



Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

Perspective

Volume 40, Number 1 + October 2008



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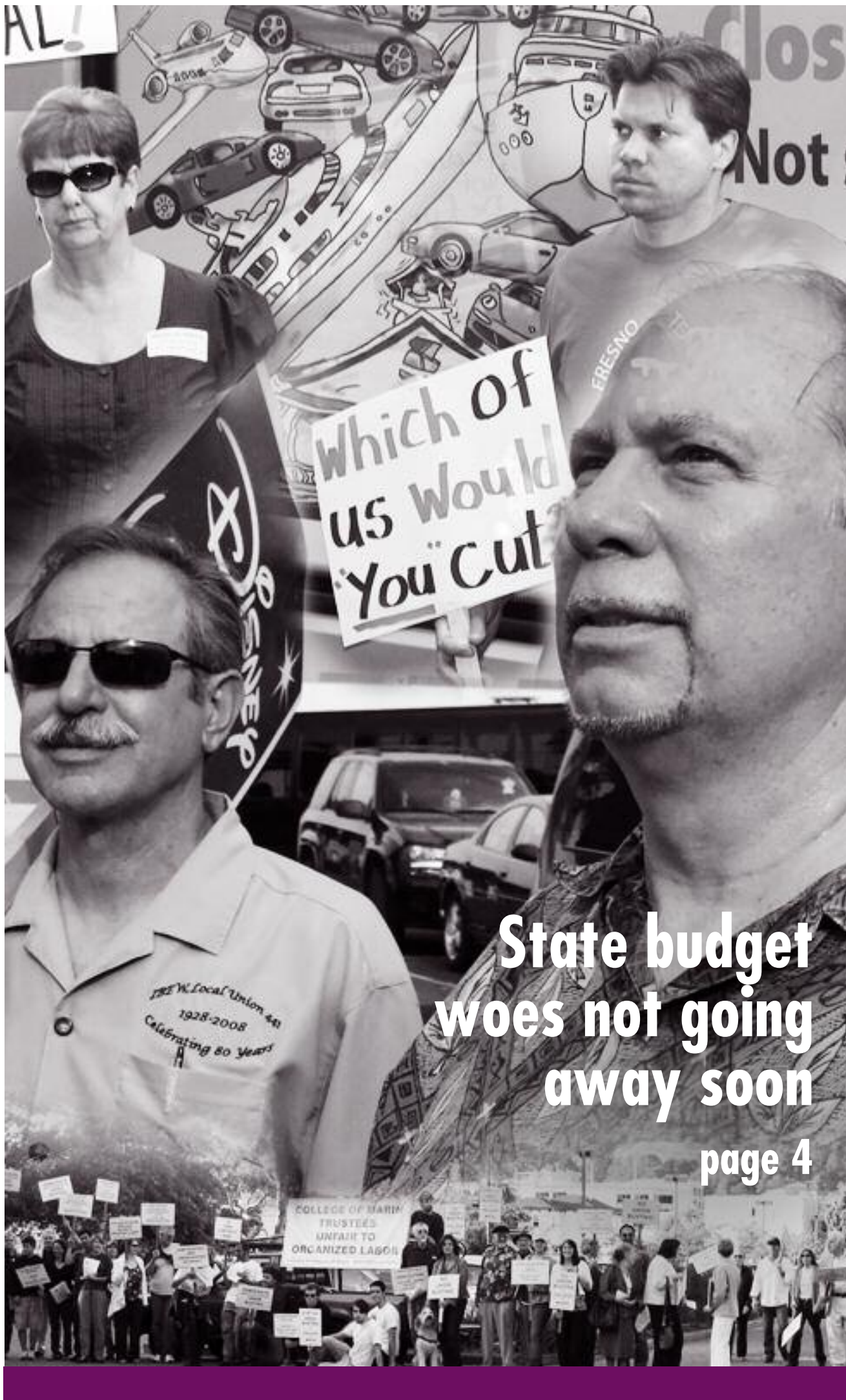
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Taking the Lead

Carl Friedlander, CFT Community College Council President

Complaining won't change things; smart politics will

In recent years, community colleges have fared as well as — or slightly better than — California's other public agencies and institutions. We've managed to avoid the fee increases that have been destroying access to CSU and UC, and we've been treated more fairly vis-à-vis the other systems than we had been in the more distant past. Many factors account for the progress. Legislative awareness of the role of community colleges is much higher. This is due to both more assertive advocacy and to the changed demographic of the legislators themselves, many of whom have roots in their local community colleges and represent constituencies that attend our colleges and care deeply about them. And Governor Schwarzenegger "gets" community colleges a lot better than many of his predecessors.

But how will we fare in the very rocky era that is about to begin? Even prior to the collapse of the nation's financial markets, it was apparent that California's jerry-rigged 2008-09 budget is likely to unravel before the holidays, leading to midyear cuts and a 2009-10 budget "problem" that makes 2008-09's look modest. We're in for rocky times, and we need to make sure we are advocating with maximum effectiveness.

In the State's recent record budget standoff, Democrats in the legislature could not get a single Republican to support a sensible combination of new revenue and cuts, even with Gov. Schwarzenegger proposing a temporary increase in the sales tax as a way of closing the budget gap. The Republicans' absolute intransigence on tax increases was certainly at least as infuriating for the Democratic leadership as it was for us. It

couldn't have been much fun to be caught between the righteous demands of the Education Coalition and other constituencies to hold out for new revenue,

and, sadly, a built in tax *cut* set to kick in in 2010-11.

I don't blame the Democrats and caution those who would. Their failure wasn't from lack of

Even prior to the collapse of the nation's financial markets, it was apparent that California's jerry-rigged 2008-09 budget is likely to unravel before the holidays, leading to midyear cuts and a 2009-10 budget "problem" that makes 2008-09's look modest. We're in for rocky times, and we need to make sure we are advocating with maximum effectiveness.

the pained cries of those calling for a budget settlement so that they could once again access desperately needed clinics, day-care centers and other services, and the Republican stonewall. Desperate and unable to envision a happier endgame, the Democrats acceded to a faux budget with no new revenue —

trying or because the leadership "caved." *We got a "no-new-revenue" budget because we were unable to apply enough pressure in Republican districts to shake a few Republican legislators loose from their pledge.* Pressuring elected Republicans is not just the job of elected Democrats; it's the responsibility of all of us, includ-

ing those from the "safest" Democratic districts.

Now, discussion is underway about a statewide initiative to have California join the 47 other states that approve budgets by majority vote. Passing this initiative is the biggest single thing we could do to mitigate our political problems, but we also need to think carefully about how to reach the two-thirds threshold in case the initiative effort falls short—after all, one attempt to lower the bar for passing budgets already misfired.

We need to change this undemocratic two-thirds requirement. But while it exists, blaming our friends isn't going to get us to two-thirds. Electing a few more friends on Nov. 4 and turning up pressure on a few Republicans to moderate their views just might.

Jill Biden, One of Us

You may not have noticed that Jill Biden, Joe's wife, is a professor of English at Delaware Technical and Community College. Dr. Biden taught high school for thirteen years and for the last fifteen

years has been a fulltime community college instructor. Her dissertation focused on student retention in community colleges. "It sounds so trite to say I make a difference," she told the *News Journal* in Wilmington, Delaware, last year, "but I really feel, especially in community college, I can make a difference." ☐



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The *Perspective* brings you information you need to know on a quarterly basis. For the most current union news, recent media coverage of education issues, and key information about the California Federation of Teachers and its activities, visit the CFT website regularly.

www.cft.org

It's not an either/or. Come see us online.

MARK YOUR 2008 CALENDAR

- November 4** Election Day
- January 23** Deadline to submit constitutional amendments for CFT Convention
- January 24** Community College Council/Council of Classified Employees, Handlery Hotel, San Diego
- January 31** CFT Committees, Los Angeles Valley College, Los Angeles
- February 6** Deadline to submit resolutions for CFT Convention
- March 4-8** AFT National Higher Education Issues Conference, Miami Beach Resort, Miami, FL
- March 20-22** CFT Convention, Sheraton Grand Hotel, Sacramento

Perspective

The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

The CFT represents over 120,000 educational employees working at every level of education in California. 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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Coast Community College District's Dean Mancina

Unionism on the cutting edge of change

Dean Mancina has been an important voice for the rights of faculty and classified employees in the Coast Community College District for three decades. This year that work was acknowledged and honored when the Orange County Labor Federation named him as its "Unionist of the Year."

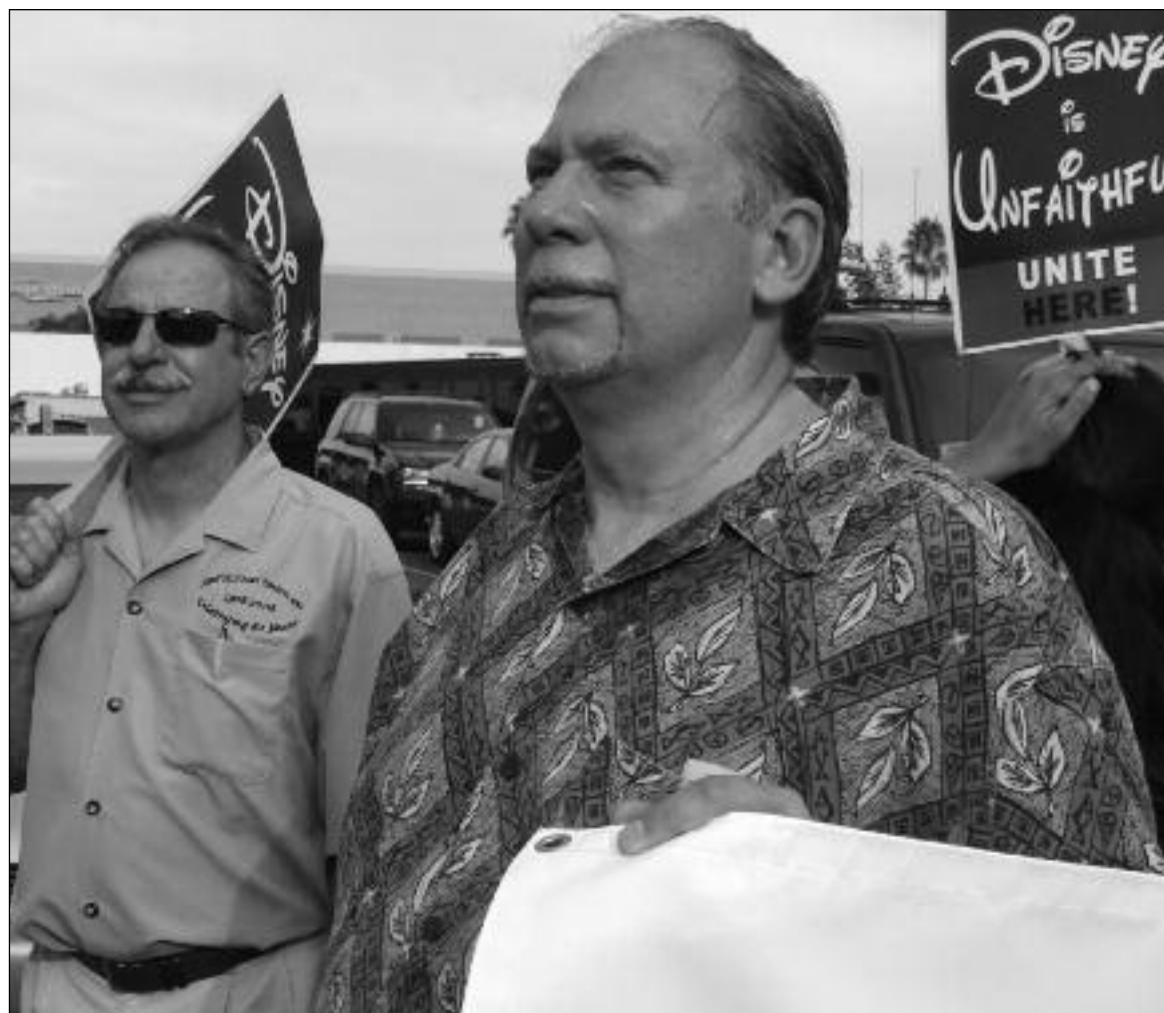
Mancina, who has been president of the Coast Federation of Educators, AFT Local 1911, for the last five years, came into the District in 1978. Originally from Culver City in Los Angeles County, Mancina moved with his family to Orange County when fruit trees and fields still dotted the landscape.

But the County had already embarked on the huge spurt of growth that eventually wiped out most of those orchards, replacing them with the factories and high-rise office parks that dominate its skyline today. "In my sixth-grade class," he remembers, "I was the 56th stu-

nia. But twelve years ago changing economics and demographics created a political groundswell that unseated Dornan and upset much of the Republican Party. Loretta Sanchez won election to Orange County's Congressional seat.

More than a witness

Mancina has been more than a witness to those changes. He helped to build a union in the community college district at the county's heart. In the process, he helped create the space in which that political change took place, and helped protect the jobs of faculty and classified



Mancina walks the walk at picket and rally organized by labor council for Disney Hotel workers.

campuses in the Coast College district. There were 168 applicants for a position administering a new peer-tutoring program. "There was a lot of unemployment in 1978," he recalls, "so you had people with advanced degrees applying for lots of non-faculty positions." Because of his diverse background, he was hired.

When Mancina began at Golden West, he was a classified employee. His first union involvement was in a chapter of

dissatisfied with their parent organization, and switched to the California Federation of Teachers. "We saw that the faculty union [a CFT local] had much more support, and we wanted to be part of it. We made a good decision."

At first the classified and faculty belonged to the same local. Eventually they decided that separate local unions would better serve their interests. "Nevertheless," Mancina says, "I've belonged to both, and we work closely together." After working as a classified employee for several years, Mancina's position was reclassified, and he became a member of the faculty union. In 1992 he was elected treasurer, serving for 12 years. He was then elected local president.

Pioneering union policies

The Coast Federation has been one of the pioneers in the CFT on issues posed by new technology, privatization and contracting out. The union has taken on policies governing computer use, efforts to farm out tech support for computerized student services, and corporate plans for reshaping jobs and curriculum in the district's nursing program.

Last year the board of trustees introduced a proposed policy in response to allegations of computer misuse. "It was a draconian reaction totally out of proportion to their real problem," explained Mancina, prohibiting the use of district computer systems even for nec-

essary college work. The district also said it had the right to monitor all electronic communications without prior notice or consent. "They even told us that if we ever accessed district email from our home computers they could enter our homes to inspect the hard drive," Mancina recalls.

The faculty and classified unions proposed an alternative, and the district eventually agreed to a policy that protects faculty, classified employees and students from accusations of misuse. Mancina says, "The District recognizes the privacy interests of faculty and staff and their rights to freedom of speech, shared governance, and academic freedom." As additional protection, the faculty union set up its own cable network and email system, using its own computers.

Mancina also blew the whistle on a proposal to subcontract out essential services to students, using online instructional software called Blackboard. The firms that produced the program were given a contract, worth \$217,000 per year, to provide tech support during the evening and weekend hours. "I have a webpage for students, and I had a problem inserting a new item," Mancina recalls. He called the help desk after hours. "A pleasant woman with a Kentucky accent spent 35 minutes on the phone with me, finally finding a workaround solution that

"I had a situation in which I was called into the Dean's office, and blamed for something that wasn't my fault. I didn't know a thing about unions, but I asked for help, and discovered that while management wouldn't listen to me, they would listen to the union. I could see it was obviously a good thing to have someone on my side."

dent. I had to sit at the teacher's desk, since there was no other place for me to sit."

Children of that era were busy learning Spanish, he says, but economic growth was leading to profound changes in Orange County's demographics. Today most sixth graders are busy learning English, and the politics of the county have been transformed. For two decades Congressman Bob Dornan, known as "B-1 Bob" for his unstinting support of military contractors, represented Orange County in Washington. Dornan helped give the county its reputation as the most conservative in Califor-

employees in a rapidly changing world.

Dean Mancina went to college at CSU Long Beach in accounting, while working in retail stores. "I loved and understood the numbers because they were connected to something real, to dollars," he remembers. "But when I graduated, I discovered I didn't really want to be an accountant. So I went back to school and studied educational psychology, hoping to get a job in school counseling or in academic support programs."

On completing his master's degree, he saw a job advertised at Golden West College, one of the

the California School Employees Association. "I had a situation in which I was called into the Dean's office, and blamed for something that wasn't my fault. I didn't know a thing about unions, but I asked for help, and discovered that while management wouldn't listen to me, they would listen to the union. I could see it was obviously a good thing to have someone on my side."

His accounting background stood him in good stead, and he became treasurer of the classified union just a few years afterwards. In the early 1980s, Mancina and other classified members became

Lessons of the state budget battle

It wasn't a compromise

On September 23 the Governor signed a fiscal plan that does nothing to support the long-term stability of vital California services. Such an unfortunate and shortsighted budget deal is the result of Republican intransigence and Democratic lack of resolve. It is also a recipe for damaging California's future.

Most press accounts are talking about the "compromise budget." A compromise occurs when two or more parties meet somewhere in the middle. This budget deal doesn't strike such a balance. It is simply a capitulation to the Republican legislators' inflexible demand that the budget leave unaddressed the state's underlying lack of adequate revenues.

Republican Assembly leader Mike Villines said, "We came out of our ideological corners to pass

measures, a sales tax increase (also \$6 billion).

The Republicans offered nothing except their mantra, "No new taxes." The budget deal passed by the Legislature is the product of this Great Refusal by the Republicans to compromise in the slightest, coupled with the Democrats' nervous recognition that as the clock ticked and state payments stayed in the treasury, health clinics were closing, disabled

months should supply all the reasons we need for joining the other 47 in rejecting this undemocratic mechanism.

We understand the sense of urgency and frustration that led the Legislative Democrats to capitulate, but that doesn't excuse the result. The budget, as finally approved, cuts public education by \$3 billion, imposes hundreds of millions of dollars of cuts on the UC and CSU systems, and unnecessarily enlarges the governor's executive powers. It also, after an initial small reduction of two corporate tax loopholes, opens them wider than ever, which will cost the state billions of dollars yearly.

The California Federation of Teachers believes there are two necessary approaches to the state budget conundrum. The first is progressive tax policies that ask those with the most (the wealthiest top one percent of income earners, people who make more than \$300,000 per year) to pay a bit more, and to close corporate tax loopholes. Polls consistently show that Californians are willing to accept either tax proposal—this progressive option, or a regressive sales tax—rather than borrow or cut. But these reasonable actions to preserve public education and other

people were going hungry, and community college students were dropping out of school.

A meaningless majority

The budget is also the product of the Democrats' realization that their majority is meaningless—that democracy, as most Americans understand it, doesn't hold in a state that requires a two thirds vote to pass a budget. Only two other states require such a supermajority to pass a budget, and the past three

a budget compromise that restores funding to vital services depended upon by our state's most vulnerable population." This is untrue. The Democrats compromised when they offered a budget that, along with its proposal to tax people who make over \$300,000 a year (worth \$6 billion a year), included large cuts to public education and health and welfare. The governor came out of his corner and offered, along with his massive cuts and budget-control mea-

We elect legislators to do their jobs with majority rule.

The archaic two-thirds requirement allows a minority to abrogate the democratic will of the people.



PHOTO BY KARA BUCHANAN

Zwi Reznik, president of the State Center Federation of Teachers (right) joined other members of the Education Coalition at a Fresno rally on Friday, September 5, in front of the local legislative office of Republican Assembly leader Mike Villines. Reznik and other speakers told Villines he needed to act responsibly and vote for a state budget that included revenues. This event was one of dozens staged by the CFT and its allies across the state during the budget standoff.

social services were not available to the legislative majority.

Get rid of the two-thirds requirement

That leads us to the second answer: get rid of the two-thirds requirement for the Legislature to pass a budget. We elect legislators to do their jobs with majority rule. The archaic two-thirds requirement allows a minority to abrogate the democratic will of the people.

That's a necessary future reform. Californians who rely on state funding and services—eight million students, the elderly, the poor, the disabled—couldn't wait for that. The Republicans, despite their smokescreen rhetoric about

"compromise," couldn't have cared less about the pain they were inflicting. In fact, that was their biggest weapon: confidence the Democrats would eventually sign just about any budget to get desperately needed services flowing again.

We need a budget based on adequate revenues, not rhetoric. We failed to get it this year. Perhaps, if these lessons have been learned, we will get it next year. ☐

*By Marty Hittelman, President
California Federation of Teachers*

*This article originally appeared on
September 24 as an opinion editorial
in the San Francisco Chronicle.*

Two-thirds rule undemocratic

California constitutional provisions tie hands of legislators

The Constitution of the State of California, Article IV.12 (d), provides that both chambers of the State Legislature must approve a budget bill by a minimum of two-thirds to send the bill on to the governor's desk for approval. This super majority threshold was added to the constitution, "as part of a Depression-era deal creating a sales tax in 1933" (Schrag, Peter, *California: America's High Stakes Experiment*, 2006, p. 144). Only California, Arkansas, and Rhode Island require so high a supermajority in state budgeting.

Voter approval of the Jarvis-Gann Initiative, in 1978, also expanded the power of the minority (as low as one-third, plus one) to block tax increases, even when supported by a substantial majority (up to two-thirds, minus one). Under Prop 13, all local and state non-budget fiscal bills also must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature, prior to review of the

governor. Consistent with the anti-tax movement's agenda, however, any local or state tax may be lowered on the vote of a simple majority.

A 2004 initiative (Prop 56), backed by the League of Women Voters, would have lowered the threshold to pass a budget in the Legislature and to raise taxes from the 66.66 percent minimum to fifty-five percent, a

number that voters had recently supported as the required test for passage of local school bonds. Prop 56 proponents spent \$13 million, while opponents spent \$8 million. Reflecting voter suspicion of the Legislature, voters rejected Prop 56 at the ballot box by a margin of two to one. In post-mortem analyses, backers of Prop 56 conjectured that, had the initiative language focused only on budget approval, and not addressed sales taxes, the proposition likely would have passed (Schrag, 145).

Defenders of Prop 13 insist that the tax limits in the constitution retain popularity with voters, thirty years after adoption of the initiative. Critics point to the public being con-

fused about the impact of Prop 13, as evidenced in the hodge-podge of funding initiatives voters subsequently have approved, the cumulative effect of which virtually paralyzes the Legislature in budget negotiations. Ironically, the FY 2008/09 state budget impasse—which delayed passage of the budget for almost three months in the face of a highly disciplined obstructionist anti-tax minority, an ineffectual and isolated governor nominally of the minority party, and the inability of the majority party to break the stonewalling, before caving themselves—may have so alienated the public that voters would embrace a new initiative reducing the threshold for passing the budget. (Note

that many school districts had to borrow, at high interest rates, to cover operational costs. Subsequent retroactive apportionment payments by the state, following budget adoption, will not cover interest on those loans, while the COLA in the FY 08/09 budget does not cover the eroding value of the allocations in the face of inflation.)

Indications are that education and public services coalitions and government reform interests, sensing a swing in voter sentiment and a mood for change, conceivably would fund such a proposition. ☐

by Jonathan McLeod

Report from the Democratic National Convention

"The most important election of our generation"

I have been a supporter of Barack Obama since his 2004 Democratic National Convention (DNC) keynote address. When he declared his intention to run for the presidency, I took it upon myself to do everything I could to get this man elected. I was the first person in Northern California to set up a profile on MyBo (www.mybarackobama.com), and I co-founded the group "Sacramento for Obama (SFO)." From a grassroots group of 57 in February 2007, SFO is now an official Obama for America campaign office that boasts a database of over 10,000 volunteers.

I have worn many hats during that time. I wrote the bylaws for SFO, registered 200+ new Democratic voters in the Sacramento metropolitan region, and currently sit as a member of the group's Executive Committee charged with 30 volunteers to conduct research and response for the campaign.

As one of Barack Obama's earliest supporters in California and having devoted hundreds of volunteer hours to the campaign, I decided to run for a delegate seat to the Democratic National Convention. I ran as the alternate choice with three other dedicated SFO volunteers as a slate and we gained a landslide victory in the 5th Congressional District in Sacramento.

Advocate for the issues

During the DNC I had an opportunity not only to witness the historic convention proceed-

ings, but also to advocate for the issues I cared about with fellow delegates and elected officials. I attended the Asian American Pacific Islander Caucus where we discussed ways to target specific API groups in order to get more of our community politically involved. I also attended the Veteran's Caucus where I lobbied for the Filipino Veteran's Bill (S. 1315), which would provide long-awaited health benefits to Filipino WWII veterans. I was



Barack Obama addressing the AFT Executive Council over the summer.

privileged to meet several of these heroes and hear their stories.

At functions like these, I met and spoke with people I would normally only see in the news, such as Congressman Mike Honda, Congresswoman Doris Matsui, and Board of Equalization member Judy Chu. These individuals, like us, spent their time pursuing the issues that

The most important election continued on page 8

CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS Election Endorsements – Tuesday, November 4, 2008

PROPOSITIONS

- YES Proposition 1A** Safe, Reliable High Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century
- NR Proposition 2** Treatment of Farm Animals
- YES Proposition 3** Children's Hospital Bond Act
- NO Proposition 4** Waiting Period & Parental Notification Before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy
- YES Proposition 5** Non-violent Offenders, Sentencing, Parole & Rehabilitation
- NO Proposition 6** Criminal Penalties and Laws
- NR Proposition 7** Renewable Energy Statute
- NO Proposition 8** Limit on Marriage
- NO Proposition 9** Criminal Justice System, Victims' Rights, Parole
- NO Proposition 10** Alternative Fuel Vehicles & Renewable Energy
- NO Proposition 11** Redistricting
- YES Proposition 12** Veterans' Bond Act of 2008

STATE ASSEMBLY

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| AD RECOMMENDATION | 37 Ferial Masry |
| 1 Wesley Chesbro | 38 Carole Lutness |
| 2 Paul Singh | 39 *Felipe Fuentes |
| 3 Michael "Mickey" Harrington | 40 Robert Blumenfeld |
| 5 Dan Leahy | 41 *Julia Brownley |
| 6 *Jared Huffman | 42 *Michael Feuer |
| 7 *Noreen Evans | 43 *Paul Krekorian |
| 8 Mariko Yamada | 44 *Anthony Portantino |
| 9 *David Jones | 45 *Kevin De Leon |
| 10 Alyson Huber | 46 John Perez |
| 11 Tom Torlakson | 47 *Karen Bass |
| 12 *Fiona Ma | 48 *Mike Davis |
| 13 Tom Ammiano | 49 *Mike Eng |
| 14 Nancy Skinner | 50 *Hector De La Torre |
| 15 Joan Buchanan | 51 *Curren Price, Jr. |
| 16 *Sandre Swanson | 52 Isadore Hall |
| 17 *Cathleen Galgiani | 53 *Ted Lieu |
| 18 *Mary Hayashi | 54 Bonnie Lowenthal |
| 19 Jerry Hill | 55 *Warren Furutani |
| 20 *Alberto Torrico | 56 *Tony Mendoza |
| 21 *Ira Ruskin | 57 *Edward Hernandez |
| 22 Paul Fong | 58 *Charles Calderon |
| 23 *Joe Coto | 59 Donald Williamson |
| 24 *James Beall, Jr. | 61 Norma Torres |
| 25 Taylor White | 62 *Wilmer Amina Carter |
| 26 John Eisenhut | 63 Mark David Westwood |
| 27 Bill Monning | 65 Carl Wood |
| 28 *Anna Caballero | 66 Greg Kenneth Frandsen |
| 30 Fran Florez | 67 Steve Blount |
| 31 *Juan Arambula | 69 *Jose Solorio |
| 33 Robert Evan Cuthbert | 72 John MacMurray |
| 34 Desmond Farrelly | 76 *Lori Saldana |
| 35 *Pedro Nava | 78 Marty Block |
| 36 Linda Jones | 79 *Mary Salas |
| | 80 Victor Manuel Perez |

STATE SENATE

- SD RECOMMENDATION**
- 3** Mark Leno
 - 5** Lois Wolk
 - 7** Mark DeSaulnier
 - 9** Loni Hancock
 - 11** *Joseph "Joe" Simitian
 - 13** *Elaine Alquist
 - 17** Bruce McFarland
 - 19** Hannah-Beth Jackson
 - 23** Fran Pavley
 - 25** Roderick "Rod" Wright
 - 27** *Alan Lowenthal
 - 37** Arthur Bravo Guerrero
 - 39** *Christine Kehoe

U.S. CONGRESS

- CD RECOMMENDATION**
- 1** *Mike Thompson
 - 3** William "Bill" Durston
 - 4** Charlie Brown
 - 5** *Doris Matsui
 - 6** *Lynn Woolsey
 - 7** *George Miller
 - 8** *Nancy Pelosi
 - 9** *Barbara Lee
 - 10** *Ellen Tauscher
 - 11** *Jerry McNerney
 - 12** Jackie Speier
 - 13** *Fortney "Pete" Stark
 - 14** *Anna Eshoo
 - 15** *Mike Honda
 - 16** *Zoe Lofgren
 - 17** *Sam Farr
 - 18** *Dennis Cardoza
 - 20** *Jim Costa
 - 21** Larry Johnson
 - 23** *Lois Capps
 - 26** Russ Warner
 - 27** *Brad Sherman
 - 28** *Howard Berman
 - 29** *Adam Schiff
 - 30** *Henry Waxman
 - 31** *Xavier Becerra
 - 32** *Hilda Solis
 - 33** *Diane Watson
 - 34** *Lucille Roybal-Allard
 - 35** *Maxine Waters
 - 37** *Laura Richardson
 - 38** *Grace Napolitano
 - 39** *Linda Sanchez
 - 40** Christina Avalos
 - 42** Edwin "Ed" Chau
 - 43** *Joe Baca
 - 44** Bill Hedrick
 - 45** Julie Bornstein
 - 46** Debbie Cook
 - 47** *Loretta Sanchez
 - 48** Steve Young
 - 49** Robert Hamilton
 - 50** Nick Liebham
 - 51** *Bob Filner
 - 52** Mike Lumpkin
 - 53** *Susan Davis

*Incumbent

Key Proposition races: NO on 4, 6, 8, and 9

Although no proposition on the ballot this time around directly addresses community colleges or public education, the outcome of several measures will exercise a great influence over our ability to deliver a quality education to the students of the state. In particular, Propositions 4, 6, 8 and 9 would hurt our students in various ways.

Proposition 4

Prop 4 threatens teen safety by mandating parental notification prior to a minor terminating a pregnancy. Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers' lives and we want our daughters to come to us if they become pregnant, and most do. But in the real world, laws like this don't work. Prop 4 can't force teens to talk to their parents, but it may force them to do something desperate and dangerous.
www.noonprop4.org

Proposition 6

Prop 6 proposes spending one billion dollars each year on unproven programs with no accountability, with no revenues to pay for it. Proposition 6 doesn't put one more cop on the street. It could take money away from schools and health care and spend it instead on probation departments and prisons. Prop 6 would change existing law so more children as young as 14 years old will be tried as adults and relegated to the criminal justice system.
www.votenoprop6.com

Proposition 8

Prop 8 seeks to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. Prop 8 isn't about schools, religion, children, doctors or courts. Prop 8 is about eliminating a fundamental right to marry for gays and lesbian couples, some of whom have been together for years. They are our friends, our neighbors, our co-workers and our family members. State law should not single out anyone to be treated differently under the law. We should not vote to eliminate their fundamental rights.
www.noonprop8.com

Proposition 9

Prop 9 will not substantially change the rights of victims, but it will weaken protections given to any of us who are charged with or convicted of a crime, like due process and fair hearings. Prop 9 denies people the right to prove their eligibility for parole (the standard 1-5 years will become every 15 years). Prop 9 will spend more tax dollars on failing, overcrowded prisons, make conditions more inhumane and take money from an already strapped state budget.
www.votenoprop9.com



Working the Floor

Judith Michaels, CFT Legislative Director

A New Law:

Governor signs bill to change 60% law

On July 10, 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 591, carried by Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally, governing community college part-time faculty employment. The new law goes into effect January 1, 2009. It alters the so-called 60% law, changing the definition of a temporary employee from one who teaches for no more than 60% of the hours per week considered to be a regular full-time faculty assignment to one who teaches no more than 67%.

After lengthy discussion throughout the CFT, culminating in a State Council resolution last fall, the CFT settled upon the 67% figure because it will enable temporary adjunct faculty who teach four- and five-unit classes to teach more than one class in a particular community college district.

Faculty who joined part-time ranks lately need to know that CFT has steadfastly worked for part-timer rights as well as for additional state funding allocations to hire much-needed full-time faculty, sponsoring the

Faculty and College Excellence Act, which became a casualty of California's recent budget debacle. Meanwhile, AB 591 will help part-time faculty access more reasonable assignments, although it does not guarantee them; part time faculty should keep in contact with their locals to assert assignment rights under AB 591.

Contractual provisions

Many of our AFT community college locals have already negotiated seniority provisions and evaluation procedures that rec-

ognize years of service and excellence in teaching. These contract provisions will help ensure that part-time faculty will not be subject to arbitrary and capricious dismissal, despite their temporary status. Although administrators did not oppose AB 591, since colleges retain hiring and assignment flexibility, in some cases we will no doubt need to assert that flexibility doesn't mean ignoring part-time faculty and student needs once again. We've already had difficulties in the North Orange County Community College District, and have asked for a formal legislative counsel opinion about the intent of the new law.

Part-time faculty recommended the increase in percentage, because of the unintended effects of the former 60% threshold. Lawmakers designed that law, part of community college reform, to encourage districts to distinguish between full-time tenured and part-time temporary teaching, intending that districts hire temporary faculty to teach in specialty areas or address short-term enrollment bumps. However, the law has had the nearly opposite effect of encouraging districts to hire part-time faculty when full-time faculty would be more appropriate.

As a result, in order to teach in excess of 60%, many adjunct teachers must travel outside a given district to pick up additional community college teaching assignments in order to piece together a full-time schedule. Travel costs from college to college, and the difficulty of juggling multiple assignments in several districts, harm not only adjunct faculty members but also their students and the education-

1725. Protections for tenure-track positions remain intact and part-time faculty, although they will remain temporary employees, will be able to teach a more reasonable class schedule and participate to a greater degree in campus life. Additionally, faculty beginning their careers as temporaries can gain some economic means to remain teaching while preparing and gaining experience for

AB 591 will help part-time faculty access more reasonable assignments, although it does not guarantee them; part time faculty should keep in contact with their locals to assert assignment rights under AB 591.

al enterprise itself. Many excellent teachers tire of waiting for a full-time position to emerge and leave teaching. Those who remain cannot get fully involved in campus life because they are constantly on the road.

Protections remain intact

The minor percentage change preserves the goal that 75% of classes are to be taught by full-time faculty and 25% taught by adjuncts, affirming state law AB

a future as a full-time college instructor.

The new 67% threshold gives us the opportunity to negotiate with our colleges to allow temporary faculty to teach a second class, a benefit for student and teacher alike. In times of course cutbacks, the 67% threshold would mean that the loss of one class due to low enrollment would not necessarily mean that the teacher would lose office hours or health benefits. ☐

Dean Mancina continued from page 3

allowed me to post my material properly. The next day, just as a test, I asked our local help desk the same question, and they showed me the correct way to use the program to do this, and it took three minutes."

Mancina also led the union's effort to challenge the creation of a nursing program under the control of a big hospital corporation, Memorial Healthcare Services. When the company offered to lend one of its employees to help expand the district's program, it not only wanted the teacher to remain its own employee, but also to decide on the curriculum. "At first, we simply wanted to make sure that this new faculty member would be entitled to representation," Mancina recalls. Then the faculty discovered that the district had created job titles for six other new positions, whose duties would be the same as those of any other faculty members.

PHOTO BY TERE GEBRE



Dean Mancina

"We went to our Labor Council," Mancina says. At the council's request Assemblyman Jose Solorio wrote to the Chancellor and urged him to respect union representation. The trustees backed down, and agreed that any new nursing teachers would have the same representation rights as other faculty.

Making change

Mancina's involvement with the labor council, the grouping of other local unions in Orange County, grew when he became one of its vice-presidents. "We're only a small local union of 800 members," he says, "but with 60,000 members in the council, I feel they have my back."

Coast College faculty and classifieds have tried to reciprocate. At a recent demonstration they backed the efforts of Disneyland Hotel workers to keep their medical benefits. "Hundreds of us moved into the intersection blocking the entrance to the park," he recalls. Twenty-five people (not Mancina) were arrested in acts of civil disobedience. "It was really exciting," he enthuses. "I love being part of making change for working class people. Our Orange County labor movement will support any effort to make life better, whether it's for custodians, healthcare workers, domestics or college faculty."

Mancina became part of recent efforts to restructure the labor

council. "We felt we weren't living up to our potential, at the same time we are living in what's still a very conservative county where we really need positive political change." He cites the hostile climate in cities like Costa Mesa, where the police have been told to stop and question people on the streets about their immigration status.

"We have a huge influx of Latinos and Vietnamese immigrants. At work we can see the face of the college changing," he says. "People are changing the culture of the county, and getting involved socially and politically. When I went to high school, there was just one African American student, and now white students are only 40% of the campus population at Coast. But I believe a lot of the anti-immigrant sentiment is changing. These are working-class families, that need the labor movement to stand up with them."

Those sentiments have led Mancina, his members at Coast, and Orange County unionists

to turn out in record numbers to work on the November election. "We held a candidates' academy," he says, "so that people running for office could learn about our priorities, and what our expectations would be if we helped them get elected. Many local candidates participated and were very supportive. That's going to help us keep them accountable after the election."

Their eyes are also turned on the crucial choice in the presidential contest. "If Barack Obama doesn't become president," Mancina worries, "our labor movement is in trouble. We have to stop this terrifying cycle in the country, in which working people are being pushed down. Our country used to be respected in the world, and we should be setting an example in how working families are treated. Our only chance is with Barack." ☐

By David Bacon

Book Review

I'll Never Be French (No Matter What I Do): Living in a Small Village in Brittany

By Mark Greenside, forthcoming, December 2008, Simon and Schuster

Merritt College instructor Mark Greenside's new book, *I'll Never Be French, No Matter What I Do*, is not unique in telling the story of an English speaker attempting to make his way in the French countryside. Peter Mayle's best seller, *A Year in Provence*, is perhaps the most famous recent example of Anglophonic adventures and misadventures in the land of wine and cheese. David Sedaris' *Me Talk Pretty One Day* is another.

There are similarities. Like Sedaris, Greenside doesn't speak much French, and gets himself into numerous whimsical scrapes with the locals through linguistic ineptitude. Like Mayle, Greenside purchases a house (in Brittany, and much to his own surprise), and in his efforts to



key divergences in politics and cultural sensibility.

One thing that bothered me in reading *A Year in Provence* was how Mayle treated his workers, both in events reported in the narrative and as characters in the book. He never attempts to do anything more than view them through the lens of

By contrast, Greenside is ruefully, often painfully aware of his outsider status, and of the sharp limitations placed on normal adult effectiveness when attempting to speak with the vocabulary and understanding of a three year old. He has a great deal of respect for the rhythms and rules of life in another culture. In patiently seeking to solve the problems of daily life, he puts himself into situations where the lines between amusing and humiliating can quickly blur or dissolve. His record of his attempts to navigate these treacherous cultural and linguistic waters forms the existential core of the book.

Greenside has been teaching in the four campus Peralta Community District since 1971. He began as a History and Political Science teacher, and now teaches English and Creative Writing. Greenside credits his experience in France with giving him a greater empathy for his students:

"Teachers as teachers most often are in control, or at least feel in control, in the classroom, that's the normal state for us. We make the assignments, we grade the papers, we give the final grades. It's difficult and humbling to find yourself in a situation where you essentially you have no control. And a good reminder of how students feel, especially non-native students or students whose cultural background doesn't make them feel comfortable in an academic setting."

Active over the years in the Peralta Federation of Teachers, Greenside has served as presi-

dent, chief grievance officer, member of the negotiations team, and chair of the local's COPE committee. Currently he is Secretary for the union. He thinks these experiences explain one of the differences between his point of view and that of Mayle. Unlike the latter, "I'm curious about working conditions, what a work week is, what the basic pay is, benefits are, how the health system works. It is always intriguing to me, because they are doing better than we are."

Greenside feels his decades of teaching have had an important impact on his writing. "To the extent that I teach about writing, it makes me a better writer. It makes me more honest with myself, and encourages me to do what I tell my students they have to do. Whenever I get bummed out or displeased or don't like what I see on the page, I think about what I tell my students to get over a block or discouragement and it helps me."



This is just a still image of Greenside. To see him in his house in Brittany, walking and talking in the village he writes about, go to the video interview with him at www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1peMnGpGNY

I'll Never Be French (No Matter What I Do): Living in a Small Village in Brittany will be available in December from Simon and Schuster. CCC

Reviewed by Fred Glass

In patiently seeking to solve the problems of daily life, he puts himself into situations where the lines between amusing and humiliating can quickly blur or dissolve.

remodel it finds himself in various struggles with local craftsmen. But Greenside's account differs in important ways, including subtleties of tone and—although *I'll Never Be French* would not be considered an overtly political book—some

stereotype, using them more as objects of his humor than as living dynamic humans. That, of course, is the prerogative of a humorist; but it also reveals a choice about the depth of one's cultural engagement in another country.

College of Marin instructor named U.S. Poet Laureate

Emily Wilson knows that moving a student from illiteracy to reading and writing is enormously rewarding, and that the benefits flow in two directions. When the City College of San Francisco instructor taught basic reading and writing at the Adult Learning Center, she discovered that "the reward was their insights when they were reading stories and poetry. It's the power of words—it really takes you somewhere."

The appointment of Kay Ryan, a part-time Basic English instructor for thirty years at the College of Marin, to the post of U.S. Poet Laureate, suggests that community college teaching can sometimes be a path to other rewards.

The Librarian of Congress named Ryan, 62, in July to the two-year term as the nation's most visible representative of the poetry community. Born and educated in California, a resident of Marin County for nearly four decades, Ryan is a member of the United Professors of Marin.

Ryan has published half a dozen volumes of poetry in a spare, wry style, and received numerous prizes and awards over her career. But none compare with the prestige of a position that places her in a pantheon alongside Louise Glück, Stanley Kunitz, Robert Pinsky, and Robert Hass.

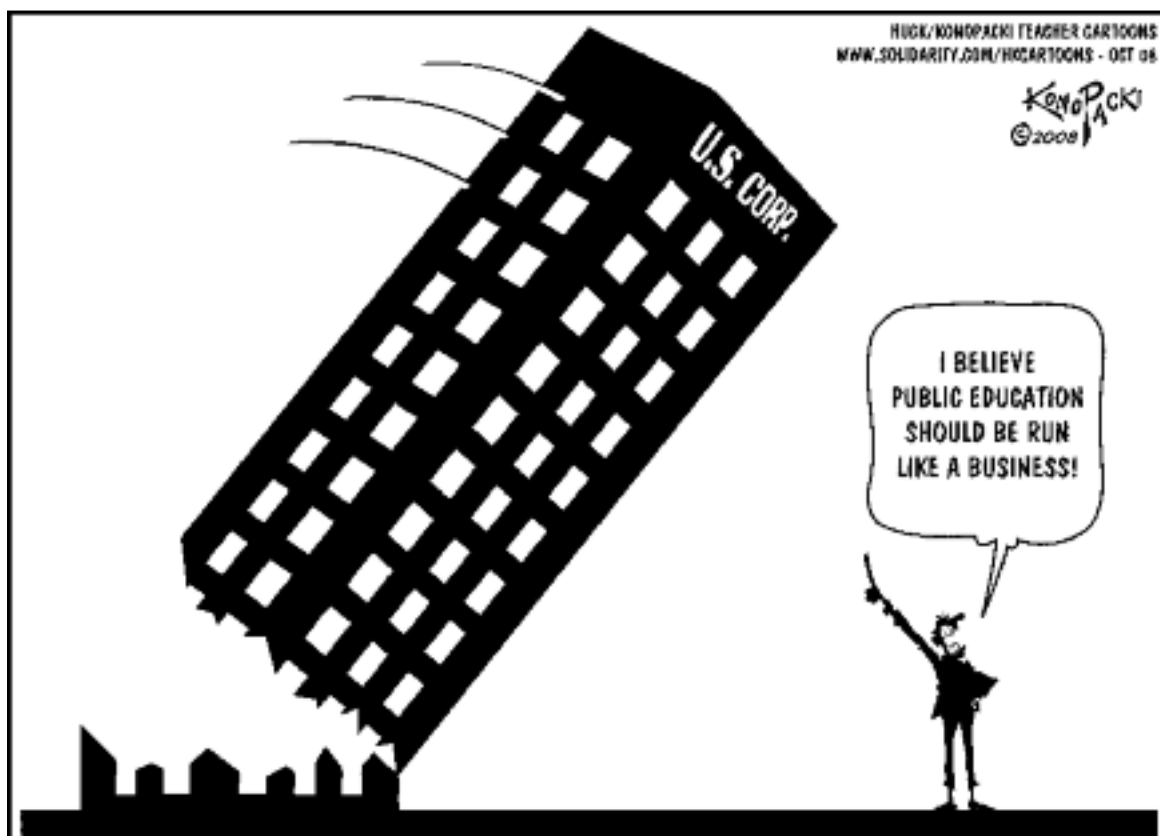
The role of the Poet Laureate can vary greatly depending on the individual occupying the position, according to Ron Silliman, a poet, critic, and author

of a popular poetry blog, <http://ronsilliman.blogspot.com/>. "The real test of that job is more what you do with it," says Silliman, "rather than being appointed to it." Silliman says of the Laureate position, "It's best use is as a mechanism for advocating for poetry."

Ryan told the *New York Times* she might like to "celebrate the Library of Congress," adding "maybe I'll issue library cards to everyone." In interviews Ryan has said that she gravitated to and stayed with part-time teaching for so many years because it allowed her the time and freedom to be a poet.

Ryan's work at College of Marin may contribute more to her poetry than simply giving her time to write. An editor at Grove Press, publisher of a number of her works, asserted that "teaching remedial English has made her pay attention to the essence of words." Perhaps. But as Silliman observes, "She writes poems that her students can read." CCC

By Fred Glass



Local Action

Orange County

Coast CC faculty gain binding arbitration

When negotiators for the faculty union at the Coast Community College district went into bargaining last year, they were determined not to roll over the existing contract. While the union had done so in 2005, members felt they needed to renegotiate many of the contract's provisions.

The union conducted a faculty survey, and the negotiating team prepared its proposal and conducted training for its participants. It met weekly for a year with district representatives for six to seven hours at a time.

"Every session, the district would propose a rollover," says Dean Mancina, president of the Coast Federation of Educators, AFT Local 1911. "Our members wanted to fix what they considered unworkable sections of the old agreement, so we would not agree."

Politics intervened. This November three of the five seats on the district board of trustees are up for election. The union had the support of two board members already, one of whom was standing for reelection. Trustees knew the union planned to support candidates for the two other seats as well.

Sweetening the pot

"The district didn't want labor unrest during the election campaign, so each time we met it would again propose a rollover, but sweetening the pot," Mancina explains. "We'd never had binding arbitration in our contract, but the district put that on the table as well. We thought, 'Why should we stop there?'" So even though we were committed to not rolling over, we began to discuss what might make that acceptable."

Five articles had already been agreed on: Academic Calendar, Sabbatical Leaves, Retirement, Faculty Service Areas, and Professional Meetings & Conferences. In addition to binding arbitration, the union proposed a new salary formula, no increases in contributions for health benefits, and rehire rights for part time faculty.

The district agreed. The new salary formula (which had been COLA + ½ of growth + 0.375%, was improved. (However, a sig-

nificant salary increase is unlikely this year, since the district will only pay a COLA increase if it gets one from the state.)

There will be no added expense in the faculty contribution for employee and dependent health coverage through June 30, 2011. Binding arbitration will be possible for all grievances filed after June 30, 2008. And after eight consecutive semesters at any one college in the district, a part-time instructor will be given first consideration for any part-time class assignment in her or his discipline, if the two most recent evaluations are "satisfactory."

The members voted by 95.5% to ratify the new agreement.

SAN DIEGO

Union rights come to temporary hourly employees

At San Diego's three community college campuses, and its seven continuing education centers, hundreds of people work as temporary hourly employees. But calling them temporary is a misnomer, since the district has employed many of them for years.

In April of 2006 the union for faculty and classifieds, the San Diego Community College Guild, AFT Local 1931, decided to help those hourly workers win union representation.

According to Guild president Jim Mahler, the resulting campaign combined contract language, political strategy, and old-fashioned organizing.

"We've helped to elect five members to the district board," Mahler says. "So instead of trying to use the PERB process, we worked to win district agreement to an internal election." After a laborious process in which the union and district agreed on who was eligible to vote, an election was held on June 30. Eighty-seven percent of the workers voted for Local 1931.

The election was the product of two years of intensive efforts to find members of the hourly unit, and then convince them to sign union cards. At the beginning, the Guild thought there were about 500 hourly workers, but discovered that sometimes as many as a thousand are employed.

Tina Fletcher, the organizer for Local 1931, spent months

just looking for their worksites. "These workers do many different jobs – they're tutors, they work in food service, they help professors, they work in continuing education helping students with GED classes. Some are even models in the art departments."

Fletcher and the Local 1931 activists who helped her say that the main issues for most of the hourly workers were lack of security, and the big difference between their wages, benefits and status, and that of the district's classified employees. "They feel they're taken advantage of," Fletcher explains. "They want a voice, more respect, and even basic things like paid holidays. While a majority of the hourly workers are students, some people have worked over six years in the same position, with no benefits and no contract."

Education code violation

One important factor in gaining district agreement to a process for union representation is that the district is in violation of the education code, which only permits two kinds of permanent employment in community colleges – as faculty and as classified employees. While districts are permitted to hire temporary employees, that employment has to have a beginning and an end date.

Like many districts, however, San Diego has had a long practice of hiring hourly temporary workers for 175 days, laying them off, and then hiring them back again. That not only creates a situation of extreme insecurity for the workers themselves, but it amounts to compliance "with a nod and a wink."

After the union effort began, in an attempt to come into compliance with section 88003 of the education code, the district revised the rules of Using and Hiring of Non-Academic

Non-Classified Employees (NANCES). A seven page memo dated August 14, 2008 from Kim Meyers, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, told managers and supervisors that only jobs of "very limited length of service ... may be filled with non-classified employees."

The memo attempted to rectify after the fact the misclassification of hundreds of current hourly workers. The Guild contends that nearly all of those employees have already earned the right to be part of the classified service.

The most important election continued from page 5

they felt were in the best interest of those they served.

I also spoke with fellow delegate-educators and discussed the challenges we faced in our local districts and how we could reform education policies to make our schools and colleges more affordable and accessible.

An individual we will trust

This election is described by political pundits as the most important election of our generation and I would agree. At a time of economic insecurity at home and a protracted war abroad the next president must be able to change the direction of our country. He must be able to promote prosperity and peace at home and abroad. His policies in education will dictate whether we will maintain our competitive edge in the global world. This election is to determine who will be our leader during a time of national crisis – an individual we will trust to lead us through, beyond, and above the troubles of our day. Having looked at the various pasts, policies, and promises of both candidates, I feel that Barack Obama is the right choice as such a leader.



After working without a contract for more than a year, College of Marin faculty took to the streets, charging that the college administration has failed the taxpayers and students of Marin County, to say nothing of the faculty, by its stalling tactics during negotiations. This demonstration took place September 13 in San Rafael at a Democratic Party dinner, where United Professors of Marin members leafleted the attendees and urged them to contact the Board of Trustees on behalf of faculty.

JOHN SUTHERLAND PHOTO

The Guild's organizing effort therefore has two goals. Actual hourly and temporary workers will now have the right to union representation. The district and the union are currently identifying who those people are, and once that unit is correctly defined, negotiations will begin on a contract covering it. The Guild and the district will also identify workers who have been misclassified, and then negotiate a process in which they will become regular classified employees.

By David Bacon

Barack Obama has a clear vision and sound plan to promote incentives in education unlike anything we have seen since the days of JFK. He proposes a \$4,000 credit for college tuition to students who commit to do community service. Obama's first bill in the Senate increased the Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$5,100. He proposes to provide incentives to hire 1 million teachers over the next decade and promises to make NCLB work by actually giving it the funds it needs for proper implementation.

This election is not merely a choice of which bubble to fill in on a ballot, but a statement of faith in an individual to change our country for the better. I joined this campaign because I recognized that there needed to be a change. Barack Obama said it best when he stated, "When ordinary people come together, they can do extraordinary things." This election is important because it will determine the direction our country will take in the new century. I am involved because I want the path to be the right one for my students, for my children, and for me. ☐

By Cirian Villavicencio