The Summer Interns Are at Work

Alex Baker is a second-year student at the SIU School of Law. Baker attended West Chicago Community High School, then the University of Missouri for his Business Marketing degree. He has one year to go for his J.D. degree; he’ll take the bar exam in fall, 2011.

So far, Baker has attended two Prairie State negotiation meetings and attended a hearing at Oakton College in addition to helping out in the office.

When asked why he pursued a legal career, Baker says he has always had an interest in labor law. His mother, Debra Baker, chairs the Triton College faculty chapter; his grandfather led a strike at General Motors. Both his grandmother and his aunt were union members. Thinking about fairness and working conditions is a family tradition. Alex Baker puts it simply, “I want to protect the workers’ rights.”

Jennifer Visk, a Riverside-Brookfield High School graduate, earned a B.A. in Liberal Arts from Butler University with a double major in Political Science and History. She is pursuing an M.A. in Education from the University of Phoenix. She hopes to be teaching history and government in an Illinois high school by fall 2011.

Visk was very interested in the meetings at Harper College where they are creating a classified chapter. “It is interesting to see how people have to come together,” Visk says. She also enjoyed taking a social media class this summer in how to use Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to communicate.

When asked why she decided to apply for this internship, she was forthright: “I’ve seen how my father, Tim, has been working for his classified chapter at Morton. I plan to be an active member of my union when I am a teacher, too.”
SOS: Save Our Schools, Save Our State; 15,000 Rally for Education in Springfield

Springfield is a town that is moved by whispers, but, clearly, the state employee unions and other groups depending on state funding to help the elderly, the infirm and public safety were angry. On April 21, over 15,000 people heeded the call from the Responsible Budget Coalition to march on the State House. They demanded a tax increase to fund the needs of the folks in the legislators’ districts. Local 1600 was well-represented at the rally.

The coalition included the Illinois Federation of Teachers (blue shirts), the Illinois Education Association (red shirts), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 31 (green shirts), Service Employees International Union (purple shirts), the IL AFL-CIO and 200 interest groups (various outfits).

The speakers to the rally were beneath an SOS (Save Our Schools, Save Our State) banner. Tim Drea, Secretary-Treasurer of the Illinois AFL-CIO, hit some of the major points:

• “The 177 members of the General Assembly in the State House have jobs, but they don’t want to do their jobs to pass a responsible budget with sufficient revenues to run the State of Illinois.”

• Drea asked, “Will it hurt our communities…if we raise revenues for health care?” “NO!” screamed the crowd. “For schools, community colleges and universities?” “NO!” “For health care for our sick and our seniors?” “NO!”

continued on page 3
The Best is Yet to Come!

The news from all fronts seems to be bad. Foreign governments’ and the United States’ economic situations have been in a downturn for the last 18 months. In addition, we are involved in two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with no end in sight. Back home in Illinois, we are facing budget deficits of $11 billion.

Unemployment is the highest since the Great Depression. Public education is under assault from union-busting administrations and Tea Party activists. It is not difficult to feel a little down at this time for the future of our nation and our profession. You just have to remember that it’s always darkest before the dawn. What we do is important and necessary to the quality of life in our country. We provide the leaders for tomorrow. The best is yet to come for our nation, state and profession.

“This too shall pass,” the old Persian proverb goes. It is good to put this in perspective. We have been in difficult times and have always come back more vibrant and stronger than before. Public education is the key for economic recovery; new jobs depend more and more on an educated workforce. Predictions for the new jobs that will be coming on line in the next decade call for advanced degrees which will not be a luxury but a necessity.

Industry is dependent on states that provide a workforce that has the education and skills to become productive workers. So, you might say, we are in a potential growth industry. Without the skills and abilities to adapt to changing circumstances that we nurture, businesses will not have a chance to compete and be successful.

Who will best provide the vital ingredients so badly needed for a nation in uncertain times? Community colleges, that’s who! Community colleges are a great investment for our nation and our state. A recent study done for Illinois’ Community Colleges categorically states that by attaining an associate’s degree, a student’s potential lifetime earnings are increased by about 38%. If you attend a community college in Illinois, your chance for attaining a bachelor’s degree is increased by 50%. There are almost one million students who attend Illinois’ community colleges, and 90% of those student stay in Illinois.

What better investment could you make than to invest in the human potential that is currently sitting in our classrooms? What better investment in the quality of life for our country is there than putting our money where our minds are? Human capital is the highest resource that a nation can produce, and shouldn’t we raise the value of that capital by investing in our people?

The world needs hope; we provide both hope and opportunities. The country needs to be able to innovate and react to the challenges of the future; our community colleges are designed to do just that.

Public education is perfectly situated to provide the tools for a better tomorrow. We are there to provide those tools. We are not the problem; we are the solution! Our day is coming; the best is yet to come.
POLITICS

15,000 Rally for Education in Springfield (continued)

- “We need a tax increase to provide services. We are not a poor state.”
  IFT President Ed Geppert then took to the podium. His key comments nailed it:
- “We need the General Assembly to pass House Bill 174 to provide funding for education, public safety, and human services.”
- “The time for our lawmakers to talk is over. Now, it is time for them to act.”
Following the speeches, the members walked around the State House. At the end, many chanted various “SOS” refrains to the General Assembly members within the State House.

At the luncheon beneath a tent behind the IFT headquarters, Local 1600 President Perry Buckley summarized the day’s activities. “The most important thing is that the crowd numbers were more than we expected. It is evident that union members and others are very upset with the General Assembly,” Buckley said. “And the power of the unions was evident—the IFT, SEIU, IEA, and AFSCME all participated together.”

“We know the General Assembly heard us. The question is—did they listen?” Buckley wondered.

“Of course we know the General Assembly heard us. The question is—did they listen?”
—President Perry Buckley

AROUND THE CCCTU

Morton Classified Sells Flowers to Congratulate Their Students

For six years in a row, the Morton Classified Chapter has held a flower sale for graduating students as part of their efforts to boost the chapter’s scholarship program. Bookstore Manager Eugene Suire coordinated the event with his unionized bookstore staff as workers: Eddie Villarrubia, Ralph Navarro, and Armando Bucio. Volunteers from the chapter this year included Chapter Chair Tim Visk, Asst. Chapter Chair Eric Porod, Lorraine Hallas, Mary Addalia, and non-union classified staffer Alyce Vujtech. House Rep. Richie Pawlak was sorely missed, but he was compelled to join the Blackhawks’ cheering section instead on May 21. Last year’s sales resulted in a profit of over $607.00. This year they made $625.00, despite occasional rain showers.
CCCTU Wins in Five Categories of AFT Print and Website Contest

Bob Blackwood, Bill O’Connell, Todd Lakin, Randy Barnette & Intern Jennifer Visk at the June 18 VOICE & Union Website Meeting in the Union office.

Local 1600’s College Union Voice newspaper and our website have won awards in five categories of the American Federation of Teachers Communications Network Contest.

Our newspaper and website received:
• a third place for general excellence of publications, editor Todd Lakin;
• a third place for “The Winners Window” photo in best original illustration or photo, photo by Bob Blackwood;
• a third place in best design/layout Print Media Only, editor Todd Lakin and Mary Cary of Cary Communications;
• a second place in best organizing materials for “COPE Road Show” Fall 2009, photos and copy by Todd Lakin, Bill O’Connell, and Bob Blackwood; and
• a second place in the best website category, photos and stories by webmaster Bob Blackwood, Todd Lakin, and Bill O’Connell.

Todd Lakin stated: “I’m very proud of the efforts of everyone involved in producing the Voice.” He noted that Perry Buckley has given him the freedom to explore in both content and style. Randy Barnette has been a guiding force on editorial content. Suburban correspondent Bill O’Connell and Bob Blackwood, special contributor and webmaster, were always supportive. Lakin also thanked recent guest contributors such as Brenda Pryor, Chuck Mustari and Rochelle Robinson-Dukes.

Finally, Lakin recognized freelance designer Mary Cary of Cary Communications “for her outstanding contributions to the design and layout of the award-winning Voice. Next year,” Lakin continued, “we’ll try to do even better in the contest.”

Bob Blackwood said, “I think Perry Buckley’s asking Randy Barnette to help us pick stories and photos for consideration in the AFTCN Contest was a good idea. The more we act as a team, the more we achieve.”

UPCOMING DATES:

July 16:
House Meeting

July 23-24:
Strategic Planning Retreat

August 20:
Executive Board Meeting

September 17:
House Meeting at Triton College

October 15-17:
IFT Convention in St. Louis

October 22:
Executive Board Meeting

November 19:
House Meeting

Visit the CCCTU website: www.ccctu.com College Union Voice
Spring Leadership Workshop
Focuses on Future Leaders

Over 100 Local 1600 members enrolled in the 6th Annual CCCTU Spring Leadership Workshop on April 24 held at Morton College. As President Perry Buckley noted in his welcome to the participants, “The presence of over 100 Local 1600 members shows, quite clearly, that the future of Local 1600 is secure. The future leaders are here today.”

The half-day workshop was divided into two parts: a plenary session, titled “Leadership in Challenging Times,” followed by three concurrent breakout sessions: “Legal Update and Grievances,” “Treasurers Training” and “Innovation in Education.”

After Asst. to the President Randy Barnette, who organized the event, reviewed the morning’s agenda, Buckley thanked everyone for “giving up part of your Saturday to be here.” He also added, “Randy told me that he didn’t recognize half the people here, which is just great! When I go to various AFT functions, so many complain that they can’t seem to get their membership involved, just the same old people,” Buckley continued. “I always tell them that, in Local 1600, that’s not the case.”

Buckley took a moment to welcome and thank Morton College President, Dr. Leslie Navarro, who noted that she is “proud to be wearing CCCTU wear” even though she may get some grief for sporting pro-union clothing. “I believe that we in the administration are here to support you and I also believe that, in these difficult times, we need to work together to face and overcome these challenges,” she said to much applause.

Buckley then introduced the presenters for the “Leadership in Challenging Times” plenary session: Rochelle Robinson-Dukes, Olive-Harvey’s Chapter Chair, and David Richmond, Harper’s Grievance Chair. He noted that both presenters represented Local 1600 at the AFT’s Future Leaders Conference in November, 2009, in Washington, D.C.

After a short break, the participants headed out to one of the three breakout sessions. CCCTU’s Legal Council Brenda Pryor and Acting Grievance Chair Chuck Mustari co-led the “Legal Update and Grievance” breakout session. Harper Faculty’s Tom Dowd and MXC’s William Stewart and CM! Winters-Palacio led “Innovations in Education.”

CCCTU Treasurer Don Radtke led the session on “Treasurer Training” for each chapter’s treasurers, offering solid advice during tough economic times.

The half-day workshop ended with a team-building luncheon. CCCTU current and future leaders had a chance to discuss the day’s events. Buckley thanked Morton’s chapter leaders Tim Visk and Dante Orfei for their hospitality and introduced the new summer intern, Jennifer Visk, Tim’s daughter.

For the full story, please visit www.ccctu.com.
AROUND THE CCCTU

KKC’s Union Retirement Celebration
Is Warm and Wonderful

President Perry Buckley chats with KKC Dean Phyllis Brooks at the Apr. 29 Union Retirement Celebration.

The Black Box Theater has a black ceiling, black floor and black walls. Some photographers shudder at the thought of shooting there. But though the lighting may be a bit of a problem, the warmth and good cheer of the people at the Union Retirement Celebration and Book Scholarship Fundraiser Luncheon soon filled the room.

Asst. Chapter Chair Melissa Smith was the first person in the room. She immediately started decorating it. Soon, Chapter Chair Arlicia Corley was there greeting people such as President Perry Buckley and his assistant, Randy Barnette, KK Dean Phyllis Brooks, Part-time Professional Union House Rep. Richard Foster, and many more.

Corley asked Buckley to open the event with comments. As Buckley said with a laugh, “The faster I speak, the faster we will eat.” He noted he had taught with many of the retirees, and that his day would come to receive the customary commendations. He praised the students present for proceeding with their academic career while balancing the problems of a troubled economy and raising their families.

KKC Dean of Instruction Phyllis Brooks welcomed everyone to the event on behalf of President John Dozier. Smith gave the blessing on the food to be eaten. Union House Rep. Lonnie Hall joined Smith on the serving line.

Following the lunch, Treasurer Gregory Blair passed out certificates of appreciation to the honorees: Barbara Conner, Bernard Shelton, Jeanette Williams, John Kidd, Jr., Joseph Kyle, Linda Villar, Madie Cannamoré, Verna Anderson, Robert Cruthird, Virgil Hempfill and Jane Naylor. Blair also gave certificates to those who contributed to the funding of the event and the student scholarships.

KKC Asst. Chapter Chair Melissa Smith decorated the hall and Union House Rep. Lonnie Hall pitched in and helped Smith serve the food.

KKC Chapter Chair Arlicia Corley, former Local 1600 Secretary Verna Anderson, and Sharonda Benson smile obligingly at the camera during the Retirement Celebration.

KKC Chapter Treasurer Gregory Blair presented retiree Prof. Madie Cannamoré with a certificate for her years of service and a “Success” paperweight.
Moraine Valley Adjuncts Meets and Express Concerns

On Apr. 28, Moraine Valley Adjuncts Chapter Chair Keith Westland popped into the 11:00 a.m. chapter meeting before it began and said hello and then was off to teach his class. Asst. Chapter Chair Dave Burns chaired the meeting. President Perry Buckley was in attendance, but he held his comments until all of the chapter officers had spoken.

Burns showed a drawing of the new Adjuncts office on the Moraine Valley campus and explained how it would function. He also noted that the adjuncts now have a seat on the MV President’sAdvisory Council.

Grievance Chair Don Stewart commented on a number of concerns. He requested members with a problem to come to him first, rather than the administration. Stewart also noted that members should not engage in any discussion that might result in their being disciplined without the benefit of union representation. “Politely mention that you are invoking your Weingarten Rights to not speak without union representation, rights that are yours by federal law, and leave while indicating that you will attend a meeting as soon as union representation is available,” he stated.

Buckley finally spoke. He attends AFT meetings in Washington, DC, five-to-six times a year, discussing the problems of “contingency labor”—a.k.a. adjunct faculty, part-time support and classified staffs, etc. Buckley said, “You deserve respect. The administration should be asking the people like you, who do the work at the college, how they can best help you.”

Buckley closed the session by praising the officers and editor of the Adjuncts’ newsletter, “Adjunction,” for having won this year’s Suburban CCCTU Newsletter Award (a plaque) plus a $500 check from Local 1600 for "Adjunction" editor Robin Meade. After the meeting proper ended, Buckley stayed to answer any questions.

MVFA Hosts Annual Picnic

At the annual Moraine Valley Faculty Association end-of-year picnic at Pioneer Woods on May 13 are (l-r): Troy Swanson, Ali Riphagen, Perry Buckley, Jan Hill, Jim O’Malley, Bill Naegle and Randy Barnette. “We’re always happy to visit the chapter’s picnic; it’s fun for us all,” Naegle said.
The 45th Annual CCCTU Banquet was held at U.S. Cellular Field’s Stadium Club. President Perry Buckley welcomed about 300 members, relatives, and scholarship winners to the event. Before dinner, Secretary Pat Wenthold honored recently deceased members. After the meal, Todd Lakin and Bill O’Connell presented “Best Chapter Newsletter” awards to Keith Westland and Robin Meade of the Moraine Valley Adjunct Faculty Organization and Rochelle Robinson-Dukes of the Olive-Harvey chapter. President Emeritus Norman Swenson greeted the winners of the scholarships that were awarded in his name. Acting Grievance Chair Chuck Mustari and Election Chair Valerie Green presented the scholarships to the seventeen deserving students. The Jeremy G. Marks Activist Scholarship went to Daley College’s Rachael Martin. The Silent Auction & Raffle went on until 9:30. Dawson’s Rausan Tamir, master of the spinning discs, guided the gala dancefest which ended around 10:30.

Editor’s note: There are 215 photos of the event on SmugMug: www.ccctu.com.
Local 1600 Chapters Give Generously

Editor’s note: In keeping with an annual spring tradition, six chapters awarded scholarships to deserving students. Those chapters are: Daley, Truman, Wright, Harper Pro-Tech, Harold Washington and Triton Faculty. (The Kennedy-King and Olive-Harvey chapters held their ceremonies earlier in the spring semester and were featured in the Spring 2010 Voice issue.) Additionally, a number of chapters honored retirees and distinguished professors during the ceremonies. All stories and pictures of the events are posted on the website (www.ccctu.com). Below are photos and captions at each event.

Daley Chapter Celebrates Its 40th Annual Scholarship Awards

Double-scholarship winner Teresa Ruiz is all smiles, as are committee members Don Koss and John Majer (center).

A happy group of scholarship winners pose for a photo with Scholarship Committee members and Local 1600 officers.

Truman Chapter Generously Donates to Student Scholarships

Truman scholarship winners happily pose for a group photo with President Perry Buckley (back row, left) and Truman chapter chair Tony Johnston (back row, center).

Local 1600 Treasurer Don Radtke catches up with dapper COPE donor extraordinaire Michael McCloskey, who also generously donates to the Truman Scholarship Fund.

Wright College Scholarship Luncheon Brings Out the Best

With Hermine Krysa, Linda Murphy and Perry Buckley on the left and Henry Herzog on the right, the scholarship winners were surrounded by some of Wright’s finest.

Legislative Chair Bill Naegele and SURS Board Member Antonio Vásquez exchanged Springfield stories at the beginning of the luncheon. In the background is Wright Security House Rep. Dennis Fitzgerald.

Visit the CCCTU website: www.ccctu.com
SCHOLARSHIP BANQUETS

Harper Pro-Techs Laud Retiring Pat Wenthold & Beth Krueger

Maral Mjukian (in striped shirt) received her scholarship from Sharon Martin, Margie McGowan and Barbara Singer.

CCCTU Secretary and Harper Pro-Tech co-founder Pat Wenthold reminisces about her long career at Harper College.

HWC Packs Them in at Greektown for Luncheon

Myra Cox and Lynnel Kiely “book-end” the HWC 2010 Distinguished Professor, Sherry Ledbetter.

HWC Chapter Chair Phil Stucky introduces the members of the Scholarship Committee to a packed house at the Greek Islands restaurant.

TCFA Honors Scholarship Winners at Luncheon

Randy Barnette, Stu Sikora, Debra Baker, Sandra Hughes, Lesa Hildebrand and Jim O’Malley congratulate scholarship winner Rosina Nikolaeva (holding plaque).

Larry McGhee, Emily Raebe, Dennis McNamara, Mary Casey, Ric Segovia and Angelee Johns finally have a moment to relax after a long semester.
Bill Naegele and Bill Mabe
Call It the Way They See It in Springfield

He concluded with a slam on Brady’s saying he could “cut his way out” just by slashing spending: “You know, if we lay off every state employee from the janitor to the governor, we would only save $3 billion of the $11.293 billion state budget deficit.”

SURS Executive Director Bill Mabe was in the third day of his new office, having been selected by the SURS Board and appointed by Governor Pat Quinn. He was accompanied by the former Interim Executive Director Judy Parker, who will continue to advise Mabe on pension issues.

Mabe stated that the SURS pension system was not a group of luxury retirees. Two-thirds of them earn under $50,000 a year. Naegele had noted that the average pension was about $33,000 last year.

Among the good points, Mabe listed the SURS administration was very lean, having only 128 employees to service all retired and actively working individuals in college and university-level public education in Illinois. In addition, the investment return for fiscal year 2009 was 19.7%, quite a contrast to most private retirement plans.

The bad points include the State of Illinois’ refusal to give enough money to cover the outflow. Mabe said, “I’m here to protect the assets of the SURS fund and to get what I need to sustain the fund.” Mabe then answered a variety of questions from the audience.

Some of the large crowd of retirees showed their support by buying a number of CCCTU caps and fleece jackets from Legal Council Brenda Pryor and the summer interns to support the COPE fund for lobbying and election expenses.
Kristine Christensen and Troy Swanson

When something happens at your college that impacts your chapter, how do you deal with it? Moraine Valley puts the issue on its website. Chapter Chair Jan Hill and the other members of the executive committee have a chance to comment on the issue via their blogs. The members can be guided by their opinions or can seek more information directly from the officers. As a show tune from “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum” almost goes, “Everybody Ought to Have a Website.”

About four years ago, Troy Swanson, the former Local 1600 webmaster and the MV Library’s webmaster, saw the need to create a Moraine Valley website to keep both the old and new members up on what was happening on their campus. The campus, which has a 3-mile circumference and 11 buildings, is a little too large for one union bulletin board. Also, it is difficult to have a frank discussion of the ethics rules and, definitely impossible to discuss political candidates at any length on any college-based website or email system.

Swanson turned to Kristine Christensen, a fellow teacher who, like Swanson, has been employed at MV for only about the last 10 years. Christensen, who teaches website design at MV, was challenged to create a user-friendly website for the MVFA. They talked about what would work for them on their campus. Swanson, who sees the website as a model for other chapters, says, “Kristine has the real talent. She also maintains and updates the website regularly.”

Christensen and Swanson began collecting home email addresses, as the college addresses would not be suitable for back-and-forth exchanges on political candidates or hot political or union issues. They now have home email addresses for over half the chapter, just in time for frank discussions of a new contract that would take effect a year from this coming August.

Christensen noted that she kept MV’s green and white colors in the chapter’s website. In designing the website, she had these ideas in mind:

- To make information accessible and navigable to everyone;
- To create a vehicle for communication;
- To have an independent resource outside of the college proper, an in-house source of information for the chapter and its members.

Christensen says: “We have blogs from members of the executive committee. Our news update blog

MV Librarian Troy Swanson initiated the MVFA website and Kristine Christensen finished it and is now its webmaster.
is updated through a WorldPress plug-in. It creates timely information with minimal maintenance.”

Christensen was also very cost-conscious in planning the website. She selected a host with many services: HostMonster.

“Our members who use the website find it easy to use and filled with timely information. Old information turns people off,” Christensen says. She enjoys helping her fellow faculty members out. “They’re a good group.”

Hill states: “Christensen and Swanson are part of a young faculty who live in the Electronic Age. With the contentious times with the State of Illinois these days, we need to be kept up to date on the latest challenges to our colleges, whether financial or otherwise. People need to read the latest articles and respond to what’s happening in Springfield by communicating with their state representatives and state senators.

“We also need information on chapter social events, on political events, and on rule changes on the campus. The chapter website is the One Stop Shop for Information.”

Hill noted that both Swanson and Christensen took the time to work on the website and help their fellow faculty at a time when both of them were not only teaching full-time but working on their doctoral dissertations. “They deserve to receive our thanks,” Hill said.

Have you moved? Please send us your new address:

Name
Address
City/State/ZIP
Home Phone:

College (or former college):

Mail to:
College Union Voice • Cook County College Teachers Union
208 W. Kinzie St., Chicago, IL  60654 or,
e-mail your address to: tlakin@local1600.org
Oakton Classified Receives National Award for Excellence from AFT at Annual PSRP Conference

The AFT’s 33rd annual Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel (PSRP) conference was held in Orlando, Florida on April 9-11. Chapter Chairs representing Local 1600 were Rose Sakanis (Moraine), Susan Braasch (Prairie State), Tim Visk (Morton), Missy Cabrera (Triton) and Patty Lucas (Oakton). CCCTU Legal Council Brenda Pryor and Suburban Correspondent Bill O’Connell were also in attendance as well as Suburban Classified VP Jillian Verstrate.

At the conference the AFT awarded the Oakton Classified Chapter a “National Award for Excellence.” This award is given, in part, to the chapter that best embodies the qualities and attributes that signify an effective and conscientious leadership that works hard for its members. The award also cites the chapter for its ability to work with the administration for the betterment of the members. It is the second year in a row the chapter has been cited.

“The AFT was very clear that this award was being presented to the entire Oakton Chapter. It is, then, an award presented to every member!” exclaimed President Perry Buckley.

“I am proud of Chapter Chair Patty Lucas and every one of her team for their work,” he continued. Lucas concurred, noting that “it is an honor not just for the Oakton Classified Chapter and Local 1600, but for every member who works so hard for the college and the students we serve.”

A variety of presentations were available to all attendees. Marcia Boone of the IFT’s Southwestern Illinois Federation of Teachers Local 6224, led the session, “Technical and Student Services in Colleges.” Assisted by Mark Schwebke of AFT Oregon, Boone discussed such topics as bullying, the impact of the economy on education and replacing retirees. Boone also reminded the union leaders that their members “owe a full day’s work. Arrive on time. Honor your break time. Don’t surf the net, and respect your job description. If you’re not at the table, you are probably on the menu.”

Pryor commented that, given the tough economic times in which we live, the administration is coming to the employee groups for financial concessions while trying to water down contract language. “Our local chapters who traditionally negotiate their own contracts have had to bring in officers from Local 1600 to remind administration that we don’t concede contract language in poor economic times,” Pryor said.

From that point Local 1600 members broke off to attend a variety of well organized seminars. Visk, Sakanis and Braasch attended, “AFT Salary and Economic Data Resources for Higher Education Locals” while Lucas and Cabrera attended “Bargaining for Respect and Recognition.” All felt that the break-out sessions were worth it. “I got a lot of great ideas for negotiating the next contract,” Cabrera said.

Pryor led the group of CCCTU leaders to a Saturday evening team building get-together to summarize the weekend highlights. The overwhelming summation was, “Together we stand, divided we fall.”

At Orlando’s Wilderness Lodge are Susan Braasch, Tim Visk, Brenda Pryor, Lynn Visk, Rose Sakanis, Patty Lucas, Missy Cabrera and Jim Lucas.
The 2010 AFT/NEA Higher Education Conference

Perry Buckley with Chapter Chairs Linda Murphy, Debra Baker and Tom Dowd at the AFT/NEA Higher Education Conference

The AFT/NEA Higher Education Conference was aptly named: “Advancing Higher Education in Unpredictable Times.” Tom Dowd, Debra Baker, Linda Murphy and Perry Buckley were all part of the union response to the difficult times we face. Some highlights from the AFT/NEA Higher Education Conference are given below.

• Bullying in the Workplace: Harper Chair Tom Dowd found the “Dealing with Unprofessional Supervisors and Colleagues” session to be interesting. “I was unaware of the large reported amount of bullying by females in the workplace. I must admit I walked away slightly confused about what actions are definitely illegal about bullying whereas harassment is clearly illegal by law.”

• Community Colleges: Challenges and Opportunities: Wright Chair Linda Murphy noted that, in 1990, a community college student received roughly $6,800 a year in support from federal, state and local sources. In 2010, a student received about $6,900 dollars from the same government sources. “While government funding has been shrinking, there is a constant rise in student tuition,” Murphy says. She also reported the $2 billion dollars that President Obama has designated for community college students will be spread out over 10 years.

• Engaging the Next Generation of Union Leaders and Activists: Finding ways to connect with and help newer and younger members succeed in their work and become active in their union is an important challenge. Triton Chair Debra Baker enjoyed the workshop: “Newer and younger faculty and staff have different interests, and there are new methods of reaching out to them. You have to encourage the development of new media to reach newer and younger members: websites, text messaging, Facebook, Twitter, web-conferencing or webinars as well as teleconferencing.”

• Job Protections for PSRPs: The AFT leadership requested President Perry Buckley to act as the moderator of the “Job Protections for PSRPs” workshop. In addition, he created an extensive handout entitled “Unpredictable Times: Job Protections for PSRPs - a.k.a. Classified and Support Staffs.” Here are his key points.

1. “The funding crisis in higher education is real; it hits support and classified staff the hardest.”
2. “The first to be hit in any downsizing are the ‘non-bargained for’ employees. Next on the hit list are non-teaching Union members.”
3. “In any threat of reduction-in-force, layoffs, or even furlough days, the primary goal of the Union is to protect jobs. Protecting the contract is second. Protecting pay and benefits is third.”
4. “Contract language should include such things as: Notification of Layoffs; Impact Bargaining; Seniority; Severance pay; Retraining; and Call Back. If you have such contractual provisions, use them. If you do not, bargain for them.”
5. “In contract negotiations in the immediate future (2010-2015) do whatever is possible to keep your members as “whole” as possible.
6. “When there is no money on the table, the team should get non-monetary gains. Better working conditions, non-cost benefits, sick banks, etc. should be secured. Under no circumstances should negotiations result in a freeze in pay and givebacks.”
7. Every union with support and classified members must be politically active. Coalitions with the administration, other unions, state higher education boards, community groups, are a vital means to force the relevant bodies politic to find the revenues to fund our colleges and universities.