



# Union Eyes

SPRING 2013 ISSUE



## Contract Highlight

### ARTICLE 36: TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Section 1.* The University will endeavor, within budgetary constraints, to provide opportunities that promote continuing education, training, and upgrading of employees. Training and Professional Development is a shared responsibility, and it is intended that these opportunities will enable employees to increase their knowledge and skill, enhance their promotional opportunities and advance their career goals.

For more information on free training or register for classes being offered through Human resources, please visit the [CSU Human resources webpage](#).

## Recent and Upcoming Events

The 2012 Holiday Social was very well attended, nearly 40 bargaining unit members stopped by to enjoy food and good times. The delegates and executive board were able to provide some refreshments, but more people came than were expected! Next time, more food!

The Social is a way for our community to come together and socialize outside of a traditional meeting setting. This relaxed atmosphere provides the space to meet some new people and spend time with veteran SEIU members.



### Distinguished Service Award

Congrats to Eileen J. Guttmann for receiving the Distinguished Service Award for Professional Staff! Eileen is the MSN Supervisor and a Nurse Practitioner in the CSU Health and Wellness Services Department.



I want to thank my "work wife" and Executive Co-Chair, Sandra English, for organizing the event and rallying the delegates into action. I appreciate everyone who was able to stop by and who helped out. It was great time and we are doing it again this spring!

**Make plans to attend on April 17th!**  
MC 122, Noon - 2 PM. Hope to see you there. – Rose Begalla,  
Executive Co-Chair

**2013  
Spring Social  
Wed April 17  
Noon - 2 PM  
MC 122**

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# Member Highlight

## Gail Marredeth: Past President, CSU Chapter, SEIU District 1199 by Rita M. Grabowski

**Note:** It was my pleasure and honor to talk with Gail Marredeth, who probably knows more about the unionization history of CSU's professional staff than anyone else on campus. Following are my questions and Gail's answers.

**RG:** I'm curious to know what Labor and Management relations were like when you started working at CSU.

**GM:** I started on January 22, 1979, and at that time, staff across campus were having problems with the Director of Human Resources. He was an ineffectual leader and loved the ladies. Several formal accusations were filed.



**Gail Marredeth**

**RG:** How did you get involved with professional staff issues, especially with the issue of unionization?

**GM:** When I started at CSU, I was a member of management. I was hired in as the Head of Circulation Services and I supervised a staff of ten. Around '87 or '88 I became a Reference Librarian, and no longer had supervisory responsibility. I was removed from my management position even though there was nothing in my Performance Evaluations that justified this move. A new Director was hired into the Library with the intent of making personnel changes. Circulation Services did not improve, and five years later the position opened again but was filled internally by a very competent manager. I was not asked to reapply for my old job.

I was kind of set-up into getting involved when the union (at that time, 9 to 5) came onto campus in 1998. My librarian colleagues asked me to represent them. The CSU faculty had unionized with AAUP [American Association of University Professors] less than a year before. Librarians are considered faculty members at many Universities, but the

CSU faculty did not want the librarians as part of their bargaining unit. Librarians did not have tenure and our fight would have dragged down the faculty's eventual win.

I attended 9 to 5 organizing meetings and helped with the effort to organize, although Calvin Knight [who has recently retired], was the best organizer. He asked me if I would serve as chapter President. I served as CSU's first president for over five years. [Gail also stepped up to help during contract negotiations in the spring of 2012 when Andi LoPresti retired due to health concerns.]

**RG:** What were some of the reasons for unionization?

**GM:** The librarians had always had a separate set of by-laws that determined policies and procedures. But the rest of the professional staff was divided up into rankings through a study done by Peat-Marwick. A lot of it was inaccurate. They didn't get it right.

Prior to this, I had attended meetings of the Professional Staff Association, but they had no bite. Their view seemed to be that management "had to be right," and they pretty much did what management told them to do.

Because there was no contract, we really had to start at the beginning. At that time, all professional staff were considered to be "term employees," and had to wait every year for a letter asking them to sign a new contract for another year's employment.

This was a huge battle with management. This and fair share\* were probably the

most difficult issues to work out. [\*Fair share is the policy where all staff who are represented by the union pay dues into the union whether they choose to become members of the union or not.] This is something that Anne Hill fought for after negotiations were over. I remember going to bed and getting a call around 11:30. It was Anne or Peggy [Torzewski, CSU's original union representative], who said about fair share: "You got it."

**RG:** How are we doing with getting people involved with union activities?

**GM:** We've moved to the next generation. The girls [Executive Board Members and Co-Presidents Rose Begalla and Sandra English] are doing fine. They work well together. The strengths that each of them has help to support the other. Jami Derry's participation has been a big plus, too [Newsletter Co-Chair and member of the Negotiating Team]. Tom Hurray as Membership Interim Chair is also a big plus.

**RG:** Gail, what message do you have for the bargaining unit members?

**GM:** Get involved. Stay involved. Be aware of what "they" are doing in local and state government. "Politics" is not a dirty word. It is all around you, you deal with it daily. Pay attention. Educate yourself. Do SOMETHING, don't just be a slug! Work to fix what's wrong. If nothing else VOTE!! And vote knowing the issues.

**RG:** Gail, thank you for being so generous with your time, today and since 1998! Your dedication and clarity have always been an inspiration to me. Thank you for all you your past and present efforts on behalf of our bargaining unit.

Educate yourself.  
Do SOMETHING,  
don't just be a slug!

Get involved. Stay involved. Be aware of what "they" are doing in local and state government.

# WELCOME TO THE BARGAINING UNIT

**Hyacinthe Raven!** by Rita M. Grabowski

On behalf of everyone in CSU's bargaining unit, I want to welcome Hyacinthe Raven to the Cleveland State Chapter of SEIU.

Hyacinthe started working at CSU as a student employee in the Career Services Center in October, 2001. Subsequently, she was hired full-time as a Public Inquiries Assistant in the Office of Financial Aid, and was a member of CWA.

She became a part of SEIU in December of last year (retroactive to October), as a result of successfully completing the Reclassification process. I know from personal experience that this is a time-consuming endeavor, but it can be done.

Within SEIU, when a bargaining unit member performs significant additional responsibilities (that are not included in their current job description) for a period of four months, they are eligible to apply for a reclass. Even if you are not successful

in moving up in grade, you might be eligible for an in-grade promotion that could warrant an increase in salary.

One catch-22 is that when additional responsibilities are taken on, it may be even more difficult to find the time to file a reclassification. Nevertheless, in my opinion, this is one of the greatest benefits that union representation offers here on campus, and can definitely be worth the effort.

Hyacinthe has been one of my favorite people on campus for the past twelve years. In the cold, gray murk of much of the year in Cleveland, Hyacinthe is (and I say this realizing it could be construed as a cliché), an absolute beam of sunny yellow joy.

Not only does she continue as a tireless advocate to CSU students (now in her new position as Coordinator, Student Employment Program), but I find it impossible not to feel better



about everything, including the weather in Cleveland, after talking with her for a few minutes.

Hyacinthe is also a published poet and a talented creative writer. You do not need to be a published poet and a talented creative writer to complete a success reclassification, but it couldn't hurt!

However, if you have a draft of the sections of a reclassification, and would like to have them proofread, and have some suggestions offered, email them to me at: [rita.grabowski@att.net](mailto:rita.grabowski@att.net).



## Know Your Weingarten Rights



Weingarten Rights are certain steps that are designed to protect members of a union in dealings with management that could potentially lead to discipline and/or termination. You have the right to union representation during conversations with your supervisor if you believe the conversation is disciplinary in nature. To invoke your rights, simply say



"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request that my union representative, officer, or delegate be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any question. **This is my right under the U.S. Supreme Court decision called Weingarten**"

**SEIU1199 @ CSU** Stronger Together



## Union Contacts

[CLEVELAND STATE SEIU 1199 WEBSITE:](http://www.csuohio.edu/organizations/SEIU)

[www.csuohio.edu/organizations/SEIU](http://www.csuohio.edu/organizations/SEIU)

To submit stories for the newsletter or to nominate a member to be featured, please email:

[j.derry@csuohio.edu](mailto:j.derry@csuohio.edu)

### How can I get involved in the Union?

Go to meetings, talk with the members of the Executive Team, volunteer for a committee, or run for a position on the Executive Team or Negotiating Team yourself. You'll be glad you did!

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD:

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#### WEB MASTER:

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