

Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views



"Por la libertad, asi como por la honra, se puede y debe aventurar la vida; y, por el contrario, el cautiverio es el mayor mal que puede venir a los hombres."
Don Quijote (Cervantes)



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The Adventure Sports Issue

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Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education

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--Start Any Time--
Spring Semester Started January 3, 2005
Most Classes Open Entry

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The Mission of Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education is to prepare a diverse population of adult students for success in the community -at work and leisure- as citizens, parents and lifelong learners

From the Desk of Director, Bob Harper

We are very fortunate to have with us this year Dr. Nancy Billich who has invaluable knowledge and experience in the Pajaro Valley. We hope that her ideas about how we can grow and her familiarity with the community will help us find new ways to serve



Some Teachers' comments on eClass attendance:

Teachers who aren't using eClass Manager yet should definitely go to the training and start using it. eClass Manager is very simple to use and makes doing attendance, including adding names of new students, really fast and easy.
Karen Reid

With eClass Manager you can print out a sign-in sheet for the week and easily access all sorts of information about your students (total hours - think Update forms!- enrollment date, date of birth, etc.).
Teresita Marchisello

It only takes me five minutes to do my attendance. And ergonomically speaking, my arms, shoulders, neck and fingers don't hurt after I do my attendance!
Kim Iwasko

If any instructor is interested in being trained to do attendance on the computer, just tell Debbie Lerma.

New Adult Ed Webpage Created

New features, new design
www.waas.pvUSD.net
Check out the new look for our webpage! Katherine Wales and Marilyn Files have spent considerable time reviewing how we have used the webpage, and have come up with a new, spiffy, and more functional look and design. There are new teacher resources, archive of News and Views issues, links for students, links for your district email and eClass attendance, job postings, as well as all classes and online registration. The front page will change on a regular basis in a "magazine" format. Currently we are featuring our VESL Healthcare classes. If you have a great picture and story (especially student success stories and human interest hooks), share them with Marilyn Files for both use on the website and potential press releases. We have plans to include a page for conversations or blogs to replace some of our extended email conversations. Also we plan to post copies of forms (payroll, conference attendance et. al.) as well as the certificated contract. What else do you need? Ideas are welcomed!

Letter to Kutis Alexander, Pajaro Valley edition editor of the Sentinel:

Greetings Mr. Alexander,

I congratulate you on the Pajaro Valley addition to the Sentinel. We in South County are growing in numbers, energy and the strength of our ideas. We welcome the increased attention of the county's largest and most respected newspaper. I do hope someone on staff will take the time to read these thoughts I want to share with you.

I write to you to:

- (1) suggest the newsworthy potential of our adult education program in south county and
- (2) express a little frustration over recent oversights.

(1) Adult Education in Watsonville

We serve over 10,000 adults a year in wide range of classes. We have been established here in Watsonville since 1938. Of course, the historic mission of adult education is helping adult immigrants acquire the English and cultural competency to be successful in their new country. Next year, California will celebrate 150 years of offering these classes.

In our program over six thousand adults come to us every year to learn English. We also offer classes in basic skills and preparation for the H.S. and GED diplomas. We offer high quality, short-term career and technical education in a curricular design and delivery that is more flexible than either the community colleges or for-profit training centers. Although we have grown over 40% in the last four years, we suffered a much greater cut funds in the current budget crisis than either K-12 or the community colleges. Even given these cuts, we are still designing innovative programs to help English learners prepare for job training (we have been recognized by the state in this regard), and no one does more on the central coast to bridge a digital divide that is still very real. We have worked hard to move forward a project to build a new ESL center in downtown Watsonville.

(2) Coverage by the Sentinel

We also have classes for adults over 55, indeed these special classes for seniors are one service that distinguishes public adult education in California from other states. Recently a front page Sentinel article described the "new" phenomenon of older adults enrolling at Cabrillo. We served over 1200 older adults last year. We have successfully offered these classes for over 50 years in Watsonville. I would invite you to see our afternoon computer classes that are packed, and in which some seniors are actually preparing themselves for an unexpected return to the workplace as well as receiving digital pictures from their grandchildren.

In December the Sentinel also ran an article (with a great picture) of "field workers" learning computers. The class was at Pajaro CDC. Pajaro CDC contracted with adult education to run the classes. The picture was of our teacher, using our curriculum, yet we were not mentioned.

Also in December the Sentinel ran an article about a class that the city of Watsonville sponsored to prepare local job seekers for work at the new Home Depot. This class, Job Readiness, is our class, our teacher, our curriculum. The city contracted with us to run the class. We were not mentioned. We continue to run the class in conjunction with the Career Center (One Stop).

I am confused as to why we are not mentioned. I suspect it is, in part, that public adult education in misunderstood. Although we have classes in traditional school settings, we also have the ability to run classes at community locations, in private industry, short term, and customized to the individual or institutional need. This is very different from what community colleges usually deliver.

I am not complaining, in any way, about the Sentinel's coverage of Cabrillo College. Cabrillo is, by any measure, one of the better community colleges in the country. The college has engaged adult education in productive, specific articulations unlike many places in the state. We are building a good partnership. My point is that (if you include Santa Cruz Adult School) adult education serves more students in our county than the community college... and receives a mere fraction of the column space in local newspapers. Our students may be English learners, High School stop-outs, the unemployed or older adults; our students are also magnificent people who deserve recognition for their learning.

(letter to the editor continued...)

March 7-11 is Adult Education Week in the state of California. Adult education successfully opens doors for over two million students a year in the state. It reaches learners here locally that no one will or can. It is an opportunity to focus on these valuable, unique services to adults in our community.

I hope you or someone has read to this point. I know when I receive long emails I check to see if it is from someone asking for money, so thank you for hearing these concerns. I invite anyone from the Sentinel to talk to us (I know Donna Jones has been a good friend in years past) about what is happening in our program. It would be even more appreciated if something was covered for Adult Education Week in March. Given the budget turmoil in Sacramento, the most powerless are often the hardest hit. I am hoping visibility translates to some kind of power for our adult students...who deserve the recognition and support.

Thanks for reading this, I would welcome answering questions or talking more in real time,

Bob Harper, Director

Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education

831.786.2160

Reponse from Mr. Alexander:

Bob, thanks for the e-mail. Your concerns are well taken, and we certainly haven't meant to neglect the obvious good work of your program. Please feel free to call, e-mail or fax me more info about your program and your ongoing activities. And in regard to Adult Education Week in March, I'll try to get something planned.

Thanks again for your initiative in contacting me, and I'll look forward to working with you.

Kurtis Alexander

Pajaro Valley Editor

Santa Cruz Sentinel

(831) 763-4504

Note to all: not only do we hope to get "good news" about adult education out in March as we celebrate state-wide adult education week, but we also want to do a better, more focused job, of getting out news to the local media on a regular basis. If you know of good adult education stories, share them with Marilyn Files who can get a press release out. Also, Cathy Jo Diaz has collected "student success stories" in a growing archive. Our being more effective in getting out good information about our programs is even more important as the state continues to struggle with its budget and possible cutbacks.

The Governor's Budget Proposals: A changing promise

Although the governor's budget, at least as released in his most recent "state of the state" proposals this month, includes cost-of-living increases, and even possible growth for increased attendance, the reality of the state's fiscal condition and threatened "deficit factors" make it very unclear whether adult education would remain funded as is, or even possibly be cut further than it was this year. The current budget is short several billions of dollars of the Prop. 98 guarantee, money that was promised by the governor last year to "return" to education. Remember we at WAAE have been cut by more 130 units of ADA (hours of attendance) because of the budget crisis in the last two years. This is equal to almost a \$300,000 cut to our funds. Added to that are cuts in our federal money, that is \$150,000 less this year than last year. We are receiving almost 15% less money... an untold story that we must tell. The governor apparently has a fondness for career and technical education. We are hoping that fondness translates into tangible support.



WAAS Calendar

California Council for Adult Education
Bay Section Annual Workshop

Berkeley Adult School - Saturday, Jan. 29

(THERE MAY BE REGISTRATIONS AVAILABLE TO THIS CONFERENCE
ARE YOU INTERESTED? CONTACT MARJORIE).

Student Art Show and Reception

Tuesday, February 1, 10:00am - 12:00 noon
Green Valley

No Classes - Presidents' Days
Feb. 14, and Feb. 21

Student Councils

Porter Day - Tuesday, Feb. 15, 12:00

Porter Evening - Tuesday, Feb. 15, 9:00

Green Valley Day - Wednesday, Feb. 16, 12:00

Green Valley Night - Wednesday, Feb. 16, 9:00

School Council

Feb. 16, 4:00-6:00, Green Valley

Adult Ed. Student of the Month

Board of Trustees Meeting, Wednesday, Feb. 23

Statewide Adult Education Week. March 7-11



... **missed January Birthdays:** January 27- Dr. Bilicich,
January 28 - Jane Reyes... look for minutes of the Student Councils to be posted on bulletin boards at both Porter and Green Valley ... a group met with Sandy Steiger last week to discuss our school's professional development plans, Sandy was principal for Milipitas Adult school for many years and has been assigned to our school by CalPro the statewide professional development organization for adult education ... look for information from the ESL department about workshops on our core text, project-based learning, and CATESOL state conference...

In memorium

Grace Arceneaux - wife of teacher Ron Arceneaux - passed on January 13. Jack Seitchik - father of Cathy Jo Diaz - passed away on January 15. Our thoughts are with both of you in your loss.