



# EMPLOYEE FEDERATION

of

North Harris Montgomery  
Community College District

2700 W. W. Thorne • Suite A-217 • Houston, Texas 77073



## THE ADVOCATE

JANUARY, 1994

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT E-MAIL

Most everyone is excited about the new technological advances the college has made recently, advances that, among other things, make communication among ourselves quick and efficient. A word of caution is appropriate. The administration has the capability to monitor our electronic mail. What you send through E-mail is not a private communication. The January, 1994 issue of Smart Money cites a recent test case in California in which two Nissan computer specialists were dismissed for sending tawdry messages via E-mail. The court ruled that there is no expectation of employee privacy on an employer's computer. The article notes that, because the employer owns the computer, "...it owns everything you do on it....If you use E-mail you might as well use a megaphone" (p. 65). Of course, what you send may not be a matter of legal concern, but it could cause embarrassment or unnecessary conflict in the wrong hands. The E-mail system is a good one--but you should use discretion anytime you log on.

Alan Hall

### BARBARA BENZEL SCHOLARSHIP

Gerald Benzel has started a scholarship in the name of his late wife, Barbara. Barbara was a student of mine a number of years ago. A returning student, she was nervous about whether or not she could make it. She visited with me about her anxieties, and I reassured her as best I could. She went on to do outstanding work in my classes. We had more conversations about whether or not she could make it as an upperclassman, as a graduate student, and in a teaching assistantship that she was offered in the English Department at Sam Houston State University. Barbara was modest about her talents, and the outcome was always the same--she excelled in all that she did and warmed the hearts of all whom she touched. She came within a semester of graduating with a master's in English when she died of cancer.

Gerald approached me last spring about helping set up a scholarship to honor Barbara. He indicated that she viewed me as a mentor, and he asked that I

*"Education for Democracy — Democracy for Education"*

oversee the scholarship awards. I was touched by his request and immediately agreed.

The scholarship will operate through the college's Foundation. Gerald's plan is to offer one student per semester a scholarship up to \$250 until his additional contributions to the Foundation generate enough income to offer two scholarships per semester. If you are interested and able, the union encourages you to contribute to this scholarship so the goal can be reached more quickly. This fund will help four needy students per year and honor the memory of a grand and scholarly woman.

Contributions should be made payable to the NHMCCD Foundation and forwarded to Carolyn Davis.

Alan Hall

### SCHEDULE SHENANIGANS

By no later than inservice week, one necessity for classroom teachers is to sit down with a calendar and plot the course of the coming semester. In recently doing so, I noticed something curious about the timing for District Conference Day. It is scheduled for Friday, February, 18 at Tomball College. That means that Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes don't meet three times this semester, since we already have holidays for Good Friday and the birthday of Martin Luther King. Last year, District Conference Day took place on a Thursday. This resulted in a more balanced academic calendar, as it came closer to equalizing the time missed in T-Th and M-W-F sections. This year's arrangement reduces M-W-F sections to fourteen actual weeks of classes before the start of Final Exams. I don't think this serves the interests of either students or instructors. I wonder as well who made this decision. Did any instructors take part in it or was it just a group of administrators? Whatever the case, this mistake shouldn't be repeated next year. If our primary institutional task is to serve students, let's make sure those in M-W-F sections don't get academically shortchanged.

Steve Davis

### JOIN THE AFT!

If you agree with the union's stances on educational and workplace issues, then it's time for you to join the Employee Federation. No other organization or publication at NHMCCD takes our kind of independent, critical approach to District affairs. If you want that effort to continue, then show your solidarity by becoming a member. All faculty and staff are eligible. Monthly dues rates are \$20.25 for full-time faculty, \$13.10 for full-time staff and adjunct faculty, and \$10.00 for part-time staff. Discuss membership with **Alan Hall**, District President (443-5544, 353-8634); **Marilyn Kron**, District Staff President; or any other member (Tony Foster, Bob Locander, Mel McFadden, Greg Mitchell, Patricia Plunk, Velma Smith, Allen Vogt, Steve Davis) of the Federation executive committee. Also, please consider writing for this publication. Submissions should be sent to the Editor, Steve Davis, at Kingwood College.