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California State University Employees Union/SEIU 2579

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October 2007

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Council
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Oct. 5–8,
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CSUEU board elects new (mostly 'old') leadership

By Kevin Glasson, Northridge

Once again, your union leadership has chosen a president and three vice presidents to represent your interests statewide. They met in Millbrae, just south of San Francisco, on Aug. 3–5, for a CSUEU Board of Directors meeting and to hold this biannual election. Pat Gantt (Chico) was reelected as president, Dennis Dillon (Northridge) was reelected Vice President of Representation, Lori Williams (San Luis Obispo) was reelected Vice President of Finance, and Ronnie Grant (Northridge) won Vice President for Organizing. All offices have a two year term, the elections being held in every odd-numbered year.

Gantt and Grant won on their first ballots. Williams was nominated and accepted the one and only nomination for that office, winning by acclamation. Besides VP for Organizing, Grant was also nominated for VP of Representation and forced Dillon into a runoff, with Dillon eventually coming out on top. Congratulations to all of the winners.

Our four Bargaining Unit Councils also voted for their council memberships. The BU Councils consist of a

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Photo: Kevin Glasson

Swearing in (L to R): VP for Representation Dennis Dillon, VP for Finance Lori Williams, VP for Organizing Ronnie Grant, and President Pat Gantt; CSEA President JJ Jelincic performs the ceremony

Laughing our way to empowerment

CSEA's Women's Conference 2007

By Natalia Bremer, SF State

I had a blast at the CSEA Women's Conference at the Capitol Hill Plaza Holiday Inn in Sacramento on July 13–15. Entitled "Empowering and Enriching CSEA Women," the purpose of the conference was to empower—and I was.

Friday evening I walked into the ballroom prepared for the opening ceremonies filled with women and men from all over the state representing the many faces of CSEA (Retirees, ACSS, SEIU 1000 and CSUEU). The special guest speaker of the evening was

Lt. Gov. John Garamandi. He encouraged us, as leaders in our communities, to value universal healthcare for our families, friends, and future. After the lovely introductions and the flashing of pictures, it was time to scout out the room—the base of operations for the entire Women's Conference.

Yes, I did buy stuff.

I moved from table to table like a pirate looking for treasure. The room was surrounded with valuable information, goodies to buy, and opportunities to make new friends. CSEA lobbyist Sheri Golden staffed the CMAC (CSEA's political action fund) table covered with CMAC socks. I will be sporting those to the gym. CSEA Member Benefits Manager, Kay Thomas was there with her brilliant smile to answer any ques-

tions regarding CSEA benefits. CLUW (Coalition of Labor Union Women) offered their Rosie the Riveter T-shirt along with the CLUW baseball cap. Virginia Watts, Jerrie McIntyre, and the many volunteers like Sharon Cunningham and Lori Williams

staffed the CSUEU table with items to buy: backpacks, crazy light toys, umbrellas, T-shirts, lunch bags, and pens (yes, I did buy stuff). SEIU 1000 was promoting "It's Our Healthcare" with pendants and information

See "Laughing ..." on page 4

Dear GC delegates and all concerned with CSEA's future

The statewide leadership of CSEA and its four affiliates, for the first time in far too long, collectively believe that CSEA has a bright future—a future where the four affiliates and CSEA leaders have clearly defined roles and pledge to work together on achieving all our goals. The Committee On the Future of CSEA has been meeting since March 2007—over 100 hours sharing the same table—plus many more of sub-committee work, putting forward a tremendous, painstaking effort to ensure CSEA can move forward as an organization that can make a difference in the lives of working Californians.

The Committee On the Future of CSEA has reached agreement on several critical issues, creating a streamlined and more cohesive CSEA, including: autonomous and coordinated political action, smooth rollovers of members between affiliates, a more cooperative CSEA committee appointment procedure, clarification of dispute resolution options, clearly defined employee-employer roles, and a new CSEA business model providing for growth and financial security.

This committee has crafted an entire package of bylaws changes that represents our best efforts at both vision and compromise. This package allows for the needs of the association to better function and serve the affiliates while providing the affiliates the autonomy and support they need to carry out their respective programs. Because the package is so carefully constructed, we collectively ask for your support in its entirety.

Thank you for your continued support for CSEA's future. CSEA has re-discovered the power of unity! With your help, we can all proclaim proudly—we are CSEA!

—In solidarity, the Committee On the Future of CSEA

(To see the bylaws proposal, go to the CSEA website: www.calcsea.org.) Committee members; J.J. Jelincic, Hylah Jacques, Donna Snodgrass, Frank Luna Jr., Tim Behrens, Olin King, Frank Ruffino, Arline Shriner-Espinoza, Barbara LaPlante, Roger Marxen, John A. Williams, Patricia Busby, Christine Thomas, Richard Duarte, Russell Kilday-Hicks, Annel Martin, Jim Hard, Cathy Hackett, Marc Bautista, Yvonne Walker

Administrator retires

By Ray Finnell, Bakersfield

Question one (10 points): Following her second retirement at the end of September, CSUEU Administrator Virginia Watts will:

- Tend her garden of prize-winning tea roses
- Take up windsurfing
- Travel to Europe and the Orient
- Finish a mystery novel set on a college campus she started in 2002
- Become a conciliator with the state's Department of Industrial Relations

If you guessed a, b, or c, your answer is incorrect. Watts, who began service to CSUEU as a labor relations representative (LLR, our paid field staff) in 1994, will finally get to live in peace ... for a while at



Virginia Watts

least. Thirteen years ago she retired the first time—from CSU Northridge—and as an LRR for the then CSU Division, was assigned to cover her home campus plus Los Angeles. Not long after the chancellor's office was added, followed by Fullerton, Pomona, and the Channel Islands campuses. (She must have slept in her car while driving.)

The stress level encountered as a new LRR may well have been a shock compared to the prior 15 years during which Watts worked in Northridge's Department of Speech Communication and the dean's offices in two of CSUN's schools: Communication, Health and Human Services and

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CSUEU toll-free:
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From the desk of CSUEU President Pat Gantt

Budget passes; time to start again

As I write this article the state budget has recently been passed and sent to the governor. There were no cuts to the CSU budget after the conference committee, but some legislators suggested that late in the game. Quick action by CSUEU membership along with other unions and constituent groups steered the legislators away from that action. Previous years' budget processes had yielded cuts to the CSU that undermined the mission and our work lives.

Unfortunately, this year the Legislature did not fund an additional one percent for compensation. The CSU did make the request and mentioned it through the committee process in the Legislature. I was there and heard the statements and testimony. We have already begun work on the next fiscal year budget process and are following up with key legislators to remind them of the impact



that the CSU has on California and the importance to keep our salaries competitive.

There will be a major debate about the direction of California and its budget priorities in the next year. As you may have heard, California is now on pace to spend more money on its prisons than on higher education in the next couple of years. This major shift in funding has been building for a while, but most taxpayers are unaware of it. There are only a handful of states that have

this status. Other large states like Texas, Florida, and New York all have significant more funding for universities than prisons. Most states budget two or three times as much for universities. Shouldn't California?

The Legislature and the taxpayers need to be reminded of the value of the CSU and its mission. It is in every CSUEU member's interest to help communicate this to their families, friends, and legislators so we can secure better and more stable funding from the state. In addition, it is important to remind your campus administration that they must also request and support what is needed for adequately funding your own campus. One question to start asking your campus administration: How much has this campus budgeted for re-classifications and in-range progressions this year?

—In Union, Pat Gantt

State budget revealed

Analysis by Russell Kilday-Hicks
The here and now

It's a truism that California has a thriving movie business. And like the movie "Groundhog Day," the California legislature is stuck in a yearly remake called "Groundhog Budget Day." And, just like some overused Hollywood blockbuster, we just saw sequel number 17 (six in the last seven years, all filmed over the last 30 years). But, you can relax now. California finally has a state budget. This was not the latest they've ever been at getting the job done. While the constitutional deadline was mid-June with the real deadline the start of the new fiscal year at the beginning of the summer, July 1, in the end, they were only 52 days late. The latest the state has ever been was in 2002 when it was more than two months overdue.

This tired script repeats, and may go on repeating, year after year, because the major elements: the competing powers, the budget structure, and the reluctance of key entities in the state to take responsibility for paying their fair share, all resist change. What's at stake doesn't change, however. But if the state is going to be serious about investing in its future, which would include our particular charge of supporting the higher education of the children of the working class in California, change—of a particular sort—is just what we need.

BTW—You may have heard that we will still most likely get most of our negotiated raises. While our raises may not be as large as we had hoped, due to some contingency language in the budget tied to the whims of the legislature to provide more funding than previously planned to the CSU, the language just drives us back to the bargaining table.

Not to say the legislature didn't explore taking away what was minimally promised. That trial balloon was floated and something quite unprecedented happened. The legislature got a joint letter from the chancellor's office and the unions representing the majority of the staff in the largest higher education system in the world (nearly 40,000 of us) saying that this would be a bad idea. Of course, we don't need convincing but sometimes you have to make some noise to stop a dog from barking up the wrong tree.

Budget and bargaining past

That letter and the new climate of cooperation reflect a power shift and our very real gains in our involvement and influence in the budget process. Here's the story: In years past when we first went to the bargaining table (usually

The problem was the CSU not asking for enough money to begin with. We, your union, were determined to change that.

in February or March, before the "May revise" when the governor adjusts his numbers based on actual state revenue rather than January's projected numbers) the CSU would steadfastly refuse to talk money. They would talk anything else, from the weather to the dotting of "i's" and the crossing of "t's" but their stance remained: "There was no point in talking money until the state budget passed," they would say. "Only then will we know how much we are dealing with." This whole process was bass ackwards, so to speak. Our needs mattered little to the CSU. That's not real bargaining and was probably a violation of the spirit if not the letter of the bargaining law laid out in the Higher Education Employee Relations Act (HEERA).

Then, after the legislature passed a budget, with funding for the CSU at least partially based on the CSU's own stated needs in their budget request to the legislature, the CSU would skip happily over to the bargaining table saying: "Here's the pie CSUEU; how do you want to slice it?" Unfortunately, that pie was often pretty lean to begin with, which is why we saw pitiful raises of nothing or a measly 1.5 percent that hardly kept pace with inflation these years past. Upon closer examination there was a fatal flaw in this game. CSUEU President Pat Gantt understood member frustration but felt people were too quick to blame a seemingly powerless union. "Many people forget that we can't get more dollars on the bargaining

table until the Legislature allocates it to the CSU in the budget," he said. The problem: the CSU was not asking for enough money to begin with. We, your union, were determined to change that.

We entered the process like never before with rallies on almost all the campuses (some held more than one), with letters and e-mails (Chancellor Reed was heard to complain about the number of e-mails, once asking a gathering of CSU labor leaders "What good does it do for me to get 500 e-mails a day?"), with visits to lawmakers, and, along with our sister union, the CFA, by putting pressure on the media to cover what was really going on. "Something happened; we did something they have never seen before," President Gantt said. This is the key to our future.

The budget this time

The almost-yearly budget stalemate is usually characterized as bipartisan bickering. This time around the "partisan gridlock" of two competing political parties came with a new twist—a Republican governor siding with the Democratic majority. After Republicans and Democrats in the Assembly came to agreement (only a month late at that point) it seemed like we were close to a resolution because only two Senate Republicans were needed to sign on to get the two-thirds majority needed (the two-thirds requirement is from a law passed in 1879, and California is one of only three states in the country with this rule). In all other areas of state governance we have majority rule (a.k.a. democracy) except when it comes to (what some would say is the crux of power) finances. In 1978 a majority of the voters of California added tax increases to the short list of a two-thirds legislative voting requirement. Passing a tax cut is not held to the same standard, however. And that outlines one of the issues needing to be addressed to fix this perpetual mess.

While trying to hold the "high ground" on why the Senate Republicans needed to delay agreement (to be "fiscally responsible" in a time when state spending exceeds income, so they said) an examination of the proposed last-minute cuts they demanded tells a different story. Some had nothing

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Reflections on a first Lobby Day

Lobby Day 2007 was my first experience with this annual event. I'd heard a lot from my chapter friends who attended in past years, but nothing really quite compares to participating and experiencing it yourself. As I entered Sacramento I drove around the Capitol building, just to "case the place" for the next day's visit. A crazy tune from the old Electric Company program my son used to watch ran through my head, "I'm just a bill. Yes, I'm only a bill. And I'm sitting here on Capitol Hill ..."

I was soon to find out about the "real" world of legislators, lobbyists, and the rest of us (constituents). Our training day went smoothly (thanks to Vicky McLeod and the CSUEU staffers for all of their hard work), and it was even entertaining. Lobby Day opened with a breakfast buffet and more tips and tricks on how to approach our esteemed (and sometimes elusive) legislators. My team was comprised of Richard Duarte and myself from Chapter 315-CSU Long Beach and Sue Kirby from the Chancellor's Office. We strolled to the north-facing steps of the Capitol building for our group photo, and then we all converged on the Capitol to find our targets.

Our first meeting was with State Senator Alan J. Lowenthal, from the 27th District. Senator Lowenthal is aka Dr. Lowenthal, formerly a professor of psychology at CSU Long Beach, served six years as State Assemblyman from the 22nd District, and six years on the Long Beach City Council.

Since we are from Long Beach and constituents of Senator Lowenthal, we felt confident that Senator Lowenthal would welcome us with open arms and we would all have a very pleasant chat in which we would accomplish our Lobby Day mission. I visualized a scenario wherein I would remind Senator Lowenthal that I first met him when he was going door to door in my neighborhood campaigning for the Long Beach City Council; we would have instant rapport.

Of course, reality soon set in when I noticed that the Senator had developed several new layers of arrogance since we last met. But, I'm skipping ahead. We thought we would be meeting with assistant Laetitia Garcia but were pleasantly surprised that the Senator decided to meet with us personally, albeit with Ms. Garcia at his side, at the ready to take over at a second's notice! We all introduced ourselves and sat down at the conference table in his spacious office.

Senator Lowenthal was initially a bit abrupt. Richard Duarte, as our chosen spokesperson opened up the conversation and quickly explained our mission (the missing one percent in compensation). Senator Lowenthal professed to not being informed about our missing one percent and seemed a bit puzzled at our keen interest in a one percent pay increase.

Then, Sherrie Golden to the rescue! Sherrie asked Senator Lowenthal if our interview could be filmed. His demeanor immediately smoothed out to a more agreeable and pleasant countenance. He then graciously stated that he supported our request and also followed with some advice about who we really needed to see—Jack Scott, the Chair of the Budget Subcommittee for Higher Education. We then concluded our meeting and Senator Lowenthal warmly shook our hands and welcomed us to visit his home office in Long Beach. Perhaps he was thinking of future campaigns when he might need our help?

Our next two appointments were not as smooth. We had an appointment to meet State Senator Edward Vincent from the 25th District. Senator Vincent's secretary seemed to not know we had an appointment and was somewhat irritated by our presence. We did eventually meet with Senator Vincent's aide, who was very friendly but somewhat distracted

due to his assignment to monitor the televised meetings concerning bills sponsored by Senator Vincent. Richard again gave his spiel about our mission, but the aide did not know anything about the compensation issues or even about the CSU. He did ask us for a copy of our contract and a budget negotiation summary and also wanted to know about our "line item" in

the State Budget. He was very surprised that the CSU budget no longer has line items and wondered how we get funded. Public higher education does not seem to be an important concern in this office (the senator has sponsored legislation for the gaming and horse racing industries).

Our final appointment was with Betty Karnette, assemblywoman from the 54th District, who was also served on the Long Beach City Council and was a teacher in the Long Beach Unified School District for 30 years. Our appointment was with the assemblywoman's aide, who was too busy to meet with us, so we were handed over to the aide's assistant. The assistant was courteous and pleasant, but clearly had been pressed into service at the last minute and was not too thrilled about it. Assemblywoman Karnette did wander into the office at one point, but did not introduce herself and hastily beat a retreat.

Our little group of lobbyists actually learned a lot just by wandering the hallways of the Capitol, reading posted agendas and picking up copies of proposed Senate and Assembly Bills. There were a number of other legislators we wanted to meet but, alas, they were not available. The Capitol building is a great place to people watch—there are lots of high-powered type folks in very expensive business suits, who are constantly engaged in whispered conversations with each other or attached to their cell phones or Blackberries. We suspected that quite a few of the folks we saw were lowly staffers, who got to run around making deliveries, picking up documents, and all sorts of "important" tasks.

Our final visit was to Assembly Room 112 where a hearing was in progress on SB 190, sponsored by Leland Yee, on Executive Compensation for the CSU and UC systems. Senator Yee's aide stopped us before we entered the room to find out which bill we were supporting; after learning it was SB 190 he said to go in and we would even be able to speak to the Assembly in support of the bill. It was interesting watching some of the audience, who were evidently lobbyists for one bill or another. There was a sense of whispered deals being made, some rude legislators (Mark Ridley-Thomas), and earnest union members fighting to be heard. It is hard to see what actually gets accomplished with these hearings as the decisions are obviously made behind closed doors. We then left the Capitol, feeling tired but also elated, with a feeling that we'd had a productive day despite some disappointments and the inevitable cynicism with our lawmakers and the political process in general.

Lessons learned from Lobby Day: Since there is a smaller group of people than at the BOD or GC meetings, I got to know my fellow lobbyists much better (actually matching names/faces/chapters) and had a number of enjoyable conversations. I got a lot of good ideas to bring back to my chapter—advice on how to proceed on important issues from those who have already been through the same experiences. I find that we are each other's greatest resources.

Special kudos to Nancy Kobata—I learned a great deal about political strategy, including getting to know our local legislators, visiting their district offices so they and their staff get to know you and issues at our campuses. You are an inspiration!

—Leanne Hayes, Long Beach

Administrator retires ...

Continued from page 1

Humanities. But inside knowledge of the system and academia must have prepared her well for the battles she faced as a front-line representative and guardian of employees' rights.

Watts recalls, "When I was working as an LRR I always felt that bringing some relief to an employee who was stressed over a workplace situation was an achievement. That did not always mean a grievance was a 'win,' but it often gave the employee some options when they were feeling boxed in and hopeless about their issue."

In 2003, Watts was hired as CSUEU's administrator and took on a different set of responsibilities, including supervision of CSUEU's office staff and her former peers, the other LRRs, plus the two senior labor relations representatives at the Sacramento office. Her (now 35-year) residency in Northridge did not end at that point, however. (More sleeping in the car?) And her "amazing" husband (her word) of 37 years has obviously been very understanding as have her two "wonderful" children and two "beautiful" granddaughters.

Watts has served to enact directives from CSUEU Division Director (now President) Pat Gantt and the Board of Directors, to pass along information to her staff, to brainstorm strategy, and to continue the mission she first agreed to 13 years ago. Her take on the position and the staff she will soon leave: "As administrator the ability to send resources where they are most needed is also satisfying. I'd like to think that I had a hand in

bringing staff together as a real team during my years as CSUEU administrator. CSUEU is very fortunate to have staff with a wide range of experience and expertise."

Her careers have had ups and downs. She muses, "Trying to do more with less is always a challenge, and disappointment creeps in when you see that you simply don't have enough to go around to meet every need. When I was covering six campuses I spent more time on the freeway than anyplace else. The 405 is always full of stalls, stops and starts—much like union work!"

This proud grandmother was asked by a friend, as many of us have also been, to become involved in union work when she was employed at UCLA a certain number of years ago. Her friend, Page Ackerman, who recently passed away, continues to be Watts' inspiration. Others who keep her going are her husband and children.

When asked what types of growth she has seen in CSUEU, Watts replied, "Before fair-share fees, the CSU Division had very few resources and consequently



LRR Jerrie McIntyre and Watts stand together at CSEA's recent Women's Conference

'Life is too short to stay stuck or unhappy in your workplace, and only you can change your circumstances.'

very few staff. Now that we have more resources we are growing a stronger infrastructure to meet member needs. That growth needs to continue, and I am hopeful that the new board will seek out ways to use available resources creatively to continue that process."

She offers this advice to rank-and-file CSU employees: "If you are happy in your job, share the joy by reaching out to someone who is in a difficult situation. If you are unhappy in your job, explore all the reasons why, educate yourself about your rights and your options, and do something

to move to a different space, either psychologically or physically. Life is too short to stay stuck or unhappy in your workplace, and only you can change your circumstances, no one can do it for you."

LRR Jerrie McIntyre spoke highly of Watts' reign. "Virginia has shown extraordinary commitment to CSUEU as an activist, then an LRR in a time of scarce resources, then as an administrator," McIntyre said. "Her leadership, fiduciary responsibility, and understanding of how to motivate us have encouraged both HQ staff and out-stationed field staff to accomplish what was impossible only seven years ago. She presided over

Workers all over are under siege

Excerpted from a speech by David Low, lobbyist for the California School Employees Association given to the CSUEU activists assembled for Lobby Day training in Sacramento, April 9

For decades American workers have been under attack in both the private and public sector. Unionized workers in the private sector have dwindled as jobs are outsourced overseas, health benefits are cut and pensions are taken away.

Private sector workers have seen their hard-earned pensions looted by corporations to fund leveraged buy-outs.

They purchase competing companies, sell off their buildings, land and assets, grant golden parachutes to top executives, and lay off the workers. Or they cook the books to inflate the value of the stock options to compensate top executives.

We have seen these patterns repeated over and over, and even when corporate executives are caught red handed, it's still the workers who are left holding the bag. We saw this at Tyco International, over at WorldCom, and at Enron

In these cases the CEOs were convicted and sentenced to prison. But in most corporations the executives are rewarded with huge salaries and stock options, as workers see their wages, health benefits and pensions eroded.

The richest one percent of Americans now receive as much after tax income as the bottom 40 percent. This one percent owns more total wealth than 95 percent of all Americans.

Our best chance to redistribute wealth to working families is through a strong and united union movement.

In the public sector we face the same relentless attacks on our jobs, our health care and our pensions. Public sector jobs have always

lagged behind the private sector when it comes to salaries, perks, and opportunities for advancement.

Our trade-off has been job security, good health benefits, and a secure pension. Now, anti-worker politicians claim that jobs should be outsourced, health benefits should be cut, and defined benefit pensions should be eliminated.

Why? Because we have had the audacity to organize and grow our unions. Because we have been brazen enough to protect our pensions against raids. Because we have been insolent enough to negotiate for good health care benefits and legislate for stable retirement benefits.

Together we faced down these attacks in Gov. Schwarzenegger's special election. Together we joined forces to stop the Keith Richman's attempt to eliminate defined benefit pensions.

And now, together we face a fight to preserve our health benefits and pensions. Gov. Schwarzenegger has said that health care reform is the number one priority for the 2007 legislative session.

Unfortunately, his health care reform package falls far short. It requires every employer to either provide health insurance or contribute four percent into a health care pool. But it caps the employer contribution and permanently shifts the burden of inflation, rate increases, the cost of technology and prescription drugs to the individual.

The Governor's plan has not been embraced by either the Democrats or the Republicans in the Legislature.

Unions are joining together to lobby for real health care reform. Health care that provides quality benefits at an affordable cost.

Health benefits that do not un-

dermine the good health benefits negotiated in good union contracts.

Health care that provides real cost containment and controls insurance company profits. Last year Howard Phanstiel, CEO of Pacific Care received a salary of \$3.38 million. Edward Hanway, CIGNA, \$13.3 million. Larry Glassrock, Wellpoint, \$25 million.

We need to control costs, stop abuses, and say NO to union workers being forced to choose between salaries or health benefits.

We also continue the fight to preserve the pension plans and retiree health benefits we have struggled to secure. I serve on the governor's Commission on Post Employment Benefits as an appointee of the State Senate.

My goal on this Commission is to reach consensus on thoughtful and reasonable policies to insure that the pensions and health care promises made to workers are promises kept to workers.

CalPERS is one of the largest, best managed, and most stable pension systems in the world. They are the second largest purchaser of health care in the United States. If the commission can come up with proposals that make the system stronger and more stable, I'm all for it.

But if it ain't broke, don't fix it. I will oppose any efforts to dismantle the system, cut benefits, or in any way undermine what our workers and retirees rely upon.

People like former Assemblyman Keith Richman tell the public that our pensions and retiree health care are a ticking time bomb. That we must cut benefits now.

The reality is that CalPERS is over 90 percent funded, their assets have increased by over \$100 billion

a period of growing pains and staff reassignments and kept her wits when those around her were losing theirs," she said.

McIntyre acknowledged the challenging environment Watts stepped into, saying, "For my first few years (as an LRR) I worked with a new administrator every year. Some could not handle the best and brightest member-leaders, were insecure and intimidated by CSUEU staff's knowledge, and had no idea what their role should be in such a complex organization. Virginia stands out by a country mile!" McIntyre concluded.

Watts notified President Gantt and the Board of Directors that her retirement would be effective as of July 30. However, she agreed to extend that date until her replacement could be hired and trained. At the end of next month, Watts will retire a second time, but not before working with Philip Coonley, who was tapped from his position as a CSUEU LRR assigned to the Sonoma and San Jose campuses to take over. Watts recommends that Coonley "be himself. Every administrator has to find their own style and meet their own challenges."

We can expect to hear more from Watts, whose career began at UCLA's Graduate Research Library in 1964. In 2002, she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing from Antioch University at the age of 60. She anticipates possibly serving to mediate labor issues for the state on a part-time basis. There's also that novel to finish, and the next one to start ...

Question two (10 points, essay): Will Watts ever really retire completely?

since 2003, and employer contribution rates are no higher today than they were thirty years ago.

Richman and our other enemies will continue to try to divide us. They will say that because many private sector workers have seen their benefits cut and pensions eliminated, that public employees should suffer the same fate.

This is not a fight between public sector and private sector workers. It is not a fight between union and non-union workers.

This is a fight for all American workers. It is a fight for the middle class American dream. The dream that if you work hard, and especially if you work union, you can provide for your family. You can go to the doctor when you're sick. You can grow old and retire with dignity. And you can watch your children and grandchildren grow up in a world that you left just a bit better.

As always, we will face well-funded and powerful opposition. The same one percent of the richest Americans I referred to will not concede their wealth and power without a struggle.

But like Frederick Douglas said, "Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are people who want crops without ploughing the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning; they want the ocean without the roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, or it may be both. But it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without demand, it never has and it never will."

Brothers and sisters, we must join together and demand good, middle class jobs. Demand stable and secure pensions. Demand quality, affordable health care. Demand our fair share of the wealth created with our labor. And fight to pass this legacy on.



By Russell Kilday-Hicks

For those of us who've attended CSUEU's Lobby Day over the years—when union activists spend time in Sacramento preparing for and visiting state lawmakers over sometimes two or three days—this year's was a huge success, one of the best ever.

There was the convenience of the hotel since it was within walking distance to Capitol Park (the office building where the state government resides) and the excellent program preparing CSUEU representatives for their day in Capitol offices, not to mention the post-lobbying meeting where statewide voting trends were examined, but the entire event was competently planned and smoothly executed.

This yearly event is organized by the Legislative Committee, led by Chair Vicky McLeod, whose mother is a state senator. CSEA's Governmental Affairs Office, leg by long-time lobbyist Sheri Golden, assisted the committee and made the legislative appointments corresponding to the campus locations of each team.

The preparation was highlighted by a speech by David Low, lobbyist for the other CSEA in California, the California School Employees Association. Low told us to watch out for more "reform" measures and outright attacks on our pensions and health care benefits. He said unions united beat them back before and will do it again.

Also the evening social event allowing legislators and their staffers to drop by for informal visits was very productive this year. "The Social was a great turn out from 2006," McLeod said. "We had nine legislators attend and had great conversations with all of them."



Committee Chair Vicky McLeod, Assemblywoman Lori Saldana (D-San Diego), President Pat Gantt at the evening reception

With our current governor, who has not been shy to veto any CSUEU-sponsored bills we get through the legislature, the Legislative Committee has put pushing actual bills to the back burner. "We focused on the CSU budget and the one percent for compensation," McLeod said. "Asking

for more money for all CSU employees—including managers."

McLeod outlined other improvements made. "Participants liked receiving documentation ahead of time and the role playing is always a plus," she said. "Attendees would like to do more role playing and have actual scripts available to use on the



Nancy Kobata stands with state Senator Dean Florez (D-Shafter)

appointments. The committee is working on draft scripts and information for district visits."

Lobby Day provided sample letters and documentation to use for a district visit as well. The most important aspect for influencing lawmakers is being in their minds year-round. For this reason, McLeod is asking chapter activists to make local visits in lawmaker's home district offices.

Next year's Lobby Day is tentatively scheduled for March 3–4, 2008. "We are trying to confirm the Sheraton," McLeod said. "It is very possible that Lobby Day 2008 will only be two days since the Sheraton can not accommodate the three days."

Laughing ...

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about the health care crisis. Various vendors sporting a mini-shopping paradise were dispersed among the room. A big hit was the Hot Flash PJs; along with wonderfully creative dried flower prints, cards and journals; the naughty table for romance ideas; aromatherapy candles, bubble bath from Avon and skin care from Arbonne; and one can't forget the tables of purses; jewelry spelling out Diva, Queen, and Princess; along with wonderfully sparkly hats and outlandish Tees.

Saturday was a wonderful day filled with memorable speakers who fulfilled the agenda to empower women. Career and life coach Kathleen Barton, founder of The Success Connection, focused on how to prioritize our goals and guided us on how to break down impossible tasks into steps with deadlines so that we could meet our objectives. I walked away with the understanding of how the "Kiss of Yes" severely impacts our lives to our own detriment, and a goal isn't a goal without a deadline.

CSEA Executive Vice President Hylah Jacques said that former state legislator Hannah-Beth Jackson gave a barnstorming, bare-knuckled progressive presentation decrying the state of the nation. Peppered with biting humor and passionate energy, she urged everyone to carry the progressive message. Jackson is the originator and president of the web-log "Speak Out California." After Jackson left the California legislature she devoted herself to community activism, progressive causes, and her very informative and inspiring blog. Worth visiting at <http://speakingoutca.org>.

According to Jacques the highlight of Jackson's presentation was when she talked about Title 9 and how important it has been for girls' scholastic athletic programs to receive funding and credibility equal to the boys' programs. Jackson recalled her own experiences as a child interested in playing baseball and trying out for the team, the boys' team, only to be told she would never be able to join the team, no matter how good she was. Fortunately, Jackson's parents were supportive and pointed her in the direction of activism and politics—which became her lifelong passion.

Of course it wouldn't be a real women's event without the passion for fashion. During lunch there was a lovely parade of real working women sporting casual wear, business suits, and evening wear for all sizes and shapes. At one point I felt like I was in New York at a fashion premiere with all the clicking and snapping cameras. At my table we were trying to figure out who should wear what and when. All the lovely models were members of the CSEA Women's Committee. Their smiles gave away their fun and it was a stellar and divine event with the support (and catcalls) from all the attendees.

Dr. Jean DeCosta, dean of Student Affairs and former EAP director at Cal Poly for over twenty

years, spoke about the value of facts in communication. She described how our brain is a valuable tool that likes to work 24/7. Our brains are constantly evaluating the stimuli around us and applying our previous experiences, but negative triggers can lead to incorrect conclusions. The value of her lesson was how we can extrapolate the wrong conclusion when we don't see the facts for what they are. She gave a wonderful

Each grandchild is asked, "What have you done with your hands this week."

example about an outgoing seven year old boy on vacation at a hotel. He went to the pool and met a family of kids and was able to join them in their games. He had a great time and spoke about his adventure with his new friends the rest of the day. On the next day, when he went to the pool, he refused to go in. He expected to see the same family of kids, and when he didn't see them and realized another set of kids were in the pool, he was convinced that it wasn't going to be the same and therefore he was going to have a terrible time. Granted, as adults we have more complicated scenarios, but we apply similar reasoning to events, often making them far worse than they really are.

Often as stewards it is our job to listen to our clients and pull the actual facts from their event/story. I found De Costa's lesson effective on how to apply my listening skills to the client's experience and identifying the negative triggers, and how important it was not to add my story to the clients, just my wisdom, intelligence and the contract.

Dr. Thomas Hopkins had a big act to follow, but he was delightful and entertaining. He raised important health issues not only for women in the audience, but the men too. He spoke about how critical it was to establish a good relationship with your health care provider and the appropriate health checks at a certain frequencies as we age. The impact of catching a problem early not only benefits us, but those around us at home and work. As women, we take on taking care of everyone else, and can tend to neglect our own health. He stressed how important it was to care for our health first, so that we could share the best of ourselves with others.

But at the close of Saturday, as groups formed and people went their separate ways for dinner, everyone was talking about the profound effect that Patty Garamandi had on all of us. She spoke about how important public service is to her and John, her amazing experiences in the Peace Corps, FEMA, an amazing and scary journey to East Ethiopia during a famine with war about to break out, and sharing the Clinton's first few days in the White House. What impacted me the most

was her message of how we, as mothers and leaders, influence the children in our lives, and how we can raise them with awareness and compassion for others. She shared how the Garamandi's teach this valuable lesson by spending their Sunday evenings with their grandchildren. Each grandchild is asked, "What have you done with your hands this week?" The littlest tyke might share how he or she helped a friend who fell down while playing in the playground to the older kids volunteering in greater community activities.

Elnora Fretwell from ACSS supervisor's union said that she was ready to join the Peace Corp after Patty's riveting and fulfilling experiences. She wanted to think more clearly about the future and make a difference.

Sunday morning we were grandly entertained by Dixie Lee Schneider. Thanks to a serious Dose of Dixie, I will never look at driving the same way again. She demonstrated how through laughter we can handle any stressful situation. Dixie travels abroad to bring joy to the troops and one of her favorite props is a steering wheel. I love the line she received from a TSA agent as she was passing through security. The agent had commented that she should just buy The Club the next time Dixie wanted to leave her car behind. It took Dixie a while to explain it was a prop for her show and has undergone some serious security checks.

It is difficult to describe the humor she showered on all the event participants, but everyone was holding their sides by the time she was finished. But I have to agree, it is important to have a few fun toys tucked away in our drawers and displayed on our desks. She found that people who knew how to have fun with a troll doll can handle stress better than someone who can't. It is critical to bring fun and joy to work too (when appropriate) in order for us to relax and leave the stress of work behind when we go home.

To be honest, I had a lot of things going on in my life and was exhausted and not eager to go to the Women's Conference. In the end, my sides were aching on the drive home from all the laughter I experienced that weekend. I left energized, excited, and empowered. And I wasn't alone. Shirley Staton, Chapter VP of Fresno State, said that she had an amazing time. "The CSEA Women's Conference was an excellent opportunity for fellowship and bonding on women's issues and initiative's in life and the workplace." Lori Williams, CSUEU VP for Finance, said she "left the conference strengthened by what we as women can accomplish as a group."

The wonderful guest speakers provided me with excellent insights and tools to be a more effective co-worker, community, and union leader. I learned how powerful my hands, along with my voice can be. So the question I leave with you is: What have you done with your hands this week?

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Budget ...

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to do with the budget.

In the end, the state was held hostage for an extra month by a handful of Republican senators acting without the approval of even the state leader of their party. This had the affect of exposing the game like never before. The first Senate Republican to turn, Abel Maldonado, stated that his colleagues had essentially moved the goal posts. He said they had already gotten everything they asked for at the beginning of the process. Senate majority leader Don Perata demanded the Republicans "tell us what you want." One of the items on their over \$800 million list of additionally proposed cuts they responded with included the yearly attack on the "UC Labor Union Institute." Of course their real name is the Miguel Contreras Labor Program. Nowhere on the institute's website is there a mention of unions. The Republicans call this non-profit research group a "special interest" because it's one of only a few groups in the state doing research on the working population in California and occasionally that research shows the advantages of unions for working people (and unionized businesses too, by the

way). There are countless groups doing "pro-business" (anti-union) research that the Republicans do not call "special" and are perfectly happy to keep funded.

The Republican holdout may have convinced the governor to use his "line-item" veto to cut an additional \$700 million from the budget after it "passed" but he may have done that anyway. He promised not to touch the CSU and he kept that promise. In the final analysis, like the answer to the question of why a dog licks his private parts (because he can), nothing more was gained for the Republicans but the crass display of power for power's sake. It must be tough to be a minority party for years on end, but there is a chance their manipulation and abuse of their budget responsibility, as Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez characterized their position, will backfire on them.

Long-term fix

The problems are not that simple but many of the solutions are. The Republican "hammer" on every "nail" deemed a "special interest" will not rebuild our state. How does one of the wealthiest states in the wealthiest country on the planet have a yearly problem with revenue stripping income? The problem

comes from having to rely on sales; when sales go down, fees go up (like student fees) because fees don't take a two-thirds vote. The Republican mantra of "no new taxes" is smoke and mirrors. They are just pushing up "taxes" by another name. What they mean to say is the little people should pay and the rich shall get richer. And they are, believe me.

For now, what is to be done?

Here's the real deal: political pressure. It's the only game in town. Like we saw when the legislature floated the idea of not fully funding the "compact" made between the governor and the chancellor, the pressure turned them back. We must get better at this, not only with our coalitions like the SEIU State Council but in the local relationships we create and the noise each and every one of us can make. We need to convince both the legislature, one lawmaker at a time, and the taxpaying citizens in the state that not only can we afford an investment in the CSU, we have a bleak future if we don't do just that.

The only long-range fix: change the two-thirds requirement (we tried and failed in 2004); return to majority rule and fix this tired script. I can't bear to watch another Sacramento sequel.

Obscene material found on computers bill becomes law

By Rich McGee, San Bernardino

Late last year, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law a bill amending the State Government Code to make it a crime for any state employee to view obscene material using a state-owned or state-leaded computer.

AB 546 makes it a crime for any state employee or contractor to knowingly use or allow others to use a state-owned or leased computer to view, access, download or obtain obscene material, except for a very limited set of specified purposes.

The only allowable purposes, according to this law, are for "accessing, viewing, downloading, or otherwise obtaining obscene matter for use consistent with legitimate law enforcement purposes, to permit a state agency to conduct an

administrative disciplinary investigation, or for legitimate medical, scientific, academic, or legislative

There have been employees within the CSU severely disciplined for doing exactly what this law describes.

purposes, or for other legitimate state purposes."

The complete text of the bill can be found on-line at http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/05-06/bill/asm/ab_0501-0550/ab_546_bill_20060930_chaptered.html

Election ...

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chair, a vice chair and six at-large members. Pam Robertson, from CSU Sacramento, won the BU2 chair and Lynn Barbra, from CSU Fullerton, was selected as the BU2 vice chair.

For BU5 chair, Sharon Cunningham, from San Diego, got the nod and Donna Dodrill, from Northridge, won the vice chair. In BU7, Annel Martin, from San Bernardino, won the chair and Jen-

nifer O'Neal-Watts, Sacramento, won the vice chair. Finally, the BU9 chair went to Rich McGee, San Bernardino, and Rocky Waters, Humboldt, won the vice chair office.

You can see the full results, including all of the at-large members in all four of the BU Councils, on our website at www.csueu.org, just click on the "results" link in the box on the top of the left side of the page to see the full list of winners.



The four Bargaining Unit 2, 5, 7, and 9 Councils—chairs, vice chairs and at-large members—are sworn in by CSEA President JJ Jelincic.

Photo: Kevin Glasson