

30 Years Strong!

UPM

United Professors of Marin

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Union Press

Ponderings of the President

by Ira Lansing

It was probably around my senior year of high school that I started going to comedy clubs for entertainment. Much as they are today, many of the performers were unknowns, hoping to catch a break. But it seems back then that there was more of this thing called improvisational comedy. In fact, so much more that many of the improv comedians hit it really big—Chevy Chase, Gilda Radner, Dan Ackroyd and many of their successors—went on to do this little show called *Saturday Night Live!*

If you have never seen improvisational comedy it consists of a small group of performers getting suggestions (preferably

unrelated) from the audience and then putting the whole thing together into a short, and hopefully funny, sketch right before your eyes. The audience suggestions can be topics, like “first date” and “going to a funeral”; or they can be single words, like “basketball”, “water” and “sex” (someone from the audience will *always* say “sex” or a related word when given the opportunity for suggestions). The resulting skit may seem like organized chaos, but as the performance progresses, a certain flow and rhythm takes place among the players that can—hopefully—be very funny to watch.

I cannot say for certain, not being in the business, but I

would imagine that what appears to be on the spot improvisation actually contains many well-rehearsed elements. I do not mean that the comedians plant the words or topics that come from the audience, but rather whatever is suggested eventually evolves into a slight variation of a routine that the group has worked through together on some level. Each person in the troupe has some sense of where the other might go and what to expect. At least I would think this should be the way it is if the improv comedians have any expectation of success.

I was prompted to reflect on my early involvement with this form of entertainment while listening to the latest report on the current state of contract negotiations between UPM and the District. It sounded as if topics—like “workload”, “schedule”, “Article 8”—had been tossed out by the audience and the District’s team went into a performance of trying to put together something that would make sense. The only problem is that the District’s team—a litigation attorney, a personnel director and a hired outside academic consultant—have not performed together for very long, and like many comedians, this gig is not their day job, so it might not be their number one priority. Consequently, the routines may start out looking good, but with time and scrutiny, they do not hold up.

You might be inclined to say give them time, like any performer, they will get better. Well, yes they might, but unlike improvisational comedy, there will not be a new audience the next night with new words and topics.

It will still be us and we will still have the same issues. And unlike a nightly performance, the unworkable and illogical proposal from yesterday will still be around. And unlike a stage performer who very clearly understands what happened and what the consequences will be when there is no response from the audience, an improv bargaining team believes it does not really have to pay attention to the audience.

Ask yourself how long would you be willing to wait and how often would you return to the comedy club to see the same act if it just were not funny. I suggest that we all will have to make this decision in the very near future. How much are we willing to put up with, what are we willing to take (or give away) and what are we willing to do about it. Think hard on this one folks, because if we do not, it will be much more than the two drink minimum cover charge that we will lose.

Stay informed, stay involved, stay in touch.



**Tick-tock, tick,
tock, time on the
clock.**

**Amount paid to
the attorney for
the District
during the
months of June
and July:**

\$51,510.00



Member Benefits

As a UPM/AFT member, you are eligible for many benefits--discounts on clothing, flowers, music, online books, magazines, entertainment, car rental, hotels, and more.

For information, visit the UPM website

[http://
www.unitedprofessorsofmarin.org/](http://www.unitedprofessorsofmarin.org/)

and click on “Benefits”

Connecting the Dots

News and Opinion

by Arthur Lutz

INFERNO

The last few weeks at the college have been a difficult and stressful time for me, so I decided to spend this past weekend relaxing with a good book. I chose Dante's *Inferno*.

We all know what it's about. It's an account of Dante's journey through the underworld, describing the geography of hell and the hierarchies of sin and retribution.

But besides being a tour of the infernal regions and graphic depictions of human pain and suffering, *Inferno* is also an allegory for Dante's own mid-life crisis and his personal search for meaning and spiritual direction. It's part of the body of "quest" literature that is common in world mythologies and religions.

But *Inferno* is also an allegory for the political conditions in Italy in the 1300s – the bloody power struggles – the internal strife and discord – the conflict between popes and emperors, each fighting for temporal authority. It reflected Dante's own dark voyage through the underworld of Italian politics and his eventual exile from his native Florence because of his opposition to papal

hegemony. *Inferno* is a wonderful epic poem that can be read on many levels.

And *Inferno* can also be read as an allegory for what is happening here at the College of Marin. Because here at our college we also have internal strife and discord, and conflict with an imperial authority. And many of us, like Dante, are also groping our way through the bleak underworld of management hegemony (hoping not to be exiled) in search of a better pedagogical direction and vision for our college.

In most quest literature, there is usually a guide or protective figure that helps the seeker on his/her pilgrimage. Dante's companion through the underworld was the poet Virgil, the symbol of reason. In contemporary quest literature there are other symbolic figures (wizards and Jedi masters etc.) who aid and support the hero-protagonists in their adventures. Castenada's guide was Don Juan and Dorothy had a lion, a tin-man and a scarecrow to accompany and support her on her journey through the trials of young womanhood and back home to Kansas.

So where, at the College of Marin, are the guides, guardians and supporters of our faculty in our search for direction, meaning and a righteous vision for our college?

In most institutions, faculty look to their administrators for such guidance and support. At the College of Marin, however, administration support is absent.

At a recent Academic Senate meeting [9/13], President White stated her belief that students come to the College of Marin because of our campus social scene and our buildings and not because of our faculty or the curriculum which we provide. "*It's about the guys and the girls and the buildings...and fun – not about the curriculum,*" "*That's what it's going to be all about.*" she stated.

Dr. White seemed to be suggesting that pretty faces, fancy buildings and revelry are what, and will, make the College of Marin a successful educational institution – and that our faculty's contributions are irrelevant to this success. Given this lack of loyalty and support for our faculty by our college president it's not surprising that the District's bargaining team has adopted the position that we are insufficiently productive, under-scheduled and overpaid, and that it is their intention to increase our workload and reduce our compensation. It's unfortunate that Dr. White, the Board, and their negotiating team intend to pursue this path rather than

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showing support for (and joining) our faculty in our quest to create programs, curricula and conditions for our students that represent the best values and traditions of higher education.

In the deepest and darkest regions of Dante's hell there is a frozen marsh called Kocytus. In this doleful area are imprisoned those sinners

who Dante felt had committed the most grievous of transgressions. These were not the sins of adultery, or gluttony, or deceit, or even the crimes of thievery or murder. Kocytus was reserved for those who had committed far greater sins – the sins of betrayal and disloyalty.

It is sad when a cowardly lion, a tin-man and a

scarecrow can show greater support and loyalty for a traveling companion than Dr. White and the District is willing to show to our COM faculty.

Arthur Lutz

New UPM Website www.unitedprofessorsofmarin.org

Do you want to check the language in the current contract or see how the next step in the salary schedule will affect your gross pay? You can find the Collective Bargaining Agreement and current salary schedule in searchable .PDF format on the Web site.

Need to get in touch with an Executive Council member, or some other unit member currently serving as a representative on a union committee? The new Web site will provide you with his or her union email address. Just click on the person's name listed on the "Officers & Committees" page.

We have a good start on the site and are looking for your suggestions on what features we can add to make it a really useful and informative tool for United Professors of Marin.

Mike Ransom, Webmaster

www.unitedprofessorsofmarin.org



Letters to the Editor

Feel free to voice your comments and/or opinions concerning any article or issue about you, the College or your union. Letters should be signed, but names will be withheld upon request. Please direct your letters to john.sutherland@marin.edu

The Terminal Cretaceous Event Or Dino-Cleansing

Cretaceous: *Geology*. Noting or pertaining to a period of the Mesozoic Era, from 140 million years to 65 million years ago, characterized by the greatest development and subsequent **extinction of dinosaurs** and the advent of flowering plants and insects.

Some of us will recall reports of a recent administrative retreat (recent, at least, in the sense that it happened more than 65 million years after the Mesozoic era) at which COM President Fran White handed out plastic dinosaurs, symbols of anyone or anything that stood in opposition to her plans. And then she vowed to get rid of them, to cleanse the college of dinosauria. (An observant archeologist will still find fossil remains on various desks throughout the campus.) The Meteorwhite had struck planet earth.

Among the first to feel the heat of the new climate were the Michaelbeebosaurus and the Lingsongosaurus. These dinosaurs went relatively quietly, unable to stand the increasing heat of the new college environment. In their places, new species arose. The M.Beebosaurus' descendant, Al Harrison, just recently told the UPM Bargaining team that despite a greater annual budget that

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ever before in the college's history, despite fewer students than ever before in the college's history, and despite fewer full-time instructors than ever before in the college's history, we currently have NO \$'s for salary increases. How's that for evolution?

Later on the extinction list came the Austrian Wachalovskosaurus and even more recently the Pamelamizosaurus. Were any of these archosaurs harming the environment? Eating up all its resources? No. They were simply in the way and had to be eliminated, and Whitehouse gasses made life unbearable for them. Who's next? You needn't look far to find out.

Clearly one of the most endangered species of COM's greening/Whiting is the notorious and obstinate Tenuro-Faculosaurus. But since the T.Faculosaurus is in part a protected species, terminating them is not as easy. So the tactic now is to turn up the heat, to create even greater campus warming, and to make it too hot and uncomfortable for the Faculosaurus to survive and to hope that it will expire/retire.

You have probably already heard from colleagues who plan to retire because the college's climate has become too agonizingly hot. Case in point: One of my colleagues in English, a 30+ year COM professor, has

announced her intention to retire because of the campus warming. In this particular case, constant battles with the area dean over course offerings, department policies, department organization, scheduling and Instructional Specialist assistance have created an environment too hostile to work in. The recent administrative decision to reduce Instructional Specialist assistance in upper level classes (next semester, to eliminate that assistance altogether!) has discouraged one of our best and brightest instructors from continuing teaching here. And the Faculosaurus is not the only one threatened by Whitehouse policy gasses. The impact on instructors' workload aside, we in English fear even more the negative consequences of this Meteorwhite on our transfer students' chances of success.

In this newsletter and at UPM meetings, you have seen and heard about the District's bargaining proposals and the takebacks they have put on the table in this round of contract negotiations. These takebacks drastically reduce faculty rights and are part of the plan to eradicate us. As mentioned above, though the District claims it does not have moneys to increase our salaries, it did have enough to give President White a

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huge raise, enough to expand the administration and administrative assistants, and it does have enough to pay its attorney huge sums for bargaining. UPM President Lansing's articles in The Union Press often detail monthly dollar amounts paid to attorney Frierson, the latest for June & July, 2007, totaling \$51,510.00. Yet we continue to hear cries of scarcity, and the current Instructional Specialist crisis in the English Program is only the start. More cutbacks will

come to your areas and will affect your ability to teach your students. After all, as President (Meteor)White said recently at an Academic Senate meeting, College of Marin is "about the guys and the girls and the buildings...and fun – not about the curriculum."

So what can we do to prevent our own (and our students') extinction? Pay attention to the nuances in what your dean says and does. Pay attention to your contract. Contact your UPM

representatives and ask questions if you feel your contractual rights are being violated. Come to the UPM Exec meetings and tell them what's going on to prevent the disastrous effects from the impact of the White Bolide.

Your college is in your hands. How will you fight the new terminal cretaceous event?

J Sutherland

UPM Officers, Committee Members, Staff

<p>PRESIDENT Ira Lansing</p> <p>BARGAINING TEAM Paul Christensen (Chief Negotiator) Hank Fearnley Theo Fung Arthur Lutz Mike Ransom John Sutherland</p> <p>UPM-PAC Arthur Lutz Radica Portello</p> <p>GRIEVANCE OFFICER Arthur Lutz</p> <p>TREASURER Theo Fung</p> <p>BUDGET MONITOR Deborah Graham</p> <p>BAY 10 REPRESENTATIVE Bonnie Borenstein</p> <p>CCC REPRESENTATIVE Bonnie Borenstein</p>	<p>NORTH BAY LABOR COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE Carol Costa</p> <p>PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE Mike Ransom David Rollison</p> <p>WORKLOAD COMMITTEE Carl Cox Don Foss</p> <p>HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE Jamie Deneris Carol Lacy</p> <p>PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE George Adams Paul Christensen</p> <p>SABBATICAL LEAVE COMMITTEE David Jones David Rollison Chris Schultz Toni Yoshioka</p>	<p>CRA TRUST Ed Essick (Chair) Robert Kennedy Ira Lansing Robin Lavin Ron Palmer</p> <p>UPM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Ira Lansing Paul Christensen Carl Cox Hank Fearnley Arthur Lutz Robert Ovetz Mike Ransom John Sutherland Yolanda van Ecke</p> <p>WEB MASTER Mike Ransom</p> <p>UNION PRESS EDITOR John Sutherland</p> <p>EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Teresa Capaldo</p>
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Academic Staffing Crisis

(From AFT Website:
<http://www.aft.org/topics/academic-staffing/index.htm>)

No trend has changed the face of higher education

more than the shift away from a corps of full-time, tenure-track faculty to a contingent instructional workforce. That work force includes part-time/adjunct faculty, full-time, nontenure track faculty, and graduate employees. Together these

employees now make up an amazing 70 percent of the 1.3 million employee instructional workforce in higher education.

Total postsecondary instructional workforce, by employment type

Category	Number	Percent of total
Full-time, tenure/tenure-track faculty	405,805	30
Full-time, nontenure-track faculty	198,787	15
Part-time/adjunct faculty	468,890	35
Graduate employees	259,567	20
Total	1,333,049	100

U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2001 Fall Staff Survey

The growth of contingent labor over the last two decades represents a major and purposeful effort by higher education institutions to reduce the number of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty. This has been done partly in response to the failure of most states to provide adequate funding for their colleges and universities. But money isn't the whole story.

The growth of contingent labor also mirrors the movement to run higher education institutions "more like a business." The traditions of tenure and shared governance, which guarantee due process and academic freedom, and which give faculty a major role in academic decision-making, run counter to a command-and-control

business model. The fact that large numbers of academic workers are hired without effective job security, without decent salaries and benefits, and without a guaranteed role in academic decision-making is of great concern to those of us who value a free and independent academy.

Addressing this "academic staffing crisis" is one of AFT higher education's highest priorities. We are working to find new ways to increase full-time tenure lines and at the same time achieve pay equity and professional rights for contingent faculty. Those efforts include:

- organizing all segments of the higher education

instructional workforce;

- effecting legislative and political changes at the state level;
- bargaining strong collective bargaining agreements; and,
- working in coalition with other unions and like-minded organizations to draw attention to these issues nationally.

In addition, AFT is currently in the process of developing standards of good practice for all components of the contingent workforce to serve as guidelines for institutions and unions.

**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: _____

UPM Membership Application Form

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

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: () _____ Campus Ext: _____

Email: _____

SSN: _____

Department: _____

Check the appropriate box:

- 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

