

Dear CAS Members:

On September 1st, your new CAS leadership team hit the ground running! I will give you an update below on the many activities we have been working on these past few weeks. But first, I would like to take this opportunity to thank former CAS President Roseanne Becher for her advice, assistance and helpfulness these past few months – it has truly made for a smooth transition.

September Activities:

On Thursday, September 11, your elected CAS officers hosted a 'meet and greet' lunch for the CAS staff in Burlingame Headquarters. There was no formal agenda which allowed us to spend time with members one-on-one, getting to know them and listening to their concerns and ideas. There were over forty members in attendance and everyone seemed to enjoy the lunch and the opportunity to meet and mingle in a relaxed setting.

Later that same day we met with CTA management (CAS meets with management routinely throughout the year). Joining me in this meeting were Vice President Shelly Bomberry, Treasurer Terri Pinkney, Secretary Sharyl Benitez, and Bargaining Chairperson Debra Oshige. It was a productive and positive meeting, and CAS stressed our desire to work together collaboratively to resolve issues at the lowest level.

On September 13-14 we conducted a Leadership/Team Building training for members of the CAS Executive Board and Representative Council. Our parent union – NSO – provided two trainers who facilitated the session, which was designed to help us learn about our own individual styles (both leadership and communication) and recognize and appreciate the strengths and styles of others. I think I can speak for everyone who attended that this was a great training! It was informative and helpful to us as an advocacy team, and I believe it helped bring us together. We have an amazing group of volunteers with great talent and enthusiasm, and I know that we will all work together toward the common goal of serving you, our CAS members.

On September 14-15, the CAS Executive Board and Representative Council met in Sacramento. Key agenda items included the adoption of the CAS Committee Roster for 2008-09 (see attached) and scheduling of the 2009 CAS General Membership Meeting which will be held March 28-29, 2009 in the Bay Area (location tba). Katie Howard, Field Services Specialist in Natomas, will chair the planning committee.

NSO Meetings – As a member of the NSO Research Committee, I attended our recent meeting in Providence, RI on September 5-6. The charge of this committee is to gather data (contractual and fringe benefits) from each state to assist affiliates with bargaining research. On September 19-20, Debra Oshige and I attended the NSO National Coordinated Bargaining Council (CBC) Conference in Kansas City, MO. Affiliate presidents and bargaining chairs from around the country met to adopt national goals and standards.

Just shortly before we traveled to Kansas City, we learned that our Oregon sister union, PSO Oregon, went out on strike on September 15th (their current contract expired June 30). PSO President Catherine Alexander reported that PSO was left with no other choice but to stand up for union values and reject management's regressive rollbacks on their health care benefits, comp time, workload/staffing, salary and retirement benefits (a proposal to institute a 2-tier retirement benefits plan, wherein new employees would not have dependent medical coverage when they retire). Also, with no movement at the table and management's refusal to bargain in good faith, Oregon PSO filed an Unfair Labor Practice against the Oregon Education Association for bad faith bargaining.

The CAS Representative Council voted to make a \$500 contribution to the Oregon PSO Strike Fund to aid these courageous unionists in their fight to defend basic union values. At the NSO National CBC Meeting, together with CSO President Tim Hill and many other sister unions, I was proud to present Catherine Alexander with our donation and pledge of support. As Catherine reported at the NSO CBC meeting, there is great support for their cause by the associate staff in Oregon, including associates using their own personal necessity days to close down OEA and join them on the picket line. She noted that one associate colleague said (about giving up her PN days) there comes a time when we must **"pay our Solidarity Dues!"** This is what is so great about NSO and about unions! We stand strong together – associate/professional and professional alike – in support of our core values and union principles. When need be, we willingly pay our Solidarity Dues! As of October 1st, they are still on strike. CAS members are encouraged to send messages of support to our union brothers and sisters in Oregon – please email to Catherine Alexander at www.divatcat@comcast.net.

2009 Bargaining - This month a new CAS Bargaining Team was appointed to prepare for negotiations and bargain a new contract (our current contract expires on 8/31/09). Debra Oshige will serve as chair, and Rhonda King, Laura Eastridge Murphy, Bob Quance, Terri Pinkney, Dede Deatrick, and Mia Anastasio will serve as team members. We have put together a team that combines continuity and experience from the last three CAS bargaining teams, a team that represents all CAS geographical areas, and a team with very solid advocacy credentials. I am confident this team will be strong and effective at the bargaining table. The first CAS bargaining date is March 16, so the team will begin preparations immediately. Attending scheduled house meetings and filling out the upcoming bargaining survey will be great ways to tell the bargaining team what your bargaining priorities are and give your input about the upcoming bargain.

As always, if you have any concerns, questions or issues you would like to discuss with me, please feel free to call or write me any time. My cell # is (916) 715-2280 or you can reach me at dawnbasurto@aol.com.

In Unity,
Dawn Basurto, CAS President