Your Union has been extremely active in the last three months. Rather than producing a casual, announcement-type newsletter, we have opted to report the semester's news in this one edition. We hope to bring our membership current and project on to the very near future the multiple issues confronting our Union.

Our major priority at this time is the negotiation of a successor contract. Our present agreement with the Board of Governors expires on June 30, 2003. Until a new agreement is reached with the Board of Governors, all the articles in the present contract remain operative. According to the contract, the BoG has been informed (and has agreed) to negotiate a new contract.

The Program Development Committee, composed of Peter Glanz (Physical Science), Edward McDowell (Math/CS), Victor Profughi (Political Science), Carol Shelton (Nursing) and Amritjit Singh (English), will meet and distribute a "faculty needs and proposals survey." Please fill out the survey as soon as you can, and return it to the RIC/AFT office (CL 229). The responses and other proposals from departments and individuals define what we bring to the negotiating table. There have been informal meetings with the AAUP at URI, the NEA at CCRI and the PSA at RIC concerning the upcoming negotiations. We can anticipate a very difficult round of negotiations and need every member to become part of the process.

* * *

The health insurance settlement for reimbursement for co-pays for prescription medicine has proceeded with a few glitches. Included in this Newsletter is a form for you to submit for reimbursement. Just a reminder: it should be submitted with original receipts, to Ann Marie Coleman, Office of Higher Education, 301 Promenade St., Providence, RI 02908-5748. Please remember that the settlement applies to all prescriptions from Jan. 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003. According to our records, many eligible faculty members are not submitting for reimbursement: submit the form!

* * *
Dr. Lenore DeLucia sent to the Union the BoG's April 21st approval of an Amendment to the Tuition Waiver policy. Essentially, the tuition waiver policy is extended to domestic partners in accord with state law, which we helped pass. A copy of the approval letter is printed in this Newsletter and I expect will be included in the next contract.

*   *   *

Our grievance concerning portfolio coordinators is continuing. At two meetings attended by Ann Marie Coleman for the BoG, President Nazarian, Dean John Bucci, Michael Mullane (RIFTHP) and myself, we documented the College's contract violation in lieu of negotiating compensation for work performed by some faculty members. We hope to resolve this issue in a very short time. Typically, our faculty work beyond the call of duty in the most professional manner, in the interests of our students. Preparing to teach portfolios and exit portfolios were completed by our faculty.

*   *   *

On March 19, 2003, the President announced promotions and tenure. We add our congratulations to these members of our college community. The contract defines the criteria and the processes for the attainment of these individual and professional statuses. Each of the faculty is more than meritorious and is a reflection of professional accountability writ large. We have printed the list in this Newsletter as a token our appreciation of their dedication and commitment to excellence at Rhode Island College.

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Censorship, clearinghouse bottleneck and an affront to academic freedom? In a series of emails between the writers of the article below (printed in the Anchor, April 22 on page 14) and the Director of News and Public Relations and the Vice President for Development and College Relations, a "policy" which mandated that any materials sent to the Providence Journal had to be cleared was mentioned. The authors and this Union would like to see this policy. The U.S. Constitution and our Contract guarantee Freedom of Speech and encourage political activity.

Every weekday between 12:30 and 1 p.m. during the war on Iraq, a group of 10-75 people stood silently in a circle on the quad, outside Adams Library. We - members of Rhode Island College Faculty/Staff/Students Against this War - were and are there as witnesses for peace. Beginning on March 20 and continuing daily until the war ended and on Mondays and Thursdays until the end of the term, the vigil is intended both to draw attention to opposition to this war and to give members of the RIC community an opportunity to reflect on the U.S. attack on Iraq.

Our group is diverse in age, politics, and perspective. Some of us are long-time peace activists who oppose any war, while others oppose this particular war but are not necessarily pacifists. We share the belief that waging war in Iraq is causing death and destruction and will not bring about peace or advance the cause of political stability in the Middle East or anywhere else in the world. Although American fears are understandably heightened since September 11, this war will not make us safer; indeed, it is likely to make us even less safe and more isolated internationally, given that the U.S. has acted without the support of the United Nations and in defiance of overwhelming public opinion throughout the world.

The unprecedented television coverage of this war may make us all feel that we have too much
information, but in fact we all have too little. That constant bombardment - visual and aural - can get in the way of critical thinking. The silence of the vigil promotes reflection and critical thought, giving us all a period of time to consider what we do and do not know about this war, what is left out of media accounts, and what our own responsibilities are as citizens of the world. What other actions should we take? How can we each contribute to help bring peace to the Middle East? How will we respond if there is a draft? The vigil prompts us to ask ourselves such questions, and others.

Support the Troops has been the main response from those who support the war, but members of our group see no conflict between profound support of the troops - wishing to end their danger and bring them home - and our opposition to the war. Sadly, support the troops has become code for support the official actions of the president. The president and his cabinet are not, however, the troops, and they have different interests. We have all seen the faces of the families in the U.S. and in Iraq-- whose children have died thus far in this war. They are the faces of the working class, the poor, the immigrants, people of color - their faces remind us of the faces of our own students and colleagues. No member of President Bush's cabinet except Colin Powell has ever served in the military, nor are any of their children now in military service. That contrast between the social origins of those sent to die and to kill in Iraq and those who send them is worth considering.

Our group is open. Anyone who would like to join the silent vigil is welcome, any Monday or Thursday.


* * *

An announcement in the Jan. 28 edition of the Providence Journal of a "Metropolitan College" and subsequently on Feb. 8 of the appointment of Kathy Mallon to lead the "Urban College Project" raised grave concerns for this Union, the AAUP at URI and the NEA at CCRI. I attended two meetings with union representatives and others, the second of which included Ms. Mallon and Jack Warner, Commissioner of Higher Education, in which we voiced our professional opinions. While we certainly stand for access and opportunity for minority students, we also stand firm on quality, faculty governance, labor issues and fiscal integrity. Overall, we cannot envision a duplicative enterprise at the expense of the three existing institutions. Our three institutions are faced with skeletal budgets, deteriorating infrastructures, frozen faculty FTEs and far-from-adequate salaries. We understand the objectives of the "City Campus Project" and the new concept of a "Stakeholders' Circle," but we also understand that partnership must be full, complete and from the beginning. We concur with the goal of increasing the number of Rhode Islanders with four year college degrees and the strategy of focusing on the urban population, however we believe that only a massive infusion of resources into our existing institutions and into K-12 education will accomplish this goal.

* * *

I and President Nazarian have approved an exceptional third term for Dr. John Dagle as chair of the English Department (cf. 5.13 of the Agreement). In addition, the Union has agreed to an exemption so that a faculty member in the Nursing Department can serve in a third limited term appointment (cf. Memorandum of Understanding, Limited Term Appointments). We know that the respective departments and our students
are best served by these non-precedent-setting agreements.

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New faculty members who have joined the Union have reported that they are not receiving information and announcements from the national AFT. We are tracing the problem and a solution should be forthcoming. In a related matter, under national AFT's regulations and our desire to be current and accountable to our members, we are beginning an internal audit. Governor, we do have t-shirts, but we do have fiscal responsibility and trustworthiness.

*   *   *

The Executive Committee has heard from several faculty who have expressed chagrin that a high ranking member of the administration should imply that the thefts of computer imaging equipment are the "fault" of negligent faculty members who failed to lock classroom doors. We are also dismayed that faculty were reminded by a dean that no final exams should be scheduled during the last week of classes, and that classes should be routinely met on assigned days for the described amount of time. I expect that all the deans will also determine how our classes were enrolled above the contractual limit. Our AFT is a union of professionals and we want to be treated as such.

*   *   *

The Laborers International Union, a sister union in the AFL-CIO, has vigorously protested the rehabilitation of Building 9 (the new School of Social Work building) by Alhambra Building Company. In an extensive collection of material, the LIU accuses Alhambra of violation of state health and safety regulations, prevailing wage law, and work standards. This documentation is in the RIC/AFT office. We are not aware of any action that the LIU will take, however if a picket line is established on our campus, you must:

♦ determine if your safety and health are jeopardized by crossing the picket line
♦ if so, you must immediately call your dean, informing him or her of your decision

For additional information or questions, call the RIC/AFT office, ext. 9842.

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Numerous complaints about the physical facilities, a grievance concerning the indoor air quality of campus buildings, complaints about smells, dirt, ventilation have all reached a crescendo. The Agreement states "The administration of the College also recognizes the importance of maintaining a clean, safe and comfortable environment for all professional activities" (cf. 11.27). The Contract also identifies a process for discussing these concerns (cf. 11.28). In order to organize our discussion, I am asking the RIC/AFT Facilities Committee to act as an Internal Environmental Quality Committee. Printed in this Newsletter are an Indoor Air Quality Fact Sheet and a Request for Action Form. Please complete the form and send it to the RIC/AFT office, CL 229.

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The Assembly of Departmental Representatives met in January, February and April on Wednesdays, at 12:30 PM. Attendance at the more-convenient time increased and our lively experiment meet during the day will now become our practice. We encourage each department to designate a representative and to have that
person report at departmental faculty meetings. We are indebted to the Assembly delegates for their information and participation. The Assembly has been and will continue an integral part of the Union structure.

Jason L. Blank, President

Announcements

The RIC Sesquicentennial Inaugural Event is Friday, May 9th, at the RI Convention Center. For information and reservations, contact Shana Murrell, 456-9625.

The RIC Commencement Gala will be Friday, May 16, 6:30 PM, in Donovan Dining Center. For information and reservations, contact Susan St. Amand, 456-8022.

The Institute for Labor Studies and Research will hold its annual dinner on Thursday, June 19, at the Westin. For information, contact the RIC/AFT, ext. 9842.

In Memoriam

We are saddened to include the following notices concerning losses of colleagues and one colleague's son. The RIC family shares these losses and extends its sympathy to the affected families.

Michael Gonsalves

The disastrous fire at the Station in West Warwick on Feb. 20 took 99 lives. We can't even imagine the agony of the victims and their families. All of us were touched by the catastrophe and we in the Union lost a founder's son. Michael Gonsalves, aka Dr. Metal, son of Neil and Mary Gonsalves, was a graduate of RIC. Many of our colleagues, including myself, were Michael's professors and friends. Michael had endearing qualities: you knew he cared; you knew he could be trusted (he worked as a student for the Union); you knew he had a joy of life and a life of joy; you knew that he would shine in a room. You knew him to be a "mensch," a person of quality, compassion and passion. Rest in peace, Michael.

Jason L. Blank

Arthur Smith

Rhode Island College has lost a most dependable, responsible, collegial and valuable faculty member. Dr. Arthur F. Smith, Professor of Mathematics and Educational Studies, who had been at the College since 1965, passed away on February 11, 2003. Art had earned a doctorate in mathematics education from the University of Connecticut, and possessed an amazing knowledge and ability in mathematics.

He was a gentle man and a gentleman. No one can remember Art ever boasting or telling anyone how wonderful he was, but he was! He was called the "gatekeeper" of the department, fielding inquiries from people who wanted to become high school math teachers. He was the expert on our graduate programs and on teacher certification practices. He could be relied on to fill out properly all the accreditation reports and assessment study questionnaires. He counseled students at every level of mathematics education with knowledge and sympathy, helping them navigate the often-complex system of requirements related to
becoming a teacher, and working to ensure that they succeeded in getting jobs. All of this was recognized when he was presented the Alumni Faculty Award in 1998. While cleaning out his office we discovered copies of letters students had written in support of that award; we cannot bring ourselves to throw them out.

Though relatively quiet, when he did speak his opinion carried great weight. Somehow people never got upset with him as they might have when similar views were expressed by others. This must have been due to the grace with which Art always acted, the respect he showed others, the logic of his arguments and his strong support for colleagues when they did things well. He had a subtle and understated sense of humor, a quality that always entertained his colleagues and friends. As department chairs, we note it was all too easy to ask Art to do things, as he invariably answered "sure" and did them, and did them promptly, and did them right.

Through the years Art taught an amazing variety of courses, including remedial and service courses, calculus, geometry, number theory, history of mathematics, complex variables, as well as the Practicum and the supervision of student teachers. His student evaluations were superb, and remained so until the end. Even beyond the RIC campus, over the years his talk "On What Day of the Week Were You Born?" was requested by dozens of local high schools.

His former and current students, some of whom are teachers now, have written to express their appreciation of his special influence on their lives.

He and Marge, his wife of 42 years, raised two wonderful children, Lisa and Kurt; he lived to know his two grandchildren. He loved to travel everywhere, and we were reminded of this when we found in his office souvenirs of his trip to Egypt, and of an around-the-world tour he took. At least he and Marge got to go to Alaska and make one more trip across the country just last fall before the seriousness of Art's health problem was diagnosed.

No one can remember Art ever complaining; well hardly ever - occasionally he had been heard to remark on the quantity of meetings. He did not complain once during the time of his final illness!

We miss him dearly. It is hard to imagine this department without him.

Helen Salzberg, Barry Schiller, James Sedlock

Victoria Lederberg

The Psychology Department as well as Rhode Island College and the people of the state of Rhode Island were shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Victoria Santopietro Lederberg on December 29, 2003 of a massive heart attack. Vicky Lederberg came to Rhode Island College in September of 1968. She immediately became a vital, active member of the department. She wrote a grant the following year to have a third floor added to the building plans for what is now Horace Mann Hall in order to have space for the Psychology Department in that building. Vicky had a charming personal way with people, putting them quickly at ease, so that they felt she was a friend from the beginning of the relationship. Her charm notwithstanding, Vicky was very goal oriented, and successful in her many achievements.

Vicky Lederberg was a graduate of Classical High School in Providence, and received her BA, and MA
degrees in biology from Brown University and then switched to psychology for her Ph.D. degree. She married Seymour Lederberg, a biology professor, during the summer following her junior year. He was her mentor during her undergraduate and master's work, and switched to psychology to avoid any sign of nepotism. Vicky and Seymour had two children, Tobias and Sarah. Vicky was family oriented was a devoted mother and also an involved grandmother to her six grandchildren, as well as a caring daughter to her two parents. Indeed, she had planned to spend Sunday, December 29th ice skating with her eldest granddaughter.

Vicky attended Suffolk law school nights and became a lawyer and member of the Rhode Island Bar in the 1970s. Vicky served as a state representative from 1975 to 1983, and as a state senator from 1985 through 1991. She also ran for Secretary of State and was a Providence mayoral candidate. In 1993 Vicky became a justice of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island, and retired from teaching at Rhode Island College.

Despite the many demands on her time, Vicky took her job as a college professor seriously, and as a colleague in the Psychology Department she often offered to volunteer to teach a class when someone was ill. After her elevation to the Supreme Court of Rhode Island, Vicky and Seymour still regularly attended the Psychology Department Holiday parities which are held annually at a member's home. They brought magnificent desserts and participated in our "Yankee swaps." Vicky was always interested in meeting the new members of the department and getting to know their teaching and research interests. In fact, the members of the department had a wonderful visit with Vicky two weeks before her death at our holiday party. The Psychology Department unanimously voted to name the award they give at Cap and Gown day the Victoria Lederberg Psychology Faculty Award.

Joan Rollins