

FROM THE PRESIDENT

COVID-19 UPDATES

UNION NEWS

AFT 1828

April 2020 Edition



CONTENTS

3 [Stop The Spread of Germs](#)

by Tessa Nelson

4 [From The President's Desk](#)

by Doug Thiel

6 [Union News - Your Union is Working Hard for You](#)

by Michael Sheetz

9 [What does the transition to “remote learning” mean?](#)

by Jim Mahler

[Has Calbright lost its legislative support?](#)

by David Bacon

[Save The Earth](#)

by Tessa Nelson

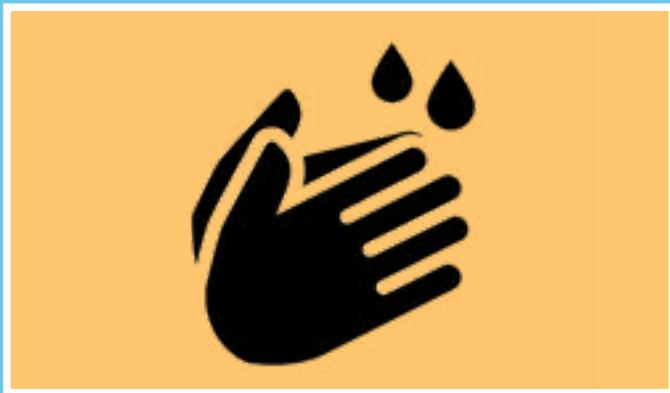
[Julianne's Comic Corner](#)

by Julianne Flores

[Upcoming](#) [Events](#) & [Holidays](#)

STOP THE SPREAD OF

Here at AFT 1828, health and safety is our top priority. You've probably heard these tips over and over again, but we want to drive home how important it is that we stop the spread of COVID-19. You may believe that the virus will not affect you personally, but this is a global threat. We need to be conscientious of those around us who could possibly be affected.



Wash Hands for 20 Seconds

Use soap and warm water to rub your palms together for 20 seconds. Get in between your fingers and under your fingernails. Sing a 20

Sanitize Surfaces

Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently. This includes countertops and even your phone!



Social Distancing!

Avoid large crowds as much as possible. Unless you absolutely have to leave your house, stay home! This is the best way to keep the Coronavirus from spreading.



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



By Doug Thiel

It has been quite some time since we posted an electronic newsletter. Recently, we have all been very busy with the Covid-19 transition and working to stay safe for our families and community.

To add to all of this, we are now in the final phase of contract negotiations. We just had an important General Membership Zoom Meeting on Monday, April 13. We have a scheduled meeting to go over the content of the Monday meeting this Friday, April 17 @ 9 am for those that could not attend Monday.

At one point there were 91 union faculty in the Zoom Meeting on Monday. AFT 1828 Chief Negotiator, Steve Hall, went over the last 18 month negotiations process and then outlined where we are today. In the words of Wes Davis, our CFT area representative and advocate in the final phrase of our negotiations, (fact-finding) ...“there’s been a seismic shift in the world as we know it. And no place is this shift more problematic than in state revenues as our economy has come to a screeching

“There’s been a seismic shift in the world as we know it.”



halt.” State income taxes are not due until July 15. In essence, the entire state budget is going to be a re-do in August and the numbers look grim.

As AFT 1828 President, I am concerned every day about the effects Covid-19 has on faculty. It has closed our campuses and placed extra demands to move online in support of students during this “seismic shift”. Like all of you, I am looking forward to when we have the current health crisis in our rear-view mirror. But, even so, the effects will linger. A world-wide economic machine has slowed to a crawl and I cannot believe the economic impacts will end in a few months. This machine will be slow to get back up to speed.

In the meeting on Monday, a faculty member asked the question “Why be a Union Member?” Sometimes when things look as difficult as they are now...when it seems that we have to compromise our negotiating position due to economic realities, this could be a question that comes to mind. Steve Hall answered the question with a fundamental truth...that essentially it is because collective bargaining can achieve better results than if there was no such instrument

available. To amplify on this, think about what it would be like to work in this District without a union.

Salary would be based on the sole discretion of management. There would be no requirement that all faculty share the same pay scale. With no Collective Bargain Agreement, (CBA) management would decide and implement pay incentives based on work force availability. There would be no grievance process other than what the District's HR offered. There would be no collective funds available to represent faculty if they suffered wrongful termination or mistreatment. And the list goes on. I have been teaching at CLU for 15 years as an adjunct. This privately funded University does not have unions. Without a CBA, it is necessary for adjuncts to fill out timesheets like an hourly worker. There are no seniority lists and each contract could be your last. Admittedly, CLU tends to be benevolent. Deans and Program Directors at CLU often stay in their same position throughout their career. But given the lack of safeguards described above, would you be willing to work in the VCCCD with the transitory management personnel that we have experienced without access to union representation?

I believe we need our AFT union. And, I also recognize we are going through unprecedented circumstances beyond our control. In such times, we can still pivot to things that we can control. AFT 1828 sponsored and worked hard to have Trustees Torres and Chancer elected in the Fall of 2018 to four-year terms. They have demonstrated concern and respect for faculty. We can accomplish this again in the Fall of 2020 when two other positions are up for election.

Without a doubt, I know how hard and conscientiously all of you have worked to make the needed transitions for your students. As you all have learned, it can be harder working at home than it is to come to the workplace!

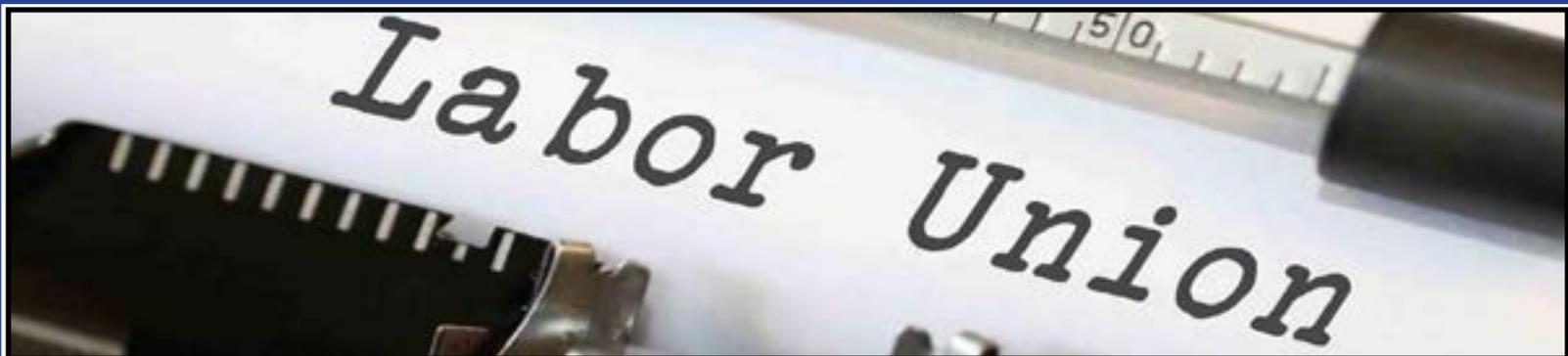
There are distractions and some of the campus resources we have grown accustomed to having physical access to are not available.

What I can offer you in this harsh environment is my continued commitment to respond seven days a week to any emails that I receive. When all faculty informational emails are sent out do not hesitate to ask any follow-up questions that may be troubling to you. If you have a situation that requires a more in-depth conversation, send me a phone number and a time to call. The best email to use is doughthielaft1828@gmail.com. For privacy sake, it is a good idea to use your non-district email, but I will continue to respond to emails sent to my VCCCD account as well.

I know all of you are setting the example in public by using masks and gloves. I am seeing more and more of the general public doing this same thing. This will help to keep our community safe as we work together to reduce casualties from this Covid-19 pandemic.

In Solidarity,

Doug



YOUR UNION IS WORKING HARD FOR YOU

By Michael Sheetz, AFT 1828 Executive Director

I wanted to take a few minutes to update everyone on what's happening with the AFT Local 1828 beyond the chaos of the current contract fight. Last weekend I was fortunate to have the chance to attend the 2020 AFT National Collective Bargaining Conference held every year. This year it was held in Orlando, Florida and was a great opportunity to meet and interact with our colleagues across the country. As some of you may know, AFT is more than teachers. It is an organization that includes nurses, public sector workers and many other professionals in allied occupations.

During this intensive two-day conference I met and compared notes with leaders from as far away as Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Not surprisingly, we are not alone in our struggles. It seems that regardless of where you look, teachers and public employees are under a constant assault by management and corporations. The biggest takeaway for

me, was the comfort that I found in being part of a 1.7 million-member organization whose entire purpose is to protect the middle class and working Americans.

Although this weekend was wall-to-wall breakout sessions and speakers-panels that were too many to list, I would like to share a few of the highlights. Our current Secretary-Treasurer Lorretta Johnson kicked off the event and set a powerful tone for the weekend that would come. Active in the labor movement since 1966 Dr. Johnson's message was clear: We cannot stop the fight now. If we do not continue to advocate for working Americans then all the progress we have made will be gone, perhaps forever.

Besides Dr. Johnson's powerful call-to-action, we heard from

many of today's leaders in the fight such as Fed Ingram, president of Florida Educator's



Association and, Karla Hernandez-Mats, President of the United Teachers of Dade as well as Michael Mulgrew long-time veteran of the New York City School system and President of the United Federation of Teachers of New York.

Regardless of the speaker, the message was very clear: our job is not only to give our members a voice at the bargaining table, but also to give them a voice at the ballot box. Although we can make gains at the table that help our members, true progress comes from our power to bring about social justice for all working Americans.

Our second day was even more powerful than the first. Mark Richard led things off with an inspirational message focused on how we can turn our tactics into a vision for success. Mark is counsel to AFT President Randi Weingarten and is a great storyteller. He began his labor career in the early 1970s when he stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Cesar Chavez as he fought to organize the farm workers and secure fair wages and decent

working conditions for all migrant workers.

After his introduction, I had a chance to attend a panel moderated by Mark that focused on the recent 11-day Chicago Teachers Union strike. Jesse Sharkey, CTU President and Stacy Davis Gates, CTU Vice president deconstructed the movement that led to this earth-shaking walkout.

By sheer luck, I was able to sit next to Stacy during part of the conference and one of the most powerful take-aways she

shared with me, was this. The huge CTU movement started out as a tiny little movement. What we saw on the 6 o'clock news every night was the result of many years of organizing and grass-roots engagement. In her words, the CTU strike was an overnight success that took 12 years in the making.

As informative as the panel was, my personal highlight was the time we got to spend with Randi Weingarten the current AFT President. A product of the United Federation of Teachers representing 200,000 teachers in the New York City's public-school





system, she has been our AFT President since 2008.

Randi's voice was loud and clear, and for me, was worth all the jet lag and coast-to-coast travel. Her message was relevant now more than ever and reminded me why I have been involved in organized labor since 1986. Collective Bargaining is the absolute key to the everyday aspirations of our members and communities. Not only does collective bargaining raise up the middle class, it raises up entire communities and, in a world, where we are being constantly attacked by corporations and the wealthy elite we cannot forget the awesome responsibility we have as a union.

As fearful as I find myself in these uncertain

times, these two days of collegiality and solidarity, capped by a strong reaffirmation of the importance of what we do by Randi, gave me a sense of hope for the future and, I boarded the plane for home with renewed energy, and the sense that we are not alone, we have 1.7 million colleagues who are standing with us. Remember, our greatest strength is our solidarity.

Michael Sheetz



What does the transition to “remote learning” mean?

For classroom faculty with traditionally scheduled on-campus classes

Reprinted with permission of CFT from a March 16, 2020 article by Jim Mahler

Note: This helpful article was written for a local community college audience, but many of the principles apply to all of higher education as well as K-12 education.

By Jim Mahler, President, AFT Guild, Local 1931, San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community Colleges

What does the directive to move your traditional on-campus class to some type of remote format really mean? First of all, this does not mean that you have to develop a full-blown online course as we would normally expect for the courses taught through our regularly scheduled online platforms.

What you need to do is to come up with some creative way to deliver your course material without having any direct contact with students. That is the most essential point of the

directive: No direct contact with students. No exceptions. No meeting with them off-campus. No meeting with them in your office. No face-to-face meetings with students, period.

Distance education or online education is a very specific pedagogy. While we appreciate the efforts some have made to provide students the same experience and caliber of instruction you have in your classrooms, it is unlikely to happen, and that is OK. We are doing educational triage.

Under any other circumstances, this would not be an approach any of us would want to take. Our students who are enrolled in on-campus classes likely made that choice because of the face-to-face interaction they desire with their instructors. They are not likely to be students who were looking for a remote



learning environment. Despite that, given the circumstances, our intent is to provide them with an alternative stop-gap teaching modality to keep them engaged, enabling them to move closer to meeting their goals, than if we were to just completely shut everything down.

You are not required to use Canvas or any other online digital education tools. Even if the only thing you or your students have is a landline, a regularly scheduled conference call can be scheduled to keep in touch. Even if you are just using email as a communication tool to send assignments or links to activities and communicate to keep in touch, that is OK. Be creative.

Here's an example of a message you could send to your students: "All of your the assignments are posted on Canvas, here are some additional online resources which include tutorials on the material we are expected to cover, email me if you have any questions, I will hold office hours on Zoom at these times for you to join in with questions." Keep it simple

and don't get overwhelmed with these tasks.

Every campus has received a ton of emails regarding online/remote support services. Check with your campus representatives if you need assistance with any of these alternative modalities. Your digital education expert colleagues are working diligently to continue their support and training in all areas of remote teaching: from tools to pedagogical approaches. They will also be offering one-on-one sessions as needed. Please take advantage of this support so generously provided by your colleagues.

We are all aware there are still many logistical and operational questions yet to be addressed and answered.

Please do the best you can in the meantime until this additional information can be provided.

Some other points for you to consider:

1. Be kind to yourself and your students. Everyone is stressed, even if they're playing

cool. That includes faculty. And that is OK.

2. Let's acknowledge that the quality of education will not be as good in alternative formats as it is in the pedagogical model we've actually planned for. That is OK as well – we are just trying to survive.
 3. Do not read up on best practices for distance learning. That is not the situation we're in. We're in triage. Distance learning, when planned, can be really excellent. That's not what this is. Do what you absolutely have to and ditch what you must.
 4. You will not re-create your classroom, and you cannot hold yourself to that standard. Moving a class to a distance learning model in a week's time excludes the possibility of excellence. Give yourself a break.
 5. Prioritize: What do students really need to know for the next few weeks? This is really difficult and once again, it means that the quality of teaching and learning will suffer. But these are not normal circumstances.
 6. Communicate quickly and clearly to your students. Keep messages to students short, single topic, and simple.
- If you are still trying to figure out your plan, communicate to them now anyway: "Please watch your email [Canvas, or however you communicate] for instructions for next week."
 - Students are confused now, so a reassuring communication from you is helpful, even if you don't have all the answers yet.
 - If you get a specific question, but you haven't determined how you are going to handle that situation yet, it is OK to tell them you

don't know at the moment, but you will soon. Show them you are in control and in charge.

- It's OK to identify with your students, "We're all confused right now, but we're going to figure this out in the best way possible."

After reading all of the above, if you feel there is absolutely no way you can transition your on-campus course to some type of remote modality, please confer with your dean and chair. Although you cannot be forced to teach online/remotely, in some cases a substitute may have to be found to take over your class if you refuse to do it.

And lastly, the most frequent question we are hearing is "Will I still be paid?" The answer in all cases is "Yes." No matter what happens with your assignment from here forward, you will still be paid as if you were attending your regular assignment.

Jim Mahler is a CFT vice president and president of the CFT Community College Council. Additional contributors to this article include Local 1931 faculty members Kim Dudzik and John Bromma, and Michelle Fischthal, vice president of instruction in the San Diego Community College District .



Has Calbright lost its legislative support?

Senators take online college to task in February 13 hearing

Reprinted with permission of CFT from an article by David Bacon February 17, 2020

It may have taken over two years, but the Calbright online community college has apparently lost any support it might have enjoyed in the state Legislature when the CFT first warned about the potential for failure. In December 2017, Jim Mahler, president of the CFT Community College Council, sent a seminal letter to Gov. Jerry Brown, Calbright's main promoter, pointing out key flaws in its proposed structure.

The project would duplicate what existing community colleges can provide and are already providing, Mahler cautioned. Its enrollment plan would concentrate on those students who most need support, pushing them into an online environment where there is much less support than on a "brick and mortar" campus. Many of Calbright's online

courses wouldn't be accredited, and therefore credits wouldn't transfer to other institutions.

The misplaced funding priorities had grown so glaring that Senator Richard Roth, D-Riverside couldn't hide his skepticism.

"If the governor is truly interested," he wrote, "in increasing the success rate of our community college students, then he should include additional funding in his next budget earmarked for the system to hire more full-time faculty and classified staff."

By the time the Senate Education and Budget Committees held a joint hearing on February 13, the misplaced funding priorities had grown so glaring that Sen. Richard Roth couldn't hide his skepticism and mistrust as he listened to Eloy Ortiz Oakley, chancellor of the California Community

Colleges. Sen. Roth repeatedly pointed out that the Calbright project duplicates online services already offered by existing community college districts.

After two years of preparation, Calbright opened in October with 450 students, far from the enrollment goal its promoters projected — 22,400 students by the 2025-26 academic year. One of Calbright's three programs of study had only 38 students enrolled.

Yet already the school has absorbed \$100 million in startup funds, and another \$40 million for two years of operating costs. In contrast, the 117 campuses in the California community college system currently serve over 2 million students, and its existing Online Education Initiative serves 99,000 students in hundreds of programs.

Calbright offers only three certificate programs: information technology, medical coding, and cyber security. In his response to the committee, Chancellor Oakley admitted that medical coding jobs are likely to be eliminated by automation in a few years, but claimed that students who got those jobs through a Calbright certification would at least be “in the system” and able to pursue other work requiring a higher degree of skill.

In his testimony, CFT's Jim Mahler called out problems of course duplication with existing brick-and-mortar colleges, lack of in-person support for students who most need it, and a faulty accreditation scheme.

“Calbright was never supported by the Legislature,” Mahler explains. “It only came into existence because the governor put it in the budget [rather than introduce it as a separate piece of legislation], and there were no policy committee hearings.” Calbright was a pet project of former Gov. Jerry Brown, who

used his political clout to establish the online college as part of that year's state budget passage.

“Calbright's three programs duplicate courses that we're offering in different colleges,” Mahler charges, as did other witnesses at the February hearing. “We offer exactly what it offers — different lengths of time, short semester, full term, open entry, open exit, continuing education — everything it does we do.”

According to Mahler, “Calbright gets a thousand times more funding per FTES than community colleges. There is no moral way to excuse these misplaced priorities, and no need to spend this level of resources on a project that completely duplicates what we're doing. How can you spend so much money on this when many community colleges are struggling themselves, with annual budgets that are often smaller than Calbright's?”

The Senate Education and Budget Committees held a joint hearing about Calbright on February 13.

Mahler points out that Calbright is seeking accreditation by a federal agency, rather than the accreditation agency that accredits all other California community colleges. The lack of transferable credits is only one aspect of its lack of student support. “The student demographic they're targeting,” he says, “is the demographic that needs the most support services, not the least support services. When you create what's more or less a correspondence course program without any support services, the demographic you're trying to reach is never going to succeed.”

Mahler's critique was echoed by many community college faculty, who traveled to Sacramento to testify at the hearing. “We cannot afford to throw good money after bad by continuing on this path,”



said Michael Sheetz, executive director of the Ventura County Federation of College Teachers AFT Local 1828. “I currently teach both online and hybrid courses, but spending the outrageous amount of money necessary to support a redundant and inefficient program is legislative malpractice.”

Sheetz continued, “Our district budget hovers near \$180 million annually and every year we struggle to meet the ongoing financial burdens of delivering the quality education our students deserve. Instead of wasting the millions of dollars that Calbright community college requires to stay viable, reinvest the money where it belongs.

Nicky Gonzalez, a Peralta faculty member, pointed to the lack of Latinx students in the Calbright population. The president of the Peralta Federation of Teachers, Jennifer Shanoski, accused Calbright of directly competing for students with the Peralta district, noting that its main office is in Oakland. “We heard that charter schools were a great experiment in providing education to underserved people, and look what happened,” she warned. “We don’t need to do this again.”

Other faculty came from DeAnza, Gavilan, Coast and Antelope Valley community colleges, and from other faculty groups. Raymond Brennan, from the part-time faculty association at DeAnza, told the committee, “I agree with Jim Mahler’s suggestion that what the committee heard should be enough to see that Calbright is not the way to go, and that the existing system can and has been doing what Calbright purports to do.”

John Stankas, president of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, testified, “The fact remains that the programs themselves are already offered at existing California community colleges. The \$100 million enterprise has greater resources to explore, which places Calbright in a position of unfair competition with other colleges in the community college system.” Bill Scroggins, president and chief executive officer at Mt. San Antonio College, described the programs at Mt. San Antonio and made the same point.

The senators at the hearing were clearly moved by the testimony. Senators Connie Leyva and Maria Elena Durazo closely questioned Chancellor Oakley. Sen. Richard Pan, a former professor, noted that the online-only model didn’t adequately meet the training requirements for most jobs. “Don’t most certificates for job skills require some hands-on experience?” he asked Oakley. “That’s not something you can get just sitting at a computer.”

Sen. Roth criticized Calbright’s sponsors for asserting that existing community colleges weren’t adequately serving students without any studies that supported their conclusions. “The real issue,” he declared, “is whether this product is needed or duplicative.”

Many faculty present were particularly outraged at the announcement that Calbright's former president Heather Hiles abruptly resigned in January. "She was given a salary of roughly \$385,000 a year to oversee a maximum student population of 450 students," Sheetz charged. "In my district our chancellor is paid \$275,000 to oversee three colleges, 1,200 faculty, and nearly 30,000 students annually." Hiles also will receive a lump sum payment of about \$32,000. She never worked in higher education, and instead was founder, CEO, and managing partner of Imminent Equity, an investment fund. Hiles' replacement, Ajita Talwalker Menon, was a higher education policy advisor to President Obama and later to Oakley. She will earn about \$285,000 per year. Both salaries are more than that of California's governor. "They're supposed to be spending 50 percent on instruction like all other districts," Mahler said, "but there's no way they're going to do that because they're paying their top managers nearly half a million dollars each."

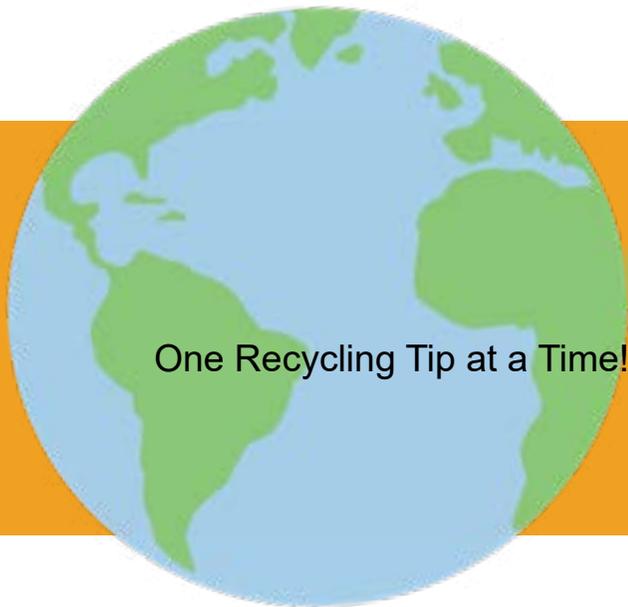
The CFT is planning to sue over Calbright's violation of its own obligations under the California Education Code. Those were outlined by CFT President Jeff Freitas in testimony to its Board of Trustees last July. The online college is duplicative of existing programs, he charged, diverts critical taxpayer resources, recruits students from other districts, doesn't tell potential students about the implications of taking courses that aren't accredited by other colleges, and hasn't met the deadlines in its own governing regulations.

"There will be a legislative audit hearing at the end of the month, and we hope that our new sponsored legislation will kill

it," Mahler predicted at the end of the hearing. "We're working to make sure it's not included in the budget. Things are lining up to get rid of it, and I'm hopeful that this is the year. The sense I had in the hearing room was that there's still no support in the Legislature for Calbright."

By David Bacon, CFT Reporter





One Recycling Tip at a Time!

Save the Earth

By Tessa Nelson

Don't put used pizza boxes in recycling bins! The oil, cheese, and sauce can contaminate the cardboard. However, cardboard boxes that are clean can be recycled.

1

2

Avoid single use items such as plastic straws, plastic utensils, plastic wrap, and styrofoam. These items usually aren't accepted by recycling haulers.

Never put plastic bags in recycling bins, for they can jam the recycling processing equipment. However, paper bags can be recycled.

3

4

Do not put drinking glasses, cups, or dishware in recycling bins - they can cause issues for the processors. Instead, why not donate them to a Goodwill or local thrift shop?

Julianne's Comic Corner!



UPCOMING EVENTS & HOLIDAYS

- The Union office will be closed until further notice due to the COVID-19 outbreak. We have established a dedicated email address for all members to send questions or concerns related to this current situation:

aftlocal1828@gmail.com

- All picketing and rally events will be postponed until further notice.
- Spring Break is from April 6-12.

FESTIVAL/ CELEBRATION	MONTH/ DATE
Easter	April 12
General Membership Meeting	April 13
Wear Pajama's to Work Day	April 16
Earth Day	April 22
World Book Day	April 23
National Arbor Day	April 24
Stress Awareness Month	April
Free Comic Book Day	May 2
Star Wars Day	May 4
Cinco De Mayo	May 5
Mother's Day	May 10