



Victoria Simiele, 13, at right, daughter of the MTA's Anthony Simiele, at left, is all-smiles during graduation, last Saturday, from Antelope Valley College.  
PHOTO BY LES TEAL

## **MTA's Anthony Simiele and Daughter, 13, Graduate from College**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 4, 2001) It was a family affair, last Saturday, when Division 8 mechanic Anthony Simiele and his daughter, Victoria, graduated together - *magna cum laude* - from Antelope Valley College in Lancaster. Anthony is 41. Victoria is 13.

The unusual father-daughter team, who took some classes together, each earned associate's degrees from the community college.

"It feels good to earn a degree and to be graduating with my daughter is a nice coincidence," says Simiele, a resident of Littlerock and a 17-year MTA veteran.

Along with a 13-year-old classmate, Christina Brown of Palmdale, Victoria is in a tiny group of young teens who attend college. Last year only 11 kids their age were among the 60,000 graduates of California 108 community colleges.

Victoria, who has completed more than 100 units, expects to earn a second associate's degree next year.

### **They value education**

Simiele and his wife, Diane Asbury, a nurse, value education and have gone to some lengths to help their daughter fulfill her educational ambitions.

When Victoria became bored with her sixth-grade classes in the gifted program at Antelope Elementary School, they allowed her to enroll at Antelope Valley to study Chinese and computer science. Later, she and her mother took classes at Pierce College and at Moorpark College.

Despite her advanced education, Simiele reports that Victoria is a "regular girl." She enjoys skateboarding, basketball and animals. She wants to be either a veterinarian or a computer graphics designer.

"Victoria's very much a part of the decision-making process about her life and her education," says Simiele. "What career choices she wants to make, what pace and what school she wants to go to after Antelope Valley College."

### **Uncertainties of the merger**

The uncertainties surrounding the MTA merger in 1993 and the layoffs that followed underscored Simiele's interest in furthering his own education.

"When I was downsized out of Division 6 that made me want to get more education," he says. "Now, I'm getting a degree and that gives me more security."

He also is concerned about how his job might be affected by efforts to form a separate San Fernando Valley transit agency that would assume responsibility for much of the MTA's operation in the Valley.

"I've tried to impress on my daughter that no job is secure and that when change happens, you need all the education you can get," he says. "We should all get as much education as possible."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)