We recently had the opportunity to attend the CTA Region 2 Leadership Conference in Reno, from Sept. 30th to Oct. 2nd. It was a weekend of informative guest speakers, instructive small group workshops, and intriguing conversation. As a newcomer to union matters, I am always amazed at the depth and extent of information, policies, and levels of leadership demonstrated within this association. Each conference opens new portals of data to be learned and processed.

There was a choice of more than 40 different small group sessions. The subjects ranged from developing school budgets to personal retirement, and extended to many contemporary, volatile issues in education. Needless to say, it was difficult to choose which class to attend. However, "Everything a Site Rep Needs to Know" was a definite must. As a first year rep, I am in much need of not only guidance, but basic information regarding procedures and protocol. The class covered every step of a grievance procedure, Weingarten Rights, and protecting teachers from parental complaints. Furthermore, many teachers who attended this class were veteran site reps who shared their knowledge and expertise, which was most beneficial and informative.

Another very worthwhile session dealt with the CTA IFT -Institute For Teaching- a program that affords grants to classroom teachers for strength based models for school change. Although this is a new approach, IFT has already helped subsidize 12 programs. Some of these include Merced's Positive Deviance Project, incorporation of STEM Programs, and Parent Teacher Visits Project. In fact, one of our own teachers, Wendy Gallimore, is also a recipient of one of these grants. She is the lead teacher of The Algebra Success Academy at Allison Elementary and Rio Tierra Jr. High. During the Capital Service Center session, Wendy presented a compelling lesson outlining the foundation of this project. I anticipate that more teachers will utilize this valuable resource. Grant applications are available online.

In addition to these informative classes, we had the pleasure of listening to CTA President Dean E. Vogel. He always has a positive demeanor and an eagerness for what is best for our students, teachers, and country. Our closing speaker was Dale E. Bernard, Executive Director of Labor and Worklife Programs at Harvard University.

This is the second union convention/conference I have attended and I'm only at the tip of the learning curve in this very dense organization. I am most appreciative for all the instructional opportunities available for one to grow within this organization. Every conference reinforces my beliefs in not only teachers' rights, but both public and private employees' rights to maintain financial and professional job security, as we approach what seems to be a new era of “scapegoating” union workers.

Melissa McManus
Joyce Elem. Site Rep

(Read articles from other attendees to the CTA Region 2 Leadership Conference on pages 3 and 5.)
As an active CTA member, you are automatically eligible for benefits under the CTA Death & Dismemberment Plan. This plan is provided by the CTA Economic Benefits Trust and requires no premium payments from you. It provides up to a $2,000 death benefit, up to a $10,000 accidental death & accidental dismemberment benefit, and a $50,000 occupational/association leader accidental death & accidental dismemberment benefit.

We strongly recommend that you register a beneficiary. By doing so, you will have peace of mind knowing that proceeds will be paid according to your specifications. If you have not registered a beneficiary, or if you can’t remember whether you did, or you realize it’s time to update your beneficiary, please take a few minutes to do so online by following these steps:

2. Sign in (registration is required for first-time users – please have your Membership ID number ready, it’s on your Membership Card, or you can get from the TRUE office),
3. Click on “My Profile” (found in orange box near “You Are CTA”), and
4. Click on the “Update Beneficiaries” tab and complete fields.

If you have difficulty with this online process, contact the CTA Member Benefits Department at 650-552-5200.

As we move towards November and the holiday season, we must realize the School Board election is only seven months away. Four years ago, many people spent countless hours getting the current Board elected. The thought at the time was that we were electing the best and the brightest, and we were getting an activist Board.

Once again, but for the last time, the seven School Board members are up for election all at once. (The following elections will be for three or four Board members at a time.) Now, Trustee areas have been reconfigured, incumbents are pondering running for re-election, and challengers are surfacing. TRUE will look to support candidates who have in mind the best interests of teachers, students and parents.

What has changed in four years are our jobs. Everything we do is highly politicized. More checkboxes added to IEPs and other forms, more parent conferences with basic or below students, and the Williams Act, are all examples of politics and legislation. When fellow teachers state “I am not a political person”, they must realize that what they do 175 days a year is very “political”, very influenced by politics. Politics affect everything.

We are the fourth largest District in Sacramento County and about the twenty-second largest union. I believe the School Board will now be a training ground for ambitious politicians, special interest candidates and people who like status quo. TRUE will protect our interests as we go forward. Hostile work environments need to go away, salary and benefits need to be protected, and real reforms to educate children need to be implemented. Our work is cut out for us. Get involved! Volunteer and participate!

John Ennis
TRUE President

October 19, 2011

Is Your CTA Death and Dismemberment Beneficiary Information Correct?
Strength in Participation and Unity

The CTA Region 2 Leadership Conference in Reno was proof-positive that California teachers are working to hold onto a standard of living through collective bargaining, collegiality, and shared values - even at this time when many hard-working American families are struggling to make a living, keep their homes, and provide for their children. This gathering of CTA members is evidence there are still people willing to work toward a better future for all Americans. When union membership shows up for union functions like this conference, they show up for unionism in general, and then workers become a force with a strong voice that speaks for all workers, not only CTA members.

My greatest takeaway from this conference is the idea that we must organize ourselves at the site level. People get busy with their lives and lose sight of how our standard of living erodes when we lose focus on what is important. Union members say, "What is the union doing for US?" We often forget that WE are US, WE are TRUE/CTA. If we do not show up for ourselves, then we cannot expect much. We have to show up, to participate, we have to remain unified, and we have to think positively about each other, all of the time, in order to become the force we need to be to make the gains we should expect as teachers and workers in this state.

It is no secret that Americans my age have a lower standard of living than our parents did. When I was a kid, our medical benefits were paid for, and there was never a question that my parents would be able to pay their mortgage, provide us with orthodontics, take us on vacations, and even give us a leg up in getting on with our own successful futures. Today, we are beginning to wake up - again - to the importance of working together to achieve common goals and regain some of what our parents enjoyed as American workers. We must show up for ourselves, though. We have to organize ourselves at the site level.

The CTA members who showed at this conference realize that we teachers do not live inside a vacuum; we are related to all other workers, to other teachers, to members of other unions, and we need to reach out to organize to be strong, powerful, and respected. It is still possible; we all must make an effort to organize on our campuses, attend union functions, and show up for ourselves, since doing so makes things better not only for us, but for our students, their families, our own families, and the future of all American workers.

Nicole Pinto
Pacific H.S. Site Rep

Elementary Teachers Meeting

- Are you concerned about elementary education in Twin Rivers?
- Do you have issues at your site?
- Are you suffering with large class size?
- Are you being asked to do custodial work?
- Is safety a concern at your campus?
- Are materials for your students hard to come by?

Let your voice be heard. Please join us for the first Elementary Teachers Meeting of this school year. This meeting will take place Tuesday, November 1, 2011 from 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. at the TRUE office. Your Elementary Directors-at-Large will be available to listen to your concerns and make a plan to help you get answers to your questions and solutions to issues.

Julieanne Neal
TRUE Director-at-Large

TRERC Update

The Twin Rivers Employee Relations Council (TRERC) meets once a month with District Administration. The main focus of the council is to resolve issues and conflicts that do not pertain to negotiations. The TRUE Team consists of: Paul Le Francois, Jack Masters, Julieanne Neal, Maria Elena Gallegos, Shirley Chambers and Joyce Childs. The following concerns were addressed at the meeting on October 17: Alternative Education, Martin L. King Jr. High, Elementary Overflow Process, Survey Results, Wednesday Professional Development and SST Process.

Paul Le Francois
TRUE Director-at-Large
It was another successful enrollment drive this year. We had 45 new members join the Catastrophic Leave Bank, pending approval. Our Bank now has 295 members.

We are happy to inform that so far, the Catastrophic Leave Bank has been able to help out 9 educators who had run out of sick-leave days, but had serious medical problems and/or surgeries. Without the help of all of you who contribute to the Catastrophic Leave Bank, their paychecks would have been significantly diminished.

If you missed out enrolling in the Bank this year, look for our enrollment campaign at the beginning of next school year. Thanks to all of you for your support.

Sharon Reichelt
Catastrophic Leave Bank Chair
Change to Teacher Evaluations?

According to Norma Sanchez, a presenter at the CTA Region 2 Leadership Conference, change may be coming to teacher evaluations in California. Due to the changes in federal education funding, states must compete for Race to the Top funds, School Improvement Grants, and Teacher Incentive Funds. States must implement newly designed teacher evaluations as part of the consideration for this special funding. California wants in on the federal money, too. For this reason, there has been pressure to change the Stull Act, resulting in several Teacher Evaluation Bills. Bills are being presented by Carol Liu, Huff, Fuentes, and Speaker Perez. Legislators and policy makers tend to think evaluation should be used for summative purposes, like quality assurance and accountability. Educators believe evaluation should be used for formative purposes like improving teaching and/or professional development.

Currently, Ed Code 44662 gives the governing board of each school district the authority to evaluate and assess certificated employee performance as it reasonably relates to the progress of pupils toward the standards established and as measured by state adopted criterion-referenced assessments. Districts, including Twin Rivers, have been looking at rubrics created by individuals like Robert Marzano or Charlotte Danielson to help track student progress. Many are trying to adopt value-added measures. Unfortunately, student growth is not one-dimensional, linear, influenced by the teacher alone, or well measured using brief and inexpensive tests. There are also some flaws with value-added measures as well, including out of school conditions and the many influences on student learning.

Our bargaining unit must be ready, if change becomes necessary, to push hard so that any change meets our interests. TRUE should become familiar with our members’ interests regarding evaluations. We need to continue to build capacity. We need to make sure teacher evaluations are about improving practice, not just test scores. Finally, we need to continue to use formative assessments with occasional summative events.

Julieanne Neal
TRUE Director-at-Large

SECURITY ACADEMY AT MCCLELLAN
3318 Howard Ave. Suite 50, McClellan, CA 95652
(916) 333-5308 www.securityacademyatmcclellan.com

We are a newly developed training facility that offers courses for the public in:

- Women’s Self Awareness (action 1)...... $20
- Defensive Devices (action 2)............... $20
- Women’s Self-Defense (action 3)......... $20
- Red Cross-Certified First Aid & CPR/AED courses, $70 (at Red Cross it’s $110)

Action courses 1 and 2 are imparted by certified law-enforcement officers; action course 3 is imparted by a black belt Tae Kwon Do instructor.

Members of the Twin Rivers United Educators (TRUE) will get a 10% discount on the above prices on all of our courses (for discount to apply, your TRUE membership will be confirmed with the TRUE office).

We are located in the same building as the TRUE office, but if a group of at least 6 persons register for a course, we can come to your school site if you prefer. To register, go to securityacademyatmcclellan.com.

We have very flexible schedules. Take advantage of this great training opportunity!
What is a “Highly Qualified Teacher”? 

Many letters were distributed to the principals throughout our District stating that teachers on their campuses are not highly qualified under current regulations. These letters are sent to students’ homes as a federal requirement under “No Child Left Behind.”

This news is often very disturbing to the TRUE members whose names are on those letters. We pride ourselves on our professional qualifications to teach every student with the best practices. The issue is not that we do not hold the proper credentials, but that we do not meet the NLCB requirements.

When a teacher has a multiple subject credential, they can teach the core subjects to a specific group of students. However, if the group changes during the day because of the student’s attendance in another teacher’s single subject class, the multiple subject teacher’s base program also becomes a single subject class because of the changes on the class roster. Then the multiple subject teacher is required to become highly qualified in the single subject. This requires that teacher to obtain a single subject credential in any subject their class roster changes because a student has left their room to take a class with a colleague that has a single subject class. Are you totally lost yet?

Special education and alternative education teachers are most often affected by the above scenario. This year the District’s Special Education Department, working with Human Resources and TRUE, have worked together to provide a solution for members that work in these special settings. The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) has established a Verification Process Special Settings (VPSS) Program for educators in special education and alternative education settings:

Members that have been credentialed since 2002 and are working in these settings will be furnished the option to complete the requirements of the VPSS program which insures they will not need to obtain additional single subject credentials. This is a two tiered process for each of the four main content areas: English, Math, Social Science and Science in all 4 California credential areas. Both tiers require a 36 hour online content and associated assignments commitment. The time frame is usually 6 to 8 weeks long for each tier. Depending on the member’s original college transcripts, the teacher might only need to complete the second tier.

The best for last is that TRUE and the District are working on a program for cost reimbursement for members that complete the program. The SDCOE program allows for members to drop one course without consequence, but second drops are costly to the program and the teacher leaving without completion. We are also working out details that would allow the TRUE members to use the college units to move over on the pay scale. TRUE will keep you posted on this last option.

Joyce Childs

TRUE CARS+Corner

The TRUE CARSplus members are tried and true: we have few leave the organization unless they retire or move up into administration. Most who go into the administrative level continue their memberships because they know the value of CARSplus. Our local TRUE CARS is currently working to increase the membership of special educators in CARSplus in our local Sacramento area. We know there are many special educators out there who need help with their programs and support at their school sites. CARSplus has always been a place where we can turn to each other for the support and ideas that keep us working toward the best practices for our students. TRUE CARS, when planning their agendas for this school year’s meetings has kept this in mind. They are inviting guest speakers that educators will find to be a great source of information and support for teachers and school site teams that work with special education students. TRUE CARS chapter generally meets on the third Thursday of every month and visitors are always welcome. October 20th, Erika Hughes from CDE, Special Education Department is slated to speak and answer questions. The chapter is also making plans for The Day of the Special Educator. Last year, many local special educators gathered together to celebrate our work with our wonderful student populations. This year’s event is tentative for Friday December 2nd in the evening. Look for details in your “e-mail inbox.”

Joyce Childs
CARS+ Region 7 Director
CTA Capital Service Center Council Equity Team

Presents

CTA/IFT UC Davis Algebra Success Academy

Dinner Forum

“Math Literacy Education
As A Key To Youth Empowerment
And Civic Equality”

First in a Series of Educational Equity Forums
On Closing the Achievement Gap

Wednesday, November 9, 2011
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Crowne Plaza Hotel
5321 Date Avenue, Sacramento
(formerly Holiday Inn)
Madison Avenue and I-80 East

FREE Dinner Menu:

- Linguine Pesto vegetarian or with chicken, sun dried tomatoes, portabello mushrooms and garlic toast
- Caribbean Chicken with mango citrus sauce, risotto and grilled asparagus
- Flat Iron Steak with grilled onions and peppers, garlic mashed potatoes and house vegetables
- Dinner includes Caesar Salad and garlic bread

RSVP by email to kdavis@sanjuan.edu with your preferred entrée by Nov. 1, 2011
EXECUTIVE BOARD:

OFFICERS:
- President: John Ennis - true.office@yahoo.com
- Vice-President: Kristin Finney - pazgirlk@yahoo.com
- Secretary: Chris Moran - riteacher@yahoo.com
- Treasurer: Rick Mau - rickmau@trueassociation.org

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE:
- For Pre-K - Grade 6: Julieanne Neal - julieanneneal1@surewest.net
  Sharon Reichelt - sreichelt23@gmail.com
  Jeanie Stockton - davejavu1@comcast.net
  Lisa Gant - lisasring@sbcglobal.net
- For Grades 7-12 & Adult Ed.: Paul Le Francois - lefrancois1@earthlink.net
  Catherine Roller - caroller54@aol.com
- K-12 Special Ed.: Chris Bach - bacher3@aol.com
- Minority Rep.: Ann Murray - annmurray456@gmail.com
- Specialty Groups: Maria E. Gallegos - gallegos4@gmail.com

NEGOTIATIONS TEAM
- Lead Negotiator: Chris Moran - riteacher@yahoo.com
- Janet Schafer
- Chris Bach

CONTRACT ENFORCEMENT (Grievances)
- Chair: Paul Le Francois - lefrancois1@earthlink.net
  Joyce Childs - joyandmic@sbcglobal.com
  Sharon Reichelt - sreichelt23@gmail.com

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
- Chair: Julieanne Neal - julieanneneal1@surewest.net

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC)
- Chair: Joyce Childs - joyandmic@sbcglobal.net

TRUE Reps on the Employee Relations Council (TRERC)
- Paul Le Francois
- Shirley Chambers
- Julieanne Neal
- Maria E. Gallegos
- Joyce Childs
- Jack Masters

CTA STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES
- Janet Schafer
- Kerri Asbury - (vacant seat)
- Wendy Gallimore
- Ann Murray
- Alternate: Lisa Gant

TRUE NEWS
- Editor: Ann Murray - annmurray456@gmail.com
- Editing Assistant: Evelyn Alvarado