



A PUBLICATION OF THE STUDENT CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
FEBRUARY 2005

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ACT NOW!: YOUR PROFESSIONAL & FINANCIAL FUTURE
DEANNA ARELLANO, SCTA NORTHERN REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT,
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

College students don't typically think about retirement. Unless you're a returning college student, or are trying your hand at a second career, you probably don't worry about life after teaching. And who can blame you? With your attention clearly focused on the road ahead - credential requirements, the CSET, paying for tuition and books - don't we all have enough to worry about? The Governor hopes so. In fact, he's counting on it.

He hopes your lives are so busy that you won't pay much attention to his political agendas or to his vision for the future of public education. And he really hopes you didn't hear about that promise he has broken to the teachers, and the students, of this state.

THE MIDNIGHT MISSION

CARMELITA HERRERA, ALMA MORAN, JO'QUANTA ALLEN, & KYRON GRANT,
CLUB ED, COMPTON WALTON MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS



When Compton Walton Middle School's Club Ed went to the Midnight Mission on November 24, 2004, we were very excited about helping out. The Midnight Mission is a place where disadvantaged and homeless people stay to sleep, eat, rest, and receive a variety of services.

Tyrone Robinson, Volunteer Coordinator and Larry Lyerla, Public Affairs Assistant gave us an explanation of the services and a tour of the facilities. Mr. Lyerla explained that the new population of "skid row" is single mothers with children and how the Mission is involved with the "Homeless to Skid Row" Program. The program provides three meals a day, seven days a week and serves over 2,000 people a day. The many programs include: alcohol & drug Abuse, GED preparation classes through Los Angeles USD, employment opportunities, reading program, free income tax preparation, family housing, life skills management, and advocacy for families of domestic violence and other services.

Club Ed: Teachers for Tomorrow is developed and sponsored by the California Teachers Association (CTA) Human Rights Department. We assisted the Mission by folding brochures and making up the beds. The homeless personally thanked us for assisting the Mission. We understand the importance of the Midnight Mission. We really appreciate our teacher and Club Ed Advisor, Ms. Dixon for allowing us this opportunity. We are very proud of ourselves and we challenge you to do the same. Our focus right now is: What can we do to serve our community bet-



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

FEBRUARY 2005

- 12 CBEST & RICA EXAMS
- 19 SCTA SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE, CSU POMONA
- 21 PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY
- 25-27 CTA URBAN ISSUES CONFERENCE, SAN DIEGO

MARCH 2005

- 2 READ ACROSS AMERICA
- 4-6 CTA EQUITY & HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE, SANTA CLARA
- 11-13 CTA GOOD TEACHING CONFERENCE, HOLLYWOOD
- 19 SCTA NORTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE, BURLINGAME
- 19 CSET EXAM
- 25 GOOD FRIDAY HOLIDAY
- 31-APRIL 3 REGION 4 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, NEWPORT BEACH

APRIL 2005

- 8-10 STATE COUNCIL/SCTA BOARD MEETING, LOS ANGELES
- 9 CBEST & RICA EXAMS
- 30-MAY 1 **SCTA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY, NEWPORT BEACH**

MAY 2005

- 5 NATIONAL DAY OF THE TEACHER
- 21 CSET EXAM
- 30 MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY

JUNE 2005

- 10-12 STATE COUNCIL/SCTA BOARD MEETING, LOS ANGELES
- 18 CBEST & RICA EXAMS
- 26-29 NEA STUDENT PROGRAM LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, LOS ANGELES

JULY 2005

- 1-6 NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY, LOS ANGELES
- 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY HOLIDAY
- 15-17 SCTA NEW BOARD ORIENTATION, BURLINGAME
- 18-22 CTA PRESIDENTS CONFERENCE, ASILOMAR
- 31-AUG. 5 CTA SUMMER INSTITUTE, UCLA

2005: KICKING OFF TO AN UNBELIEVABLE START!

MONICA MASINO, SCTA PRESIDENT, ARGOSY UNIVERSITY

My mantra is “You get out of SCTA what you’re willing to put into it!” So, I’m asking you to get involved, get pumped and get ready to have one of the best experiences of your life! To those of you who are new, I wish to welcome you. You have just entered the best pre-professional association in California. To those who have returned to SCTA, I wish to congratulate you for reinvesting in your education. I look forward to helping all of you with NEW ideas for getting you and your chapters involved.

If you’ve heard that something unique exists...you heard right. There is a close-knit bond that exists between the Executive Board, Chapter leaders, members, teachers, faculty and staff. It’s outstanding to have members happy to meet one another, staff a phone call away and advisors who invest extra time with their chapter members. It’s part of the reason I like it here and I’m sure you will too.

Have you met your Executive Board? If not, I strongly recommend that you contact them to find out more about their roles here within SCTA. Without a doubt, they have a tremendous amount of insight and are motivated to help.

SCTA’s mission is “to offer the tools necessary to foster interest in the education profession by providing pre-professionals information about their rights, responsibilities and vital support systems necessary to become a committed part of the education profession.” SCTA achieves this through a mixture of exciting conferences and events such as:

- February 19 – SCTA Southern Regional Conference, “I Can Do It!” (classroom management)
- March 19 – SCTA Northern Regional Conference, “Adapting Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for all Students”
- April 30–May 1 – SCTA Representative Assembly.

Check out the website for information about these events and to contact your Executive Board members --- www.cta.org/scta.

ACT NOW! YOUR PROFESSIONAL & FINANCIAL FUTURE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

He doesn’t want you to get involved. Or maybe he just underestimates your passion for this profession.

While most of us were either enjoying the end of our well-deserved winter break, or getting into the swing of a new school term, Governor Schwarzenegger announced his intentions to implement a merit based pay system for teachers, a proposal he knows other states have consistently defeated. Leaders in CTA believe this is really a smokescreen, designed to draw the attention of education advocates away from his proposed budget - and away from his broken promise. The Governor made a promise that he would replace \$2 billion in education funding that he cut last year to balance the budget. (California schools have suffered more than \$9.8 billion in cuts over the last 4 years). Now he says students will have to live without it. Arnold lied. To you. To me. To our students.

He wants to change the way we - teachers and nurses and police officers and other public employees - live during our retirement. Like President Bush and his attempt to privatize social security, the Governor wants to take your retirement dollars out of the experts’ hands and put them into yours to manage, for better or worse. Current teacher retirees get a set benefit amount every month, which increases slightly over time, and they will receive it for life. Under his new plan, all public employees hired after July 1, 2007 (THAT’S US) will not. The state will also stop contributing money to retirement plans, for current as well as future teachers, and your school district will have to make up the difference - the same districts that are having budget crises and closing schools. All the way around - this change to our retirement is a risk we cannot afford to take.

So, what can you do about it? **FIRST, GET INVOLVED.** It’s time to start emailing and calling and writing letters to your state representatives! (To find out whom your representatives are and how to contact them, go to www.cta.org, and follow the “Politics and Legislation” link to “Contact Your Lawmakers”) Don’t wait - do it now! They represent you - and you need to tell them how to vote. Tell them you won’t let the Governor mess with your retirement. Let them know you won’t stand for broken promises!! **SECOND, SPREAD THE WORD.** If the Governor calls a special election this year, we need to start informing parents and colleagues today! It’s time for your voice to be heard. It’s time to act!

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY IS GOING HAWAIIAN

LEO SOLIS, SCTA EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CSU LOS ANGELES

We're going "Hawaiian!" The SCTA Representative Assembly (RA) is the annual business meeting of the Association, but that doesn't mean we can't have fun too. RA is going to be exciting and filled with entertainment and a fun theme. We're encouraging all of you to dress accordingly for the awards banquet. So, bring your grass skirts, coconut bras, muumuus and sandals because we're going to get down and hula!

If your chapter has been active on campus or in the community, then we want to hear about it. All you have to do is fill-out the awards application form, www.cta.org/scta/chapterleaders and email, fax or mail it to the SCTA office by **April 4**. We will be taking time to reflect on this past year's accomplishments during our banquet dinner Saturday evening. At this time, we present prestigious awards to outstanding leaders, chapters and an advisor.

This jam-packed weekend will cover many things and delegates from across the state will elect next year's Executive Board. That's right! Statewide elections are coming! If you're an individual who is passionate, committed, open minded and ready to learn and be a leader, then sign-up. Feel free to contact your Executive Board members, www.cta.org/scta and ask about their experiences and expectations for positions on the statewide board.

For more information, contact Leo Solis, SCTA Executive Vice President at

Leo.Solis@sbcglobal.net.



NORTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Adapting Curriculum & Instructional Strategies For All Students

When? Saturday, March 19, 2005

Where? CTA Headquarters, Burlingame

Contact your Northern Regional Vice Presidents for more details.

See you there!

Toni Bice:

ToniB9716@aol.com

Deanna Arellano:

northernregional@hotmail.com



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO DOWNLOAD A FORM
GO TO: WWW.CTA.ORG/SCTA/EVENTS

A MENTOR MAKES THE DIFFERENCE!

Did you know that 1 in 5 new teachers leaves the profession within 3 years? In urban districts, 50% of new teachers leave within 5 years. These statistics may be daunting, but there is hope. SCTA has partnered with CTA-Retired to create the Intergenerational Mentoring Project. "Having a mentor is the best tool you can have as a new teacher!" says Rhonda Lewis, a first year teacher in Pomona.

Retired members of CTA will be paired with student members for 1 year, to provide that extra support and advice. This fledgling project will start on 2 campuses – CSU Fullerton in the south and Sonoma State in the north. We hope to expand the program next year to additional campuses.

CTA Retired members in the south met on January 18th to discuss their roles as mentors. Attendees include: Karen Jepsen, Marshall E. Kahan, Geraldine Davis, Ricki Pearl, Diana Stone, Laura Washington and Morris M. Aborne. Pat Ryan is the CTA-R contact for the south. An orientation for mentors in the north is to be held in February. For more information, contact Gail Watts, SCTA Organizer, gwatts@cta.org or 650/552-5346. Thank you mentors!



THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“As recently as the 1970’s, California’s public schools were reputed to be excellent. Today, that reputation no longer stands. Instead, there is widespread concern that California’s schools have slipped in quality over the years and that they are no longer performing as well as they did previously or as well as schools in other states.” These excerpts are from the report, “California’s K-12 Public Schools: How Are They Doing?” by the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit research organization.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- In 2000, California had the largest population of 5-18 year olds in the nation followed by Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois.
- 1 in 10 Californians is a recent immigrant (a foreign born person who entered the US in the past 10 years). By comparison, not even 1 in 20 persons nationally is a recent immigrant.
- 1 in 5 children in California lives in a family whose income is below federally established poverty thresholds. Child poverty is most prevalent in the central valley -- Tulare, Fresno and Madera counties – which rank in the poorest tenth of the nation’s counties.
- In 2001, California had the 2nd highest ratio of pupils to teachers in the nation. About 20.9 students to 1 teacher. The US average is 16 to 1.

SCHOOL FUNDING

- In 1970, California spent \$400 ABOVE the national average per pupil. Public schools were primarily financed locally – half of revenues were from property taxes.
- In 1978, Prop 13 passed reducing property taxes (and therefore school funding).
- In 1988, Prop 98 passed requiring 40% of state’s general fund go to K through 14 education.
- In 2000, California spent \$600 BELOW the national average per pupil – a decade-long pattern of spending well below the national average per student.
- Mid 1970’s Californians spent about the same share of personal income on public education as the rest of country – 4.5%. By late 1970’s the share we spent on education fell to about 1.2% BELOW national average and continues through 2000.
- 85% of all K-12 expenditures devoted to personnel salaries/benefits (almost 40% devoted to teachers salaries/benefits).
- In 2001 California ranks 32nd in teacher (adjusted) salaries, lower than the national average.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- As of 1999, California tests students in more grades than most states, but other states test in more subjects and have more-varied types of questions.
- California ranks 48th (just above Louisiana and Mississippi) in terms of NAEP scores (National Assessment of Educational Progress). When family background is controlled for, California scores are the lowest in the nation.
- CA has a low rate of students continuing on to college, but high school graduation rates are favorable to other states.

FACILITIES

Between 1991 and 2000, California per pupil spending on construction was about \$890 less than the national average. Since then, progress has been made in terms of several large state general bonds passed by voters. Despite this, California still lags the nation in terms of the adequacy of school buildings. These inadequacies are concentrated in cities serving high minority and low-income populations as well as rural areas.

CONCLUSIONS

“California’s demography presents extraordinary challenges to public education and it may be the case that these challenges cannot be effectively met unless the state’s K-12 system is funded at relatively high levels. However, California school districts have experienced comparatively low levels of funding compared to funding in most other states. California’s schools have been further stressed by extreme fluctuations in real spending per pupil. These relatively low funding levels in California’s K-12 schools reflect comparatively low effort relative to the state’s capacity.”

EXPANDING STUDENT AID PROGRAMS

LISA DIGGS, SCTA STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE, CSU POMONA

Higher Education reforms impact students who attend public colleges and universities and who depend on federal funding such as Pell Grants and Student Loans to pay for their education. Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) is expected to re-introduce, **Senate Bill 1793: College Quality, Affordability and Diversity Improvement Act of 2003**, that:

- Increases and expands student aid programs, including Pell Grants, SEOG (State Opportunity Grants), HOPE Scholarship Tax Credit.
- Will make Pell Grants a mandatory program in the federal budget, by making current levels of the Pell Grants mandatory while continuing to include increases for Pell Grants as college costs increase.
- Reduces fees and other costs associated with student aid, such as origination fees. This means that when you apply for a student loan, the school that you attend will deduct a reduced fee to process your check out of your original loan amount. Currently these fees are very high and takes away more funds from students who need every dollar borrowed to pay for their education.
- Provides a tax credit, reducing the time a person's income in the public sector can be contingent (based on income earned and not on the amount of the loan or the repayment schedule). This will provide relief for low income students and their families. Also if the bill is passed, it will allow the student opportunity to refinance the student loan if the market is favorable with home mortgages, but only after graduation and after working for a certain number of years.

Unfortunately, this bill is not expected to survive - unless it gets support from you.

GPO & WEP ARE UNFAIR TO TEACHERS!

LISA DIGGS, SCTA STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE, CSU POMONA

Have you ever noticed an area on your paycheck that says SSI or Social Security Tax? This indicates that you are paying into Social Security. Therefore, you need to know about the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). These terms may be new and confusing, but they impact current and future teachers who in various times in their lives worked part-time or had other careers before entering public education.

The GPO and WEP are unfair. Public employees, such as teachers, fire fighters and police are not able to collect their share of social security benefits as a result of these provisions. Social security benefits are reduced for anyone that worked in the private sector and later switched to public sector jobs or their spouse cannot collect death benefits. Currently, the GPO effects retirees who apply for Social Security benefits earned by a spouse and retirees who receive pensions from states that do not pay into Social Security. While public school educators contribute to the State Teacher Retirement System (STRS), **workers in the private sector are not faced with these reductions**, no matter what amount of money they receive from any number of pension plans. The provisions and exceptions are only for public employees.

Did you know that you pay into Social Security now as a part-time employee, during summer employment, internships and any job in the private sector? Unfortunately, you cannot collect the full Social Security monies paid through deductions in your income when you become a public employee. Do you want to repeal this inequity? If so, support the following bills to be heard by the 109th Congress in 2005:

- **Social Security Fairness Act** (House of Representatives Bill 544 and Senate Bill 349 which has expired and needs to be reintroduced).
- **Public Servant Retirement Protection Act** (House of Representatives Bill 4391 and Senate Bill 2455).
- **House of Representatives Bill 2683** (Howard McKeon, R-CA & Howard Berman, D-CA) **and Senate Bill 1523** (Feinstein, D-CA). These are the most promising of the bills. The effort to repeal the GPO and WEP is bipartisan.

How important is your retirement? As responsible future educators, it is imperative that we take action and make our voices heard. Email your representatives today by using the NEA Legislative Action Center at www.nea.org/lac.

CARRYING THE TORCH: HOMAGE TO CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCACY

MONICA MASINO, SCTA PRESIDENT, ARGOSY UNIVERSITY

A picture of a black man dressed in overalls accompanied by a young white boy, floating down the Mississippi River on a raft is pictured in a history book from my youth; we know them as Huck Finn and Jim, the runaway slave. In further pages etched in my memory are pictures of black men dressed in torn clothing, working the fields as farm laborers and the caption underneath would read "Negro's with no means of support and no experience at farming were given a chance to work on plantations as laborers to better themselves and learn a skill." These are all the visions that I grew up with through the Louisiana educational system, culture, and media. If not for the elders passing on vital bits of history and culture, an entire race may have been lost along with the country that we know today as the United States of America. We are truly a melting pot - all races and cultures have contributed to her greatness to impart knowledge passed down through generations. There comes a time when we must realize that we are all human and are in tune to the inalienable rights of freedom and the pursuit of happiness.



In the words of the late Martin Luther King Jr., "When a people are mired in oppression, they realize deliverance only when they have accumulated the power to enforce change. The powerful never lose opportunities-they remain available to them. The powerless, on the other hand, never experience opportunity-it is always arriving at a later time."

Through the efforts of African-American leaders such as Malcolm X, with his "by any means necessary" and later his "lets work together philosophy" and Martin Luther King Jr. and his social change through non-violence movement, African-Americans began to experience power gains.

The Civil Rights Movement had many names and faces that participated to achieve equality for all people regardless of the color of their skin. Political Rallies, Bus Boycotts, and Freedom Marches had a crucial part in the fight for Civil Rights as these nonviolent protests provided the opportunity for economic growth and the implementation of laws that would protect the rights of minorities. They also set the foundation for overturning segregation laws that secured non-whites their constitutional rights.



THE END OF A COORDINATED EFFORT

On April 4, 1968, while trying to secure better employment conditions for the city's garbage workers, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was shot to death in Memphis, Tennessee by James Earl Ray, a white man, who pled guilty to the murder and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. King died knowing that his leadership turned protest into crusade; he translated local conflicts into moral issues of nationwide concern. He was a success in awakening the black masses and galvanized them into action.

READ ACROSS AMERICA

CHRISTINE TRAN, SCTA COMMUNICATIONS EDITOR, UC LOS ANGELES

"Happy readers come from California....got books?" is the theme of this year's CTA Read Across America event which kicks off **March 2nd**. Don't forget to celebrate Read Across America with your chapter or in your community. The National Education Association (NEA) and California Teachers Association (CTA) celebrate reading year round, so invite chapter members (and non-members) to partake in this great effort to excite students about reading.

Do you need ideas or materials to promote literacy in your community? You can get free resource kits, posters, bookmarks and activity ideas from both CTA and NEA. Go to <http://www.cta.org/Features/RAA/05/ReadAcrossAmerica.htm> for more information and helpful website links. NEA has added a poster for teen readers and a CD-Rom for members. Go to www.nea.org/readacross/raa-request.

Let the nation know what you are doing to celebrate reading. Visit the NEA pledge page at <http://www.nea.org/readacross/pledge.html>.

Here are some quick ideas:

- Ask students to be authors and create their own books.
- Do a read-around with a short story.
- Have a poetry recital.



Chapters!

Members!

Are you celebrating literacy by participating in Read Across America? Send us an article!

Contact your
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Editor,
Christine Tran at
ctran81@ucla.edu

ADVENTURES OF A FIRST YEAR TEACHER: CONNECTING WITH PARENTS, PART 3

RHONDA LEWIS, SCTA PAST OFFICER, FIRST-YEAR TEACHER



I recently heard a radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) from Babara Kerr, CTA President. In this PSA, she stressed the importance of parents and teachers working together for the improved education of their children. In theory, this is a wonderful concept, but how does it happen in practice? As a first year teacher, I entered the profession with the belief as expressed by President Kerr. My mom was very active in my education, and her very presence and engagement with my teachers, helped to improve my educational experience. Wanting to provide the same experience for my students, I set out to establish a partnership with my students' parents.

Your teacher education classes will tell you that your first communication with parents should be positive- make positive phone calls first rather than only calling home when little *Johnny* has done something wrong. I was determined to be the best first year teacher so I knew that making phone calls would be a piece of cake. But then reality set in and I did not get my final class list until the first day of school and with all of the work and excess paperwork I was now responsible for, there was simply no time for me to make these calls. Also, language was a huge problem as about 80% of my parents spoke only Spanish and my Spanish is very rusty. I really wanted to connect with parents in a way more unique than just sending home a generic letter. Finally, I had an idea.

At Back-to-School night, I proudly welcomed parents into my classroom and shared with them the goals and plans for the new school year. My final announcement to the room of parents was my philosophy on teaching. I expressed to them my goal of working closely with all of them to provide the very best for their children. I encouraged them to work with me in this partnership so that their children would have a strong support network that spanned from their homes to the classroom. My students' parents agreed. Despite our language barrier, we had a universal goal that transcended our differences.

To date, I have wonderful relationships with the parents of my students. These parents have invited me into their homes for dinner, they have ensured the completion of homework assignments, and have reinforced guidelines established in my classroom. In turn, I communicate with the parents regularly so that they know where their children are at all times. Before we went off track in October, we had parent conferences. All of my parents showed up. I think the best part of our partnership is that I do not tell them how to raise their kids and they don't tell me how to teach. What we do is share information about what we have observed about the students so that we can figure out a solution to help them at home and at school. These parents are involved and are willing to take the necessary steps to provide the best for their children. I wouldn't have it any other way.

MEMBER BENEFITS:

SCTA PROTECTS YOU!

Attention Student Teachers!

SCTA provide you with **\$1,000,000** liability insurance and legal protection when you work with students as a part of your preparation to be a teacher.

- CTA death benefit of up to \$2,000 that accrues to your beneficiary if you die while still a member of CTA.
- \$1,000 accidental death and dismemberment Insurance.
- Disaster Relief Fund through FACT provides grants and no-cost interest loans to teachers who are victims of natural disasters in the state.

Not a Student Teacher?

SCTA still protects all members with low rates on auto, homeowners/renters and life insurance.

Remember! It is important to think about the future and all that may lie ahead. So don't worry, SCTA has you covered!



SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED!

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

Congratulations to the following members who wrote outstanding essays to win the SCTA Herb Foreman and Ed Romero Scholarships. These scholarships are awarded in both the Fall and Spring semesters each year and are funded by the sale of SCTA merchandise.

Herb Foreman Scholarship (Gradaute Students):

First Place: \$500.00 - Saadia Shariff, Stanford University

Second Place: \$150.00 - Anne Domenic, CSU San Luis Obispo

Ed Romero Scholarship (Undergraduate Students):

First Place: \$500.00 - Tamara Tanner, San Jose State University

Second Place: \$150.00 - Danielle Marie Brever, Sonoma State University

Scholarships Available:

*Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship, www.cta.org.
Cal Grant A and B, www.fafsa.ed.gov.*