

CAPSule

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2014: CAPS' Thirty Year Anniversary

This year —2014 — marks CAPS' 30th anniversary. To honor this milestone, it is fitting to look back, see why CAPS was formed in the first place, and consider whether CAPS is living up to its legacy. This "back to basics" review should give long-time members and newcomers a better sense of where CAPS came from and where it's going.

In 1983, state Bargaining Unit 10 had recently been established by the Public Employment Relations Board, one of the original 20 state bargaining units (a 21st bargaining unit has since been designated). Unit 10 was represented by the California State Employees Association, the predecessor to SEIU Local 1000. Many state scientists felt lost in CSEA's "one size fits all" union. At the time, CSEA represented most state bargaining units, although state safety units and some professional bargaining units were already exclusively represented by independent unions of their choosing, all of which were dedicated to the occupational interests of that bargaining unit.

At that time—1983—the vision of a handful of state scientists was a very different course than the one being taken by CSEA: the only way to achieve professional and occupational goals was to become independent. They wanted an entirely new, independent union that would be dedicated exclusively to the occupational and professional interests of state scientists. Because of the legal, political and labor aspects of this endeavor, these career professional scientists needed help. So they approached Dick Baker, one of the principals of Blanning & Baker Associates. He provided some legal and technical assistance, but it was these scientist "revolutionaries" from several state departments who focused on bringing CAPS to fruition. They circulated the petitions and gathered the signatures necessary to hold an election that would determine which organization would have the exclusive right to represent state Bargaining Unit 10 in its dealings with the state of California. In spring 1984, CAPS won that right in a lopsided election. Here are the principles upon which CAPS was founded.

Independence. CAPS was established as an independent union not affiliated with any other organization or entity. It is operated by a democratically elected Board of Directors composed exclusively of CAPS state scientist members who volunteer their time to serve. All significant decisions would be made by state scientists, with input from a variety of professionals.

Occupational Focus. CAPS was dedicated to the proposition that state scientists and only state scientists would be the focus of its

efforts at the bargaining table, in the Legislature, at the worksite and, when necessary, in court. Resources would be devoted to issues and efforts only if it furthered the employment and professional goals set by the independent CAPS Board of Directors.

Volunteerism. Elected and appointed CAPS leaders serve without a salary. They would continue to pursue their careers as state scientists and thus minimize the cost of representation.

Cost Effective Dues. Unlike CSEA at the time, CAPS was dedicated to the proposition that the dues and fees charged to members would fund its representation activities and nothing more. No per capita fees were shipped off to a national or international affiliate, and no money was spent on social or political causes unrelated to the employment and professional issues affecting state scientists.

Professional Help. CAPS would offer assistance to its members using trained, experienced labor relations professionals, legislative advocates and legal professionals, NOT ill-trained stewards who weren't well equipped to deal with management on workplace disputes, disciplinary actions, grievances and other often complicated workplace issues. This differed markedly from CSEA at the time, which used its own appointed "stewards" to provide initial assistance to employees.

Now, 30 years later, CAPS leaders carry on that tradition of working exclusively for state scientists to protect pay, health and retirement benefits and to promote and celebrate the important scientific work done for the State of California and its taxpayers. The elected and appointed state scientists who lead CAPS make all the important decisions and set the direction that makes CAPS one of the leading voices among state employee unions. CAPS is active in the traditional areas, such as pay and benefits. CAPS also takes a leading role on retirement reform and on health benefit issues.

CAPS also has a strong tradition of supporting science in the community by promoting science education. CAPS long ago established the CAPS Outstanding Young Scientist Program in high schools throughout California. CAPS is a cosponsor of the Synopsys Sacramento Regional Science and Engineering Fair, and annually sponsors State Scientist Day on the West Steps of the state Capitol.

CAPS is proud of its rich heritage and encourages members old and new to join CAPS in setting the tone for success in the future.



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EnCAPSulations...

Schedule Your 2014 Professional Development Days! Two Professional Development Days (PDDs) are earned each July 1 in accordance with Section 15.3G of the CAPS Memorandum of Understanding. They must be used in the same fiscal year in which they are granted. The PDDs earned on July 1, 2013 expire **June 30, 2014**. They don't accumulate and can't be cashed out. Leave for these days are requested and approved in the same manner as vacation and/or annual leave. Supervisors are required to ensure that employees are provided an opportunity take their two days of PDD by the end of the fiscal year. Please schedule your time off if you haven't already done so!

June 1 for Dependent Scholarship Applications. College costs continue to rise, and CAPS is doing its small part to help. Any CAPS member with a dependent in college, or bound for college NEXT fall, may apply to CAPS for one of several \$500 cash scholarships. The number awarded this year will depend on the number of applicants and availability of funds. To obtain the dependent scholarship application, go to the CAPS web page: <http://capsscientists.org/benefits/scholarships/>. This is for CAPS MEMBERS ONLY! If you aren't yet a CAPS member, or you know someone who should be, apply online for CAPS membership: <http://capsscientists.org/contact/application/>.

CalPERS Benefits Seminars. CalPERS is hosting benefits education events this spring to inform members about CalPERS programs and benefits available to them. They begin in Sacramento on May 9 and 10 (Sacramento Conventions Center), followed by Visalia on May 30 and 31 (Visalia Convention Center), and conclude in Ontario on June 6 and 7 (Ontario Convention Center). They are open to all CalPERS members, including state scientists. The hours for each seminar are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. These seminars are designed for members at any stage of their career who want to know about their benefits, what steps they need to take for the next phase of their career and to ask questions. Topics include retirement and health benefits, supplemental savings plans, college savings, long-term care, and more. Representatives from CalPERS Regional Offices will also be on hand to answer questions. Visit www.calpers.ca.gov for more information and to register. Walk-ins are welcome.

Analyzing Pension Reform. CalPERS recently released two new studies that evaluated the effects of pension reform on public employee compensation and compare California's retirement benefits to the nation. *The Emerging Role of Defined Contribution Plans for California Public Employees* finds that given specific hypothetical assumptions, new CalPERS members need to save between \$373 and \$1,480 per month more or work 2.5 to 5 years longer to retire with the same income as CalPERS members who were hired before the pension reform act went into effect. The second study, *California Public Employee Retirement Benefits - Assessing Compensation Changes* estimates that California government employers spent 0.06 percent less on overall compensation compared to the national average in 2010 and 0.30 percent more on retirement benefits. CalPERS shared the studies widely, and CAPS is doing its part to share the results with all state scientists.

Use The Restroom When You Need To. There are times when CAPS members need advice on workplace situations. These are routine for the most part, but every now and then we get a real surprise. For example, a state scientist recently asked this question: **"Is the use of restroom facilities supposed to be done only on breaks (during the two 15-minute breaks and lunch break) or are we allowed to use the restroom when needed, as long as it doesn't interfere with our work duties? I have always been under the impression that it was the latter, but was told otherwise very recently. I just need some clarification regarding the use of restroom facilities."** **The answer from CAPS: "Use the restroom when you need to. That is entirely appropriate given the practice of state departments and consistent with human dignity. If there is a question about timing or excessive use, please contact us with specifics. Thanks for your question."**

More CAPS Grants!



CAPS proudly awards professional development grants of \$300 every quarter to each of four CAPS members—a total of 12 annually. The purpose is to support members' professional development, however modestly, because state departments too often don't do enough. The CAPS Grants program has been in continuous operation for over 20 years. ANY CAPS member can apply for a CAPS grant via the CAPS webpage: www.capsscientists.org. Congratulations to these grant recipients for the second quarter of 2014:



Senior Environmental Scientist (Sp) Marc W. Kenyon, Jr. of the Department of Fish and Wildlife in Rancho Cordova will use his grant to assist with travel and registration fees to attend the 11th Mountain Lion Workshop in Cedar City, Utah, May 12 – 15, 2014. Mr. Kenyon is the DFW's Mountain Lion Program Coordinator and will use the conference to evaluate mountain lion population trends in other states, nuisance abatement techniques, noninvasive methods for enumerating populations and the human dimensions of mountain lion management.



Environmental Scientist April McEwen of DWR in Sacramento will use her grant to support coursework in obtaining a PSU River Restoration Professional Certificate. Course completion will advance her technical skills in fish passage and habitat restoration projects.



Senior Environmental Scientist (Sp) Erick Burres of WRCB in Long Beach will use his grant to offset costs in attending the 9th National Monitoring Conference (Working Together for Clean Water) April 28 – May 2, 2014 in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Environmental Scientist Margaret Mantor of the Department of Fish and Wildlife in Sacramento will use her grant to support publication of her scientific work. She is the first author on a paper that has been accepted for publication in the Wildlife Society Bulletin. Publication will further her career as primary coordinator of the statewide Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Strategy that the DFW is drafting.

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.

Looking Towards July 1

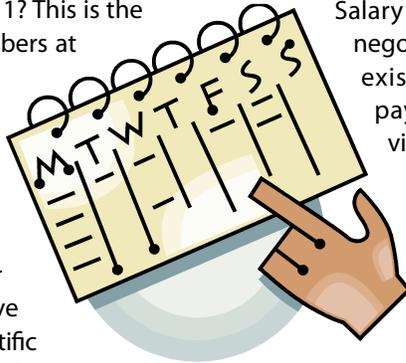
By David Miller, President

Will CAPS have a new labor contract in effect July 1? This is the question I hear nearly every day from CAPS members at work sites up and down the state.

The beginning of the next fiscal year on July 1 carries with it important events. A new state budget takes effect, and with it the promise of an expanding revenue base. That budget will determine how state scientific programs deliver services to stakeholders. A CAPS team of legislative advocates is working hard to ensure that state scientific programs receive their fair share of the state fiscal pie. Their actions are directed by elected and appointed CAPS members.

July 1 is also the effective date of a possible 2% general salary increase negotiated by SEIU Local 1000 and other state employee groups that have a new labor contract in effect. Those contracts provide a maximum of 4.5% in wage increases over three years, with 2% of that effective July 1, 2014 — but only if the Director of the Department of Finance declares that sufficient funds are available to provide for this early payment. DOF Director Michael Cohen is almost certainly going to make this declaration. The 2% increase will also apply to state scientific supervisors and managers. There may be an additional amount provided to scientific supervisors in accordance with the Like Pay For Like Work decision. Details on this remain uncertain due to the vagaries of the legislative process. Nothing is certain until the ink is dry. That comes with adoption of a final state budget by Governor Brown on or before July 1.

The question from many CAPS members has been whether this increase will apply to CAPS members — State Scientists in Unit 10. The answer to this question depends of course on whether CAPS is able to reach agreement on a new labor contract with Governor Brown's California Department of Human Resources — CalHR. And while many CAPS members understandably view the 2% wage increase as paltry and insufficient to meet our needs (you can include me in this group), salary growth in whatever amount is important. Your CAPS Bargaining Team certainly doesn't want to leave money on the table. On the other hand, the CAPS Team wants to see any negotiated MOU actually RATIFIED by the CAPS membership.



Salary is clearly the most important issue being negotiated, but there are others. Continuation of existing benefit programs with guaranteed payments from the state — health, dental, vision and retirement are really important. We need the increased reimbursement rates for travel, the lack of which is causing real hardship to many state scientists. We are being forced to pay out-of-pocket because hotel chains have increased lodging rates in recognition of the higher reimbursement rates paid to state employees

in other bargaining units. This is a serious problem! And while we have an arbitration decision pending, we aren't guaranteed a victory. The best course for the long-term is to reach agreement at the bargaining table, one that includes the higher travel reimbursement rates.

We do our best to keep you informed about progress at the bargaining table — or lack of it — via regular broadcast emails, and responses to individual questions. We have had a round of worksite meetings, and there will be more when there is a conclusion to bargaining. I am proud of our communication program. For those who don't like the news, please distinguish between the number of communications we send, and the content. We recognize the content isn't what you want to hear. That's because we haven't reached a satisfactory agreement at the bargaining table.

But there is still time, and our CAPS Bargaining Team, led by Chairperson Patty Velez, is working overtime to get the job done. We are also spending considerable time on classification reform, another vehicle that could provide badly needed salary equity.

Above all, we appreciate your patience as this difficult process proceeds at a snail's pace. There is an end in sight, although admittedly the final results remain very uncertain. Thanks for your understanding and continued support during this very difficult journey. You should also know that there are many dedicated CAPS member volunteers and hard-working staff members working toward a positive outcome.

“ ... our CAPS Bargaining Team, led by Chairperson Patty Velez, is working overtime to get the job done. ”



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In This Issue



- » *2014: CAPS' 30 Year Anniversary*
- » *Schedule Your 2014 Professional Development Days*
- » *Looking Towards July 1, by David Miller, President*

CalPERS Generates \$30 Billion in Economic Activity

According to a recent CalPERS study, more than \$30 billion in economic activity was generated by retirement benefits paid by the pension fund for the year ending July 1, 2012. View the online copy of the [CalPERS Economic Impacts in California](#) via the Newsroom at www.calpers.ca.gov.



Key findings of the report:

- Retirees returned to the California economy nearly 11 times the value for each taxpayer dollar (public funds) contributed to the system. That's \$10.85 spent for each taxpayer dollar contributed to CalPERS in support of the retiree during his or her working life.
- The total economic revenue generated by CalPERS benefits was more than \$30.4 billion.
- CalPERS benefits created 113,664 jobs throughout California.
- The CalPERS investment portfolio, which includes public and private equities, real estate, fixed income, and infrastructure, supported 1.5 million jobs.
- Investments in California accounted for \$20.7 billion, or approximately 8.9 percent, of the entire CalPERS portfolio.

CalPERS is the largest public pension fund in the U.S., with \$287.7 billion in assets. CalPERS administers health and retirement benefits on behalf of 3,089 public school, local agency and state employers. There are nearly 1.7 million members in the CalPERS retirement system and more than 1.3 million in its health plans. For more information about CalPERS, visit www.calpers.ca.gov.