



# UNION SPOTLIGHT

AFT Washington, AFL-CIO

Website: [wa.aft.org](http://wa.aft.org)

[www.facebook.com/aftwa](http://www.facebook.com/aftwa)

Summer 2011

## Solidarity Forever!



## Tacoma paras rally against cuts

*TFP members rally before a school board meeting about cuts in hours for special education paraeducators. AFT Renton Classified members joined them in a show of solidarity.*

### Inside

Tacoma Paras Protest

2

President's Column

3

The Business of the Union

4

Financial Emergency

5

Scholarships Given

5

Members Matter

5

K-12 Members Get Involved

6

Kudos

6

Members Meet Congressional Representatives

7

cover photo

# Tacoma paras protest cuts in hours for special ed students



*A sea of blue attending the school board meeting.*

**T**he administration at Tacoma Public Schools recently proposed cutting one half hour each day from paraeducators who work with special education students because of state and federal funding reductions.

Needless to say, these reductions will severely impact the students with whom they work.

When you add up that half-hour by the number of employees and multiply the number of hours in a school year, it means at least 12,000 hours will be lost to help students and their teachers.

A half hour reduction means that a child with disabilities won't get help on and off the school bus, or the teacher and paraeducator can't work together to plan the day.

Most of all, it means the safety of the child with special needs is at risk.

And that's the message that members of the Tacoma Federation of ParaEducators Local #461 took to their June 23rd school board meeting.



*TFP member Betty Neal testifies before the school board.*

As many of those who testified at the meeting said, the teacher and paraeducator use the first 15 minutes in the morning to plan their day as a team.

They were heard loud and clear. The school board said they have some questions and needed to do more research about the issue before they could make a decision.

*The News Tribune* provided great media coverage. Two articles were in the newspaper, and the editor accepted and published an op/ed by Sandra Schroeder that appeared the day of the school board meeting.

## AFT Washington Executive Board

President  
**Sandra Schroeder**

Vice President At-Large Pos. 1  
**Janet Watson**

Vice President At-Large Pos. 2  
**Barbara Randall-Saleh**

Vice President At-Large Pos. 3  
**Lila Harper**

Vice President for Community and Technical Colleges Council  
**Tom Gaskin**

Vice President for School-Related Personnel Council  
**Todd Hahn**

Vice President for 4-Year Council  
**Bill Lyne**

VP for Legislative Affairs  
**Phil Ray Jack**

Vice President for Higher Ed Classified Personnel  
**Mark Daniels**

Vice President for Paraprofessional Classified Personnel  
**Janet Morgan**

Vice President for Legal Defense  
**Margaret West**

Vice President for Human Rights  
**David Ortiz**

Vice President for COPE  
**Karen Strickland**

Secretary  
**Karen Patjens**

Treasurer  
**Karen Toreson**

Vice President for Special Projects  
**Marci McLaughlin**

Retiree Chapter President  
**Ross K. Rieder**

Parliamentarian  
**K. Ann McCartney**

Meetings are usually held on the first Saturday of the month except for holidays and summer months. Board members are elected to two-year terms.

AFT Washington represents over 6,000 members in early childhood education, K-12, and higher education in Washington State and is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, which represents 1.5 million members nationwide.

Editor, Sylvia Watson  
swatson@aftwa.org

Photos by Sylvia Watson unless otherwise noted.

206-242-4777 ext. 8084

Toll free: 1-866-99-AFTWA

## President's Column



**A**t the AFT Washington convention in May, I announced that this would be my last term as president.

Giving two years notice may seem excessive, but by that time I will have served 12 years. Although I and the board and staff I serve with have brought many new ideas to our union, it is time to open the door to more new ideas. The challenge for you, the members, will be in deciding which ideas those will be and who will bring them forward for you.

I hope the question of who will be the next AFT Washington president will be an area of discussion at local meetings during the next two years. Too often union leaders are elected because no one else stepped forward rather than because they had been encouraged to run by their colleagues. I hope as well that there will be more than one candidate coming to the 2013 convention and that there will be a vigorous debate about the issues and the future.

People often ask me who I have groomed to replace me. I've offered my advice to anyone who's asked and will continue to do so, but it's not my job to select the next president. It's yours. I am working with other members of the AFT Washington Executive Board to try to determine a

## Who will be the next AFT Washington president?

process by which anyone who wants to learn more about the daily life of the president can have a chance to do so. I hope that a dozen people will ask.

Unions are facing greater challenges today than ever before. We can no longer be casual about who we choose to lead us, whether locally or at the state level. It is time for those of you with vision and commitment to stand up and stand out in leadership at all levels of our union.



Since I have been involved in union leadership at various levels for 20 years, I have come to appreciate how important two elements of our work are to maintaining a strong labor movement. One is getting new people involved in leadership and activism and the other is maintaining our history.

You can help with both of those important areas by asking your local to make contributions to two important projects.

The first is the Washington State Labor Education and Research Center, now located at the Georgetown Campus of South Seattle Community College. The Center works throughout the state to provide trainings, conferences, and classes for and about working people and their unions. Its mission is to design and offer programs that will help people develop the skills, confidence, and knowledge to become more effective leaders, staff, and activists.

The second is the Labor Archives of Washington State housed at the University of Washington, founded to preserve the records of working people and their unions and to serve as a center for historical research, ensuring that new generations have access to the rich labor history of our region.

Your local can give to both by sending a check made out to the Washington State Labor Council, 314 1st Ave. W., Seattle, WA 98119. Put "WSLC-Labor Education Project" on the Memo line.

Those of us who work in education have a special obligation to support projects that enhance education, so I hope you will email or call your local president or leader to ask them to make a contribution to these worthy endeavors.

### Young unionists on campus

Involving students is a constant theme in discussions about how higher ed faculty and staff should respond to attacks on the colleges. However, faculty members generally agree that they should not recruit students for social and political activism through their classes, except when activism is an explicit purpose of the class.

So what is the answer, especially when the two-year college students are seldom able to sustain an organization on their own? *cont'd on pg. 8*

# The business of the union

**I**n May this year, AFT Washington held its 76th convention at the Coast Wenatchee Center.

During the convention, about 60 delegates attended from the following locals: AFT Everett #1873, AFT Renton Classified #6367, AFT Renton TC Faculty #3914, AFT Washington Retiree Chapter #8045R, AFT Seattle #1789, Bates TC #4184, Cascadia College #6191, Clover Park TC Professional Staff #6431, Edmonds CC #4254, United Faculty of Green River CC #2195, Lake Washington TC #4787, Shoreline CC #1950, South Puget Sound CC #4603, and Tacoma Federation of ParaEducators #461.

The Friday dinner program featured **Bryan Kennedy**, President of AFT-Wisconsin, who spoke about their governor's efforts to kill collective bargaining, other anti-labor measures, and labor's response. Wisconsin has long been a pro-labor state.

Because of the governor, the labor movement in Wisconsin was energized. Faculty or academic staff at six university campuses voted to unionize since the attacks began.

Kennedy told AFT Washington convention delegates to be prepared for anti-union legislation in our state



*Bryan Kennedy*

because it is part of a concerted movement to kill workers' rights and weaken middle-class working families. Kennedy said it is already happening in 17 other states.

After Kennedy spoke, we heard from **Lynne Dodson**, the Secretary-Treasurer for the Washington State Labor Council, who spoke about the disproportionate wealth in our country. Lynne was given an "Excellence in Leadership" award from our union.

On Saturday, our organization recognized **Rep. Chris Reykdal** as "Legislator of the Year" for his support of education. Reykdal sponsored our priority bill to allow bargaining over local dollars to fund salary increments.

Local delegates passed two resolutions, elected board members for 2011-2013, and recognized outstanding contributions to the labor movement and human rights.

The first adopted resolution supports Social Security and opposes efforts to cut benefits or weaken its protections.

The second resolution resolves that the state federation urge locals to contact congressmembers and our international union and advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. To read the resolutions, visit our website at [wa.aft.org](http://wa.aft.org).



*Rep. Reykdal accepting "Legislator of the Year" award from Sandra Schroeder.*

A fundraiser for our education scholarship (see related article on pg. 5) **raised a record \$1,302** — more than double what's been raised in past years! Donating baskets or money for the raffle were Green River CC, Bates TC, Renton TC Faculty, Central Washington University, AFT Renton Classified, AFT Renton TC Classified, Tacoma Federation of ParaEducators, Edmonds CC, Shoreline CC, AFT Everett, AFT Seattle, Pierce College, and AFT Washington.

Overall the convention was a success. Some of the feedback from delegates included "... the speakers were excellent, inspiring, and powerful" ... "went smoothly, stayed on schedule or ahead of schedule," ... but there were some concerns about the low number of delegates who attended and having time to socialize with members from other locals.

Next year's convention will be held **May 4-5, 2012** (location to be determined). Save the date!

*Convention photos by Christine Landon, AFT WA*

## Financial emergency declaration tabled for now

**T**hanks to the incredible testimony of several AFT members, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) voted on June 23rd to table the declaration of financial emergency.

It was an unexpected turn since representatives of college trustees and administrators and SBCTC Executive Director Charlie Earl testified in support of passing the declaration. It did not pass, and we feel that the board voted in favor of sending a message of collaboration to the colleges.

Thanks go to **Karen Patjens, Tom Gaskin, Sharon Mitchler, Gary Parks, and Kevin Asman** for joining AFT Washington President **Sandra Schroeder** to testify at their board meeting. **Carla Naccarato-Sinclair** and **Wendy Rader-Konofalski** of WEA also testified against the declaration.

SBCTC board members remarked on the professionalism and persuasive-

ness of the speakers. We can safely say that our remarks and presence influenced their decision.

We have not “won” the battle yet. The declaration could be resurrected at any future meeting. We will monitor the situation and try to stay in communication with the SBCTC board and staff about their plans.

It would be very helpful if you would continue to let your president and trustees know that faculty oppose the declaration and that you hope they will stand with you and tell the SBCTC to say they will not use it.

We know “An injury to one is an injury to all” as we watched our colleagues at Bates suffer the imposition of a local declaration. We have, at least, bought a few months of grace for them and for other faculty around the state. We hope—and will continue to lobby to ensure—that this period of grace will last for the entire biennium.

## Scholarships Given

**T**hree \$1,000 education scholarships were awarded this year to **Azalea Koestler, Casey Croshaw, and Chelsea Ruggiero-Diehl**.

Azalea is the daughter of **Shannon Hopkins Fernandes and Gordon Koestler** who are members of AFT Yakima Federation of Teachers Local #1485. Azalea plans to finish her AA degree at YVCC and transfer to Central Washington University to major in American Sign Language.

Casey is the son of **Tracy Croshaw**, another member of AFT Yakima. Casey’s goal is to attend Central Washington University’s Chemistry Teaching Program and receive his teaching certificate.

Chelsea, daughter of **Chris Ruggiero**, a member of Tacoma CC #2196, will continue attending the University of Washington to get a BA in Linguistics and a Minor in Spanish.

The **AFT Washington/Schwerin Campbell Barnard Iglitzin Lavitt Scholarship** program has provided 23 scholarships to members or their family since 2006.

*Members of Washington Educators in Early Learning (WEEL)/AFT at “We Are One” rally on April 8. From left: Almaz Eshetie, Ebony Botts, and Alecia Bryant.*



## Members Matter!

**M**embers stepped up and got involved in telling their legislators to save public education and the safety net and raise revenue.

More than 24 letter-writing action meetings were held during the 2011 legislative session. Overall, **292 members** participated in the letter-writing actions, generating **572 letters**.

We also had over **150 members** participate in two rallies at the State Capitol on March 17 and April 8.

# Kudos!

Annual member awards given during convention



*Sandra Schroeder awards Centralia CC #4469 member Judith Aguilar (center) a César Chávez Human Rights Award. David Ortiz, Chair of the Human Rights Committee, is on right.*

**Congratulations** to the following members who were recognized for their outstanding work on behalf of the union. Awards given at this year's convention were:

**Union Stewardship:** **Karen Strickland** (AFT Seattle #1789)

**Political Action:** **David Ortiz** (Cascadia CC #6191)

**“We Are One” Solidarity:** **Liz McKinney** (Green River CC #2195); **John Martinez** (AFT Seattle #1789); **Dr. Delores Cleary** (United Faculty of Central Washington #3231); and **Joe Coverson, Ed Glazer, and John Arbuckle** (Everett K-12 #772).

In recognition of members who fight for social justice and human rights at their workplaces and in their community, the **César Chávez Human Rights Award** was given to:

**Leona Adams**, WEEL #9462, for her unrelenting activism against the

cumbersome and vindictive revocation of state licensing for child care centers.

**Judith Aguilar**, Centralia CC #4469, for her long commitment to “Citizenship Day” to create opportunities for immigrants to gain citizenship.

**Kathryn Thompson, Evie Bello, Melissa Pond, Traci D’Andrea, Bev Saum, and Juliana G. Butler** (Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals #5017) for their work against workplace bullying at Kaiser Permanente.



*Sandra Schroeder gives Leona Adams a Human Rights Award. Pictured from right: Schroeder, Adams, and Marcie McLaughlin*

## K-12 members get involved

— Richard Burton

**Three locals** — Sno-Isle Technical Skills Center, AFT Renton Classified, and the Tacoma Federation of ParaEducators — are working on their upcoming school board elections.

Because most governance and daily policy decisions are made at the school-board level, these locals are actively involved to ensure that their interests are represented on their school board. Each of the three participating locals has now collectively developed and sent candidate questionnaires to candidates running for their respective school boards.

TFP members interviewed candidates on June 30. The other two locals will hold member forums in the early fall and invite the candidates to come to those meetings to address their members.

If a given candidate is endorsed, each local wants to donate money to them, and to mail voter recommendation information to all of the AFT members – not just their own members – who live in the cities where these school board races are taking place. Sno-Isle members have also committed to helping to do field campaign work (door-belling and phone-banking).

If you are interested in working on your school board election, contact **Richard Burton**, AFT Washington Political Organizer, at **206-225-0621** or **rburton@aftwa.org**.

# Members meet their congressional representatives



Members from the 9th Congressional District discuss the federal budget, Social Security, and immigration reform. From left to right are: **Michael McBride**, member of Renton Federation of Teachers #3914; **Todd Hahn**, President of AFT Renton #6367; **U.S. Rep. Adam Smith**; **Kimberly McRae**, Executive Board member of AFT Seattle #1789; and **Victor Calderon**, member of AFT Seattle #1789. Also shown are **Richard Burton**, AFT Washington Political Organizer; and **Sandra Schroeder**, AFT Washington President.

## Breaking news coming to a cell phone near you

**I**f you want to receive breaking news and action alerts right from AFT, text them at 738674 to get on their list.

Along with subscribing to AFT's main news alerts, you can receive specific texts based on your interests or constituency:

Higher Ed News: text **HIGHERED**

PSRP News: text **PSRP**

Retiree News: text **RETIREE**

You will get a confirmation text message asking you to text back your zip code so you can get alerts specific to your area.

This will come in handy for the 2012 presidential election.

While AFT will never charge you for text messages, your carrier's message and data rates may apply.



WEEL members and staff and Washington State Migrant Council (WSMC) staff from Yakima attend a fundraiser for **Congressman Jay Inslee** who later announced he is running for governor. Front row: **Espy Borboa** (WEEL Organizer), **Samantha Adame** (WEEL Organizer), **Lorraine Zapata** (WSMC Organizer), and **Maria Marquez** (WEEL member). Back row: **Miguel Reyes**, husband of **Lucy Reyes** (WSMC employee), U.S. Rep. Jay Inslee, **Jeannette Mora** (WSMC Organizer), and **Jose Marquez** (WEEL member).

The average pay of CEOs during the recent Great Recession jumped 23 percent compared to the two percent that average workers saw during the same time.



625 Andover Park W.  
Suite 111  
Tukwila, WA 98188

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Seattle, WA  
Permit No. 1074

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

“Like” us on Facebook at



aftwa

Your wall is not visible to anyone on our site who is not your personal fb friend.

## Upcoming Events

**October 1, at 9 am**

College Council  
Southcenter Office Park, 635  
Andover Park W., Suite 105

**October 1, at 10 am**

Classified Council  
AFT Washington, 625 Andover  
Park W., Suite 111

**October 1, at 10 am**

Contingent Faculty Issues  
Committee  
AFT Washington, 625 Andover  
Park W., Suite 111

**October 1, at 12 Noon**

AFT Washington Executive  
Board Meeting  
Southcenter Office Park, 635  
Andover Park W., Suite 105

**October 22, at 9 am**

Faculty for the Future Forum  
Location to be determined

**November 19, at 9 am**

Conference on Contingent  
Faculty Issues  
Location to be determined

## Young unionists cont'd

AFT Washington hopes to pilot labor-oriented student groups on a few campuses this fall through the structure of the student club system. To do so, we will need the support of the local on campus, through which we can recruit two or three faculty or staff who are willing to be advisors to the group.

We would provide whatever support or information is needed to get the group started and would work to coordinate efforts at the volunteer campuses. If you are interested in helping as an advisor or even in just offering ideas, please contact **Richard Burton** at [rburton@aftwa.org](mailto:rburton@aftwa.org) or (206) 225-0621.