Buckley Wins as President of Local 1600; Votes Split for Other Local-wide Offices

As the Voice goes to press, early results from the American Arbitration Association (not the official certification) show that Perry Buckley defeated Judith Armstead for president of Local 1600 by a narrow margin. Buckley’s Independent-Union Progress Coalition (I-UPC) won five local-wide offices vs. three for Armstead’s Union Democratic Caucus (UDC). More details on the election will be published in June’s Voice.

For City Colleges vice president, Sonia Powell of Olive-Harvey (I-UPC) pulled more votes than Tony Johnston of Truman. For suburban vice president, Jim O’Malley of Triton Faculty Chapter (I-UPC) drew more votes than Stu Sikora of the same chapter. For classified vice president, Gail Wiot of Moraine Valley Support (UDC) gained more votes than John Rossmiller of Triton Classified. For grievance chair, Marc Schwertley of Malcolm X (UDC) picked up more votes than Tom Kodogeorgiou of Daley. For secretary, Patricia Wenthold of Harper Pro/Tech (I-UPC) drew more votes than Sammie Dortch of Harold Washington. For treasurer, Don Radtke, CPA, from Daley (I-UPC) came up with more votes than MV Faculty retiree Dick Fritz. Finally, for legislative representative, Marie Caronti, retiree from Triton Classified, (UDC), won more votes than South Suburban Faculty’s Bill Naegele.

When asked for a comment on the election, Buckley said, “It was a hard fought election. I want to thank the members who supported me and every member of Local 1600 who took the trouble to vote in this election. Now, it is time to create unity in our union. I intend to improve communications with every member of our union.

“At the same time, I intend to maintain the high standards of excellence that Norman Swenson achieved for 38 years. I also intend to establish written policies and procedures for administration of our union.

“But let me be clear. The greatest challenge this union faces is not internal but external. I will need the support of every member of this union in negotiating contracts with our college boards in these extremely hard economic times. We must protect our paychecks, our benefits and our working conditions.”

(Biography on Page 2)
The elections are over. We enter a new chapter in our history with a new set of officers.

The I-UPC won three of the four major union posts: the presidency (Perry Buckley), the City Colleges vice-presidency (Sonia Powell) and the Suburban Faculty vice-presidency (Jim O’Malley). The UDC won the Suburban Classified vice-presidency (Gail Wiot).

The other four officer positions split evenly between the I-UPC and the UDC. I-UPC won the secretary’s office (Pat Wenthold) and the treasurer’s office (Don Radtke). The UDC won the grievance chair (Marc Schwertley) and the legislative chair (Marie Caronti).

Now we must face the challenge of negotiating four City Colleges’ contracts and one suburban contract. In the City Colleges, we must complete negotiations on the faculty, full-time professional employees, police officers and part-time professional employees contracts.

Our City Colleges Board cries poor mouth. So far, it has offered no salary increase and demands a huge increase in health care costs for these contracts. We could be forced to strike in the fall.

At Prairie State College, our support staff chapter faces an equally difficult contract re-opener in a harsh economic environment.

In the face of these challenges, we must close ranks and forget our past differences. For the past year, much of the energy of your officers has been consumed by their desire to win their elections.

I dropped out of this struggle for reasons of personal health and because I did not have the strength for fighting a war on two fronts. I still have the strength, as your chief negotiator, to fight externally with the board for good contracts. I did not have the strength to fight internally, at the same time, for the presidency of Local 1600. I did not want to die in office as happened with two former Chicago mayors.

It is now time to close ranks as a union so we can successfully fight our external opponents and produce good contracts. The word “union” means “you and I are one.” Congratulations to the new set of officers; condolences to those who lost re-election.

Solidarity forever!

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BRIEF PERRY BUCKLEY BIOGRAPHY

• FAMILY: Parents are Pierce and Shirley Buckley with brothers Mark and Scott. Father was a battalion chief in the Chicago Fire Department. Buckley is first in his family to gain a college degree. Buckley’s spouse, Lillian Doleshek Buckley, is the principal of Nativity of Our Lord Grade School in Chicago.

• EDUCATION: Lewis University, Trinity College (London, England), Wroxton College (England) for MA, University of London, Ph.D. with dissertation on Shakespeare.

• COLLEGE TEACHING: Hired at Chicago City-Wide College of the CCC in 1981. He then transferred to Wilbur Wright College where he teaches Shakespeare, English and English as a Second Language.

• UNION OFFICES: City-Wide College grievance chair (1984, before gaining tenure); Wright College assistant chapter chair (1992-98); Wright College chapter chair (1998-2000); Local 1600 election chair (1998-2002); Local 1600 grievance chair 2002-2004.

• During 2002-2003, Buckley made four trips to London to participate as an authority in four panel discussions on “Censorship in Shakespeare: The New Problem Plays” at the Globe Theater Educational Center.

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COOK COUNTY COLLEGE TEACHERS UNION, LOCAL 1600, AFL-CIO

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Vice President, City Colleges Division....................Judith Armstead
Vice President, Suburban Faculty..............................Stu Sikora
Vice President, Suburban Staff.................................Gail Wiot
Secretary..........................................................Verna Anderson
Treasurer..........................................................Richard Fritz
Legislative Representative.................................Marie Caronti
Grievance Chairman............................................Perry Buckley
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Member of AFT Communications Association
and Midwest Labor Press Association.
Adjunct instructors Rimon Bitar (left) and Dan Noftz (right) met with Triton College Faculty Association’s Chapter Chair Maggie Hahn Wade after Triton adjuncts voted for the Local 1600 to represent them in bargaining.

In January, Local 1600 conducted a collective bargaining priorities survey of its City Colleges membership. Over 250 faculty responded plus 50 professional employees and training specialists. Top priorities in both surveys were salary and health benefits improvements. Next on the list were workload and retirement benefits. Top write-in responses included the nurses’ workload on the faculty survey and improved seniority protection on the professional employee survey. Local 1600 Assistant Chief Negotiator Perry Buckley noted, “The contract priorities from the membership survey will guide your joint faculty-professional employee bargaining team.”

Meanwhile, the City Colleges Board hired James Zuehl from the law firm of Francyek, Sullivan at the cost of $250 per hour to represent it in bargaining. Francyek, Sullivan recently represented the Chicago Board of Education in contract negotiations.

During the first bargaining session on March 10, the union team rejected, for this contract's negotiations, a CCC Board proposal to accept an “alternative plan” for faculty, training specialists and professional retirees who have completed the ten years of the early retirement program and must pay the full cost of the PPO insurance premiums.

For example, while the “alternative plan” would cut the monthly premium from the average for a couple covered by Medicare from $641.06 to $544.40, it mandated big boosts in co-pays and deductibles.
• The cost for a 90 day supply of mail order generic drugs, which is now the same as purchasing a 30 day supply at a retail drugstore, would be three times that co-pay.
• The deductible per person for in-network treatment would be $200 per person vs. $300 per person in the “alternative plan.” For out of network treatment, it would be $400 vs. $2,500 in the “alternative plan.”
• The family out of pocket limit for in network treatment would be $2250 vs. $5000 in the “alternative plan.” For out of network treatment, it would be $6,000 vs. unlimited expenses for the “alternative plan.”

The union team is pressing to finish the non-financial aspects of contract negotiations for the CCC part-time professionals and for the CCC security chapter.

Chief Negotiator Norman Swenson said, “We expect extremely difficult bargaining in the present economic environment.” The Local 1600 bargaining team includes: Swenson, Buckley, Verna Anderson, Sonia Powell, Clyde Walker, Wendall Wilson, Rausan Tamir, Hermine Krysa, Mel Anderson and Joseph Figueroa.
President Bill Scheuerman of the United University Professions of New York addressed the members of the Union House at the November 2003 Union House meeting. On March 5, 2004, Scheuerman, as an AFT Vice President, presented Norm Swenson with an award for service.

On Thursday, January 29, 2004, Kennedy-King College held its Local 1600 Union Book Scholarship Awards Ceremony at the college. Eight recipients were awarded scholarships. Local 1600 secretary Verna Anderson (pictured second from the left) and Chapter Chairperson (Jeanette Williams (third from the right) posed with the Scholarship Committee.

Truman College held its annual winter banquet on Saturday, January 31, 2004, at the Via Veneto. Pictured are the chapter’s Local 1600 honorees: From left: Union Leadership Award Recipient George Otto, Distinguished Professor Mary Robinson, and Distinguished Professional Elizabeth Iehl.

On Friday, Jan. 30, the majority of both local-wide union officers’ slates (I-UPC on the left with Perry Buckley) and (UDC on the right with Judith Armstead) were introduced by Wright Chapter Chair Clyde Walker at the podium to the assembled Wright faculty for their forum.

On Feb. 29, Local 1600 President Norman Swenson, Cook County State's Attorney Dick Devine, Hispanic American Labor Council President Augie Sallas, and Local 1600 Grievance Chair Perry Buckley discussed politics at the Hispanic American Labor Council's “Meet the Candidates’ Breakfast” at the Concordia Restaurant in Chicago.

On Monday, Feb. 9, Morton Faculty Chapter Chair Gus Koutoulas took the podium to introduce Local 1600 Vice President Judith Armstead and Local 1600 Grievance Chair Perry Buckley, the two presidential candidates in the local-wide election, for a candidates’ forum.

On Thursday, Jan. 22, the “Showdown at Harold Washington College” featured the Independent-Union Progress Coalition candidates on the left side of the room: Tom Kodogeorgiou (grievance chair), Patricia Wenthold (secretary), Donald Radtke (treasurer) and Perry Buckley (president). Sonia Powell (vice president CCC) came later.

On the right side of the room were the Union Democratic Caucus candidates hosted by Washington Chapter Chair Mike Rugieri: Judith Armstead (president), Marie Caronti (legislative chair), Sammie Dortch (secretary) and Dick Fritz (treasurer).

At the “Showdown” Jan. 22 on the right side of the room were the Union Democratic Caucus candidates hosted by Washington Chapter Chair Mike Rugieri: Judith Armstead (president), Marie Caronti (legislative chair), Sammie Dortch (secretary) and Dick Fritz (treasurer).
FEBRUARY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

The Executive Board passed the following motions in the February meeting:

• To extend the deadline for the Norman G. Swenson Scholarship to March 10th.
• To thank Professor Jane Wagner, member of the City Colleges Insurance Committee, for all of her work.
• To thank everyone who worked hard with the Morton layoffs, especially Linda Oltmann and Denise Brown.
• To recommend that Jeff Barnes suspension not go to arbitration.
• To congratulate the members of the Moraine Valley Adjunct Faculty Negotiations Committee on their first contract
• To hire Tom Barrett, CPA, to conduct the audit of Local 1600's financial statement for 2003 at a cost of $5,600.

• To have the Union Treasurer give a copy of his proposed 2004 Local 1600 budget to the Union President and mail it to all officers one week before recommending it for adoption at the April 16 Executive Board Meeting.
• To buy a $150 table of tickets to the Feb. 29th Hispanic American Labor Council's “Meet the Candidates Breakfast.”

President Swenson reported that President Dennis Gannon of the Chicago Federation of Labor will be the guest speaker at the May 8 Annual Union Banquet in the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza Hotel. In the light of the California job action at Safeway Foods and other grocery chains, President Swenson noted that the following Chicago-area supermarket chains are unionized: Cub Foods, Jewel Food Stores, and Dominick's Food Stores.

By a vote of 75-5 during Feb. 10-12, the members of the newest chapter of Local 1600 — the Moraine Valley Adjunct Faculty Organization — ratified a contract negotiated with the Moraine Valley College Board. There are approximately 200 members in the new chapter. "We started organizing that chapter in Fall 2002," said Moraine Valley Faculty Chapter President Randy Southard. The early start may explain why the Illinois Education Association never attempted to organize the chapter.

The new contract contains substantial salary increases. Adjunct faculty who teach from 0-24 equated credit hours beginning in Fall Semester 2003 will receive a retroactive increase of 5.26%; in Fall Semester 2004, an increase of 5%; in 2005, 4.76%; and in 2006, 4.55%. Part-time advisors, counselors and librarians, who work 700 hours per year, will receive, as of July 2003, a 4.9% increase; in July 2004, a 4.9% increase; in July 2005, a 4.8% increase; and in July 2006, the same increase as the Moraine Valley Support Staff Association.

Other benefits include a seniority system to determine summer school assignments, one sick day per semester for the fall and spring, increased office space, and the addition of another salary step. IFT staffer Bob Breving helped lead the organizing drive.
The Union House of Representatives passed the following motions:

- To send its officers plus Rausan Tamir, William Naegele, John Rossmiller, and Assistant to the President Janie Morrison to the March 5, 6, and 7 AFT National Higher Education Conference in Seattle and pay expenses of $700 each plus the $75 registration.
- To send its officers, its chapter chairs and the Assistant to the President to the March 19 and 20 IFT Leadership/Professional Development Conference at the Hyatt Oakbrook and pay expenses of $150 each plus the $45 registration fee.
- To pay the $250 cost for the Voice Editor Bob Blackwood to attend the Illinois Union Leaders 2004 Community Media Workshop Conference Feb. 6, 13, 20 and 27 at the Chicago Federation of Labor.
- To contribute $500 to the HERE Local 1 Hardship Fund to support the strike of the Congress Hotel workers.
- To contribute $200 to the AFT Aids in Africa Campaign and take up a volunteer collection from the House members.
- To take the Barbara Griffin OH suspension case to arbitration.
- To authorize the Union's attorney, Larry Poltrick, to contact the attorney handling the Cox vs. Powell case and offer to settle out of court. The maximum amount to settle out of court is $5,000.

- To begin nominations for Local 1600 officers and delegates and alternates to the 2004 AFT and 2005 IFT Conventions. Nominations will close February 13, 2004, for all local-wide officers and AFT and IFT Convention delegates and alternates.

Local 1600 Grievance Chair Buckley filed a Step II grievance which maintains that the City Colleges of Chicago has not properly deducted Union dues for at least the past two years. The Union discovered on November 26, 2003, that there have been gross errors in the amounts of deductions made by CCC. A survey shows that upwards of $60,000 of dues owed have neither been collected nor paid to the Union.

The union lost its arbitration case for the City Colleges counselors. Buckley is asking for a decision regarding hiring former counselors Luis Burgos and Martha Palmer as college advisors since they were denied positions as such. Also, he is requesting a sabbatical leave for the 2004-2005 year for Dana Nevo to retrain in another discipline so that she can teach Reading and English at Truman. Finally, the Union “unpends” the grievances regarding the qualifications to teach of former counselors Daniel Simpson and Martha Palmer-Boahene.
Members Gather to make Springfield Lobby Day, Wed., April 21

A number of Local 1600 members will be waking up early on Wednesday, April 21, to make the run down to Springfield for Lobby Day 2004. Last year's lobbying efforts were quite successful. On April 16, 2003, Governor Rod Blagojevich signed the bill restoring full collective bargaining to the Local 1600 members of the City Colleges of Chicago. Also, last year saw the passage of a bill enabling part-time professors who have taught only three credit hours a semester to be eligible to receive union representation as of January 1, 2004. As Local 1600 President Norm Swenson noted, “A Democratic governor and a Democratic majority in both houses of the Illinois General Assembly insure a fair hearing of our concerns, but you have to work to get what you want.”

This year's Local 1600 legislative agenda is rich with proposals, including:

- Increasing state aid to community colleges to 50% of operating costs,
- Amending the Illinois Community College Act to establish Civil Service protection for non-academic employees,
- Amending the Illinois Community College Act to require seniority as the basis for the layoff or reduction in force of classified, training specialists or professional employees,
- Requiring adequate funding of SURS without increasing employee contributions and opposing compulsory inclusion of SURS into the Social Security system,
- And urging support for a number of other teacher-friendly, classified and professional employee-friendly and community college-friendly bills.

Two bills with essentially the same content — Rep. Kevin McCarthy's House Bill 4877 and Senators William Haine and Gary Forby's Senate Bill 2157 — will be added to the program. They would amend the Illinois Pension Code to allow an employee to receive service credit for up to two years (now up to only one year) of unused sick leave. This bill would be very useful to our members in the suburban community college systems. CCC members receive a cash buy-out for their unused sick leave.

Lobbying, however, does not wait for Lobby Day. President Norman Swenson's calls to the Chicago Federation of Labor and AFL-CIO Chair Margaret Blackshear led to the restoration of a $660,000 grant for CCC retirees' health insurance that had been scheduled to be cut in Springfield.

Members who plan to attend this year's Lobby Day are urged to contact Assistant to the President Janie Morrison in early April to let her know they will be going to Springfield for Lobby Day. If you need a ride, please call her at the union office: 312-755-9400.

AFT National Higher Education Conference Breaks New Ground

The American Federation of Teachers National Higher Education Issues Conference: “Breaking New Ground” did just what it said it would do on March 5-7 in Seattle. For the first time, the National Education Association held its higher education conference jointly with the AFT. At the opening AFT/NEA dinner, AFT Executive Vice President Nat LeCour and NEA President Reg Weaver of the NEA held a question-and-answer session with the audience. The conversation focused on political action, specifically the efforts of both teachers’ organizations to elect John Kerry to the presidency.

On Saturday, the AFT and the NEA shared a joint luncheon and listened to the Irwin Polishook Lecture by General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen of Education International. Education International is the teachers’ union umbrella organization with 22,000,000 members worldwide. During the conference, the AFT sketched out its new strategic plan in higher education, involving new approaches to organizing, political action, collective bargaining, professional control enhancement, and the rebuilding of the academic workforce.

Of particular interest to Local 1600 members was a presentation by AFT Vice President Bill Scheuerman of the United University Professions of New York, which represents 28,000 members of the State University of New York. He bestowed a silver “Get Out of Jail Free” plaque to Norman Swenson for his militancy and service to the AFT.

Scheuerman, the chairman of the AFT Higher Education Program and Policy Council, reminded the members that the Higher Education Division already had established the Norman G. Swenson Militancy Award. This award is presented to an AFT local every two years at the AFT National Convention during the Higher Education Breakfast. This year, the Swenson award will be presented to Michael Harkins, chapter chair of the Harper College Faculty Senate, for his leadership during the Harper College Strike of 2002.

From left: Janie Morrison, Rausan Tamir, Norm Swenson with silver plaque, Perry Buckley, James Moore, Verna Anderson and Bill Naegele gather to honor Swenson at the AFT Conference in Seattle.
Retired Biology Professor Satish Chandran of Kennedy-King College, recently visited the islands of the Galapagos Archipelago, in the footsteps of 19th Century theorist Charles Darwin, for a reminder of evolution by natural selection.

Debra Baker, Coordinator of the Ophthalmic Technology Program at Triton College, was awarded Fellow status with the Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology at its annual conference. ATPO’s Fellow Program was established to recognize members who have made significant and sustained contributions to ophthalmic allied health.

Marc D. Dukes and Rochelle Robinson were married at Augustana Lutheran Church on March 4. Dukes is an editor for the Pantagraph Newspaper and Robinson is an English professor at Olive-Harvey College and a correspondent for the Voice.

Professor Bob Hughes of Truman College, a creative writing teacher, has recently published Running with Walker, about his family’s struggle to raise their autistic son. Both Bob and Walker were mentioned in a Channel 7 story broadcast last November.

Editorial Note: “Personal Glimpses” is the place for publishing good news about life-significant wedding anniversaries, commendations from your employer or college chapter, awards won, etc. Send your typed “personal glimpse” with a photo of your face (a suggestion, not a necessity), address, chapter and your college and home phone numbers to:

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