

THE BRIDGES

The Newsletter of the Stony Brook Health Sciences Chapter
of United University Professions

January 1999

Message from the President

John Marino
Chapter President

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on what has been going on at our chapter during the last few months. We have had two chapter meetings and a department rep meeting. The chapter meeting held in September included a visit from some of our statewide negotiation team members. The focus of the meeting was to gather information from the membership for the upcoming contract negotiations. This meeting was well attended and there were many items and ideas brought forward by our chapter to the team. Meetings such as this were held around the state at every chapter and while we heard many of the same things mentioned here, there were many other items unique to a region or a campus.

In addition to the negotiation team visits there was a statewide survey mailed to every member and a survey done at each chapter. The next step is to sift through all the data gathered and to find out what is most important to the members of this chapter and all the other chapters around the state. No small task! But don't worry, with the leadership of statewide president Bill Scheuerman, chief negotiator Thomas Matthews, and some new and well seasoned team members on the negotiations team, it will get done. From my own first hand observations, I can assure you we are organized.

The chapter town hall meeting held in October was also well attended. Questions were asked by members and answered by some of our statewide leaders. (See article on page 5). You brought forward concerns including compensatory time, overtime, workload,

lack of promotions for professionals, health and safety issues, discretionary increases, longevity pay, and time and attendance problems. Let me take this opportunity to invite any of you to serve on a committee to help gather information on some of these important issues.

Your concerns were heard. Many of these issues are being addressed on the local level with administration. We have had monthly meetings with Dr. Norman Edelman, Chief Operating Officer Paul Seale, and Dr. Bernard Hirsch at the LISVH. In addition to these regular meetings we are also planning a labor/management meeting with Dr. Shirley Kenny.

Our department rep meeting was held in November with about 30 new department reps attending. The meeting was organized by our chapter development committee led by membership development officer Ed Hines and committee members Frank Goldsmith, Bruce Kube, and Darcy McGuire. The functions of reps were explained by the committee with copies of the contract, membership cards, benefit trust cards, dental forms, VOTE/COPE cards and important phone numbers being distributed. We are planning more dept. rep meetings in the future. If you are interested in becoming a department rep please call the UUP office at 444-1505.

As you can see we have had a busy autumn. I believe we are picking up momentum because we are getting more members involved in our chapter-YOUR chapter. We are not where we want to be yet, but we are on the right track - GET INVOLVED!

Fall Delegate Assembly

The Fall Delegate Assembly took place in Albany all day Friday, October 2nd and Saturday, October 3rd. The delegates from this chapter that attended were: Ed Alleyne (P), Ora Bouey (A), Dennis Caruana (P), Katherine Caruana (P), Angela DeVito (P), Ed Drummond (P), Daniel Fischer (P), Jeanne Galbraith (A), Nereida Gonzalez (P), Ed Hines (P), Mary Hoch (P), Colleen Kenefick (A), Bruce Kube (P), Ed Lane (P), Tina Manning (P), John Marino (P),



Charles Mazzarese (P), Darcy McGuire (P), Joe Moreschi (P), Donald Pisani (P), and Doris Weisman (P).

Pictured clockwise are new delegates Katherine Caruana, Nereida Gonzalez, Charles Mazzarese, and Angela DeVito.

One of the most hotly contested debates in recent memory was a proposed amendment to the UUP Constitution to increase the number of consecutive terms for which statewide officers are eligible. The constitu-

tion was amended to read as follows, "Officers shall be elected to terms of two years; no person shall be eligible for more than five consecutive terms in any one office." This action makes it possible for union leaders to hold the same position for ten consecutive years before having to step down.

Also adopted was a resolution endorsing a University Faculty Senate resolution urging the suspension of a system-wide uniform "comprehensive test of student achievement."

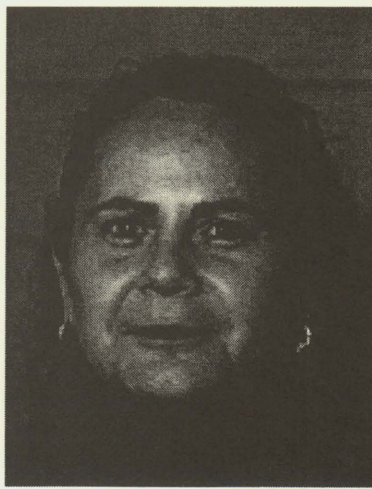
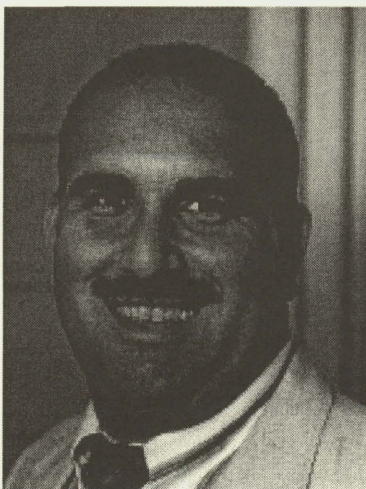
The Executive Board approved the appointment to the HSC Concerns Committee of co-chairs Phil Smith (Syracuse HSC) and John Marino (Stony Brook HSC). Committee members include all Vice-Presidents for Academics and all Vice-Presidents for Professionals from the HSC's.

Each year at the Fall Delegate Assembly the Link scholarship winners are honored for their activism and scholarly achievements. The 1998 recipients are Laura Clemens, a junior at Geneseo; Carrie Seares, a senior



at New Paltz; and Andrea Spreter, a senior at Plattsburgh.

The prestigious Nina Mitchell Award for Distinguished Service was awarded to Bill Godfrey, UUP chapter president on west campus since 1992, for his exemplary dedication to UUP. He is director of the Liberty Partnership Programs, the Teacher Opportunity Corps and Upward Bound, all state programs designed to help underrepresented students. Congratulations to Bill for his long years of devoted service to the Stony Brook campus. Thomas Morrissey, professor of history at Fredonia, and Alan Shank, professor of political science at Geneseo, were the other recipients.



Negotiating a new UUP Contract — A Primer

*How does UUP put together a package of demands?
What happens then?*

Michael Silverberg
Vice President for Academics

The responsibility for negotiating a contract lies ultimately with the UUP president. He or she, in the end, bears the burden of deciding when he has an agreement he can recommend to the membership. Getting to that point, however, is a long, quite expensive, and often difficult process. The president generally appoints a team of members to act on his behalf, first to communicate with the membership, then to assemble a package of contract demands and finally to actually sit at the table with the State and negotiate. Let's talk about these three phases in turn.

The first phase of discussion with the membership is remarkably open and democratic; I doubt there is any union in the country that has such an open process.

Between surveys, both local and statewide, campus visits and consultations with committees that include professional and academic members from every campus, the team is exposed to the full spectrum of the problems seen by members and their desires for change.

During this whole process, it is safe to say that every single comment, war story or suggestion is read by at least some team members. At the end of this stage, the team is very well versed indeed in what is happening at each campus, which problems are systemic, which are more local and

what members feel are the most significant issues that need attention. And that concludes the easy part of the task!

The next phase is to distill all of that information into a coherent set of demands to the state. There are two guiding principles, the first sometimes honored more in the breach, the second adhered to scrupulously. The first one is *be realistic*. This is pretty obvious, we could go to the state and demand a 200% pay increase for everyone, but it is unlikely to lead to a productive round of negotiations. On the other hand, we have often included in the proposal *blue sky* items, things we would like to get but which the State is unlikely to agree to unless something unusual happens. And sometimes we do get one or two of those so it is

worth including them. The second rule is like the Hippocratic Oath: "do no harm." A great deal of effort is always expended to examine every considered point

of view of *be careful what you wish for*. Sometimes a gain for one segment of the membership could prove a real loss for another, other times we may be tempted to resolve ambiguities which can also lead to the *you can't go home again* problem. This classic negotiating trap is to ask for language that clarifies some right or benefit you believe you already have. If you fail to get the requested clarification, you might find you have given some future arbitrator

reason to rule that you never had the right or benefit in question. So it can be better to live with ambiguity than to try to "tidy it up."

The most difficult part of this

Majority Rules?

UUP members working at Health Science Centers comprise about 32% of total union membership; we are the largest single block of union members. Alternatively, UUP members in the New York Metropolitan area comprise almost 35% of the total membership, also making us the largest single block in the union. Except that it is a different block! Do we have more in common with our colleagues at Purchase and Old Westbury or with those at Syracuse? Clearly, trying to decide priorities on the basis of what suits a majority of members can be a hazardous undertaking when the categories of members, and therefore the definition of majority, can be drawn so many different ways. In the negotiations process, a problem experienced by any number of members is a problem that we need to address, but even the needs or wishes of a clear majority of members should not be a reason for agreeing to something that would harm other members.

***Your dues
at work!***

To Your Health—Winter Training

process, one which overlaps all the phases, is to explain to the membership the rules of logic, reason, and justice in the negotiations process. The answer is, unfortunately, not much, or even hardly at all. In the end the currencies of the bargaining table are mostly power and money. For example, we hear constantly that a succession of years with little or no cost-of-living raises have left us in a worse economic position than other teaching professions, especially in the school districts. Therefore, justice demands a substantial salary increase now.

This is an argument that has been in the air for at least 10 years now and it simply runs into the brick wall of the state saying, in essence, "we don't want to spend that kind of money and we won't." In the end we have rarely been very successful in getting more money put into the contract — it has more often been a case of rearranging the total dollar amount between salary and various kinds of benefits to try and eke out the most advantage for our members. In other cases, the SUNY bureaucracy is just not willing to give up power or control no matter what the merits of the argument.

Sometimes we can prevail, sometimes not, but it isn't reason and logic that wins the day! Generally if we can convince the State that we want changes in language badly enough and they want to settle the contract badly enough, SUNY gets overruled; if not, not. Grim? Not really, it's just the art and science of negotiations.

Greetings and salutations, readers and fellow members of UUP. Under the heading *To Your Health*, this column is the first in what we are planning to have as a regular feature of *Bridges*, covering various topics in health promotion and wellness. I hope that you will find it to be useful. And please let me hear from you, c/o the UUP office if you have any thoughts that you would like to share on the subject. Now, let's turn to the subject of this column, "Winter Training."

While in future columns I will address the issue of getting started in regular exercise, this one is obviously addressed primarily to those who are already in the habit. First, please take some down time. Take off a week, two weeks, or even a month if you worked out regularly this past season. If you are in good shape, you won't lose that much, even with a month off. Those studies which showed rapid deconditioning upon stopping were done primarily in people who were new to exercise. I think that the mental benefits alone of taking time off are worth the mild physical detuning that will occur. If you happen to be one of those people who goes out of whack completely when you don't work out regularly, then at least cut back significantly on both distance and speed.

Second, the winter is a good time to attend to goal setting. How did you do in achieving your goals this past season? If you didn't set any, do you think that doing so might help your performance or increase your enjoyment or both? Are the goals that you set realistic ones for you? Remember, goals should work for you not against you.

Third, if you are an equipment buff you might think about what you have for indoor training, the primary mode for most regular exercisers during the winter. Buying your own equipment is in the short run not an inexpensive

enterprise. You must have the money and space to house the stuff, and be fairly certain that you will use it for its intended purpose (and not as an all-purpose dust collector and clothes hanger). Over the life of most home equipment, most of which is indestructible if treated right, you will save money over the cost of a gym membership.

Primary for me is my own weight-training machine. I don't have to drive to the gym, waste time changing clothes or showering, or stand around waiting for the person ahead of me to finish up on the machine I want to go to next. Best of all, no over-cheerful morning man is blaring hard rock music over Z1000. Yes, I can play Mozart or Morning Edition without entering into negotiations that would best take place in Geneva. You do need to be self-motivated and self-disciplined to lift regularly at home. But, if you do use a home machine, it is the best.

Some home gyms use actual weights or another form of resistance. Prices range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars, but if only you and perhaps a few friends or family members are going to use it, you don't have to spend a lot of money to get something that will work for you. You can buy a variety of machines mail-order and there are infomercials for several of the more popular ones. I suggest that you go to a local sporting goods store or to a store specializing in weight lifting equipment (there are several of them on the Island), and actually try out a few different models to find one that works well for you. Further, if you buy from a store, should the machine need set-up they usually will do that as part of a delivery package.

Well, there are a few thoughts for the winter. Whatever you do, as with all regular exercise, have fun! See you next time.

**Steven Jonas, MD, MPH, MS
Academic Grievance Chair**

Town Hall Meeting

Our chapter held a town hall meeting on Wednesday, October 21st for bargaining unit members. Peggy Barmore, Director of Communications; Tom Corigliano, Secretary; Peter Martineau, NYSUT assistant director of legislation; William Scheuerman, President; and Henry Steck, Vice President/Academics attended from Albany. They came to hear member's concerns as well as to bring news about negotiations and legislative issues. Concerning the latter, Scheuerman told us that although the Hospital Flexibility legislation was signed by the governor, it will not be a panacea, especially if the three SUNY hospitals are not funded adequately by the state.

As the "negotiation season" begins, we learned that the statewide negotiations survey

received a great response rate and it is clear that many issues are not unique to the Health Sciences Center, but are a concern at every SUNY campus. A timely contract resolution and a major salary increase were the most important concerns to be addressed. Salary compression (new hires being paid at almost the same salary as long time employees) is recognized as a worsening problem.

Hospital employees expressed grave concern with the seven day a week hospital concept. The provisions for compensatory time in the Burke memorandum (now included in the contract as an appendix) and for FLSA comp. time are not really adequate. UUP also has questions about the accuracy by which members have been classified as FLSA eligible.

In response to complaints about the dental benefits, we were informed that our contract with Delta Dental is expiring and possibly a new carrier will be selected. Beginning January 1st, there will be a 15-20% increase in dental benefits. Members also raised the issue of educational days which is left to the discretion of individual departments to arrange. However, enough time should be granted to reach continuing education requirements for maintaining required licenses or certifications. Many employees have reached maximum accrued sick leave and alternatives to losing this time are being explored in negotiations. Time and attendance issues are a recurrent problem and perhaps the new computer software will eliminate some clerical errors.

Professional Development and Quality of Work Life Grants

If you missed the two previous rounds of PDQWL individual grants, there is one more chance in this contract for those interested in pursuing research and study-leave projects. Round 3 will cover activities from July 1, 1998 to August 31, 1999 with applications due by January 29, 1999. The maximum individual award under this program is \$1,000 or up to \$5,000 when salary for a replacement is required. An application and more information can be obtained on the UUP web site at www.uupinfo.org/contract or in the union office.

VOTE/COPE

The process of negotiating for a new contract is a primary focus of our union and is supported by union dues. However, the process of maintaining friendly relationships with legislators who will support higher education is only financed from VOTE/COPE monies. With Governor Pataki re-elected, we have an even stronger need and difficult path in seeking out support for higher education in the legislature. Union dues cannot be used for any political action, which includes for example legislative luncheons, lobbying or campaign support. We need to meet with our representatives to make them more aware of our needs and ask them to support our programs.

Thanks to your VOTE/COPE dollars Senator D'Amato has been

unseated, which should give higher education a stronger supporter at the federal level. As we end this year and grow closer to the turn of the century, please examine VOTE/COPE payroll deduction and either increase your donation or become a contributor. One dollar more from each of us per payroll period can return many dollars to all of us through legislative support. Only strength in numbers can help make our goals a reality.

Doris Weisman

VOTE/COPE Coordinator

To be a member of UUP you must submit a signed membership card. If your dues are coded with 215 on your pay stub you are not a member. The member code is 222. If you have any questions about your membership status, please call the office at 444-1505.

Elections Calendar

Every two years, all UUP chapters conduct elections during the spring semester. Every HSC chapter officer and delegate position will be open for nominations, including delegate positions to our affiliate meetings, the NYSUT Representative Assembly and the AFT Convention.

One of the most important duties that you have as a union member is voting for your representatives. If you would like to work for positive change and to become a more active member, consider nominating yourself as a delegate. Self-nominations are perfectly acceptable and your name will appear on the chapter ballot.

Watch for the nomination forms in January and give serious consideration to either nominating yourself or encouraging a colleague to run for a chapter leadership position.

- January 13th Chapter Nomination Forms Mailed from Albany
- February 10th Chapter Nominations Close
- March 26th Chapter Election Ballots Mailed
- April 14th Chapter Election Ballots Due
- April 15th-April 17th Chapter Election Ballots are Counted
- June 4th Run-off Election Ballots Mailed (if necessary)
- June 23rd Run-off Election Ballots Due
- June 24th Run-off Election Ballots are Counted

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The UUP Newsletter welcomes articles and letters submitted by members of the Stony Brook community. Remember, this is *your* newsletter. Share your thoughts with us, we want to hear from you. Persons who have material they wish to submit should contact: Colleen Kenefick at 444-3995 or 444-1505.