

Part-Time Faculty Association of Allan Hancock College

PARITY & FAIRNESS THROUGH ADVOCACY



President's Letter

Winter 2017

By Mark James Miller, PFA President



Welcome to Winter!

“Now is the winter of our discontent.
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.”

Some people sleep with a horseshoe under their pillow, some burn life sized dolls, some eat black-eyed peas, and others practice the *bleigiessen*, the tradition of melting a spoonful of lead and then dropping it into a glass of cold water. If the lead forms into a ball, good luck will come your way in the new year. But if the lead forms into the shape of a cross, death is coming.

Belief in superstition among Americans is up. One half of all Americans believe in superstitions of one kind or another. Belief in the supernatural—ghosts, witches, magic, and haunted houses—has increased over the past decade.

Part-Time Faculty Association
of Allan Hancock College
Local 6185
California Federation of Teachers
American Federation of Teachers
AFL-CIO.

The PFA's goal is to achieve parity with the full-time faculty by improving pay, benefits, and working conditions of its bargaining unit members.

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So with my four-leaf clover firmly in hand, I look forward to 2017 as a good year for the Part-Time Faculty Association. Before we begin planning for the new year, however, it would be wise to take a look back at 2016.

2016—A Look Back At An Exciting Year

The big story for the PFA in 2016 has to be the election of Jeff Hall and Dan Hilker to the Board of Trustees in November. We were well aware that politics is a risky business, and were facing two well entrenched incumbents, Bernard Jones from Lompoc and Tim Bennett from Orcutt. If our candidates lost we ran the risk of turning these two board members from being more or less neutral toward us to being openly hostile to us and to our cause. But we felt that we had far too much to gain, and too little to lose, to pass this opportunity up. After our board interviewed all four candidates for these two positions, we decided to support Jeff and Dan.

The vote was close in both elections. When the first night's returns were in both our candidates were behind. But not all votes had been counted. A week later, after batch of late and mail-n ballots were tabulated, Jeff Hall had taken a significant lead over Bernard Jones and Dan Hilker had pulled slightly ahead over Tim Bennett. Both races were so close that we did not know the final outcome until December 6, when the last votes were counted. Dan Hilker defeated Tim Bennett by 293 votes, out 17895 cast, and Jeff had defeated Bernard Jones by 678 votes, out of 12,376 cast. Our hard work had paid off. Both our candidates were victorious.

What we accomplished is little short of amazing. Unseating two board members, each with 12 years behind him, is no small thing. It is no less than a seismic shift. But combined with the fact that with our other friend on the board, Hilda Zacarias, we now have a majority, certainly bodes well for the future. We've also shown the administration and the other board members we are a force to be reckoned with.

The annual CFT convention was held in March in San Francisco, and we sent a 4 person delegation: myself, Danielle Blanchard, Dave Yundt, and Jeff Stein. We came away with 6 awards: A First Honor for Membership Growth, 1st place for best single effort, 1st place for Best Bulletin Series, 2nd place for best website, 2nd place for best public relations, and 3rd for best editorial or column.

This was followed by the AFT Convention, which was held in July in Minneapolis. The AFT holds its convention every other year. You may recall that in 2014 it was held in Los Angeles, and we sent a delegation. But because of the cost and the distance involved, we decided not to send a delegation to Minneapolis. However, we did, just as we had in 2014, win a coveted Pride of the Union Award, for our efforts in growing our membership.

August saw a modest 1.27% across-the-board-increase for our members, the last of the pay raises we bargained in 2015. As noted below, this year's negotiations begin on January 25, 2017, with the entire contract on the bargaining table. Compensation will definitely be an important part of that.

August also saw a very modest increase in dues: .16%. Dues went up from 2.30% to 2.46%. It has been explained before but it is probably worth mentioning again, the PFA only passes through the dues increases that are passed along to us by our two parent unions, the AFT and the CFT. This is mandated by the constitutions of both these organizations.

In September the 3rd annual Labor Day Picnic was held in Pioneer Park. This event, which we helped start in 2014, is now becoming entrenched in our area and we can look forward to it taking place every year from now on.

We also added 78 new members in 2016—less than in the past three years, but still a significant number. People, we believe, are starting to realize the importance of having a union as union membership is growing nationwide.

Bargaining Begins January 25—Entire Contract On The Table This Time

Our contract, also known as our collective bargaining agreement (CBA) is of a three year duration, and is due to expire on June 30, 2017. By custom and mutual agreement, both sides typically make their list of demands public several months before the contract runs out (a process called sunshining) in the hope that a new contract can be hammered out before the old one lapses.

Sunshining and Public Comment

Under the laws that govern contract negotiations in the public sector, both the administration and the union present a list of their demands to the Board of Trustees at least a month before bargaining is due to begin. These lists are then "sunshined" before the Board. The following month, at the next board meeting, they are open for public comment. Once these requirements have been met, bargaining can legally begin, and our first bargaining session is scheduled for January 25.

Upcoming Events

Spring semester is fast approaching. Don't forget to attend both the Part-Time Faculty Orientation on Thursday, Jan. 19, (this is usually after your department meeting) and our All Staff Day Meeting, on Friday January 20, at 3 PM in C-31. The latter is an excellent opportunity to ask questions and find out the latest information from the PFA. You also get professional development credit for both.

If You Need Information on Union Benefits

Our union offers numerous benefits to its members. If you ever need information on our various benefit programs, Joe Hooper is the man to contact. You can reach Joe at ihooper@cft.org.

Don't forget our battle cry!

