

# UNION



# NEWS

November 2005

I HAVE VOTED-HAVE YOU?

## PROPOSITIONS 74, 75, AND 76

SEE PAGES 6 - 7!

### MEASURES SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS

#### STATE

**73 WAITING PERIOD AND PARENT BEFORE TERMINATION OF MINOR INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.** California Constitution, defining and prohibiting unemancipated minor until 48 hours after minor's parent/guardian, except in medical emergency, parental waiver. Mandates reporting requirements for monetary damages against physicians. Impact: Potential unknown net state cost of several million dollars annually for health care services programs, the courts, and administration combined.

**74 PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS. WAITING PERIOD FOR PERMANENT STATUS. DISMISSAL. INITIATIVE STATUTE.** Increases probationary period for public school teachers from two to five years. Modifies the process by which school boards can dismiss a teaching employee who receives two consecutive unsatisfactory performance evaluations. Fiscal Impact: Unknown net effect on school districts' costs for teacher compensation, performance evaluation, and other activities. Impact would vary significantly by district and depend largely on future district personnel actions.

**75 PUBLIC EMPLOYEE UNION DUES. RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS. EMPLOYEE CONSENT REQUIREMENT. INITIATIVE STATUTE.** Prohibits using public employee union dues for political contributions without individual employees' prior consent. Excludes contributions benefiting charities or employees. Requires unions to maintain and, upon request, report member political contributions to Fair Political Practices Commission. Fiscal Impact: Probably minor state and local government implementation costs, potentially offset in part by revenues from fines and/or fees.

**76 STATE SPENDING AND SCHOOL FUNDING LIMITS. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.** Limits state spending to prior year's level plus three previous years' average revenue growth. Changes minimum school funding requirements (Proposition 98). Permits Governor, under specified circumstances, to reduce budget appropriations of Governor's choosing. Fiscal Impact: State spending likely reduced relative to current law, due to additional spending limit and new powers granted to Governor. Reductions could apply to schools and shift costs to other local governments.

YES  NO

YES  NO

YES  NO

57-102A

VOTE BOTH SIDES A

# NO

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FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY DEAN MURAKAMI

### LESSONS FROM THE AFTERMATH

It has been almost two months since hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast region. However, those people who have been displaced from their homes; who have lost loved ones; have lost their jobs; their needs are still urgent and will continue to be for several years. Add to this the cost of reconstruction and those needs are almost overwhelming. The LRCFT has donated \$12,000 to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Disaster Relief Fund and will continue making annual contributions as long as there is a need. The AFT is the largest representative of school employees in the Gulf Coast region with about 15,000 members. The money donated to the AFT Disaster Relief fund goes directly to AFT faculty and staff in the region for financial assistance. In addition, separate from the relief fund, AFT has credited an extra \$500 for each person in the devastated area that has an AFT credit card. Thanks to all of you who have made donations to their respective charity organizations.

In my previous visits to New Orleans, the unique history, culture, music, norms, and cuisine unfailingly impressed

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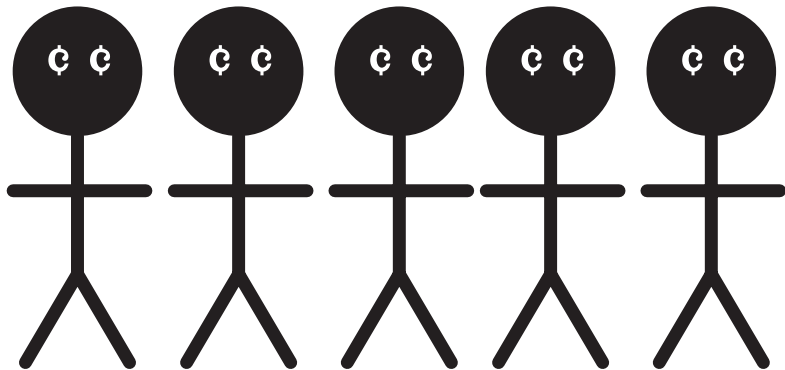
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me. The city always had such incredible energy and joie de vivre. I knew there was significant poverty below the happy exterior, and I've had discussions with friends that live in New Orleans about the poverty issues that were never addressed. Hurricane Katrina removed that veneer of carefree enjoyment and exposed the country to those horrific images of poverty. People begging for food and water; parents pleading for their dying children; a corpse slumped in a wheel chair; and another blanket-covered corpse lying by the side of the road. It was the eyes that haunted me more than anything else; the eyes seemed to be a conduit where I was able to sense the pain and suffering within their souls. There were also heroic im-

*Studies have shown that school segregation today is as high as it was before the civil rights movement.*

ages of people trying to help, rescuers in boats and helicopters, and overwhelmed medical workers. Those images have become a part of the collective consciousness of this country, one that we must never forget. Those images illustrated the incontrovertible and

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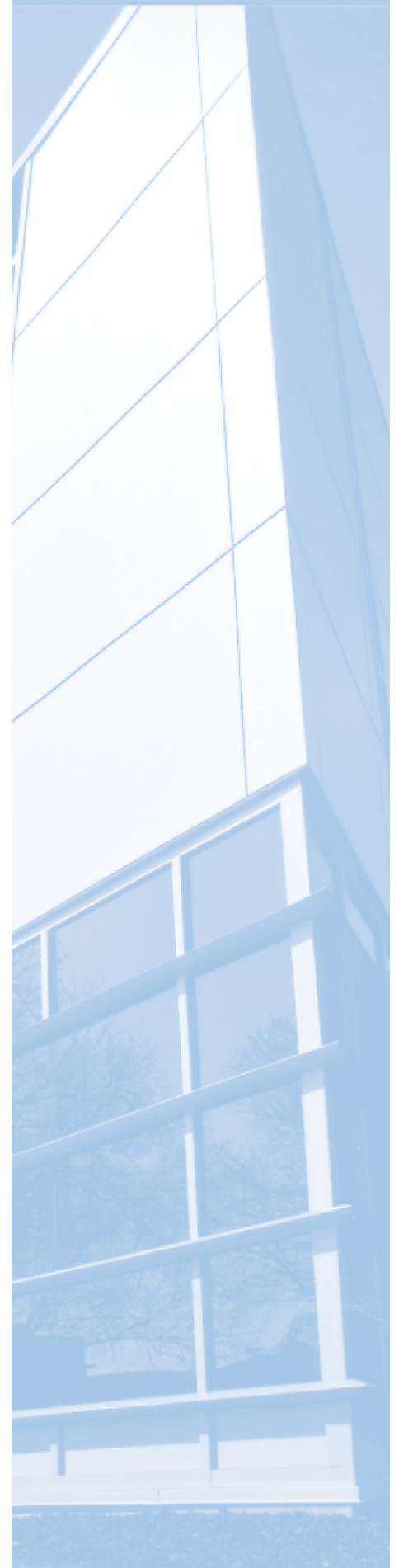
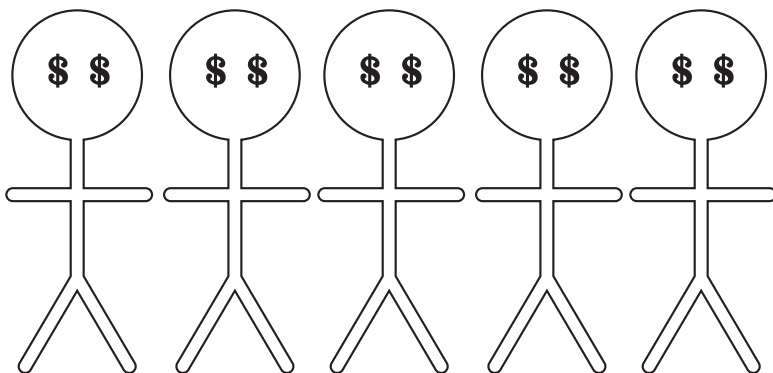


disheartening fact that the face of poverty in New Orleans was largely African-American, many of whom had poor job skills and little education. I always knew that, but it was never so visually imprinted into my memory like this.

What we saw was the consequence of a long-standing New Orleans history of corruption, misplaced values, and institutional racism. The racial gap in education, family income, and opportunity are as deep as at any time in that area since 1965. Long-standing racially/economically segregated communities with poor performing schools and few job opportunities have not changed following the civil rights movement and supposedly better race relations. New Orleans has been a place where large community investment (taxes) went to corporate shipping and petroleum operations, hotels, casinos, an ever-expanding convention center, and the Superdome. At the same time, New Orleans has rarely ever passed a school bond and has consistently been one of the worst in the country in per pupil K-12 school funding. There has been a historic lack of investment in education and a myopic understanding of the value of education for the community. As a result, corporate high skill/wage jobs often went to those moving from other parts of the country rather than from within the local community. It is also unfortunate that New Orleans may be a microcosm of the rest of the country. In most of the major cities in America, Anglos have moved from the inner city to the suburbs with better schools and jobs. This has left the inner city with a predominantly minority population, poor schools, movement of companies and jobs out of the inner city, and an economically segregated community based on racial lines.

Studies have shown that school segregation today is as high as it was before the civil rights movement. The social and psychological difficulties that the inner city poor and minorities bring to school makes the job of teaching much more difficult, so that excellent teachers often leave within a few years.

In Sacramento we have our Oak Park and Del Paso Heights communities, and the booming (white) suburbs of Roseville, Loomis, Folsom, Cameron Park, and El Dorado. We have had schools with falling ceilings, inoperable air-conditioning, antiquated textbooks, and mold on the walls before the community finally passed a school bond. We have a governor who has been trying to devalue the contribution of teachers and reduce the Proposition 98 guaranteed minimum for school funding. While significant investment has gone to the downtown area for revitalization, it does not affect those economically segregated communities. Therefore, communities like Oak Park and Del Paso Heights remain forgotten, people pleading for help, but like the poor in New Orleans, no one is coming, a veil shrouds their suffering and spares us from having to invest emotionally. Is it going to take a flood before we recognize and are motivated to address the social and economic inequities in our own community? ■



## SEEING THE INVISIBLE

BY TRACI GOURDINE

This could easily sound like a commencement or motivational speech. This time slot could bring on the crickets with a wrong turn of phrase or poorly timed joke. What is this slot anyway? First off, someone suggested I talk about where I've come from and how I ended up poet, editor, and professor. I started off in NYC and at 19 ended up in California in 1978 with a one-way ticket, \$200 and an eight month old in my arms. I wanted to be a writer but I had absolutely no idea how high the odds were against me. I graduated from UC Davis and raised two daughters throughout the years, and I realize that both drive and accident brings me to this spot.

When I was a kid in NYC, my father decided to put me in Catholic School. I was running around loose in the streets and having a dangerously good time cutting classes to hang out in the plaza of Central Park to dance salsa with the boys from the neighborhood. One moment I was in bell-bottoms, peasant blouse and headband and the next I was in a cab headed for a meeting with a Mother Superior and my father. Upon my arrival, I was handed a grocery bag that held my new school uniform. I was told to undress and change into the blue blazer, polyester skirt and knee socks and hand over my freedom clothes.

Life changed. Life jumped the tracks. Roman Catholic nuns who read me with a glance surrounded me. They had x-ray vision. They never yelled or hit me, but they terrified all of us into scholastic performance with their stern faces and eagle eyes. One never dreamed of showing up to class unprepared or full of excuses. If you did, you ended up in the rectory on your knees, washing the feet of the Holy Virgin. But it wasn't fear that made me focus and perform to the best of my ability at that College Prep Catholic school. Basically it was because I was seen. For the first time in all of my education I was seen by a teacher who dug past my teenage obstinacy, saw through my barriers and discovered latent talents that I wasn't even aware of. They locked eyes with me and refused to avert their gaze. A searing spotlight rode my back throughout high

school causing me to see the possibilities within myself.

One particular nun, Sister James Ann, stared hard at me when it was my turn to read aloud the essay I had written. She stood in stiff backed silence for several long moments after I had finished. She saw my love of words and honed in on it, driving me relentlessly and even harder than many of the others in my class. She recognized my abilities and wouldn't have me waste it. That school, that sister, that moment saved my life. I'm not the only one who has been saved by such focus. My father was a thug out of the projects of Bedford-Stuyvesant. One day in class, he challenged a teacher to a fistfight in a cloakroom. The teacher accepted and single handedly had my father hanging from a coat hook in moments. Because he had lost that battle, my father was to stay after school daily and learn advanced calculus. This was a teacher who would not back down. Sensing the genius in my father, he steered him clear of the streets and poverty by making my father understand that math and science would save his life. My father attended Cornell University with classmates Toni Morrison, Dick Schaap and Roscoe Lee Brown (Roscoe edited my father's English papers while he in turn tutored Roscoe in Algebra). All of them came from disparate backgrounds but each made their way to the most challenging institution simply because a teacher, a professor took the time to see them as individuals with hidden unearthed genius. It saved their lives and enriched all of ours.

A dear friend, an award-winning poet, holds the most stunning story of how an instructor saved her life. Julia Connor grew up in an angry Irish Catholic household. She was incorrigible, dyslexic, sadly fashioned in an era of pastel and red lipstick, she wore only black leggings and a huge fisherman's sweater fit for Hemingway. She would neither read nor write and slid through the cracks of school virtually invisible and at times dismissed as too lost to teach. One day she happened to turn up to class early to take her usual seat in the very

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back of the room. The teacher had written a few lines of poetry on the board and for some reason, Julia forced these scribblings into meaning. To this day she can't explain why it was that she took the time to focus those words into coherence, but when she did, those very words raised the hairs on her neck and arms. The teacher, standing off to the side saw her response and tackled it. He approached slowly as one would approach a spooked horse and before long he had untied her anger, her disbelief in herself and the world and uncovered one of the most gifted artists working today. I have Julia tell this story every summer to the high school students we work with at the California State Summer School for the Arts. They can't believe that this subdued, articulate intelligent writer was once illiterate, angry, and unapproachable and determined to meet the world with her fists. She was seen by an instructor who could have easily dismissed her as useless but instead, he saw past the rage and found someone who soared once permitted.

Stories such as these helped me find purpose in teaching. I cut my teeth teaching inside California State Prisons while putting myself through graduate school. I worked within the Arts and Corrections Program facilitating writing workshops for men, women, and children. Inside, I was faced with huge men with swastikas tattooed on their heads and scars creased their faces; the women carried enough rage to topple a skyscraper and the children appeared so blank and so unloved they had goals to tour some of the meanest prisons just to prove they could survive it. All of them are numbered and all of them are dressed identically. In these places they are watched but are unseen. When I was locked in with them for three hours at a time, it was not only my job to teach them how to write, but I was expected to keep them in line and keep myself safe. Without any training whatsoever as an instructor, armed only with books of poetry and naivety, I had to reach people everyone else had given up on. In time I had lifers,

functional illiterates, and some of the most calloused psyches writing and reading their stories and poems. I had no pedagogy. I had only the seat of my pants.

If I happened to pause and truly focus on the fact that I was in a prison (Deuel Vocational Institute, Northern California Women's Prison, Vacaville Medical Facility, Old Folsom, New Folsom, California Youth Authority) with some of the most violent people in California, I would have balked. However, I was so naive and so hungry, I overlooked the fact that I was trying to teach people with horrific pasts and insurmountable learning difficulties. To stay the fear, I simply told myself to pretend I was back on the streets of New York. The main line was Times Square at 3am and my classroom was the waiting room at Port Authority and these folks were waiting for the next bus out of town same as me. I relaxed and listened. I stared them straight in the eye and refused to back down. I listened to their stories. I spoke my mind and hurled back asides as quickly as they hurled them at me. I would not be shaken. I saw to it that they would neither rhyme nor write anything but the solid truth. I demanded that they showed themselves. In time, I found playwrights, poets, novelists, essayists and comic writers amongst drug dealers, armed robbers, murderers jewel thieves and arsonists. I saw inmates parole literate and confident in themselves. Few returned; some went on to finish their educations in several colleges and universities.

I don't know if I saved a life or not, but I do know that every man, woman and child set before me was seen as an individual with a gift. If I could let them know that I could see them they began to believe in themselves and put down the rage or sadness at least for a little while. In addition I never forgot where I had come from. Wayward kid with a penchant for chaos, easily distracted and a single parent by 18, my odds had once been as high as theirs. I still don't allow myself to forget that when faced with a student on

limited income, two kids at home to feed, and a dying car in the parking lot. I do know there's ability in the tight fistled scrawl of the man who appears angry and wary, biding his parole in my Developmental Writing class.

Once I came to American River College, I felt the job would be easier. Here I would find a predictable population of eager young scholars. Of course I was wrong. The diversity of culture, education and lifestyle within our classrooms provides me with the same challenges. Again, before I can teach I must see the individual before me. Too many have been told they cannot achieve, that they are weak and hopeless with math, science, reading or writing. That the best they can do is hide or feign competence. I'm not saying that I have to be a social worker or a therapist in order to teach. I'm simply saying that there is an innate common need within all of us to be seen, truly seen as individual with talents just waiting to be unleashed and appreciated. Ralph Ellison wrote, "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me". Without recognition, why should a student try to progress? What difference would their efforts make if they sense they are still invisible? I've learned to dig past reluctance, indifference, and their belief that failure is a given and I try to let each student know that I recognize their possibilities. Once that understanding is achieved, the student seems to shuck off whatever it is that encumbers them and they begin to try mainly because they sense the genius within themselves.

*(Traci Gourdine is a professor in the Department of English at American River College. She gave this speech at the Fall 2005 Convocation. It is reprinted with her permission.)* ■

## NO ON PROPOSITION 74

Governor Schwarzenegger has called the November 8 Special Election, an off-year election, where no statewide public office is being contested, principally to have the voters approve ballot measures that he believes, if approved, will make it easier for him to implement his plans. This article reviews Proposition 74, the so-called (by Governor Schwarzenegger and his supporters) "Put the kids first act."

Proposition 74 would require new K-12 teachers to undergo five years of probation instead of the current two years. Supporters of Prop 74 claim that after completing their current probationary period, teachers are virtually guaranteed a job for life. Thus, supporters argue that administrators need more time "to decide whether a teacher is performing well," before giving them that "lifetime" job.

Simply untrue! The current two-year probationary period is totally controlled by the school administration. During this period the probationer can be released without being offered specific reasons. Additionally, the individual has no right to challenge that decision. If the teacher successfully completes probation and achieves "permanent" status, he/she merely has a right to an administrative hearing before a district can terminate him/her. And, the administration must provide a reason for that termination. There are a variety of reasons for which a teacher classified as "permanent" may be terminated, including, but not limited to, unsatisfactory performance, dishonesty and unprofessional conduct.

Proposition 74 would deny teachers due process by allowing a district to terminate a teacher who has passed probation without providing any opportunity to improve their performance; without having to provide as much initial documentation identifying specific instances of unsatisfactory performance.

According to the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO), if Prop 74 is approved by the voters,

districts might experience increased costs. The longer probationary period and modified dismissal process for teachers who have passed their probationary period could be perceived as increasing job insecurity. According to the LAO, "This would have the effect of putting upward pressure on teacher compensation costs." We believe that it is a virtual certainty that new college graduates would think twice about becoming teachers if they knew they would have to undergo five years of probation, during which they could be terminated without cause.

What really concerns the LRCFT is that Prop 74 appears to be the main piece in the governor's plan to reform education. His plan does not include hiring more teachers; decreasing class size; providing more funding for books and other supplies currently being paid for out of the pockets of teachers; upgrading facilities and a host of other much more pressing needs. No, our fearless governor is going after teachers, who are the bulwark of the education system.

Prop 74 amounts to a smokescreen and a red herring to divert our attention from the real problems of our schools and the fact that the governor has no plan to address those problems.

For these reasons and more, we urge you to vote "No" on Proposition 74 on the November 8 special election ballot.

(Information on which this article is based is available at the California Secretary of State's Web site at [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)) ■

## NO ON PROPOSITION 75

According to the text of Proposition 75, the purpose and intent of the law are "to guarantee the right of public employees to have a say whether their dues and fees may be used for political campaign purposes." As many of you know, public employees already have that right. Every year the LRCFT and other public employee unions must pay an independent auditor to examine the previous year's expenditures and determine, among other things, which of those expenditures were spent for partisan political purposes. Those expenditures are then expressed as a percentage of the total expenditures of the LRCFT and constitute the amount of money that, upon request, is returned to those who do not want their agency fees spent for those purposes. This entire procedure is mandated by law.

Let's be frank, though. Proposition 75 is not about protecting your paycheck; it's about protecting the governor and his supporters from public employee unions. A cursory look at contributors to the governor's various campaign committees (appearing in the Sacramento Bee weekly on Saturdays on page A-3) will demonstrate this clearly. And, although public employee unions have opposed the governor on several fronts, the main cause for concern among our ranks should be his clearly stated intent to alter the public employee retirement systems, STRS and PERS, from defined benefit plans to defined contribution plans. Plainly, Governor Schwarzenegger would like those retirement plans to look more like 401Ks, subject to the vicissitudes of the stock market, than plans on which you can rely when you retire.

Maybe you think that the governor only wants to change the retirement plans of new teachers and, thus, you will not be affected. You better think twice. If funds formerly slated for the defined benefit plan are now diverted to 401Ks, that will have a profound impact on the earnings of the current plan and, consequently, your final retirement allotment. If the defined benefit plan begins losing money because of the



**NO**



diversion of funds to 401K-type plans, that will force either an increase in your monthly contributions or a reduction in your benefits or both.

If naked self-interest doesn't move you, then consider how unfair it is to put barriers in the path of public employee unions' participation in the political process, while allowing large corporations and the governor's other wealthy supporters the freedom to ignore shareholders' interests when contributing to political campaigns, even though those same corporations outspend unions 24 to 1.

We urge you to vote "No" on this proposition when you cast your ballot in the November 8 Special Election. You will be doing yourself a favor. ■

## NO ON PROPOSITION 76

Proposition 76, the so-called "Live within our means act," (LWOM) is an initiative that was put forth by a business-backed coalition calling itself Citizens for California and has the support of Governor Schwarzenegger. According to the non-partisan California Budget Project, Proposition 76 "would radically restructure the rules governing the state's budget process...impose a new state spending limit, give the governor [whether Democrat or Republican—Ed.] broad authority to cut spending if revenues fall below forecast levels, and make changes to the Proposition 98 school spending guarantee...."

### LWOM AND PROPOSITION 98

The LWOM Act clearly and irrevocably eliminates the "maintenance factor" that was built into Proposition 98. The factor was built into Proposition 98 in order to return school funding to where it would have been absent suspension when the state economy has improved and the state can afford it. Elimination of the "maintenance factor" would significantly weaken the long-term value of the Proposition 98 guarantee.

The other certain result of LWOM would be that increased school funding (other than growth and inflation) would be on a one-time, year-by-year basis. It would remove the "floor" from Proposition 98's promise and prevent any optional increases from being added to the base. Furthermore, the governor could impose funding cuts unilaterally up to four times annually if revenue drops 1.5% below budget.

### NEW POWERS FOR THE GOVERNOR

Proposition 76, if approved by the voters on November 8, would give the governor broad powers to cut spending even in years when there is a budget surplus. It would allow the governor to declare a fiscal emergency and cut General Fund spending any time revenues fall 1.5 percent or more below forecast levels or if the governor determines that the state will spend more than half of the funds in the Budget Stabilization Account unless legislation is enacted to address the emer-

gency within a specified period. The LWOM Act does not require that the budget be out of balance in order for the governor to reduce spending. The governor would also retain the power to declare a fiscal emergency and cut spending even if expenditures fall below anticipated levels, since the trigger looks only at the revenue side of the budget.

### REMOVING CHECKS AND BALANCES

The LWOM Act would allow the governor to determine unilaterally what spending would be cut to close future budget deficits. In bad budget years, a governor could circumvent the will of the legislature by vetoing any measure passed to address a budget shortfall and then use his/her authority under the LWOM Act to make spending reductions to craft a budget. For example, a governor would have the authority to reduce spending for K-14 education regardless of the will of the legislature. A governor would also have the authority to reduce wage and benefit payments subject to collective bargaining agreements signed after the effective date of the LWOM Act or to reduce appropriations that support payments to businesses that provide goods and services to the state pursuant to contracts signed after the effective date of the Act.

Finally, the LWOM Act does not require any advice a governor may receive from the Department of Finance regarding the status of state revenues and expenditures to be made public, or provide a process for the legislature and/or public to review and comment on the forecast that would be used as the basis of declaring a fiscal emergency. Nor does the Act require a governor to provide an analysis of proposed spending reductions or their impact to the public or the legislature.

Proposition 76 is a bald-faced power grab by Governor Schwarzenegger, allowing him unlimited power over budget decisions and holding him accountable to no one. We urge you to vote "No" on Proposition 76 on the November 8 Special Election ballot. ■

## CAMPUS REPORTS

### ARC REPORT

By DIANA HICKS

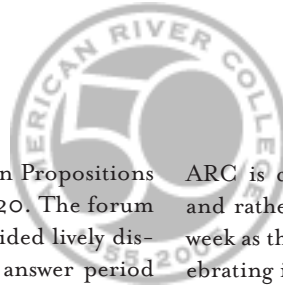
The Union held a forum on Propositions 74, 75 and 76 on October 20. The forum was well-attended and provided lively discussion in a question and answer period on the three ballot issues. Carl Pinkston, from the Alliance for a Better California, and Robert Perrone, LRCFT's Executive Director, spoke in opposition to the propositions. Craig De Luz, from Governor Schwarzenegger's campaign organization, JoinArnold, spoke in support of the propositions.

In speaking on Proposition 74, Perrone made the point that instead of devising new methods of terminating new teachers, Governor Schwarzenegger and his supporters, who have touted Prop 74 as "education reform," should be devising methods to keep new teachers in the profession. He cited the statistic that more than half of all new teachers leave the profession within five years. As he pointed out, "Prop 74 offers neither mentoring of new teachers nor any mandatory training."

Pinkston emphasized that Prop 75, the so-called "paycheck protection plan," is redundant, in that those who disagree with a union's political expenditures can request a rebate of that portion of their agency fees that are directed to spending on political issues. The process of requesting such a rebate requires no special form nor elaborately worded message.

Audience members were reminded by the speakers that Proposition 76 would give the governor, whether a Democrat or Republican, unprecedented new powers over the budget without the requirement of even consulting with the legislature.

In addition to the forum, we have distributed literature to faculty mailboxes on the ballot propositions.



ARC is celebrating its 50th anniversary, and rather than just designate one day or week as the day to celebrate, we will be celebrating it all year. One way we will honor this 50-year mark is through a series of colloquia in which we will feature programs and faculty. The first is "Marsden Hartley and I," presented by Art professor Craig Smith on November 3rd.

The new Natomas Educational Center located next to Inderkum High School on Del Paso Road near Truxel, opened in September. Faculty, both full- and part-time, have staffed the late start classes. Unlike in the past, all faculty teaching at ARC will be rotating in and teaching at the Center at some point in their careers. ■

### CRC REPORT

By CHUCK VAN PATTEN

Before an inquisitive group of students and two adjunct faculty members, representatives from the No on Propositions 74, 75 and 76 campaigns spoke and answered questions for over an hour on October 6 in the Recital Hall. The students in the audience appeared to be a representative demographic of the CRC student population—gender, ethnic and age.

Most of the pointed questioning came from one of the students who had assumed the role of the devil's advocate. He did an excellent job of challenging the two speakers from the "No" side of the debate. The "Yes" side, representatives of Governor Schwarzenegger and his supporters, had been invited but chose not to attend.

In addition to the forum, the LRCFT has sponsored literature tables on campus, where we have distributed campaign literature and registered new voters. ■



## A NEW LABOR FEDERATION

By BILL MILLER

The Change to Win (CTW) Coalition, formed on June 15, 2005, was originally composed of five unions: Service Employees International Union (SEIU), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (Teamsters), United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), Laborers International Union of North America (Laborers) and the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees-Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (UNITE-HERE). Four of these unions (all but the Laborers) did not attend the late July convention of the AFL-CIO.

CTW held its own convention near the end of September, and in addition to the five unions mentioned above, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (Carpenters) and United Farm Workers of America (UFW) also attended. The Carpenters pulled out of the AFL-CIO in 2001, while the Laborers and the UFW are still in the AFL-CIO.

Between the AFL-CIO and CTW, there are approximately 14 million union members. Now, CTW has about 5 million members and AFL-CIO has about 9 million members. In addition, there are 2.3 million members of the National Education Association (NEA) that are not affiliated with either labor federation.

The AFL-CIO still has over 50 unions that are members, including the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and its 1.3 million members of which the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers (LRCFT) is a local, Local 2279.

### Declining Number of Workers in Unions

In 2004, 12.5% percent of workers in the United States were unionized, down from 12.9% in 2003 and 20.1% in 1983. While about 36% of government workers are unionized, only about 8% of private sector employees are unionized. One question that a number of commentators have asked is: does it make sense to split a declining number of union members into smaller segments

by forming two separate labor federations?

### The Biggest Difference: Money for Organizing

It seems to make sense to CTW. Its principle point is that more money must go to organizing and getting new members. As Tom Woodruff of the SEIU said, "Fifty million workers are in jobs that can't be off-shored and can't be digitized--six million are in the CTW unions now, so 44 million are to be organized." CTW would return half of what the affiliate unions were paying to the AFL-CIO for organizing if each union can demonstrate a strategy for using the money to organize its industry. That would amount to \$35-45 million dollars annually. Of that money, \$25 million would go to organizing campaigns at companies such as WalMart, Federal Express and Cintas. The AFL-CIO had offered to return \$15 million to the affiliates and dedicate another \$7.5 million to organize companies such as WalMart.

### A Problem Almost Solved: Working Together on the Local Level

At first, John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO, said that unions that were not affiliated with the AFL-CIO could not participate on state federations or central labor councils (CLCs), the local organizations that do a lot of the grassroots work of unions. Lately (in the last few weeks), the AFL-CIO and CTW look like they will be able to settle this issue by allowing some, if not full, participation of CTW members on the state federations and CLCs.

In Sacramento, the Sacramento Central Labor Council (SCLC), affiliated with the AFL-CIO, has all of its officers from the unaffiliated unions: President John Sorsos of SEIU, Vice President Obie Brandon of UFCW and Secretary Cathy Hackett of the SEIU. Unless unaffiliated members can hold officer positions, then the SCLC will have to replace all of its officers.

### Where Does the LRCFT Fit In?

The LRCFT has been involved with the SCLC virtually since it won the right to represent all Los Rios faculty in 1978. Although

we are one of the larger local's affiliated with the SCLC, we do not and have not held a board position. Besides the unions already mentioned above, unions that are currently serving on the board are from UNITE-HERE and the unions for sheet metal workers, painters, firefighters, communication workers, electricians and iron workers.

Both the AFL-CIO and CTW are suggesting returning money to the affiliate unions for organizing. For the LRCFT, that rebate would go to the AFT to enhance its organizing efforts. Locally, almost all community college faculty are represented by unions, some affiliated with the AFT and some (like Sierra College) affiliated with the California Teachers Association, an affiliate of the NEA. Recently, members of the LRCFT executive board have helped to successfully organize one of the last remaining groups of unrepresented faculty at the Mendocino Community College District through the AFT's California Community College Organizing Project.

(Dr. Bill Miller teaches chemistry at SCC) ■

**VISIT OUR  
WEB SITE  
AT:**

[www.lrcft.org](http://www.lrcft.org)

CONTRACT INFORMATION  
ABOUT LRCFT  
EXECUTIVE BOARD  
POLITICAL ACTION  
NEWS  
LINKS  
CONTACT US

"The right is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about people."  
- Cesar Chavez

Inspired by the accomplishments of the US labor movement, the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers (LRCFT) was founded in 1978 to represent faculty throughout the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCCD). Since then, LRCFT has been a leader in the struggle for faculty labor rights in the Sacramento area and the education rights of all Californians.

FOR THE CONTRACT TENTATIVE AGREEMENTS 2003-09 [CLICK HERE](#)

## LRCFT LINKS

[http://www.lrcft.org/linkst3/cagov\\_links.html](http://www.lrcft.org/linkst3/cagov_links.html)

[http://www.lrcft.org/linkst3/hied\\_links.html](http://www.lrcft.org/linkst3/hied_links.html)

BY BILL MILLER

### Its Initiative Time!

If you're like me, you've seen a lot of ads about the initiatives. You know how the governor would like you to vote, and you know how the Democrats would like you to vote. But how much of the actual propositions have you read? I usually wait until I get the Voter Information Pamphlet, save it until a few days before the election and read as much as I have time to read before I vote.

### California Government Links

It's especially important in this election cycle to be up to speed early about the propositions. One site that has a nonpartisan role in analyzing the propositions is the Legislative Analyst's Office (<http://lao.ca.gov/>). Under "Ballot/Initiatives" and then "Propositions", you can find information about each of the eight ballot initiatives on this November's ballot. Let's assume that you've heard a ton about the Big 4 Initiatives, 74, 75, 76 and 77, and another.

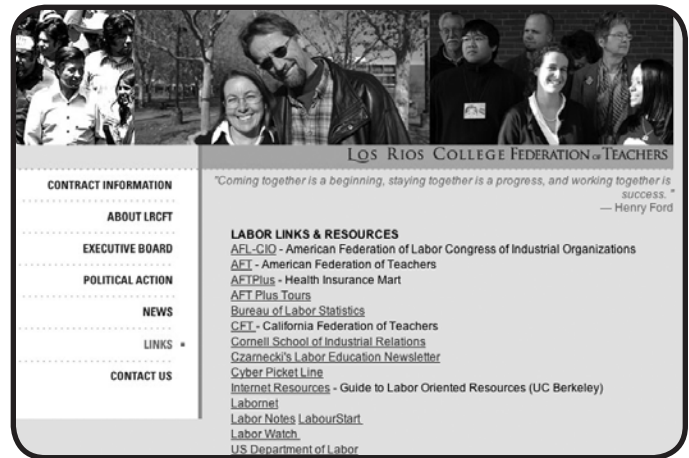
Proposition 73, the "Waiting Period and Parental Notification Before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy" Initiative Constitutional Amendment will, if passed, reverse a state law passed in 1953 that "allowed minors to receive, without parental consent or notification, the same types of medical care for a pregnancy that are available to an adult." Later, in 1969, the California Supreme Court ruled that adult women had the right to get an abortion. It wasn't until 1971 that the right to an abortion was extended to minors. There is much more information here, but perhaps that is enough to get you interested in finding out more.

Other sites listed under California Government include the State Assembly's and State Senate's websites. These two sites allow you to see some of the very strangely shaped voting districts that prompted Proposition 77, the "Reapportionment" Proposition. I must say, it seems strange that, as a resident of Davis, I'm in the same Congressional voting district as all of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties and NOT in the same voting district as about 20% of Woodland (and any of Sacramento). One thing I definitely noticed about the websites of the legislature is that not a lot of money is being spent to design them! The Assembly's website had six announcements all labeled "I."

### Higher Education Links

On this page, you'll find links to the Academic Senate of Community Colleges, the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) and The Chronicle of Higher Education - Community College News. On the day I accessed the last link there was a story about the "Millennials", born between roughly 1980 and 1994, some of whom are now going to college. A quote describing how people in this age bracket are being defined:

They are smart but impatient. They expect results immediately. They carry an arsenal



of electronic devices—the more portable the better. Raised amid a barrage of information, they are able to juggle a conversation on Instant Messenger, a Web-surfing session, and an iTunes playlist while reading Twelfth Night for homework. Whether or not they are absorbing the fine points of the play is a matter of debate.

The article went on to say that the "Millennials" may not be patient enough to sit through an hour long lecture, and asked the question how, if in any way, schools can change or respond to the perceived change in students.

In conclusion to this series of three articles highlighting the many different sources of information on the LRCFT website, if you don't know exactly what you're looking for, but you know its related to your union, and/or teaching, like Ragu spaghetti sauce, its in there! ■

<sup>1</sup> [http://lao.ca.gov/ballot/2005/73\\_IL\\_2005.htm](http://lao.ca.gov/ballot/2005/73_IL_2005.htm), accessed 10/04/05.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ppacca.org/site/pp.asp?c=kuJYJeO4F&b=139490>, accessed 10/04/05.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.assembly.ca.gov/defaulttext.asp>, accessed 10/04/05.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sen.ca.gov/>, accessed 10/04/05.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.academicsenate.cc.ca.us/>, accessed 10/04/05.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.faccc.org/>, accessed 10/04/05.

<sup>7</sup> <http://chronicle.com/cc/>, accessed 10/04/05.

## CHIEF NEGOTIATOR'S REPORT

By DENNIS SMITH

The LRCFT/LRCCD contract in Article 9, Section 9.14.1 states, "Faculty who teach overloads without additional compensation may accrue the equivalent formula hours (EFH) up to a maximum of thirty (30) equivalent formula hours which may be applied towards a Type C, Professional Development Leave." In September, my wife Darlene and I spent three weeks touring and learning about China. The day after the not-so-special election, we leave for Rome and southern Italy for a few weeks. In late December, we're planning to spend a week or two on the beach in Key West, Florida. During this time that I've enjoyed the benefit of full salary and benefits, there was no application process to my college's Professional Standards Committee, nor is there any obligation to provide a written report of my activities to anyone when I return in January. I will, however, be happy to share my photographs and talk endlessly about our experiences with anyone willing to listen.

I tell this tale not to boast, but rather to inform those

who are unaware of Type C leaves that they exist and that those leaves can be absolutely wonderful. If one reads carefully the language of 9.14.1, there are subtle details. The first is that only those unit members who teach overloads (full-time faculty) are eligible. The next is that equivalent formula hours are the basis for accrual. Since overload teaching does not require any additional office or institutional service time from the faculty member, such assignments are compensated at 75% of the full-time rate of pay. The translation is that for each four units taught in overload, the equivalent of three units are banked toward Type C leave. Lastly, there is a maximum of 30 equivalent formula hours (one year) that can be accrued. My predecessor as president of the LRCFT took the entire year and sailed to the South Pacific. Though I have a year banked, I'm taking one semester now and am planning another semester later. Most recently, LRCFT and LRCCD agreed that new mothers could utilize Type C Leaves of less than a full semester to supplement maternity leave under the provisions of Section 9.3.8.2

of the contract.

Over the years, the LRCFT has successfully negotiated five different categories of professional development leaves for full-time "regular" faculty that are summarized in Appendix D and detailed in Article 9. Sadly, though the effort has been made repeatedly, we have been totally unsuccessful in negotiating any professional development leave opportunity for part-time "temporary" faculty. The terms "regular" and "temporary" are from the California Education Code and the administrative reasoning is that one cannot be granted a leave from "temporary" employment. Ironically, the Secretary-Treasurer for the LRCFT is an adjunct faculty member and has been employed in this district longer than I have. A long-term temporary if ever there was one!

**An idea that is making its way into the dialog at the state level for "temporary" faculty is to raise the current 60% per semester to 80% per semester.**

There have been some recent negotiating successes for the part-time faculty, though, and those are detailed in the last issue of the Union News, which is online at [www.lrcft.org](http://www.lrcft.org). There have also been some legislative successes that have occurred in the last year, resulting in improvements in the computation of retirement benefits and access to unemployment benefits for "temporary" faculty. An idea that is making its way into the dialog at the state level for "temporary" faculty is to raise the current 60% per semester load limit to 80% per semester. Our statewide affiliate, the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) has recently created a Part-time Faculty Committee as was reported in the Fall 2005 edition of the CFT/Community College Council PartTimer newsletter. This committee will most likely be the group that causes this idea to become part of the CFT future legislative agenda. If you care about this idea or other such issues, be sure to communicate to the LRCFT Adjunct Representative or to any other LRCFT official at your college. ■

## I ... I ... I CAN'T ...

By STEVE RUIS

Something happened to me this semester that had not happened in the last twenty years—one of my lab sections got cancelled for lack of enrollment. I am not taking it personally; it happens to the best of us. What it did cause, though, was a concern over what I was to do. Since we are near the end of a two-year cycle, I had to make 60 formula hours by the end of Spring semester. And, since there were only lab sections unclaimed, I was looking at 27 hours of class next semester!

An option offered by my department chair was, "You could bump an adjunct."

That would solve my problem; it is allowed under our contract, ...but...I just couldn't do it.

Adjuncts don't have the best end of the stick in academia. They cobble together whatever schedule they're allowed, that fits in with their other obligations, often in assignments they would rather not do, but the rule is "you take what work you can get." They often are counting on the income from that work, too. Then at the last minute, they get bumped? Not by me, thank you; not if I can figure another way around it.

I am writing this article to encourage you to think about this before it happens. I am writing to encourage you to explore options that don't disenfranchise another teacher. I am writing to encourage you to ask: "Anyone out there want one fewer class?" If there is an adjunct who was pressured to take a section they really didn't want (out of dire need, threats over future assignments, etc.), then by all means a solution may be at hand, but just bumping an adjunct to make my schedule easier, well, ...I can't.

*(Steve Ruis is a former chief negotiator for the LRCFT) ■*

## FLC REPORT

By KC BOYLAN

At the request of Folsom Lake College's new department chairs and the Academic Senate, LRCFT representatives conducted four drop-in workshops and a joint training session with the Office of Instruction on performance review best practices. The training sessions focused on recent changes to Article 8 of the new contract and the importance of continuous communication between team members and the faculty undergoing review. Both adjunct and full-time faculty sought clarification on the changes to the self-study, which encourages faculty to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and also to identify resources needed to achieve personal and professional goals. Faculty also sought guidance on appropriate levels of interaction between team members and the faculty under review. To avoid surprises, continuous communication is encouraged throughout the process, including timely feedback after workstation observations. Additional workshops on writing clear commendations and recommendations are planned for November.

FLC has a new member on the LRCFT Executive Board. Hali Boeh, adjunct faculty in Communication Studies, will represent the interests of adjunct faculty at the college and on the board. Hali has been an adjunct faculty member at several of the colleges in Los Rios and, over the past several years, has represented adjunct interests through her efforts with the Academic Senate, Professional Development, and Department Planning. She has been teaching adjunct at FLC and EDC since 2002, and is familiar with many of the issues unique to our adjunct faculty. Her attention to detail and her collaborative approach make her an ideal representative. As with many of our adjunct faculty, Hali is often on the road between locations; the best way to reach her with questions, concerns, or a "welcome" is through her campus email boehh@flc.losrios.edu. ■

## SCC REPORT

By ANNETTE BARFIELD

LRCFT sponsored a forum on October 12th at SCC which provided an opportunity to inform faculty, staff and students on Propositions 74, 75 and 76 for the November 8 Special Election ballot. Supporters and opponents of the propositions spoke to the issues and answered questions.

The Union is also sponsoring a literature table on the SCC quad three days each week until the week of the election. Voter registration materials and information about most of the propositions is being displayed. Faculty volunteers are helping to staff the table. ■

# DON'T FORGET TO VOTE! Nov. 8<sup>TH</sup>

## THE CFT & THE ALLIANCE FOR A BETTER CALIFORNIA RECOMMEND:

### NO ON GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER'S SPE- CIAL INTEREST AGENDA

- ✗ No on Prop. 74: "Punish New Teachers Act"
- ✗ No on Prop. 75: "Paycheck Deception"
- ✗ No on Prop. 76: "Education and Health Services Cuts Act"
- ✗ No on Prop. 78: Industry-Sponsored Prescription Drug Act

### YES FOR CONSUMER RIGHTS & CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

- ✓ Yes 79: "Cheaper Prescription Drugs for Californians Act"
- ✓ Yes 80: The "Affordable Electricity and Preventing Blackouts Act."