

Sheriff's deputy fatally shoots stolen car suspect

NORWALK – A sheriff's deputy shot and killed man in Norwalk Wednesday after the suspect allegedly struck the deputy with a stolen car.

Authorities say a sheriff's deputy was on patrol when he ran the registration of an Acura Integra parked near a gas pump at the 7-Eleven located at Alondra Boulevard and Studebaker Road. The registration check revealed the Acura had been stolen out of Whittier.

The deputy approached the vehicle and saw that it was occupied by one male driver," sheriff's officials said. "The deputy heard the driver start the vehicle as he attempted to make contact with him. At some point, the vehicle accelerated, struck the deputy, at which time, a deputy involved shooting occurred."

After the shooting, the deputy performed CPR on the suspect until paramedics arrived. The suspect, described as a male Hispanic, died at a local hospital.

The deputy was transported to a hospital where he was treated and released.

The shooting occurred at the same location where a man was killed just one day prior.

In that incident, authorities say the victim was approached by people inside the 7-Eleven and a verbal altercation took place.

The victim was reportedly chased outside the convenience store where he was shot and killed.

Authorities said the shooting was gang-related. The suspects were described as several Hispanic men in their late teens to early 20's.

Lawmaker wants to make advanced vehicles more affordable

WHITTIER – Assemblymember Ian Calderon (D–Whittier) introduced Assembly Bill 1710 last week which implements a comprehensive program to promote technologically advanced light-duty vehicle deployment in disadvantaged communities.

AB 1710 requires the Air Resources Board, the California Energy Commission and Caltrans to develop and implement a comprehensive program to promote advanced technology light-duty vehicle deployment in the state to meet the goal established by Governor Jerry Brown and the legislature of 1.5 million zero-emission vehicles in California by the year 2025.

AB 1710 requires that the program include support for low-income deployment in disadvantages communities, as well as long-term market signals, sustainable funding mechanisms, and a portfolio of approaches to promoting technologically advanced light-duty vehicle deployment.

"While the state has done a good job of creating incentives to promote clean vehicle adoption in California, we must expand these incentives to our disadvantaged communities and ensure that rebate programs are within reach for low income households," said Calderon. "Increasing access to clean transportation will bring much needed environmental benefits to these communities, including reduced air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions."

Technologically advanced light-duty vehicles are currently more expensive than equivalent conventional models. Despite a federal tax credit and California's state vehicle incentive, the higher initial zero emission vehicle (ZEV) costs remain a barrier for many California consumers.

The state has taken leadership to develop programs to assist the deployment of plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) and fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) in disadvantaged communities.

However, any long term plan designed by the state needs to address both new and used cars sales in these communities, Calderon said.

Cerritos College faculty rally for higher wages: 'You have the money'



By Alex Dominguez
Contributor

NORWALK – Inclement weather was not enough to deter several Cerritos College faculty and students from rallying last Wednesday evening in protest of what they believe to be unfair wages and working conditions.

Clad in matching read shirts that adorned the phrase "the power of a thank you" across their backs, a moderate sized group of individuals comprising of full and part time staff and a handful of their students assembled in the college's administrative quad prior to Cerritos's Board of Trustee's meeting.

Solomon Namala, co-chair of the Cerritos College Economics Department and Cerritos College Faculty Federation (CCFF) President said that negotiations are not going well.

"One of the main reasons is we've been a union for 13 years and we don't have a complete contract yet," said Namala. "We're the only community college in the state without a complete contract."

Currently, the Faculty Union is fighting for paid and expanded office hours for both part-time and full-time staff, fair compensation for other activities such as serving as department chair, and reduced class sizes.

In a statement prior to the rally, the CCFF stated that "the District sits on a \$50,000,000 dollar reserve. This is tax payer money that should be invested in students and should be spent toward their success."

According to information provided by the CCFF, the District's reserve funds are over eight times the state mandate; more than the nine community

colleges that Cerritos is often compared to.

Lyndsey Lefebvre, vice president of part-time faculty and member of the negotiating team, said that negotiations are expected to go back and forth, however what has been offered is "kind of sad."

"We were trying to do a three-year salary deal; the last two, three years they offered 2 ½ percent, but anything we wanted to negotiate beyond our contract, so for example if we wanted to pay for office hours, we would have to pay for it out of our salary increase," said Lefebvre. This also included paying department chairs, according to Lefebvre.

Lefebvre went on to explain that currently staff is only paid for eight hours of office time over the entire semester period, which is 18 weeks during a normal semester.

After the rally, the group addressed the Trustee Board directly during their meeting. Several people spoke.

Sandra Weese, Organizing Director for the California Federation of Teachers, described it as "shameful" that the Faculty Union had gone 13 years without a contract.

"You have the money," said Weese. "There's a clear case about what's going on here. Work load is getting bigger, class sizes are getting bigger. In aggregate, they're losing money, you guys are making more money in terms of administration. It's despicable, it's not fair, and you should fix it."

Joanne Waddell, president of the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, said that collective bargaining agreements are a right.

"The fact that the Cerritos faculty has been denied that right has caused me to be here tonight to stand with my Cerritos sisters and brothers in their fight for their right to a collective bargaining agreement," said Waddell. "... In the face of such backward budgeting, Cerritos faculty remain loyal employees, and continue to professionally develop to stay current in their fields. In return they're told to take money from one pocket, put it in the other pocket, and call it a raise. That's not a raise."

In response to the recent negotiations, the Cerritos College Community District also released a statement, saying "The District and the Board of Trustees highly value the contributions of our full-time and part-time faculty toward the success of our students...The District offered its other employee groups a 10% raise over the course of three years, which they accepted. The District extended a 10% increase to the Faculty Union for full-time faculty and 16% to part-time faculty over three years, which is far and above other colleges in the region. The Union has asked the District for more than 30% in salary increases.

"The District remains fiscally prudent to ensure that all students are served with the best possible resources. The District is hopeful that the Faculty Union will return to the negotiating table to reach a fair resolution that does not jeopardize the financial health of the institution."

Elementary students display patriotism at Flag Day ceremony



NORWALK – Moffitt Elementary School was awash in a sea of red, white and blue on Feb 19 as students proudly waved the Stars and Stripes and performed patriotic songs in commemoration of Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District's annual Flag Day celebration.

The Flag Day festivities, sponsored by the Norwalk Lions Club, are a District tradition, serving to increase awareness and educate students about the importance of patriotism.

"It is so wonderful to see such enthusiasm and creativity from the students on such a special day," NLMUSD Superintendent Dr. Hasmik Danielian said. "We are tremendously grateful to the Norwalk Lions Club for sponsoring this event every year and for providing the community with much-needed support and services."

Shared Stories: Moving to Downey

Charlene Farnsworth's parents liked what they saw when they brought Charlene to visit a school friend whose family had moved from Los Angeles to south Downey in 1950. They purchased the lot across the street with seven fruit trees, and Charlene joined her friend at Alameda Elementary. Shared Stories is a weekly column featuring articles by participants in a writing class at the Norwalk Senior Center. Bonnie Mansell is the instructor for this free class offered through the Cerritos College Adult Education Program. Curated by Carol Kearns

By Charlene Farnsworth

When I was nine years old, our family often visited my best friend, Dee Anne, in Downey, Calif. She and her guardians had moved from our cramped neighborhood in Los Angeles to a more spacious rural area. All that could be heard was the occasional mooing of a cow and the cackling of hens from a nearby chicken ranch.

There were numerous orange trees and many undeveloped lots on her street, Dolan Avenue. The smell of orange blossoms and clear, fresh air were enchanting. I so wished that my parents would have a new house built for us on the empty lot right across the street from Dee Anne and her guardians' home.

To hear only the sounds of nature in a country-like setting instead of the noisy hustle and bustle of Los Angeles appealed to me. Of course, the noise we best friends would create with our giggles and laughter was a different matter.

I hadn't even thought about hearing the nerve-wracking sounds of power construction tools and land movement equipment filling the air for days on end. Also, the aroma that wafted from beyond the chain-link fence that separated the back of the lot from the chicken yard was often quite unpleasant.

At this time, Dad worked as a shop superintendent for a family-owned

business, Dura Steel Products. The owner graciously offered to loan my parents the funds to purchase the lot on Dolan Avenue and begin construction. Dad was a talented draftsman, but both Mom and Dad designed the layout of our new house.

Dad, brother Jim, and I all pulled slippery weeds week after week. It was a very dirty, endless job. Several adult family members worked late into the night on various indoor projects. One uncle was a skilled finishing carpenter and another uncle was an expert in linoleum installation. With such talent readily available, many custom features could be integrated into the design. Construction of our new house was well under way!

The abundant fruit we picked from seven orange trees on the property was delicious. We also enjoyed the tasty apricots and peaches. We would plant a sizeable garden full of fresh carrots, beets, tomatoes, squash and cantaloupe after we moved in.

I, of course, was looking forward to being able to see Dee Anne every day, but was not looking forward to saying goodbye to my special fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Metzger. I can still see her kind, sweet face today.

In June 1951, we moved into our lovely new home in Downey. Transitioning to a new school was easy, and I was soon equally fond of my gentle sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Tennant, at Alameda Elementary School.

Working the cooperative sandy soil, Mom planted a fragrant rose garden, and I helped plant and maintain our beautiful annual and perennial flower beds. Woofs could soon be heard from a furry addition, our sleek-coated, red-brown little dog Fritzie. In time, the meows from various short- and long-haired cats added to the chorus.

I am living in this same house today where many happy memories were created and many happy celebrations took place over the years.

Weekend at a Glance

Friday 77°

Saturday 74°

Sunday 79°

THINGS TO DO



Healthy Downey 5K

Saturday - Apollo Park, 7:30 a.m.

A 5K run/walk with proceeds benefiting the TLC Family Resource Center. Same-day registration \$40 adults, \$30 kids



Classic Car Show

Saturday - Whittier Area Community Church - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Classic cars and hot rods, food trucks, vendors, and more.



Boxing

Saturday - Honda Center, 4 p.m.

Leo Santa Cruz headlines a live card of Showtime fights. \$27



Stan Lee

Sunday - Frank & Son Collectibles in City of Industry, 9 a.m.

The comic book legend will be signing autographs and taking pictures. \$100

FROM OUR FACEBOOK

Cerritos College faculty rally for contracts

Ken Cook: \$50 million sounds like it's a lot of money, but really, it's not. Cerritos Community College is simply mirroring what happens on every campus, throughout California. I was a part-time faculty member there from 2006- 2011, so I understand the concerns of those who are protesting. The best protest is moving on to somewhere that will meet your needs, and make you happy

Josh Forsythe: Public sector shouldn't have unions.



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TWEET OF THE WEEK


@BentonPrincipal: Limo Ride to In-N-Out. #Step-It-Up #Fundraiser #nlmusd



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8:00 a.m.

Walk Starts at

8:30 a.m.

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Register online at

www.arcwalk.org

The Arc is a private non-profit organization serving hundreds of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities every day in 12 different programs.

Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer

Throughout my childhood, an aloe plant grew in my backyard. I distinctly remember the large, thick, pointed green leaves and the clear substance that oozed out. If I had a cut or abrasion, I was told to rub the liquid onto my wound. Was this good advice?

Aloe vera has been commonly used for medicinal purposes throughout the ages. Ancient Egyptian writings mention the nourishing juice of the aloe vera plant. The list of historical figures who used aloe vera for various reasons purportedly includes Cleopatra, Alexander the Great, and Christopher Columbus.

The aloe vera plant is also known as burn plant, lily of the desert, and elephant's gall. Aloe gel is found in the inner part of the leaf, and contains vitamins, minerals, amino acids and antioxidants. Aloe latex is yellow, and comes from just under the plant's skin. Some aloe products are made from the whole crushed leaf, and contain both gel and latex.

Aloe vera has a significant presence in the cosmetic, pharmaceutical and food industries, with an estimated annual market value of \$13 billion worldwide. It's



claimed benefits range from youth and beauty to digestion and health.

But what benefits are supported by scientific studies? There is good evidence for its use to treat genital herpes, psoriasis, dandruff and constipation. (Until 2002, its components were used in over-the-counter laxatives. The FDA required that aloe be removed due to lack of safety data.)

Unfortunately, there is no strong evidence supporting the use of aloe vera for other medical conditions. Areas lacking in scientific support include cancer prevention, use with chemotherapy or its side effects, canker sores, treatment of the common cold, dental conditions including gum disease and reduction of plaque, skin ulcers, high cholesterol, antioxidant and antibacterial properties, improvement of skin elasticity and wrinkle reduction, aid in digestion, and improved circulation.

Evidence has actually been found against the use of aloe vera for treatment of diaper rash, heart disease, liver disease, pressure ulcers, and most notably, wound healing. Although some early studies supported its topical use to heal burns and abrasions, later studies showed that the gel actually could inhibit the healing of some wounds.

And what about side effects? Using aloe vera topically doesn't

appear to cause significant side effects, but taking aloe vera orally may actually be dangerous. Consuming whole leaf extract has resulted in carcinogenic activity in rats (but not in humans). Abdominal cramps and diarrhea have been reported. Oral use of aloe vera can decrease the absorption of many medications. It may lower blood glucose levels, which can actually be effective for diabetics, but would require that other diabetic medication be carefully adjusted in order to maintain a critical delicate balance.

Aloe vera (like so many ancient natural herbs) does not possess potent medicinal powers simply because of its longevity. And, unlike the times of ancient Egypt, modern times often offer more effective products. While science and controlled studies clearly have their limitations, they do give us valuable guidance. Always discuss any herbal or supplemental products you are taking with your health care provider, in order to be aware of any interactions or side effects – and be aware that some popular herbs and supplements may simply offer little benefit.

Dr. Alan Frischer is former chief of staff and former chief of medicine at Downey Regional Medical Center. Write to him in care of this newspaper at 8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240.

Study: 1 in 3 adults don't get enough sleep

More than a third of American adults are not getting enough sleep on a regular basis, according to a new study in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

This is the first study to document estimates of self-reported healthy sleep duration (7 or more hours per day) for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society recommend that adults aged 18–60 years sleep at least 7 hours each night to promote optimal health and well-being. Sleeping less than seven hours per day is associated with an increased risk of developing chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and frequent mental distress.

"As a nation we are not getting enough sleep," said Wayne Giles, M.D., director of CDC's Division of Population Health. "Lifestyle

changes such as going to bed at the same time each night; rising at the same time each morning; and turning off or removing televisions, computers, mobile devices from the bedroom, can help people get the healthy sleep they need."

CDC researchers reviewed data from the 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), a state-based, random-digit-dialed telephone survey conducted collaboratively by state health departments and CDC.

Key Findings:

- Healthy sleep duration was lower among Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders (54 percent), non-Hispanic blacks (54 percent), multiracial non-Hispanics (54 percent) and American Indians/Alaska Natives (60 percent) compared with non-Hispanic whites (67 percent), Hispanics (66 percent), and Asians (63 percent).
- The prevalence of healthy sleep duration varied among states and

ranged from 56 percent in Hawaii to 72 percent in South Dakota.

- A lower proportion of adults reported getting at least seven hours of sleep per day in states clustered in the southeastern region of the United States and the Appalachian Mountains. Previous studies have shown that these regions also have the highest prevalence of obesity and other chronic conditions.
- People who reported they were unable to work or were unemployed had lower healthy sleep duration (51 percent and 60 percent, respectively) than did employed respondents (65 percent). The prevalence of healthy sleep duration was highest among people with a college degree or higher (72 percent).
- The percentage reporting a healthy sleep duration was higher among people who were married (67 percent) compared with those who were never married (62 percent) or divorced, widowed, or separated (56 percent).

Vaginal ring may protect against HIV

A ring that continuously releases an experimental antiretroviral drug in the vagina safely provided a modest level of protection against HIV infection in women, a large clinical trial in four sub-Saharan African countries has found.

The ring reduced the risk of HIV infection by 27 percent in the study population overall and by 61 percent among women ages 25 years and older, who used the ring most consistently.

These results were announced Monday at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in Boston and simultaneously published online in the New England Journal of Medicine (link is external).

Women accounted for more than half of the 25.8 million people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa in 2014. Finding effective HIV prevention tools for adolescent girls and young women in particular is critical, as one in four new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa occur in this group.

The ASPIRE study, also known as MTN-020, aimed to determine whether the experimental antiretroviral drug dapivirine could safely and effectively prevent HIV infection when continuously released in the vagina from a silicone ring replaced once every 4 weeks.

The study, which began in 2012, enrolled more than 2,600 HIV-uninfected women ages 18 to 45 years who were at high risk for HIV

infection at 15 sites in Malawi, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The women were assigned at random to receive either the dapivirine ring or a placebo ring. No one knew who received which ring until the end of the trial.

All study participants received a package of HIV prevention services at each study visit, including HIV risk-reduction counseling, partner HIV testing, treatment of sexually transmitted infections in participants and their partners, and free condoms.

The investigators found that the dapivirine ring reduced the risk of acquiring HIV by 27 percent among all women enrolled in the trial. But when the scientists excluded data from two sites where it was apparent early on that many women were not returning for study visits or using the ring consistently, the ring reduced the risk of HIV infection by 37 percent.

Furthermore, the investigators found that the dapivirine ring reduced the risk of HIV infection by 61 percent in women ages 25 and older, but provided no statistically significant protection in women younger than 25 years. These younger women appeared to use the ring less consistently than other participants, based on the amount of dapivirine measured in volunteers' blood during study visits.

To explore this age-related effect further, investigators performed analyses that were not originally planned and found that the ring

reduced the risk of HIV infection by 56 percent in women older than 21 years, but provided no protection for women ages 18 to 21 years. More research is needed to determine whether behavior, biology or a combination of factors contributed to the lack of significant protection for younger women.

Finally, the investigators found that the rate of adverse medical events was similar among women who received the dapivirine ring compared to those who received the placebo ring, as was the frequency of antiretroviral resistance in women who acquired HIV.

An ongoing large multinational clinical trial called The Ring Study also tested the dapivirine ring for safety and efficacy in women.

Similar to ASPIRE, The Ring Study investigators found an overall effectiveness of 31 percent, with a slightly greater reduction in risk of HIV infection among women older than 21 years. The results of The Ring Study also were announced today at CROI.

NIAID plans to consult with a panel of outside experts to determine next steps for research on the dapivirine ring, which the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) developed and provided for both studies as their regulatory sponsor.

In South Gate, future tech developers showcase their ideas

SOUTH GATE – Would you go for an app that sends an alert when you’ve left home without turning off the kitchen light, and asks whether you want to turn it off remotely?

How about one that lets you find a reliable, background-checked, neighborhood baby sitter at the last minute? Or better yet, an app that determines how much water you should drink daily depending on how much energy you’ve burned?

None of these apps exists yet, but all of them got a big boost toward becoming reality by claiming prizes at the recent WeHack / Southeast Cities Hackathon, organized by the Southern California Latino Policy Center and Sabio and hosted in South Gate, a working-class Latino community not usually associated with hi-tech innovation.

“These communities are sometimes left out,” says South Gate Mayor Jorge Morales. “They’re the last ones to get in on the environmental push and the last ones in on technology. So to have the (hackathon) here is incredible for us.”

Hackathons are events where computer programmers, software and hardware developers and others gather to compete and create software projects in a matter of days, usually over the course of a weekend.

The “wehack: Southeast Cities Civic Hackathon” drew more than one hundred participants from Irvine, the San Fernando Valley and even as far as Riverside. They converged on the South Gate campus of East LA College over the weekend to compete for more than \$7,000 in prizes with goal of creating apps and software that would benefit the residents of communities such as South Gate.

Sabio, a developer community offering 6-12 week full-time coding bootcamps in Los Angeles and Orange County, steered the initiative to stage the hackathon in South Gate. Co-founders, Gregorio Rojas and his wife, Liliana Aide Monge say it was critical to come to the southeast, where there is very little awareness about the opportunities in the field of writing code for computers.

“We’re really happy with some of the high schools that came out,” Monge says. “We commend the teachers that made that effort.”

Many of the high school students, novices known as “developing developers,” came from the Foshay Learning Center School’s Tech Academy. Among them, 16-year old Esmeralda Nava and Danny “Hyun Bum” Cho, 17, who didn’t know each other until they met at the start of the event Friday night. Two nights later they walked away with the top prize for students with their Easy Sitter app, which helps track down reliable baby sitters on short notice. They also developed an instant rapport of familiarity to the point where they sometimes finished each other’s sentences.

“We didn’t know each other before this weekend,” Danny says. “And now,” Esmeralda continues, “we have this passion together and it’s a lot of fun. You also meet a lot of mentors and you get connections and can start networking and I really like that.”

They also learned an important skill overlooked and seldom considered by novices: the ability to pitch their idea. Ed-tech entrepreneur Quiana Patterson offered an early morning workshop on hitting the high notes of a perfect pitch, and the importance of being a skilled public speaker.

“No one wants to build or create something and not be able to sell it,” she says. “My message to them is, if you’re going to spend the time and energy to think of something awesome or revolutionary, you have to be the best salesperson of that product. You never know where your public speaking skills might take you or guide you to an even higher career.”

When the workshop ended, another group of students – the developers of what they called, the “Green Home” energy conservation app – met with Ken Nnaoji, one of the half-dozen mentors from the Sabio organization, to polish their presentation.

“Try to begin by telling a story,” he told them, as they huddled in a corner of their meeting room. “Something that can pull the audience into understanding the significance of what you’re creating and how it’s going to make a positive impact on your community. You guys have really great ideas. You’re innovators. Just go out there and knock it out of the park like I know you can!”

On the final night of the event, 15-year-old Megan Dotson hooked the crowd and got the judges’ attention with the story of her ongoing frustration with her younger brother. “Every time he goes into a room he turns on the lights, and I’m constantly turning them off after he leaves.” Her team’s Green Home app landed the second place, \$500 cash prize.

“The concept of team sport is really critical,” Sabio’s Rojas says. “It isn’t

something that you do individually like tennis. It’s more like basketball, and sometimes like football and hockey with all the fights that might happen.”

No drama at this particular hackathon – but there was plenty of work to be shared, according to 15-year old Sara Du. “The process was hard but the end product is good,” she says. Du was the creator of “Aqua App.”

“It harnesses the health app on your iPhone and sends you regular notifications and emails to remind you to hydrate based on personal physical data such as age, weight and height – even taking into account how much walking you’ve done.”

Du also admits, “I didn’t think I could’ve created this app in a day. Otherwise I think I would’ve been doing this for a month, probably. Other students might not be encouraged because it seems really hard to do. But I met a lot of people who could help me, so [this] was a good learning experience.”

“There was much more going on this weekend than coding and programming,” said Victor Abalos, Executive Director of the Southern California Latino Policy Center. “We’re hoping events like this help the residents of the Southeast Cities not only recognize how important tech can be to solving day-to-day problems, but also how careers in tech offer amazing opportunities for young people from this area.”

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The Norwalk Patriot accepts and encourages letters to the editor. Letters must include a full name, address and telephone number, although only the author's name and hometown will be published. Letters may be edited for length, style and/or content.

Letters can be mailed to The Norwalk Patriot, 12040 Foster Rd., Norwalk CA 90650 or via e-mail at news@thedowneypatriot.com.

Making sense of Cerritos College’s labor issue

By Raul Samaniego Contributor

Members of the Cerritos College faculty crowded into the College Trustee chamber to voice opinions on the current contract negotiations stalled in discussions Wednesday February 17, 2015.

Call them what you want; Associations, Employee groups, bargaining teams...Unions.

I like unions; it's the union leaders I, eh, well have reservations with.

It was my time dealing with the leadership of the San Diego Labor Council back in my San Diego days. Membership included mostly AFL-CIO affiliated unions.

They were foul-mouthed, hard drinking, and marine like strutting, ball busting men in charge.

Good thing I had the opportunity to meet individual union leaders which included women in their ranks. They represented all types of workers and employees in education, police and fire fighters, bus drivers, electrical workers and more.

They were adamant whether male or female in their views, but presented themselves in a different manner compared to the leadership at the head of the Labor Council.

When I was asked by an Associate of the Labor Council what I thought the role of the leadership was?

“Why, they are there to represent the interests of the union membership,” was my naïve response.

Looking at me directly in the eyes, he coldly responded, “Their job is to keep their job.”

He went on to explain that every union leader has to be elected by the membership every so often and that if they had to return to the assembly line or back to driving a bus, they wouldn't like it.

Keeping their job as a union local leader came about by not rocking the boat. That is, don't do anything that would irk the voting membership at the next election.

Most of the union leaders at the local level were more reachable and sociable. I had many meetings with those leaders after I got past my initial introduction to higher organized labor.

Here in Norwalk, specifically Cerritos College, there is Dr. Solomon Namala, the faculty representative for the Cerritos College Faculty Federation (CCFF).

I met Dr. Solomon Namala a few years ago when I was taking courses at Cerritos to keep active during that darned “Great Recession.”

After returning from San Diego, I sought out Dr. Namala regarding his Macro Economics class.

After an in depth conversation, we decided that his section at this level wasn't the course for me. The year was 2012.

Meeting Dr. Namala at last week's Cerritos College Board of Trustees meeting, I was impressed that he remembered our meeting in his lower level office in the older Social Science building (That's what it was called when I attended classes the first time back in 1980's).

Earlier in the day, all faces seemed so full of smiles and happiness on the campus.

Everyone at the Year of the Monkey New year's celebration was just so festive.

Leaving the ceremony after about an hour of meeting people, interviewing and taking pictures, I submitted about a dozen photos with a recap of the event.

While at the gala event, I ran into Cerritos College President Dr. Jose Fierro, asking him as I do everyone, “What's News?”

That's my friendly way of asking what is news worthy in your world.

Most often, people will add some small tidbit. Dr Fierro started volunteering information regarding the current employee contract negotiations.

Whoa, whoa, whoa! After all, I was there to cover the Chinese New year's celebration.

When am I going to learn,

“You're never off the record,” as my Journalism Instructor Professor Rich Cameron once told me.

Dr Fierro was saying “ten percent this, sixteen percent that.” I should have paid closer attention.

After leaving the ceremony, I ventured over to the national coffee shop to write my stories. I had a commentary piece on the City Council study session and the New Year's event to finish.

When the editor asked if I wanted to do a commentary piece on the labor dispute, I agreed and said I'd go down after I checked something at Hermosillo Park.

I wanted to see if anything had been done with the playground equipment I had seen and written about a couple weeks prior.

Yikes! They had been secured with three shiny bolts and washers..

“Stop the presses!”

That's a great journalism cliché, but that's essentially what I asked for. I had to rewrite the “February Study Session” story for the equipment at Hermosillo Park was indeed repaired.

On to Cerritos College! Winter showed up again with a late afternoon shower.

With my orange poncho from head to just below my knees, I must have looked like the “Great pumpkin on wheels,” as I rode to the campus in the rain.

I made my way through the campus arriving at the entrance to the Trustee Chamber where fifty or more people clad in red T-shirts were clamoring around with signs, realizing to myself, “This is the place.”

Walking up to one woman holding a hand written sign with the words, “No Justice, No Peace,” I asked her if she were “advocating Violence?”

Responding to my question, she simply said, “By whatever means.”

Again, I asked, “So, you are advocating violence?”

“If that's what it takes,” was her final response.

Inside the meeting room, I was greeted by a member of the College President's staff who led me to Dr. Namala where I offered my

salutations and we sat for the first phase of the meeting.

During the open segment, some of those higher level Union folks took the mic and gave what I recognized as very emotional to say the least, addresses to the Board, President and all in attendance.

At the break, Dr. Namala and I sat for a time and we reviewed the material handed out at the door by the President's Staff. We spoke, I listened and he presented the material which supported his side of the labor situation.

What got me out in the rain, after nearly fully recovering from that bout with bronchitis the previous six weeks was the simple phrase in a press release provided to me by Aya Abelon, Media Relations Coordinator.

“The District and the Board of Trustees highly value the contributions of our full-time and part-time faculty toward the success of our students. Negotiations are sometimes difficult; but it is unfortunate that the Faculty Union has rejected the District's contract offer. The District offered its other employee groups a 10% raise over the course of three years, which they accepted. The District extended a 10% increase to the Faculty Union for full-time faculty and 16% to part-time faculty over three years, which is far above other colleges in the region. The Union has asked the District for more than 30% in salary increases”

Truth be told, I had no problem riding this one out watching a re-run of the “Big Bang Theory,” in the comfort of my warm and dry living

room.

It was that darn “30%” statement. I needed clarity.

I've never been in a union. As a matter of fact, most corporations I worked for preached against the practice citing the evil pitfalls of such a monster.

Being in Sales and Management, I was blessed; Salaried with bonuses, trips and company cars. Life was good...before the “Great Recession.”

Thinking I was “One of the guys,” I even showed up at company picnics hoping to play softball not knowing that the “Suits” did not go to those things.

My grey khaki clad co-workers were in a union and one of my friends explained that even though all company employees were invited, the “Suits” never came to those events.

I had been a suit for 25 years.

So, what's the problem with the negotiations at Cerritos I asked myself?

The first thing, I needed an explanation of the “30%” statement from the Administration side.

I thank Dr. Namala for his explanation of their side's proposals and his attempt to explain the Administration side.

In a one on one phone interview, he was very responsive to my questions about the current issue, the definitions and what needed to be done to move this process forward.

A week later, I received a one page response to my inquiry from the Administration side and my

surprise (Again) the statement said:

“Combined (full-time and part-time), CCFH requested more than 41.04% in its initial negotiation request to the District...”

This not only caught my attention, but of course my initial reaction was those blank teachers!

However, being that I received a “C” in my last Algebra class, I did not want to start with the X's and Y's of the proposals.

My humble opinion; Yes, I owe my sense of inquiry, deduction skills, enhanced interviewing techniques, gumption, scheduling habits, understanding of the human psyche, compassion, “keeping an open mind”, and even volleyball skills... to teachers.

That is four years worth at Cerritos and a lifetime of continual education throughout the thirty years since I left Cerritos the first time.

I asked Dr Namala what needs to happen today.

“We need to sit down again and keep the dialogue going.”

Dr. Fierro, President Liu, all Trustees and those involved in the negotiations, let's stop the bickering, roll up those well ironed shirt sleeves and get back to the bargaining table.

You don't have to “Play ball” with them either, but as I learned in my Micro Economics class (San Diego City College), both sides need be at that overlapping area where the happy median exists and a potential solution can be achieved.

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College celebrates Chinese New Year

NORWALK – The 2016 Lunar New Year Celebration or Year of the Monkey was held Wednesday at the Student Center on the campus of Cerritos College.

“I want to share our (Chinese) culture,” said a smiling Cerritos College Board President Dr. Shin Liu regarding the day’s program.

It had been at least four years since the last celebration.

“It is celebrated by Chinese, Japanese, Korean and all Asian

cultures,” Dr. Liu added.

The day was filled with traditional colorful lion dancers, demonstrations of martial arts, Erhu (pronounced ir-hu) musicians and additional assortment of dances complete with feats of beautiful renditions of Asian dances.

Food and drink was provided also.

Dr. Liu not only can lead the Board of Trustees, but she joined the Erhu players on stage to join in

playing her “Two-string” Chinese violin.

Sporting a new beard and welcoming the crowd was Cerritos President Jose Fierro.

By having the event on a school day, rather than a weekend, it was hoped that more students would attend.

The turnout showed that the planning was correct.

–Raul Samaniego

What’s new at the Norwalk Senior Center

NORWALK – Seniors are invited to enjoy a candlelight dinner St. Patrick’s Day dinner March 8.

The menu includes corned beef and cabbage, red potato salad, garlic bread, dessert, beverage and coffee.

The dinner is dine-in only. Doors open at 5:15 p.m. with dinner service from 5:45-6 p.m.

Tickets are \$6 if purchased before March 5 (\$7.50 after). Tickets will not be sold at the door.

•The senior center is sponsoring an excursion to San Diego on March 24.

The first stop is Seaport Village, where visitors can stroll through 80 one-of-a-kind shops and eateries. A voucher good for one of eight Village restaurants will be provided.

The next stop is Old Town, known for its historic sites and unique stores.

Tickets are \$20 for Norwalk residents. Registration begins March 1.

Buses leave from the City Hall parking lot at 9 a.m. and return by 6 p.m.

•The senior center is also making an excursion to the Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival on April 23.

The festival features live performances, shops, live history performers, mansion tours, and food vendors.

Tickets are \$15 (lunch not provided). Tickets go on sale March 14.

Buses depart from City Hall at 8:30 a.m. and return by 4 p.m. Call the senior center at (562) 929-5580 for more information.

Time is running out for State of the City tickets

NORWALK – City Manager Mike Egan will deliver Norwalk’s State of the City address next Friday, March 4, at 11:30 a.m. at the DoubleTree Hotel.

Egan, joined by the City Council, will bring guests up to speed on Norwalk’s progress on its Vision2020 Strategic Plan and how it has helped Norwalk grow in technology, efficiency and service.

Tickets are \$45, which includes lunch. Deadline for sales is Feb. 29. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

Doors open at 11 a.m. for a silent auction.

For more information, or to purchase tickets, go to ncccconline.us.

The State of the City is a fundraiser for the Norwalk Coomunity Coordinating Council.

Pancake, posole breakfast Saturday

NORWALK – Norwalk Lions Club will hold its annual pancake and posole breakfast this Saturday from 7 a.m. to noon at the Norwalk Arts and Sports Complex.

Tickets are \$5. Attendees are asked to bring their old or unused eyeglasses for donation.

Learn how to receive a U.S. passport

DOWNEY – The Barbara J. Riley Center will host a free workshop April 9 on how to apply for or renew a U.S. passport.

The workshop will be open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. No appointment is needed.

All passport applicants must personally appear and bring with them a completed but unsigned application. Forms are available at state.travel.gov.

Applicants should also bring a 2x2 color photograph of themself, proof of identity (such as a driver’s license), proof of citizenship, and appropriate fees.

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