



On The Board

The Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers

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Board Highlights from JANUARY 2018

Reported By Juan Jose Campos

Don't 'Cha?

Don't 'cha just love a New Year? I mean, it's the epitome of will. 'Will' you finally paint the house? 'Will' you finally shave a few pounds? 'Will' you finally admit you LOVE "This Is Us" and "Glee"? ☺ No matter what your resolution is, one thing is for sure, we 'will' keep striving to keep you informed and make it feel like you were there at every meeting. Boring or not, we'll try to keep it interesting. January was one for the books. Happy New Year everyone!

SVFT

SVFT Prez Steve McDougall addressed our Board on January 9th and thanked it for its support of, as McDougall put it, "getting the side of the table you're responsible for, finished. We are in the process of ratifying 16-17...onto 17-18. Although economics wasn't part of the equation (in the contract), a number of working conditions are being experimented with and if it works well and make it stick, it may benefit SVFT." He also addressed former SUHSD Associate Superintendent Randy Bangs' departure as something SVFT or McDougall were NOT ok with. In case you didn't catch the translation, it means Bangs would be missed. "I mean this, I'm not ok



with Randy leaving.....we don't always agree, but he's honest and transparent...the hardest working, or at least the second hardest working person I know." Which begs the question, who's on first? On behalf of SVFT, fare thee well Mr. Bangs and good luck in your future endeavors!

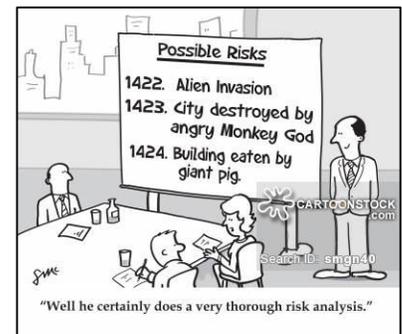
The Artist Formerly Known As Board Comments

Board members echoed McDougall's sentiments on Bangs' departure with Patty Padilla-Salsberg commenting Randy would be missed and

described him as being "very thorough".

Padilla-Salsberg informed attendees that the portion of the evening formerly known as Board Comments would

now carry a new name, and would be known as Members' Correspondence and Committee Reports. Tomato, tomato? Cue Prince. On a more somber note, she extended her condolences to Superintendent Dan Burns, who recently experience the loss of his father and wished him well. Trustee Kathryn Ramirez wished all a Happy New Year expressed also expressed her condolences to both Burns and Trustee Padilla-Salsberg who recently lost a family member, as well. With respect to Bangs, she thanked him "for the work you've done and dedication to your



work. It's been a couple of decades and I look forward to your success in South County." Trustee Lila Cann added she would miss Bangs and drew a couple of chuckles from the crowd upon mentioning that the "Board in Soledad is much easier to deal with....good for you." Maybe the grass is greener? Or maybe they actually water it. Or maybe.... "It's Happening In Soledad." ☺



Trustee Rubio again wished Bangs well and commented that he had recently seen a Raspberry Computer presentation at a local site and was quite impressed. In case you're wondering, a Raspberry is an entry level computer students can build for somewhere around \$50. Pretty neat.



Trustee Sandra Ocampo also wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated she had much to be thankful for, such as being "still alive." That's always a good thing, right? Again, she lauded Bangs as having been a "great addition to our Board...I commend him for his work, he is very clear." Trustee Tabera said Bangs would be missed while Burns added that he "appreciated his calmness and demeanor. I wish you well, and I'll lock up the supplies." Yup, the jokes were flowing that evening folks. ☺ He also took a moment to recognize a former Woodshop teacher of mine, (and yours, too?) Wayne Proeschel, from Washington Middle School, who recently passed away. Thank you Mr. Proeschel, and may you rest in peace. Next, he mentioned "we've been recertified for NJROTC (EAHS), so it's a big deal," and he thanked everyone for their thoughts during his difficult time. "Unions, Staff and the entire



organization feels like a family from receiving all the well-wishing. Thank you." **Real Quick** Burns took a moment later in the evening to give an updated job description for the now vacant Career and Technical Ed Coordinator position. He clarified that the updated version will now be more in line with District goals and objectives. "It's a tough job, it replaces the Vocational Coordinator position and the job has transitioned into CET (Center For Employment Training), not just vocational. Blanca Baltazar-Sabbah and Ivonne Glenn have been working on this so that our programs can be internalized, and there is no change in pay, just an updated job description."

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Individuals Addressing the Board

Jan Story from EAHS, took a moment to thank our Board for the great work as a result of recent negotiations and reminded them of a time when "things were loggerhead back then, we never got along and the purpose was to argue with each other. We can communicate. Thank you, it's been a long process. At a time when things are polarizing...politics, we're the ones that create the future, to help our kids." Ron Cheshire of the Monterey and Santa Cruz County Construction Trades Council asked the District to continue encouraging its students to explore apprenticeship programs in the trades. "Salinas is doing fairly well for apprenticeships, we provide more opportunities which turn into jobs, and later careers. It's hard to get a young person to get into the trades."



Disability Insurance: Lemon?

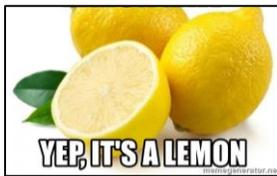
And, in what will surely be seen as my most awkward piece, I will now be writing about myself in the third person. Ahem: MTHS Instructor Juan Jose Campos

(handsome devil, he 😊) recently took a moment to speak to our good Board regarding disability insurance. His comments were



centered around the fact that more scrutiny needs to be placed on the financial products the District allows to be sold to our Union members (i.e. YOU). “I, like many colleagues opt to purchase a third party disability insurance...but as you may or may not be aware, we typically have no more than 10 minutes of time with the salespeople you allow on our campuses and one of their selling points is that with their product, you will take home approximately 75% of your take home pay should you ever get sick.” The fact is, nothing could be further than the truth because according to Campos, even their salespeople don’t exactly know how the product works and once a mysterious “differential” is factored in, the amount you take home is FAR from a living wage and far from the 75% their salespeople tout.

Unfortunately, you don’t find out the true inner workings of the product until you get sick. “This is incredibly serious, and with less than 10 minutes, it’s hardly enough time to make an informed decision....and being that the District has so aggressively pushed this company on us implicitly by allowing them to be the sole company allowed on our campuses, I believe it bears a responsibility in ensuring it (the company) is transparent.” He finalized his comments stating the company



was nowhere to be found when inquiring about the inconsistencies... “I contacted their local

rep and was met with no follow up despite weeks of calls. When you call their headquarters, the experience is similarly dire. What I’m imploring the Board to do is reevaluate the way we as instructors are sold financial products and that a number of safeguards are put in place to ensure we are not being misled. Based on this company’s poor response, I find it hard to believe my experience is anecdotal as they’re quick on the sell, but slow on the delivery. My aim in the coming weeks is to alert the membership to truly see if their monthly contribution to

this particular product is truly worth the dollars they work so hard to earn.” The ball is your court folks.

Who Knew?!

It never ceases to amaze me how something apparently so simple can suddenly become so controversial and convoluted. I’m talking about recent efforts seeking out what will be High School Rancho San Juan’s mascot. A human baby never got that much attention!



Trust me, there’s a committee and everything. Kudos to the District for allowing all stakeholders an opportunity to decide what mascot will represent the new High School. But as you might expect, there’s never a dull moment and a bit of controversy surfaced regarding one of the proposed mascots. One of the finalists was “The Renegades”, which involved a character with a bandana and yeeeah, that didn’t go over so well. While Board members loved the name, they hated the depiction and given the violence in the community and certain stereotypes that might be associated with it. Board Members such as

Trustees Ramirez, Padilla-Salsberg and Trustee Rubio voiced their concerns. Future Rancho San Juan Principal Anthony Hinton, who made



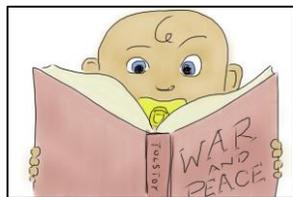
the presentation, was put to the task in achieving the goal of finding a mascot and for the most part, he said the experience had been a positive one. “We’ve had positive meetings among students and community members and have discussed topics such as originality, connection, identity.” After much discussion and a couple of meetings, another contender, “The Trailblazers” seemed to garner much more support. Trustee Ramirez even went so far as to give a definition of what a Trailblazer was and how it just might fit the



mold based on our community's history. There's still work to do, and the Committee is far from done. We can expect a vote on its decision in the near future, so here's hoping for a good one.

New Course

Associate Superintendent Blanca Baltazar-Sabbah informed the Board that after a pilot Ethnic Studies course held in 2017, the District was continuing its work on incorporating an A-G approved Ethnic Studies course throughout the District. AHS' very own, Dr. Ana Gutierrez, presented and gave a brief overview of the Ethnic Studies Committee timeline. Gutierrez added that one of the best parts of the process had been the input given by instructors, Staff and students and that a syllabus was in the works. She pointed to research which showed that courses such as Ethnic Studies that are well designed helped meet diverse learners' needs and had an overall positive effect on students. "91% of our students are diverse and this course will hopefully promote Civic engagement. Summer planning will be necessary to prepare teachers on the proposed textbook and curriculum." Additionally, the Board was given a course description as well as the proposed textbook, Howard Zinn's A People's History of The United States. Light reading, of course. ☺ Get ready to see neurons explode.



Finally, she gave student testimonials in support of the pilot course they took over the Summer of 2017 while Trustee Rubio chimed in to say he was "thankful for the course. It is long overdue." Trustee Padilla-Salsberg said that while she didn't have the opportunity in ...school to take an Ethnic Studies course, she did get the opportunity in college. "It made me proud of my heritage. I am who I am because I took that class."

Gulp!

We won't sugar coat it. CSEA Vice President Lupe Ruiz-Gilpas had a field day during CSEA's normally allotted presentation time and fired off a number of complaints aimed at Trustee Kathryn Ramirez. "I am here to address Trustee Kathryn Ramirez. We had elections and made history, over 100 CSEA members showed up for elections. Ramirez posted on social media that our members are afraid of us (CSEA officers). It's untrue." Dan Burns quickly interjected and asked Board members if Ruiz-Gilpas was out of order. According to Board guidelines, comments during the time set aside for CSEA are to be of a



general nature and are to avoid personal attacks. Hence, the objection. Board President Padilla-Salsberg asked others to speak up on the matter, but Ramirez said that if her (Ruiz-Gilpas) comments were of a general nature relating to CSEA, it was ok and she could proceed. Ruiz-Gilpas continued and avoided mentioning Ramirez' name again. "A Board member got involved in CSEA elections, and we didn't appreciate it...our elections are internal. I have a list of bullying and intimidation that have happened with CSEA members." She then showed a file of statements in her hand to the Board that according to her, were "from way back. We're defending our members and it is within our right." She started giving specific examples of said bullying, but the Board felt the attack was of a personal nature and due to Board guidelines, once again, objected. Again, Ruiz-Gilpas continued and Padilla-Salsberg, clearly frustrated, asked that she



(Ruiz-Gilpas) share general information from CSEA, as a whole. Trustee Ramirez asked that Padilla-Salsberg “do her job” and put an end to Ruiz-Gilpas’ comments. Undeterred, Ruiz-Gilpas stated she had a “strong concern that a Board member would not be fair in negotiations” and asked the rest of the Board “to do the right thing.” Once more, she was called out of order, but she relented and squeezed in a few last words: “We represent the Classified Staff, I was told we can’t come to her (Ramirez). Again, I’m asking the four of you to do the right thing.” But WAIT, there’s more!

To add to the colorful events of the evening, there were a couple of gasps heard in the room when, during the Individuals Address the Board portion of the evening, Rick Giffin,



Chairman of the school bond oversight committee, hand-delivered Trustee Ramirez a recall petition to remove her from her post. That would explain why KSBW was on hand to document the delivery and by now, most of



you have already heard about it, so it’s nothing new. Know what IS new?
.....Nothing. Sigh. ☹

A Little Levity

At that same meeting on January 23rd and immediately following all of that drama, SVFT President Steve McDougall offered a little “levity” as he termed it, by turning the Board’s attention to the current mascot search for Rancho San Juan. He shared how back in his day, his high school mascot’s name had to be changed due to it being “insensitive, anyway, they’re just now the Raiders....and I hate the Raiders. There’s your levity after ‘that’.” Yeah, ‘that’ was somethin’ else. He then beamed about the extraordinary voter turnout for the ratification of our 16-17 contract that had taken place earlier that day. “Turnout was phenomenal, La Paz almost ran

out of ballots. SHS had 126 members alone for a tentative agreement that didn’t have anything extraordinary (in terms of finances). 94% of our members were in agreement.” He summarized by insisting that SVFT is not just one person, it is a group organization. As evidence of that comment, in attendance were a few SVFT members such as Melissa Gonzalez from MTHS, to support the recent success. Congrats to the negotiating team working so diligently on the membership’s behalf! Thank you!

