

## Local 2398

Staff & Clerical Federation, AFT, AFT-Wisconsin, AFL-CIO  
Chippewa Valley Technical College, Eau Claire

Jan/Feb  
2009

<http://wi.aft.org/CVTC2398/>



### From the President

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What is a union? Here are a couple of definitions I found online:

*The term union often refers to a labor union or trade union, a certified association of workers whose goal is to promote the economic social interests of its members, in particular by negotiating and applying collective bargaining agreements -Wikipedia.com.*

*An organization of wage earners formed for the purpose of serving the members' interests with respect to wages and working conditions. -Answers.com*

Two excellent definitions, but here is my favorite:

*The state of being joined or united or linked; "there is strength in union". - TheFreeDictionary.com*

This is a year of change, not only in the country with our new President, but also change in your union. My New Year's resolution is to create opportunities for you and your family to gather with other members and their families. I have heard so many stories on how the union used to have holiday parties, picnics, and other social events. Why don't we do that anymore? I say it's time to build up relationships between members outside of the workplace. That is why we created a Social Committee, co-chaired by Kim Vollmer and Sheri Brandstetter.

It is because of all of the definitions listed above that I felt it was important to create this type of committee. So often our social events are political in nature, and some are turned off by that. Now, we will be sponsoring events that have nothing to do with anything other than getting together to enjoy each others company and also to get to know each other better. I also feel it's important that our families and loved ones are included in these events. To me, our union is more than collective bargaining, grievances, or politics; it's about the family that we are at CVTC.

If you have any ideas for the Social Committee, please contact Kim or Sheri. This is your union and any and all suggestions are welcome!

So, *Cheers!* to the New Year! I wish you and yours good health and much happiness in 2009.

In Solidarity,

Lisa

### **Labor Relations Update:**

#### **Campus Union Stewards**

I reported at the November membership meeting that the Labor Relations Committee was in the process of seeking volunteers at each campus to serve as Union Stewards.

I am very pleased to announce that Local 2398 now have union stewards at all campus locations. Please join me in welcoming the following campus stewards: Jean Alcanter representing ESEC, Don Morrow representing Transportation, Paul Wittrock representing River Falls, Brenda Meinen representing Nano/Gateway, and Sue Sie representing HEC. We have current members: Viv Deford representing Chippewa, Linda Danzinger representing Neillsville, Jeannie Krig representing Menomonie, and Barb Stuber representing BEC.

The most important aspect of being a steward is to provide our members a link to the union at those campus locations. A steward is trustworthy and known by co-workers as someone they can go to for information or help. Stewards are there to listen and be an extra pair of eyes to report workplace issues to Lisa and me so that we can follow-up. Union stewards will not be writing grievances, but will be the campus contact person for members to document workplace issues and concerns.

Jim Mangan, our staff representative, and I facilitated a training session for new and current stewards on January 14, 2009. This session was an abbreviated version of the training session I participated in at ULI in September. We will meet again in late spring, with plans to meet twice a year. Stewards are encouraged to call or email Jim, Lisa or me at anytime.

Thank you all for stepping up and taking on this important role!

### **Grievance Update:**

Here is a run-down of the grievances that we have been dealing with over the last few months.

- The Grievance regarding reduction in work hours that was in abeyance pending contract negotiations, has been consolidated in the new contract language. We are currently working out the details of the consolidation.
- The Summer Computer Assistants Grievance was placed in abeyance to allow for a solution as part of the contract negotiations process. This was not discussed during the negotiations process and we are continuing to work out the details.
- The grievance concerning seniority issues in a hiring decision has been withdrawn without prejudice or precedence.
- A tentative settlement has been reached with the grievance regarding reduction in work hours. We are currently working on the details of this settlement.

We have no further grievances at this time.

In Solidarity,  
Kathy Goodman  
Labor Relations Chair



### Member Contributions

#### AFT-Wisconsin Convention Update

By Kathy Goodman

I attended two workshops presented by Al Guyant, of Guyant Associates. Guyant is a nationally recognized trainer and consumer affairs professional. The first workshop was: “Using the Power of Ethics to Shape Behavior.” Without realizing it, ethics (the set of values and morals used to judge something right or wrong) has a powerful influence in our lives. The workshop helped us to discover this power to help influence behaviors around us.

The second workshop: “Scientific and Practical Ways to Handle Difficult People,” explored reasons why we behave the way we do, and offered tips and tools to handle difficult people. The handout below, “11 Laws of Human Communication” is a guide to follow to help get messages across and for being better understood. (*This guide is published with permission from Al Guyant, [www.Guyant.com](http://www.Guyant.com)*).

### -- 11 Laws of Human Communication --

These laws of human communication are based on the great abilities and severe limitations that we humans have in communicating with each other. Follow these laws and you'll multiply your effectiveness in getting your messages across and being understood. If you ignore them, it will be like walking out of a skyscraper's window and pretending that the law of gravity won't apply.

- 1. Perfect communication is not possible.**  
Strive for good understanding of main points, *not* perfection. As a fallible human being, you cannot express your thoughts perfectly. The instant you compress your thoughts into words, you begin to be inaccurate. Most of your audience will not read or listen to much more than half of your message, and never 100%.
- 2. The more you say, the less they listen.**  
Speaks for itself.
- 3. The more you write, the less they read.**  
Says it all.
- 4. The more you bury the message, the less they will dig for it.**  
Summarize your main point in one sentence, and put it near the top. If you can't summarize it in one sentence, you don't know yet what you are talking about.
- 5. If you don't know what you are talking about, they won't either.**  
See Law 4.
- 6. The meaning of your words lies in their heads (not yours).**  
Each person speaks and hears a slightly different language. The meanings we give to words vary from person to person, just as each snowflake varies from one another. Find out the meanings that they give to your words, so you can speak their language.
- 7. You cannot “not” communicate.**  
You are always communicating because they are giving meaning to your words (or lack of) and actions (or lack of).
- 8. If you don't give them a picture, they probably won't see your point.**  
People think in flash mental pictures, so your words need to use the pictures they already have in their heads, or you must spend time and effort to put the pictures in their heads.
- 9. If you won't listen to them, they won't listen to you.**
- 10. The more the speed, stress, complexity, and importance, the more the confusion.**  
Research confirms Murphy's Law (Search on Google to verify this).
- 11. Punishment for violating these Laws is automatic, self-inflicted, and inescapable.**  
The more you violate these laws, the more you kill the message -- and the messenger.

## **AFT Remembers Education, Labor Advocate Pell**

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Former Rhode Island Sen. Claiborne Pell, an honorary AFT member and one of the union's strongest allies in the U.S. Senate on education and labor issues, died on Jan. 1. Pell, who served six terms in the Senate after first winning election in 1960, said his proudest achievement in a distinguished legislative career was creating the college student loan program that now bears his name.

The legislation creating Pell Grants, originally known as Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, passed in 1963. Since then, the grants have helped tens of millions of poor and middle-class students attend college. The name was officially changed to honor Pell in 1980. As Vice President-elect Joe Biden, who served for many years in the Senate alongside Pell, put it, "The doors of college have been opened to millions of Americans—and will continue to be opened to millions more. That is a legacy that will live on for generations to come."

Throughout Pell's career, former AFT president Edward J. McElroy notes, he was a vigorous supporter of public education and an equally vigorous opponent of vouchers.

Pell also wrote the 1965 legislation that created the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. An avid support of mass transportation, he pushed through legislation that led to the creation of Amtrak. During his final years in the Senate, Pell's focus turned toward international affairs as chair and then ranking minority member of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Despite coming from one of the most prominent old-money families in Rhode Island, Pell remained a staunch supporter of unions and their members during his career. McElroy—a longtime Rhode Island union leader—remembers Pell "as a tried and true advocate for working people, and the people in Rhode Island loved him for it. He was one of a kind and has been missed in the Senate, and he will be missed by all of those who loved and respected him."

He was "American royalty," former President Bill Clinton said at Pell's memorial service. "He was the right kind of aristocrat—a champion by choice, not circumstance, of the common good, our common future and our common dreams." [Dan Gursky, *New York Times*, WPRI]

January 6, 2009

*Submitted by Deb Ausman*

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## **Taking Care of Us Allows Us to Take Care of the People We Serve**

Research from the Economic Policy Institute shows that Unions raise wages of unionized workers, offer better benefits such as paid leave, health insurance, and retirement plans, and most importantly protect workers and their rights in areas of safety, health, family/medical leave, etc. Having a collective bargaining agreement is so important to our working families. It enables us to perform better at our jobs therefore providing excellent service for everyone. How can we give our students quality education and training if staff are forced to work in an unsafe and unhealthy environment? Take pride in your collective bargaining agreement, it is for this reason we can better serve our people.

*Submitted by Deb Ausman*