

April 21 rallies launch state budget battle

On April 21, thousands of students, along with college and university instructors, staff, administrators, parents, politicians, and other supporters, converged on Sacramento for a rally against higher education budget cuts. They came from across the state to present the legislature and governor with a picture of what the proposed cuts would look like. Their hope was that the show of commitment and public spirit would change the minds of decision-makers who seem to think that slashing an already-skeletal budget further is preferable to raising taxes.

The largest contingent, from AFT Local 2121, the San Francisco Community College Federation of Teachers, included eleven busloads of students and faculty. English instructor Alisa Messer carried a sign that read, "Tax the rich, not community college students." Students bore placards reading, "Tax the top 1% to fund education." Smaller rallies took place in Los Angeles, San Diego and Riverside.

In the governor's January budget proposal, he asked the community college chancellor's office to identify one-time reductions totaling \$40 million, to come from already allocated monies that have not yet been spent on various programs. The chancellor's office found \$31 million in these categories. The governor accepted this self-mutilation as adequate, and that was the number the legislature was working with until the bad news arrived about the property tax shortfall, which, if left untouched by legislative hands, would result in a further cut of \$129 million.

The CFT is working on coordinated efforts with other education organizations and allies in the labor

movement and broader community to convince the public and elected officials in Sacramento that at least some of the budget deficit must be made up through fair tax policies.

The next focus of attention will be on the Governor's May revised budget which will be released on May 14. More actions to secure decent funding for higher education are being planned. □



Scene from April 21st rally in Sacramento against education cuts

photo by Chris Hanzo

Negotiations with District proceeding slowly

After five sessions of bargaining, two of which included Eric Brenner and Alma Cervantes representing distance education issues, we have not made a significant amount of progress in the areas of part time seniority or distance education. We know that in the process of negotiating there are times when you seem to move backwards, sideways or nowhere at all before you move forward. We've experienced all three positions lately.

However, our meetings with the District Team have been ex-

ceedingly civil and communication has been good; thus, we are hoping for some forward motion from the District in future meetings. We have two sessions scheduled for May and will keep you informed as soon as we have something substantive to report.

AFT's proposals are available on our website: aft1493.org. Click on: "Contract & Salary Schedules."

Your AFT Negotiating Team are Joaquin Rivera, Katharine Harer, Vickie Clinton and Sandra Raeber.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The end of an era: John Kirk, faculty anchor, to retire, as will President Ernie Rodriguez

by Ernie Rodriguez, AFT 1493 President

Dear Faculty Colleagues:

Reflections on Retirement

Well, it is truly amazing how time flies. Here I am writing my final letter to the faculty. While, in one way, it seems like



it has taken forever to finally arrive at retirement, in another, it seems like just yesterday that I started my teaching career in the San Mateo Community

College District. The time from my hiring in 1971 to my retirement in 2008 now seems to have passed so quickly. I have always liked the line "we are but a moment's sunlight fading in the grass".

I always like to tell students that, because life is short, they

I am sure an entire building could be filled with faculty John has helped.

should make life choices that have meaning, that are passionate choices. I am fortunate that from the time I entered college I knew two things: that I wanted to be a psychologist and that I wanted to teach. I never felt any doubt or regret about my choice to follow this path. So now that I am rounding the final bend I will cross the retirement finish line very satisfied with my career and very grateful for the opportunities I have been given.

I am definitely ready for retirement. I am excited about what the next phase of life, now often referred to as our "second adulthood", might bring. I am a firm believer that it is best to retire while still vital and enthusiastic. Sadly, I know colleagues who have stayed too long. It is understandable that there might be fear, for some, in stepping into the unknown of retirement. I am fortunate to have a loving family and lots of projects to keep me

busy. It feels like the right time to go. I am counting the days like a kid waiting for Christmas. While savoring the last weeks of my career, I can't wait for my last official day to arrive.

Honoring John Kirk

I feel very honored to be retiring in the same year as John Kirk. John has been the heart and soul of our Union local. While I am one of the founding members of AFT Local 1493, I have not always been one of the core members. My career has been varied. It has not been until the last few years that I have become deeply involved in union work.

John, however, has, through the years, served as an anchor and safe haven for faculty through his work as Chief Grievance Officer. He has

successfully defended the great majority of cases he has handled.

I would love to

have his win-loss record. So would the District. While John has served other roles for the Union, most of his time has been spent representing faculty. He has successfully represented my interests on three different occasions. I am sure an entire building could be filled with faculty John has helped. It was not until I became active in union work in the last few years that I realized how much work John does for so little return. I was amazed to learn that John has only asked for 3 units release time per semester for all of the grievance work he does.

So John, here is wishing you many happy years sharing good times with your wife, Judy. May you look back in satisfaction at the contribution you have made in support of the faculty of the San Mateo Community College District. You have provided an exemplary model for faculty who follow in

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President's Letter

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your footsteps. It truly has been the "John Kirk era" for AFT Local 1493. You are a legend in your own time and will be dearly missed. Congratulations on a retirement well deserved.

Thank You Dan

As I prepare to end my term of office, I would like to say a big thank you to AFT Local 1493 Executive Secretary, Dan Kaplan. Dan has made it so much easier to do my job as AFT President. Dan is both diligent and dedicated to the work of our Local. Dan is the foundation of our Union. He does his job so well that his work often goes unnoticed. Without Dan our Local would be in total chaos.



Dan Kaplan

In addition to honoring the hard work that he does it is also important to appreciate Dan's articulate voice. I very much admire his ability to speak with intelligence and competence. He knows the issues and is on top of the information faculty need in order to stay informed. Dan is fearless about speaking his voice whether it be to administrators or to our Board of Trustees.

Finally, I would like to praise Dan's optimism. He is always hoping for positive outcomes. Dan is not a Pollyanna, he faces issues squarely and realistically. Dan's optimism comes out of faith that with the right effort good things will happen. He has the deep commitment of a true labor organizer that if we, as workers, take steps, no

matter how small, in the right direction, our Union will grow and prosper. Dan works hard on behalf of all faculty and I am pleased to recognize him for all that he does.

Dan I will very much miss working with you and I would like to wish you the very best. I have benefited greatly from your help and expertise.

As I Head Out the Door

I can't resist leaving behind a few words of advice as I head out the door. This advice is based on my experience through many years in the District and as the result of my recent work as AFT President. Those of you not particularly interested in my "pearls of wisdom" may now skip to the next section of my letter.

The following guiding principles have anchored me through good times and bad—and believe me there have been plenty of both.

1. Don't lose your voice, remember you are both workers and professionals—be ready to fight for your rights. Academic freedom is precious. It is the heart and soul of what we do as teachers. Use your voice. Speaking your truth is revolutionary. Refuse to be silenced. Be courageous.
2. Remember you are the heart and soul of what the SMCCD is about. Never accept objectification of yourselves or your students. Fight for recognition of your humanity and that of your students. Faculty are not "human capital", students are not "products". Faculty are human beings and need to be respected, nurtured, and supported.
3. Work together. Collective action by the faculty is very powerful. Decide to commit some time in your career to doing union work. Without unity faculty have little power.
4. Take time for self-care no matter how busy. You are no good to anyone else if you are no good to yourself.

Keep things in perspective. The right priorities reflect our values. Family comes first.

5. Expect the worst but hope for the best. Leave at least a little room for miracles. Often the best things happen unexpectedly (as do the worst).
6. Remember your greatest strength is also likely to be your greatest weakness and vice versa.
7. As a dear faculty colleague said a few years ago, "go ahead take risks. What's the worst that can happen? It can turn out to be a disaster and you have probably dealt with those before." Have faith in your ability to handle what comes along.
8. Be playful. Enjoy life. Be spontaneous. Have a sense of humor.

I better stop, I am beginning to feel like Dr. Phil.

A Final Thank You

Finally, I would like to end my column by expressing gratitude for the wonderful career I have enjoyed. I am grateful for the opportunity I have been given to teach and serve. While I will be returning to complete my post-retirement contract, my status will change dramatically upon retirement. I will no longer be a core member of the faculty.

I will miss the daily contact with faculty and students. While our work is dedicated to helping students and while I have many wonderful memories of students I have had the privilege to teach, my fondest memories will be of you, my faculty colleagues. Through the years I have been so honored to have the opportunity to work with so many wonderful teachers. As I write this I think of so many dear colleagues, some who have passed away, some who are retired and many who are still teaching. I am so proud to have been one of you.

In Unity □

AFT 1493ers have a busy weekend at CFT Convention

by Monica Malamud, *Cañada Chapter Chair*

This year's annual CFT Convention was held in Oakland, April 11-13. Six delegates represented our local, AFT 1493: Ernie Rodriguez (President), Joaquin Rivera (Chief Negotiator), Katharine Harer (Co-Vice President), Dan Kaplan (Executive Secretary), Dean Chowenhill and me.

The three-day schedule was packed with general sessions, workshops and meetings. Union business continued even during meal times and after hours. For example, after attending the Community College Division Council Meeting on Friday from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., many delegates, including some of us from SMCCCD, went for a drink. Those sitting next to us, from another district, kept asking us, "When are you going to stop talking about work?" Well, this was an opportunity for us to get work done, and we did. But by midnight we decided it was time to go to bed, especially since Saturday's program started at 7:30 a.m.!

Each of the general sessions ranged in length from 1.5 to 3.5 hours, totaling over 10 hours among all five sessions. "Soporific", you may think. "Not really", I must counter. General sessions contained a good mix of reports, guest speakers and debate; the variety and fast pace made sessions interesting and time really flew. Before resolutions were brought to a general session, there was a chance for committees to work on them and make recommendations. I attended the Higher Ed Committee meeting first, followed by the K-12 Committee meeting. When every other committee was already done, I knew there was still one that would be engaged in lively discussion: Socio-Political Committee; so there I went. A wide range of resolutions was brought to the general sessions for consideration, including several dealing with education funding, employee benefits, school safety, professional development and support for those who suffer oppression and human rights violations.

Among the guest speakers, one of my favorites was

Gray Brechin, a geographer, journalist, environmental historian and author who spoke about the Living New Deal Project. The goal of this project is to create an inventory of public works that are the legacy of Roosevelt's New Deal. Mr. Brechin showed us a multitude of examples of beautiful art and architecture from parks, campuses and other public buildings across the state. I also enjoyed the hilarious performance of Steven Karwoski, who shared some of his adventures as a substitute teacher. I occasionally substitute in K-12 myself, and I always say that I do it "for the fun of it". It's true, even if sometimes the experience is only funny in retrospect.

It is great that there are so many workshops at the CFT Convention – over 30 at this year's. What's not so great is that they are scheduled in three sessions, with

about ten workshops in parallel, so you can only select one workshop in each session. This year I attended "Know your CFT", to better understand the CFT structure and resources available to our local, "Community College Faculty Legal Update", in which a labor attorney shared recent cases that may affect faculty rights, and "Academic Freedom", where I heard about the challenges that non-tenured faculty especially must deal with on their job.

There is a lot more that goes on at the convention and it would be impossible to report on it all here. In my opinion, the CFT convention is a wonderful opportunity to share knowledge, talent, resources and accomplishments, and to remind us that we can be stronger if we work together. Thus, it's fitting that hard work and achievements be recognized throughout the three-day program. Some of the awards included:

- those presented at the awards breakfasts, where each local honors a full-time and a part-time faculty member for their contributions (this year's AFT 1493 recipients were John Kirk and Sandi Raeber)
- Communications Awards, which recognize outstanding

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Berkeley Federation of Teachers member Barry Fike brings a resolution to the floor



Delegate Joshua Pechthalt poses with Assemblyman Tony Mendoza (right) who received CFT's Legislator of the Year Award.

A novice delegate has positive experience at CFT Convention

by Dean Chorvenhill, CSM

This is for those who have never attended a CFT Convention. The recent CFT Convention was a pleasant surprise. Like most of us, I have attended many educational conventions and conferences. They have been discipline specific community college events. This convention was neither of these and the mix of people was stimulating.

Educators attended this convention from K-6, Inter-



photos by Fred Glass

Delegate John McDowell of the LACCD makes a point

mediate School, High School, Community College and University. One of the best parts for me was that classified employees were well represented, respected -- and vocal! This was a rich mix of diverse people working together on some important issues -- pretty cool stuff. The official theme of the conference was, "We Do the Work," and the feeling throughout the weekend was one of Unity, Respect, and

Busy weekend at CFT Convention

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communications from the locals (we won four this year),

- many Raoul Teillet Scholarships (\$1000-\$3000 for college education) awarded to union members and their children,
- membership growth awards for locals who had the greatest membership increases,
- Legislator of the Year Award, presented to Assemblyman Tony Mendoza in 2008.

And even a delegate who did not receive an award could still go home a winner: the convention concluded with drawings for over 20 prizes, such as gift certificates and books. I found it a very nice way to end the weekend. Unfortunately, I didn't win a prize this year. Maybe next year... □

CFT presents AFT 1493 with four Communications Awards

AFT Local 1493 won four Communications Awards this year at the CFT Convention.

- **Monica Malamud** won First Place for Best Feature Writing for her "My First CFT Convention" article from the April 2007 Advocate. The judges said it was "a great first experience report of the Convention. Fun read."
- In the Best Use of Graphics category, **Eric Brenner** won First Place for his graphics selection that accompanied an article in the May 2007 Advocate titled "Cañada faculty want District to take a new look at moving to a Compressed Calendar." The judges commented that: "They found a creative way to represent the essence of a difficult-to-illustrate story."
- **Ernie Rodriguez** won an Honorable Mention in the Best Continuing Column category for his "President's Letter" column.
- In the Best Public Relations category, AFT Local 1493 and **Virginia Medrano Rosales** (student photographer) won an Honorable Mention for the "District leaders gave a final push in Prop. 92 campaign" media advisory and accompanying press conference photograph.

Solidarity.

Some of the main topics were Health Care, Parity for Part Time Faculty, Legal Updates, Fiscal Fitness, and Academic Freedom.

There were over 30 workshops from which to choose and over 20 resolutions presented. The resolutions were broad ranging including: Adequate Funding for California Schools, Prevent gun violence, Support Career Education, Support ECE, Promote classified and faculty unity, Support U.S. Labor Against the War and Oppose human trafficking and forced labor.

There was definitely passion in the room for many issues and the floor debates were stimulating. There were also some excellent formal presentations. One that impressed me was about Green Collar Jobs in America's Cities -- the Apollo Alliance. This is a multi-faceted concept which has the potential to train and employ many unemployed and rebuild our cities aging infrastructures using Green technology. Of course the kicker is that all of this could be accomplished using the monies now being spent on our military budget.

My humble advice is that if you are nominated and elected by the membership of AFT Local 1493 to be a delegate to the next CFT Convention, GO and be a part of this active community. □

GRIEVANCE REPORT

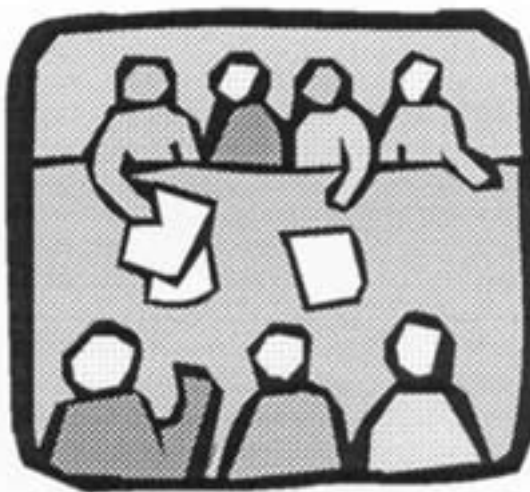
Grievances continue for probationary instructors, adjunct librarians and on part-time seniority; resolution on challenge readings

by John Kirk, AFT 1493 Chief Grievance Officer

The following is an update of the grievance report published in the last issue of the *Advocate*.

Non-renewal of probationary instructors: two grievances filed

Three Tenure Review Committees have voted not to renew the contracts of probationary (contract) instructors. Two of the instructors are in their second year and one of the instructors is in his/her fourth year. Under the contract, they all have the right to file a grievance contesting their non-rehiring. The second year probationary instructors, however, can challenge their evaluations only on procedural grounds while the fourth year probationary instructor can challenge on both procedural grounds and on the "reasonableness" of the evaluation itself. Procedural issues can involve meeting timelines, making clear the expectations for earning tenure, biased committee members, providing enough time to make improvements, etc. The union is required to file a grievance for each probationary instructor who requests representation. The union is not required, however, to take any grievance to arbitration. The union has filed a grievance for two of the probationary instructors. One of the grievances is awaiting a response from the Chancellor and the other is awaiting a Level II hearing with the Chancellor.



Challenge Readings: Grievance Resolved

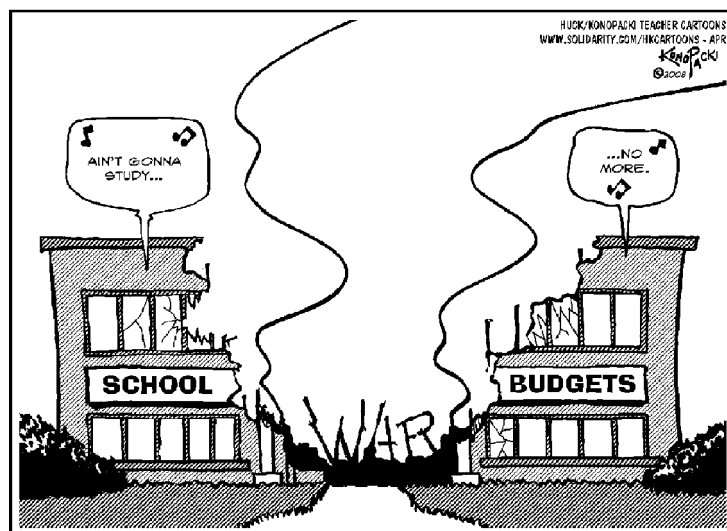
It has been the past practice at the College of San Mateo for both full-time and part-time instructors to be paid at the Special Rate for reading challenge papers, essays and exams during the regular academic year (official 175 day academic calendar) and during non-instructional periods. This practice has been in place for at least 10 years. During the Fall semester 2007, the CSM administration unilaterally decided that the past practice of paying full-timers (contract and regular faculty) for this work was "an error" which resulted "in a past practice that does not conform to the AFT contract." The union filed a grievance on the issue. The administration at first turned the grievance down but then reconsidered and agreed to "continue to pay English and ESL faculty for the review of challenge exams per the existing arrangement."

Part-time Seniority

The union filed a formal grievance on the issue of overload pay (part-time seniority). The college president turned the grievance down. The union appealed the grievance to Level II and a hearing was held with the Chancellor. The Chancellor turned the grievance down. The union will have to decide whether to take the case to arbitration or not. We will first seek the opinion of our attorney on the merits of the case. □

Part-time Librarians: Amended Charge

The union is still waiting for PERB (Public Employment Relations Board) to rule on the Unfair Labor Practice charge that we filed in 2006. The issue involves the unilateral change in the hours of part-time librarians from a set, semester length contract to weekly changes in hours. On April 24, the union amended its unfair labor practice charge against the district. The charge was amended to include documentary evidence that part-time reference librarians have received semester-length contracts for over 20 years. This issue only concerns the CSM library since both Cañada and Skyline still give semester-length contracts.



AFT 1493 FACULTY SURVEY**Plurality of faculty surveyed favor taking Spring Break the week after Easter**

Between April 9 and 18, AFT 1493 surveyed District faculty about which week SMCCCD should schedule Spring Break. Below are the results of the survey:

The week BEFORE Easter	43	20%
The week AFTER Easter	90	41%
The week closest to the middle of the Spring semester	62	28%
Other (see responses below)	24	11%
Total submissions:	219	100%

"Other" responses included variations on the above choices; coinciding with various other local school districts or SF State; halfway between the four-day weekend in February and the end of the semester; and eliminating Spring Break so we can end the semester a week earlier.

We appreciate the large number of faculty who participated in the survey and we will use these results when we negotiate with the District on our academic calendar for future years. □

Ballots for election of AFT 1493 leadership coming soon

We are in the middle of the election process for determining the elected leadership and the Executive Committee of AFT Local 1493 for 2008-2010.

The nominations form was sent out to all AFT members and nominations for officers and delegates were due back in the AFT Office by Friday, May 9. Nominations may also be made at the May AFT membership meeting, which will be held at 2:15 p.m. on Wednesday, May 14, at Skyline College, in Building 1, Room 1319

The election will be by secret mail ballot. All AFT members will receive their ballot in campus mail, with the ballots going out around May 16, 2008. Please remember that all ballots must be received in the AFT Office at CSM (15-131) by Monday, June 2, 2008. □

PART-TIMERS**Part-timers are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits during summer break**

All Part-timers should remember that you are eligible for unemployment compensation benefits over the summer break and between semesters, unless you are working another job over the summer or between semesters and you are earning more than your unemployment grant would be. As soon as you give your last final exam, you should contact the local Employment Development Dept. (EDD) office and file a claim, or reactivate the one you have from last winter (if you applied between semesters). If it is a new claim, you will have a one-week waiting period before benefits start, so do not delay. You can also claim for the period between regular terms and summer school.

When applying, tell them about all your jobs, since your benefit is based on all your income over the previous year. When they ask if you have a job to go back to after summer break, you should answer, "Not with reasonable assurance. I only have a tentative assignment contingent on enrollment, funding and program needs." This is important. Do not just tell them that you have an assignment for fall or you will be disqualified. According to the Cervisi decision of the State Court of Appeals, part-timers, as a class, do not have "reasonable assurance" of a job and hence are eligible for benefits between terms. If questioned further, mention the Cervisi case. Be sure to fill out all job search forms correctly, and appear as directed in person or by phone or mail. You should not have any problems, but if you do and are denied for any reason, call the AFT office as soon as possible and the Union will advise you on how to file an appeal. Don't be reluctant to file. This is your right, not charity. □

AFT 1493 Calendar**May 1493 Executive Committee & Membership Meeting:**

Wednesday, May 14, 2:15 pm • Skyline, Building 1, Room 1319

AFT Union Leadership Institute (ULI):

June 22 - June 27 • UCLA

National AFT Convention:

July 10 - July 14 • Chicago

Call the AFT office at x6491 for more information

Don't miss the retirement bash for John Kirk! All District faculty invited on June 6 at CSM

AFT Local 1493 is throwing a retirement party for John Kirk on Friday, June 6.

All SMCCCD faculty and significant others are invited to attend!

John has taught Economics at CSM since 1969. And over the years, John has held virtually every position in the Local. He is past President of AFT



John Kirk in 1982

1493; he has been an AFT 1493 representative to various California Federation of Teachers (CFT) bodies; he has been the AFT 1493 Executive Secretary; and since 1973 he has been the AFT

1493 Chief Grievance Officer. For 39 years, from 1969 to 2008, John has continuously been a member of the AFT 1493 Executive Committee.

The party begins in the CSM Theatre at 6:00 p.m.

There will be a musical program provided by the Bay Area Labor Heritage Rockin' Solidarity Chorus. This 55-member chorus was created under the auspices of the Labor Studies Departments of Laney College and City College of San Francisco. It consists of workers from various unions and people who love to sing. The Chorus repertoire includes songs about work from various cultures, including gospel, folk, South African, and Norteño music.

There will also be testimonials from friends and colleagues of John.

At 8:00 p.m. the festivities will reconvene at the Clubhouse at the College Vista Faculty and Staff Housing complex, 3405 CSM Drive, to continue the party in a more intimate setting. This portion of the evening will include catered hors d'oeuvres and wine and

other beverages. This social will go on until 10:00 p.m.

AFT Local 1493 strongly encourages all faculty in the San Mateo Community College District to reserve June 6 for this very special event.

Please RSVP your intention to attend John Kirk's retirement party by May 19 to Kaplan@smccd.edu or by calling the AFT 1493 office at 574-6491. Please also indicate if you are interested in making some remarks during the CSM Theatre portion of the celebration, time permitting.



photo by Alma Cervantes



photo by Fred Glass

The Bay Area Labor Heritage Rockin' Solidarity Chorus at the CFT Convention