

Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views



"We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens this community - and this nation."

Cesar E. Chavez

March 2006
Biggest Attendance Month
in WAAE History!!
See Page 5

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One World Issue

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Adult Education Students Have Strong Feelings about HR4437 and National Demonstrations

The proposed immigration reform legislations, and the national response to them, deeply affected many of our students in these last few weeks. It was clearly a "teachable moment", and in the best adult education sense I saw and heard a lot of discussions of people listening to each other, with pride, passion and open minds. It's been a time when we have learned together.

Many of our students participated in the initial demonstration in Watsonville and in subsequent demonstrations with our local k-12 students. Some of our students did not come to school, or were concerned about signing attendance records because of renewed fears about their own immigration status. I talked with several ESL classes about

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From left: Kim Iwasko, Assemblymember Simon Salinas, Cary Keisler, and John Basor

WAAE Leaders Visit Capitol for CCAE Leg Day

By Kim, Cary and John

Adult Education Legislation Day is held in March of each year at the State Capitol. Each CCAE section sends a group of members to Sacramento to discuss current adult education issues with elected Legislators.

Kim Iwasko, Cary Keisler and John Basor attended the Legislative Day on Sunday, March 12th and Monday March 13th at the State Capitol in Sacramento. On Sunday afternoon we attended Legislative Training Meeting. led by Margaret Kirkpatrick and by Adult Ed. lobbyist Ron Frost. The meeting with Mr. Frost was very informative. Mr. Frost monitors adult education legislation updates to members. CCAE watches over legislative bills and continually works to support legislation that maintains and improves adult education in California.

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Democracy in Action

(cont. from page 1) classes and was struck by the depth of feelings, and the apprehension. Certainly it would be inaccurate to think all our students think the same about these issues, and thoughtful conversation about differences happened a lot. But I was also impressed with the eloquent expressions of pride and commitment to peaceful struggles for more social justice. To share unmediated student voices I offer the following letter from Charles DeWald's advanced ESL class and excerpts from reflection written by SOS students:

**Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Representative Sam Farr
United States Congress
Washington, DC**



Dear Legislators:

Our ESL class attended a public forum on Immigration Bill HR4437. The class is mostly composed of students from Mexico. I asked the class to write a few sentences concerning their reactions and feelings about the pending legislation. Here are some of their responses:

—I'm sorry, but I really don't like Bill HR4437. It's unfair. We're not criminals. We came here to work to survive, respect the laws, and be a good person.

—I think HR4437 is a stupid proposition because people who come to this country just want to have a better life. They are not criminals! or terrorists. They are workers.

—The proposition is very bad because it affects a lot of people who only work here in different places. Their goals are only to work hard and to have a better kind of life for themselves and their families.

—I think Bill HR4437 is unfair because immigrants work hard in the fields and restaurants, and in construction. And they pay taxes, support the economy and all that stuff. But some people don't recognize this and they treat us like criminals, and the only thing we do is work hard to live better and have a better future for our families.

—These are my feelings. I think HR4437 is not the right way to take us away from here. We are not bad people. Why don't you look at the people who are natives of this country who don't want to do these kinds of jobs that we are doing? This country is the biggest because we helped make it that way, and, in my opinion, it is too bad that you want to do this to us. Most of us have family in Mexico who are waiting for our help. Please don't do this.

—We are workers, not killers! Are picks and shovels—weapons?

—Are we criminals just for working here illegally?

—I think that Bill HR4437 is not good for the people who are working hard in the field and other kinds of jobs because we only want to work for our families.

The students hope that you will take their comments to heart when considering this legislation.

**Sincerely,
Charles DeWald
ESL Instructor—Watsonville/Aptos Adult School**

SOS Essay Contest

Many of our students in our SOS program were profoundly moved by the national discourse about immigration that the proposed legislations generated. Many participated in public expressions of their feelings. They were offered the opportunity to write their personal reflections about these issues. The following are unedited excerpts some of their essays.

Last week I was one of the many thousands of people marching for immigration rights all over the United States. We were expressing our freedom of speech and our pride of being immigrants... We were standing up to the new discriminating and evil law HR4437 that makes undocumented immigrants human felons and criminals. ... The bill is like some say unfair, racist, and inhumane. I am against it because I am a one in a million seeking peace and happiness for all. I marched for my family and myself and everyone who has ever worked hard for something good in life and has not given up. □ *Patty*

I can't believe that they can't see that without immigrants none of the agriculture in the U.S. would be possible. There are so many white people (excuse the racist word) that won't even step a foot in a field to see how hard they work, so others can eat and be able to feed their families. - *Leonel*

When I was marching last week, I was proud of myself, because I want to support the immigrants and I always honor to help other people. Cesar Chavez is one person who I admire, because he fought for his rights, but without violence. What I see is that if he could do it, so can we do it too! □ *Rosa*

I personally feel that if this bill is approved a lot of my loved ones would have to leave before they get caught because I wouldn't want them to be put in jail.... When I know they have not done harm to anyone or anything. The only reason they are here is because they are looking for a better future. - (name withheld)

I marched because I don't think we should have borders. Why can't we just live in peace! This is just an act of racism. Why should immigrants have to leave? I mean, wasn't this a part of Mexico before it was America?.... It's a different story if they're criminals, but if they are hard working people trying to support their families, why not let them stay? □ *Felisa*

This makes me so sad that the INS might ruin my community. But what I was most excited about was that there are some cool senators like McCain and Kennedy. These senators are trying to help and I appreciate what they are doing for immigration in the US. - *Lysandra*

How about let's put Bush in the fields? □ *Natalie*

Being part of the protest against HR4437 that took place last week here in the City of Watsonville made realize that we can still count on each other when it comes to difficult times. I think that this piece of legislation, HR 4437, is a racist law against people who come to the US ... but I felt proud that on March 25th, 2006, Latinos showed how strong we can be as a whole to fight for our freedom and rights as a people living and working hard in the United States. - *Andreina*

We will make our voices be heard! "I'm not a criminal." We will prove that by staying in school, bringing up our school's scores, showing everyone that we belong here, and achieving what we can. ... if they (Senate and President) want to close all the borders, why not close the Canadian border too? □ *Brenda*

We are workers, not criminals. □ *Jaime*

On Monday morning we had another briefing with adult education lobbyist at the State Capitol. Bob Harper pre-scheduled three tentative appointments with Senator Albert Maldonado; Assembly member John Laird and Assembly member Simon Salinas. First at eleven o'clock we meet with William "Chris Mower an aide to Senator Abel Maldonado and we discussed the following issues: Issue #1 SB 368 (ESCUTIA) - Reform of the Community Based Educational Tutorial (CBET) Program; Issue #2 AB 2417(WYLAND) Adult Education Proving Cashee Services For High School Age Students; Issue # 3 AB 2255 (DE LA TORRE)- Saturday Administrative and Issue #4 AB 2153 (LIU) - Adult Education Distance Learning. In the afternoon we met with Bonny Hawley, Chief of Staff to Assembly member John Laird and our last appointment was at 3 p.m. with Assembly member Simon Salinas in person.

At the end of the day we had a short meeting with the lobbyist to summarize all of the issues mentioned how they are very very important to our Adult School and the community. We feel that we got a positive response and the politicians were supportive of our Adult Education legislative needs.

We invited Simon Salinas to be a guest of ours at WAAE and he graciously accepted our invitation saying that he would come when we requested .



Kim, Cary and John were invited to a luncheon with State Senator Abel Maldonado last week in Watsonville

California Council for Adult Education Annual State Conference May 4-6 Sacramento

**Our own Jose Humberto Camacho
will be honored as one of the "150
Adult School Students Succeed"**

California Council for Adult Education

The only organization in the state that invites teachers, students, classified staff, administrators and other supporters in solidarity to advocate for public adult education.

Mini-Conference celebrating the reforming of the Central Coast Chapter of CCAE

Kim Iwasko, President CCAE Central Coast Chapter
Saturday, May 13, Monterey Adult School, 9:00am-1:00pm

Two hours paid extra-duty, four hours paid extra duty if you join CCAE.
Submit your names to Kim Iwasko.

Adult Ed. Attendance Soars in March

| Three Year Month-to-Month Comparison | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------|
| | 2003-2004 | 2004-2005 | 2005-2006 | |
| July | 75.93 | 61.57 | 58.22 | -3.35 |
| August | 49.02 | 62.49 | 57.49 | -5 |
| Sept | 109.97 | 98.15 | 99.83 | 1.68 |
| Oct | 108.74 | 101.03 | 105.16 | 4.13 |
| Nov | 103.69 | 89.75 | 100.48 | 10.73 |
| Dec | 62.6 | 52.83 | 51.89 | -0.94 |
| Jan | 94.62 | 83.1 | 95.12 | 12.02 |
| Feb | 99.17 | 96.34 | 106.88 | 10.54 |
| March | 136.23 | 104.1 | 145.84 | 41.74 |
| April | 88.97 | 98.64 | 98.64 | |
| May | 81.42 | 89.7 | 89.7 | |
| June | 22.01 | 66.18 | 66.18 | |
| Total | 1032.37 | 1003.88 | 1075.43 | 71.55 |
| | | CAP | 1042 | |

In our year of focusing on “Student Persistence” somebody must be doing something right. Although our school year started running with attendance under last year, since November note how attendance has grown to levels well above last year. In fact, the month just past has the distinction of being our largest attendance month in our institution’s history. Looking at the above table, you can see the patterns of attendance for the last three years. March 2004 had seemed to me like the “monster month” that was mysteriously way above previous years. The month just past shows an increase substantially over that month. (March is always our largest month and it is no accident that it is the one month of the year when no crop at all requires work done - confirming that our attendance patterns correlate to the agricultural industry’s cycles). The timing couldn’t be better. Last year we ran at a substantial deficit and had every expectation we might do so again this year. We still may. But legislation passed last year means that for the first time in history we may get paid (partial apportionment) for attendance *over* our CAP. See the 1042 above? It is our Golden Ring, our pot at the end of the rainbow, our... oh, well, you get it.

We’ve been running increased television advertisements, our 150th anniversary celebration gave us an opportunity to do more outreach, but let’s be clear that congratulations must be given to all our teachers who have worked so hard to attract and keep students.

Although these numbers are in part about our revenue, they need to be understood as teachers working successfully with students to give them important educational experiences and our institution’s focused response to our community’s needs.

Also *congratulations to Debbie Lerma and the office staff* who helps her with attendance, and their coping with the hugely increased workload this attendance means to them. We are a team, a family, working together to serve our students.

Remember Earth Day? Remember when there were concerted efforts to help educate ourselves about what is happening to our environment, to our planet, to our garden home? It seems this "educational holiday" is fading just as evidence mounts of global warming, the end of fossil fuels is projected to happen in our children's lifetimes, and genetically engineered foods and rapidly diminishing water supplies are taxed to sustain the world's exponentially expanding population. Gloom and doom got you down Pooky? Maybe it's time we educators use these "special day" opportunities to enhance our curriculum and instruction with useful and enlightening activities for our students about these very important issues of health, ethics, and survival.

Earth Day 2006, April 22

Resources for teachers:

<http://www.theteacherscorner.net/thematicunits/current.htm>

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/earthday/>

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/default.asp?ID=137>



WAAE Calendar

School Council

April 12, 4:00-6:00, Porter

Spring Break, April 14 - 22

Rescheduled Student Councils, April 24, 25



CCAIE Central Coast Mini-Conference - Monterey, Sat. May 13, Paid!!

Community Advisory Council (NEW DATE)

Wednesday, May 17, 10:30-noon, Green Valley

ESL Awards Ceremony

Thursday, June 1, 7:00pm, Mello Center

WAAE Secondary Graduation Ceremony

Friday, June 2, 7:00pm, Mello Center

WAAE All-School Dance

Thursday, June 15, 6:00-9:30, WHS Cafeteria