



# The Power Source

## Old/New Kid on the Block

By Alan Wintermeyer, President

Dear Classified Colleagues:

My name is Alan Wintermeyer. For those of you who don't know me, I am a Family Nurse Practitioner in Student Health Services. In addition to that, I assumed the role as President of the Classified Bargaining Unit in May of this year when Doug Kuula became the Manager of Environmental Health & Safety. I wish him the best and am thankful for all his good efforts on our behalf for the past 8 years.

When I began my work at SRJC in the summer of 1980, classified employees were represented by CSEA. As a part-timer here juggling 2 other jobs, trying to finish my graduate studies, and raise a young family my level of involvement was nil. In the later 1980's we had a decertification election, and chose to be represented by SCOPE (Sonoma County Organization of Public and Private Employees), which later became Local 707 and now is SEIU

1021. I served on the first Classified Advisory Council, and was elected the 2<sup>nd</sup> President of the unit in 1990 when Dr. Agrella began his tenure here. I remained on the Council for several years and also served a term as Vice President and negotiator.

Hence the title choice "Old/New Kid" As I am older now, and much has changed on the block. I don't know many of you, and many of you do not know me. Being in this position again on such short notice feels very new, and has been a steep learning curve. I would like to address some of my concerns as an Old/New Kid on the block here.

These are not the best of times, with as yet an uncertain future. In January we should be having a new President replacing Dr. Agrella, and this presents another change and challenge. There are also rumors of mid-year cuts from Sacramento, and while they will not impact us

this academic year, it will have an impact on negotiations which resume in January. Over 40 classified staff have now been re-engineered in the past few years, which is about 10% of us. Experiencing these changes during the re-assignment meetings has been difficult. As a group we need to try to remain flexible and supportive of each other.

One of the important goals we set forth many years ago was agency shop, as a part of our contract and working conditions here. As an Agency Shop here we have a FEE PAYER alternative, allowing some of you to contribute less, and sacrifice your ability to vote and participate in a more meaningful way in the workplace. I feel paying our union dues is no different than paying taxes for police and fire protection, public schools, and many of the other services we consider essential, fair, and reasonable. For those of you who do not belong, you might consider some of alternatives proposed without negotiations...like direct pay

## Stressed Out on the Job?

By Bess Eiermann, Job Steward

Have you been feeling it in the air lately? It's that air of uncertainty, apprehension, nervousness. It seems a lot of us are on edge, and for good reason. The expectation is out – we are expected to do more with less. Some employees have retired and their positions are not being filled. And yet, the tasks they were doing still need to be completed. Other positions have been phased out

and those employees holding those lost positions have been "re-purposed." And while we watch the news of unemployment figures rising, food bank lines getting longer, and homes being foreclosed on at record rates, we then tell ourselves that we are lucky to still have employment.

The fact is, we ARE lucky to still have employment. But

that fact doesn't negate the elevated stress levels we may be experiencing.

So, what is an SRJC employee to do with this anxiety?

First, **learn to prioritize.** If necessary, include your manager in this decision-making. Make a list of those tasks you are facing, and put them in three lists: Most important, important, and least important. Attend to the most

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cuts, no longevity or step increases, layoffs, etc. which has not happened to our bargaining unit. We all need to be responsible and participate in the democratic process, and I want to encourage all of you who are FEEPAYERS to PLEASE JOIN AND WORK WITH US.

I want to personally thank all of the members of the Classified Executive Council, the Officers, the Negotiating Team, and the Job Stewards for all their great efforts on our behalf (and for all the help and support they have and continue to give me). I also want to recognize and thank our Classified Senate colleagues as well. Let us all hope things can and will get better...



## Shirley Davis Classified Scholarship By Hilleary Izard, Vice President

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Shirley Davis worked as a Coordinator, Microcomputer Lab for many years and served on the Classified Executive Council as a Negotiator and activist for professional development. She has recently retired and a scholarship was created in her honor. The goal is to identify Sonoma County Junior College District Classified employees and give you the potential to progress in work-related skills. Look for more information about how to apply for this scholarship!



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important first.

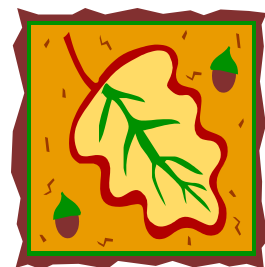
Second, **learn to leave your work at work.** Now is the time to really indulge in those things you love to do outside of work. Make sure you have time for yourself.

Third, **get enough sleep, nourishment, and exercise.** Want your mind and body to feel peaceful and strong enough to handle the ups and downs at work? Get the right amount of sleep for your needs — not too much or too little. Eat well: Choose fruit, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains for long-term energy (instead of the short bursts that come

from too much sugar or caffeine). And exercise to send oxygen to every cell in the body so your brain and body can operate at their best. Exercising on a regular basis is one of the main stress reducing activities. Exercise makes us use pent-up energy and tension, focusing our nervous energy into a constructive activity.

Finally, **stay connected with others.** Make time for family and friends. Doing things with those we feel closest to deepens our bonds and allows us to feel supported, secure, and not alone. If you are feeling worried or upset about work, take time to talk about it with your support

system — the people who know and love you the most. Staying connected with nature is also helpful. By taking a walk in the woods, going to church, and finding that peaceful activity that lessens your stress levels, you will then be able to rejuvenate yourself for another day.



# Have You Thought About Joining the Union?

By Hilleary Izard, Vice President

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How the union effects your job:

- protects and enforces the contract with the District
- provides a mediator to help with work related problems
- advocates for the best benefits
- focuses on retention of employees
- serves as a bridge from local to Sacramento

Contact a steward to sign up to be a union member and not a fee payer.

*It's the strongest voice  
you have here at work!*



## Do You Know Your Weingarten Rights?

By Caitlin Downing, Job Steward

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America's unions fought hard to obtain many legal rights for employees. Some of these rights are now taken for granted or are not exercised simply because employees do not know they exist. It is part of a steward's role to educate members about employee rights. The guarantee of union representation at investigatory interviews is known as **Weingarten rights**. These rights were announced by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1975. Before Weingarten rights were established, an employee could be compelled to enter a closed-door meeting with management where they could be interrogated or bullied into confessions of wrongdoing. With Weingarten rights, employees are protected from false accounts and intimidation by management.

If you are called into a meeting with your supervisor and **believe there is a strong possibility the meeting will have disciplinary consequences**, you may request the presence and support of a steward (or other union representative) at that meeting. Possible subjects

for discipline would be: absenteeism, accidents, damage to JC property, drinking, drug abuse, falsification of documents, fighting, insubordination, lateness, poor attitude, sabotage, theft, violation of safety rules, and poor work performance. **It is important to know that management is not required to inform you about your Weingarten rights. It is your responsibility to know of this right and to request it.**

Here is what you say:

*"I request to have a Union representative present on my behalf during this meeting because I believe it may lead to disciplinary action being taken against me. If I am denied my right to have a Union representative present, I will refuse to answer accusatory questions and any I believe may lead to discipline."*

- Weingarten rights

### You should know:

- **You must make this clear request for representation before or at any time during the interview.** An interview may not begin as disciplinary. However, if turns in that direction, you may request your Weingarten rights at that point.
- You cannot be punished for requesting representation. If management asks you to give up your right voluntarily, you are strongly advised to refuse.
- Management may grant your request to delay until a union rep. shows up, or it may deny your request and end the interview then and there.
- You are allowed to consult with your rep. privately before the meeting with management.

### What a steward can do for you.

Your steward can advise and support you, boost your confidence and allay your fears, serve as a witness to prevent false records and interpretations of

## Weingarten Rights, Cont'd from Page 3

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the meeting. A steward can stop you from losing your temper and risking charges of insubordination. A steward can prevent you from making dangerous admissions, can tell you how to answer a question, and can offer extenuating circumstances for your actions. A steward can speak up for you and ask supervisors to provide clarification.



## Reengineering—The Santa Rosa Junior College District By Sandy Sigala, Job Steward

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Re-Engineering continues to occur these days due to the state budget crisis. As difficult as it may seem, we continue to see more of the district re-engineering happening. You may be feeling vulnerable and unprotected as the college moves through this process, however keep in mind, both the District and SEIU continue to be successful as we complete a process for reassigning or re-purposing. The CEC (Classified Executive Council), continue to be involved with the District throughout this process; to assure that the classified staff reassignment is being handled according to the Union Contract and with utmost diligence, while communicating with all those who may be involved with this process, i.e., Human Resources, current supervisor, proposed new supervisor, maybe a dean or vice president along with the classified staff and CEC member.

As difficult as it is to be re-engineered, remember there is a positive side in that you will take your experience and knowledge forward to a new department and add your expertise there, gain new wealth of information and knowledge as

### What a steward cannot do.

A steward cannot tell you not to answer a question or give false answers. You can be still be disciplined if you refuse to answer questions.

You may feel intimidated when an actual situation arises. You may be unaccustomed to demanding your rights, but be assured; it is in your best interests to do so. All the stewards encourage you to exercise your rights.

you learn your new job, and who knows, the new job may be even more exciting from the job that you left. Try to think change is good even though it is difficult. Try to look at all the positives to help you and stay a far from being stressed; the new department will provide training for you; reach out to the classified staff for helpful questions you may need answers to, we are just the next seat over from you, many are always offering a helping hand. Just reach out and ask.

Finally, as a reminder, the objective of re-purposing staff is to be able to meet short and long term staffing needs of the District by reassigning current staff from one office or department, to another work location to fill a position that has been deemed critical or essential to the operations of the District. Once the classified staff member has been reassigned to a new work location, the District will not be “back-filling” the position vacated by the employee, thus, being able to save the District money, as well as being able to retain a regular classified staff member. All in all, this is a win-win situation for both the employee and the District!

## CEC Members Phone List

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### Alex Drake, Parliamentarian

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### Margaret Mann, Member-At-Large

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