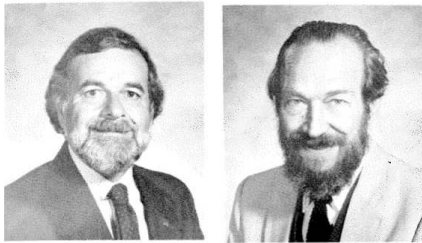


# AFT ERTHOUGHTS

THE AFT LOCAL 1839 NEWSLETTER FALL/WINTER 2010

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Dr. Donald Silberman

Mr. Robert Arey

**Save the Date!**

**Silberman Scholarship and  
Robert A. Arey  
Award Luncheon**

*Honoring the winners of the AFT scholarships*

**Wednesday, February 16, 2011  
9:00-10:30AM  
GSU Multipurpose Room**

## FROM IVAN STEINBERG

It is the best of times and the worst of times. As you are all aware, our governor Chris Christi is doing all he can to break up our bargaining unit, the Council of New Jersey State College Locals. If he succeeds, we would negotiate with our board of trustees for salary, our working conditions, and fringe benefits. We cannot allow this to happen. In June our newly elected Executive Vice President, William Calathes, Grievance Chair Matt Caulfield, and Sarah Harnick accompanied me to Trenton during the legislative lobbying day in an attempt to have the legislature increase the funding for higher education. At the end of the day, the consensus was the Governor would prevail and the budget would be passed without any additional funding: that is what occurred.

The Governor was traveling around the state conducting town hall meetings to gain support for his legislative agenda, which included an attempt to bust up our negotiation bargaining unit, the Council of New Jersey State College Locals. His agenda also included attempts to have us pay as much as thirty percent of the premium for our health benefits. Of course, we must stop this. No more givebacks. We have already contributed by giving up seven days' pay during the last academic year as well as the raises that were negotiated under our current contract. We will not allow ourselves to become the scapegoats for the fiscal mess in which the state of New Jersey finds itself.

As you may not be aware, recently the nine presidents of the New Jersey colleges and universities signed off in support of Bills A3219 (Collective Bargaining) and S2337 (Civil Service). In effect, these two bills dissolve the collective bargaining and civil service processes as we know them.

Since I have been teaching at New Jersey City University (from the time it was New Jersey State Teacher's College), we have negotiated our state contracts which have set uniform state-wide policies regarding

compensation, benefits, grievance procedures, and negotiations. This time-tested proven approach to collective bargaining has required all parties to deal with each other honestly, fairly, openly, and equitably to balance the needs of members with those of state college and university administrations and the State of New Jersey. Passing A3219 provides autonomy for University Boards of Trustees and College/University Presidents and undermines Legislation (P.L. 2009, C308), a law that provides oversight regarding the State colleges/universities.

In the Presidents' letter to Senators Sweeney and Kean, Assemblywoman Oliver and Assemblyman DeCroce, they state that the current system of collective bargaining is "anomalous and works against effective management of our cam-

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**"There are no good reasons for  
modifying what has proven to  
work well in our state."**

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pus" and "does damage to the educational environment for students and the professional environment for employees." I cannot imagine what the reasons must be for them to believe they would be better off negotiating as separate units, but here are some possibilities:

- good intentions, but naiveté about the harm in destroying a process that has been fair and equitable to both labor and management
- calculating that they can get more for their individual college/university if there is no State Agreement
- opportunity for increased power and autonomy
- strong anti-union sentiments that cause support for anything to help destroy unions

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## LOCAL 1839 OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

Ivan Steinberg

### EXECUTIVE VP

William Calathes

### VP FOR FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME

#### FACULTY

Joseph Moskowitz

### VP-LIBRARIANS/PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Queen Gibson

### VP-A HARRY MOORE

Zelda Shuster

### VP-ADJUNCT FACULTY

Niloofar Mina

### GRIEVANCE CHAIR

Matthew Caulfield

### TREASURER

Bill Craven

### RECORDING SECRETARY

Anne Mabry

### CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Lynn Baskin

### COPE CHAIR

Sarah Ann Harnick

### CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS & SCHOLARSHIPS CHAIR

Howard Singer

### DELEGATES-CNJSCL

Ivan Steinberg, Sarah-Ann Harnick, Bill Calathes, Gail Gordon, Matt Caulfield, Rubina Vohra, Naomi Wright, Lilliam Rosado, Gloria Boseman, Christine Carmody-Arey, John Debrizzi, Howard Singer

### DELEGATES-AFT NATIONAL CONVENTION

Gail Gordon, Niloofar Mina, Naomi Wright, Theresa Guerriere, Howard Singer, Debra Jenks, Ivan Steinberg

### UNION REPRESENTATIVES

Joe Moskowitz, Lynn Baskin, Lilliam Rosado, Rubina Vohra, Debra Jenks, Queen Gibson, Niloofar Mina, Pamela Andrews

## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are pleased and privileged to offer you a renewed *AFTerthoughts*, Local 1839's newsletter. Each of us is committed to revamping the newsletter in such a way that it will serve the members of our local by providing them with a voice to air their concerns, express their viewpoints, and foster goodwill among the members of our Local. With a little trepidation we write "no union related topic is off limits" but we add "as long as it is thoughtful and courteous." We have no objection to satire; in fact, we encourage it.

So many of our members have been inactive for some time or have recently become inactive in Union activities. *AFTerthoughts* provides this population with a forum in which to join the conversation. At the October 15 general membership meeting, Executive Vice President William Calathes gathered the participants' ideas for methods by which we might increase member involvement, thereby strengthening our Union. They are listed in an email from Sam Platizky dated November 8. If you have not yet done so, take a look. Their implementation promises an exciting future.

*AFTerthoughts* now has its own email address: **AFTnews@njcu.edu**. All submissions should be forwarded to this address, and we hope that the submissions for spring are numerous. If you have any questions, you may also phone us: Bob Golinski @ x 3136, Allison Thornton @ x 2038 or Laura Wadenpfohl @ x 3529.

Help us make *AFTerthoughts* a viable tool of our Union!

Bob Golinski  
Allison Thornton  
Laura Wadenpfohl

## LOCAL 1839 CALENDAR OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

September 27, 2010  
October 25, 2010  
November 22, 2010  
December 13, 2010  
January 31, 2011  
February 28, 2011  
March 28, 2011  
April 11, 2011  
May 9, 2011

## UNION CONTACT INFORMATION

Rossey Hall, Room 115  
Office Hours: Monday—Thursday 11a.m. – 4 p.m.  
201/200-2216; Fax: 201/200-2226  
<http://www.aftlocal1839.org/>  
listserv: AFT@njcu.edu  
Contact President Steinberg to be added to listserv

## AFTERTHOUGHTS EDITORS

Robert Golinski, A. Harry Moore School  
Allison Thornton, Office of Marketing  
Laura Wadenpfohl, English Department  
*AFTerthoughts* is published twice each academic year: Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer. (Additional issues may be published as needed).

**Send submissions to: AFTnews@njcu.edu**

*The opinions published in AFTerthoughts do not necessarily reflect the views of the union.*

The current method of collective bargaining protects the rights of workers, provides flexibility to meet college/university needs and forces a fair process. The Civil Service regulations help prevent nepotism, recognize seniority and provide flexibility for new job titles. There are no good reasons for modifying what has proven to work well in our state. Continued state involvement in the contract process preserves equitable collective bargaining. Continued state involvement also recognizes the contribution of state aid in college and university budgets. Recently, in my meeting with President Carlos Hernández, I informed him that the leadership and membership of AFT Local 1839 view support of these bills as the first step in destroying unions, and that we will do everything we can to oppose these bills. Our leadership and membership have discussed these bills at a number of General and Executive/Local Board meetings, which provides me the right and obligation to delineate our Local's position on this issue.

At the same time, it is imperative that we all contact our local New Jersey senators and assembly persons and express

our outrage at what the governor is doing to higher education. Since the time of the Whitman administration, each governor has said he wants New Jersey to have a world class system of higher education. Our governor, if we let him, will deprive our students who are first generation college students of the chance to get a first class education, which is necessary to be

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able to find employment in our economy. In order to have a first class system of higher education, we must compete with other institutions. To continue to attract first class faculty members, we must continue to offer a competitive wage and fringe benefit package.

All the members of the Executive Board and I will continue to make sure that the administration honors our current

contract which expires on June 30th 2011. We will fight to make sure we are given a fair deal in the new contract negotiations that will begin late spring 2011. We will work for a contract that treats the full-time faculty members, contingent faculty members, librarians and professional staff with respect and rewards them for the outstanding job that they do in order to provide our students with a first class education. I ask for the support of all members of the unit. Come to our monthly meetings. Be involved. Drop by the union office.

On a different and happier note, I offer you a belated welcome back to a new academic year. I hope that the summer gave you a chance to relax, continue with your research, and enjoy your friends and family. To the new members of the faculty and staff, welcome to our New Jersey City University family. To all the new members and returning union members, Local 1839's new administration will do all it can to make your professional life at the university a success.

## **FREEDOM OF THE (UNION) PRESS**

*Lois Weiner*

When one of the delegates to the CNJSCL state council from a sister local saw the Spring 2009 issue of “AFTerthoughts,” edited by John Trigonis and Debra Jenks, he sent a link to his AFT listserv, noting the issue's lively analysis and reportage.

Unlike many unions, our local has a proud history of producing a newsletter with editorial independence and a range of opinion. In the time I have been writing for our union newsletter, first under Nick Gordon, then under Sheila Kirven, Lynn Baskin, and Jacqueline Ellis, and subsequently under the editorial direction of Debra Jenks and John Trigonis, censorship has been a non-issue. All of the editors have upheld the principle of our local having a free press. In this tradition, the editors solicit material from members and print it, without challenging the substance. They use their best judgment to lay out articles in an attractive format and include material that they see as relevant. Though readers or local officers as

individuals might disagree with editorial judgments, to my knowledge, the process of editorial independence has been maintained. As a result, we have had a publication that has enabled us to “speak truth to

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**“In a healthy, vibrant union, the newsletter represents the range of opinion in the organization.”**

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power,” on our campus, in our state union, and in the State of New Jersey. In years when union activity flagged on our own campus, the newsletter remained a steady reminder of the local's continued presence and viability.

Our local's tradition stands in contrast to the sorry practices in many, many unions, wherein a union president controls the content, generally through his/her appointment of the editors. Often the union “newsletter” is little more than a publicity mechanism for an incumbent. In one union to which I belonged, members who bothered to read the newspaper

would take bets about how many times the union president's name or photo would appear, following his/her appearance in a large photo on the front page. One's chances of winning the competition were greatly increased by thinking big!

In a healthy, vibrant union, the newsletter represents the range of opinion in the organization. Its pages are open to all points of view, expressed in civil terms. Member activity and ideas are highlighted, rather than the perspectives and doings of paid officials and staff.

As we face one of the most dangerous periods in our union's existence, we need more than ever to protect this tradition of editorial independence and to be absolutely clear that our union newsletter is open to all points of view.

The charge we should give our editors is to use their judgment in producing a newsletter that represents viewpoints of members and principles of unionism, including democracy.

## ARE NEWSLETTERS PASSÉ?

Laura Wadenpfehl

I have begun to wonder whether newsletters have become passé. Between blogging, texting, tweeting, and emailing, why bother? Let's face it. Writing something for a newsletter takes far more effort than texting and blogging, activities that are all "reaction." And if one were to write an article for a newsletter, when would there be time to tweet informing our friends of our decisions to have tuna or turkey for lunch? Priorities are important and apparently non-negotiable.

But the problem goes beyond tuna or turkey. Who among us has not witnessed someone walk into traffic, trip on an uneven sidewalk, walk into a poll or person because the individual was so engrossed in reading and sending text messages? If you stand at the truck on Kennedy Boulevard, observe the number of individuals who are ruining their posture, their eyesight and rapidly acquiring carpal tunnel syndrome as they furiously text. When do they look at the sky, note those around them, ponder over what was said in class, or at the office, or by a loved one? When do they listen (and I mean *listen*, not *hear*) to someone's voice? The short answer is almost never.

So by now you are asking yourselves (if you have gotten this far) what has this to do with the future of the newsletter? Everything! In fact, the relentless use of instant communication has everything to do with the future of both meaningful verbal and written communication. True literacy cannot exist without a disciplined attention span, and instant communication erodes our attention spans. While texting, tweeting, and emailing have their place, the cost of their replacing written communication, communication that is thought out, that is focused, that is vetted, that someone took time out of his or her life to create, is astronomical.

A great part of that cost is the diminishment of human observational skills. I call this addiction to instant communication the "zombie factor" because day after day I witness adults of all ages, young and old, staring into their electronic devices, scrolling through messages, sending messages. They do it when they walk, when they work, when they ride on buses,

trains, planes, in waiting rooms, in classrooms, in faculty meetings, at union meetings. The cost of this is that we have an ever-growing population of citizens who do not look around, do not observe their surroundings, do not make eye contact with their fellow citizens. They have reduced themselves to little more than zombies, asleep to all except what is transmitted electronically, held within their hands, and the result is that their worlds encompass an ever increasingly narrow environment.

This should scare the bejesus out of us. Obsessive use of these devices is the equivalent of mass hypnosis. Creation, insight, innovation, progress occur only when introspection and independent thought exist. The hypnotized cannot create; they cannot reason. Think about what that means for the progress of humankind. It scares the bejesus out of me.

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**"Local 1839 deserves a forum in which union members, those of us who I referred to as "the silent majority" in my second request for submissions, can share their interests with others."**

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At the beginning of the fall semester I sent out a request for submissions to this newsletter. I received not a single response. Knowing my audience and how riled up it can get, I sent a second request saying something reasonable about President Nixon believing that would result in the membership pounding on my office door. Again, there was not a single response, not even an angry email reminding me of the secret bombing of Cambodia (I was ready for that). I then reached out to individuals, and each one declined my request to write something for the newsletter. But I have read emails from the members of Local 1839, the topics of which lend themselves to a more developed and thought out treatment than email permits. But email, tweeting, blogging, and texting do not require the commitment that thought does. An article for a newsletter requires the purging of

personal anger and hurt feelings; it requires reflection and thought.

Maybe newsletters have become passé. I hope not, and I have hope. Local 1839 deserves a forum in which union members, those of us who I referred to as "the silent majority" in my second request for submissions, can share their interests with others. Let us take a stand and insist that serious ideas need a serious arena in which to be discussed. Let us begin to listen to each other at union meetings rather than conducting the ubiquitous sidebars that drown out all but the most determined speakers. Let us carefully read and think about what we read before responding to each other. Finally, let us treasure what sets us apart from every other living creature on Earth, the ability to reason—it is too precious to lose.

Make no mistake—the creative and analytic individual is an endangered species. And without commitment to change, our demise is change you *can* believe in.

I look forward to your "letters to the editors."