

The SOUNDPOST



CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, INC., of the AMERICAN STRING TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Fall 2026



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If you have any questions, please contact Member

Services. We look forward to welcoming you to the ASTA community.



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- ☐ String Enthusiast
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- ☐ Retired

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- ☐ Elementary [K-5]
- ☐ Middle [6-8]
- ☐ High School [9-12]
- ☐ Collegiate (Undergrad & Graduate)
- ☐ Adult

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- ☐ Violin
- ☐ Viola
- ☐ Cello
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- ☐ Guitar
- ☐ Brass
- ☐ Percussion
- ☐ Harp
- ☐ Piano
- ☐ Woodwind

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- ☐ \$85: Senior Member
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On a personal note, even though I'm no longer a student myself, I still keep track of the year with the turn of the academic calendar. Students are returning to classrooms, orchestras are finding their sound again, teachers are establishing new routines, and for many young musicians, this is the season when they pick up a string instrument for the very first time. At The Violin Shop, we get to experience this right alongside the parents, teachers, and students. I am happy to report that the rental season went remarkably smoothly and the next generation of string players are well on their way!...Now its time for us as teachers to do our work.

The last 2 months have been full of fun zoom meetings, both on the national level, and on our State level. I've enjoyed every conversation, new idea, and collaboration that I shared with you.

As we begin this new season, there are many opportunities to connect and participate in our ASTA community. Our CalASTA Solo Competition will take place October 24 at Sonoma State University, and we are looking forward to another wonderful opportunity to celebrate California's young string musicians. We are also preparing for CalASTA's presence at CASMEC and another chance to connect face-to-face with educators from across the state.

Nationally, we are keeping an eye on registration and participation opportunities that are underway for the 2027 ASTA Conference, along with the Community Catalyst Scholarship, Student Chapter opportunities, and a variety of webinars and awards.

National ASTA leadership nominations are also open through September 15 for National Conference Committee Vice Chair, National Orchestra Festival Vice Chair, and Board Member-at-Large. Members may nominate a colleague or self-nominate. I feel like California has a lot to offer here, so reach out if you have any interest, I'd be happy to help with the nomination process.

One of the things I hope we continue to strengthen this year is bringing our sections together more often, and finding ways to share ideas, learn from one another. ASTA isn't simply an organization we belong to; it is an organization we participate in. The strength of our chapter is truly evident by the participating members we have, and I look forward to helping that grow.

As we head into another school year and performance season, thank you for the work you are doing in classrooms, studios, rehearsal rooms, schools, and communities throughout California. I am excited about what lies ahead and grateful to be serving alongside you.

Here's to a wonderful fall season!

Jennifer B. Albrent

President, California ASTA



**ASTA Calendar Year Accounting Report
California Chapter
Calendar Year 2026 (7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026)
Prepared by Michael Feeney, State Treasurer**

INCOME Rebates from National	6,779.95
Total Income:	6,779.95
EXPENSES Rebates to Sections	4,965.30
CBDA Conference Booth Expenses	666.00
Website Support 609.06	
Office Miscellaneous Expenses	173.64
California Government Registration	75.00
Total Expenses:	6,489.00
Actual July 1, 2025 Bank Balance	7,813.35
Less Outstanding Checks as of 7/1/2025 (-)	0.00
Calculated July 1, 2025 Bank Balance	7,813.35
Plus Income (+)	6,779.95
Minus Expenses (-)	6,489.00
Calculated June 30, 2026 Bank Balance	8,104.30
Add Outstanding Checks as of 6/30/2026 (+)	90.81
Actual June 30, 2026 Bank Balance	8,195.11



Our 2025-2026 season of activities has been satisfyingly hectic so far!

First up, our annual Chamber Music Workshop was on February 21, held once again at Alta Sierra Intermediate School, and once again attracting a large number of participants. Sixty young musicians joined us this time out! Students aged 5 through 18—38 violinists, 8 violists, and 14 cellists—enjoyed a full day of sightreading and rehearsing, topped off with a casual performance for friends and families. Everyone had a great time!

Our coaches were both ASTA and non-ASTA teachers, including Luis Cerrillos, Julia Copeland, Adam Elmore, Janice Fleming, Yuliya Hess, Emma Hill, Jonathan Lee, John Morrice, Judy Robinson, K.C. Simba-Torres, Matthew Smoke, and Cynthia Stuart. This is a wonderful event and we love the venue which is ideal for this project. We had used this facility for a number of years successfully when the pandemic forced the school to close its doors to us. But we were able to resume using the school for our workshop starting in 2023 and hope to continue for many more years.

Next, on March 21, we enjoyed our Annual Student Recital at University Presbyterian Church. Thirty-two players performed in a surprisingly eclectic program that ranged from Suzuki Book One to violin concerti by Tchaikovsky and Vieuxtemps and cello concerto by Elgar, culminating by an electrifying, memorized rendition of the Zoltán Kodály's Duo by brothers Asher (violin) and Christian (cello) Moore.

The students represented our local ASTA teachers Adam Elmore, Lianna Elmore, Thomas Loewenheim, Laura Porter, Judy Robinson, Kamilah Simba-Torres, Cynthia Stuart and Limor Toren-Immerman. Many thanks to accompanists Maria Briggs and Matthew Harikian as well as to Julia Copeland who supplied the programs and works miracles with her computer.

Other string related incredible events this season were the Cello|Fresno – International Cello Festival with guest artists Emilio Colón, Cara Colón, Thomas Landschoot, Thomas Loewenheim, Jonathan Ruck, and Bion Tsang. The event was held in November and included a concerto competition for pre-college and college levels, and two gala concerts featuring the guest artists with the Fresno State Symphony Orchestra and the Youth Orchestras of Fresno's Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Thomas Loewenheim. In March our Annual Violin and Viola Festival featured violinist Giora Schmidt and violists Che-Yen Chen who gave master classes and performed as soloists with the Fresno State Symphony Orchestra. Critsian Fatu joined the faculty and worked with our younger violinists who opened the closing gala concert.

Our June Solo Competition drew 21 contestants who impressed our judges—cellist Jennifer Kloetzel and violinist Peter Wilson—with their advanced repertoire and excellent stage presence.

Here are the competition results for 2026. Heartiest congratulations to an amazing group of performers who participated in this event!

NOVICE DIVISION (12 and under)

1st place, Asher Moore, violin

2nd place, Raphael Loewenheim, cello

3rd place, Charlotte Feng, cello

JUNIOR DIVISION (13 to 18):

1st place, Daniel Lien, cello

2nd place, Alice Feng, violin; Salma Ismail, violin

3rd place, Cade Peckham, double bass

HONORABLE MENTION: Emmanuel Loewenheim, violin; Christian Moore, cello

SENIOR DIVISION (19 to 26):

HONORABLE MENTION: Aranza Partida, cello; Lydia Thompson, harp

In June Fresno hosted the annual FOOSA Festival/Fresno Summer Orchestra Academy. Fresno ASTA's president, Thomas Loewenheim, conducted Ibert's Overture de fête, Bartók's Miraculous Mandarin, and Strauss' Alpine Symphony at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles on Friday June 26 and at the Shaghoian Concert Hall in Fresno on Sunday June 28. FOOSA also hosted the FOOSA Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra giving a large number of string players the opportunity to have great opportunities to perform in orchestral settings.

All of us are looking forward to this coming season which will be filled with many exciting events as it will be Dr. Thomas Loewenheim's 20th anniversary in Fresno. The season will start with the Cello|Fresno – International Cello Festival in November with esteemed cellist Gary Hoffman as the featured guest artist as well as cellists Wesley Baldwin, Emilio Colón, Cara Colón, Jennifer Kloetzel, Thomas Landschoot, Thomas Loewenheim, Attila Pasztor, and Jonathan Ruck, for a weeklong festival that will include master classes, large cello ensembles, two gala concerts, and much more.

From the FresnoASTA Team:

Thomas Loewenheim (president),

Cynthia Stuart (vice president), Lianna Elmore (secretary/treasurer),

Julia Copeland,

Adam Elmore,

and Limor Toren-Immerman



Newly Elected Officers:

President-Elect: Johanna Gamboa-Kroesen

Treasurer: Wendy Velasco

Secretary: Elizabeth Blake

Board Changes:

Past-President: Laurie Niles

President: Kristin Herkstroeter

A special thank you to Connie Deeter, who served as our Secretary for the past 10 years.

Outstanding String Teachers and Distinguished Service Award:

In May we honored some of our Outstanding String Colleagues and presented the Distinguished Service Award. Congratulations to all!

Outstanding Studio Teacher: Nancy Yamagata

Outstanding School Teacher: Elizabeth Blake

Distinguished Service Award: The Colburn School

Student Competitions:

Our **Harp Competition** took place on April 4, 2026 at the First Baptist Church of Glendale. This year we had 11 participants. A big thank you to our chair, Marcia Dickstein and co-chair, Jillian Risigari-Gaias. Congratulations to all of our winners!

Judges: Diane Alancraig and Elizabeth Zosseder.

Novice:

First Place Jeremy Liu (Linda-Rose Hembreaiker, Teacher)

Second Place Rebecca Chou (Koni Choi, Teacher)

Junior I

First Place Emmeline Liu (Linda-Rose Hembreaiker, Teacher)

Second Place Erin Bai (Hee Jin Yoon, Teacher)

Congratulations to the winners in our 2026 ASTA-LA Guitar Competition, which took place April 4 at the MacDonald Recital Hall at USC. Special thanks to our Guitar Competition Chair, Brian Head.

Judge: Jason Yoshida

Novice

First Place: Thomas Tsai (Alex Park, Teacher)

Second Place: Kaelyn Lee (Alex Park, Teacher)

Junior I

First Place: John Paul Barsoumian (Felix Bullock, Teacher)
Second Place (tie): Edward Liu (Shintaro Yana, Teacher)
Second Place (tie): Finn McCauley (Tengyue (TY) Zhang, Teacher)
Third Place: Alina Jung (Alex Park, Teacher)
Honorable Mention: Grady Gillen (Vasil Chekardzhikov, Teacher)

Junior II

First Place: Hailey Worby (Vasil Chekardzhikov, Teacher)

Senior

First Place: Nicolas Rubi (Vasil Chekardzhikov, Teacher)

This year our **Bowed Strings Competition** attracted 108 violin, viola and cello students from 49 studios across 7 counties - Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura. Trina Hodgson, our competition chair assembled a national panel of judges who invited 39 violin, viola and cello finalists who performed on May 23 at California State University Fullerton. Students ranged in age from elementary to college age. Finalists were chosen in 9 categories. Winners denoted with an asterisk will have the opportunity to participate in the state-wide ASTA competition next year. Congratulations to all of our participants and their teachers. Many thanks to our Bowed Competition chair, Trina Carey Hodgson, our volunteers, and big thank you to the Hennings-Fischer Foundation for their financial support.

Judges: Carrie Kennedy, Kyle Champion, Carrie Holzman-Little

The 2026 **Noumi Fischer Prize** - \$200 and solo performance with Olympia Philharmonic, went to Kayla (Heejae) Kim, who won first prize in the Junior II Viola division.

Cello

Novice

First Place*: Jamie Chang (Jefferson Marins, Teacher)
Second Place: Micah Lee (Yoshika Masuda, Teacher)
Third Place: Dain Kim (Ye Lin Stella Cho, Teacher)
Honorable Mention: Jeah Won (Sangwon Cho, Teacher)

Junior 1

First Place*: Daniel Guo (Joonsung Jun, Teacher)
Second Place* (tie): Anastasia Joy Catanus (Laszlo Mezo, Teacher)
Second Place* (tie): Jeeho Park (Suzanna Lee, Teacher)
Third Place: Ryan Kim (Ashley Kim, Teacher)
Honorable Mention: Xinqi (Amy) Jiang (Joonsung Jun, Teacher)

Junior II

First Place*: Jeremy Lee (John Ott, Teacher)
Second Place: Bernard Zhang (Sarah Koo, Teacher)
Third Place: Joshua Fong (Benjamin Lash, Teacher)
Honorable Mention: Yulin (Emily) Shen (CoCo Yanan Hu, Teacher)
Honorable Mention: Alex Hwang (Benjamin Lash, Teacher)

Los Angeles Section

Senior

First Place: Ella Magen (Yoshika Masuda, Teacher)

Viola

Junior I

First Place*: Yican Wu (Gina Coletti, Teacher)

Second Place: Aiden Xu (Albert Wu, Teacher)

Third Place: Ameyaa Deo-Dixit (Gina Coletti, Teacher)

Honorable Mention: Juha Kim (Gina Coletti, Teacher)

Junior II

First Place*: Kayla (Heejae) Kim (Gina Coletti, Teacher)

First Place*: Jiwon Chung (Solim Shin, Teacher)

Second Place*: Chloe Liu (Hui Liu, Teacher)

Third Place: Rachael Kim (Gina Coletti, Teacher)

Honorable Mention: Yuchen Hu (Ying-Chen Tu, Teacher)

Violin

Novice

First Place* (tie) : Alicia Huang (Chiai Tajima, Teacher)

First Place* (tie) : Oscar Zhang (Elmer Su, Teacher)

Second Place*: Eli Liu (Linda Rose, Teacher)

Third Place: Emily Lee (Moon Lee, Teacher)

Honorable Mention: Xuandi (Diana) Wang (Chiai Tajima, Teacher)

Junior I

First Place*: Natalie Xu (Mori & Park, Teacher)

Second Place* (tie) : Erin Su (Landi Sheng, Teacher)

Second Place* (tie) : Allen Wang (Joan Kwuon, Teacher)

Third Place: Li Li (Elmer Su, Teacher)

Honorable Mention: Kate Masuda (Henry Gronnier, Teacher)

Junior II

First Place*: Dallas Chu (Linda Rose, Teacher)

Second Place*: Joel Kim (Henry Gronnier, Teacher)

Third Place: Sylvie Kim (Joan Kwuon, Teacher)

Honorable Mention: Kevin Hu (Elmer Su, Teacher)

Honorable Mention: Vivienne Shiao (Alexander Kalman, Teacher)

* Advance to the state competition

A special thank you to Trina Carey Hodgson on all of her hard work to make this competition a huge success. It is quite the task. She is stepping down as chair. Christine Lee-Song will be taking over as chair. The transition process has already begun.

June 7: **Olympia Youth Orchestra Concert**, featured a solo by violinist Jacob Sun, who won the Grand Prize in our 2025 ASTA-LA Bowed Strings Competition. He was also awarded the \$200 Noumi Fischer Prize at this performance.

Currently we are working on:

ASTACAP - We are setting dates for the spring and creating an application process for evaluators.

We are working on securing a date and location for the **2028 State Competition**.

California State University, Northridge

SPRING 2026 | 10

Department of Music



Situated in Los Angeles, the string program at CSUN cultivates a vibrant curriculum and nurturing environment for its dynamic and diverse student body.

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Lorenz Gamma, Violin

Head of String Studies
Director of Chamber Music

Roberto Cani, Violin

Concertmaster, L.A. Opera

Wendy Richman, Viola

Founding Violist,
International Contemporary Ensemble

Diane Roscetti, Cello

Director, CSUN Honors String Quartet Program

Jory Herman, Double Bass

Los Angeles Philharmonic

Allison Allport, Harp

Los Angeles Studio Musician



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CalASTA Featured on Two Rancho Bernardo Library Concerts!

The San Diego Section held two ASTA sponsored musical programs for members and their students giving all the opportunity to perform which was held on Saturday, February 14th 3pm at the RB Library for the Discovery Concert Series which featured Jennifer Albrent in a Valentine's Day "For The Love of Music". ASTA students were featured in performances along with Jennifer performing beautiful solo selections for the audience. Another concert on Saturday, April 10th "Rising Young Stars" also at the RB Library featured high school students three who are students of ASTA San Diego Chapter President, Ulli Reiner. Both programs were for no fees and was a generous donation through the San Diego Library system and organized through the Discovery Concert Series chaired by Ulli Reiner.

The Discovery Concert Series will continue to offer programs for next season and will be posted in August of this year on the SD Library website and on the FB Discovery Concert Series board. Our Vice President for our SD Section will be featured on the May 2027 concert presenting a Mother's Day program "Woman in Music". Be sure to watch for the library announcement for that wonderful program featuring Jennifer Albrent with ASTA friends and students. These concerts are offered free of charge and open to the general public. If you are interested in presenting a concert program under the Discovery Concert Series, please contact Ulli Reiner for additional details. We are already looking for interested groups for our 2027-2028 season.

Board Members Participated in a Performance Tour to Europe and will return again this summer of 2026. Two of our board members traveled to Europe this past summer with the Poway Symphonette, a Poway Adult School community string ensemble. We performed in the areas of Salzburg, and the lake districts of Mondsee and in Hallstadt, Austria. The performances are charity concerts with proceeds going to children in hospice, families in need and seniors in need. For high school students looking for volunteer opportunities in their college application process, this is a wonderful opportunity to participate in as a performer and in participating in volunteering. <http://powaysymphonette.com>

Board Meetings! Several informal board meetings via phone and zoom calls have been held when needed and will continue to update the board members and San Diego members on upcoming events for next year.

Upcoming ASTA Events!

A Winter Chamber Music Recital is in the works for the fall of 2026 and Jennifer Albrent will be the organizer. More information to come.

Stay tuned for these events and more to come.

Warmest wishes as you gear up for your school, private studios, upcoming concerts and fall programs. Best wishes for a fall season filled with continued musical adventures and fun activities

Musically yours,

Ulli Reiner,

President, CalASTA San Diego Chapter

wolfemozart@gmail.com



CalASTA San Francisco kicked off the 2026-27 season with a Potluck/General Meeting on August 2, at Jinny's Music Studio in San Jose. Attendees included members from the Silicon Valley, San Francisco, East Bay, and Sonoma County. The space was beautiful, the food was spectacular, the meeting was wonderfully productive, and the occasion provided an opportunity for members to connect and share ideas. The meeting focused on setting event dates for the calendar year.

The Irene Sharp Scholarship, now in its third year, raised \$5000 and will be split among five students. Our finances remain stable. Online board meetings – now open to all members – have been scheduled for October, January, and April. In-person ASTACAP Evaluations, which have been steadily growing for the past three years, are scheduled to be held in late March in San Francisco and East Bay locations, and we are working to arrange an additional evaluation site in the Silicon Valley. Our Branch Honors Recital is planned for early May, which features ASTACAP Honors recipients and advanced students based on teacher recommendation.

CalASTA San Francisco will be well represented with contestants at the State Solo Competition, held at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park on October 24.

Our new and exciting projects for the season involve additional Branch Recitals for students of CalASTA SF members, and a Suzuki Play-In for violinists, planned for a Sunday in late January/early February. Projected dates and venues have been discussed and are currently in the scheduling stage, to be finalized soon.

We are excited for the future as we move forward with vision, commitment, and energy!

Respectfully submitted,
James Greening-Valenzuela
President, CalASTA San Francisco



Stockton Section currently has 22 members. We plan to continue collaborating with our neighboring sections: Sacramento and San Francisco this year. To avoid scheduling conflicts we are compiling a student music event calendar. The calendar will include Youth Orchestra concerts, County Honor Orchestras, CODA Honor Orchestras, Midwest Clinic, school district festivals and concerts, CASMEC Conference, etc. Many of our teachers teach in the public schools and also teach a few private students. Our section is considering a Solo & Ensemble Recital this year in February. We will be meeting later this month via Zoom to plan our schedule. Congrats to Michael Winer becoming our new CalASTA President-Elect!

Our section is focused on the future and plans to get a jump on next year by scheduling events early to avoid scheduling conflicts that impacted our plans this year.

Submitted by,
Donna Harrison, President
CalASTA Stockton Section



Bakersfield Section has had a wonderful few months in the ASTA string world. We had our Annual String Workshop in the Fall as usual with great success! In February, we had a wonderful chance to learn so much with all the clinicians and fabulous sessions at the National ASTA Conference. Our Stockdale High School Orchestra directed by Amanda Sproul and Jeffery Ruud performed at the ASTA National Conference in San Francisco, and it was a chance for them to shine with most of our string teachers, parents and the ASTA members in attendance.

Christina Roh, Cellist, was chosen to perform at the Cello Master Class and she did a wonderful job on the Saint-Saens' Cello Concerto, first movement. The clinicians had good things to say for both the master class and the Stockdale Symphony Orchestra concert. All performers, parents, and teachers were beaming!

Since the National Conference was on the west coast, we had a huge contingency from Bakersfield and Ridgecrest and our membership is up to 28. I hope that they all stay in and remain enthusiastic. It was great to have people from our largest districts represented as members of ASTA in Bakersfield City School District, Kern High School District, Panama-Buena Vista Union School District, and Ridgecrest School District. The teachers and the students learned so much from the entire experience including exceptional sessions. Amanda and Jeffrey really planned great events for a very short tour including the Bay Tour. We also enjoyed the camaraderie and sharing during meals in lots of great restaurants in San Francisco. We anticipate that our Spring ASTA Solo Festival and Competition will be held at the Valley Baptist Church Fine Arts Building on the Fruitvale Campus and tentatively on Saturday, April 3, 2026. We will be booking our judges as soon as the date is finalized.

Also this spring, we will have a nominating committee for our CalASTA Bakersfield Section Officers. I think everybody's settling into their jobs on the board however, we would like to invite new members to join the board, as well. We will establish a nominating committee at our next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy McGuire
CalASTA Bakersfield Section President



CODA Message

The California Orchestra Directors Association (CODA) exists “to promote school orchestras in California by providing quality honor orchestra experiences for school orchestra students, facilitating an exchange of instructional strategies and ideas for the school orchestra director, and providing a forum and community for school orchestra directors.”

With the purpose above clearly in mind, CODA would like to invite all educators to be actively engaged with the organization throughout the year.

First, individuals are encouraged to renew or establish their membership by visiting codaorchestras.org. Membership is measured annually (July 1 – June 30) and all are invited to visit the website to ensure that CODA can stay effectively connected to its members throughout the year.

Next, CODA is proud to sponsor two wonderful honor orchestra experiences for California’s students: the December Honor Orchestras and the All-State Orchestras (January).

The December CODA Honor Orchestras will be held at the beautiful Occidental College, Los Angeles and will take place on December 4th and 5th 2026. Audition recordings and application materials are due by Wednesday , October 15th, 2026 for CODA and Allstate High School recordings and Junior High School recordings are due November 2, 2026.

The All-State Orchestras had played significant role in California All-State Music Education Conference (CASMEC). CASMEC will be on January 14th to 17, 2027 in Sacramento. Students this year will be have the opportunity to work under the direction of three committed educators: TBA (Symphony Orchestra), TBA t (String Orchestra) and TBA (JHS String Orchestra, and TBA (JHS Concert Orchestra).

Please visit codaorchestras.org for audition materials, repertoire selections, or additional information on the above ensembles.

Finally, CODA is committed to serving orchestra educators by arranging for quality professional development sessions and music education opportunities at February’s All-State Music Education Conference (CASMEC). Presenters this year will include both nationally recognized pedagogues and leaders from within our communities here in California. In addition, CODA will continue to highlight select student ensembles and is committed to exploring additional opportunities to include more students, directors, and schools at CASMEC.

The members of our CODA board and related committees are committed to serving California’s school orchestra programs, students, and educators. Your voice in our organizations matters, so please do feel free to contact either myself, Executive Administrator Trish Adams, or any member of our CODA leadership team with questions or considerations as we continue to work towards supporting the objective noted above.

Thank you for your service to music education in California!

Membership Report

September Membership Report



We currently have 726 members. We have 164 lapsed members. In August we had 708 members. The best benefit is our National Conference. Plan to join in the fun at the ASTA National conference in Chicago February 24-27. Go to the national ASTA web site for details. Early registration is open.

<https://www.astastrings.org/site/2027-national-conference>

Section	members in good standing	# Lapsed
Bakersfield	26	9
Fresno	30	4
Los Angles	309	76
Sacramento	41	9
San Diego	37	9
San Francisco	259	46
Stockton	24	11

Submitted by,
Stephanie Holmes
Membership Chair



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