

# STANDING ROOM ONLY



**VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2**

**February 2013**

**RSCCD - CSEA Chapter 579**

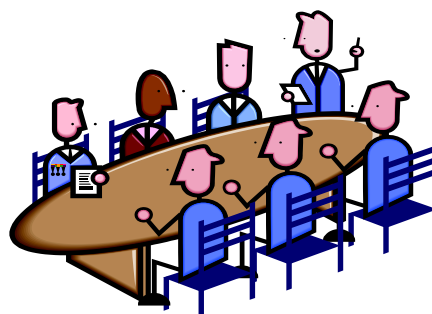
## President's Message

Happy late Valentine's Day to all my Brothers and Sisters in CSEA 579. I hope you celebrated with your someone special! In this month of "love and appreciation" I thought I would focus this message on how much I appreciate each and every one of you, what you do, and the high level of professionalism that you bring to work with you each and every day. It is important that each of us feel appreciated and respected in what we do. It is a validation of our commitment, hard work, and effort. From time to time I hear about a group of people or an individual that does not feel that way about classified staff, and it makes me a little bit angry. Classified staff - that is all of you reading this - are a valuable and integral part of learning community. Our past chancellor once indicated he viewed all employees of the district as educators, and I share this belief.

Just because you are not teaching in a classroom does not mean you are not helping a student to learn, to advance themselves, or to better society in some way. So if you are feeling down, think about all of us classified staff of CSEA 579 who know what you go through and respect and appreciate you and what you do for students. I would ask each of you make the conscious decision to dedicate some time out of your day and tell each other how much you appreciate what each of you bring to this district. Take the time to get to know your fellow Brothers and Sisters of CSEA 579.

## Chapter 579 Executive Board

President	Sean Small
1st Vice President	Victoria Williams
2nd Vice President	Tom Andrews
Secretary	Lithia Williams
Treasurer	Esmeralda Abejar
CPRO	Denise Phillips
Past-President	Marti Reiter



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## Is it a Grievance or a Gripe

I am proud to announce that of the eight co-workers that started CSEA Job Steward training on Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> all eight finished their training on Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> thus providing Chapter 579 with seven new trainee Job Stewards.

One of the most important concepts we learned was the difference between a grievance and a gripe and we want to share that information with our membership. Gripes are issues that are important to the member but for which there isn't an obvious violation of the Contract. Instead, sometimes the issues might be interpersonal disputes between members or specific concerns about how management is managing. This does not mean that the issue is not important for the Union to investigate and if possible pursue other methods of dispute resolution. One method we use at RSCCD is our Employer, Employee Relations Committee.

The EERC committee is made up of our Orange Field Office, Labor Rep. Guillermo Santucci, our Union President, our Chief Job Stewart, one rotating e-board member and the Executive Vice Chancellor of HR, John Didon and the Assistant Vice Chancellor of HR., Judy Chitlik. Here we can discuss "management mis-management" or ask for clarification of procedures. Often asking management to explain their reasoning and listen to the concerns of employees can be enlightening for both management and labor. Very often management makes decisions unsure of the impact on workers. Conversely, what may appear to be a bad decision will make more sense to the employees once management fully explains their reasoning.

## Due Process. One members story

Recently, one of our members was confronted by their supervisor with an accusation of misconduct and a recommendation that this member be severely reprimanded. Fortunately, this member knew that he/she could call Tom Andrews, our Chief Job Steward for help. This right to union representation is referred to as ones Weingarten Rights, named after the Supreme Court Case decided in 1975. Our Chapter 579 Contract, Articles 24 & 13, provides procedures for disciplinary & grievance action based on that right. After speaking with other employees working within the department, Tom was able to conclude that no misconduct was intended by the employee, even if his/her decision might not have been the most appropriate. Due to the severity of the reprimand still recommended by the supervisor, Tom requested the intervention of our Orange Field Office Labor Relations Representative. At the next level of appeal during the Skelly Hearing, an independent hearing officer reduced the RSCCD suggested disciplinary action, DRAMATICALLY.



Weingarten cont.

When management begins to ask questions that could lead to your being disciplined, you don't have to face it alone. Under this decision, when an investigatory interview occurs, the following rules apply: 1) **The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview.** The employee cannot be punished for making this request. 2) After the employee makes the request, the Employer must either: grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives; deny the request and end the interview or risk an unfair labor practice if the employer continues to question the union member asking for representation. You, the employee may stop answering questions, but **you cannot leave the meeting** or you could be charged with insubordination.

### YOUR DUES WELL SPENT

CSEA prides itself on offering members the training they need to succeed. Thus three of your E-Board members found themselves on Saturday, Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> at the Irvine Unified School District Headquarters (no swanky hotel conference room for us) for a daylong workshop designed to improve the leadership, mentorship and communications skills of chapter officers. During the thirty minute registration period, we met chapter officers from other Community Colleges, and K-12 chapters and then broke out into our officer position training.

Tom Andrews commented that the "officer skills training was a great experience for me. There was a lot of information distributed by the CSEA Field Office that answered a lot of questions I had regarding my position as Chief Union Steward for our chapter. I will be putting these ideas and methods to work right away. It was also great to see old union friends and network with all the brothers and sisters from our area. The day was educational and enjoyable, and well worth my time. Regarding the CPRO position, Denise truly enjoyed this workshop and came away with quite a bit of information. Communication is still stressed as the key to success. The interaction between the various CCOs present was inspiring and our conversations never got out of hand because our group leader kept us focused. The educational packets provided regarding the publication of newsletters seem extremely helpful and I know I will refer to them often. CPRO officers now have a new title which was introduced last year. We should update our bylaws and call ourselves CCOs "Chapter Communications Officers."

So when you ask yourself, how my dues are spent at the state level, remember these workshops and training opportunities, as CSEA is a member run Union.

### Job Stewards—We have your back

