

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 2011

Last spring the HDTA Executive Council voted again to fund HDTA Scholarships for graduating Hart District students. In a long-standing relationship with the Santa Clarita Scholarship Foundation, HDTA forwards the funding to the Foundation, and the Foundation selection committee chooses the recipients of the HDTA Scholarships. The scholarship amounts are \$1000. Priority is given to graduating sons and daughters of Association members and/or to graduates indicating some genuine interest in going into teaching.

The 2011 Hart District Teachers Association Scholarship recipients were:

Lauren Boe (Academy of the Canyons)
Emily Jeems (Bowman)

Tempest Lyle (Canyon)
daughter of George Lyle, Canyon teacher and
Marie Lyle, Sierra Vista teacher
Marissa Gordon (Golden Valley)
Alyssa Olinger (Hart)
Karsyn Taelyr Benedict (Learning Post)
Naticia-dei Dizon Caranto (Saugus)
daughter of Normita Meza, Saugus teacher
Alyssa Keyne (Valencia)
Kaitlin Phillips (West Ranch)
daughter of Nancy Phillips, Rio Norte teacher

HDTA congratulates these fine students, their parents, and their teachers!

ELECTION REMINDER

Election day, NOVEMBER 8, is just around the corner now, and those that are permanent absentee have already received their ballots. The HDTA wants to remind everyone to go out and vote in this upcoming school board and bond elections.

The HDTA endorsed GLORIA MERCADO-FORTINE and STEVE STURGEON for the Hart District School Board. Other chapters in the Santa Clarita Valley have also held candidate interviews and made endorsement recommendations for their races. They are as follows:

The Newhall Teachers Association endorsed YES on Measure E.

The COC Faculty Association endorsed DIANNA SHAW and SCOTT WILK.

The Saugus Teachers Association endorsed ROSE DIAZ and ROSE KOSCINIENLY for school board.

The Sulphur Springs Teachers Association endorsed DENIS DEFIGUEIREDO and SHELLEY WEINSTEIN for school board.

CTA CONFERENCES

CTA's yearly Equity and Human Rights Conference for 2012 will be at the Irvine Marriott (March 2-4, 2012). The CTA Good Teaching Conference (Southern conference) will occur at the Hyatt Regency Orange County (March 16-18, 2012). Both of these conferences include a variety of workshops and limited continuing education units are sometimes possible.

Each year HDTA's Executive Council

BARGAINING SURVEY FOR 2012-2013

Bargaining Surveys for the upcoming round of negotiations will again be done online, using Survey Monkey. The link to the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HG5N55P>. The link will

While separate from the above mentioned elections, STRS is also holding elections for the board. Ballots were mailed to home addresses. CTA has endorsed DANA DILLION and HARRY KEILEY for the K-12 positions. You can vote online or by written ballot. Instructions are included in the materials that were mailed.

The local Association has a responsibility as part of our duty of fair representation to make members aware of the national, state, and local candidate and issue endorsements. Any endorsement comes about as a result of a deliberative process that looks at candidates and issues and tries to determine those candidates and issues that are most teacher and education friendly. All Association recommendations are just that—recommendations. The Association is not telling people how to vote; it is passing on a recommendation that we believe is in the best interest of us as educators. How people actually vote is, of course, up to them!

votes to sponsor a limited number of HDTA members to attend. Priority is given to newer teachers and first-time participants on a first come, first served basis, but veterans are not automatically excluded. If you have an interest in attending one of these highly regard conferences (expenses paid by the Association), please contact your Building Rep. or chapter president Leslie Littman.

remain open from now until November 21, 2011.

JAYME'S MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Since Halloween is arriving sooner than I can believe, let's talk about some scary stuff. Death and Dismemberment to be exact! If you are anything like me, you might be a bit clumsy or accident prone and want to consider a voluntary insurance (that means it will cost you a few dollars) offered through www.neamb.org. This insurance would go above and beyond the basic policy that is offered to all of us members free by virtue of our membership. For as little as \$23 a month, you can have more extensive coverage to provide for your family just in case something bad happens to you.

If the screams from the haunted houses you visited for Halloween have left your hearing a bit damaged, I have great news: You can get hearing aids via the NEA Hearing Aid Savings plan. Even better - that plan can also provide coverage for your family - even your parents! (Shhh, don't tell my mom; I want it to be a surprise!) If

you have had to price these little gems in recent times, you will appreciate the 30% to 70% discounts available to NEA members. Hearing exams are included in this plan. Don't miss out.

When your paycheck arrived at the end of September, did you flinch a little at how much was being taken out? Did it scare you a bit? Did you think about taking some classes to advance across the pay scale? Through NEA Academy, there are classes for you on line to help with salary advancement. If you are interested in pursuing a master's degree, three colleges offer on-line programs through NEA and they waive some fees and offer discounts to current members. You can learn about these on line once you have registered as a member at www.neamb.org. Don't forget to sign up for the free life insurance. Until next month!

-Jayme Allsman

OPEN ENROLLMENT REMINDER FOR NEW TEACHERS

This is the Association's yearly "last reminder" about two benefits that are automatically available to new certificated employees to the District. If you are an HDTA/CTA/NEA member, as a new employee in the first 120 days of employment you may elect to enroll in the CTA sponsored Life or Income Protection/Disability insurance programs. If you apply for either coverage, you would automatically be accepted REGARDLESS of previous or current health condition.

HDTA is aware that new employees often come to the District and the Association with their life insurance needs already attended to. It is the Income Protection/Disability policy that we strongly recommend each

new employee/member give some serious consideration. It can pay up to 75% of your salary once all other leaves have been exhausted. Premiums through payroll deduction are based on monthly salary—lower salary people pay lower premiums.

It is just historical fact that each year some members use up all leave options because of unanticipated health conditions and then start looking for that one last "safety net." The Income Protection plan is usually it. Information and applications were included in the New Teacher blue folders given out at the New Teacher Luncheon. One may also contact CTA Member Benefits at 650-552-5200 or The Standard at 800-522-0406.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This past Friday I attended a training on CalSTRS. The focus was not on what benefits a person receives when they retire from education. Instead, it was about the current attacks on our pension plan and I wanted to use this column to update you on some of what I learned.

Some of the attacks on our pension are based on the mistaken belief that we are draining the state budget to pay for our retirement. Last year, anti-public pension advocates drove a limo around cities with signs implying that we were fat cats receiving large pension checks. To combat this attack, a group of retired teachers, firefighters, nurses, and police formed the Pension Truth Squad and held rallies at various cities around the state to combat the misinformation about our pension. The Truth Squad will be at an event this week in Carson when a hearing is being held on reforming the pension system.

Additional attacks are coming from the corporate world that CalSTRS and CalPERS invest our retirement dollars in. One reason for these attacks is the potential profit that could be gained by individual brokers who will be able to profit over the fees they can charge individuals. The other reason comes from how these funds have acted as watchdogs over corporate behavior. Last week both Cal-

STRS and CalPERS made news when they voted against Rupert Murdoch and the Board of Directors of Fox News-Corp. Both funds also advocate for executive compensation reform, regulatory reform of the financial industry, and ensuring that stockholders' voices are heard. Information on how STRS uses its proxy votes can be found on the STRS website. Since some in the corporate world have been unsuccessful in eliminating the plans, they are looking to go after the workers and eliminate their voices with a paycheck deception initiative set to appear on the November 2012 ballot.

This new initiative claims to be about campaign finance reform but only changes the rules for workers and not for big corporations. If it passes, corporations could continue to make political contributions without restrictions and continue their lobbying to sway legislation or influence government contracts. This initiative attempts to fix something that doesn't need fixing in an effort to disguise its real intent—to silence our voices. We can not let that happen.

-Leslie Littman