before taking three months off work.

In California, about 73 percent of teachers and 40 percent of classified employees are women. Most do not receive paid maternity leave because their employers do not participate in the worker-funded State Disability Insurance Program, which includes six weeks of partially paid (up to 55 percent of salary) leave under Paid Family Leave provisions. With the state facing a massive teaching shortage, CFT sponsored a bill that would have helped keep valued school employees in the workforce.

This fall California Gov. Jerry Brown had

Activists succeed in first pesticide drift protection for schools

Students and staff still exposed to toxic agricultural chemicals

In Watsonville, where teachers have fought for years to restrict pesticide spraying near schools, a recent regulation issued by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation was greeted as a victory, but with serious reservations.

“This is the first time any statewide agency has regulated the use of pesticides around schools. It is a really good step,” says Francisco Rodriguez, president of the Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1936. “But it’s only a part-time protection.”

Together with their allies in a broad coalition, Safe Ag Safe Schools, Pajaro teachers fought for a one-mile buffer around schools where pesticides couldn’t be applied, a protection that would be in place 24 hours a day. In the regulation issued November 8, “Pesticide applications will be prohibited within a quarter mile of these schools and facilities between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday,” according to a DPR press release, and will cover K-12 schools and licensed daycare facilities. Growers

must give annual notice to county agricultural commissioners of the pesticides they intend to use, and warn schools in advance of using them nearby.

Casimira Salazar, a teacher at MacQuiddy Elementary School and a participant in the coalition, said, “It’s not quite what we wanted, but we’ve put the issue before the state and the nation.” She and Rodriguez both credit the regulation to local organizing. “It’s been very effective,

including meeting with representatives and writing to newspapers,” Salazar says.

The effort began in the mid-90s, when teachers at Amesti School protested the use of methyl bromide when the United Farm Workers sought to have it banned. The pesticide is a known carcinogen and neurotoxin, and damages the earth’s ozone layer. When growers and chemical companies substituted methyl iodide, the fight continued. Today growers also substitute chloropicrin, a poison gas used in World War I, and 1,3-dichloropropene, another carcinogenic pesticide.

“We learned the importance of building coalitions with people with the same goals,” Rodriguez explains, “and together with the Monterey Bay Labor Council and Californians for Pesticide Reform we targeted DPR, pushed for a statewide regulation. Before, the only regulation came from county ag commissioners, and they are often influenced by growers.”

The urgency heightened as teachers over the years observed the impact on themselves and students. Salazar herself got stage 4 cancer in 2001. At Ohlone Elementary School, across the street from the fields at the edge of Watsonville, teacher George Feldman noticed problems with students. “He found three cases of students with cancer, which is just not that common among children,” Rodriguez says.

In 1999 several Latino parents of Ohlone students filed a civil rights complaint with the Environmental Protection Agency, charging that DPR had discriminated against Latino children by allowing methyl bromide application near schools. Twelve years later, in 2011, the state settled the case by installing an air monitor next to the Ohlone playground.

“So regulation is important,” Salazar emphasizes, “but the effects go on. One girl who went to Ohlone just died of cancer, and she was only 24. It’s just too many



Pajaro Valley Federation President Francisco Rodriguez accepted an award last year from the Californians for Pesticide Reform.

Our vital need to explain “full funding” to the public

RICO TAMAYO COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Increased funding for public education is a top concern of our local unions, according to a survey our council conducted this fall.

One way to advocate for increased resources is to lobby the Legislature. Even more effective is engaging the public in campaigns to help fund schools like we did with Propositions 30 and 55. Voters overwhelmingly approved both when they learned the measures would help their schools.

However, the average Californian doesn’t know that we remain one of the lowest funded states for education. What follows are some conversation-starting facts.


- California ranks as the world’s sixth largest economy in the world, but 46th in the nation for per pupil funding.
- California spends \$75,560 a year per prisoner, but only \$10,291 per student.
- The state auditor recommends 785 students to every librarian, but now there are 8,091.

- The American Pediatric Association recommends a nurse in every school, but 57 percent of California districts do not employ a single nurse.

- The American School Counselor Association recommends 250 students to every counselor, but there are now 945 to every counselor.

We must continue to educate our fellow citizens about this chronic underfunding.





Teachers involved in protesting pesticide drift gather around the air monitor at Ohlone Elementary, which has agricultural fields across the street.

people.” Teachers point out that most studies of pesticide effects concentrate on acute exposure, while the problems they see result from day-after-day chronic exposure. “We have a lot of stories to tell about long-term effects, so we see this new regulation

released a groundbreaking report in 2014, “Agricultural Pesticide Use Near Public Schools in California,” which documented for the first time the extent to which hazardous and difficult-to-control pesticides are used in close proximity to schools in 15

Five of the pesticides most heavily used near schools are fumigants — the most dangerous and drift-prone pesticides on the market — applied as gases to the soil before crops are planted.

“Working on this has been very good for us as a union,” Rodriguez explains. “In the past, people in the community would say, ‘Those teachers! What are they picketing about now?’ So we’ve changed the way we’re viewed. I go to meetings of our coalition and there are 50 people there. We’re together with doctors, nurses, students and parents. If this happens in other places, especially in rural districts, we can get protections that will be much stronger.”

— By David Bacon, CFT Reporter

“This is the first time any statewide agency has regulated the use of pesticides around schools. It is a really good step. But it’s only a part-time protection.”

— Francisco Rodriguez, President, Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers

as just a start,” Rodriguez says.

Momentum for new protections has been building steadily since the California Department of Public Health

counties of the state’s agricultural heartland.

Many of the more than 140 pesticides in use near schools are linked to negative impacts on children’s health and learning.

“We don’t spend much time changing bulbs anymore. There aren’t many left on campus to change.” — Rick Beach, Electrician, Palomar College

Upgrades require a hefty investment, but save energy and cut operating costs. Most LED bulbs are rated for 20 years and rarely need to be replaced.



JAMIE LYTLE

Campus electricians shine in clean energy awards Proposition 39 investments reap environmental and fiscal benefits

We don’t spend much time changing bulbs anymore,” said Palomar College electrician Rick Beach. “There aren’t many left on campus to change.”

And fewer by the day. Beach and maintenance and operations staff members of the Palomar Council of Classified Employees, AFT Local 4522, recently led the installation of LED lighting across Palomar’s San Marcos and Escondido campuses.

The \$1.4-million exterior lighting retrofit caught the attention of the Board of Governors of California Community Colleges, which recently recognized it as

the best project by a medium-sized district. Winners are determined by a point system reflecting energy savings, cost savings, and jobs created by the projects. The Board of Governors has presented its Energy and Sustainability Awards since voters approved Proposition 39 in 2012.

“This is a time to think big, to rethink whole lighting systems, not just change bulbs.” — Randy Key, Electrician, Orange Coast College

Prop 39 – better known as the Clean Energy Jobs Act – generates up to \$380 million dollars a year made available to schools and community colleges for projects that

“improve energy efficiency and expand clean energy generation in schools.” It was intended to help generate clean-energy jobs, retrofit existing equipment, and construct new energy efficient projects such as heating and cooling upgrades.

Palomar’s Jeff Bennett said retrofits and

upgrades require a hefty investment, but save energy and cut operating costs. Most LED bulbs are rated for a 20-year life, and rarely need to be replaced. Bennett, who

Classified Conference brings insight and new ideas

MEMBERS ATTENDED the annual Classified Conference held this year in Anaheim, where there were opportunities for collaboration, networking, and lots of learning.



BOB RIHA, JR.

supervises building services on the San Marcos campus, is currently auditing energy use for additional projects.

“Prop 39 has been a blessing for us,” he said. “Lighting a campus is a safety issue, and Prop 39 put these projects within our reach.”

The Federation represents classified employees who worked on the projects at two of the six districts honored this year. Besides Palomar in northern San Diego County, the Board of Governors recognized a five-year effort by Orange Coast College in Orange County as best project by a large district. In the first year alone, the college replaced 30,000 lamps and 12,000 ballasts with fluorescent and incandescent fixtures with energy efficient LED and fluorescent ones.

Over the last four years, electrician Randy Key said, Orange Coast used Prop 39 funding to retrofit lighting in 73 buildings the first year; upgrade all parking lot lights the second; convert the theater, drama lab and two gyms the third; and tackle the stadium and track last year. After the holidays, Key added, plans to replace 380 walkway lights will move forward.

Key, a member of the Coast Federation of Classified Employees, AFT Local 4794, says Prop 39 has given school and college

districts the resources to make serious investments in infrastructure. “This is a time to think big, to rethink whole lighting systems, not just change bulbs.”

Prop 39 allocated state tax income into a Clean Energy Job Creation Fund. The community colleges have received about \$50 million per year; K-12 schools have received more than \$300 million per year. Those funds can be combined with other sources to accomplish major goals.

Orange Coast, for example, covered the cost of its retrofit with Prop 39 funds, utility rebates, and district funds. Palomar pooled funds similarly.

The projects are expected to save districts tens of thousands of dollars in energy costs annually. The projects were completed by companies employing union workers who interfaced with electricians and other maintenance and operations staff familiar with the campuses.

The CFT was a strong supporter of Prop 39 in 2012. Four years later, the CFT adopted a Climate Justice Agenda, which includes divesting from fossil fuels, pushing for green legislation, and supporting union labor in new and upgraded infrastructure projects.

— By Steve Weingarten, CFT Reporter

Greening by the numbers

PALOMAR COLLEGE | San Diego County

463,000

kilowatt-hours saved annually

\$74,000

in energy costs saved annually

857

hours of union journeyman work created

582

hours of apprentice employment created

\$1.4 million

total project cost

\$516,000

in Prop 39 funds used

COAST COLLEGES | Orange County

628,000

kilowatt-hours saved annually

\$81,000

in energy costs saved annually

2,500

hours of journeyman work created

\$887,000

total project cost

\$722,000

in Prop 39 funds used

Our strength grows through collaboration

LUUKIA SMITH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

In October the Council of Classified Employees held its annual conference. New this year was a Local Presidents’ Collaboration, where leaders shared struggles, strengths, and successes. We learned just how differently each local union functions.

We can build on this collaboration and help each other turn our struggles into strengths as

we prepare for the threat of losing agency fee in the *Janus* case.

New employee orientation is one place to start. At El Camino College, our union always had a place in the new staff orientation given twice a year. Now a state law mandates public sector union access to all new employee orientations. Unions can now meet new hires right away, and talk with each person one-on-one.

Another opportunity for our preK-12 locals

is the new law which finally allows us to bring noon duty aides into our bargaining units. We can grow the union and provide solid representation to these part-time employees who have been left out for too long.

Let’s continue this conversation at our next CCE meeting on February 2 at Mission College in Santa Clara. All local unions are welcome to attend.



An open letter...

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Responding to Gov. Jerry Brown's request for the development of options for a fully online college, the California Community Colleges on November 13 announced three options and belatedly asked for comment from stakeholder groups.

Option 1 would use an existing campus to create a statewide delivery system with campus faculty and instructional designers creating content. College employer partnerships would be used and new ones developed statewide.

Option 2 would use an existing district to host a consortium of colleges that opt in, with faculty coming from the participating colleges. The host district would employ or contract with instructional designers as well as develop employer relationships.

Option 3 would create a new community college district that would operate under the Chancellor's Office. Selected faculty would work with the new district's instructional designers, and customize student services.

At right is the response from the CFT Community College Council.

Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers

November 22, 2017

**To: Governor Jerry Brown
Community College Chancellor Eloy Oakley
Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges**

We are writing in response to your request for feedback regarding your proposed options for a fully online college. We soundly reject all three options and this new initiative in general for the reasons stated below.

The underlying assumption for the proposal — that California needs a new, fully online college — is flawed. We see this initiative as duplicative of what the community college system already provides to our community college students. Through the State Chancellor's Office Online Education Initiative, students from anywhere in California can currently take classes at any California community college. This current program is already 100 percent online, including counseling and tutorial services.

The new initiative will hurt students. The students this initiative is purported to help are typically the demographic of students who perform worst in online courses. Funding a "new" initiative based on helping a student demographic which is least likely to succeed makes no sense from either a pedagogical or policy viewpoint, and runs counter to the important student equity work currently underway.

In addition, it appears this initiative is going in the direction of "correspondence courses" from decades ago: Use formulaic lesson plans created by private instructional designers and then "test" the students as they progress to grant access to the next module. Teaching, not testing, must remain the central mission of our community college system.

It also appears that this new "online college" would fall outside of accreditation, and perhaps even outside of current collective bargaining statutes. What credibility would such a college, degree or certificate have? Again, it seems as though this proposal is more of a mechanism to enrich private investors, or at best wishful thinking that quality education can be done online on the cheap, rather than about actually meaningfully educating our students.

The process that led to this problematic proposal lacked stakeholder participation and transparency. The workgroup formed to develop the options for carrying out this proposal lacked representation from a broad cross section of stakeholders. All participants were handpicked by the chancellor rather than selected by the various stakeholder organizations as has been customary. Furthermore, based on our discussions with some members of this workgroup, we understand that the workgroup's recommendations were not even brought forward, but were replaced by the recommendations of the out-of-state consultants who are driving this project.

For the above reasons, we soundly reject the governor's proposal for a fully online college. It is noteworthy that both the UC and CSU systems have also independently reached this same conclusion.

If the governor is truly interested in increasing the success rate of our community college students, then he should include additional funding in his next budget for community colleges earmarked to allow the system to hire more full-time faculty and classified staff, as there is ample documented evidence that doing so would increase both the retention and success rates of our students.

Sincerely,
Jim Mahler, President
Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers



...CFT *rejects* fully online college proposal

The promise of free college only awaits funding

JIM MAHLER COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Tuition has not been free for community college students since 1985 and that is about to change.

Gov. Brown signed Assembly Bill 19 (Santiago, D-Los Angeles) that allows first-time students to attend community college tuition-free for the first year if they are enrolled in at least 12 units.

At \$46 per unit — less than \$1,400 annually for a full course load — California's community colleges are one of the country's best bargains. Educational and living costs, however, are often too steep for students, especially from low-income families. About half of the system's 2.3 million students already receive fee waivers because of financial need.

Implementation of the California College Promise, however, awaits the Legislature al-

locating funds in next year's budget. The program is expected to cost more than \$30 million in its first year.

Once funded, the College Promise will provide the opportunity for more California students to get started on their higher education goals. It has always been the CFT's position that tuition should be free for all of higher education.



IMAGE ZOO

Building a member-driven union at the university

An effective site rep structure reaches lecturers, librarians where they work

At UC Berkeley, 16 lecturer site representatives are fanning out across the sprawling campus. In Davis, the union is fielding at least 15. In both places, the effort to meet the challenge of a new era in public sector labor relations is part of an even larger move to change the culture of the union.

Like many public sector unions, the University Council-AFT is preparing for a Supreme Court decision in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case, in which the court's new right-wing majority is likely to strike down agency fees. That would invalidate the union's contract provision requiring non-members to pay a fair share service fee for representation services.

In response, Roxi Power, UC-AFT vice president for organizing, developed a traditional site rep structure overseen by member leaders as coordinators. It encourages campus locals to communicate more closely with members and to bring people into the union in new ways.

"At Berkeley, we ask these site reps to identify themselves to their fellow lecturers, to develop a two-way communication about the contract and benefits, and to come to union meetings to participate," explains Site Rep Coordinator Joanna Reed.

Berkeley librarians are out in front, with 72 union members of the 78 people in the unit. They organize with the advantage of working together so they get to know each other on the job. They developed a structure with one site rep to every six members in preparation for next year's bargaining.

On the other hand, the campus has 1500 lecturers in an academic year, with about a one-third turnover. Of the 886 lecturers currently working, 413 have joined the union.

"Our effort started before we'd even heard of *Janus*," says Khalid Kadir, Berkeley's second site rep coordinator. "Two years ago we had a broad discussion

of how we could make our union much more of a place to connect with our colleagues. We want to build a real union, that goes beyond the core of people who've traditionally been active."

Lecturers are widely dispersed across UC campuses, where there are rarely more than 10 in a department and often fewer. Some departments "encourage" lecturers to leave after a couple of years, to bring in new recent

graduates. In addition, professional schools often hire people with active careers in the professions themselves, with little interest in the salary they earn from their appointments or other traditional union concerns.

"People live in their departments," Kadir emphasizes. "If all we do is come in when there's something wrong, to fight about it, people can see us as a source of problems. So I try to change their view, first by

"At Berkeley, we ask these site reps to identify themselves to their fellow lecturers, to develop a two-way communication about the contract and benefits, and to come to union meetings to participate."

— Joanna Reed, Site Rep Coordinator, UC Berkeley



JOANNA REED

Site Rep Joanna Reed, left, talks with lecturer Jill Bakehorn about the union's activities on the Berkeley campus.

DAVID BACON



DAVID BACON

KHALID KADIR

UC Berkeley Site Rep Khalid Kadir says, "Ultimately, we're a member-driven union, and we're here to serve what members want to do."

"We also want people to see our union as an inspiring place that can bring people together, and as an organization committed to justice in the world beyond our jobs."

— Khalid Kadir, Site Rep Coordinator, UC Berkeley

helping them understand all the things the union has done to make their jobs better, and then by giving them a voice in defining our organization's priorities. 'It's your union, you own it,' I tell them. So it's a slow process, but I've signed up eight site reps in two months. You start with people who are really busy, even wary, but at the end they're always enthusiastic. The key is personal contact and lots of coffee. Sending people emails doesn't cut it."

"The key is also knowing someone," Reed

adds. "We've found that site reps are more effective if they're people in the departments themselves."

Katie Rodger, a site rep coordinator at UC Davis, agrees. On her campus the union had already mounted recruitment drives last fall and spring. "Now we're trying to be more strategic," she says. "We mapped the campus to see where the

clusters of lecturers are. Then, instead of looking through lists, we're trying to get site reps in those hotspots."

That's worked well among lecturers in the writing program, where she works. Almost all have become union members. Now they have to go beyond. "What resonates are the basic questions of job security — getting continuing appointments — and raises," Rodger believes. "It's really about people talking to each other."

Kadir agrees. "We also want people to see our union as an inspiring place that can bring people together, and as an organization committed to justice in the world beyond our jobs," he said. "When student workers walked out of the dining halls to protest poor wages and working conditions, we supported them.

We voice our concerns about DACA students and people affected by the Muslim ban. Ultimately, we're a member-driven union, and we're here to serve what members want to do."

— By David Bacon, CFT Reporter

In tune with the seasons of the union

AXEL E. BORG COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT

As an agriculture librarian, I see the seasons through the agricultural cycle: planting, growing and harvesting. In the fall, we see the fruits of our labor and we give thanks. In my role as a statewide leader, I see the same pattern in our union.

We have been working towards greater member involvement, which began with an

extensive effort to recruit new members. In the past year, we have focused on getting members more actively involved in our union. We've emphasized that our union is their union, and any union is only as strong as its members make it. This is crucial as we anticipate the continuing assaults on unions.

Recently, due to AB 119, librarians and lecturers have been bargaining for greater access to new employee orientations. Librarians have

signed an agreement, and by the time that you read this, lecturers are likely to have reached an agreement.

In both cases we were successful in getting direct access to newly hired librarians and lecturers. This brings to a close another season of the union.

>Editor's note: UC-AFT President Mia McIver is on parental leave.



Medicare-for-All could free billions for our classrooms

Most American schools and colleges pay for employee healthcare out of their budgets. Education activists are enthusiastic that a Medicare-for-All approach for faculty and staff would free up billions of dollars for classrooms.

Los Angeles schools, for example, could cut their current \$1 billion healthcare bill in half, according to John Perez, a retired president of United Teachers Los Angeles.

Under a Medicare-for-All approach, Perez said, Los Angeles Unified would pay additional Medicare taxes, but that would amount to much less than escalating insurance premiums, and could save the district up to \$500 million yearly. Extrapolated statewide, he added, a national health plan could free up \$5 billion for California classrooms.

“That would pay for a lot of education,” Perez said. “That’s what happens now in places with a single payer system, like Canada or Europe, where every single Canadian dollar or euro that went to employee healthcare before now goes into services for the students.”

Medicare-for-All would also free unions and administrators across the country from millions of hours of negotiating individual health plans, he added.

The U.S. Congress is also wrestling with ways to improve the Medicare system, which currently serves about 74 million Americans.

Senate Democrats led by Sherrod Brown of Ohio have sponsored legislation to allow more than 40 million Americans between the ages of 55 and 64 to buy into Medicare. Brown’s Medicare at 55 Act offers them the



CFT retirees at the Convention, from left, Ann Killebrew, San Francisco; Bill Phillips, Santa Cruz; and Margaret Shelleda, Oakland.

COURTESY CARA/CHUCK WALKER SR

CARA Convention talks about Medicare

HEALTHCARE IS ALWAYS on the agenda of the California Alliance for Retired Americans, and Medicare-for-All was the buzz at the 10th Annual CARA Convention this fall.

“Those of us who have Medicare know how valuable a single payer plan is,” said retired CFT Executive Director Margaret Shelleda, now a CARA vice president representing CFT and AFT retirees. “Why burden employers with providing healthcare?” Shelleda asked. “A national health system could cover everyone if we all paid a slightly higher payroll tax, but didn’t have to deal with deductibles and copays and all that.”

Several CFT retirees play leading roles in CARA.

- **Hene Kelly**, United Educators of San Francisco, represents CFT as a Vice President.
- **Sandra Mack**, United Educators of San Francisco, chairs the Education Fund.
- **Michael Nye**, former CFT Secretary Treasurer, represents the Democratic Socialists.
- **Margaret Shelleda** represents CFT and AFT as a Vice President.

same benefits and protections as someone enrolled in Medicare Parts A, B and D.

Congress is also debating a bill that would allow Medicare to bargain with the big drug companies over the cost of

prescription drugs for retirees, something now forbidden by federal law under a law passed under George W. Bush.

— By Steve Weingarten, CFT Reporter

Congress headed in exactly the wrong direction

JOHN PEREZ COUNCIL PRESIDENT

It is hard to keep up with what the Republican Congress is doing every day, but one thing is sure — whatever they are doing will not be helpful for the American people in general and for us retirees in particular.

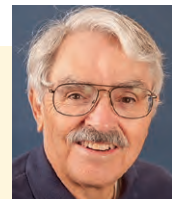
They and President Trump tried and failed to

destroy the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), but now they are at it again. At press time, the tax bills are headed to a conference committee.

The GOP plan will repeal the individual mandate provision of the ACA and cause 13 million people who are now insured to lose their medical coverage. The bill will also cut \$25 billion from Medicare, causing even more harm to the

vast majority of Americans.

The way to insure that all Americans have good healthcare is to move toward a Medicare-for-All system, but what the Republicans are doing is moving, nay, running away from this pro-people solution to our healthcare needs.



LOCAL 1603

#MembershipBlitz In November the **Peralta Federation of Teachers**, launched a six-day membership drive as part of a year-long strategy to recruit and engage members.

To prepare, the union audited membership files to make sure it had a signed membership form for every member. It then coordinated instructor schedules, recruited volunteers, finalized logistics, and assembled new member packets with helpful union information and a new union sticker.

During the six-day blitz, 26 member volunteers talked to more than 300 faculty, librarians, counselors and nurses. Staff from CFT and other AFT locals aided the effort that enlisted 44 new members and collected 224 signed membership forms.

"Members were able to connect with us during face-to-face conversations," Local 1603 President Jennifer Shanoski said. "Overall, the drive was a great success and will serve us in the face of the looming *Janus* decision."



COURTESY LOCAL 1603

LOCAL 1828

#DeserveARaise The **Ventura County Federation of College Teachers** organized a board action to address the lack of progress in bargaining. Negotiators are in their second year of bargaining a three-year contract and the district is offering no salary increase for full-timers, and only 1 percent for part-timers, over the three years.

This followed a \$40,000 pay boost for the chancellor, while the district holds a nearly 30 percent reserve.

Another important issue is a guarantee for part-timers that classes with at least 15 students will not be canceled. Administrators are arbitrarily closing classes when they believe the enrollment is too low.

LOCAL 1521A

#LaborScholarship Sandra Lepore devoted 33 years to organizing and building the **AFT College Staff Guild** before she retired from its executive director position in 2015. Local



Faculty at Ventura Colleges pressure their board of trustees for a pay increase.

COURTESY LOCAL 1828

1521A recognized that dedication by creating the Lepore Labor Scholarship and making it available to Los Angeles community college students committed to labor studies.

Lepore recently presented a \$1,000 check to the first recipient, Amy Chong, who earned a sociology degree at East Los Angeles College and is now studying public policy at USC. Chong interned for the local's sister AFT union, the **Los Angeles College Faculty Guild**.

"It's very exciting to bring

new people into union activism and politics," Lepore said. "It makes me feel like I'm part of the future."

LOCAL 1021

#SaveOurSchools

Thousands who attended raucous rallies in Los Angeles Unified, from Harbor City to North Hills, sent a message to the public about what's at stake if we don't stop starving our schools and start supporting educators.

United Teachers Los Angeles members spoke to the many concerns in their classrooms that drove them to the streets. Parents, students, educators, and community groups massed on November 16 in six locations under the "Save Our Schools" banner.

#GOTaxScam Newport-Mesa and Coast Federation members spoke out against the Republican tax plan, labeled "the worse tax heist in history." AFT President Randi Weingarten was the keynote speaker at the Orange County Labor Federation and urged local Congressional representatives to vote against the disastrous bill.



JESSICA ULSTAD

Kirsten Farrell, a health science and medical technology teacher at Venice Senior High School, and member of United Teachers Los Angeles, AFT Local 1021, was named as one of five California Teachers of the Year for 2018 by the state Department of Education.



Kirsten Farrell

Farrell created one of the first sports medicine teams at Venice High in 2004 in partnership with the West Coast Sports Foundation. In addition to teaching students about anatomy, medical terminology, and treatment of athletic injuries, the program trains them in CPR and other life-saving techniques.

A 21-year teaching veteran, Farrell has served Venice High for 15 years as a regional occupational program and career technical education teacher.

Mark Lantsberger, a computer science teacher at Del Norte High School in Poway, and member of the Poway Federation, AFT Local 2357, was a finalist in the California Teachers of the Year award program. Named a San Diego County Teacher

of the Year, Lantsberger advises the school computer club, maintains a "digital classroom," and opens his lab before and after school for students to work on projects.

James Blackie, a science teacher at Horace Ensign Intermediate School in Newport Beach, and member of the Newport-Mesa Federation, AFT Local 1794, was a

semifinalist in the California Teachers of the Year program. A teacher of the year in the Newport-Mesa Unified district, Blackie exposes students to thought-provoking science lab activities.

David Mielke, a psychology teacher at Culver City High, CFT Vice President, and president of the Culver City Federation, AFT

Local 1343, was featured on a podcast sponsored by Mad in America, a non-profit focused on rethinking psychiatric care. Mielke is concerned about the number of children who have a psychiatric diagnosis and are on psychiatric drugs. In the podcast, he explores these interventions and drug-free alternatives. Download the podcast at goo.gl/38RVgw.

IN MEMORIAM

GARY RAVANI, 72, a fierce advocate of public education, died on November 17 after being hospitalized for acute pancreatitis. Ravani served as president of the EC/TK-12 Council from 2009 to 2015 and as a CFT Vice President for two decades.

After fighting in the Vietnam War for three years where he saw action during the Tet Offensive of 1968, Ravani earned his degree and teaching credential. He taught history, English, and ESL at Kenilworth Junior High in Petaluma for 35 years.

Ravani became involved in the union and served as president of the Petaluma Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1881, for 19 years. He was famous for his back-to-school speeches that used his droll sense of humor to weave together observations of the current political climate. He read nearly every education study published, analyzed that information to provide foundation for his union work, and quoted statistics and detail impressively.

Ravani is survived by his wife, Paula, two sons and a grandson. You may share remembrances on the CFT Facebook page or on his obituary page at goo.gl/stVSD5.



BOB RIHA JR.

Be a delegate to CFT Convention

March 23-25 • Hilton Orange County



The CFT Convention is the Federation's highest governance body, where delegates shape union policy and positions on issues affecting all members. It is open to all CFT members, but only elected delegates can vote. Reach out to your local union now if you want to run as a delegate to the CFT Convention.

Learn more at cft.org/convention-2018

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