

Faculty Welfare Committee

Excellence in Education

From the FWC Executive Committee:

Our Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP newsletter is designed to educate faculty about current issues affecting faculty and faculty welfare, broadly defined. We are taking the unprecedented step of devoting this edition of the newsletter to our colleague, Professor George Lang, who passed away last May after a very brief illness. George's dedication to the FWC, to Fairfield University and its faculty, to faculty welfare, as well as his tireless work advancing academic freedom and shared governance was, to say the least, extraordinary.

As anyone who has ever attended a state or national AAUP event has learned, the Faculty Welfare Committee, Fairfield's affiliate of the national American Association of University Professors, has the reputation of being one of the very strongest chapters in the country. And, as anyone involved with Fairfield's FWC/AAUP knows, this is due in large part to the work of George Lang. His leadership at our local level was extraordinary – serving as President from 1978-81, on the Executive Committee since 1990 and Vice-President from 2001 until the time of his death. He didn't simply hold office, of course – his leadership began with a deep knowledge of the fundamental AAUP principles underlying academic freedom and strong shared governance and continued with the political will to work tirelessly to educate faculty and administrators on these principles with the intent of creating and defending policies that protect faculty welfare and the academic profession.

In addition to his work at Fairfield, he was a lifelong activist in the AAUP at the state and national levels, even memorialized at the AAUP National Meeting in June 2007 by AAUP President, Cary Nelson. His voice for faculty was resolute and unwavering, and we've tried to capture it here in some classic moments from meetings, etc. But it would be a disservice to George and everyone who knew him to ignore the many other aspects of our friend. Our former colleague, Tom Regan, S.J., reminded us at George's funeral that the breadth of George's interests represents the best of what we want our students to be. With this in mind, we asked for contributions from George's friends and colleagues of stories and memories in order to provide what we hope is a rich, full tribute to George.



Photo taken at AAUP Leadership Training Workshop in NJ on 2/15/07. Contributed by Judith Johnston, NJ AAUP President

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Stories, photos, excerpts of minutes, and more

From Paul I. Davis

History Department, Emeritus:

I will never forget the surprised reaction from the guests at my retirement party in 1998 when George announced that he had known me longer than anyone else there including those who were here before my arrival in 1963. He was right, of course, for I had taught both George and his brother at Loyola of Chicago before I came here. At Loyola,



1973, contributed by Mary Hofmann

George had been very active in his fraternity, student government, theater, etc. - foreshadowing his activities at Fairfield.

By chance, in the spring of 1970, I ran into George and the chair of the math department in front of Canisius when George was being interviewed and I strongly endorsed his candidacy as a great asset to Fairfield. What an enormous understatement that was. As a colleague, George became the finest advocate for faculty rights and advancement we have ever had and I was proud to support him and the AAUP over the years. When computers reared their complicated heads on campus, George became my mentor on how to use them. And throughout the years we were warm friends. So I mourn the loss of George as student, colleague, mentor, and especially as a friend. Fairfield University lost one of its greatest treasures with George's death, but his legacy will benefit the entire community in the years to come.



From John Thiel

Religious Studies Department:

Many of my colleagues know that I'm a graduate of this venerable institution (class of '73), but few know that George Lang was my undergraduate professor. In my sophomore year, I was a Sociology major (before I saw the light!) and enrolled for two semesters in the required Math course for Soc majors, "Probability and Statistics." It was Professor Lang's first year at Fairfield, and even a student like me whose eyes glazed over at the very mention of terms like "derivative" or "curve" could see that he was accomplished at his art. I distinctly remember a fellow student in the class observing that Professor Lang saw Mathematics as a game, a judgment, I think, about his playfulness with ideas and his delight in their communication.

Years later, I was able to practice my "Probability and Statistics" skills with George in a regular poker game that we shared for twenty years with other Fairfield friends - Sue Rakowitz, Don Greenberg, Matt Coleman, Alan Katz,

and Ron Salafia. George was not the best player in the group. In fact, I think he was the worst - but for the best reasons. He lacked guile and had way too much curiosity. These are devastating poker traits but, as all of us encountered them in his person, admirable measures of character. In some factual sense one could say that George taught me Mathematics, but actually I was not a good enough Math student for that to be true. He did teach me much about faculty prerogatives, the importance of academic community, and, most importantly, about what a life lived with integrity looks like. I miss him.



From the General Faculty Meeting minutes 2/2/2007:

Prof. George Lang brought up the issue of evacuating disabled students in the event of an emergency (and mentioned that the Academic Council had asked the administration for clarification on this last year when he had a student in a motorized wheelchair in a class on the 3rd floor of Bannow). Mr. Ficko had explained that Public Safety has the schedules of students who would need assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation and officers would be dispatched in that event. Prof. Lang said it is unacceptable to expect a faculty member to have to decide whether to stay or leave a student who needs assistance in an emergency situation when the room is filling up with smoke. [In classic deadpan fashion,] He expressed less than complete confidence in the notion that the system responsible for running the classroom clocks would quickly and accurately direct firefighters to wheelchair bound students. [Editor's note. At this point in time, the two clocks in SON auditorium indicated vastly different times of day.]

Excerpt of minutes from the last General Faculty Meeting George attended, 4/13/2007:

Professor George Lang rose to address the pending motion. He pointed out that every full professor owes an enormous debt of thanks to previous Faculty Salary Committees, since it was the hard work of previous FSCs that got the administration to make the commitment to the AAUP's 95th percentile, to put the administration's commitment to the 95th percentile into the Memo of Understanding, and also to put in the language that mandates what happens when we fall below the 95th percentile. Furthermore, every faculty member owes a debt of gratitude to the FWC/AAUP members since it is our FWC/AAUP dues that enable the AAUP to collect and compile the data on the economic status of the profession, which includes the 95th percentile figures.

The current MOU must be considered in context. The joint faculty/administration committee that drafted the Guiding Principles for Faculty Compensation (GP) agreed that the increase for sustained merit should be at or above the corresponding increase in the CPI, and that sustained merit would at least keep pace with inflation *over the years*. The Guiding Principles say "For merit plans to be effective, the committee considers that sustained merit should reasonably allow faculty members to retain or increase buying power over the years." This position in the Guiding Principles was approved by the Academic Council, by the General Faculty, and by the administration.

Prof. Lang continued by reminding the faculty of the motion passed by the General Faculty last spring quoting it in part, "...any determination of salaries at Fairfield University that creates a pool for merit pay or other incentives by reducing the monies available for the just remuneration of those who, having met their contractual requirements, are deemed to have achieved "sustained merit," is unworthy of a Catholic institution, and should be summarily rejected, not only by those affected by such policies, but also by administrators and trustees who represent an institution that claims Catholic and Jesuit identity."

Since merit pay began, sustained merit has fallen behind the increase in CPI to such an extent that in order to break even with the increase in CPI, sustained merit this year would need to be 5.2%. The 3.5% proposed salary pool, if it had all gone towards sustained merit, would have made some real progress toward our losses with respect to CPI. Lang, speaking against the motion, will not vote to accept an MOU that does not have sustained merit this year at or above 5.2%. Prof. Lang recalled a meeting of the trustees when a trustee, objecting to Prof. Lang's characterization of merit pay as punishment pay, said merit pay is not intended to be punishment. Perhaps the trustee was naïve, but sustained faculty falling this far behind the increase in CPI under our merit pay system is punishment and it is simply not just.



1976, contributed by Mary Hofmann

**From Kathy Nantz
Economics Department:**

Dear George,

Wherever we were going, you always drove. I think you always had a white Honda, with the stuffed animals lined up in the back window. (What was up with that? I never asked.) The car was always spotless inside and out. I never saw Mary-Beth, or anyone else for that matter, drive it. Remember that time we were headed to DC to an AAUP gathering? We were catching an early shuttle, so I needed coffee desperately. You said you usually don't eat or drink in the car. I begged and you relented. We stopped at the Starbucks, I ran in, and as I was settling the cup into the holder the lid came off and coffee went everywhere. I apologized but you just mopped up the mess with the roll of paper towels you always had in the back seat. (Why would you need paper towels if you never ate or drank in the car? Again, I didn't ask.) I really wanted you to yell at me for being such a klutz, but you just got onto I-95, drove on to the airport, and continued to be my #1 fan.

From your #1 fan,
KNantz



"The Redbook"
AAUP Policy Documents and Reports. Order a copy at:
<http://www.aaup.org/aaup>

**From Cecelia Bucki
History Department:**

I will remember George always for the fruitful conversations we had about labor union matters, because that is my research and activist focus. But here, I wish to remember George for another interaction that sums up, in my mind, what George was all about.

In fall 1999, when David McFadden, Marti LoMonaco and I were staging the Sixties Project, George shared with me a copy of a memento of his first teaching experience – 1967 or '68, I think in Indiana. It was a Dean's memo to him, asking him to excuse one of his students from class that week, "because she had just been notified that her fiancé had been killed in Vietnam." George had kept this memo in his files all these years! For me, that gesture captures the depth of George's social conscience and personal sense of social justice. I will always remember that about him.

**From Laura McSweeney
MACS Department:**

During my first month at Fairfield, on my birthday, I started my computer and logged into my cs (Unix) account. My printer mysteriously started up and out came a sheet of paper with nothing but a smiley face on it. I have no evidence to support this, but I am convinced this was George's doing. It was a simple little thing, but it really brightened my day.



George with Laura McSweeney, 2005



**From Mike Gish
VAPA Department, Emeritus:**

I taught a figure and portrait class in the Loyola Hall studio, and I asked George to pose for us which he did on a couple of occasions. I did this pencil/charcoal sketch during one of those sessions, probably in the late 1980s, and of course gave it to George as a keep sake. I wish I had signed it.



I realized when I heard that George had passed away that I had lost a caring friend at the university. With his most generous spirit, George reached out to me as an artist, coming to many of my exhibits and openings, showing interest in what I was striving for in my field. George's willingness to serve was extraordinary, and he will be sorely missed.



**From Jim Long
Philosophy Department:**

George was a man of many parts, both in life and on stage. Of the many personae he assumed on stage – and I saw most of his productions – my favorite was his Kokol, the prince of the singers, in Peter Weiss' Marat. I had a special vantage from my bathtub as Jean-Paul Marat, and George was the glue that held the cast together. I still suspect it was he who used to put a rubber duck in my tub every night, just before I was carried on stage and immersed. It did wonders for my concentration. (One of my most prized possessions – which I've threatened on occasion to release – is a photo of Mary-Beth, who played one

of the Charenton inmates, sucking on her big toe.)

We had this running joke that we would trade mothers-in-law. One day George phoned to tell me that the deal was off. I knew immediately that his had passed away. That was typical of George's wicked sense of humor.

One of my favorite times with George was our annual serendipitous trip to New York City. Sometimes we'd see a play, sometimes visit a museum, but always walk, sometimes from Grand Central to the Columbia area or down to the Village, and of course talk. We were due for another such outing in March, but George announced when I posed the question that he was off instead to see the Cubs in their spring training camp. I understood his tragic infatuation with his ill-fated team, but I still regret that I missed out on that last outing.

Peace, old friend.



America's Team
Maybe this year.
There's *always*
next year...or
next century...

Excerpt of GF Minutes 3/3/05:

Professor George Lang spoke in favor of the motion. He agrees with and won't repeat comments from the previous speakers who have so eloquently pointed out the importance of process. He will speak to another perspective: it's about money. It's about faculty losing money. Cutting benefits, even if all the money goes into salary, is a bad deal for us. Faculty are better off financially with this money staying in benefits. Prof. Lang doesn't want additional merit money if it comes at the expense of our colleagues and their families' health care costs. Yes, process is very, very serious, but it's also about real money.



Photo credit Maressa Blau Gershowitz/contributed by Ruth Ann Baumgartner

We'd like to think that this photograph speaks for itself, but in case it doesn't, we asked contributor Ruth Ann Baumgartner for some details. The picture was taken in 1996 during a performance of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, a comedic farce written by Francis Beaumont and first performed in 1607. This photo shows George as Giant Barberosa (a barber) fighting said knight bearing the aforementioned pestle. We do not think the knight is much of a match for George, wielding his barberpole.

**From Irene Mulvey
MACS Department:**

George Lang was the second person I met when I interviewed at Fairfield in February of 1985 (the first was the department secretary), but I have a story about George that goes back earlier, to 1982. For my first job out of graduate school, I applied all over the country and got a Visiting position at Swarthmore. During that job search in 1982, I applied to over 100 schools, keeping careful records of the whole thing. When I got the job at Fairfield 3 years later, a friend helping me clean out my Swarthmore office suggested we check my files to see whether I had applied to Fairfield in 1982. We found a rejection letter from Fairfield and read it together. Believe it or not, it was the *nicest* rejection letter you could ever imagine – we were amazed. It came across as complimentary and validating of *me* – you have great qualifications and I have no doubt that you will have a successful career; I'm only sorry that we can't hire you at Fairfield just now. You probably already guessed who signed it: George E. Lang, Jr. Of course, the letter made me feel great about the new job I would soon be starting but, ultimately, this story epitomizes the George I would come to know: a kind and thoughtful human being, and the consummate professor, chairman and academician, not to mention a great letter-writer.

My last conversation with George was by phone. He called me from the hospital and even though he was wrapped up with serious medical concerns and not talking to *anyone*, he knew how devastated I would be by the news of his retirement and wanted me to hear this news from him. We talked only for a minute since he needed to get back on his oxygen but as we hung up I blurted out (even though we've never been this kind of friends), "Love you, George." His last words to me: "Love you, too."

In the time between these two stories, I was luckier than most people will ever be because, for 22 years, I had George Lang as a friend, next-door-office neighbor, mentor, supporter, editor, advice-giver, and confidante. His

institutional memory, his deep knowledge of the essential principles that are the basis of effective shared governance and academic freedom, and his firmly held beliefs on faculty rights and responsibilities based on those principles shaped me and will continue to inform me for the rest of my career. He never pressured anyone and rarely got angry, but on every important issue, from merit pay to collective bargaining to maternity leave to research funding to grievance procedures to health benefits to parking, he did the research, had the facts, and developed well-reasoned arguments. He was strategic – he knew when the battle was over – but until that time, he continued to insist positively and assertively on faculty having their rightful voice in deliberations and decision-making. He knew when it was time to quit, but he never gave up. Neither should we. I miss him every day. Love you, George.



"Academic Freedom for a Free Society"

Visit the FWC/AAUP at
<http://faculty.fairfield.edu/fwc>
and the AAUP at
<http://aaup.org/>

Peace, Geo

From an invitation George emailed to some new faculty to join a semi-regular Happy Hour group at Black Rock Castle:

"If you're new to the Castle, here's the protocol. We get a table in the back. The pregnant and those who took the pledge are on their own. The first one there gets a pitcher of good beer (traditionally Harp, Sam, or Bass). When that's gone someone else among the drinkers gets another pitcher. If you land up drinking free all night, plan on picking up a round early next time - Assistant Professors get to hold back longer, us heavier drinkers sooner. In the past some splinter group has started a pitcher of lite beer - they got teased, but continued anyway; I will have no part of organizing such activity." [Editor's note: Ever the educator.]

**INSPIRED? WANT TO DO SOMETHING IN MEMORY OF GEORGE?
HERE'S A TERRIFIC IDEA!**

In honor of our colleague, the Connecticut State Conference of the AAUP has instituted and will fund an annual award, named after George, for a Fairfield faculty member (at Fairfield fewer than 10 years) who has shown an awareness of and dedication to important AAUP issues like academic freedom and shared governance. The recipient will be announced, along with the other annual FWC awards, at a faculty meeting in May and the CSC will pay the recipient's FWC/AAUP dues for a year. The CSC invites your contributions in order to endow the award and make it self-funding. Checks in any amount made out to CSC-AAUP can be sent via campus mail to Kathy Nantz for forwarding to the CSC Treasurer. We are delighted that the CSC has made this commitment to honor George in a way that will recognize young faculty activists and strengthen our chapter. Thanks, CSC! George would be very pleased.

About Fairfield's FWC/AAUP:

The FWC at Fairfield is a faculty welfare organization that promotes the economic and professional interests of Fairfield faculty. We are entirely dues-funded. Our dues-paying members fund all our activities: gala receptions, brown bag lunches, travel for members to AAUP meetings and training workshops, newsletters, legal counsel when needed, and more. But our activities are intended to educate and benefit all Fairfield faculty members. If you're not a member, please consider joining – all our work is entirely funded by our dues-paying members.

OFFICERS:

Kathy Nantz, President
 Joe Dennin, Acting Vice President
 Bill Abbott, Secretary
 Rick DeWitt, Treasurer
 Betsy Bowen, Membership Chair



Fairfield University MACS Department 1982.

Left to right: George Lang, mystery person, Joe MacDonnell, S.J., Bernie Scully, S.J., Dorothy Shaffer, Joe Dennin, Maurice Wong, S.J., Ed O'Neill.

Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP

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