

36 Years Strong!



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Union Press

Ponderings of the President by Ira Lansing

January 20, 2011 marked the 50th anniversary of John F. Kennedy’s inaugural speech, the one with the statement: “ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” This fact was noted by our new president, David Wayne Coon, during his convocation speech. His observation came from the perspective of how many College of Marin employees there are that are old enough to remember hearing the speech. The statements by these two presidents motivated me to address the UPM membership in a similar vein at the General Membership meeting later in the afternoon.

As I am sure you are all aware, our Union is in the midst of an *extremely* protracted contract negotiations. With the understanding to do so means a willingness to strike, the offers from the District have been rejected by over 80%

of the membership. Pre-strike activities, in the hopes of avoiding a strike, have been organized and commenced. As the new semester begins, it is crucial that the momentum and energy of the previous months not be lost. This set the tone for my comments to the members, and there were nearly 200 of you at this Friday membership meeting. To paraphrase another politician, I’m no John Kennedy, but I hope the message came through. The tenor of my address was this is not the time to ask what your Union can do for you, but what you can do for your Union. After all, you, me, all of us—we are the Union, and if *we* do not act, if *we* do not act together, then *you* should have no expectations of achieving what you want.

At that same meeting, while the District’s latest offer was discussed and questions answered, I noticed a paper

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heavily taped onto the table at the front of the room where I was standing. This half-sheet was a memo dated from 2004 and signed by the top administrators in the District: the Superintendent/President Fran White, the Vice-president of Fiscal Affairs Michael Beebe, the Vice-president of Academic Affairs Elise Schneider, and the Director of Human Resources Carole Green. This was no light-weight group of people in the District, at least where titles are concerned. What message could be so important that managers from all areas of the campus community needed to co-sign? Amazingly, the memo was a directive to keep Fusselman 120 (the room in which the table resided) neat and clean and to erase the boards after each class. There is another entire column about the significance of that memo and the signatories, but at that meeting, and now in this column, my observation is that after a little more than a half dozen years, none—not one single solitary one—of those administrators is still here at the College of Marin. Yet I know that of all the members reading this article,

nearly every single one of you will still be here in six years.

As you think about the bargaining process and the offers received from management, remember that your choices are ones that you will have to live with for the duration of your employment with the Marin Community College District. Unlike the collection of top administrators who are no longer here, and also unlike the ones who are here but will no longer be present in the next years, *you will be here*. Decide accordingly.

There is one more statement Kennedy presented during his tenure as president and I will close with it: “So let us begin anew—remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.”

Stay in touch, stay informed and stay involved.

	<p>Tick-tock, tick, tock, time on the clock.</p> <p>Amount paid to the attorney for the MCC District for legal services (UPM arbitration, grievance and fact-finding) for the month of November:</p> <p>\$23,690.00</p>	
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2011: A New Year, A New Tune

As we ring in the New Year, we have good reason to be (cautiously) optimistic about the future of our fine college. We have a new college president, a new interim VP of Student Learning and a new president of the Board of Trustees. But the explanation for optimism lies not simply in that fact that our top two managers are new to the college; rather the reason has to do with their message.

At the Department Chairs meeting on January 20, 2011, interim VP Angelina Duarte set a new tone: Rather than continuing with the usual, simple, one-way “information sharing,” she suggested that Chairs meetings concentrate on identifying and proposing solutions to the problems and obstacles that have become entrenched in our system since Fran White first appeared. Ms. Duarte empathized with many Chairs who, upon being asked to single out bright spots their departments, spoke of the determination of their faculty to staff courses and serve students despite drastically diminished numbers of full-time instructors. Interim VP Duarte even confirmed that she would fight with us to correct the problems we identified. The mood at the end of the Chairs meeting was positive, something that was rarely felt under former VP Chang’s obfuscation and evasiveness.

Of course, the most prominent blockage for us has been in contract negotiations, but at Convocation, President Coon reinforced the positive tone of the new administration by saying that resolution of the UPM-MCCD negotiation standstill was a top priority. In fact, President Coon recently met with UPM President Lansing and assured him that negotiation resolution was indeed *the* top priority. This good will is welcome, particularly after years of degradation at the hands of President White who more than

once publically referred to certain long-standing faculty members as racist, sexist, heel-nipping dinosaurs doing everything they could to ruin the institution.

The new tone is especially welcome after years of wasteful spending on legal services. During the Fran White administration, the District squandered well over a million dollars of Marin taxpayer money on legal fees (See “District Legal Costs” in the November 2010 *Union Press*) to block negotiations and to arbitrate grievances—arbitrations ALL decided in UPM’s favor. And as for grievances, no one in the White administration has been more responsible than Director of HR Linda Beam for creating arbitrary policies that led to many grievances. Ms. Beam’s inane misinterpretations of the UPM-MCCD Contract have exacerbated the wasteful expenditures of time and money and dissolved trust, camaraderie and intelligent dialog throughout the college.

In preparing for classes this semester, I noticed a new copy machine in Harlan Center. Over the past years, many of us in the upper campus would attempt to use this copier and would be frustrated by paper jams or “out of order” signs. While former President White saw fit to obtain a new copier for the Administrative Center, many of us were forced to do without or to go to Kinko’s. But this day, I used the new copier without problem and was on my way in a matter of minutes. It worked!

A notable difference in our new administrators is that it appears they, too, want things to work, whether that translates into a respectful faculty contract, meaningful meetings or, simply, a reliable copy machine.

John Sutherland

CONNECTING THE DOTS

News and Opinion
by Arthur Lutz

FAVORITE WORDS

There are some words in the lexicon that are enjoyable to say because they're pleasing on the tongue and on the ear. One word I especially enjoy saying is...

Kieselguhr.

The origin of the word is German; *kisel*, from *Old High German*; *chisel* + *guhr*; *an earthy deposit from water.*

Kieselguhr (kee'zil-goor) is diatomaceous earth; the fossilized remains of microscopic aquatic plants. Much of it is found in Germany, but there are deposits in Nevada, Oregon, Washington and California.

Kieselguhr has dozens of commercial uses. It is used as an abrasive in products like *Bon Ami* cleanser and it is used in toothpaste, water filters, fertilizer, wine making, facial scrubs, and as a stabilizer in dynamite. My interest in Kieselguhr, however, is strictly sound related – it's so pleasing to say.

Other people also have favorite words. Often they are euphonious words that roll pleasingly off the tongue; words like *calliope* or *hullabaloo*; but sometimes they are cacophonous words like *crepuscular* or *feculent* or *sarcophagus*. It's one of the joys of language that words not only convey meaning but can also delight or challenge the ears just by their sound quality. Poets understand this.

I've always been interested in other people's favorite words and I've found that if you listen to people speak or read their writings

you can often determine their favorites by how frequently they are used.

I've done this at the college and after listening and reading numerous e-mails and memos I think I've been able to determine the favorite words of some of our administrators.

Take our *Executive Dean of Human Resources*. I think her favorite word must be "**recommendation.**" Because every time UPM notifies her that the District has violated a provision of the Contract, she routinely responds that the District need not comply because these contractual mandates are only "**recommendations.**"

And our *V.P. of College Operations* – his favorite word must be "**reserves**" because although we've repeatedly demonstrated that the college has sufficient funds in the budget to hire additional instructors, he insists that the money is needed for the "**reserves.**"

Or the District's union-busting attorney (and highest paid employee.) He appears to have three favorite words: **Defer**, **Delay** and **Deny**. Because whenever we're set to arbitrate a grievance with the District, he typically tries to **defer** and **delay** and **deny** a timely hearing.

But I think the word that must be our administrators' "*favorite of all favorites*" is the one that was used by our former president; "**TROUBLEMAKERS!**" Because whenever she was criticized for ineptitude or blunders, Dr. White invariably shifted the blame away from herself to "**troublemakers**" who were out to destroy the college." *Dinosaur troublemakers; Racist troublemakers; Union troublemakers* – all of whom were members of our faculty.

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But in addition to the words that our administrators seem to like, there are also some words I think they would prefer never to hear. I'm referring to the two words that workers around the country have used in their struggle for fairness and decency in the workplace. The words that helped achieve the eight-hour day and the forty-hour work week; unemployment insurance; social security; teacher tenure and employer-paid

medical benefits. The words that helped the sanitation workers in Memphis Tennessee in 1968 win a fair and equitable contract – the two words that if repeated often enough are sure to help our faculty in our own fight for a fair and equitable contract – **UNION SOLIDARITY!**

—words that I think are even more euphonious than *Kieselguhr*.

A Message from UPM/PAC

The UPM-Political Action Committee provides financial support to candidates and measures that support or benefit education in Marin County and CoM in particular. In advance of the last CoM Board of Trustees election UPM-PAC made a significant effort to oust a sitting board member who had been fairly hostile toward faculty and replace her with someone that we felt would be better for the college and who would better understand faculty issues. Several of us tracked the results of the write in ballots before and after our mailers were delivered and our phone calls were made. The trends indicated that our efforts had an important effect on the outcome of the election and our goals were achieved.

One day after the election results were reported, our former President, Fran White, announced her retirement. It had become clear that the voting balance on the CoM Board of Trustees had tipped and Fran White's strong supporters were no longer in the majority. After four years of stalled bargaining, impasse and facilitation, our bargaining team was finally able to make a bit of headway, but as you know, things are far from acceptable. The Board of Trustees needs to know that it must invest in CoM's faculty and not in just buildings in order for our college to thrive. We will not be able to

attract the most talent if our potential and current colleagues cannot afford to live and raise families anywhere within a somewhat reasonable commute of the college.

Money talks, and perhaps if the trustees feel that we are able to influence their candidacies in the future, they might treat us with more respect.

For that reason, I am imploring you to make a donation to UPM-PAC. Any amount will help, but a monthly donation of \$10 from every member would give us some real clout. We will accept any amount or a single, one time donation. Ten dollars per month is the cost of a few cups of coffee and a sandwich. Consider it an investment toward your future salary and working conditions. When we speak before the Board of Trustees at their monthly meetings, several of the members busy themselves with other things, clearly not listening to us. Perhaps knowing that we have money and power will get their attention.

The contribution form is at the back of this newsletter. Dig deep into your pockets!

Laurie Ordin,
Co-chair UPM-PAC

2011 CFT Convention March 18-20 in Manhattan Beach

"Standing Up, Standing Together, Speaking Out"

The sixty ninth annual California Federation of Teachers convention, the highest decision-making body of the statewide organization, will be held this year March 18-20 at the Marriott Manhattan Beach. In a time of great challenges for public education, the convention provides members with the opportunity to work together to make changes for the better—for ourselves, for our students, and for California.

At the center of the convention will be discussion and debate around education and union policy. Much of this comes from the resolutions submitted by locals and committees of the CFT. This year we will also remember one hundred years of free speech battles that produced, often with great sacrifice from our members and others, the rights we enjoy today, and which need continuous protection as we go forward.

As we do every other year, this year we will elect new leadership for the statewide union.

The CFT's vitality and democracy depend on participation in the convention by delegates from all locals in good standing representing all the divisions—classified, community college, early childhood/K-12, adult education and university—of the CFT.

Bestowal of the prestigious Ben Rust award, the highest honor of the union, the Women in Education Award, and Legislator of the Year Award, will be highlights, as usual. Awards will also go to local activists and the winners of the annual communications contest.

For more information [contact your AFT local](#). Media inquiries, contact Fred Glass, 510-579-3343.

If you are interested in becoming a delegate to this convention, please contact the UPM Office.

UPM Committees and Staff

2010-2011

PRESIDENT

Ira Lansing

BARGAINING TEAM

Paul Christensen (Chief Negotiator)
Theo Fung, Arthur Lutz, Michele Martinisi, Laurie Ordin, Patty O'Keefe

UPM-PAC

Arthur Lutz, Laurie Ordin, Co-Chairs

GRIEVANCE OFFICER

John Sutherland

TREASURER

Theo Fung

BUDGET MONITOR

Deborah Graham

BAY 10 REPRESENTATIVE

George Hritz

CCC REPRESENTATIVE

Open

NORTH BAY LABOR COUNCIL REP

Tom Behr

PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Bonnie Borenstein, Carl Cox

WORKLOAD COMMITTEE

Theo Fung, Deborah Graham

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

George Adams, Chris Schultz

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Arthur Lutz, Bonnie Borenstein

36 Years Strong!

UPM

United Professors of Marin

SABBATICAL LEAVE COMMITTEE

Walter Turner (Chair), George Hritz, Radica Portello, Chris Schultz

CRA TRUST

Sarah Brewster, Judy Coombes, Ed Essick (Chair), Ira Lansing, Laurie Ordin

UPM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ira Lansing, Paul Christensen, Bonnie Borenstein, Carl Cox, Deborah Graham, Arthur Lutz, Michele Martinisi, Laurie Ordin, John Sutherland

WEB MASTER

Mike Ransom

UNION PRESS EDITOR

John Sutherland

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Teresa Capaldo

PART-TIME REPRESENTATIVE

Tom Behr

UPM CAMPUS BUILDING REPRESENTATIVES

<u>Building:</u>	<u>Contact:</u>	<u>Campus Extension or Email:</u>
Austin Science Center	Ira Lansing	7531
Business Center	Mike Ransom	7579
Fine/Visual Arts	Tara Flandreau	7576
Fusselman Hall	Paul Christensen	7635
Harlan Center	John Sutherland	7434
IVC Campus	Arthur Lutz	8518
Learning Resource Center	Carl Cox	7423
Part-time Faculty	Tom Behr	tom.behr@marin.edu
	Deborah Graham	Deborah.graham@marin.edu
	Michele Martinisi	michele.martinisi@marin.edu
Physical Education	Ira Lansing	7531
Student Services	Theo Fung	7389

Visit the UPM website for the most recent bargaining updates, newsletters, union announcements and more

www.unitedprofessorsofmarin.org

UPM Open Positions:

Part-Time Representative
North Bay Labor Council Representative
Bay 10 Representative
CCC Representative

A call for these positions will appear soon



Letters to the Editor

Concerned about the rejection of the TA? About other UPM matters?

Feel free to voice your comments and/or opinions concerning any Union related article or issue. Letters should be signed, but names will be withheld upon request.

Please direct your letters to john.sutherland@marin.edu

UPM Membership Application

I hereby apply for membership in the United Professors of Marin, AFT Local 1610

Date: _____ Email: _____

Name _____ SS #: _____

Address: _____ Department: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Campus Ext.: _____

Check the appropriate category:

I am a permanent credit or non-credit employee or leave replacement.

I am a temporary non-credit employee on the quarter system.

I am a temporary credit or non-credit employee on the semester system.

Return to UPM Kentfield campus mailbox or UPM Office, Science Center 136

United Professors of Marin UPM-PAC Payroll Deduction Form

The UPM-PAC (Political Action Committee) provides financial support to candidates and measures that support or benefit education in Marin County and the College of Marin in particular. If you would like to support the UPM-PAC with a monthly contribution, small or large, please fill out the form below and send it to the Payroll Office.

To: Payroll, College of Marin

Date: _____

I hereby authorize the Marin Community College to deduct from my earnings the sum of _____ beginning in the month of _____, _____ (year), and each month thereafter, and to remit this sum to the United Professors of Marin PAC #990958 until I revoke this authorization in writing.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

SSN: _____