



## Local unions gather to shape organizing strategies Annual conference highlights role of members and communities

About 100 members of the CFT Council of Classified Employees recently met in Anaheim for three days of networking and learning. Half the members who attended the annual conference were first-time attendees, signaling both a changing workforce and a new generation of union activists.

A high point for veterans and new participants was a panel moderated by the CCE Vice President for Southern California, Carl Williams, with three leaders whose locals are thriving.

**Albert Lopez, president of the Menifee Council of Classified Employees,** helped double his union's ranks last year by tracking down fee payers, explaining the ways that joining AFT Local 6109 would benefit them, and signing them up as members. As a delivery driver, Lopez crisscrosses the Riverside County school district daily.

"A lot of people don't understand what we do," he said. "Getting out and talking to people really helps."

**"We believe the old saying that, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu. We sit at every table possible."**

— Thomas Hamilton, Long Beach Council of Classified Employees

PHOTOS BY BOB RIHA, JR.



Classified leaders talk about the power of organizing, from left: Thomas Hamilton, Long Beach, San Francisco's Anabel Ibañez and Menifee's Albert Lopez.

**Thomas Hamilton, president of the Long Beach Council of Classified Employees,** has learned that discussing a political issue over lunch or coffee with

a community college trustee or administrator can often resolve or prevent a problem.

"Before I was active in the union, I didn't want to be con-

sidered 'political,'" Hamilton said. "After serving as president, you realize that you must be political to effectively represent hundreds of members and their families."

Hamilton said he and AFT Local 6108 leaders meet regularly to exchange ideas with Personnel Commission members and district trustees. "We believe the old saying that, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu. We sit at every table possible."

During recent negotiations, the local began a dialogue with the college's new president and superintendent. Hamilton says those talks helped resolve several contract issues.

**Anabel Ibañez is the new political director of United Educators of San Francisco,** the first paraprofessional member of AFT Local 61 to hold the position. A key component of the local's political outreach is organizing community support.

"We recognize the richness and power of coalitions," Ibañez said. "That explains how we elected our full school board slate last November. When we're fighting for our

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## Senator Josh Newman: The value of one vote

### ORANGE COUNTY CONSERVATIVES

launched a recall campaign against Josh Newman almost as soon as the Democrat won his state Senate seat by a whisper in 2016.

Conservatives say they want to recall Newman because he voted to raise the state gas tax. In fact, his 0.6 percent victory margin touched a nerve because it gave Democrats a two-thirds majority in the upper house.

Newman thanked Orange County members for their ongoing support, saying, "No single force in the last 150 years has had such a profound impact on economic growth and access as the labor movement."

Newman joined the union of trade and craft workers in the entertainment industry as a young video producer. The freshman legislator keeps his IATSE membership current and made his position on public education clear.

"I'm happy to stand with unions in the fight against the charter school industry. It's the right side." The associated problem of contracting out, he added, affects classified employees the most.



Josh Newman supports classified staff and their unions.



# Legislature's actions benefit classified

## ►“Noon Dutys” now part of the classified service

The job title varies from one school district to another, but most “Noon Dutys” — as part-time playground supervisors or noon duty aides are often called — are women working five days a week for two or three hours a day. They are often the lowest paid employees on campus.

Current law blocked most noon dutys from classified status, but that changes on January 1. Gov. Jerry Brown has signed AB 670 by Assemblyman Tony Thurmond (D-Richmond), giving a leg up to about 1,500 part-timers across the state.

“Part-time playground employees deserve the same protection and benefits as classified

employees,” Thurmond said.

Lawndale Federation President Carl Williams said this is the moment to sign up new union members. “So many noon dutys don’t get sick days or health benefits. Take this opportunity to organize them.”



Playground Aide Lesa Estrada

staff up to \$4,000 per year while earning four-year degrees and credentials.

The CFT responded to broad interest in the program by advocating for increased funding.

Legislators, in turn, allocated \$25 million in the 2017-18 budget.

Under the Classified Employee Teacher Credentialing Program, districts and county offices of education that receive state grants must notify their classified employees that funds are available. Those applicants chosen locally will receive award grants for tuition and books.

## ►Free first year of college awaits funding

Gov. Brown also signed AB 19, allowing first-time students to attend community college tuition free for the first year if they are enrolled full-time. Implementation is delayed, however, until the Legislature appropriates \$30 million to cover first-year program costs.

At \$46 per credit, California’s community colleges are one of the country’s best bargains. Educational and living costs, however, are often too steep for students, especially from low-income families. About half of the system’s 2.3 million students already receive fee waivers because of financial need.

## ►Classified-to-credential program expanded

In 2016, the CFT proposed a teacher credentialing program for classified and paraprofessionals to raise their income, diversify faculty ranks, and help fill the teaching shortage. Legislators included \$20 million in the 2016-17 budget to provide 1,000 public school

## SNAPSHOT: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

# Family and Medical Leave

**ONE CFT-SPONSORED BILL** this year sought to provide women working in education up to six weeks of paid pregnancy disability leave without charging the woman’s sick leave bank. The Legislature passed AB 568, but the governor refused to sign it into law, saying other options were possible.

Family and medical leaves are defined in federal laws, state codes and individual collective bargaining agreements. Your union local may also bargain improvements.

### PAID OR PARTIALLY PAID LEAVES

**Sick leave:** Classified can use up to seven days per year as personal necessity leave to care for parents, grandparents, spouses, siblings, children, grandchildren or other relatives living in the same household. *Education Code 45207*

**Sick leave to bond with child:** Thanks to CFT-sponsored AB 2393, as of January 1, 2017, new mothers and fathers can use up to 12 weeks of sick leave to bond with a newborn or newly adopted child. Employees without 12 weeks of accrued leave can use half-pay differential leave. No minimum work hours are required if an employee has at least a year on the job. *Education Code 45196.1*

**Family School Partnership Act:** Employees can take up to 40 hours per year (capped at eight hours per month) to participate in



BOB RIHA, JR

Conference attendees at a workshop about family and medical leave.

a child’s school or daycare activities, address a school or child care emergency, or enroll children in school. Leave is charged against vacation time. *California Labor Code 230.8*

**Military Disability Leave:** Provides up to 12 days during the first 12 months for treatment of a military service-connected disability of at least 30 percent. This applies to K-12 districts (unless merit system), but not community colleges. *Education Code 45191.5*

**State Disability Insurance:** Most classified employees are not part of SDI, but if a local union negotiates elective coverage, Paid Family Leave provides up to six weeks leave at 55 percent of wages to care for a family member with a serious health condition, or to care for a newborn, a newly adopted child, or a newly placed foster child.

### UNPAID LEAVES

**Family and Medical Leave Act:** Provides up to 12 weeks every 12 months to care for one’s own serious illness or injury, care for a spouse, minor child or parent, or bond with a new child. The

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## New holidays for Long Beach staff

**THE LONG BEACH COUNCIL** of Classified Employees ratified a three-year agreement providing significant economic relief and longer holidays for about 425 members.

Pay will increase 3 percent the first year retroactive to this July 1, followed by cost-of-living increases of at least 2.1 percent and 2.35 percent the second and third years.

President Thomas Hamilton said college administrators agreed to add one day of paid winter break the first year of the contract, with a second day added the next year, and two additional days the third year. Hamilton said the new college president personally intervened to help resolve several sticking points.

"Let's give credit where it's due," he said. "Negotiations were a slow process with minimal results since we began in April. After she became involved, we reached a tentative agreement in four meetings over six weeks."



COURTESY LOCAL 61

San Francisco paraprofessionals and teachers led a successful contract campaign.

## San Francisco paras see pay increase

**FACING A CRISIS** of affordable housing that threatens to push educators out of the city, United Educators of San Francisco's 6,200 teachers, early childhood educators, paraprofessionals, nurses and social workers negotiated an 11 percent pay increase over three years, as well as annual bonuses. The overall compensation package will grow to 16 percent if voters approve a par-

cel tax that city leaders hope to place on the ballot in 2018.

The contract also offers professional development to a wider range of school employees, focused on priority areas that include children who have suffered trauma, alternative disciplinary measures, and providing a more inclusive environment for children with learning challenges.

## Longevity awarded new respect

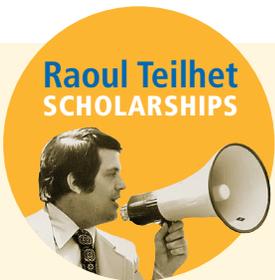
**AFT LOCAL 6142** members made two important gains at the bargaining table with front-loaded pay raises and a reworked system of longevity stipends.

Chief Negotiator Luukia Smith said El Camino College staff will receive a 5 percent raise for 2017 retroactive to January 1, with at least 1.28 percent more in 2018 and a cost-of living increase the following year.

The union also negotiated improvements in monthly longevity stipends. Previously, staff began receiving an additional \$75 monthly on their 20th work anniversary, doubling to \$150 monthly at 25 years. In the new contract, the stipend provides 1.5 percent of salary after 15 years of service, adds another compounded 1.5 percent at the 20-year mark, and again five years later.

"If you're a 25-year employee and were getting a \$150 monthly stipend before," Smith said, "you should be getting at least \$190 monthly now. And every time you get a salary raise, your stipend will automatically increase."

## 3,000 reasons to appreciate her union



**MONICA MARLATT**, a career development specialist for Santa Cruz city schools, has good cause to appreciate her membership in AFT Local 6084, the Santa Cruz Council of Classified Employees.

Marlatt's daughter, Madeline, is studying nursing at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash-



COURTESY MARLATT FAMILY

Santa Cruz's Monica Marlatt with her daughter, Madeline.

ington. Books and nursing fees alone totaled \$900 last semester, but help is on the way. This summer the CFT awarded

Madeline, and eight more continuing college students, a Raoul Teilhet Scholarship for \$3,000.

"I appreciate the union for giving my daughter the gift of an education," Monica Marlatt said. "It is money well spent."

The CFT celebrates 20 proud years of the Raoul Teilhet Scholarship Program in 2018. Applications from high school seniors are due January 10. »Learn more at [cft.org/member-services/scholarships](http://cft.org/member-services/scholarships).

## ClassifiedCalendar

**January 10** is the deadline for high school seniors to apply for **Raoul Teihet Scholarships**.

**February 2** is a quarterly meeting of the **Council of Classified Employees** at Mission College in Santa Clara.



**March 23-25** is **CFT Convention** at the Hilton Orange County where the **Council of Classified Employees** meets on Friday night, March 23. The deadline to submit policy resolutions for Convention is **March 9**.

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>Learn more about the CFT's highest policymaking body at [cft.org/convention-2018](http://cft.org/convention-2018).

#### INSIDE!

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# Classified Insider

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## SNAPSHOT: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS Family and Medical Leave

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job-protected leave can be intermittent (a day here and there), except for bonding with a child. Employers must maintain the employee's health insurance during the leave. Employees are eligible if they have been employed for one year and have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months. *U.S. Code, Title 29, Chapter 28*

**Pregnancy Disability Leave:** Provides up to four months leave for a pregnancy-related disability. The default leave duration is 10 to 12 weeks (four weeks before childbirth and up to eight weeks after delivery), but doctors may certify leave up to four months. This leave has no requirement for minimum hours worked or length of time employed. *California Government Code 12945*

## Classified Conference

(Continued from page 1)

rights, we're also fighting for our students' rights. Our families trust us, and that trust extends to the community."

Key allies include tenants rights advocates, San Francisco Rising, and ACCE. About 700 UESF members and supporters, attended a recent contract rally.

Community ties don't grow overnight, Ibañez cautioned. "Let people know what you do. Go to their events and donate some money. It shows we care and want to work with them."

California Federation  
of Teachers   
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A Union of Professionals

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Snapshots from the annual Classified Conference with the theme "Classified: The other school employee"