

The Place for Part-Timers

“Experience is what you get when you didn’t get what you wanted.” ~Randy Pausch

Editor’s Comment: Fair Treatment is the goal of Local 6286 at Victor Valley College. We especially want the fairness of Equal Pay for Equal Work.

Labor Day?

 PTFU 6286

Editor's Etchings

“Everyone was affected by the economic crises that defined the Gilded Age. Everyone saw how governors, legislators, and judges served the interests of the moneyed classes. Jay Gould’s New York *World* insulted all working people when it declared that ‘Men must be contented to work for less wages. In this way the workingmen will be nearer to that station in life to which it has pleased God to call them.’ ”

Source: *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor in the United States* by Priscilla Murolo & A.B. Chitty. Illustrations by Joe Sacco.



I was initially hoodwinked by a recent article that ran in the Orange County Register last Monday about Fresno County School Superintendent Larry Powell giving up \$800,000 in compensation that he would earn in the next three years to keep his 325 schools and 35 school districts afloat. The article’s publication coincided with our own return to classes @ VVC, and it inspired me to know that an already over-paid Administrator recognized that he was so. He is quoted to say things like, “There’s no reason for me to keep stockpiling money,” and, “a part of me has chafed at what they did in Bell.” The author of the article went on to describe how Powell had technically retired so that he could return \$288,241 in salary and benefits for the next three to four years. He was hired back @ a rate of \$31,000 per year to continue his service. The author, Tracie Cone of the AP, also stressed the significance of the \$31,000 being \$10,000 per year less than a beginning teacher’s salary and with no benefits. I must say that this kind of civic-minded responsibility did my heart good. I even saved the article to use in one of my Liberal Studies courses where we investigate the status and quality of education nationwide. Way to go, Mr. Powell!

However, as we all know, there is usually more to the story when it involves school budgets and allocations, salaries and benefits, and the current “caste” system of Education that I ranted about in August. So, what “appears” to have really taken place is what Stephen Greenhut (editor of www.calwatchdog.com) asserts as proof that “the retirement systems are too generous.” Powell actually got himself a better deal because, as pension reform gets heated, he will be collecting a paycheck (albeit much more modest) and “shifting the bulk of his salary to the retirement system, which is awash in unfunded pension liabilities. That means he is spreading his costs from one set of tax payers to another set.” Hmph! I really wanted to stay hoodwinked at this point (Greenhut’s article ran just yesterday as a follow-up to last week’s pomp and circumstance), and I really do commend Mr. Powell for finding a way to give money back into his districts and schools (who serve more than 195,000 students), but I just won’t wrap my mind around the kind of heroism he is receiving as the story travels around the nation.

What really bothers me the most is the insistent “hoodwinking” of us all when schools and their staffs receive less and less and are expected to do more and more. Yet many are doing more—and where is their recognition? And where is the transparency that we hear about but never see? The rhetoric stops here for me, dear friends, as I grapple with the reality that we probably never hear the truth about much, and that, when we do, our intelligence is considered to be as meager as our paychecks. Thank goodness we know ourselves to be amongst the true heroes “in the trenches” as we weather the tribulations—and tributes—of our earnest profession!

Enjoy the rest of your Labor Day Holiday and I will see you again on September 12th,

Val Frangelica, Editor