

# UNION NEWS



DECEMBER 2004

## SOME FACULTY THOUGHTS ON THE GUN ISSUE

BY ROBERT PERRONE

As most of you know by now, at its regular meeting on November 3, the Los Rios Board of Trustees considered the issue of arming District POST certified police officers, who are represented by the Service Employees International Union. Since the issue was subject to collective bargaining, their discussion took place in closed session. The Board decided to arm the members of the District Police Department, effective January 1, 2006, contingent on certain criteria being met.

The news of this decision generated mixed reactions among faculty throughout the District. During October, the issue had been the subject of campus forums (billed as "debates" but lacking any official voices opposing guns for campus police). Those responsible for organizing the forums maintained that efforts were made to include all points of view and that no supporter of the status quo, i.e., anti-guns, could be found who was willing to participate. In addition, certain administrators did not even want to call the forums "debates" for fear that the forums would then be seen as adversarial (incorrectly, as it happened) and divisive. This represents a stereotypical view of a debate and was but one indication that the District did not initially embrace the idea of publicly discussing the issue. As KC Boylan, Professor of Communication Studies at FLC, writes, "Debates allow for the open and honest exchange of reasoned positions, by promoting accountability to evidence and logical reasoning. They create a context for dialogue that promotes reasoning rather than subjective reaction because advocates are held accountable by opposing advocates for the quality of their arguments. By requiring advocates to openly share the

evidence used as the basis for their positions, we as a 'society' have the ability to develop 'convinced awareness.'"

To underscore the dissatisfaction with the forums on the part of some faculty members, Charles Van Patten, Professor of Philosophy at CRC, sent an e-mail to all District employees with a compilation of arguments (four pages worth) against arming the police. (He had solicited these from his colleagues at CRC.) What follows is a sampling of faculty opinion on the decision to arm the campus police.

Kimberlee Beyrer, the Coordinator of Student Leadership and Development at SCC, writes about the efforts of the Associated Student Government members to give voice to student points of view, efforts that the District did not seem to welcome, according to Beyrer:

"I am proud of the student leaders at SCC. They gathered information, considered it critically, shared it with their constituents, made informed choices, and acted with integrity. Despite their [the ASG's] unwelcomed comments and unpopular views, they stood strong in an effort to represent and give the students of SCC a voice. Our students have learned a great deal from the LRCCD community, but in this case, the lessons belong to us. May we all, and especially those who criticized the students, learn from them a greater sense of courage and integrity."

Not all faculty are against the arming of College Police. Phil Cypret, a Professor of Aeronautics, writes, in part: "...after attending the campus forums and reviewing the heavy email traffic that blew

LOS RIOS COLLEGE  
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS  
SCC • ARC • CRC • FLC

AFT LOCAL 2279  
1127 11TH STREET,  
SUITE 806  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
(916) 448-2452  
FAX (916) 446-2401  
WWW.LRCFT.ORG

**IN THIS ISSUE**

GUN ISSUES ..... PAGE 1  
PRESIDENT'S REPORT ..... PAGE 2  
DENNIS AND ME ..... PAGE 4

up around this subject, it appears that the majority of folks are in favor of an armed police force. It also seems that was reflected in the board [Board of Trustees] vote. I'm also speaking as a faculty member who has had to disarm a suicidal student...who was armed with a .38 caliber pistol in my class some time ago. It seems the Academic Senate should represent the majority of faculty on such issues."

Dyan Pease, Professor of Business, was in agreement with Cypret. She wrote, "I am

Continued on page 4

# UNION NEWS

President:	Dennis Smith 448-2452 smithd13@aol.com
Secretary/Treas:	Donna Nacey 568-3100 x2754 nacey@sbcglobal.net
ARC CP:	Dean Murakami 484-8497 murakad@arc.losrios.edu
College Rep:	Dolores Delgado Campbell 484-8279 delgadd@arc.losrios.edu
College Rep:	Diana Hicks 484-8210 hicksdl@arc.losrios.edu
College Rep:	John Gamber 484-8459 gamberj@arc.losrios.edu
Adjunct Rep:	Tamir Sukkary sukkarte@arc.losrios.edu
CRC CP:	Chuck Van Patten 691-7229 vanpatc@crc.losrios.edu
College Rep:	Lanny Hertzberg 691-7472 hertzbl@arc.losrios.edu
College Rep:	Reona James 691-7254 jamesr@arc.losrios.edu
College Rep:	Norv Wellsfry 691-7269 wellsfn@crc.losrios.edu
FLC CP:	KC Boylan 608-6628 boylank@flc.losrios.edu
College Rep:	Talver Germany 642-5663 germant@flc.losrios.edu
College Rep:	Ted Foster 642-5610 fostert@flc.losrios.edu
SCC CP:	Annette Barfield 650-2579 barfiea@scs.losrios.edu
College Rep:	Phil Cypret 650-2721 cypretp@scs.losrios.edu
College Rep:	Tonie Hilligoss 558-2602 hilligoss@oro.net
College Rep:	Robyn Waxman 558-2280 waxmanr@scs.losrios.edu
Adjunct Rep:	Donna Nacey 568-3100 x2754 nacey@sbcglobal.net
PAFC Chair:	Tamir Sukkary sukkarte@arc.losrios.edu
Exec. Director:	Robert Perrone 448-2452 x117 perrone@lrcft.org
Admin. Asst:	Reina Mayorga 448-2452x118 myhija@aol.com

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

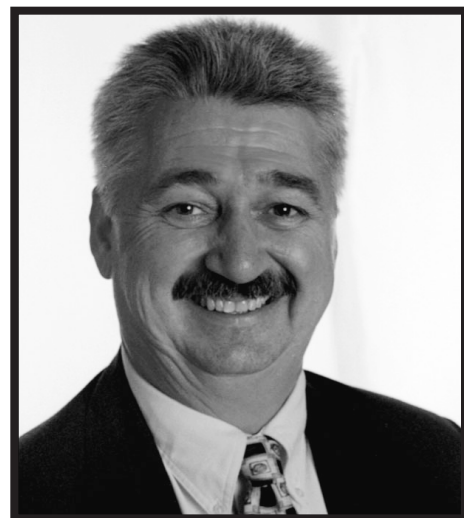
BY DENNIS SMITH

### GETTING EVEN WITH SOME PEOPLE

"The people to get even with are the people who have helped you." This advice was given to me at an IBA training session and I think I will use my last column as your LRCFT president to get even with some people. There are many people on my list but I would especially like to get even with Marc Hall, Steve Ruis, Michael Crowley, Linda Stroh, Robert Perrone, Reona James, and each of the four LRCFT College Presidents. I know why I want to get even with these people and I will continue to try. For the purposes of this column, however, all I can do is to thank them publicly for all that they have done for me and for all of us in Los Rios.

I think everyone in Los Rios should try to get even with Marc Hall and Steve Ruis. Marc Hall, CPA and former CRC President first conceived of the now evolved and widely imitated LRCCD revenue sharing contract agreements known as the "salary bucket system." Steve Ruis, ARC Chemistry Professor and former LRCFT Chief Negotiator was the first to lead the union team in an interest based approach to collective bargaining. Seeing the value, Steve and others have since tirelessly led the effort to embed the principles of an interest-based approach to dialog and decision making into the organizational cultures of the LRCCD. The financial stability, the retro checks, the policy of no layoffs, and the respectful labor/management and governance relations in Los Rios are the envy of many in California. Thank you Marc and Steve.

All faculty should also want to join me trying to get even with Michael Crowley and Linda Stroh. Michael Crowley is a CRC Professor Emeritus who helped to build the LRCFT. He was the union president when I joined Los Rios twenty years ago and during the first week of school he personally asked me to join the union and contribute to the political action fund. Over the years, Michael successfully repeated that "ask" a thousand times I'm sure. Likewise, we should try to get even with Linda Stroh, now President of the SCC Academic Senate. With great integrity, Linda has served the faculty of Los Rios for more than a decade. Both before and during my time she was the LRCFT's Dispute Resolution Officer, SCC



Vice President, and Secretary Treasurer. Thank you Michael for building this union and Linda for many years of faculty service and leadership by example.

Many faculty might want to join me in getting even with Robert Perrone, Reona James, Annette Barfield, Dean Murakami, Chuck Van Patten, and KC Boylan. They carry the stress of conflict resolution for the union when its members are in dispute with administration. In their respective roles as LRCFT Executive Director, Dispute Resolution Officer, and LRCFT College Presidents they are on the job for the faculty and the union officials (especially the President) on a 24/7/365 basis. Thank you all.

**"The people to get even with are the people who have helped you."**

Though I'm willingly giving up the job as president of our union, I'm not giving up union work. Just as Michael Crowley, Linda Stroh, and others stayed to help me once I became president, I plan to stick around a while to be a resource for LRCFT president Dean Murakami and the other union officials. We have some very interesting work to do and I'm excited to continue to be a part of it.

### THE STATE OF OUR UNION

In each of my two previous terms as your president, I have shared my perspective of

Continued on next page

the state of our union. Using a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis format, I will leave you with these opinions.

The greatest strength of our union is always its people and the most important is you. In addition to the necessary financial support, members of the LRCFT freely give their time, intellect, and creativity whenever they are asked to help in a union effort. Another major strength of our union at this particular time is the incredible depth and breadth of experience of the LRCFT District and College level leadership. Making the union work are LRCFT'S extremely competent professional staff, Reina Mayorga, Administrative Assistant and Robert Perrone, Executive Director. You, the members, your elected leadership, and your professional staff make up the LRCFT's pyramid of people power.

The LRCFT is also strong because of its very effective relationships with other groups both in and outside of Los Rios. We enjoy a unique and powerful partner relationship with the LRCCD Academic Senate through our liaisons and the Senate Union Joint Issues Committee. We are also in what I would characterize as a partner relationship with District level financial and executive administration, we benefit from an interest-based approach to contract negotiations, and we have a mutually respectful relationship with LRCCD Board of Trustees. Finally, LRCFT participates in the committees and councils and has affiliate relationships with the Sacramento Central Labor Council, the California Federation of Teachers, the California Labor Federation, and the American Federation of Teachers. We are not alone.

We certainly have strengths as a union but we also have a few weaknesses. Though we have made progress, I believe that the LRCFT exhibits marginal political effectiveness in educational public policy development. The interests of community colleges and faculty in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco are articulated much more clearly than ours. Additionally, I believe that the LRCFT has a marginally effective relationship with the Sacramento Central Labor Council. Again, we have evolved in that we have participated in some joint activities but based on collaborations between AFT community college

unions and county labor councils in San Jose, Los Angeles, and other locations, we could do so much more.

From assessed weakness always come opportunities. We clearly have the opportunity to build more effective relationships with governmental and legislative contacts and also with the Sacramento Central Labor Council. We have other opportunities closer to the workplace. First, we have the chance to improve the working conditions for all LRCCD faculty via our upcoming contract negotiations. Second, through union sponsored workshops and events, we have the opportunity to provide professional development for faculty activists and leaders.

There are some threats out there. Changes to our salary formulas, outcome-based funding, fewer tenured faculty, and diminished Los Rios relationships are chief among them. Every year, there are proposed changes in the California Community College System's budget line items that affect LRCCD contractual salary formulas. Last year, there were recommendations made by the California Legislature and by the Governor in the Master Plan and in the California Performance Review that either did not reflect or were in direct conflict with the faculty values. A more insidious and long-term threat to the membership of the LRCFT is the attack on tenure that seems to be gaining momentum. The financial stresses of California's political budget has caused the Community College System Board of Governors to reduce, waive, and/or defer the hiring of full time faculty as required by the "full time hiring obligation" regulations called for by Assembly Bill 1725.

Finally, and this is just a concern, the union and its members could be threatened by any deterioration in LRCFT/LRCCD operational relationships. Contract implementation, resolution of workplace issues, and forward progress for this union and this district will always be better if employees and management pay particular and perpetual attention to our relationships. Thus, I conclude six years as your president. Thank you for the privilege and the honor.



Gun Issues, continued from page 1 completely supportive of the decision [to arm campus police with guns]. Our officers are trained to handle weapons and they should be able to defend the campus and those of us working here.”

Eileen Sarasohn, Professor of History, addressed what appeared to many faculty as a narrow view of the issue as a strictly “collective bargaining” matter. Like other faculty, she involved her students in a discussion on the topic. She wrote, “A concern of many of my students and colleagues is that the Board labeled this issue a ‘collective bargaining’ issue. It is far more than that. This is an issue that affects both the learning and work environment. It was a decision that ignored the most important data available: That violent crime is not a prominent factor on our campuses.”

Although Deborah Russell, an Adjunct Professor of English, is “adamantly opposed to handguns of any kind” and “think[s] they should be outlawed,” she also adds, “However, I am a realist, and it doesn’t look like we’re going to be successful getting rid of them [guns] any time soon. That said, if every Tom, Dick, and Harry running in the streets seems to have one, how on earth can we logically argue that our law enforcement officers need NOT have them? [Emphasis hers] Their job is to protect us and, of course, themselves. In the event of a Columbine-type situation, do we really want our campus officers to stand by helpless while an insane person shoots students and staff at will?...I wish I didn’t have to say this, but yes, arm them!”

## DENNIS AND ME\*

BY ROBERT PERRONE

On another page of this issue you will read the last comments of Dennis Smith as the president of the Union. As someone who has worked closely with Dennis for the last ten years, during which he served first as the Union’s treasurer for four years and then as president for six, I believe I am qualified to offer these observations.

At the beginning of his service, one would have to have concluded that no two people could be more unlike than Dennis and me. Dennis, the straight-laced accounting professor who wears a shirt and tie virtually every working minute; me, the casually dressed, union rep whose educational back-

ground is in the social sciences and work history in the factories of Los Angeles. Fortunately, neither one of us tends to judge people by surface appearances, job titles or background. In the ten years I have worked with Dennis I have seen him develop from a reluctant participant and borderline cynic vis a vis union activities, to a full-blown trade unionist who willingly and unselfishly gives of his time and energy to the cause of improving the lot of not just faculty, but working people in general. His open minded approach to issues has enabled him to change and grow, both as an individual and as a union officer. As a faculty leader, as soon as he is convinced of the

Julie Hawthorne, Professor of English and Communication, articulates the concerns of many when she writes: “I have two problems with this decision. First, I believe that arming of police officers will contribute to an atmosphere of fear. I also believe that there is a greater likelihood that there will be gun violence on campus. I can’t back this up with statistics, but I personally am very frightened at the prospect of armed officers.”

However, Hawthorne’s main problem had to do with the time necessary to dispatch an officer to a trouble spot. “Unless this issue is addressed, it will not matter whether police officers are armed,” she writes. She supported this with personal anecdotes of police going to the wrong place, even “when I have been very clear as to where I am;” of no one answering the phone at the dispatch center; of the connection being lost; or “the officers arrive so late that if there had been a true emergency, there might have been a loss of life.” “Given the problems of dispatch,” Hawthorne says, “the issue of having guns available is moot.” She adds that, “There are options other than arming all campus police. For example, the District could decide that only the police chief and sergeant would be armed. I think we should urge the District and SEIU to consider options other than having all college police officers armed.”

Hawthorne also sent her remarks to Rick Jones, the recently hired Los Rios Chief of

Police. Jones responded to Hawthorne’s remarks that same day, via email. Here are excerpts from his response:

“I want to assure you that only officers who pass very stringent guidelines will be permitted to carry a firearm. I did not make the request nor did I make the decision about firearms, but like many of us I will do as I am directed. My primary concern as always is the safety of the campus students, staff and visitors...Since I have been here I recognized problems and have been addressing them. Many of these problems have been present for years so it will take a few months to sort them out. In the meantime we have addressed the dispatch issues. We have increased their training and the number of dispatchers. We now have dispatchers on duty seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day...I would advise and request that if you have been treated unfairly or you are not satisfied with the service provided please contact me or one of my supervisors to file an Internal Affairs complaint. Thank you.”

Hawthorne was impressed with the problem-solving approach Jones offered.

“Given that the decision has been made to arm our District police officers, we should continue the dialogue to help us better understand the various points of view. There is much we can do to make our colleges institutions which actively promote non-violence. The arming of officers shouldn’t be viewed as the sole problem, nor the sole solution.”

importance of an issue, he becomes a principled advocate for change.

On a more personal level, I could not have asked for a more loyal colleague. I know that at times that loyalty was tested to its limits. I will miss our conversations, some more profound than others, in this office that touched on a broad array of issues, not all of them strictly work-related. Thank you, my friend, for occupying that chair behind me for all those years.

\*Don’t say it—I know that isn’t grammatically correct

