

UNION NEWS



NOVEMBER 2004

MEMORIES OF CHARLES HONNOLD

I REMEMBER CHAS



By now, most faculty in Los Rios are familiar with the circumstances surrounding the death of our colleague, Charles Honnold. So, there's no need to rehash a story told numerous times already. Besides,

I would prefer to remember how Charles lived, at least the part of his life with which I became familiar, than how he died.

To me, Charles was a paradigm of the faculty union activist. He was respected by his peers; literally, loved by his students as a teacher; and he was genuinely involved in issues of human and worker rights, including opposition to the war in Iraq, what I would argue is one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time.

Not surprisingly, since I am not ensconced on any one campus, much of my communication with Charles came via e-mails, 34 in all, the earliest from April 2001 and the last dated June 20, 2004, and which he signed off as "Chas.". That first e-mail came after he and I had discussed the rights of tenure track faculty in their second through fourth years. He wanted to make certain that they understood their right to challenge a faculty member on their peer review team. The message was sent to all ARC tenure track faculty in April of that year.

Over the next three years we communicated on a variety of issues, union-related and not. Even with the title of Professor and Department Chair, he was not reluctant to

make fun of himself. For example, in one communication in which he responded to the issue of the Social Security offset, he wrote, "Because of my misspent youth doing other things than teaching I have about 25 years worth of earnings in Social Security."

Nor was Charles reluctant to put a figurative elbow in my ribs; I suspect he knew that we shared a personality trait of not taking ourselves seriously. Thus, in August 2001, while serving as the Academic Senate President's Designee for Peer Review (that was his actual title) he asked for advice on a matter concerning the request of a faculty member to, in essence, appoint his own peer review team. Charles wrote, "Since you always know everything, I figured perhaps you could give me advice on this matter. Having been grilled by lawyers on both sides in the [faculty member who had been denied tenure] matter, the reliving of this issue is not something I wish to reexperience." And, this is how Charles once notified me that he would not be able to attend an LRCFT Executive Board meeting: "I will be unable to attend the Union meeting today as my clone is unavailable and I have to shepherd 11 ESL classes through the curriculum committee today."

Over the period of three years during which we communicated and that he spent on the Union's Executive Board, I came to know him as more than an ESL instructor and LRCFT campus representative. As the war in Iraq continued, Charles got involved with other CFT anti-war activists and with a national organization opposing the war, United States Labor Against the War (USLAW). He attended a national planning conference of USLAW in Chicago with activists from the CFT and

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

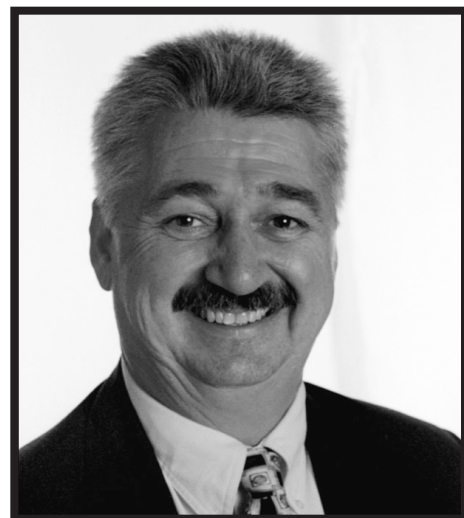
BY DENNIS SMITH

This past July, LRCFT delegates from SCC, ARC, CRC, and FLC participated in the bi-annual convention of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) held in our nation's capitol. For five days, Ted Foster, Diana Hicks, Reona James, Charles Honnold, and I attended the educational issues workshops, listened to incredible speakers, worked on AFT policy resolutions in various committees, and debated the issues on the convention floor. We spent every evening together breaking bread, talking about our families, laughing, reviewing the events of the day and planning for the next one.

On the last night, we said our goodbyes in our hotel lobby since each of us had separate travel plans on or after the next morning. Tragically, our union brother Charles Honnold suffered a fatal heart attack on his way home and died where he fell in the Phoenix airport. I know that each of us will forever treasure the time that we had together with Charles. There is nothing for us to do now but treasure each other, carry on, and follow the lead of the great union leader, Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, who advised us to "Mourn for the dead, and fight like hell for the living." In public education, there is certainly no shortage of issues that are worth fighting for.

STORM CLOUDS FOR CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Some of the recommendations of Governor Schwarzenegger's California Performance Review (CPR) team may do for community colleges what hurricanes Frances, Jeanne, Charley and Ivan did for Florida. There are natural disasters and there are public policy disasters. The proposal to consolidate the Community College Chancellor's office into a single division of the Department of Education (see related article) and the implied elimination or diminishment of the independent 17-member Board of Governors for the California Community Colleges is one such public policy disaster. This bad idea has even prompted the LRCCD's usually politically cautious Board of Trustees to recently join other local boards in adopting a resolution in opposition to this particular CPR recommendation.



On September 9th, the CPR Commission held a forum in Los Angeles for public comment regarding the recommendations made in the Education, Training, and Volunteerism chapter of the CPR. I joined many faculty leaders including Carl Friedlander, my AFT counterpart from the Los Angeles CCD; Dan Crump for the State Academic Senate; Marty Hittleman, Community College Council president of the CFT; Cathy Crane-McCoy, Community College Association president of the CTA; and Rich Hansen, president of the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges. We all arrived early, filled out request to speak cards, spent the entire day listening incredulously to the proceedings, and patiently waited to give our five minutes of testimony. At the end of the day, not one of us was afforded the opportunity to speak on the recommendations.

SOME OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER'S CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE REVIEW (CPR) TEAM MAY DO FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES WHAT HURRICANES FRANCES, JEANNE, CHARLEY AND IVAN DID FOR FLORIDA.

The CPR group is not the only body making recommendations regarding community colleges. In May of this year, our own Chancellor Brice Harris, former President of the Chief Executive Officers of the CCCs; David Viar, Executive Director of

Continued on next page

the Community College League of California; and Michele Jenkins, then-President of the CCC Trustees requested that a team of chief budget officers be formed to study and make recommendations for improving community college funding formulas. In September, the workgroup released a report containing 19 recommendations. These recommendations have been shared with community college leaders throughout the state as well as with the LRCFT and other constituent leaders within Los Rios. Since the salary formulas in our collective bargaining contracts are directly tied to the community college system's funding formulas, it goes without saying that your union leadership is studying the recommendations very carefully.

At the Los Rios level, there are also local groups that are making plans and drafting options that will have an impact on the work of faculty. Teams of faculty appointed by the Academic Senates have been working on what is known at the Educational Initiative. A rather undefined process for funding the implementation of proposals related to the Educational Initiative is evolving as this article is being typed. Financial support, however, is only one aspect of implementing some of these grand ideas. Recognition of a finite

number of hours to do our existing faculty work is yet another. The LRCFT has received expressions of concern from several of our faculty regarding the potential for "workload creep" related to some of the suggestions in the Educational Initiative.

Finally, just last week, Dr. Marie Smith, Vice Chancellor of Instruction and Technology provided the LRCFT with a draft of a document known as the Strategic Options Report. This report was put together by the Distance Education Working Group of the LRCCD Education Technology Committee and is related to the development of the Los Rios distance education strategic plan. By the time this newsletter is printed, the document will have been presented throughout Los Rios in a series of forums designed to achieve discussion and consensus on the issues of distance education. Several of the issues will most certainly have workload and collective bargaining implications and the LRCFT is appreciative of Dr. Smith's courtesy in providing us with a preview of the document. We (you and I) must remain vigilant in protecting the interests of faculty including the professional interest of controlling our academic work.



EXTREME MAKEOVER?

LRCFT "FACE LIFT" SEEKS TO BUILD MEMBER PARTICIPATION

If you haven't noticed yet, the LRCFT has been working on a "face lift" of sorts to encourage members to increase their participation. This summer, graphic designer and fellow faculty member, Robyn Waxman, began developing a new logo, Web site, and promotional materials. "We want the union to be more welcoming, more cool," stated Waxman, an 8-year veteran of Sacramento City College. "Our promotional materials need to reflect that."

The LRCFT "face lift" began with a retro-style welcome box for new faculty hires. Waxman designed the box, which included brochures and useful information about union membership. LRCFT Executive Director Robert Perrone, for one, believes the new design worthy of attention: "We're hoping to take an award at this year's AFT

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publications and promotions competition," he said. "Last year we took a first place prize in the best artwork category, and this year's welcome box is even more creative."

Robyn Waxman is an award-winning designer and instructor from the Graphic Communication Department, and a campus representative for the LRCFT. Her students have won numerous awards at the California State fair and other design and art competitions throughout the state. Most recently, Waxman and her students were recognized for their artistic contribution to the Missing Student Project, a political art installation for Community Colleges in California.

Look for our redesigned Web site in January 2005, and for and other "cool" publications coming your way via campus mail.



CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE REVIEW: A MULTIBILLION-DOLLAR HANDOUT TO BIG BUSINESS?

BY ROBERT PERRONE

On August 3, the administration of Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger issued a proposal to reorganize California's state agencies. The report, the California Performance Review (CPR), attempts, in part, to eliminate regulations and programs that restrict corporate profit-making; and eliminate many commissions that provide the only opportunity for public oversight in the policy-making arena.

The CPR is Schwarzenegger's response to Wall Street's demand that California end its structural deficit by eliminating or transforming agencies that regulate the operations of large corporations. The underlying premise of the report appears to be that any state institution that cannot prove itself useful to big business be done away with.

The CPR calls for the dismantling of regulatory commissions relating to the environment and industry, the privatization and outsourcing of public services, the layoff of 12,000 state workers, and accelerating the trend toward an educational system that better serves the needs of big business. Supporters of the measures maintain that the proposed changes will reduce the state deficit by \$32 billion over the next five years. Some of the CPR's proposed changes could be enacted through executive order. Others require legislative action.

While initial media reports maintained that the recommendations were drafted by a committee of 275 administrators, consultants and state employees, later reports revealed that the committee was primarily composed of representatives from major energy producers, insurance companies, and other corporate representatives.

Over the course of the six months prior to the report's release, the CPR team functioned in secrecy. In a manner reminiscent of Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force, they met frequently with representatives and lobbyists of nearly 60 companies and trade associations, including Hewlett-Packard, Cisco Systems, Microsoft, EDS, Pitney-Bowes, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, and Citrix Systems.

DISMANTLING ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCIES

If fully enacted, the CPR would create 11 new agencies, headed by Schwarzenegger's appointees, to replace 118 independent boards and commissions. Perhaps the best-known regulatory body facing destruction is the California Air Resources Board, which has led the nation in setting air pollution standards for 35 years.

In the 1970s, the board forced automakers to add catalytic converters, a requirement that, together with the conversion to unleaded gas, significantly reduced smog, despite California's rapidly growing population. The Air Resources Board would be folded into a new Department of the Environment, along with the state Water Resources Board and regional water-quality agencies. A Department of Natural Resources would take over the state Board of Forestry.

Also targeted for elimination is the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Control Board (SFBRCB), which is in charge of regulating pollution from Chevron's massive Point Richmond refinery. Chevron, which owns the largest refinery in California, was a major contributor to Schwarzenegger's election fund and had representatives on the CPR committee.

ATTACKS ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

A large section of the report deals with education, proposing that it be tailored to the needs of California's businesses. According to the CPR's recommendations, the current community college system should be bundled together with the state's K-12 system, under the control of a new—and tellingly named—Department of Education and Workforce Preparation.

Currently, community colleges serve as a relatively inexpensive pathway for working class students to higher education. Many of those enrolled in community colleges transfer to public universities to complete their undergraduate education.

Under the new proposals, community colleges would more directly serve the needs of big business for vocationally-trained

employees by effectively establishing two education systems—a liberal arts university education for a minority of enrollees, and a vocational system focused to meet the profit needs of the state's business interests for the majority.

Under this plan, community colleges would see a dramatic increase in part-time faculty, faculty who currently account for more than half of the faculty on the campuses.

Replacing \$70,000-a-year full-time tenured instructors with \$35,000-a-year part-timers with no benefits or job security in most districts would result in substantial savings to the state. And, because most part-time faculty are not paid for nor are required to participate in curriculum development or college governance activities, nor are required to meet with students after class, students end up receiving fewer services from part-time faculty while paying the same fees.

The CPR also calls for mandating 16 hours of compulsory community service for college students at all three levels of the state higher education system as a requirement for graduation. There are 3.5 million students throughout the state's three-tier university system of 109 community colleges, 23 California State University campuses, and 10 University of California campuses. The California Performance Review team calculated that this proposal would translate into \$192 million worth of unpaid labor every year.

The CPR also proposes an increase in college tuition for non-residents attending California's public universities.

For primary and secondary education, the CPR proposes reductions of \$4.1 billion over the next five years. Fifty-eight county offices and boards of education would be eliminated and replaced by 11 regional offices. One measure would move up the cutoff date for enrolling children in kindergarten to September 1, instead of the current date of December 2. This would reduce the first-year kindergarten class by 25 percent.

ATTACKS ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The CPR advocates merging the State Highway Department (CALTRANS), the California High Speed Rail Authority, the California Transportation Commission and the Rail Authority into a super-agency called the Department of Infrastructure, part of a move to privatize all of transportation in California. Proposed changes in transportation would lead to the establishment of toll roads and user fees.

The state's 6,500 miles of highway would be placed under the jurisdiction of local governments, which would then be allowed to impose tolls on highway use. Drivers would also have to pay to use carpool lanes, highway rest stops and bathrooms. The bidding process on new transportation projects would be revamped, with more flexible rules to benefit contractors.

Other commissions facing elimination include the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Homeowners and Renters Property Tax Assistance Program.

Related recommendations include altering the state's conservation program, exempting small logging operations from having to prepare timber harvest plans, making it easier to obtain permits to build or expand oil refineries, and loosening the overall regulation of businesses.

DISMANTLING OF HEALTH SERVICES

The dismantling of the network of public clinics and hospitals across the state, which was well under way during the administration of Schwarzenegger's Democratic predecessor, Gray Davis, will be completed under the CPR plan. The remnants of the current system are to be run on a for-profit basis.

The commission endorsed a proposal by Electronic Data Systems (EDS) for a "public-private partnership," in which the company would work to enroll more Medi-Cal recipients into the federal Medicare pro-

gram for the disabled and elderly, in order to save the state money. EDS would receive 10 percent of the savings.

Executives and lobbyists from Wellpoint, Health Net, Molina Healthcare and the California Association of Health Plans helped craft the proposal to save health maintenance organizations (HMOs) the expense of preparing expensive state audits, by allowing industry accreditation groups to take over the auditing process and minimize state regulation on their operations.

Slated for elimination is the HMO watchdog, the Department of Managed Health Care. Its founding director, Daniel Zingale, said, "Taking away the state's ability to see how HMO finances affect patients is to undermine California patients' rights."

The CPR calls for combining and moving the day-to-day operations of Medi-Cal, CalWorks and food stamps—programs that serve the state's 4,000,000 neediest residents—from the counties to the state, which would then privatize these operations to save \$4 billion over the next five years. Held up as a model is the Healthy Families program, a state-subsidized but privately administered health care program which enrolls residents at one fourth of the outlay that goes to the average Medi-Cal recipient.

The CPR recommendations mark a qualitative escalation in the longstanding drive of big business to eliminate all of the social reforms enacted in California during the 1960s and 1970s—quality low-cost public education, environmental and safety regulations, a modest network of public clinics and hospitals, and a state welfare system. This effort to dismantle and transform California's state agencies through the CPR follows the recent gutting of workers' compensation, large budget cuts in healthcare, education and the public infrastructure, and massive hikes in fees for students in California's community college and public university system.



Chas Honnold, Continued from page 1
other unions. His principle of respecting the rights and culture of others went far beyond the borders of Los Rios.

I consider myself lucky to have known him.

From Robert Perrone, LRCFT Executive Director

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I will miss Charles for his quiet and subtle ways; many times he used humor to get across a very controversial point, but the way he employed humor, I

had to listen carefully (especially since he was soft-spoken) and/or think, frequently evoking a chuckle from others and from me. Charles had a political T-shirt for every occasion.

I remember his willingness to serve on district committees; his car crammed with objects, schoolwork, and such, much like his office. Charles seemed to have a boundless energy. He always walked up the three flights of stairs in Davies Hall. Similarly, he covered more territory in Washington D.C. than anyone in our contingent from the LRCFT

when we went to the American Federation of Teachers' Convention this summer. Other than Charles, the other four of us took the Metro back to the hotel. Charles walked back to the hotel, about an additional 3 – 4 miles, after we had already walked about 15 – 20 miles that day. And whenever I think of Washington D.C., I will remember how Charles referred to it as the "district of Coke." You see, Charles was a Pepsi man, through and through and, while in Washington D.C. at the AFT Convention, he found that virtually every restaurant and hotel sold only Coke.

From Diana Hicks, English Assistant Professor at ARC

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I enjoyed his wry wit and that twinkle in his eye. He was one of the most compassionate and caring persons I have known.

Charles touched so many lives at Los Rios—students, faculty, and administrators. I think he was in a very comfortable time and place



in his life; it is sad that it ended so soon.

Civil rights and civil liberties were core values for Charles. He saw the Patriot Act, the Iraq War, and George Bush as deep violations of those values.

From Dean Murakami

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We will remember Charles Honnold for a long time.

We will remember him for his sense of humor and unflappability – like the day a chair leg broke under him at a meeting. He used the broken leg as a gavel for the rest of the meeting.

We will remember him for his steadfast – some called it quixotic – insistence on our title of "professor." Apart from more classroom space for ESL, it was the only thing about which I ever heard Charles nag anyone.

We will remember him as a calmer of troubled waters. When others suspected dark plots, Charles always checked facts first. In every case I heard about, he always found missed communication rather than evil intent. He lived IBA in a way that too many only talk about.

Finally, Charles was a genuine friend to us all. He had a kind word for everyone. He warmed the places he went – and we will remember.

From John Gamber, ESL Professor at ARC



LRCFT LINKS:

<http://www.ccleague.org>
STATEWIDE DATABASE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS SEARCHABLE BY ADMINISTRATORS

BY BILL MILLER

The Community College League of California has recently put together a database of collective bargaining (CB) agreements to help district administrators in negotiations. The database includes over 4000 documents including 3383 job descriptions, 302 salary schedules and 160 collective bargaining agreements. Sixty-

seven of the 72 community college districts in California are current subscribers to the database, including the Los Rios Community College District.

The database is to be used as a time saving device for districts. Current practice is to use email and phone surveys to share the necessary CB information. Annual costs of \$4000 per year per school for the database are offset by savings of approximately 49.5 hours of time per month per district currently used to collect the CB information.

An "Information Booklet", available online at <http://www.helmsolutionsgroup.com/cbdata>

[base/information_booklet.htm](http://www.helmsolutionsgroup.com/cbdata/base/information_booklet.htm) (accessed October 23, 2004) presents several scenarios when the database could be used to help administrators. These scenarios include situations when a bargaining unit wants to change the language of an article and when a bargaining unit files a grievance against one of the articles in the contract.

In these scenarios, administrators can search the database to find similar language in other districts' contracts and whether this language has led to any grievances. Further searches can then find the results of the grievances and whether districts then revised contract language.

CHIEF NEGOTIATOR'S REPORT

BY DEAN MURAKAMI



The time has come again when we have to renegotiate the contract for another three years—from 2005–08. By now, the contract forums have taken place at all of the colleges except FLC (scheduled for November 10th). We have input on which issues need to be placed on the sunshine document and negotiated next semester. If you were unable to attend one of the forums and still would like to provide input, please e-mail your concerns to your respective LRCFT campus president. We need input from as many people as possible so that the document that is presented to the Board reflects all the issues we plan to negotiate next semester.

The administration will also provide its sunshine document. These documents will be part of the public record for 60 days; that way there are no surprise issues, allowing both parties to be prepared. This semester the negotiating teams will analyze the issues, prioritize them and develop a negotiating strategy.

If you were unable to attend one of the forums and still would like to provide input, please e-mail your concerns to your respective LRCFT campus president.

I must say that the negotiation process is a tremendous amount of work and it is done with great professionalism by the LRCFT negotiating team. Dennis Smith, Chuck Van Patten, KC Boylan, Annette Barfield, Diana Hicks, Donna Nacey and Robert Perrone are currently part of the team that will make my job as chief negotiator much easier. If you have the opportunity, please thank them for the work that they are doing.

Following negotiations, we will present the new contract to faculty. We will have public forums at each college to discuss the changes that have been negotiated. I will send an e-mail to you detailing those changes, after which you will have the opportunity to rati-

fy the contract or not. All of this must be done by the end of May so it can be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. That's a lot to do in a very short amount of time!

At the same time that negotiations are taking place, the next round of the state budget will be in full swing. We spend a lot of time lobbying for the community college budget at the legislative committees, in our representatives' offices, and within CFT, FACCC and other organizations that lobby for specific priorities in the state budget. We need to continue this lobbying effort so that community college budgeting priorities continue to receive the support they deserve from our legislators.

We also endorse and support candidates for our Board of Trustees races and local high school boards. All of this takes place within our Political Action Fund Committee that emphasizes local races (not national elections!) and issues that directly affect Los Rios. These efforts take a lot of time and money, also, especially when we have positions that are in conflict with larger organizations such as K-12, California State Universities, and University of California with much larger budgets for lobbying. For example, remember the idea that CSU and UC were going to have many of their incoming students take their first two years at community colleges? This decision was reached and the procedures determined without any community college input. In addition, a voiced concern from one person from the Assembly Committee on Higher Education about these transfer students was that she didn't think the community colleges could academically prepare these "university students" for transfer. I was steaming and had to give my two cents worth and fight for a budget that favored Los Rios. Do you remember the two billion dollar give away the CTA so graciously removed from the education budget last year in a back room deal with the Governor without any community college representation or input? Both K-12 and community colleges shared in the loss of those funds, but did you know that when these funds are restored they would go exclusively back to K-12? These are a few reasons why Los Rios

faculty must make a more significant effort in lobbying within education organizations such as CFT and FACCC, at the local level such as the Sacramento Central Labor Council, and especially the legislature. Being right next to the Capitol places us in a unique position; it could make Los Rios one of the most influential community college districts in the state. All of this effort takes time, energy and a budget called the political action fund, but none of this comes from your union dues. Instead, the political action fund comes from your voluntary contributions. During this time of elections and a critical period of state budgets, I am asking you to make donations to the political action fund. It is very easy to make a small monthly contribution that will be so helpful in our lobbying efforts to protect Los Rios and the faculty.



LATE NEWS REGARDING THE CPR RECOMMENDATIONS

The CPR commission charged with obtaining public input and reviewing the original recommendations has completed a draft of revised recommendations to the Governor. Some of those recommendations would:

1. Not require volunteer service for graduation at state colleges and universities;
2. Scrap a plan to do away with the state Air Resources Board and state water boards; and
3. In higher education, the panel said the State Chancellor's office should be enhanced instead of having its functions merged into a new agency.
4. Oppose a recommendation to dismantle the Student Aid Commission and shift the administration of aid programs to colleges.

Dear Union man,

In 100 words or less, can you tell me what the "salary bucket" is and how it works? What goes into the bucket and what goes out? If my dean gets a raise, does my salary go down? Take 109 words if necessary.

Bill

Dear Bill:

If we imagine a bucket into which something, let's say money, must be poured, then there are several sources of that money, mainly items in the community college budget for growth, COLA (cost-of-living adjustment), basic skills, lottery money and various part-time categorical funds for office hours, medical coverage and part-time faculty compensation. The Los Rios share of the overall community college budget is approximately 4%.

But, the LRCFT "bucket" is still a ways from having those funds poured into it. The District must first receive all the money before it begins pouring it into the LRCFT's "bucket," or any of the other employee group "buckets." Once the District receives that money, the LRCFT then receives its proportionate share of eighty percent of those aforementioned funds. For example, if there are 1,000 total employees represented by organizations with the authority to bargain on their behalf, and if faculty comprise 650 of those total employees, then the LRCFT's proportionate share of that 80% figure would be 65%. In recent years, that percentage has actually hovered around 65%. The chancellor, presidents, and "lesser" chancellors receive their funding from the other 20% of the funds, which is considered the administrative "bucket."

Normally, dean raises follow those of

faculty; thus, your question reverses the order of raises.

Once the "bucket" is filled, or once all the source funds have been put into the "bucket," those funds then are poured out, according to a predetermined priority list, beginning with step increments and class changes on the faculty salary schedules and ending with the last of twelve items on the list—fully funding step 15 on salary schedule A. If any funds remain in the LRCFT "bucket," those funds become one additional source of retro checks and possible overall salary schedule improvements.

This explanation, unfortunately, has strayed (by 186 words) from your word restriction but I hope the "bucket" concept is now clearer to you.

Hope this helps, Union Man

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN INQUIRY TO UNION MAN, PLEASE EMAIL ROBERT PERRONE AT perrone@lrcft.org

KEEP ON PUSHIN'

BY ROBERT PERRONE

Nobody has ever accused Scott Suneson, faculty at CRC, of a lack of persistence. Once Scott latches on to an issue, for better or for worse, he doesn't let go, until something changes. Sometimes, that has not served him very well, particularly since he has been in fragile health for a while now. In the most recent example, however, of his refusal to drop an issue until it gets resolved, several hundred adjunct, overload and summer school faculty were the beneficiaries.

Around the beginning of April, Scott had asked the District office to provide to him a summary of his accumulated sick leave. While the District did provide that information, Scott noticed that the multiplier that Employee Benefits used to calculate his accumulated sick leave was incorrect. And he also noticed that the error dated from before July 2000. He realized that if he was correct, that Employee Benefits (at all times demonstrating patience and professionalism) had

indeed used an incorrect multiplier to calculate his accumulated sick leave, then the determination of accumulated sick leave of other adjunct faculty was also incorrect.

Over the next two-and-a-half months, in various forums, telephone, e-mail, face-to-face, and mainly at Scott's insistence, (for, I must admit, that when it comes to accounting issues, I am usually in over my head) I sought further clarification from the District on its explanations for the discrepancy in Scott's sick leave report.

At the beginning of June we had our first and last face-to-face meeting with Carrie Bray and Mike Jones. Scott, in a reversal of form, demonstrated patience in explaining his calculations and where he believed the mistake was made. A few days later, after Bray and Jones had had an opportunity to review our (actually, Scott's) presentation, I received an e-mail in which Ms. Bray wrote, in part, "In

reviewing the calculations...Scott and you are correct in that 5 hours should have been used for the conversion [instead of three]." She continued, "We will identify the faculty members (adjunct, summer school and overload), determine what their ending balance was in HW [Honeywell, the old system], and apply a formula to increase the conversion for each day from 3 to 5 hours."

So, if you were an adjunct, overload or summer school faculty member and you noticed a change in the accumulated sick leave on your semi-annual report, you can thank Scott Suneson (who acknowledged in an e-mail that "without union support my concerns might very well have been blown off") for his persistence, even during times when I know for a fact that he was feeling literally, deathly ill.

And thanks to Carrie Bray and Mike Jones for their willingness to continue to examine the issue and graciously admit the error.

