PONDERINGS OF THE PRESIDENT
By Laurie Ordin

There is a lot of talk about economic inequality out there and whether or not it is good for economic growth and the country as a whole. We are always hearing about how money trickles down if you just let the richians keep almost all of their income via low tax rates. This has been the talk since the early 1980s and I guess we should be seeing trickles turning into gushing waterfalls all over the place by now, but the research that I have seen states that while we are in an economic recovery from the devastation that most Americans felt during the crash of 2008 (Hey all you stockholders, the Dow is hovering near 18,000 as I sit down to write this article.) only 10% of the American public has benefited from any of these gains while the median income of the bottom 90% has actually declined considerably and most parents feel that their children are not likely to be as well off as they are. This, I believe, is the first time in our history that this has happened.

The argument goes that we must let the richians keep so much of the money because they are the job creators, and in some cases this is probably true, but they are also job destroyers (remember Bain Capital and others like them, sometimes referred to as VC, Venture Capitalists, but now resentfully renamed Vulture Capitalists. Many VCs go in, reorganize companies, let go of the little guys working there, load up the company with debt and take huge fees for themselves. In some cases the company becomes more profitable. In some cases the company folds or is acquired by another.
I’ve recently read a number of commentaries on Amazon’s distribution practices. These tell of abhorrent conditions at Amazon’s fulfillment centers where contingent workers toil. These workers are really not Amazon employees at all, but contracted out by temporary agencies with names like Integrity Staffing Solutions. People are asked to work 12 hour days in huge concrete floored warehouses the size of 16 football fields, crisscrossing them at mandated breakneck speed. Conditions range from frigid to sweltering. Several years ago, because Amazon’s management refused to spend money on air conditioning, they called paramedics to stand by at a warehouse in Pennsylvania in case employees melted down when the temperatures inside were reported to be reaching 114 degrees. People are given demerits for such infractions as staying home sick, or taking a day to care for a sick child. After a very few of these demerits, workers are summarily fired.

I could go on and on, but instead refer you to the August 2014 edition of the Hightower Lowdown which you can find online. Why am I writing about such depressing things as the holidays are approaching? Well, the answer is three fold. First, it just seems that the work world is spiraling down and so many people in power don’t consider the well-being of those who provide the labor that builds the backbone for their companies’ successes. I have read comments by journalists who describe management policies of the past which considered not only the bottom line, but also the welfare of the workers and that of the community. This philosophy seems to have died and been replaced by ruthlessness. And there seems to be a huge disconnect between the “haves” and “have-nots.” There is almost no interaction between these groups and this, in my opinion, leads to a lack of empathy and a feeling of entitlement among the “haves.”

My second reason, of course, is because I see parallels between what goes on in the corporate world and what goes on in the world of academia. We hear of public school superintendents making salaries orders of magnitude greater than that of the governor of California. A recent article in the SF Chronicle tells of one such superintendent who took home over $625,000 in one year by virtue of the fact that she was fired! Sounds like the Wall Street CEOs who get seven figure bonuses when they engineer the crash of the national economy. I inevitably am seeing the same sorts of things here at our college. At a recent meeting I had with President Coon, when I mentioned the disconnect between the large increases that were recently awarded to our top level managers here at CoM and the meager sums that have been offered to the rest of us, my comment was brushed off. He may brush it off, but we all know that it’s out there.

I will leave you to read about all of the details of our frustrating bargaining travails in John Sutherland’s column that follows, but when you read his column, I think you will agree that there is a lack of respect being shown to us. Offers are being made that a person with a second grade math education can see don’t add up. It is insulting to our intelligence to do this and leaves us unable to trust the process.

Finally, I wish you all a restful, joyous and healthy holiday season, but if you are searching for a gift idea for a news junkie, you might want to consider giving the gift of information by sending someone you love a subscription to The Nation, Mother Jones, and/or The Hightower Lowdown. In these publications they will read things that the corporate media would rather you not see. If you’re nice and not naughty perhaps you will be able to read these magazines as hand me downs. They say you should think globally but act locally, so read these magazines to get your global perspective, but then read our UPM Newsletter, contribute to it, engage with UPM, come to our meetings and gatherings to stay informed, stay in touch and stay involved.

Happy Holidays to All! □
EDITORIAL

A DICKENS REDUX

WHAT IS IT ABOUT CHRISTMAS that sometimes brings out the most ungenerous qualities in some organizations? One would expect that at this time of peace and love and holiday cheer, the “better angels” of management’s nature would manifest themselves. At CoM, however this appears not to be the case. Ebenezer Scrooge is apparently comfortably ensconced in District offices.

For many years, our janitors have been servicing the housekeeping needs of our campus. And if and when they are needed to perform extra duties over and above their contracted work week, they receive overtime pay, as mandated by federal labor law.

But not this year. This Christmas, although our housekeeping staff had always been offered overtime work to get the campus ready for the spring semester, the District has decided to outsource their overtime work to a non-union janitorial service.

It saves the college a few bucks, but it impacts the income of our in-house janitors who have served our campus well for many years.

It’s especially regrettable that the District is doing this at Christmas time when our janitors were hoping for a few additional overtime ha’pennys in their Xmas stockings, instead of lumps of coal.

But aside from this lack of generosity by the District, it’s clearly a union-busting maneuver – which along with the District’s recent selection of non-union Follett to be our new bookstore operator, is sure to exacerbate the morale problems that we are beginning to see on campus.

Acting like Ebenezer Scrooge is not the way our District should be treating its loyal employees. □
UPM COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UPDATE
John Sutherland
UPM Chief Negotiator

DISTRICT BACKPEDALING

WE’VE REPORTED OFTEN WHERE WE ARE in bargaining, and we were pleased with the turnout at our recent Membership meetings. Thanks to you all for attending. I know everyone was excited to learn about President Coon’s September 30 Wages clarification of an “average increase of 8.68% for full- and part-time faculty.” Your UPM Bargaining Team, too, was excited at the prospect of a fair wage increase. The District had, over time, assembled a Wage package, and their reps at the table told us repeatedly that we could take the total dollar value any way we wanted. And so, when President Coon clarified that the total package represented an 8.68% increase, we confidently and trustingly accepted.

However, District backpedaling began soon thereafter. On December 5, we met with the District reps who presented information on benefits. Now that we’ve joined SISC (Self Insured Schools of California), the District explained, we have saved money in the face of rising health care costs. But when it came time to talk Wages and put some of these savings into our salaries, District rep Jon Eldridge balked. Since it was clear that he was not going to open the discussion at 8.68% on-schedule, respecting President Coon’s clarification, UPM declined further conversation. We insisted that we had already accepted the Districts 8.68% increase.

The SISC savings are just one component of the District cache. We know, for example, that revenue from the county has soared; that our Reserves are hovering around 11% (The State Chancellor’s Office requires 3%; we go on a watch list if we fall below 5%; and yet the District has elected to listen to the Government Finance Officers Association, which advises 10%, over the State Chancellor’s Office advice); that the District has been over budgeting for years on “supplies and materials” (in 13-14, for example, the District budgeted $2,187,712 for supplies and materials, yet actually spent only $915,015, a savings of $1,271,697); and the District has saved beaucoup bucks from recent faculty retirements. And though management has been more than willing to accept hefty raises for themselves, they have been reluctant to reward CoM faculty. So how do these numbers relate to Bargaining? Well, they let us know that the money is available.

A glaring inconsistency arose in the December 10 session when VP Eldridge presented another Wage package. Though we pointed out to him that we had already rejected the District “package,” uninterested in what we had to say, he went on with a slightly modified version of what we’d seen before:

The calculation in the first part of his Cost Analysis identified a 2% off-schedule “increase” for “Full time employees only.” (This, by the way, is NOT an “increase”; it’s a bonus.) The “Annualized Cost to the District” calculated this total at $447,480.

If we approximate that we have 120 full-time faculty members, and if we generously calculate that all of them are at the top of the salary schedule (which they are not) and earn $102,000, at 2% each we arrive at about $2,000 per full time member. Now multiply that by 120 (The total number of full-timers) and we get $240,000. This number is, of course, way high since few members are at step 21, and many more are much below. Thus, VP Eldridge’s cost analysis ($447,480), the amount that the District is claiming a 2% off-schedule bonus will cost, is roughly twice as much as basic math shows.

This blatant attempt to backpedal on President Coon’s 8.68% increase is clearly faulty and has resulted in a deep mistrust at the bargaining table of Management’s truthfulness and skill.

District inaccuracy in our bargaining sessions was displayed again Friday, December 10, when UPM >>
Presented a clarification statement regarding VP Eldridge’s memo from October 9, regarding “Exempt” employees and “expected” service duties. (VP Eldridge had called an end to negotiating 8.1 and 8.2 because he had erroneously determined UPM unit members were “exempt” employees and thus could be made to perform service duties even if completing said duties required we exceed the 37.5 hour work week.) After reading our statement, which clarified that we are not exempt employees, (the term “exempt” only refers to certain non-unionized workers) he simply backpedaled and suggested he could take out the term “exempt” and then tried to continue with the masquerade. But since his argument was premised on the misunderstanding that UPM members are “exempt” employees, his entire argument became invalid. Had he researched “Exempt” employees in the first place, he could have avoided embarrassing himself and his team and wasting our time at the Bargaining Table.

Of late, District “logic” has been to increase management salaries to “attract the best managers.” See chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year 2013/2014</th>
<th>Financial Year 2014/2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Salaries:</td>
<td>Management Salaries:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7% of Total Budget</td>
<td>5.3% of Total Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Salaries:</td>
<td>Faculty Salaries:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.9% of Total Budget</td>
<td>33.4% of Total Budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But backpedaling that jeopardizes the good will that President Coon has built over his years here, simple mathematical blunders and poor listening skills only make one wonder at the wisdom behind these huge management salary raises.

We can only hope that the District will soon backpedal on this counter-intuitive management wage rise and the fall in salary salaries.

At Our December 10th Bargaining Session
The District offered our faculty a Less than one percent yearly Pay increase.
IMPORTANT CalSTRS FLEX WORKSHOPS

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 15th, Benefit Counselors from CalSTRS will be on Campus to offer three Flextime faculty retirement workshops.

Organized and sponsored by our Retirement Support Program and HR, these workshops are designed to provide information for imminent and potential retirees as well as for those faculty who are new to CalSTRS and wish to understand more about their CalSTRS membership and benefits.

WORKSHOP #1:
This is an ideal workshop for those STRS members who know they are retiring and already know their retirement benefit amounts, as no new estimates are provided. This workshop is also for those faculty who attended the COM Fall semester STRS workshops and who have already met with Vickie Holden, STRS Benefits Counselor, and were expecting her back to assist with their applications.

The first hour is by PowerPoint and runs through all required and optional STRS forms.

The second hour is for STRS members interested in completing forms and submitting them that day for retirement.

Thursday, Jan 15; 9:30 – 11:30; SMN 225

*Please RSVP for this workshop by calling CalSTRS Counselor Vickie Holden in the Sacramento Office at: 800-228-5453

WORKSHOP #2:
This is an ideal workshop for those faculty members 1 to 5 years away from making a retirement decision and who want actual benefit numbers.

This presentation is by PowerPoint for 1.5 hours and allows for 30 additional minutes for questions. STRS members will receive estimates and a confidential folder and can follow along with a presentation reviewing a number of estimates they requested.

Thursday, Jan 15; 12:00 – 2:00; SMN 225

*A pre-counseling sheet is required for this workshop, so please RSVP to CalSTRS Counselor Vickie Holden in the Sacramento Office at 800-228-5453. The CALSTRS workshop presenter will prepare retirement estimates in advance of the workshop for those STRS members who plan to participate in this workshop.

WORKSHOP #3:
This workshop is ideal for new faculty or for those new to CalSTRS. This workshop provides basic information only (no benefit estimates) in a PowerPoint format. The STRS Benefits presenter will distribute various publications at the workshop.

For this workshop members can be new to CalSTRS and/or College of Marin, not yet vested, newly vested, or many years away from making a decision about retirement. This is the perfect workshop to inform members about CalSTRS, how the CalSTRS Benefits office supports members through their career, and the benefits that they (and their beneficiary(ies) may receive at retirement or if disabled.

Thursday, Jan 15; 2:30 – 4:30; SMN 225

*STRS members wishing to attend this workshop are requested to register as follows:
1. Log onto www.calstrs.com
2. Choose “Members” in the ribbon.
3. Under Retirement planning, choose CalSTRS workshops.
4. Under Search Workshops, click on the down arrow to bring up the menu of workshops. Choose CalSTRS Basics.
5. Click on the down arrow at locations. Choose Kentfield, CA.
6. Choose January 15, 2014 in the date range fields and click “search”.
7. Scroll down until you see the search results.
8. Click on the title of the workshop provided in red, it will indicate “CalSTRS basics”.
9. The details of the workshop appear at the top of the screen; Date, time, room etc..
10. Enter passcode SN150115 in the passcode field and click on “register” button.
11. Members are directed to choose the number of attendees and choose continue.
12. Member then registers for the group.

UPM thanks Edna Smith, Claudette Muldowney, Kristina Combs and the Retiree Support Group for their efforts in arranging these CalSTRS workshops.
DECEMBER LABOR HISTORY

DECEMBER 8th IS CELEBRATED around the world as “Human Rights Day”

It commemorates the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, recognizing the “inherent dignity, worth and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.”

Chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, the *Declaration* was written by the *United Nation Commission on Human Rights*. It contains thirty Articles of rights and social equities that should be enjoyed by all human beings, including labor rights that are not included in our U.S. Bill of Rights or Constitution:

- Protection against unemployment.
- The right to equal pay for equal work.
- Just and favorable remuneration for oneself and one’s family.
- The right to rest and leisure and periodic holidays with pay.
- The right to social security and health care, and:
- The right to form and join trade unions for the protection of one’s interests.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is not a treaty or a statement of law or legal obligation. It is, as described by Eleanor Roosevelt, “a document of moral force in the world,” giving inspiration and authority to human rights groups in their efforts to bring pressure on governments that violate the rights of their citizenry, including our own government.

The “Declaration,” states in clear and unequivocal terms the rights that belong to every person. They are the same rights for which organized labor has fought for over 100 years – the same rights that are affirmed in the mission statement of the *American Federation of Labor*.

To view the complete text of the *U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights* go to:


UPM LUNCH AND MEETING

ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14th from noon to 1:30 (right after convocation), there will be a UPM catered lunch and General Meeting in the Kentfield cafeteria. Come and enjoy the food and hear the latest news on wages, benefits and working conditions.

A QUESTION OF ETHICS?

MANY OF US ARE SENT COMPLIMENTARY TEXTS by publishers in hopes that we will adopt these books for our classes. Often we don’t, but since these books are sent to us unsolicited, we are under no legal obligation to return them.

But every semester many of us also receive emails from book dealers who will offer us cash for these texts so that they can resell them on the open market.

Is it ethical for us to sell books that we received for free as a professional courtesy?

The Board of Ethics in Washington State contends that public college professors who do this are as unethical as doctors at state hospitals who sell free drug samples.

"It's a shady practice and we all know it," said Kandace Knudson, an English professor at Sacramento City College. "But there are lots of faculty who aren't willing to stand up and admit that they do it.”

The resellers, and some faculty, claim that the practice benefits students because these books are resold at a lower price than publisher’s list. Is that really the resellers’ and the faculty members’ motivation?

If you would like to engage in a Newsletter discussion about this issue, please send your comments to our newsletter editor: Arthur@unitedprofessorsofmarin.org. Responses will be printed anonymously, if requested.
CFT CONVENTION DELEGATE WANTED

THIS COMING MARCH 20 – 22, the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) will be holding its annual Convention in Manhattan Beach, CA (LA area). UPM would like to have one of our faculty attend as our delegate and report back. If you have the time and interest and would like to serve as our UPM convention delegate, please contact UPM President Laurie Ordin by January 8th at: Laurie@unitedprofessorsofmarin.org.

CFT conventions are always interesting and informative and you would be doing our union and our faculty a valuable service. Funding available. □

DEAN HUMOR

TWO COLLEGE DEANS WERE OUT for a stroll in the woods when a bear crashed out of the brush and headed right for them. The deans scrambled up the nearest tree, but the bear started climbing up after them.

The first dean started taking off his expensive Gucci loafers and the other dean gave him a puzzled look and said, "What in the world are you doing?"

"I figure when the bear gets close to us, the first dean said, we'll jump down and make a run for it."

"Are you crazy? the second dean said. We both know you can't outrun a full-grown grizzly bear."

"I don't have to outrun the bear, the first dean said, I only have to outrun you!" □

KWANZAA IS A TIME when we honor our heritage and give special thanks for the harvest of good in our lives. We remember our glorious past, and celebrate the best of what it means to be who we are. It is a time when we gather in the spirit of family and community, to celebrate life, love, unity, and hope.”

- MAYA ANGELOU

MICHELLE AND I EXTEND our warm thoughts and best wishes to all those celebrating Kwanzaa this holiday season. It marks a week-long celebration of African-American history and culture through the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. To many, Kwanzaa serves as a time of reflection—taking lessons learned from our past and looking forward to a more promising tomorrow. It reminds us that though there is much to be thankful for we must recommit ourselves to building a country where all Americans have the opportunity to achieve their dreams. As families across America light the Kinara in the spirit of unity, our family extends our prayers and well wishes during this season.”

- BARACK and MICHELLE OBAMA

OUR UPM EXECUTIVE COUNCIL also extends our best wishes to all those celebrating Kwanzaa this holiday season.

- IN UNITY

YES, WE FIGHT FOR BREAD...
... BUT WE FIGHT FOR ROSES TOO
Song of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU)
"FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER" (3)

YOU WON’T HAVE TO BE A BROWN-NOSE LIKE RUDOLPH IF YOU JOIN THE UNION
UPM PROTECTS YOUR RIGHT TO SPEAK YOUR MIND WITHOUT FEAR OF RETRIBUTION

UPM MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Name: ___________________________ SS#: ___________________________
Address: ___________________________ City: __________________ Zip: __________
Date: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________
Home Phone: ______________________ Campus Ext: _______

Check the appropriate category:
___ I am a permanent credit or non-credit employee or leave replacement
___ I am a temporary credit or non-credit employee on the semester system
___ I am a Community Education instructor

Return to the UPM mailbox or to the UPM Office.
And please make sure you have completed the UPM payroll deduction option, in Human Resources.

Please Note: Unless you have filled out the above UPM Membership Application, you are only paying a representation fee and you are not entitled to UPM’s full membership benefits.