

DECEMBER 2018

# HOME ROOM

FAIRFIELD-SUISUN UNIFIED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

It has been years since I mailed holiday cards to family and friends, although I look forward to receiving them each year. I especially enjoy the cards that come with a year-in-review letter. Cards containing letters seem to be dwindling, and that could be because social media keeps us up to date in real time.

So it is with nostalgia that I compose my year-in-review letter to you and once again fail to get holiday cards mailed.

This past year has been one of the best. I traversed these 12 months in the company of friends and family, expanding my world to include my puppy Hazel in February and second “grandchild” William in August. Everyone is healthy and happy.

Only recently I have realized that most of my adult life has been spent preparing for my work as your President. I am the rare person who can say with the certainty that I am exactly where I want to be in my career. Every day I come to work excited, passionate and determined to do all I can for teachers, students and public education.

It is such an honor to be of service to you and the important work you do every day. Although I miss being in the classroom and watching my students grow, I hope I still can make a positive impact on their lives by doing all I can to smooth your way and provide you with what you need as an advocate for teachers and public education.



The way we join together to achieve that is through our union. We are the voice for our students and public education. To realize you find value in our collective work propels me forward even on the tough days when things don't go our way. I know tomorrow will be better because we will not stop our efforts until we have a system in which students can learn and teachers can teach.

I entered 2018 with trepidation for what the year would hold for our union and the freedom of all working people. The specter of the Janus Supreme Court decision loomed I worried if I was doing enough, making the right decisions, communicating effectively to keep us strong and united in the face of what we anticipated to be a huge challenge to our union. I should have remembered Winston Churchill's advice. "You never can tell whether bad luck may not after all turn out to be good luck."

That is the moral of the Janus case in a nutshell. Janus reenergized FSUTA. We refocused on our member voices and inclusive leadership, reinvented ourselves to be of value and purpose. Status quo made us complacent and less effective. That is not the case anymore thanks to the teachers, nurses, specialists, librarians and counselors who proved Chicken Little wrong by keeping us near 100 percent membership with participation in the union greater than ever before.

We had a great 2018 settling two contracts (OK, one ratified in December 2017 but I'm counting it anyway), successfully standing up for our members in times of difficulty, electing a school board member and bringing our many new hires into the fold. All of this and more was because of your efforts.

With this running start, watch out 2019. FSUTA is on a roll, reclaiming this as our district because we are the educational professionals who want what is best for students and freedom for our members.

Wishing you a joyous, safe and healthy end to this year with best wishes for the new. This decade isn't winding down. We are winding it up.

***Educate, Engage, Empower!***  
***Nancy Dunn, FSUTA President***

# TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



Anna Kyle: Irene Corioso

Armijo: Anna Vieira

B. Gale Wilson: Christina Kling

Cleo Gordon: Lisa Mohorovich

Cordelia Hills: Kim Cussins

Crescent: Katherine Jansen

Crystal: Vincent Sturgis

Dan O. Root II: June Collins

Dover: Michelle Vashaw

Early College: Lisa Turgeon Staggs

Elementary Release: Gary Schmidt

Fairfield High: Valerie Quijas

Fairview: Barbara Niehoff

Grange: Catherine Reynolds

Green Valley: Cristina DeVries

K.I. Jones: Shadia Jones

Laurel Creek: Deborah Butcher

Matt Garcia: Kelly Briggs

Nelda Mundy: Lauree Carpenter

Oakbrook: Victory Llaguno

Public Safety Academy: Jean Hull

Rodriguez: Rick Bryan

Special Ed Preschool: Hayley Kercher

Suisun Elem: Roxee DeLa Rosa

Suisun Valley: Janice Whan

Sullivan: Roxanne Mancha

Tolenas: Kevin Kenyon

Michelle Vashaw



Lauree Carpenter



Janice Whan



Barbara Niehoff



June Collins



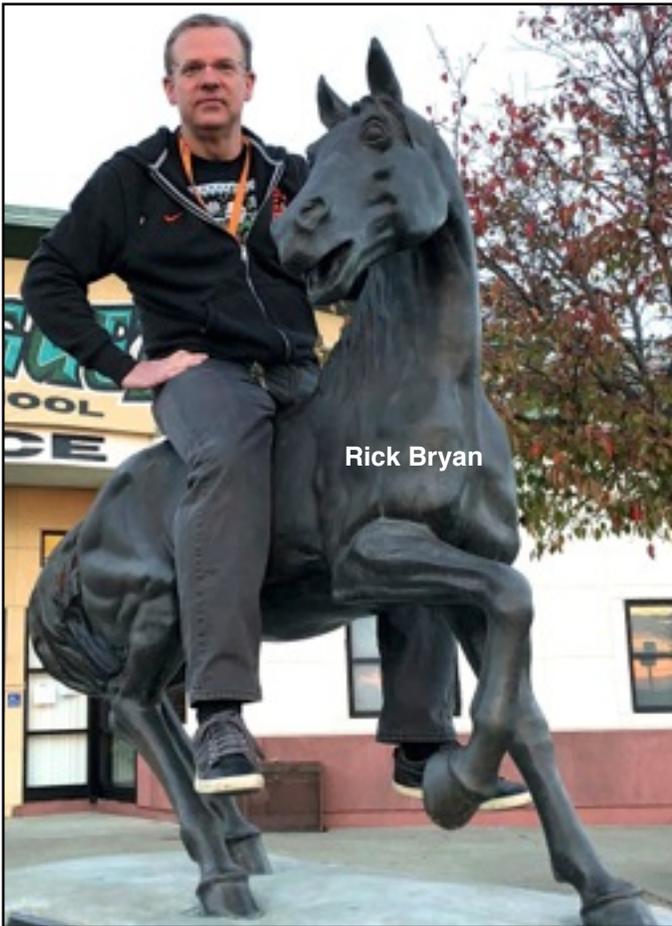
Catherine  
Reynolds



Irene Corioso



Kevin Kenyon



Rick Bryan



Hayley Kercher



**EDUCATE!  
ENGAGE!  
EMPOWER!**



Christina Kling



Katherine Jansen

# Christmas sneak without a squeak

My father has used WD-40 on doors and locks since I was a child. It's also great on squeaky hinges. I discovered that a week before Christmas when I was just 9 years old, but I'm getting ahead of myself in telling this story.

Sleep is but a dream on Christmas Eve. Somewhere between half-asleep and half-awake, I sat up on my bed. The question of all questions popped into my head: Did Santa come? I didn't hear him, so I didn't know. Perhaps it was too early to tell. At that very moment, I realized I may be one of the luckiest boys alive. The clock read quarter past Christmas Eve and it was dark outside – so very C.D.E. (that's "Christmas Dark E-A-R-L-Y" for those of you who don't speak 9-year-old). Time was motionless. Do you know how long a minute lasts when you are 9 and awake on Christmas Eve? It's an eternity!

The expectation of Santa's arrival is not without its anticipatory anticipation. In preparation for the most sacred night, I saturated the lock and hinges of my bedroom door with WD-40 lubricant, knowing full well by doing so that I would be committed to the journey of journeys – from bedroom to living room to see if Santa had come. That led to the big question: Would I get caught? What if I get caught? If I get caught, will Christmas be over? Knowledge is not without a price; would I be willing to pay it for sneaking a peak? When you are 9, you risk it all for Christmas!

I was committed to going down the long hallway to the living room. I was so excited that I didn't grab my robe or slippers. My bedroom door was shut, but I was fearless and determined. *Oh, WD-40, don't fail me now.* With a slow twist of the knob and a soft pull on the door, not a single click or squeak was made and I was out in the hallway.



It was so cold in the house that the floor felt like ice on my bare feet. The hallway floor creaked in certain spots, but I knew just how to avoid stepping on them. The ninja step, silent creeping down the long hallway was laborious. I felt tired, scared to death and excited all at once.

The bathroom nightlight cast a golden glow midway down the hall. My shadow on the wall was the only evidence of my secret trip to the living room. Not a sound was made; I was halfway there. Please God, let it be Christmas!

I saw the outline of that sacred Christmas tree. As I approached the living room, my nostrils filled with the scent of Monterey Pine. The ornamental bulbs on the tree scattered what little light there was in a thousand twinkling directions. I thought, "There are stars in my living room?!" Seven steps to go, and hopefully I would know.

I could feel my heart pounding in my chest and remember it in my ears. With each step, it got louder. It was the only sound I could hear - lub-dub, Lub-Dub, LUB-DUB! Three more steps and I would almost be there.

Ambiguous shapes appeared around the base of the tree. I felt ethereal and elated curiosity. With one final step, I reached the edge of the living room carpet, "Oh rapture, oh joy and YES!" I was awake, exhausted and had made it undetected. The journey was magical, it was spiritual, it was Christmas. It, and I, had arrived.

And that can of WD-40, well – I put it back just where I had found it. No one had missed it and no one was the wiser, or so I thought ...

- David Shadduck, Fairfield High School



## Culinary celebration

Visiting the Great Dickens Christmas Fair in San Francisco in 2010 led Armijo teacher Karen Lockhart to fix a traditional British holiday meal. It also prompted her family to suggest trying a different culture each year. Fortunately

for Lockhart, there are ethnic grocery stores in the area where she can talk to employees who are "very excited to share with us their favorite Christmas traditions and snacks and treats." From a tuna poke and turduckens to a German Pot Roast, Lockhart and her family now travels around the world on Christmas Day without leaving the dining room.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS