PONDERINGS OF THE PRESIDENT
By Laurie Ordin

LAST MONTH IN MY PONDERINGS, I mentioned a recent California Superior Court decision which proclaimed that the tenure system for K-12 schools is unconstitutional. The plaintiffs in the case claimed that the K-12 teacher tenure laws deprive poor and minority students of a quality education and they do so in a disproportionate way. I thought I would ask how our members felt about this, but due to the underwhelming response (well, it’s summer, after all) you are stuck once again with my meanderings. But before I go too far afield, I just want to reiterate that this decision only applies to K-12, and that it most definitely will be appealed, and that the attorney for UPM and many other California community colleges, Bob Bezemek, feels that the decision will be overturned.

So how shall I meander? Well, a couple of weeks ago I was listening to ‘Forum’ on KQED and they were discussing a recent Field Poll which asked the question of Californians: “Do you feel better off this year than last?” Amazingly to me, more people who were polled said that they were better off than last year. This was the first time in seven years that the majority said they were. The results were interesting for a number of reasons. Mark Dicamillo from the Field Poll was interviewed and shed some light on the findings.

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It turns out that, first of all, the poll only surveyed registered voters. Keep in mind that he points out that two thirds of registered voters are homeowners. Dicamillo said that how people responded depended in large part upon where in California they lived and what their income level was. People from the 9 county Bay Area responded much more positively than anywhere else in the state, especially more than people from what was described as the inland empire, places like Stockton and Fresno. Responses also clearly depended on ownership of assets, so homeowners, especially those with homes in areas of high appreciation like the Bay Area, responded more positively. Home prices in the inland valley have not recovered from the mortgage...
(Ponderings continued)

...crisis. Assets also included stock ownership, which is heavily concentrated among high income respondents. All in all, the poll broke down according to income, with people whose income was above $80,000/year responding very positively and people whose income was below $40,000/year responding very negatively.

After Dicamillo’s summary, they opened the lines up to callers with comments and questions. This is when my ears really perked up. Several of the callers said that they were contract, or contingent, workers. One of them was a part time community college faculty member who worked full time, but only because he had contracts in several Bay Area districts, in other words, a Freeway Flier, or my preferred description, A Road Scholar. He said that, even though he worked full time, he made far less than $40,000/year and he didn’t feel at all secure. He also said that he felt that his present status was how he saw the future, that he had no hope that his situation as a contingent worker would improve or that he would get a full time job.

In fact, just before sitting down to write this article, I was reading the June jobs report for the entire U.S. economy. At first glance things seemed to be improving with 288,000 new jobs added and unemployment down to 6.1%. U.S economist Omair Sharif said, “Perhaps the only disappointment might be that average hourly earnings growth remains subdued.” Not so fast, I think. What about all of the people who have simply given up on finding employment, or, like many workers, what about those who want full time employment, but are only able to find part time employment?

In a recent blog Robert Reich wrote this in response: “The big story on jobs (hardly mentioned in today’s job report for June) is America is in the midst of a massive shift to part-time work. Part-time jobs accounted for 2/3 of all new jobs in June. Most people don’t want part-time work; they need a full-time job. But corporations are shifting to part-time work because it allows them to (1) avoid paying overtime, (2) avoid paying health insurance (evidence suggests Obamacare’s employer mandate, although delayed, is adding to the part-time shift), (3) more cheaply respond to ups and downs in customer demand, and (4) keep workers obedient and docile (and punish anyone trying to unionize) because workers need whatever hours they can get. So when you hear that the U.S. economy is creating lots of new jobs (288,000 jobs in June), be skeptical. Most are part-time.”

Sometimes, I think that American corporations got their playbook from higher education in this country, where a majority of faculty positions are now part time. So where am I going with this? Well, here at CoM we have many, many faculty positions that are part time, but our part time members have one of the best contracts in the country. You may have also noticed that the District is hiring quite a few full time faculty members. I was having a discussion with President Coon not long ago and he mentioned that there wasn’t really an advantage to having part timers here. They don’t save the District anything because our UPM contract is so supportive of our part time members.

To me, this just illustrates how organized labor and solidarity works to improve working conditions. Although we have always been pressured to do so, UPM has never thrown our part timers under the bus for the advantage of the full timers. We have always stood shoulder to shoulder. Even now we are working toward 100% pro rata pay and benefits. We are not there yet, but we are working on it. And so, the District takes a long look and decides to hire more full time, tenure track faculty members. This is good for those getting these jobs, but it is also good for those of us who already are full time permanent or probationary. We get the benefit of new blood and ideas and increased input from members who are not running around to 2 or 3 other districts, trying to cobble together a living salary. Our new permanent faculty members help all of us to make this college a better place to work, but, of course, we cannot forget the most important benefit. That benefit is that our students have increased access and commitment from faculty members devoted to College of Marin, because College of Marin is devoted to them.

I think corporate America could learn a thing or two from CoM, and the workers of America could learn a thing or two from UPM. Wouldn’t it be better to live in a society where we all take care of each other and we’re not just waiting for the hatchet to fall, leaving us floating, adrift and insecure?

On that note I hope you all enjoy the rest of your summer, stay in touch, stay informed, and stay involved. □
EDITORIAL

At the same time that many Marin County taxpayers are demanding public employee pension reform, administrators at our college are being given huge salary increases.

As reported in the Marin Independent Journal on 5/31, our CoM Board of Trustees has rehired and rewarded President Coon with a twenty percent wage increase, (up from $215,000 to $255,000/yr.); plus a potential additional yearly bonus of 5 percent (~$12,000); plus a $750 monthly travel stipend; plus 22 vacations days per year; plus a 3 month sabbatical during the 2015-2016 school year; plus paid medical benefits.

Additionally, our Board has just granted all our CoM vice-presidents a 30 percent wage increase, plus perks.

While administrators are important for the proper functioning of our college, so too are faculty and staff. Yet the CoM faculty and staff are only being offered a one percent (1%) wage increase, far less than the rise in the Marin County cost of living, and certainly disproportionate to the 30% that our Vice-presidents have been awarded.

As justification for rewarding our vice-presidents with this 30% wage increase, President Coon wrote: “...we are adjusting the management salary schedule to ensure... the recruitment/retention of top quality... administrators who are committed to supporting the success of our students.”

I certainly agree that we need to recruit and retain top quality administrators. But shouldn’t we also be concerned with recruiting and retaining top quality teachers and support staff at our college? And how can we do this if we don’t pay a competitive salary?

If COM administrators (some of whom have been on the job for only one year) are receiving a 30% wage increase, shouldn’t our faculty, (some of whom have been teaching here for over 30 years,) also receive a commensurate wage increase; or at least one certainly greater than 1 percent?

It is disappointing that our CoM Board of Trustees seems to be unmindful of the value, importance and contributions of our teaching staff – a faculty who have made College of Marin the premier educational institution that it is.
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Our UPM Bargaining Team has been meeting with the District over the summer months working in your best interests. We’ve put together demands based on membership input and have been diligent in arguing your wishes. It’s hard to believe that in only another month, we’ll be back for the fall semester. Upon return, we’ll hold our usual General Membership Meeting, [see page 6 for time and date] at which we’ll give a more thorough accounting of where we are in negotiating a new contract.

For this update, though, I’ll summarize:
We’re currently talking about Article 4, Benefits. Our opening demand was for full medical coverage for all eligible employees, credit and non-credit alike. The District’s initial response, however, was disappointing: The District team said it would cover only those who are currently covered, and then only at the 2012 dollar amount. This means that eligible unit members on family plans would have to pay out of pocket (the exact amounts to be determined) to make up the difference, and part-time non-credit members would qualify only for a $100.00 per month District contribution to Kaiser coverage. We meet again on (7/17/14) to receive more details on the District’s offer.

We have reached a tentative agreement on office hours. Guided by membership input, the UPM Team has reasoned with the District to allow 50% of our required office hours to be held ‘virtually’. Still in place are the stipulations that times must be identified and adhered to by faculty members, but the location of 50% of the required hours is at the discretion of the faculty member, as are the methods of the non-face-to-face communications. These changes will go into effect upon membership ratification and Board approval of the new contract.

In other areas, we’re still working on Articles 8, Workload, and Article 3, Wages. On Wages, we recently pointed out that, as reported in the Marin IJ on 6/26/14, teachers in the Tamalpais Union High School District (also a Basic Aid District) will get a 10% raise over the next year. The IJ also reported (6/27/14) that Marin’s assessed value for tax purposes was $61.8 billion as of January 1, up $3.4 billion, or 5.9%, from last year. These figures were apparently news to the District. We are still waiting for clarification of the District’s last counter offer on Wages.

Elsewhere, we’re working hard on securing another SERP retirement incentive package, which will benefit those currently considering retirement, the District in terms of savings, and future full and part-time instructors at the college. We’re close to agreement on the SERP but still have some details to work out.

We’ll continue to keep you informed of further developments and will give a full report at the General Membership meeting next month. ☐
PLUS ÇA CHANGE ...

IN 1849, IN AN ISSUE OF the French journal Les Guêpes, Jean Baptiste Alphonse Karr coined the epigram, "plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose." It means, "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

Karr was the editor of Le Figaro and started the satirical journal, Les Guêpes (The Wasps), which brought him the reputation of a somewhat bitter wit.

But bitter or not, his epigram has lasted over a hundred years. And I thought of it as I was reading Dr. Coon’s latest response to a letter that our Union President had written him regarding the “huge wage increases for several CoM administrators” [30 percent], while the District was showing our faculty a lack of “monetary respect” by offering us only one percent.

In Dr. Coon’s response, he wrote, “… we are adjusting the management salary schedule to ensure that COM management recruitments…result in the recruitment/retention of top quality educational and classified administrators."

And then I remembered where I had previously heard that language. It came from our former president, Fran White, when she tried to get raises for her Vice-President Anita Martinez and others on her administrative staff. As reported in the Independent Journal of 5/14/2007, Dr. White said, “It’s crucial to keep (my) administrative team intact and I need to offer them salary hikes to make that happen.”

[BTW, wasn’t this the Anita Martinez who was double-dipping, by working another full time position at CCSF while she was employed full-time at CoM?]

So… “PLUS ÇA CHANGE, PLUS C’EST LA MÊME CHOSE” (N’est-ce pas?)

I guess it’s understandable that management would be more interested in management needs than in the needs of our faculty. That’s the nature of a class society. Which means that if our faculty is to protect OUR needs, we need to rely on an organization that represents OUR class interests - our own organization - our faculty union!

So if you are not a member of UPM, please join. You will become part of an organization you can rely on to represent and protect your needs and interests. □

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.
“FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER”
Myth, Mirth and Miscellany for the Union Faithful

LITTLE (AND BIG) BOXES

AT SOME TIME OR ANOTHER, everyone has probably had the feeling of being “boxed in.” Various conditions of life seem to press in so hard that there is precious little room for maneuvering.

The same may be said for all of us in our work environments.

One of the main accomplishments of the labor movement has been to make people aware that through collective bargaining the conditions that shape one’s work environment can be improved.

Here at COM, we are fortunate that many people, for many years, have worked to improve our local working conditions. Right now, our UPM Bargaining Team is continuing that effort to secure an equitable contract.

But there is also a “bigger box” – the state and national conditions that affect our working conditions. Our funding, many of the requirements we are obliged to meet, and even our right to bargain, can be influenced by these “big box” factors.

Fortunately, at the state level, we have people advocating for us. One of these groups is the California Federation of Teachers, of which UPM is an affiliate. A portion of our UPM dues goes to the CFT for their representation services and for other assistance that they offer our local.

Another group representing faculty interests at the state level is FACCC – the Faculty Association of the California Community Colleges. The State Budget, STRS, the Education Code – these are some of the issues that FACCC, along with CFT, is addressing in Sacramento, from a faculty perspective.

This year, FACCC is launching an education and membership drive in our area. If you would like more information about FACCC, log on to FACCC.org.

Paul da Silva

UPM LUNCH MEETING

ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 15TH, we will hold our annual catered UPM lunch and general membership meeting, in the Kentfield cafeteria from noon to 1:30 (right after Convocation.) We will have updates on Contract negotiations and other topics of interest. And, of course (as usual) a great repast. Mark your calendars.

ACCJC UPDATE

ON JULY 16TH SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE Curtis Karnow denied a motion by ACCJC to delay proceedings in the lawsuit that the S.F. City Attorney filed against the ACCJC. It means that the trial can move forward, and is scheduled to start October 27th.

“We are thankful for the judge’s ruling,” said Tim Killikelly, President of AFT 2121. ACCJC’s attempt to use this delaying tactic was nothing more than their attempt to avoid accountability and thumb their nose at the court.”

Judge Karnow’s ruling guarantees that City College, its students and faculty, and the city will have its day in court.

LABOR HUMOR

A CORPORATE LAWYER was vacationing on the Riviera and bumped into an old union-busting pal and asked how things were going.

“Remember that lousy property I bought last year?” the union buster said? It burned to the ground.”  “I’m here thanks to the fire insurance proceeds.”  “How about you?”

The corporate lawyer replied, “Remember the crummy real estate I bought in Mississippi? Well the river overflowed and I’m here on the flood insurance proceeds.”

The union buster looked puzzled for a minute and then asked, “How did you start the flood?”
**“FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER” (2)**

**JULY LABOR HISTORY**

BEGINNING IN JULY 1936, forty thousand men and women from fifty-two countries traveled to Spain to join the “International Brigade” to help the Spanish people defeat Francisco Franco’s attempt to overthrow Spain’s democratically elected Republic. It was the start of a three year civil war that took at least one million lives and was the forerunner of WWII.

Twenty-eight hundred Americans were part of this volunteer force, calling themselves the “Abraham Lincoln Battalion.”

One of these “Lincolns” was merchant seaman and labor organizer Bill Bailey, who wrote to his mother: “You see Mom, there are things that one must do in this life that are a little more than just living. In Spain there are thousands of mothers like yourself who never had a fair shake in life. They got together and elected a government that really gave meaning to their life. But a bunch of fascists decided to crush this wonderful thing. That’s why I’m going to Spain, Mom, to help these poor people win this battle, so that one day it would be easier for you and all the mothers of the future.”

When the war ended in 1939, Bailey returned to the US to continue his work as a labor organizer. However, one third of his comrades in the Lincoln Battalion did not return. They died on Spanish battlefields fighting against Franco’s fascism.

The ‘Lincolns’ and their Spanish comrades fought courageously, but in the end, with the aid of Mussolini and Hitler’s Luftwaffe, Franco won the war. It was the first time that aircraft were used to bomb civilian targets, reducing the city of Guernica to rubble.

One day in 1936 before the battle for Madrid, Dolores Ibárruri, a Spanish defender of the republic known as “La Pasionaria,” spoke to the forces defending the city from Franco’s assault. She said: “The whole country roils with fury at those savages who want to plunge democratic and the people’s Spain into a hell of terror and death. But they shall not pass. - ¡NO PASARÁN!”

Unfortunately the fascists did pass. What we should not let pass, however, is the honor and admiration we feel for the brave “brigadistas” who fought and gave their lives in Spain to defend democracy. □

**CRA TRUST ELECTION RESULTS**

IN THE RECENT ELECTION for the board of our CRA Trust, Judy Coombes was the top vote-getter and will retain her incumbency for the next two years.

As per the Trust By-Laws, the UPM Executive council is charged with appointing one additional Board member, and our Exec has selected the next highest vote getter, Hank Fearnley, to serve. Congratulations to both Judy and Hank. □

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL APPOINTMENT**

AND CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHN ERDMANN, who has been appointed by our UPM Executive Council to fill an open seat on our council until the next scheduled election. □

**SOLIDARITY**

WHY SHOULD OUR CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO WORKERS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO? BECAUSE IF OUR CHILDREN DON’T UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE STRUGGLES OF THEIR PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS AND GREAT-GRANDPARENTS, THEY MAY BE DOOMED TO FIGHT THE SAME BATTLES ALL OVER AGAIN.

Fred Kaltenstein, labor educator
JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL
UNION MEMBERS LUNCH
AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

FRIDAY, AUGUST 15\textsuperscript{TH}
NOON TO 1:30 (After Convocation)
IN THE COLLEGE CAFETERIA