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There Is More to SEA Than Fun and Games

By Jill Wagner

The Staff Employees Association's newly elected co-presidents have a message for their constituents: There is more to the SEA than Padres games and trips to Laughlin, Nev.

"We want to make people more aware the SEA is their association and it's a place they can go when they have questions or concerns," says Becky Gilbert, administrative assistant in Copley Library.

"It's a place where they can have a say and be a part of change," adds Lynette Layne, assistant for the nurse practitioner program.

Gilbert and Layne were elected co-presidents in January and have wasted no time in setting goals for the next two years. In a recent meeting with new SEA officers Frank Holcomb, Lillian Lachicotte and Alicia Buenrostro, the co-presidents compiled a list of three goals to focus on throughout their term.

Topping the list is generating more participation among the general membership.

"Every staff employee is a member of SEA but we don't have a lot of people coming to visit meetings or see what we are doing," Gilbert says. "There's not a lot of interest."

The duo has several ideas for making the monthly meetings and officers more accessible to the 500 staff employees on campus, including posting the board meeting minutes on the gopher computer system and distributing the e-mail addresses of SEA representatives. Through e-mail, Gilbert and Layne are hoping employees will consider communicating electronically when they have ideas or concerns but little time to meet with their representative in person.

Besides organizing social outings, the SEA advocates for benefits and policy changes for the good of employees. In recent years, the SEA won tuition remission benefits for staff employees and their children taking classes at USD. Now Gilbert and Layne are focusing on creating better access to those classes.

Currently, it is at their supervisor's discretion that employees can take classes during work hours and some bosses simply won't allow the release time, Layne says. The small number of evening classes makes it even harder for some employees to earn a degree.

"We'd like to get a policy set up where there would be release time for at least one class a week," Gilbert says.

Gilbert's experience on the SEA benefits committee will come in handy when lobbying for the policy change. A three-year

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Honoree Loved by Two Families

By Jill Wagner

How does a single mother of six come to care for eight foster children? "They just seemed to find me," Mary Griffith answers, laughing lightly at the warm memories of the kids she raised for varying lengths of time.

One of the first children to find Griffith was part of a group of emotionally disturbed kids she was working with while she also held a full-time job. Another toddler was dropped off by her parents and stayed with Griffith for several years until the parents returned.

Whatever the circumstance, Griffith welcomed each child with an open and generous heart, believing that God would provide for her family. Her faith coupled with a great love for kids provided the strength to raise her three daughters and three sons as well as the foster children.

"I just believed I could do it," she says. "I took the best of what my parents were and instilled that in my children.

“There were times when I didn’t know where the next meal was coming from, but God always provided,” Griffith recalls.

The same sense of generosity and faith has guided Griffith in her work at USD for 24 years. Currently the purchasing manager, Griffith was honored as administrator of the year at last summer’s employee appreciation picnic. Chosen for the award by the Staff Employees Association, Griffith said she couldn’t hold back the tears when her name was announced.

"Something that stands out in my mind about Mary is her patience and understanding," wrote Nancy Olson, a buyer in the purchasing department, in nominating Griffith for the award. "When I was first hired in purchasing she told me, 'Don't worry about making mistakes because I’ve made them all!!'

Griffith, a North Dakota native, earned a psychology degree from San Diego State University. She later joined USD in accounting and moved to the purchasing department where her previous experience at General Dynamics proved invaluable. Griffith’s “detailed-oriented approach and her charismatic personality” further contributed to her success, Olson wrote.

Griffith herself attributes her excellent working relationship with employees to her education. “Psychology takes the icing off the cake,” she explains. “It teaches you to look at the person within, not the surface person.”

Mary Griffith (right) is admired by her colleagues from purchasing, Nancy Olson (center) and Eldrin Rowe, as well as many other community members who elected Griffith the 1994 Administrator of the Year.

Speaking from her Mission Hills home while on medical leave, Griffith bubbles with enthusiasm when reflecting on her friends and career at USD. She calls the people at Alcalá Park her second family. "My first love is being a mother, my second is USD," she says.

Now Griffith is enjoying being a grandmother to 13 children who live throughout the country. She particularly enjoys rummaging through bookstores with her grandson who lives in San Diego, and then returning home to pore over the books they both enjoy. The preferred topic this month is Native American history.

"The important thing in life is the love of a family," Griffith says. Both families, in her case.
Department of the Month

Career Services

The staff of Career Services includes (seated from left to right): Barbara Burke and Linda Scales; (standing from left to right): Renee Lewis, Denise Annatone, Anita Rogers, Rebecca Jaurigue, Mildred Brown and Liz Jacobs.

1. Where is your department located?
   Our office is located on the top floor of Serra Hall in room 300. Next year we are moving to the first floor of the new Hughes Administration Center.

2. What are the functions of your department?
   We serve as a bridge between the university’s academic experiences and the career world. We assist students and alumni by providing career counseling and assessment, workshops, career resources, job listings, internships, employer contacts, on-campus recruiting and information on trends in the work place. We sponsor employer presentations, career days and networking events. We meet with students both individually and in groups on résumé and vita preparation, interviewing skills and job search strategies. We teach students how to make effective contacts in their fields of interest by interacting with faculty, utilizing our career network of more than 2,600 USD alumni and parents and building a base of professional contacts in the community.

3. What is the biggest challenge your department faces?
   Our biggest challenge is educating students and the USD community on the importance of career development as an active process which takes both time and commitment. Students who start considering career choices early in their studies find themselves with more options at graduation than those who begin the process the last semester. In this rapidly changing world, many students are surprised to learn that employers are looking for “more than a degree” and are placing increasing emphasis on internship experience, relevant part-time jobs and leadership activities — as well as good grades and the ability to communicate effectively.

4. How has your department changed over the past 10 years?
   As interest in careers has increased, we are doing more campus and community outreach through specialized presentations for student groups, visits to employers and participation in special events. Examples of new programs include senior seminar, graduate career night, workshops in targeted career fields and panels on admission to graduate school.

5. What is one thing you would like the campus community to know about your department and its functions?
   We serve all students and alumni in a personal manner as part of the mission and educational process at USD. We appreciate the involvement of the entire campus community in referring both students and potential employers to our office. This (Continued on page four)

March Seminars and Colloquia

Faculty and staff are invited to the following seminars presented by the Irvine Faculty Development Program:

- Service Learning in Communities of Difference workshop, 1 to 4:30 p.m., March 3, in UC Forum AB.
- Honduran Children’s Conception of Story, noon to 2 p.m., March 6, in UC Forum B. Donna Barnes, School of Education, will present a luncheon colloquium.
- Understanding the Multicultural Consumer, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., March 22, in UC Forum A. Marlene Rossman, School of Business Administration, will present a luncheon colloquium.
- Creating Linkages with Mexican Health Care Colleagues: Development of Spanish Language Proficiency, 11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., March 28, in UC Forum A. Rita Snyder-Halpern, School of Nursing, will present a luncheon colloquium.

For more information, contact Elaine Elliot at ext. 4027 or Judith Liu at ext. 4025.

Expecting a Baby Soon?

Join us for a celebration of new life at a prayer luncheon, 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., March 15. We will gather for fellowship, reflection and a special blessing prayer. Call Sister Irene Cullen, ext. 2265, by March 8 for reservations.

Passages

Deaths
- Sean Quick, a USD undergraduate student, on Jan. 14.
- Noelle Marra, daughter of Cmdr. Ken Marra, Department of Naval Science, Jan. 15.
- John Dilorenzo, father of Sister Carlotta Dilorenzo, in January.
- Homer Kripke, distinguished professor in the School of Law, in January.
- Soegem Djaja, father of Marianna Djaja, a cook in dining services, on Feb. 3.
- Karl Rahn, an undergraduate student at USD, in February.
New Hires, Promotions

Congratulations to the following employees who recently joined the USD community: John Courter, physical plant; Larry Dershem, legal research center; Mary Anne Francisco, graduate admissions; Alice Noquez, health center; Jin Wang, legal research center; Evelyn Kirkley, religious studies; Leigh Plesniak, chemistry; Julie Couch, printing and duplicating; Susan Lynn Crouch, administrative data processing; Rondi Stein, athletics administration; Kristen Tronvig, development; Floyd Warn, dining services administration; Raymond Rodriguez, administrative data processing; Anastasia Hyll, financial aid; Catalina Leyva, housekeeping services; Amy Martin, law school financial aid; Jose Pena, controller; and Sergio Pinto, legal research center.

Congratulations to the following employees who recently received promotions or reclassifications: Catherine L. Crutchfield, executive assistant for dean of arts and sciences; Marta R. Godinez, manager in loan administration; Francisco R. Martinez, custodian in housekeeping services; and Roxanne A. Vargas, data processing clerk in development.

More to SEA
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employee of USD, Gilbert joined the library staff after 14 years in the Navy. She chaired the benefits committee for the last two years.

Layne, on the other hand, brings experience as a board member and chair of the social committee for the past two years. She joined the School of Nursing five years ago, soon after moving to San Diego from Oklahoma.

Their third goal calls for increased fundraising efforts to provide book scholarships to employees with older students, complementing an existing fund for young children to attend the Manchester Family Child Development Center.

Gilbert and Layne are excited about the next two years and working with a dedicated group of officers and area representatives. “We have a talented group of people that are really interested in making things happen,” Layne says.

“Now we need to spread that enthusiasm to the other 450 members,” Gilbert adds.

Kids Carnival Set For April

Bring your kids to a fun day at USD's first Kids 'n' Community Carnival to benefit the university's Manchester Family Child Development Center. The carnival will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 8, on Camino Patio. There will be game booths, an Astrojump, food, prizes, clowns and more. Admission is $5; children under 12 are free. For more information, call Sharon Kepple at 442-5224.