

# THE FONTANAN

SUMMER BREAK IS ALMOST HERE!

MAY 2025



Volume 45 Issue 10

FONTANA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

# EXECUTIVE BOARD

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# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FTA PRESIDENT

Dear Union Sisters and Brothers,

Something is happening to public education in this country — and it's not good. We're seeing cuts, chaos, and a level of disrespect that feels, frankly, gut-wrenching. Under the current administration, public schools like ours are being treated like afterthoughts, as if the work we do every day with our students isn't the backbone of our communities. The truth? We are witnessing an unprecedented wave of attacks on our schools, and that means we can't afford to stay quiet.

Let's be honest: many of us are feeling tired. Demoralized. Some days, it feels like we're being asked to hold the entire system together with duct tape and pure heart. Budgets are uncertain. Class sizes keep growing. We hear promises of "support" — but what we actually get are more mandates, fewer resources, and leadership that acts as if public schools are the problem instead of the solution.

But we are not helpless — we are organized.

This is the moment for every educator in Fontana to rally around the Fontana Teachers Association. Our union is our collective voice, and that voice has never been more important than it is right now. FTA isn't some distant office or logo — it's us. It's every teacher who has stayed late to help a struggling student. Every counselor who's managed a caseload triple what's reasonable. Every educator who's found a way to turn scarcity into opportunity because they refuse to give up on kids.

Let's be clear: we deserve a fair contract. Not just because we work hard — but because our students deserve classrooms where their teachers are supported, respected, and fully present. Our working conditions are our students' learning conditions. And when we advocate for ourselves, we are also advocating for them.

But none of this will happen unless we organize — not someday, not eventually, but now. We need to show up for each other. We need to speak up at board meetings, rally at the district office, and stand shoulder to shoulder in union meetings. We need to remind the decision-makers that we are watching, we are united, and we are not backing down.



## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FTA PRESIDENT

Finally, we want to extend a warm welcome to our new FTA officers. They've stepped up in a time when the work is hard and the road ahead isn't easy. They can't do this alone — and they shouldn't have to. Let's be the kind of members who lift each other up, especially in times like these.

As I step down from my role as FTA President, I want to thank each and every one of you for your support, your courage, and your unwavering commitment to our students and to each other. Serving as your president has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I have seen the power of solidarity firsthand, and I will carry that strength with me always.

Thank you for standing with me — and for standing strong for what's right. I leave this role with the hope that our union is in good hands and that our collective voice will continue to grow even louder.

**Together, we fight for what's right. Together, we make change.**

In solidarity,

*Mark*

OUTGOING FTA PRESIDENT





# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FTA VICE PRESIDENT

Dear Union Sisters and Brothers,

In 1949 or so, teachers of Fontana decided that teaching was not just a profession, it was a cause worth organizing around. Those teachers wanted a union, a body that would work for, and look out for their own. So, in 1950, the Fontana Teachers Association, FTA was born. In my mind, it probably happened on a hot Friday afternoon, powered by chalk dust, courage and the kind of determination that only teachers can summon after the chaos of recess, PE, or a fire drill! We became affiliated with the California Teachers Association, CTA, in 1954, and the National Education Association, NEA, in 1958.

75 years later, we are still here! Still organizing around our profession. Still a body of our own, looking out for our own. We are wiser, louder, stronger, waaaayyyy more caffeinated, diverse and overworked than ever. This is my 28th year and I never thought I would think to myself, "when I first started..." (fill in the blank with your own memory) - but here I am! Back then, our classrooms had blackboards, (whiteboards were installed my second year – much to my devastation - and the demise of my prized chalk holder) and hand crank pencil sharpeners that were attached in weird places around the room. Those antiques have been replaced by screens – OMG screens everywhere, extension cords and pencil eating machines whining loudly while we speak. Long gone are the days of hiking across campus to make copies or wheeling in the shared TV cart. Now we have smart TV's, laptops, and we print in our rooms alongside a million other tools that are meant to make teaching easier.

Throughout the last 75 years, FTA has advocated for fair wages, excellent-FREE health and welfare benefits, smaller class sizes, even chairs, desks, and materials for every student, among a myriad of other things. The Collective Bargaining Agreement, CBA, as we know it, was not handed to us. FTA Negotiations Team has fought for each article; nothing has been given to us ever – on the contrary, it is/was often expected that we give of ourselves until we have nothing left to give. Many have never experienced a class size of 33+ in K-3, or had health benefits that cost half of your check, or a principal asking why you needed that personal day. Maybe every classroom you've ever walked into has had every supply, been a comfortable temperature every day, and students wait patiently for you, eager for instruction... – maybe. Here, in real life as the kids say, IRL, we struggle daily with the conditions under which we are expected to perform miracles. Teachers everywhere are leaving the profession faster than colleges can graduate those who want to teach.



## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FTA VICE PRESIDENT

FTA remains at about 93% of our teachers as members, but union membership overall is down about 10% across most unions over the last 25-30 years. Those of us staying in education bear a responsibility to keep what we have, make it better where we can for those coming behind us, and keep FTA strong! We cannot allow public education to fail, and it takes more than a small percentage of our association to keep us powerful and right now only a small fraction of our association is involved. Our union needs to be strong, stay strong and get stronger. The demands on us never lessen, our credibility, knowledge and professionalism are questioned constantly. We are rarely treated as the professional in the classroom on neither content nor students that we see more than some parents. Behavior concerns continue to escalate and the response by those in charge is lackluster and ineffective. We work too much, we wear too many hats, and union activities are difficult to add to our already overloaded schedule. Unless we maintain and improve the strength of FTA, it is unlikely we will see any improvements or reductions in the amount of work that we are expected to accomplish, or the degree of the miracles we should be performing.

FTA continues to envision schools that empower teachers and encourage students. Classrooms that are safe and comfortable, equitably equipped and unapologetically dedicated to helping our students attain the promising future they deserve by recruiting and maintaining the best teachers around with an excellent compensation package. We are tireless protectors of teachers' rights and champions of public education. Every FTA member walks into a classroom backed by generations of teachers before them that stood up for academic freedoms and professional rights, safe campuses, and fair compensation packages. That is a lot for 75 years!

We should be proud of our past, but what of our union now? How can we make ourselves better? Stronger? More powerful? First, know your contract. Every one of us should read and know our contract – the conditions under which we work. We need to learn to enforce OUR contract. NO administration can overrun an organized staff that holds them accountable for knowing (or breaking) the contract. It is all our responsibility to work for the betterment of our association and the only way we move forward is by not letting anyone move our association back. Others outside of the association will always try to fragment us; dividing us makes it easier for them, so we absolutely must stop allowing that! Imagine the strength – perceived and actual, of our association if we just half of us showed up sometime at a board meeting, or a district sponsored event...somewhere to do something – anything! 800 people looks and sounds awesome!



## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FTA VICE PRESIDENT

Second, consider getting involved. Yes, you may be busy, it is imperative that we are all involved. FTA needs you. Start small. Maybe you noticed an issue at your site? Maybe your admin is pushing just a little too much on something. Give us a call and we can help you make sure you understand the contract, and get your staff organized. Maybe you have some great ideas for social events, or a project for Human Rights to work on. Maybe you're a BIPOC teacher and you have an issue for the Equity team? Maybe you just want to retire and would love to help out on the Retirement Committee - or maybe you just have a specific set of skills that make you particularly dangerous - we would love to know about that! We need everyone.

You've elected new officers, but the core values of our union remain! FTA stands for our collective action, our professionalism and our advocacy. FTA's strength exists only because of collective action. WE are the UNION. Not your site rep, not the President of FTA or Executive Board. It's you, and it's me, and the guy/gal/person next door to your class. ALL OF US! WE are FTA! So, join a committee! Come to a meeting. Become a site rep or an alternate. Come to our social events and wear your T-shirt!

In solidarity,

*Jodi*

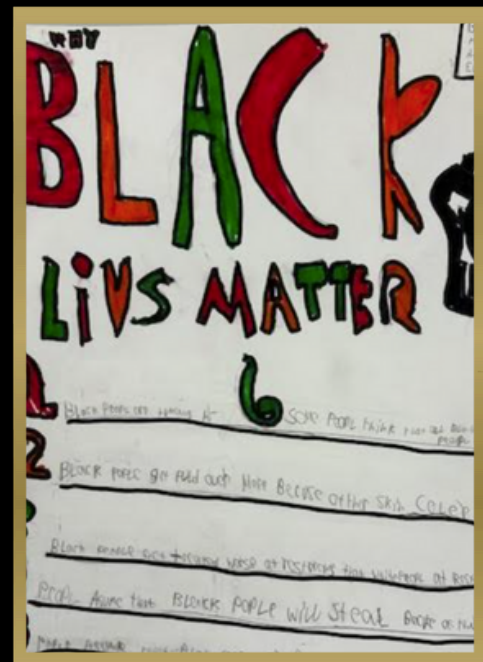
OUTGOING FTA VICE PRESIDENT





# FTA HUMAN RIGHTS POSTER CONTEST

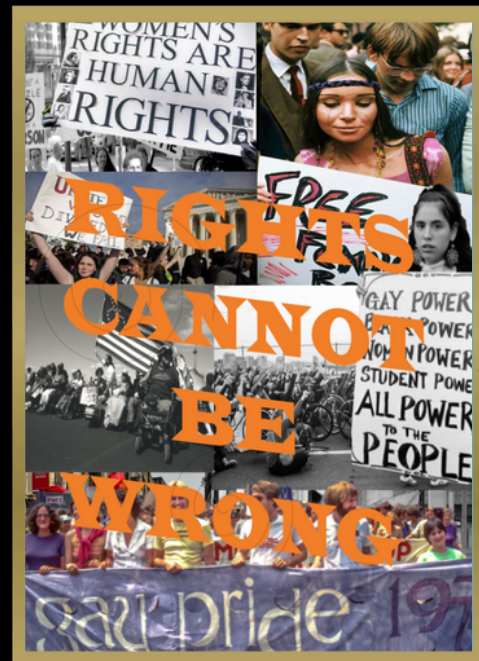
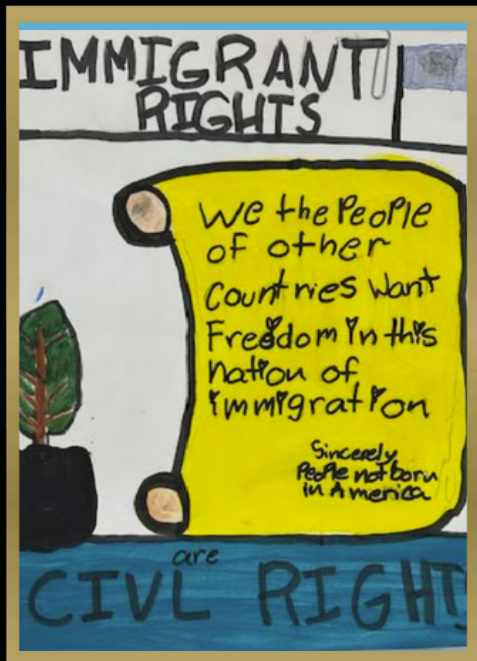
## Selections



THANK YOU TO ALL THAT PARTICIPATED.

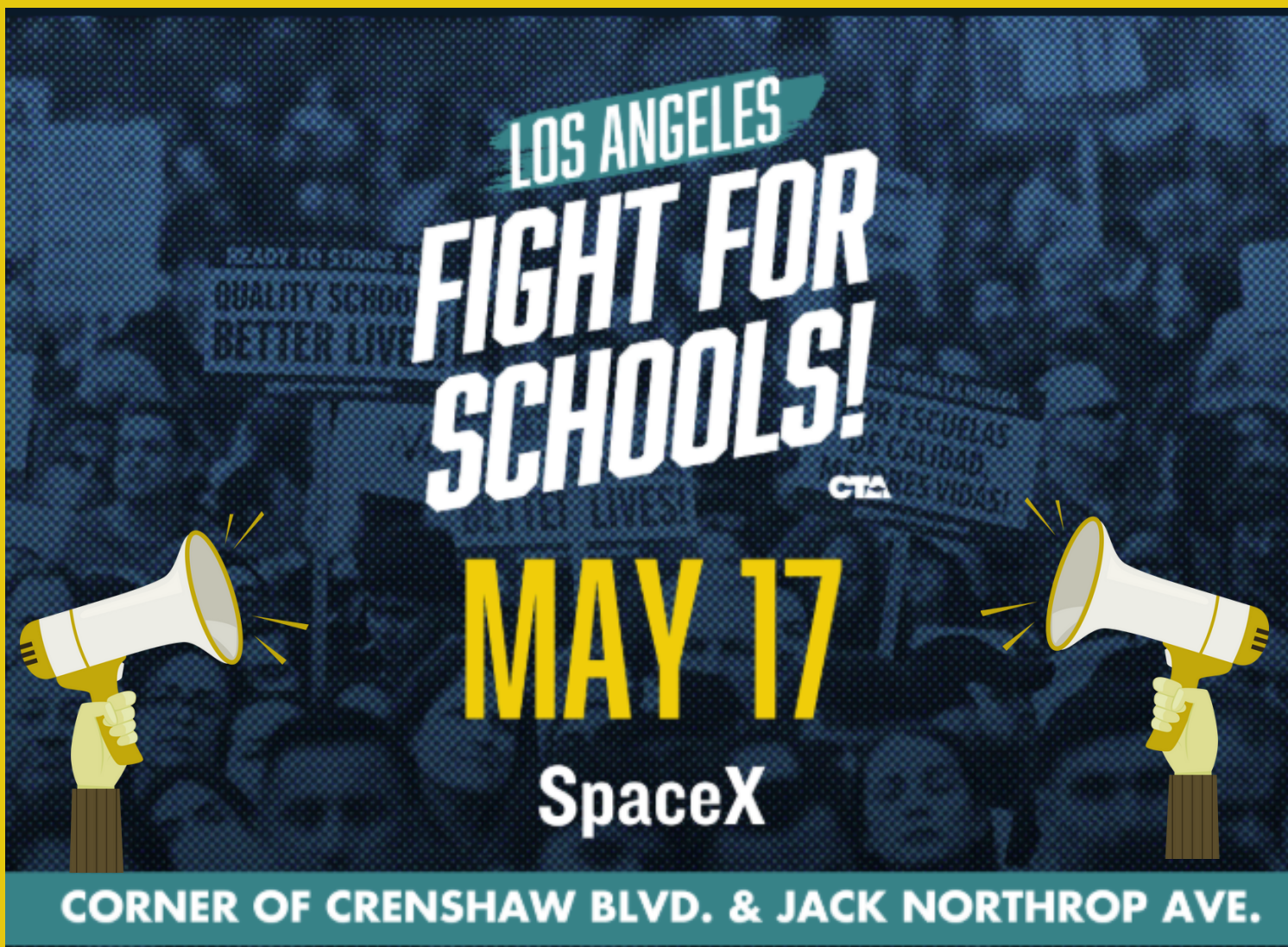


# FTA HUMAN RIGHTS POSTER CONTEST Selections



THANK YOU TO ALL THAT PARTICIPATED.





This is our moment to rise. The Trump/Musk administration is launching ruthless attacks on our students, our profession, and the very fabric of our communities. We will not stand by in silence—we will fight back.

On May 17, join dozens of educator unions and allies as we march on SpaceX in Hawthorne, the heart of Elon Musk's empire. This is bigger than any one issue—it's about defending public education, protecting our students, and demanding dignity and respect for every educator.

We teach courage every day. Now it's time to show it.

### **FTA MEMBERS:**

**Be there. Be loud. Be unbreakable.**

**Let's make history. Together.**

Are you ready to stand shoulder-to-shoulder on May 17?

Carpooling is recommended. Register:





# WHEN CAN I RETIRE?

By: **Leandra Marchis-Poirier**



## 50

You can retire from the District at 50 years of age if you have worked for the District for 15 or more years. If you retire at 50 you will not receive a pension as of yet, but you will be able to keep your benefits for a limited time if you have participated in our benefits programs for at least the last 5 years of your employment.

## 55

You can retire from the District at the age of 55 and begin to collect your pension payments from CalSTRS if you have contributed to CalSTRS (not all teachers belong to CalSTRS). In addition you will be eligible for benefits for a limited time as well. The amount you receive for your pension payments will vary according to your contributions, years of service, etc. To get an idea of what your pension will look like, please contact CalSTRS (you can find their information below).

In addition to your pension, you may be receiving a one time supplemental benefit payment which is based on additional duties you have completed over the years such as, summer school, coaching stipends, tutoring, etc. This supplemental payment is in addition to your pension, but can be taken as a lump sum or divided into payments.

For more specific information about Retirement, please review Article 13 of our Contract. You will find the link below.

CalSTRS:




Article 13:







# SUMMER To Do List

- 
- ☐ If you have a new home or email address, send that to the FTA Office at [ftaoffice@fontanateachers.org](mailto:ftaoffice@fontanateachers.org).
  - ☐ Update your beneficiaries if needed with District Office HR for your District-Paid Life Insurance, CalSTRS and Tax-Deferred Annuity plans (403B's. etc.).
  - ☐ Check and make a note of the ending balance of your sick/personal leave time.
  - ☐ Make an appointment with CalSTRS to learn about your retirement options, even if you are not close to retiring.
  - ☐ Make a list for your loved ones of who and what companies to contact in the event of your unexpected death.
  - ☐ Gather important documents into a safe place in case of an emergency. These documents include birth certificates, marriage certificates, Social Security cards, car titles, home titles or mortgage info, life insurance information.
  - ☐ Take some time to relax and rejuvenate.





# Legal Services



We understand how daunting legal matters can be. CTA works to preserve and enhance the rights of educators and other public school employees in all aspects of their employment. As a benefit of membership, CTA members receive free legal services and consultations on **employment and non-employment-related** legal matters such as:

- ☒ Personal Injury
- ☒ Family Law
- ☒ Workman's Comp
- ☒ Wills, Estate & Trust Planning
- ☒ Social Security & Disability
- ☒ Civil

For employment-related legal services or referrals please contact FTA.



 909-829-0940





Join us for the love of reading and bringing book pages to life!

# Equity Team Book Club



On break for  
the summer.  
Book Club will  
resume in  
August 2025.





**Protect**  
**those who matter**  
**most to you.**

*Have you updated your beneficiaries?*



**We've simplified information on the CTA Death Benefits including the NEA Complimentary Life Insurance Plan.**

## AUTOMATIC BENEFITS



CTA  
Dismemberment  
Benefit



NEA Life  
Insurance

## VOLUNTARY BENEFITS AVAILABLE



CTA Disability  
Insurance



CTA Life  
Insurance

Included in this article you will find important contact information that you may provide to the surviving spouse or beneficiaries.



909-829-0940

16850 Seville Avenue, Fontana CA 9335

fontanateachers.org





# Shop Summer Savings in May!

Celebrate Mother's Day and Memorial Day by creating unforgettable memories and enjoying amazing savings. Shop now and embrace the season of adventure and relaxation!

To Register Visit [ticketsatwork.com](https://ticketsatwork.com) and use Company Code

**KBFFTA**



Scan QR code or click  
the link to visit  
website



Choose the best deals  
and offers



Find amazing  
exclusive offers &  
deals



More savings, more of  
what makes you  
happy

## Featured Offers



### **Disneyland Resort**

Adult Tickets at Child Prices for 3+  
Day Tickets - Includes \$20  
DiningDollars.com Certificate



### **1-800-Flowers.com**

Get up to 25% off select collection +  
20% off everything else



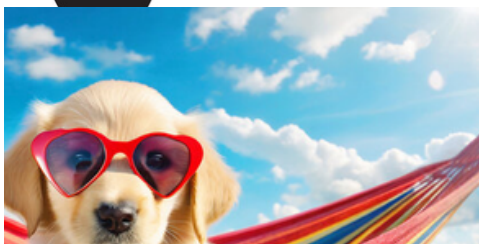
### **Apple**

Exclusive employee savings on select  
products



### **Discount Hotel Reservations**

Enjoy exclusive savings up to 60% off  
hotel rates + earn 4x points.



Credit on



### **Discount Flight Reservations**

Save up to 20% on flights



# From the Desk of Lady Pencilsdown

## Fontanan's Favorite (and Possibly Last) Scribbler



Dearest Readers,

With a flourish of ink and a touch of theatrical flair (one does like to exit with style), I must inform you that this will be my final missive—for now. It appears that certain members of next year's union leadership have developed a rather delicate constitution. My pen, it seems, proved a touch too pointed for their liking.

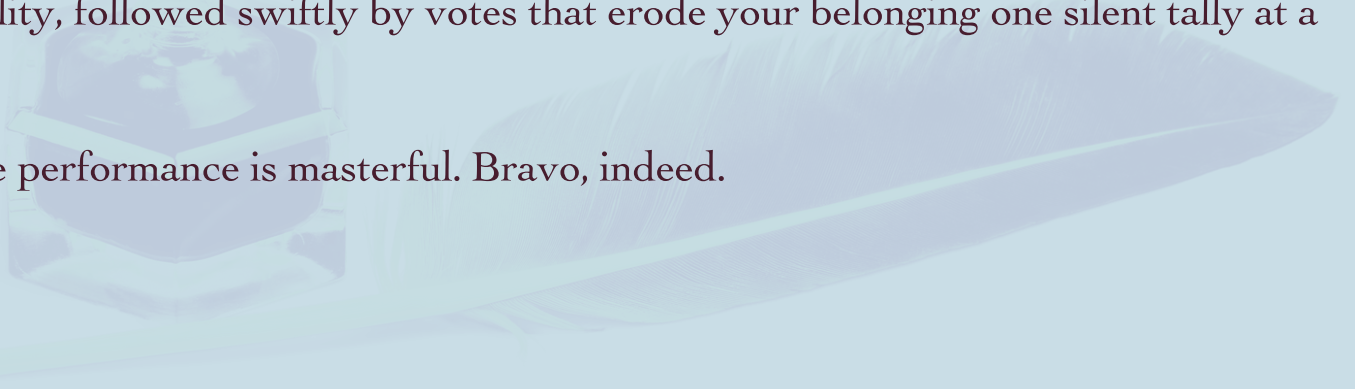
Alas, the quill must rest—temporarily. The will of the majority has spoken, and I, ever the dutiful subject of democracy, shall honor it. I have informed the editor of *The Fontanan* that this will be my last column until such time as the winds—and those who claim to read them—shift once more.

But before I vanish into the rhetorical mist, permit me one final indulgence: a plea, earnest and urgent. Pay attention.

We find ourselves not merely at a crossroads, but in the unraveling of the very tapestry we are sworn to protect. Beware, dear colleagues: the person smiling in the hallway may not be the ally they appear. Some among us wear the noble badge of “educator,” yet sleep soundly while endorsing decisions and policies that harm the very communities we claim to serve.

To my fellow immigrant educators, and to those protected by DACA—walk carefully. Not all who claim camaraderie truly mean it. The betrayal, when it comes, is rarely announced with fanfare. It arrives disguised in compliments and collegiality, followed swiftly by votes that erode your belonging one silent tally at a time.

Yes, the performance is masterful. Bravo, indeed.





# From the Desk of Lady Pencilsdown

## Fontanan's Favorite (and Possibly Last) Scribbler



Even more troubling is that some of these actors are entrusted with the hearts and minds of our students—students of color, of immigrant families, of communities too often told they are guests in their own homes. There is no rule against holding such views, no clause in our union bylaws forbidding quiet prejudice. But one must wonder: why teach in a city woven so richly with diversity if one recoils at its very fabric?

Still, I choose to believe (because one must believe something) that most among us remain here for the right reasons: to guide, to nurture, to uplift. To open doors, not reinforce walls. So I say to those who still believe—stand tall. Our students are watching. They are learning who to become by watching who we are.

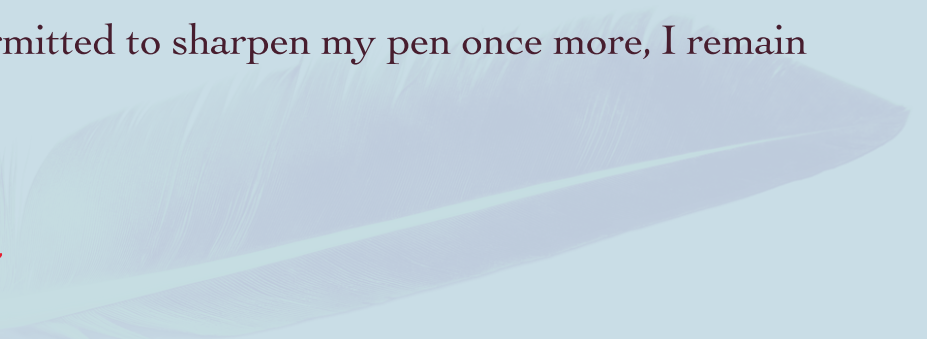
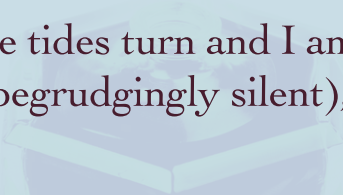
We teach more than math or metaphors. We shape identity. And when we make students feel they do not belong, we do not leave behind a mere lesson poorly taught—we leave a scar.

Yes, there have been trainings. Meetings. PowerPoints enough to fill a ballroom. And yet, some among us keep their eyes resolutely closed. This, too, is their right. It is not a crime to choose ignorance. It is merely... disappointing.

If you believe, as I do, that this profession must be better—must do better—then I invite you to join the protest this weekend. You shall find the details, as always, elsewhere in this issue.

Until the tides turn and I am permitted to sharpen my pen once more, I remain yours (begrudgingly silent),

*Lady Pencilsdown*  
Retired, but not retired-retired





# HOME IS HERE

## Supporting Immigrant Students & Families

CTA is providing a wealth of resources for members to use during these challenging times to help support our immigrant educators, students and families. They can provide you with classroom posters, buttons, resources, etc. The posters can either be downloaded or you can request they be printed and sent to you. Below, please find samples of what the posters look like along with a link to order them!



You will need to log on to your CTA account to order. Here is the link:







# **CALLED INTO A DISCIPLINARY MEETING WITH ADMIN?**

The US Supreme Court has ruled that the National Labor Relations Act gives workers the right to request union representation during investigatory interviews by supervisors, security personnel, and other managerial staff. An investigatory interview occurs if 1) management questions you to obtain information; and 2) you have a reasonable apprehension that your answers could be used as a basis for discipline or other adverse action. You must ask for union representation either at the beginning or during the interview. Management does not have to remind you of this right. If your request is refused, and management continues asking questions, you can refuse to answer. Your employer is guilty of an unfair labor practice and charges may be filed.

## **I REQUEST**

If you are called into a meeting with management, read the following when the meeting begins:

## **REPRESENTATION**

If my responses to your questions could lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or adversely affect personal working conditions, I respectfully request that you summon my union representative. Until my representative arrives, I choose not to answer any questions.