

MCCC News

208

The Official Publication of the *Massachusetts Community College Council* / Volume 6, Issue 23 / March 2008

MCCC Converges on Mass Bay

On Jan. 28, MCCC members from around the state joined the Mass Bay chapter in a demonstration to the college's Board of Trustees. The intent of the gathering was to show the trustees how seriously the union takes the ongoing problems with college President Carole Berrotte-Joseph.

Trustees called the meeting for 8 a.m. on a Tuesday, making it difficult for faculty, and especially professional staff members, to attend. But approximately 30 MCCC members participated at various times from 7:30 to 10:30. Mass Bay members were joined by MCCC President Joe LeBlanc, Secretary Phyllis Barrett, representatives from Bristol, Bunker Hill, Holyoke, Mt. Wachusett, and North Shore Community Colleges along with MTA Board of Directors member Sara Satham and NEA Board member Bob Gillies.

Mass Bay Chapter President Joseph W. O'Neill said he was thrilled to see so many chapters and important Union officers standing in solidarity with the chapter.

Trustee Chair Jonathan Bower scheduled the meeting for the small Board Room, restricting the number of people who could attend. He claimed that if he had known that so many people would be attending, he would have scheduled it for a larger room. But the college had hired a number of State Troopers to provide additional security, which indicated that something was anticipated.



MCCC members from across the state hold signs to encourage college trustees to take positive action to improve campus climate. (Photo by Don Williams)

MCCC members held signs along the road approaching the campus, produced by the MTA, that said "Trustees Do The Right Thing" prior to the meeting. (The signs were not permitted on campus.) Twenty-eight members waited outside the Board Room in order to gain admittance. As the meeting progressed, when one attendee left, another was admitted.

Inside the meeting, the first part of the agenda was a series of glowing reports about how great things are at Mass Bay. Eventually, the President and Chair addressed the ongoing labor problems within their reports.

President Joseph said it was regrettable that the MCCC participated in the chapter

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Annual MCCC Delegate Assembly April 26, 2008

Crowne Plaza Worcester
10 Lincoln Square
Worcester, MA 01608
Phone: (508) 791-1600

Delegates will also receive a Delegate Packet, with reports and the proposed budget at least one week before the meeting. Chapters are allotted one delegate for every 10 members. The MCCC Bylaws state that "each chapter shall elect its own delegates."

Chapters should begin recruiting members to ensure full representation of the membership.

DIRECTIONS

From Mass Pike take Exit 10 to Route 290E, take Exit 17-Rt9. Take a left at top of exit. At 2nd set of lights at bottom of the hill, go left onto Worcester Center Blvd. Hotel is on the right.

From Route 495 take Exit 25B, Route 290W. Take Exit 18-Rt9. Turn right at Lincoln Square/Worcester Center Blvd. Hotel is on the right. ■

The Candidates Present Themselves

Joseph LeBlanc – Candidate for MCCC President

In my first term as president, I have worked hard to serve every single member. Here are but a few examples:

- **Classification Task Force:** Together with the college presidents, we have pushed for salary increases to bring us to the 75th percentile of peer institutions from ten comparable states. Our research, maintained since the inception of the Classification Study, has been verified, and as this piece goes to press we will be presenting our findings to the BHE. We will next press our case with Special Education Advisor Dana Mohler-Faria, A and F, and Gov. Patrick. Our goal: economic justice and salaries set at the 75th percentile.

- **Organizing Initiatives:** Thanks in part to NEA organizing grants, we are aggressively reaching out to our members. Last year, regional cluster meetings drew scores of adjuncts. This year, our Professional Staff Committee is up and running and working well while our new Adjunct Ad Hoc Committee is discussing the problems contingent faculty face and ways they can work with their union to solve them.

We have launched online forums to begin to open new channels of communication. We are reaching out to new members in our Early Contact Program and will soon be training a new generation of leaders in our Emerging Chapter Leaders Organizing Program.

As you can probably tell, I work hard and am relentless in seeking ways to strengthen our union. I am having the time of my life as your president and am asking for your vote. ■



Gail Guarino – Candidate for MCCC Secretary

I am running for MCCC secretary because I want to continue my service to the union at the state level. I firmly believe that the MCCC plays a major role in trying to make the community college system in Massachusetts the best that it can be for both students and employees. I have been a faculty member at Cape Cod Community College for 21 years, the first nine years as an adjunct Information Technology instructor. I currently coordinate the IT program at CCCC, serve as parliamentarian for College Meeting, and chair the Curriculum and Programs Committee.

I have been active in the Union at the local level for 20 of my 21 years at CCCC serving as the DCE Coordinator, Director, Treasurer/Vice President, President, and currently as the Secretary of the CCCC. On the state level, I have been a member of the Financial Committee for three years and am active on the ORP Ad Hoc Committee. This year I am serving on the DCE Bargaining Team. Last year I had the privilege of serving on the New Business Committee for the MTA delegation at the NEA RA.

Following in Phyllis Barrett's footsteps is a daunting job, but I promise to do my best to maintain the high standards that she has set. Please vote for me for MCCC Secretary. Thank you. ■

Additional statements are on page 3



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The Optional Retirement Plan: What's the Fuss?



Donnie McGee,
SAC Chair &
MCCC Vice President

In January 1994, the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) was signed into state law. Nine months later this defined-contribution plan was offered to faculty and administrators at the state's 29 public colleges and universities. Today the ORP enrolls 5,000 employees statewide. Nine percent or close to 450 of them are MCCC faculty.

In contrast to the State Employee Retirement System (SERS), a defined-benefit plan in which most state employees are enrolled, the ORP provides no guarantee as to how much an employee will earn upon retirement. ORP accounts are left to enrollees to manage on their own. SERS funds are given comprehensive oversight by the State Retirement Board.

Most MCCC faculty enrolled in the ORP seem satisfied with this retirement option. They want to manage their own investment portfolios. This plan provides portability and vests employees immediately. They can take 100 percent of their retirement earnings with them if they switch careers or move to another state. Were they in the SERS, these faculty would have to be employed for 10 years before being vested in the system. If their employment ended

with the state, their SERS funds would remain frozen.

Not all MCCC members are pleased with their enrollment in the ORP, however. Results from an October 2007 on-line survey indicate that 33, or 41 percent, of the 81 ORP-enrolled community college faculty who responded were either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied." These members decry the methods used to enroll them in the first place. During the three month enrollment period, mistruths were communicated to them about the ORP. Many felt pressured to join this plan. Some were reminded by Human Resources (HR) personnel that they had no guarantee of tenure and, in the same breath, told that the ORP was the safer or better plan.

These faculty had little, if any, information on the benefits of the State Employees Retirement System. One State Retirement Board counselor indicated he had wanted to visit the community college campuses to provide faculty with such feedback, but was not allowed to do so. The retirement information provided to most in this group was almost exclusively shared by investment representatives from private companies, whose prime objective was to sell their products.

Employees had little time and incomplete information to make appropriate retirement decisions. For new faculty, the three month enrollment period was an especially intense time. They were familiarizing themselves with job responsibilities and requirements, while striving to be successful in new positions. On some college

campuses in other states, faculty offered alternative retirement plans similar to the ORP are given up to two years to make such a decision.

Those most vocal about dissatisfaction with the ORP are older faculty who have accumulated 15 to 20 years or more of Social Security (SS) benefits from previous employment. These employees were told by HR staff and by investment representatives that their SS retirement income would not be affected if they joined the ORP, but would be offset if they enrolled in the SERS. This was a key selling point for their ORP enrollment. According to the ORP survey, 49 faculty, or 61 percent, of those responding believed their SS benefits would not be reduced with this plan.

Years later, these faculty were informed that their Social Security earnings would, in fact, be offset under the Optional Retirement Plan as well. They wanted to know when the federal law had changed, insisting it could not apply to them. The SS offsets have always applied to both retirement plans, but these ORP enrollees were told otherwise or never told that their Social Security earnings would be offset under the ORP. The mistruths about these offsets under this plan are still being communicated by some representatives selling ORP investment products.

Additionally, comparisons of the two plans among ORP enrollees now considering retirement reveal that faculty would have been far better off if they had enrolled in the SERS to begin with. Some would also have been able to transfer or buyback

years of service towards retirement due to previous employment or military service, a feature that was never communicated to them. All would have been able to retire earlier with far greater security under the defined-benefits plan.

Worth noting: West Virginia teachers faced similar problems with a comparable alternate state retirement plan. Given these employees' concerns, this option is no longer offered to these teachers. Those affected now await the support of legislation that would return all teachers so enrolled to the state's defined benefit plan. The disparity of these plans and the false promises these members were given are highlighted in the March 2007 issue of the NEATODAY.

Not everyone is fussing about the ORP, but those MCCC members who are, have valid complaints. SAC leadership is working with MTA and legislative leaders to address these concerns. A key objective of the union's ORP Ad Hoc Committee is to secure legislation and enrollment regulations that would serve our current and future ORP-enrolled members appropriately. If current faculty want to join this committee or wish to receive future updates on these issues, they should contact me.

Chapter leaders and HR departments should advise all new faculty to consult with an independent financial planner and talk with colleagues, friends, and family before joining either retirement plan. Retirement decisions are too important – the consequences, too serious – to be made without such consultation. ■

MCCC Converges on Mass Bay . . . *Continued from Page 1*

protest. She stated that she remains willing to "negotiate" with the union to improve relations. Union members reacted with incredulity at this comment, as last year MCCC President Joe LeBlanc, had worked to help the chapter and the President to resolve some of the issues, but nothing came of the discussions. And the President continued with actions that had been at the core of Union complaints.

Chairman Bower then read a prepared statement to address the union concerns. In the statement he announced a seven member commission the trustees convened of "distinguished educators and community leaders" to review the issues. He said, "This Board is not walking away from any of its

responsibilities as we have been accused by the MCCC leadership."

In comments to the assembled MCCC members after the meeting, MCCC President Joe LeBlanc pointed out that Bower promised a special commission back in 2007, with a report to be concluded by Jan. 29. Contrary to Bower's statement about the Board's commitment, the commission still had not met.

According to Chapter President O'Neill members of the search committee who had recommended hiring President Joseph have now regretted the decision. The reasons are her job performance. He said that he disagreed with everything that Bower said in his statement. The Union did not call the press

when the WBZ I-Team investigated the President's costly inauguration celebration or when the state nursing board prevented the program from accepting new students.

The climate at the college has continued to deteriorate with threatening emails being sent to Union officers from computers in college labs. The college has determined that these did not rise to the level of being criminal, but the union sees this as contributing to a hostile and unhealthy environment.

The commission has begun to meet, and the Union is awaiting its opportunity to meet and present the list of particulars drawn up that details complaints about the President's job performance. ■

Bowing Out

By Phyllis Barrett

In the waning years of the last millennium, when I first took up a laptop on behalf of the MCCC, times were tough. After I'd spent all day Friday typing a blue streak, and referencing such things as CAS-cases, the MRLC, HELC, etc. – all Greek to me at the time, my job had just begun. First, I'd revise the minutes, trying to create the appearance of an orderly, rational, and congenial meeting – not always an easy task in those early days. Then I'd print them and take off for Staples, where I'd request about 155 copies of the five or more pages, printed back-to-back to cut down on cost – and weight. Because the next step was to fold them, stuff them, stamp them, seal them, and label them for mailing from the Granby P. O. A word about the labels: Those I ran on an old dot matrix printer dedicated to (and, as near as I could tell, capable of) only that task. It was a lengthy process and required constant tending, as the printer frequently jammed. On those occasions when I needed to run labels for the entire membership, rather than for just the leadership, the run took five hours. Fortunately, I usually had a pile of essays to grade while keeping one eye on the machine.

Fast forward almost twelve years. I still devote a great deal of time to revising the minutes, aiming for accuracy and clear communication with those on the distribution list and with their constituents on the campuses. And, when necessary, I still gently edit the proceedings for organization and logic. But once I've completed these tasks, I hit a couple of letters on the keyboard, left click the mouse, and launch the minutes into cyberspace – no driving, no folding, no licking. Technology does have an upside.

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Members from various campuses who attended the Mass Bay Trustees' meeting gathered for a post-meeting debriefing session with MCCC President Joe LeBlanc. (Photo by Don Williams)

Seeking The 'Happiest Conversation'



Joe LeBlanc,
MCCC President

"That is the happiest conversation where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm, quiet interchange of sentiments." Samuel Johnson

About a year ago, our union began a long overdue conversation. Our Strategic Directions Retreat drew great participation from all our chapters. We began to talk about the many challenges facing our union. By the end of this conversation, we agreed on three strategic priorities: revising our Mission State-

ment, strengthening grassroots member participation, and developing a new generation of leaders.

This academic year, we are continuing this conversation on several levels. Our Board of Directors recently redrafted our Mission Statement. This month, the conversation is being driven down to the chapter level to seek grassroots member input. A draft of a revised Mission Statement will go to our Delegate Assembly on April 26 where we will again discuss, amend and reaffirm the guiding principles of our union.

Grassroots member participation is being promoted elsewhere. Our new Adjunct Ad Hoc Committee is advising our board of directors, contacting state senators about the adjunct health insurance bill, and organizing their colleagues. At its heart, this is a grassroots organizing initiative that will succeed or fail depending on how success-

ful we are able in engaging in a conversation with this varied group.

The conversation will continue on many other levels thanks in part to our NEA organizing grant. Last month, chapter presidents met over dinner with a lightly structured agenda and lots of conversation. Our MTA Uniserv Consultants reintroduced themselves and answered questions about the impact bargaining process (Is your college planning a reorganization without seeking input from our union?) and MTA Legal Services (Do agency fee payers – non-members – ever receive the services of an MTA lawyer?). I asked our chapter presidents to support our new Early Contact Program to help us to better reach out to new members.

Newer Chapter Presidents like Joe O'Neill sought advice from experienced chapter leaders, saying that he would like to

"learn from one another by discussing the struggles, strategies, experiences, outcomes, histories, visions we know as campus leaders with the common goal of building and sustaining engaged chapters."

In three hours, we shared stories about some colleges attempting to count hours of faculty non-instructional workloads. We began a conversation about how to best solve the problems of the promised 75th percentile and overuse of adjunct faculty.

Our union will begin its Emerging Chapter Leaders Organizing Program later this semester. We have launched online forums for our Adjunct Ad Hoc Committee and Chapter Presidents. We haven't yet reached the goal of Johnson's "happiest conversation" but we have started a process that will continue for the good of our union. We will talk and together we will make a difference. ■

Candidate Statements



Diana "Donnie" McGee – Candidate for MCCC Vice President

I am seeking re-election as Vice President of the MCCC. This past term, I have been involved with many initiatives important to the strength of our union and protection of our faculty and professional staff.

In my role as the MCCC coordinator for strategic action statewide, I have testified at hearings, written op-ed pieces, attended conferences regionally and nationally, and partnered with MTA and MCCC leadership to promote our agenda. I have been instrumental in the fight to secure legislation to support the buyback of 03 "contract" time and currently chair the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) Ad Hoc Committee to address ORP concerns statewide.

I have worked with legislators and the Governor's office to resolve our flawed contract funding process and serve on the MCCC Classification Task force to bring resolution to the salary inequities of our current contract. The MTA sent me to Washington to lobby for the repeal of the GPO/WEP provisions.

Though progress has been made in furthering our agenda, much work remains. Our colleges need full-time faculty and professional staff; adjuncts need affordable health insurance and retirement security. Our colleges are drastically under-funded, and our salaries, not competitive.

I would like to continue this work as your Vice President. In this challenging political and economic climate, we must safeguard the integrity of our classrooms and protect our own professional lives. With your support, I believe my perseverance, enthusiasm and leadership can move us forward. Please consider me for Vice President when you vote. ■

MCCC Mission Statement

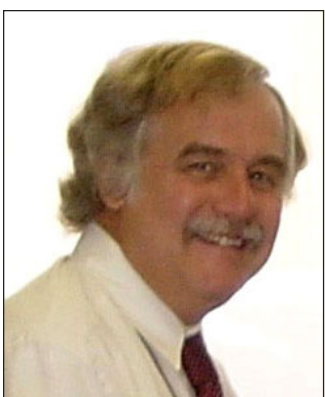
The MCCC is in the process of revising the Mission Statement to more adequately reflect the contemporary environment. As part of the Strategic Directions Initiative, the process is being brought out to the general membership for input. Member suggestions are encouraged and should be passed on to your chapter MCCC Director. The Mission Statement will be discussed at this year's Delegate Assembly with the final version being approved at the Delegate Assembly.

Current Mission Statement in Bylaws

We, the members of the community college professional staff, believing in the unique contributions of the community college to American education, have organized to strengthen and secure this type of education for those who desire additional education beyond high school, for those who would be deprived of this education were it not readily accessible, and for those who wish a more individual orientation to higher education. Because we so believe, the members of this Council have organized into a collective bargaining unit in order to maintain and improve the quality of educational services through the protection of professional rights and the advancement of the economic well-being and the working conditions of its members.

Section 2. Objectives:

- A. To protect professional rights, the Council shall seek to:
 1. Secure and maintain academic freedom.
 2. Ensure the right of the unit member to exercise responsible judgment in all areas of his/her competency.
- B. To advance the economic well-being of its members, the Council shall seek to:
 1. Maximize their job security.
 2. Continually improve salary and benefit levels.
- C. To improve the working conditions of its members, the Council shall seek to:
 1. Achieve and maintain reasonable workloads and work schedules.
 2. Obtain whatever materials, equipment, space, and support services are essential for members to carry out their functions. ■



Phil Mahler Candidate for MCCC Treasurer

It has been a challenge to serve as your MCCC Treasurer for the last five and one-half years. I have learned a great deal, and together with the office staff, have developed a strong office operation during this period.

I had no idea of the magnitude of the job of being treasurer when I took it on over five years ago. Our staff of three full-time employees is busy year around processing our 2,000 full-time and 4,000 part-time unit members. We support an office, answering numerous member calls, and meeting space that is used quite often by the ever-growing number of MCCC committees.

I have served the MCCC since 1984, from Chapter President for seven years, to MCCC Director, MCCC Vice President, and MCCC President. I have also served on the MTA Board of Directors for the last four years. I do this both to help keep the MTA strong, but also to keep our relations with the MTA healthy and productive for our members.

My goal remains to support your elected leaders, negotiations teams, coordinators, committees and your chapters, in their efforts to serve you.

I work hard for the MCCC, and have your best interests at heart. There is a lot left to do. I enjoy my job, and the challenge it continually poses, and I would like to continue for another term. I would greatly appreciate your support. ■

Visit the revised MCCC web page at mccc-union.org. The re-design was done by Gail Guarino and her web design class at Cape Cod Community College.

The screenshot shows the MCCC website interface. At the top, there's a header with "Massachusetts Community College Council" and the MCCC logo. Below the header is a navigation menu with links like Home, Purpose / Daily Quote, Chapters, Contact & Directions, Contract - Day, Contract - DCE, Distance Ed Agreement, Coordinators, DCE / Part-Time Links, Day Full-Time Links, Documents, Facts & Figures, Governance, Committees, and Memorial Awards. The main content area features a "IT'S YOUR CAREER" section with a quote about workplace dignity and a "The Latest..." section with links to GPO/WEP Retirement Fairness News, GPO/WEP Action Needed, Adjunct Health Insurance Needs YOUR Support, New Contract Tips, and Contract Enforcement Information. There's also a "What's New" section with links to President's Update, S.A.C. News, and MCCC leaders graduate from NEA Emerging Leaders Academy. The right sidebar contains a "Newsletter" section with links to President's Update, S.A.C. News, Intern Program, In the News, Calendar, MCCC DA, Job Vacancies, MTA DA / NEA RA, MTA NEA, PHENOM, Related Links, Change of Address, Contact/Find Legislator, and About this Site. A search bar is located at the bottom right.

DIRECTORS NOTES

At the Feb. 15, 2008 Meeting of the MCCC Board of Directors the following actions were taken.

- The Board voted to make a contribution of \$3500 from reserves to support PHENOM.
- The Board voted to authorize the expenditure of no more than \$2500 to mail postcards to DCE members alerting them to the online questionnaire on bargaining priorities.
- The Board voted that the MCCC Board of Directors meeting room be henceforth called the Geraldine Curley Board Room in honor of retiring member Geri Curley. ■

Know Your Day Contract

March 2008

- March 5** Request leave of absence recommendations due (p.26)
March 15 Dean's recommendations for Title change due (p.59)
March 15 Unit Personnel Practices recommendations for tenure due (p.38)
March 30 Department Chair evaluations (p.70)
March 30 Preferred schedules and course submitted (p.32)
March 31 Department chair vacancies announced (p.55)

April 2008

- April 6** Dean's leave of absence recommendations due (p.26)
April 15 Dean's tenure recommendations due (p.38)
April 15 Title changes announced (p.59)
April 25 Professional Staff unused vacation days in excess of 480 hours (64 days) converted to sick leave at end of last pay period in April. (p. 22)

N.B. Dates may vary depending on the first day of classes. Most of these dates are "last date" standards. In many instances the action can be accomplished before the date indicated. ■

Letter To The Editor

I want to express the deep frustration that my colleagues and I are experiencing regarding the fact that our present salaries are not near the 75th percentile of ten similar states. In 1999, we willingly participated in and accepted the classification study that was completed by DMG-MAXIMUS, INC., and we voted for a 3-year contract (1999-2001), which mandated that full-time faculty teach an additional course—the infamous 5th course. This 5th course was supposed to attest to our increase in "productivity." In the updated Archer Company report (Archer took over DMG), they said, "The plan developed by DMG and submitted to the BHE placed **major emphasis on pay equity.**"

We were promised competitive compensation with similarly situated states (California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington). In its 2007 update of the study, Archer finds that we are \$7,634 (13.8 percent) below the promised average. They suggests that the BHE consider a change in point dollar value of 2% or 3% over a five-year period to maintain the integrity of the compensation structure; otherwise, the gap will increase each year between what we are actually paid and what we should be paid.

How long do we wait? The longer the delay, the more the amount we are owed grows.

My CONCLUSIONS:

1. Our union must make this its Number One Priority.
2. MCCC members should receive the \$7,634 all in one lump sum immediately!
3. The point dollar value should be increased by 3% so that this "gap" in salary be avoided in the future.
4. All promises be put in writing in future contracts, and our union be held responsible to be sure they are kept. The union leadership keep sharp on these issues AND implement IMMEDIATE ACTION when a facet of our contract is not honored!

It is time full-time faculty and staff unite to get this financial issue resolved...before many of us retire and get a percentage of a lower base for the rest of our lives!

Professor Brenda Clark
North Shore Community College ■

MOVING?



Please make sure the MCCC has your correct mailing address. This affects receiving the newsletter, elections, important mailings and notices.

Call the office at 1-877-442-MCCC toll free or go online at <http://mccc-union.org/ChangeMyAddress/>



MCCC News
<http://mccc-union.org>

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The MCCC News is a publication of the Massachusetts Community College Council. The Newsletter is intended to be an information source for the members of the MCCC and for other interested parties. Members' letters up to 200 words and guest columns up to 400 words will be accepted and published on a space-available basis. The material in this publication may be reprinted with the acknowledgment of its source. For further information on issues discussed in this publication, contact Donald Williams, North Shore Community College, One Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923. e-mail: Communications@mccc-union.org



DCE Negotiating Team members at one of their Tuesday meetings at the MCCC Office. From left, seated, Gail Guarino (CCCC), John Palmer (QCC), Richard Devine (QCC), standing Don Williams (NSCC), Patrick Lochelt (NECC), Diana Yohe (BrCC) and Miles Stern (MTA Consultant). Carole Dupont (STCC) was unable to attend, and Betsy Smith (CCCC) participated via conference call.

Photo by Joe LeBlanc.

Bowing Out Continued from Page 1

The major upside of service to the MCCC, however, has been the opportunity to work with so many gifted and dedicated people. Space does not allow for mentioning all of those who have been valued colleagues and friends, so I'll limit myself to a few words about the four presidents I've served: Susan Dole, Phil Mahler, Rick Doud, and Joe LeBlanc. Each brought a completely different personality and style to the position; each

has demonstrated a unique combination of political savvy, acumen, diplomacy, humor, and passion. All four made my job easy and made me feel like a valued member of the leadership team. I'd be remiss if I didn't make a special mention of Phil Mahler's technical support over the years, whether he was serving as vice president, president, or treasurer. His help made me look better at my job than I was. So this is my swan song. As my dear

friend Susan would say, "It's been grand," and leaving isn't easy. But rather than follow what seems to be an international trend—think Musharraf, Putin, and Chavez—I've decided to impose term limits on myself. Any organization, like any country, is improved by regular infusions of fresh talent and energy. I hope that, in stepping aside, I am making a place for someone who can bring new gifts to the MCCC as its next secretary. ■