

CCFT



# Unionews

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Local 4909

Strength

## Trying to Cope

by Susan Marsala (COPE Chair)

Governor Arnold Swarzenegger's recent retreat from his support of an expensive special election to "reform" the PERS/STRS program is good news for all of us and demonstrates the power of union collaboration in shaping the political direction of this state. Both statewide and locally, there is a movement emerging that will call upon all unions to work together on issues of shared concern.

CCFT is currently working with several organizations, putting together a local political action force that can respond to local, state, and national issues. An unexpected benefit of the challenges we face is the collaborative effort to work for common concerns. While these organizations and our membership may run the gamut on party affiliation, we do have shared goals that can only be achieved through the political process. The importance of working together on meeting these challenges can't be overstated. Understanding that, we can see that while we might disagree from time-to-time on how to accomplish our collective tasks, we must never undermine our collective strength in the process. A strong organization encourages healthy and comprehensive debate, and, as a new member of the Executive Board, I have been impressed by how effective our CCFT debates can be. While these moments can get tense and even messy at times, there is much to be said for a group that confronts the issues honestly. Even more admirable are those times at meetings when I see those who disagree with a particular point wage a good battle and then, having lost the point, these members pack up their tents and join forces with their colleagues to work for the success of that decision. That willingness to sacrifice the individual ego to work for all is, in my mind, the very definition of "strength through unity."

The next few weeks and months will be crucial for the survival of our pensions, as they are currently structured, and we hope that all of our members will volunteer what time and money they can to help. Our governor has not given up the idea of privatizing our pensions; in fact, he has reiterated his support for such a program at every opportunity. The petition gatherers are still collecting signatures for an initiative that even the governor has admitted is "flawed." Sadly, we are most likely facing a very expensive election on this initiative. Together, we have a chance to save our pensions and to work actively for common needs. As COPE Chair, I plan to work hard to build coalitions with other local and statewide organizations. Political action is our only course; apathy is our common curse. It is time for that sleeping giant we call the middle-class to awaken. We must fight if we are to hold the ground others worked so hard to secure for us all.

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## 2005 CFT Convention Speakers

by Hedy Carra (Secretary)

CFT presented three exciting speakers this year at its annual convention this March at Huntington Beach. Bill Fletcher, Jr., Kent Wong, and Phil Angelides. Bill Fletcher is the president of TransAfrica Forum, a non-profit group that organizes and advocates for policies in favor of the peoples of Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. He provided an enlightening description of AFL-CIO activities since the 1920's and made an intense plea for this enormous labor federation to face, directly and with courage, "uncomfortable issues, sometimes painfully so." The complete speech is available on the CCFT website. [www.ccft.org](http://www.ccft.org)

Kent Wong is the Director of the Center for Labor Research and Education at UCLA, serves on the Executive Council of the International Federation of Worker Education Associations, and is co-editor of *Teaching For Change: Popular Education and the Labor Movement*. Wong gave a rousing attack against Swarzenegger's assault on education and public workers. He encouraged and even insisted we unionists fight back and "forge a new path based on the changing needs of workers and unions." After listening to Wong, we all grabbed signs with statements such as "Fund Schools Today or Prisons Tomorrow," took to the streets, and began a protest march.

Phil Angelides, state Treasurer and Democratic candidate for governor of California, was a surprise speaker for the hundreds of delegates in attendance. We were excited by his presence and pleasantly surprised by his charm. Yes, he has charisma. Angelides spoke in opposition to Swarzenegger's cuts to education. He said of the governor, "He promised to protect education, but he cut funding at a time when California ranks 43rd in the country in per pupil spending, at the very time we need to prepare our children for the economy of the 21st century. He won't ask the most fortunate to pay one dime more or close corporate tax loopholes, but he told 25,000 students, who had done all their work and made all the grades, that there was no room for them at our state colleges and universities." Not surprisingly, Angelides received a standing ovation.

My first union conference was an edifying and quite stirring event thanks in part to the way these three speakers confronted the alarming issues that workers, including educators, face today.

## CCFT Welcomes New Members

Clark Kerr	Part-time Mathematics
Diane Tomkins	Part-time Lang. & Com.
Amy Wiley	Part-time English
Melanie Senn	Part-time English
John Ruppert	Part-time Eng. & Tech.
Carina Love	Full-time Library Serv.
Darel Sorensen	Part-time DSPS
Rhonda McBride	Part-time Human Dev.
Ralph Fullwood	Part-time Phys. Sciences
Eric Zebe	Full-time Eng. & Tech.
Kerry Friend	Part-time Phys. Sciences
Shawn Cabalka	Part-time Phys. Ed.
Kevin Fagan	Part-time Phys. Sciences
Karen Garza	Part-time English
Cynthia Gaw	Part-time English
Anne Stahl	Part-time Fine Arts
Douglas Highland	Part-time Fine Art
Deborah Foss	Full-time English
Eli Knight	Part-time Eng. & Tech.
Rebecca Adams	Part-time Mathematics
Kelli Martignoni	Part-time Health Center

## Looking Forward To Unity

by Matthew Fleming (Vice President)

Colleagues, as faculty of Cuesta, we are undoubtedly all aware of the benefits of employment at such a quality institution. Each day we work beside people who care about the students, the community, and each other. However, if we are not diligent in our efforts to work together on some important areas, we may find our situation drastically altered in the not so distant future.

Over the last ten years, we have seen a dramatic increase in the cost of housing and healthcare in San Luis County, and it is beginning to take its toll on our work environment and quality of life. For example, I purchased a modest two-bedroom home in Morro Bay just over two years ago, which came with a mortgage that devours over two-thirds of my monthly full-time salary. And I count myself lucky! If I were to be hired full-time at Cuesta today, my same house would consume 90% of my paycheck.

This situation reflects more than just an economic trend in our housing prices; it points to serious problems we will face, and in some ways already face, with hiring new faculty and retaining current faculty. If we want Cuesta to maintain its reputation as an exceptional community college and place of employment, we must make certain that our faculty are able to afford homes in this area and to receive more than adequate health care coverage for themselves and their families.

As we begin negotiations for the next contract, we all must not lose sight of this situation. The less critical desires of the minority must be relinquished or postponed at times for the essential needs of the majority. We must join together, in union, and move forward as one to secure the future of our careers.

### CCFT Retreat Planned for September 9th-11th, 2005

After discussion with the Council of Representatives and Julien Minard, Director of Training for CFT, the Executive Board has set the date for a retreat that will occur every other year. The retreat will take place at Camp Ocean Pines in Cambria on September 9th-11th, 2005. The Executive Board strongly encourages all CCFT Council Reps, Reps to Committees, Executive Board members, the Negotiating Team, and other invited individuals to attend (we will be sending more info out very soon!).

This retreat will provide an excellent opportunity to discuss many important topics, including roles and processes, methods of communication, email protocol, confidentiality, and short and long-term goals and strategies. The impetus for having this retreat is three-fold: The critical nature of the impending contract negotiations, the need for clear and effective communication between all union members, and a unified voice in all public situations.

The retreat will be organized and facilitated by Julien Minard the CFT's Director of Training, who has worked with numerous other affiliates on similar issues. If you are seriously interested in being involved in this retreat, please contact me at ext. 2743 or email me at m Fleming.



## **Union Sponsored Scholarships**

### **Raoul Teilhet Scholarship Program**

The California Federation of Teachers offers \$3,000 and \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors and continuing college students who are dependents of CFT members in good standing. To learn more, go to [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org) or phone (818) 843-8226

### **California Labor Federation Scholarships**

The California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO awards numerous \$2000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are dependents of members of AFL-CIO labor unions in California. To learn more go to [www.calaborfed.org](http://www.calaborfed.org) or phone (510) 663-4000.

### **Robert G. Porter Scholarship Program**

The American Federation of Teachers awards four \$8,000 scholarships to high school seniors who are dependents of AFT members, as well as 20 continuing education grants of \$1000 to AFT members. To learn more, go to [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org), or email [porterscholars@aft.org](mailto:porterscholars@aft.org) or phone (800) 238-1133 extension 4457.

### **Union Plus Scholarship Program**

Union Plus and AFT offer scholarships of \$500 to \$4000 to union members (and their spouses and dependents) who have one year of continuous union membership. To learn more, go to [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org) or [www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org).

### **CCFT Scholarships**

The CCFT Katy Tomes Memorial Scholarship Fund  
(c/o Cuesta College Foundation)

The CCFT Lenore Erickson Scholarship Fund  
(c/o Cuesta College Foundation)

For more info, go to: <http://www.cuesta.edu/commtty/foundation/pages/scholarships.htm>



### **President Rossa is Vice President?**

Yes, you read that correctly. No, Marilyn is not taking over my job as VP. She actually just won the highly contested seat of Vice President to the CFT Executive Council for the third year in a row!

Congratulations, and keep up the overworking!

**Editing and Layout: Matthew Fleming,  
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