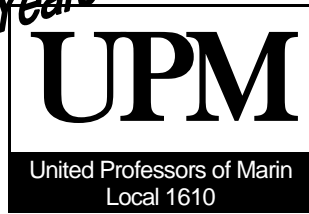


37 Years Strong!



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Volume XXXVI/VII No. 12/1, December 2011/January 2012

Union Press

Ponderings of the President by Ira Lansing

I have been told there is a saying in Italian that goes something like this:

Politics (the politician) is a bit like a root of a plant. Once it savors the water, the sun and the good weather, it does not want to give up its spot to a younger plant. It entrenches itself into the earth that should be shared with other plants.

It is interesting that the Italians have this perspective given the fairly recent troubles of the former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (allegedly had sex with an underage prostitute, although his previous encounters with women of the age of majority were not overwhelming issues to the Italians).

An opposite perspective on “younger plants” might be found in California politics, where many political scientists attribute the complete dysfunctionality of the State legislature to be in large part attributable to term limits. The State Senate and Assembly consist of politicians with little experience, no sense of history and not too beholden to their constituents.

While there may be no perspective that is completely correct, I would offer that horticulture does provide some approaches that are applicable to the world of politics, and especially the political world that involves academia and labor unions. There are some plants where age is required, even desired; grape vines, oak and redwood trees come to mind. Then again, there are some where the plant appears, does its thing, and then is uprooted or plowed under. Most vegetable plants and grains would fall into this category, and despite their relatively short time in the garden, they are highly desired. There are even circumstances where both types of vegetation coexist and support one another, such as trees used for a windbreak around a crop field. I would hope that anyone reading this column could see the analogous situations in our educational environment: long-term administrators, Senate or Union presidents or chief negotiators might be desirable, as long as they are perceived as “doing good” by their constituents.

Continued on 2

Classroom teachers might be “plowed under” every semester (that is, students change their instructors), but a quality crop is highly desired and greatly appreciated. And of course the two categories can readily support one another, which allows each to flourish.

However, I suspect the motivation for the above Italian statement is one where an older plant is choking the garden, preventing new growth while not providing any real benefit to the garden. It just takes the benefits of sun and water without providing any in return. No one would want to be accused of acting in such a way, and certainly no one would perceive themselves in such terms; yet we all know that there are politicians who do just this. Unlike plants however, people have the ability to uproot themselves.

I have been president of the United Professors of Marin for over twenty years now (the exact starting date is lost in history, partly because I served as president with a short break in between terms). The woman who served as president prior to my last long stretch is unknown to most of you, although she is still an active member of our faculty (but not too active in UPM at this time). I would like to think that my tenure is a result of satisfaction on the part of the membership, but I suspect a large part of it comes from no one else wanting to do what is seen as a thankless and overwhelming job. Regardless, here I have been and here I am—for only one more semester, as you read this. I am not retiring from the College of Marin, but I am stepping down as UPM President. The College has successfully completed another transitional phase (one that is not completely over), but I believe there is now a superintendent/president who will readily work with my successor. The issues that will confront the College of Marin, and its faculty in particular, will not be any different than those of the last 20 years, but how we approach them may. The current

faculty by-and-large does not come from a Vietnam war era and are not the Generation of Love. There may even be faculty who have never lived when Apple did not exist as a company. The cultures that formed these generations (because they do cover multiple eras) produced different ways of approaching issues and solving problems, approaches that will be more effective *and less effective* than those of my generation, and the current faculty will need to try these on their own terms and deal with their own successes and failures.

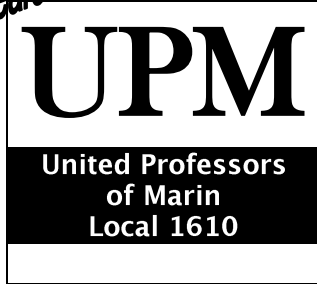
Who the next UPM President will be is still unknown. The Executive Council will have to elect someone by next June. Fact: the UPM President is the *only* UPM office that requires membership on the Executive Council. Technically the office is President of the Executive Council, yet the person serves as the face of the Union. So if anyone out there is even thinking of taking on this job, you had better get yourself elected to the Executive Council. Nominations and the election happen this spring.

Lest you fear that my experience will just evaporate and serve no future purpose, remember windbreaks. I have been appointed to serve as UPM Grievance Officer for the academic year 2012-13, which was one of my first positions in this organization way back when. It will be a nice change, that of being an advocate for one individual and not for 400 individuals.

In an interview that took place in 1984, after the introduction of the first Macintosh® computer and having achieved a personal net worth of over \$200 million, Steve Jobs said: “It is a very interesting challenge, isn’t it? How to grow obsolete with grace.” Indeed it is. Mr. Jobs managed to hang around for another 25 productive years.

Until then, stay in touch, stay informed and stay involved.

37+ Years Strong!



United Professors of Marin

American Federation of Teachers • Local 1610

P.O. Box 503 • Kentfield, CA 94914

Phone: (415) 459-1524 • Fax: (415) 459-1524

www.unitedprofessorsofmarin.org

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WHEN: FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2012

WHERE: FUSSELMAN HALL, ROOM 120

TIME: FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 1:00 P.M.

MEETING AGENDA:

- **PRESIDENT REPORT**
 - **TREASURER REPORT**
 - **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING REPORT**
 - **QUESTIONS, DISCUSSION**
-

UPM Student Grant

A few years back, UPM established an annual grant for students in need of emergency support. Please encourage disadvantaged students who need funds for books or other supplemental support to see Margaret Eliot in the College of Marin Foundation.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

News and Opinion
by Arthur Lutz

W-o-o-W-o-o

In 1920, Léon Theremin (born Lev Termen) a Soviet electrical engineer, invented a musical instrument he called the **theremin**.

As Robert Moog described it:
"The theremin is an electronic musical instrument that you play by moving your hands in the space surrounding it, without ever touching it. The theremin has two tubular metal antennas: a straight vertical tube on the right, and a horizontal loop on the left. The closer you get your right hand to the straight rod, the higher the instrument's pitch goes. The closer you get your left hand to the loop, the softer the note sounds."

Although Theremin conceived his instrument for the classical concert hall, the theremin achieved greater success in movie sound-tracks where it is used to generate the eerie, other-worldly *woo-woo* sounds heard in Sci-Fi and horror films.

Léon Theremin died in 1993 at the age of ninety-three, but last year the American Film Institute honored him with a posthumous award for innovative movie music.

The theremin was invented shortly after the Russian Revolution and Vladimir Lenin was so impressed with it that he commissioned six hundred instruments to be built and

distributed throughout the Soviet Union. As Theremin remarked, *"In the Soviet Union at that time everyone was interested in new things, in particular all the new uses of electricity: for agriculture, for mechanical uses, for transport, for communication, [and] for music."* Dmitri Shostakovich wrote for the theremin. Western avant-garde composers Edgard Varèse and George Antheil also recognized its promise and wrote pieces using the theremin. More recently rock musicians have incorporated it in their performances. Generally, however, the theremin has not achieved the popularity that its inventor had envisioned.

One of the reasons for this is because of its difficulty to play. The slightest movement of one's hands in space will change the pitch of a note. Even inadvertent body movements will change intonation. Changes in facial expression or breathing can make notes go sharp or flat. As a result, it requires a new approach to music performance. The player must stand perfectly still and have precise control of his/her fingers, hands and limbs. So despite the theremin's great expressive potential there are relatively few musicians who are courageous enough to tackle these new challenges.

You might class the theremin along with other innovative ideas that are resisted because of a refusal or a timidity to break with traditional practices.

Continued on 5


We have that same situation here at College of Marin.

I'm referring to our *Human Resources* department and their practice of pursuing old-fashioned punitive disciplinary strategies, rather than more modern and innovative dispute resolution policies.

Just last month one of our instructors received a Certified letter, signed by his dean, from HR telling him that because his office-hours schedule was not posted on his office door he would be disciplined by having a letter of Censure placed in his permanent personnel file.

Was this really necessary? Wouldn't a simple phone call from HR to the instructor have resolved this oversight and accomplished the desired objective? Or was that solution *too innovative*? Was it really necessary for HR to demonstrate its power by using the old-fashioned punitive hammer?

Most modern HR departments in academe have disciplinary policies that are more progressive and which attempt to resolve employment disputes collegially rather than with threats, intimidation and muscle. Wouldn't it be nice if our own HR department followed their lead and moved in a more progressive direction? **Woo-Hoo!** □

| UPM Committees and Staff | | 2011-2012 |
|--|---|--|
| <p>PRESIDENT Ira Lansing</p> <p>BARGAINING TEAM Paul Christensen (Chief Negotiator) Theo Fung, Arthur Lutz, Michele Martinisi, Patty O'Keefe, Laurie Ordin</p> <p>UPM-PAC Arthur Lutz, Laurie Ordin, Co-Chairs</p> <p>GRIEVANCE OFFICER John Sutherland</p> <p>TREASURER Theo Fung</p> <p>BUDGET MONITOR Deborah Graham</p> <p>BAY 10 REPRESENTATIVE Open</p> <p>CCC REPRESENTATIVE Open</p> | <p>NORTH BAY LABOR COUNCIL REP Open</p> <p>PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE Patty O'Keefe, Chris Schultz</p> <p>WORKLOAD COMMITTEE Carl Cox, Michele Martinisi</p> <p>HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE George Adams, Chris Schultz</p> <p>PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE Bonnie Borenstein, Arthur Lutz</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><i>37 Years Strong!</i></p>  </div> | <p>SABBATICAL LEAVE COMMITTEE Michele Martinisi, Patty O'Keefe (Chair), Walter Turner</p> <p>CRA TRUST Sarah Brewster, Judy Coombes, Ed Essick (Chair), Ira Lansing, Laurie Ordin</p> <p>UPM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Ira Lansing, Paul Christensen, Bonnie Borenstein, Carl Cox, Deborah Graham, Arthur Lutz, Michele Martinisi, Laurie Ordin, John Sutherland</p> <p>WEB MASTER Mike Ransom</p> <p>UNION PRESS EDITOR John Sutherland</p> <p>EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Teresa Capaldo</p> <p>PART-TIME REPRESENTATIVE Open</p> |

Bargaining Survey Allert

It seems like only yesterday that UPM concluded its latest bargaining marathon, and yet here we go again: We're slated to begin re-openers this year. On the "re-openers" table are Wages, Benefits and one other (yet to be determined) Article.

The UPM Bargaining Team is currently working on a survey for its membership that will ask for your input into the next round of Bargaining. We value your involvement, so please keep your eyes open for this important survey.

The UPM Bargaining Team



2012 CFT Convention Call for Delegates

- Women in Education Award
- Ben Rust Award
- Communications Awards

The California Federation of Teachers has announced its 2012 Convention will be held at the Fairmont San Jose April 13-15, 2012.

If you are interested in serving as a UPM delegate to this convention, please contact the UPM office for more information.

Keep in Touch with Your Union News

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

ww.unitedprofessorsofmarin.org



Letters to the Editor

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: _____