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We Want to Feel the Sunshine, We Want to Smell the Flowers

Emari DiGiorgio, President of SFT Local 2275, examines the intersection of work and free time, and how some of us are too willing to sacrifice our leisure for toil.

This summer, I've started my reading list with Jenny Odell's *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*. One of my colleagues has already snarkily remarked, "So how's that going for you?" Odell is not advocating for one to relinquish all social responsibility. Instead, she's asking us to reconsider how we engage with, or rather how we might disrupt, the status quo, which is not sustainable or even designed to take into account human wellbeing.

She reminded me that as far back as 1886, US workers have been advocating for "eight hours of work, eight hours of rest, and eight hours of what we will." The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions' logo and song reflected these ideals. The three-part graphic showed a textile worker at her machine, feet poking out of a bed, and two people on a boat reading a paper.

Likewise, the Union song echoed these sentiments of rest and "what we will": "We want to feel the sunshine; we want to smell the flowers; We're sure that God has willed it, and we

mean to have eight hours."

Now, more than ever, we need to stake these boundaries. Nearly all of us are guilty, myself included, of giving the University chunks of time

"...we can be loyal stewards of the University ... without sacrificing our health and well-being."

that should be ours. Sometimes, we say it's "for the students" or that "it won't get done, if I don't [fill in the blank]." Every division and unit across campus is understaffed, and management has been reluctant or opposed to filling these vacancies. There is no incentive to fill these positions if we continue to steal from ourselves in the name of expediency, efficiency, and/or duty.

I know this is easier said than done, but we can be loyal stewards

of the University—our students, our colleagues, and each other—without sacrificing our health and well-being.

Unions have fought for workers' rights in the United States for over 130 years. We are able to maintain what we've earned when we have a strong, active membership that knows its rights. These past few years have been incredibly challenging with the added stress and instability of the pandemic. I want to honor and acknowledge what you have endured, and I want to encourage you to take care of yourself, navigating a four- or five-day work week in your understaffed office this summer or trying to catch up on stalled research/creative projects.

Several of our sister institutions are experiencing financial difficulties and initiating layoffs. That is **not** our fate at Stockton, but these attacks on organized labor after a University mismanages its finances can have ripple effects, especially as we enter statewide negotiations for our Master Agreement next summer.

May you have eight hours of rest and another eight of what you will; the Union is here for you all year.

In solidarity,

*Emari DiGiorgio, MFA
Stockton University
President SFT Local 2275*



The Union and Professional Staff, A Primer

As a staff member, do you know how the union serves you? VP of Professional Staff, Maria Spade, explains the fundamentals.

Have you ever asked yourself, “what can the union do for me and what are its limitations?” This is a question I get frequently and since there are so many new professional staff members we thought this would be the perfect time to help answer these questions. A *Meet the Union Exec* workshop was scheduled with the intention of helping staff understand what is considered a condition of employment, what the union can assist with, and what falls outside of our purview.

On June 8th, we not only held this workshop, but we held one that was a first for our university. Not only were SFT Executive Members present, but so were the Executive Members from both CWA and IFPTE. This inaugural tri-union workshop allowed staff members to ask questions, not just to their own union, but also those of their colleagues who they work with on a daily basis.

It is important for all staff members

to know who their union executives are so they are aware who can assist them with concerns regarding terms and conditions of employment. See below for a breakdown of the current executive members for each of the unions.

It is important to know that **all three unions** are part of larger statewide and national bargaining units who advocate for terms and conditions of employment, negotiate on behalf of their members (including when offering supplementals), serve as an intermediaries between members and managers, represent their members during any disciplinary proceedings, and assist members with reclassification of state titles. One very big difference is that SFT can negotiate local agreements for its members, while CWA and IFPTE cannot.

If you would like to learn more about the 2019-2023 Statewide Master Agreements for each of

the unions, they can be found by following the links below:

[SFT Master Agreement](#)

[CWA Final Contract](#)

[IFPTE Final Contract](#)

All parties agreed that this partnership should continue, so lookout for future meeting invites that involve all three unions. We want to hear from you! How can we work better, as individual unions, and together? If anyone has any questions or topics that they would like to see as a workshop or suggestions on how the unions can work better together, please contact me at maria.spade@sftunion.org.

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*Maria Spade
Stockton University
Vice President of Professional Staff
SFT Local 2275*

SFT 2275

President:
Emari DiGiorgio

Vice President:
Tara Luke

VP of Professional Staff:
Maria Spade

VP of Adjuncts:
Stephanie Cawley

Grievance Officer:
Nazia Kazi

Lead Negotiator:
Tina Zappile

Treasurer:
Heather Perez

Communications Officer:
Justin Maciejewski

COPE Officer:
Erin O’Hanlon

CWA

President:
Robert Wallace

Vice President:
Christy Engelhardt

Secretary:
Karin Kallert

Treasurer:
Tucker Rowlinson

Shop Stewards:
Erika Cassetta
Sam Doughty
Ryan Schocklin
Linda Shea
Rochelle Iannuzzi
Brittany Boone
Irvin Moreno-Rodriguez
Raymond Edwards
Joe Vannucci
Shekhania Demosthenes

IFPTE

President:
Todd Doughty

Vice President:
Mike Mason

Secretary:
Arthur “Jamie” Jones

Treasurer:
William Albertson

Sgt-at-arms:
In electoral process

Shop Stewards:
Greg Hauser
Louis Parks
Dennis Finnegan
Robert Deitrick
David Jimenez

A New Face with the Same Fiscal Responsibility

An introduction and update from your new SFT Treasurer, Heather Perez.

Hello SFT members! I'm delighted to serve as the Treasurer for the union, taking over for the amazing Stacey Rose to finish out her term of office. Stacey provided me with amazing instructions and continues to help me as I find my way around to the various banks and accounts.

A little about me by way of introduction:

I have been at Stockton now for five years and have had the pleasure to work with many of you on committees and in classes as a faculty librarian. As Treasurer, I bring my professional skills in records management and organization to serve the SFT membership. I will work closely with the union leadership to ensure that the Union's finances remain sound so that we can fulfill our responsibilities

to ourselves, the members.

What are my qualifications for Treasurer? Like many of you, I pay my bills and do my own taxes. I read the fine print. I research the best credit cards and investments for my retirement plans. I enjoy making spreadsheets and to-do lists. I have bounced a check here and there (hate those bank fees!) and missed a payment on occasion, but overall I keep it together. And I hate paying for anything that should be free; my husband will tell you - I will do anything to avoid toll roads, beach tags, and paid parking!

Personally, I enjoy walking around Lake Fred, going to the beach, visiting museums, doing family history research, and watching my kids' sports, music, and theater

productions.

As Stacey wrote in the last newsletter, the union is in a good financial position with a healthy positive balance in our accounts. But we will continue to be watchful with costs rising due to inflation and with the retirement of so many of our members this year. Both of these impact our bottom line and we will be responsibly budgeting for the coming fiscal year until we can get a better read on where things stand. I look forward to serving as Treasurer and helping you to get the most out of your union membership!

--
Heather Perez
Stockton University
Treasurer, SFT Local 2275

Weingarten Rights: What You Should Know

Nazia Kazi, Grievance Officer, educates us on the background and limits of what we know as Weingarten Rights.

You are probably aware that, as the member of a collective bargaining unit, you are entitled to have a Union representative present at any meetings with management that may lead to sanction or discipline. In labor organizing, this is referred to as your "Weingarten rights."

We always urge you to avail yourself of your Weingarten rights should such a matter arise. While some managers may urge you to have a Union observer present at an investigatory meeting, they are not required to do so. In fact, managers are not required to inform you of your Weingarten rights at all. In many ways, the onus falls on you, the member, to become familiar with and invoke these protections when needed.

Weingarten rights do not mean

you can have a Union rep at *any* meeting with management. For instance, meetings that are training or correction of workplace practices are not included in Weingarten protections. And while you cannot select *which* Union representative will be present at your meeting, the Union executive board works collaboratively to determine who is available to attend your meeting. If you find yourself in a meeting with management that seems to veer in the direction of possible discipline or sanction, you may request to pause the meeting and ask for Union representation.

Your Union representative will not interrupt or stall an investigatory meeting. Instead, we work to keep the conversation on-topic and moving forward. We also ensure the questions being asked are

appropriate, take notes, or ask clarifying questions.

If you request a Union representative for a meeting that could lead to discipline and management denies it or retaliates against you for this request, this is a violation of the National Labor Relations Act and could lead to an Unfair Labor Practice charge.

If you have any questions about your Weingarten rights, please contact me at nazia.kazi@sftunion.org.

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Nazia Kazi, Ph.D.
Stockton University
Grievance Officer SFT Local 2275

In Memory of Lydia Fecteau, Vice President of Adjuncts for SFT (2015-2019), Adjunct Professor, Activist, Friend

When I was a freshman at Stockton University, I had the pleasure of taking Rhetoric and Composition with Professor Lydia Fecteau. The course was online and I was hesitant to sign up for my first remote course, but Lydia eased all of my worries with a warm welcome and a generous response to my questions. Through her encouragement, I stuck with the class, and I'm very happy that I did. She always provided helpful feedback and found thoughtful ways of engaging the class despite our asynchronous learning. I fondly remember her sense of humor and lively emails, which I admired as her student (and colleague).

In 2017, I returned to Stockton as an adjunct professor in the Department of General Studies, and while at the onboarding session, I noticed that Professor Fecteau was the Vice President of Adjuncts for the Stockton Federation of Teachers. It was one of the many reasons I joined as a full member at that meeting; so many of my former and beloved teachers were heavily involved in fighting for workers' rights at Stockton. They embodied the innovative and equitable lessons we discussed in our classes - especially Lydia, who tirelessly advocated on behalf of adjuncts and worked to improve accessibility conditions at large but particularly in higher education.

I never intended to run for office as a union representative, but Lydia's



leadership and passion for equity naturally guided me to the position. As a wealth of knowledge on adjunct rights, she was always available to answer questions or sometimes, recite word for word, the terms of our current contract. She was lovely and bold and fought for inclusion, respect, and changes for adjuncts at the local and state levels. She fought for all of us, really. Professor Fecteau

will be missed, and her legacy and fierce spirit will live on at Stockton through all of us who continue to stand up for what is fair and right.

Sincerely,

Maxine Patroni



News From The Social Front

A Recap: Retiree Dinner

On April 28th SFT rounded out the semester with a splendid celebration honoring our retirees from the past 3 years. With over 200 people in attendance, members enjoyed catching up with one another over a delicious meal, delightful drinks and wonderful entertainment provided by The Faculty Band. Emari DiGiorgio, SFT President, served as MC for the evening. She shared heartwarming remarks to those retiring and engaged the audience in a game of "Guess Who?". The Union sends our best wishes to all those retiring and moving on to their next adventure! Pictures of the event have been made available on the [SFT website](#).



A special note from the SFT Events Manager

Thank you to all who participated in the SFT Event Survey. We appreciate all the feedback we received. This information will help guide us with planning for the upcoming semester. For future events, we kindly ask that affirmative RSVPs (accepting calendar invites/filling out Google forms) are made only with the full intention of attending an event. All food, beverage, favors, and supplies are ordered based on RSVP numbers.

Lisa Warnock
Stockton University
Events Manager SFT Local 2275



SAVE THE DATE

SFT TOAST & ROAST

November 18, 2022

Stockton University, Atlantic City Campus, Fannie Lou Hamer Event Room

HOW DID WE DO?

The SFT Union Local 2275 Newsletter is a quarterly publication that focuses on the needs and issues that concern its members.

Errors? Omissions? Poor choice of content? Send us your accolades, gripes and suggestions, we'd love to hear from you.

A copy of this newsletter can be found in the inbox of all registered members or on our website:

www.sftunion.org

You can reach me, Justin Maciejewski, your editor and Communications Officer at:

justin.maciejewski@sftunion.org



SFT Retirees 2019-2022

Join us in bidding farewell to three years of retirees. We thank you for your service and extend an open invitation to come back and visit. You will all be missed!

2019-2020

Anthony Bethel
 Diane Falk
 Marion Hussong
 Stephen Kubricki
 Mark Mallett
 Melanie McLeod
 Simon Quint
 Robert Ross
 Victoria Schindler
 Joseph Sowers
 Pamela Vaughn
 Ann Walker

2020-2021

Kerry Chang
 Deborah Figart
 Diane Holtzman
 Ellen Mutari
 Sipra Pal
 Carole Rae Reed
 Lisa Rosner
 Joe Rubenstein
 Peg Slusser
 Luanne Usinger
 Jianrong Wang

2021-2022

Jean Abbott
 John Boyle
 Judy Copeland
 Pamela Cross
 Dennis Fotia
 Reza Ghorashi
 Richlyn Goddard
 Lee Ann Guenther
 Alisa Hogan
 Carra Hood
 Matthew Landau
 William Lubenow
 Denise McGarvey
 Shelly Meyers
 Arnaldo Cordero-Roman
 Linda Sayers
 Arthur Worthington

