

AAUP NEWSLETTER

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Montgomery College Chapter

October, 2004

President's Corner

By Rose Sachs, Rockville

With the usual scramble of a new academic year just barely beginning to subside, in an effort to draft some opening comments, I have spent some time reading over the columns of our past Chapter presidents. The one, most notable theme of these columns has been contract negotiations. While this is a subject dear to my heart, as we have negotiated a three-year contract, we are facing the luxury of two negotiation-free years. With our salaries settled for the time, I am facing the prospect of trying to define those more global issues that appear critical to this Executive Committee. Because the contract is key as it provides the assurance of fair working conditions and due process, the work of the union is thought of by many primarily in relationship to negotiations; this respite provides us an opportunity to examine other non-contractual issues, both here at the College and nationally.

Clearly, the faculty and the administration have different perspectives that are based on our respective set of responsibilities. We, the faculty, are the primary guardians of academic integrity and

standards; our focus is to provide an array of quality educational opportunities to our students, to assist them to develop their intellects and their characters. As it is the students that separate us from other organizations, our mission is essential. The administration is charged with ensuring that the College continues to exist and develop. Their success, obviously, is critical to ours. They too are committed to the educational opportunities provided our students. So, although our priorities are at times different, at times in conflict, my experience, in the variety of roles I have had at the College, has led me to conclude that we are really all vested in similar interests and not quite so far apart as we may appear when we are haggling over the specifics.

Having said that, I would also caution that we do not become complacent. Across the nation, colleges and universities are taking on corporate characteristics, which results in deemphasizing scholarship and eroding academic standards. Higher education has been devalued by national and state governments, as evidenced by the lack of funding provided, which places a terrible strain on resources. Montgomery College, as it continues to grow and diversify, and regardless of intentions, is not immune to the current trends. Through union, committee, council, and assembly membership, we must continue to be actively involved in the decision-making processes in areas that affect students and programming.

Martin Snyder, AAUP Director of Planning and Development, asserts: "...hierarchical organizational structure, and objectives, and goals set from the top down, inevitably conflict with standards of college and university governance based on a sense of academic community, shared responsibility, and mutual respect." It well may be that the collective heart of the administration and the collective heart of the faculty are in sync; in order to maintain a governance based on a sense of academic community, shared responsibility, and mutual respect in this very difficult political, social, and economic climate, however, faculty must be vigilant and remember to give our voice to the issues, and, in turn, the administration must remember to listen. ♣

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Don Day, Grievance Man

By Bryant Davis, Germantown

So you're mad, and you aren't going to take it anymore. You've had enough, and now something's going to happen. Thinking of filing a grievance? Read on.

Grievance. The very word conjures up images of righteous indignation, heat, and maybe even fury. And that's what I was expecting to hear about when I met with Don Day, the AAUP's Grievance Officer at Montgomery College. "*Sturm und drang*," I thought: "this is going to be good." What I learned was quite different from what I expected.

Grievances Are Rare

When a faculty member approaches Don with a complaint, the faculty member wants to know

- What is a grievance?
- Can I file a grievance?
- How do I file a grievance?

Don then explains what constitutes a grievance, and if the complaint fits, the faculty member fills out a form, submits it to the Dean (in most cases) and to human resources, and follows the procedure outlined in the union contract, a fairly well-laid out process.

But that's only in a few cases, maybe one to two a year. In "95% percent of the cases," Don says, the problem presented to him is "not something that is a legitimate grievance." Specifically, a grievance can occur only when the AAUP "contract is not followed." About 5% of the issues presented to Don, maybe 1 or 2 a year, are actual grievances. Therefore, Don says, most of what he does is not related to actual grievances.

Mediation Is the Rule of the Day

In the majority of instances, usually 10-30 cases a year, Don acts as a mediator. Ten to thirty cases a year? What leads to that? "Differing expectations," Don says. "Faculty members have expectations of power, authority, and roles that are sometimes quite different from management's

expectations." Don talks with the affected faculty member, other involved faculty, the Department Chair and/or the Dean and/or other College managers to ascertain all points of view. His goal is usually to find a common ground where a solution to the problem can be worked out.

Don enjoys mediating because it's similar to advising. Both, he says, involve problem solving. He believes his training as a physicist helps. "Physics asks people to look at different parts of a complex problem," Don says, just as mediation does. He has to

- Ask questions
- Listen carefully
- Get a sense of what's fair and equitable
- Maintain objectivity

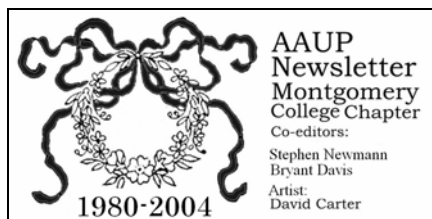
All of these help him discover the real issues. Problem solving, he says, is frequently not a logical process but there is nearly always a solution.

Do You Need Don in Your Life?

Within the next couple of years, Don plans to retire, and Tim Kirkner will assume the post. Until then, though, Don remains eager to work with faculty to solve problems, whether the problems are grievances or something else. If readers "gain something out of an article like this," Don says, he hopes that "it is if they have a problem they can call me. Tim and I will try to help them." ♣

Who's Who in 2004

President	Rose Sachs - (R)	279-5077
Secretary	Rick Penn - (R)	279-5195
Treasurer	Bill Talbot - (R)	279-5014
VP – G	Tammy Peery - (G)	353-7768
VP – R	Judith Prask - (R)	279-5126
VP – TP	Tracy Smith Bryant - (TP)	650-1369
Past President	Harry Zarin - (G)	353-7767
Governance	Jim O'Brien - (R)	279-5233
Liaison		
Grievance Officers	Don Day - (R)	279-5235
	Tim Kirkner - (R)	279-5049
At-large Member	Joe Thompson - (G)	353-7751
At-large Member	Trudy Cohen - (TP)	650-1412
At-large Member	Ken Weiner - (R)	279-5203



Update on Parking/Transportation Fee

By Bryant Davis, Germantown

At the end of August, Rose Sachs, president of the Montgomery College chapter of the AAUP, notified us about a possible enforced parking/transportation fee for employees—a fee that would affect salaries. Rose mentioned that

the Board of Trustees has passed a resolution, beginning this semester, to charge students a transportation fee of \$2 per credit hour. The purpose stated for this fee is to “pay for debt service for construction of a parking garage and for free Ride-On bus service for students and employees and better parking lot maintenance operations.” The rationale stated for this fee is to “provide some incentives for students and employees to use mass transit [which] could assist in alleviating some of the parking problems.”

In her August message, Rose included a survey asking if faculty currently use or potentially would use Ride-On. The survey asked

1. Is Ride-On bus service a feasible means for you to travel to and from work?

YES NO

If you answered yes to question #1:

2. Currently, do you use Ride-On bus service regularly to travel to and from work (average of at least twice a week)?

YES NO

3. Would having a bus pass change your current use of Ride-On service; would you regularly leave your car at home and use Ride-On bus service to travel to and from work?

YES NO

Within 72 hours of the survey being sent out, 175 faculty members responded. About 75 faculty members have responded since then. Of the initial 175 respondents,” Rose says,

three FT faculty responded that having a bus pass might change their use of Ride-On, two of those with conditions. So, thus far, I think it is safe to say that there is a good chance that the provision of bus passes to faculty for Ride-On services would indeed free up one parking spot on the Takoma Park Campus two to three days a week; it appears unlikely, however, that it would “assist in alleviating some of the parking problems.”

Rose points out that Ride-On is Montgomery County only, not Metro – thus, the coveted bus pass provides access to only a specific (and very limited) part of public transportation. Rose continues by saying that “one faculty member went to the Ride-On website to ‘plan’ her 7 mile, 10 minute (driving) trip. Using the ‘least amount of time’ option, the trip by Ride-On would take 1 & 1/2 hours.”

At this point, the situation remains that “A joint committee of administrators, faculty, and staff has been established to examine College-wide parking and transportation issues.” ♣

From the Treasurer:

Some time in the next month your AAUP dues deduction from your payroll **might** increase based on your recent pay raise.

If you already fall in the highest bracket, this will not change your deduction.

Payroll dues are based on the following schedule:

Annual dues by salary range for 2004-2005.

Less than \$40k	\$110
\$40 to 44	\$125
\$44 to 48	\$140
\$48 to 52	\$155
\$52 to 56	\$170
\$56 to 60	\$185
Greater than \$60k	\$200

Divide each amount by 20 to get your payroll deduction.

Thanks,
Bill Talbot, AAUP Treasurer

New AAUP President

By Jack Suruda, Retired

Counselor succeeds counselor. In the 25th year since its inception in 1979-80, the MC AAUP Chapter welcomes a new president, Rose Sachs (R), who takes over for Harry Zarin (G).

Professor Sachs, a former New Yorker who lived in California for three years, came to Maryland in '67 and started a family which grew to three children—Lisa, Laura, and Perry, and, eventually, six grandchildren. She joined MC in 1982.

Sachs, a certified social worker for the past 12 years, completed her undergraduate studies and earned her MSW degree at the University of Maryland. After hiring on at Montgomery College, she transitioned from staff to faculty. Professor Sachs coordinated the Learning Center at Rockville and was a founding mother of the College Access Program. Rose also co-authored a grant that eventually evolved into the beginning of the assistive technologies program.

She brings to her AAUP post welcome qualities: passion, energy, and a rich experience in disability studies and AAUP service—having served as negotiating team member and, finally, as chief negotiator—a position that demands commitment, intelligence, speaking skills, a strong ethical sense, and not a small degree of humor and patience.

As union chief, Rose affirms strong views, “You fight for what you believe is right, and you pick your battles. Confrontation is not a negative thing. We confront issues.” On faculty commitment to AAUP membership, she adds, “You have to be attached to something bigger than yourself. This is the forum for the faculty—through the union.”

Professor Sachs' beliefs arise not from genes or family history. “No unions,” she explains. “They were all physicians. And my brother retired as a corporate executive of a major company—a man on the other side.” She adds, “My commitment to equity arises from civil awareness, a lot of involvement—growing up in New York City, and activism in the 60's.”

At ease in her office (122C) in Rockville's Counseling Building, Professor Sachs, white-haired and admitting to being “sixty-ish,” still maintains the 1960's activist look—a magenta cotton jacket, yellow cotton skirt, and leather sandals. Quick to laugh and energetic in conversation, Rose knows her union strengths. “I do my homework, and I never ask a question that I don't know the answer to. If I believe that something is just, I will not back down.”

Her first floor office—one that looks out through a peaceful canopy of magnolias and pin oaks onto the South Entrance Parking Lot—reflects her personality, experience, and interests: The room features a large animal collection (including one purple rhino); cat artifacts; a portrait of Virginia Wolfe; a long desk with family pictures; a color photograph of her son posing with “Bert”, his English bulldog—a Hollywood icon; a Max Weiler poster from Innsbruck; another poster of a wheelchair race that states—“Just do it.”; art reproductions by Otto Dix, Frida Kahlo (an artist, feminist,

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AAUP Funds Student Scholarship

By Bryant Davis, Germantown

Your union has been at work—and good work, too. Each year the Montgomery College Chapter of the AAUP funds an academic scholarship to help a student continue his or her education. Patti Lopez, Financial Aid Scholarship Coordinator at Montgomery College, oversees choosing the honoree.

The chapter has been funding the scholarship for 10 years. To be eligible, a student must be full time, have completed at least 24 credits, and have a 3.25 GPA. The winning student receives \$1,500.

The recipient for the 2004-2005 school year is Addis Kebede, a full-time student pursuing an associate of science degree in nursing. Addis is from Ethiopia, where, writes Patricia Lopez, “political and economic barriers prevented her from pursuing a college education.” Once given that opportunity, though, she has shown “the dedication and determination to meet the challenges of the nursing program. I want you to know that this student is committed to academic excellence and is a worthy recipient,” Lopez adds. ♣

NEW PRESIDENT Continued

and dissenter among the first to use disability as content), Diego Rivera, and others; and numerous assorted paintings and artwork—some by grandchildren, some by students with disabilities, and some by friends. A prominent black and white photo of a vagrant lying in front of the White House states, “There are no hungry people in America.” (Ed Meese).

Rose, a competitive Sunday *Times* puzzle fanatic, lives with her two St. Bernards—200 pound Alfie and Zoe. She also enjoys her backyard pond and fountain and “peaceful” garden: mandina (false bamboo), astilbe, moon beam coreopsis, day lilies, and camellias (“My mother's favorite flower.”) Though not a dedicated cook, Rose bakes a highly applauded negotiations-cheesecake, “to ease the process,” she explains.

Though worried that faculty face some dangers of a corporate model applied to education, Professor Sachs views the Chapter's future optimistically. “I believe that there is desire for good will on the part of the administration and the faculty.” She adds, “But relationships take work. We need to be vigilant.” ♣