

CAPSule

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Bargaining Commences



CAPS has notified the Brown Administration that it intends to commence negotiations for a successor collective bargaining agreement. That step was taken on

March 28 when CAPS provided a document at a public meeting outlining its general bargaining proposals. Another early step is to gauge the needs of state scientists. So the CAPS Bargaining Team conducted a survey of all state scientists. Both documents can be found on the CAPS web page: www.capsscientists.org

The bargaining survey gathered information essential for the Team to evaluate members' views and preferences on salaries, benefits, employment conditions and related issues.

The Bargaining Team will set goals and develop specific proposals for presentation to state management based substantially on this survey. The overall response to this year's survey was outstanding, with nearly 1,000 Bargaining Unit 10 state scientists responding.

The CAPS Team expects to begin meeting with the Governor's team from the Department of Human Resources (CalHR) during May, likely after release of the May Budget Revision. That document will provide the most definitive financial assessment of the state's fiscal health.

Meanwhile, full pay is scheduled to be restored during the July 2013 pay period with the end of the Personal Leave Program. The top step of all classifications will increase 3% effective July 1 as well, consistent with the existing labor contract.

EnCAPSulations



CAPS Staff Member Passes. Anyone who has called or visited the CAPS Sacramento office, anyone who volunteered to help with State Scientist Day, the Sacramento Regional Science & Engineering Fair, or the many regional science fairs held around the state, probably communicated with Linda Johnson. Linda dedicated 25 years of her life to support state scientists and everything CAPS-related. We are sad to report that Linda passed away March 29 after a short battle with cancer. Her dedication and kindness were evident to all who knew her. Linda's family and many friends attended services on Saturday, April 13, 2013.



Got Shovels? A major earthquake would make working at the Oakland state building a real problem (many CAPS members work there). Building managers have apparently let it be known that in the event of a catastrophic event it would be essential to have 72 hours' worth of food and/or water, shovels for broken glass, ropes for egress from upper floors, and other materials stockpiled in the building. None of this stuff is lying around. It's doubtful that "best practices" in this instance are being adhered to anywhere. The admonition for supplies comes as a general "best practice" recommendation from the state's disaster relief agency, CalEMA. Among other things, CAPS will review a recent seismic study of the building. CAPS has recommended to the Department of General Services that an inventory of disaster relief items in that building and ALL state owned or managed buildings be assessed.



Stockton Bankruptcy Judge Says NO To Wall Street. A U.S. bankruptcy judge on April 1 allowed the City of Stockton to pursue bankruptcy proceedings over the objection of Wall Street bondholders. Creditors sought to block the city's bankruptcy until it cut pension obligations to active and retired city employees. The judge criticized the behavior of the two major bondholder creditors, citing them for bad-faith negotiations. He said that Stockton made a good-faith effort to negotiate its bond debt but received "nothing but a stonewall on the other side." Chairman Dave Low of Californians for Retirement Security had this statement on the ruling: *"This ruling once again shows that greed is driving the large Wall Street corporations who in this case sought to further slash retirement security for police and other public employees to better their bottom lines. Ironically, these Wall Street bankers and bond houses are some of the same people who caused the financial crisis that crippled cities like Stockton."*

California State Scientists ... Knowledge, Innovation, Protection

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Pension Critics Use Social Media

Courtesy of the Los Angeles Police Protective League

CAPS isn't the only organization making good use of social media to advocate on pensions. Public employee **critics** have begun a new line of attack in their effort to place all blame for economic woes on public employees. Now they're using social media and shadowy websites to bolster their cause.

In California, they've created a "think tank" to operate a series of websites that appear to be nominally independent. The group churns out "analysis" and opinion pieces to make it appear as if there is a groundswell of interest behind their unsubstantiated attacks.

The "mother ship" is the independent-sounding California Public Policy Center (CPPC). The CPPC has its own website called PensionTsunami.com and supports an elaborate string of websites, labeled with names to fool reporters and mislead the public. These websites allow their operators to hide in the shadows, with no single individual responsible for the misinformation they disseminate.

Here's how the creative scheme works. Pension critics create some phony analysis of an issue, and then distribute it to a handful of columnists or reporters. They, in turn, regurgitate the talking points in several different publications.

Then it moves up the ladder when some of their reliably anti-union editorial boards, such as the *San Diego Union Tribune* or *Orange County Register* cite the "Policy Center's analysis." Sometimes more mainstream papers or editorial boards will swallow the bait and parrot some of the CPPC's claims.

As a result of the misstatements in those editorials, people who know the facts write letters to the editor (rarely published) bemoaning the false reports. These manufactured stories and editorials live on in internet searches. It's a new playbook for propaganda distribution from the anti-public pension crowd – one that everyone needs to be aware of and actively question.



The CalPERS Pension Buck

The CalPERS Pension Buck

Pensions create jobs, boost state and local revenues, and keep retirees contributing to our economy.

Every dollar spent on public employee pensions comes from the following sources:

64¢

CalPERS Investment Earnings

22¢

CalPERS employers

14¢

CalPERS members

Classification Work Nears Pay Off

By David Miller, President

After months of work, the consolidation of dozens of state scientific classifications into a few broad series should have a significant payoff for state scientists. When (and if) implemented, it will mean greater career mobility and eventually higher salaries. That's because for affected scientists it will be easier to move between positions and departments (as long as qualifications are met). For CAPS it won't be as complicated to negotiate salary and benefit enhancements. CAPS President Patty Velez, Local Rep Jon Marshack and I—ably assisted by CAPS Staff Kristen Haynie—have spent long hours studying and revising state scientific classification specifications. This has required meeting with and cajoling state management. Fortunately, we've had lots of help from dozens of CAPS members as subject matter experts and evaluators.

“We’ve had lots of help from dozens of CAPS members ...”

This might sound tedious—and at times, it was. But it takes considerable time to make sense of and modernize a state classification system that evolved over decades. The current system, when applied to state scientists, no longer meets the needs of state management, state scientists or the stakeholders we serve. It has become moribund with dead-end classifications, inaccurate job descriptions, and low salaries. This classification makeover goes a long way to correcting these shortcomings.

It all starts next month with review of the first large consolidation, under the Environmental Scientist series. Already the largest series covering state scientists, the Environmental Scientist classification will serve as the umbrella for even more related state scientists. Bigger is better in this case.

Scientists with equivalent education and experience will qualify for exams and positions across departmental lines, thereby increasing mobility and career growth. There are legitimate concerns that too many underqualified applicants will be tempted to apply for jobs with a narrow scientific focus, thus wasting valuable time. Some hiring managers are already complaining that it will become harder to find specific expertise in a testing process that attracts a much larger pool of candidates. We believe that a merit-based

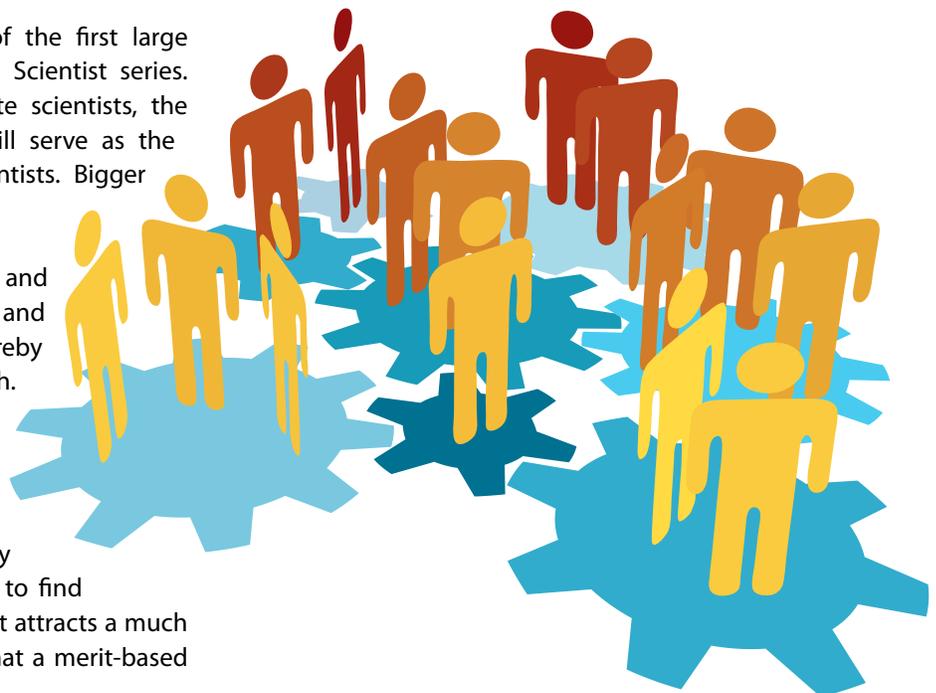
exam process, focused screening of education, and good judgment by testing personnel will ensure that the field of **well qualified** applicants will expand. That's good for everyone.

More is better too. More candidates for a job mean more choices and ultimately a higher caliber selection. The testing process itself will address this with clear duty statements. In other words, an Environmental Scientist experienced in toxic cleanup won't have a “leg up” for a fisheries job simply because any Environmental Scientists can apply. Education and experience really matter.

For CAPS, it will help us at the bargaining table. Far too often state departments have said **NO!** to salary improvements and benefit enhancements because their scientists are in classifications unique to the department. That has made it tough

to achieve gains in bargaining. We have agreement from Governor Brown's CalHR and affected state departments on the changes to the ES series. Implementation depends on final approval by the State Personnel Board during May.

Modifications to other classification series are in the queue. Some are cost neutral and others will force the state departments to ante up. That's right, some changes will result in modest salary increases. **NO ONE** will see a pay-cut.



In This Issue



- *Bargaining Commences*
- *Pension Critics Use Social Media*
- *Classification Work Nears Pay Off, by David Miller, President*

Second Quarter CAPS Grants

CAPS awards a \$300 cash grant to each of four CAPS members every quarter. This program has been in place for the last 20-plus years because the state can't or won't adequately support state scientists in their professional development. You can apply for a CAPS grant via the CAPS webpage: www.capsscienists.org. Note: the CAPS Grant program is independent from the two days of professional development earned by every state scientist annually in accordance with Section 15.3 (G) of the CAPS MOU. Here are the second quarter grant recipients for 2013.



Environmental Scientist Pete Figura of the Department of Fish & Wildlife in Redding will use his grant to partially offset the cost of preparing scientifically accurate illustrations of the plant species in the genus *Antennaria*, which is native to northwestern California.



Staff Environmental Scientist Leah Gardner of the Department of Conservation in Sacramento will use her grant to offset costs to attend the Northern California Botanist Symposium in Chico during January 2013.



Staff Environmental Scientist Cynthia LeDoux-Bloom of DWR in Sacramento will use her grant to offset the cost of attending the Central Coast Conference during February 2013.



Research Scientist IV Lisa Feuchtbaum of the Department of Public Health in Richmond will use her grant to pay for membership fees to the American College of Medical Genetics.

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