



INSIGHT

NEWSLETTER OF THE
STONY BROOK CHAPTER OF
UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS

ISSUE 05-8 UUP LOCAL 2190 AUGUST 2005

WHAT ARE THE TAXPAYERS REALLY SAYING

Written by John Schmidt, President UUP West Campus

The results of the Spring '05 school district voting suggest a less than positive perspective, at least as far as many Long Island school district residents are concerned. Voting on school budgets provides a first-hand opportunity for citizens to affirm or restrict what happens with our children, not to mention our K-12 colleagues. For the sake of argument, let's agree that no-one would intentionally vote to restrict access or opportunity for our children.

Local school budget approvals endorse the district agenda and the means for getting there. Budget rejections, on the other hand, send the opposite message. But are the taxpayers really questioning the ways and means in which instruction is delivered? To be sure, there are many who decry teacher salaries and the "look at all of the time they get off" conclusion. Of late, and more to the point, are the various fiscal horror stories that have empowered the naysayers.

There are three critical faults with these arguments. The first fails to appreciate the responsibility that is entrusted to our K-12 teachers and support staff. These trained professionals operate under a most personal public trust. They are responsible for educating and molding the individuals who will be the citizens, parents and colleagues of the future. We entrust to them the lives of our children. What price should we pay for such a daunting responsibility?. Second, teacher and professionals salaries are contractual. They have been and will continue to be negotiated at the bargaining table. Passing or defeating the budget in no way affects the negotiated contract.

Lastly, taxpayers should always question the manner in which funds are expended. It is only through fiscal oversight and the continued demand that money be spent prudently can we expect fiscal responsibility. Who attends School Board meetings? Who bothers to find out exactly what is going on in the classroom (instead of the auditor's office)? Waiting for the media to report wrongdoing doesn't rise to the level of sincere taxpayer concern.

So, what are the taxpayers really saying?

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SAVE THE DATE

WELCOME BACK BB-Q

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2005

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"A Tale of a Mouse"

Submitted by Willa Smith, Treasurer UUP West Campus

A Mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife opening a package. "What food might this contain?" He was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap.

Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning. "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, "Mr. Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it."

The mouse turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mousetrap in the house." The pig sympathized but said, "I am so very sorry Mr. Mouse, But there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured that you are in my prayers."

The mouse turned to the cow. She said, "Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you. But it's no skin off my nose."

So the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap alone.

That very night a sound was heard throughout the house like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey.

The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness she did not see that it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught.

The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital, and she returned home with a fever. Now everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient.

But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig.

The farmer's wife did not get well. She died. So many people came for her funeral the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them. So the next time you hear that someone is facing a problem and think that it doesn't concern you, remember that when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk.

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A Few Words From Pam Burris

Written by Pam Burris, Professional Delegate, UUP West Campus

Like Lynn A. Davis (*Insight*, June 2005), I too have not been managed by fear and intimidation. I have worked for fifteen years in a large department whose members get along well with one another by successfully working out issues in the open in order to avoid creating power struggles that can rip apart an organization.

However, I receive quite a number of calls from professionals in other parts of the campus who tell me about their issues, from less serious to serious. This makes me realize that while I generally drive home feeling as if I've accomplished something during the day, I have colleagues who drive home in angst. It seems that, within this large and prestigious institution where we have an abundance of experts in every field, we could/should do a better job at forming a community that works well for all.

Two years ago I became a UUP delegate and initiated, through the Professional Council headed by VP for Professionals, Arty Shertzer, a committee about civility on campus. The core group of Arty, Sara Lutterbie, John Schmidt and others quite quickly moved from talking about people being nice-nice and polite to one another to the other extreme: people losing their jobs due to factors beyond their control, whether from faulty management, lack of communication, lack of performance program/evals in place.

Our discussions encouraged us to reach out to other campus units who are in the business of well-being: AAEEEO, Ombuds, EAP. With each joint meeting we became increasingly determined to continue the discussion until in late spring when we added more concerned folks to the table and now have on going meetings.

Much of Arty Shertzer's message published in *Insight* (April-May, 2005), comes from the fact that, as VP for Professionals, he is quite close to the UUP grievance process. This gives him a particular view of campus that things are happening that shouldn't. These reports can greatly affect one's view of the culture.

Budget cuts result in staff cuts with the consequence that many in the organization are doing more for less. I've heard key administrators blaming grounds and facilities people for not having events set up properly or not having repairs made. A closer look might show the administrator that part time student employees or a dearth of full time staff is behind the lack of ability to conduct tasks properly.

I've also heard administrators blame UUP for 'standing in the way of progress' when, it seems, they forget that **management and UUP have SHAKEN HANDS in agreement** of contractual items and should work together for the greater good of the community. Like in a family where one party has agreed to mow the lawn and the other to do the laundry, even though both would rather be doing something else, there has been an agreement. It's better for both if it's fulfilled with responsibility.

I think that both Arty and Lynn point to correctly perceived worlds at Stony Brook. Arty sits through the agony of listening to grievances while Lynn is able to carry out her workday in the professional setting we all should enjoy. I would be in Lynn's world here at Stony Brook if I didn't hear so much about what doesn't work. The Civility Committee is in the same place - its members hear of things that don't work and we would like to believe we might be able to discover a fix if we keep at our quest to make Stony Brook one community with fairness to all.

Benefits Fair

Monday, October 17, 2005 • 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Wang Center.

Lynn Gåseidnes, UUP Benefit Trust Fund Representative will be here to answer any questions that you may have along with material containing the latest benefit information.

If you would like more information you can contact her by phone: 800-887-3863
Email: lgaseidn@uupmail.org

Helpful Before Tax Program

By Arty Shertzer, Vice President for Professionals
UUP West Campus

I was talking the other day to a woman that I walk with in the mornings. She has little children and I have older ones. She was saying how her son fell and cut his eye, and then a few days later how he got a bad irritation on his feet from the track. She sarcastically said that she was worried that CPS was gonna come for him! I then related how my kids would say that they were gonna call CPS if I did this or that and then I countered with telling them that if they did, they would be taken away to some strange house...That usually worked! I then told her how I've always thought that there should be a 1-800 number that parents can call, when they are being abused or maligned by their children...just picture it...you call and a nice long limo pulls up...they welcome you in and whisk you away to a house with kids that pick up after themselves, you get woken up by the sounds of a mower cutting the lawn..piloted by one of the "good" kids....they wash dishes, they clear plates....and, when you do something nice for them, they say "Thanks" !!

Then I get jolted back to reality, and here I am.

Now before the PC amongst you get all bent out of shape, the preceding was a tongue in cheek, no more serious than that of Jonathan Swift "A Modest Proposal".

But, what I do want to inform you of, is that our contract with the State offers a program called the Dependent Advantage Account. This program was established to cover your costs to care for your children, and elder or a dependent disabled person so that you can go to work. I won't take the time here to go into details, other than to say that we used it extensively during our years when the kids were under 13 and it literally saved us. I urge you to go to the website, www.uupinfo.org and click on the link for summer day camp. This before tax program is really worth looking into. If you have any questions, give me a call. Happy summer!

A NYSUT sponsored Defensive Driving program

is being offered for all UUP employees and their immediate family members on:

Monday, September 19, 2005 and Tuesday, September 20, 2005 from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM, both nights, in the Wang Center Room 201.

Cost is \$25 per person. Checks should be made payable to "NYSUT Benefit Trust" and delivered to the UUP office, 104 Old Chemistry, Z-3475. Office hours are Monday thru Friday, 9 am to 3 pm.

Participants are usually entitled to a 10% discount on their automotive insurance. Check with your provider. The certificate is good for three years of savings!

For more information contact Corinne Burns at 632-26570 or email her at cmburns@notes.cc.sunysb.edu.

A Message From Bill Scheuerman

President, United University Professions

July 25, 2005

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am asking you and all members of our union to support the 2005 State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA).

UUP members have a long tradition of lending a hand to others wherever and whenever needed. One of the best ways that we help our union brothers and sisters, and friends and neighbors in times of need, and make a lasting difference across New York, is through our contributions to SEFA.

The 2005 SEFA campaign theme – “Join the SEFA Team: The New York Givers...Your SEFA Gift Makes New York a Better Place to Live and Work” – speaks to how team work, unity and solidarity bring results that matter in our communities. By working together on the SEFA team, we carry on the tradition of a caring labor movement and collective action.

I urge you to please support the 2005 State Employees Federated Appeal. In doing so, we can continue to improve the quality of life of thousands of New Yorkers.

Thank you for continuing to make New York a better place to live and work.

In solidarity,

Bill
William E. Scheuerman, President
United University Professions

Walk For Beauty September 18

Calling all UUP members!

We are forming a UUP West Campus team for the annual Walk for Beauty.

Join your fellow union members as we walk through beautiful Stony Brook Village on Sunday, September 18th.

Registration starts at 8:30 a.m.
The walk begins at 9:30 a.m. with distances of 4K or 6K.

There is a \$20.00 registration fee and everyone gets a UUP T-Shirt. Lots of fun with fellow employees - friends and family welcome! Let's show the community that UUP cares about helping in the fight against breast and prostate cancer.

To register, call Charlie Mcateer at (631) 632-6445.

UUP Calendar of Events 2005-2006

September 2005

14 Executive Board Meeting
21 Welcome Back Barbecue Lunch
23/24 Fall Delegate Assembly - Albany
28 Academic Council Meeting

October 2005

12 Executive Board Meeting
17 Benefits Fair
21 Labor/Management Meeting

November 2005

9 General Membership Meeting

December 2005

14 Executive Board Meeting
16 UUP Holiday Party

January 2006

11 Executive Board Meeting
20/21 Winter Delegate Assembly - Albany

February 2006

8 Executive Board Meeting
11 UUP Annual Dinner Dance
28 Stony Brook Day in Albany

March 2006

8 Executive Board Meeting

April 2006

12 Executive Board Meeting
20/21 Spring Delegate Assembly - Albany

UUP Front Page Discussions

A series of lunch-time chapter discussions with authors of new books and experts on important topics of the times. Meet people from other departments in conversation throughout the coming year. All members are welcome to attend. Watch for notices or contact Michael Zweig (631) 632-7536 or mzweig@notes.cc.sinysb.edu to be put on the email announcement list.



Who's Who and New @ UUP

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The Chapter Office is open Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 3 pm.

The Executive Board meets on Alternate Tuesdays at 12 noon, and members are encouraged to attend. Please contact the Chapter Office for exact dates and times. Insight is published by the Stony Brook Chapter of United University Professions. Items for inclusion should be sent to the UUP Office, 104 Old Chemistry, Zip=3475. The opinions expressed in articles in the newsletter are those of the author or the Stony Brook Chapter of UUP and are not necessarily the opinions of United University Professions.

Operation Save Enid & Support a Cure for ALS

Many of you know Enid Graf because of her 25 years of dedication as Director of Taproot. Others know Erle, her husband, as a part of the Stony Brook Physics and Astronomy department faculty, or know their daughters, Edith Aurora and Elizabeth.

As friends and acquaintances of Enid you no doubt know that she has ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease), a progressive, neurodegenerative disease that attacks nerve cells and pathways in the brain and spinal cord. Motor neurons reach from the brain to the spinal cord and from the spinal cord to muscles throughout the body. It is through these neurons that we are able to control all muscle movement – arms, legs, breathing, blinking and so on. As the disease progresses, these motor neurons cease to function and the ability to initiate and control muscle movement is lost, leading to total paralysis and ultimately to death.

We have Erle and Enid's blessing to establish a fund-raising team effort called OPERATION SAVE ENID, associated with the ALS Association's 'WALK TO D'FEET ALS' in Eisenhower Park on Sunday, September 25 at 11:00am.

If you would like to make a donation to our efforts on Enid's behalf, please make a check out to 'The ALS Association Greater New York Chapter' with 'Operation Save Enid' in the notation and mail to:

The Main Office • Physics and Astronomy Department
 Stony Brook University
 Stony Brook, NY 11794-3800

What is a simple task for us in the morning, to button a shirt, is labor intensive for Enid. It takes her from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the size of the button and consistency of the cloth. Unlike us, she has to stop and rest in between. She walks inside her house without assistance, taking steps of about 1 inch at a time and having to locate her center of balance each time she stands. She has frequent coughing fits but, although they are frightening, she has been told by medical personnel that choking is not the way most ALS patients die. Her mental agility is keen enough to take on anyone and her fiction writing is splendid. This is today with a lot ahead of her. If you would like further information, please call Pam Burris at 632-8066.

Sincerely,

*Richard Berscak, Pam Burris, Maria Hofer, Elaine Larsen
 Sara Lutterbie, Pat Peiliker, Robert Segnini, Diane Siegel*



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