



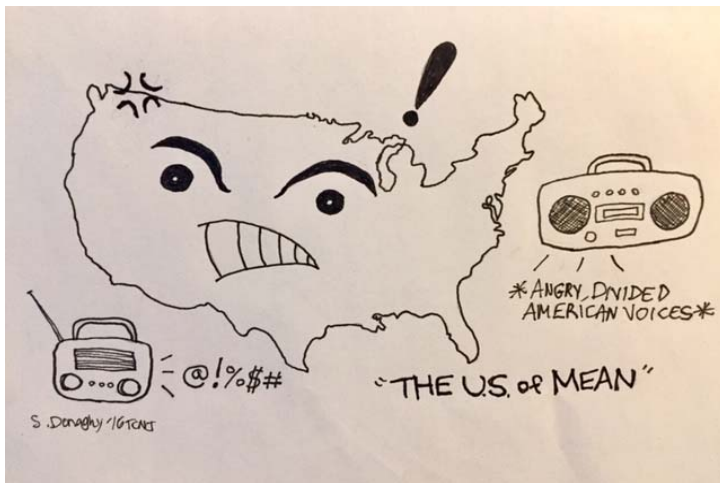
TCNJ's Local 2364 is affiliated with the **Council of New Jersey State College Locals**, the bargaining agent for more than 7,000 professional staff, librarians and full-time, part-time and adjunct faculty at the nine state colleges/ universities of New Jersey.

## Meeting Dates

The General Membership end-of-year lunch will take place on Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm in Education Building 212. Once again we will welcome Michael Clark from the Eastern Service Workers Association, who will bring us up to date on ESWA's efforts over the past year.

## America the Meanie

I was driving home from work one recent afternoon, and all I could feel as I listened to the news was sad. Among the news stories was one about how the Trump administration has gone back to court to have the Affordable Care Act ruled unconstitutional. Another news story dealt with the ongoing immigration situation at our southern border. Without giving this a lot of deep thought (I really was trying to concentrate on the traffic conditions), I thought to myself "When did the United States get so mean?"



No matter where you fall on the political spectrum, it does seem that we are living through a "mean" period of time. The public discourse is coarse, and many people seem obsessed with what they don't have rather than what they do have. I'm not disputing that there is real suffering in the United States. In fact, that's my point. There is real suffering in the United States, and it is not being alleviated by the current discourse.

David Brooks, the author and one of the conservative columnists for *The New York Times*, frequently talks about how we, as a nation, have come to focus too much on resume virtues as opposed to eulogy virtues. He is not saying that we are bad people, just that we mistake job or career accomplishments for what it means to be a "mensch," Yiddish for a very decent human being. We almost can't help ourselves. It seems as though reveling in your resume virtues has become endemic in United States' culture. There is certainly nothing wrong with high achievement. In fact we are a union of high achieving individuals.

But something doesn't feel right in our national culture. With the pressure to achieve, or to maintain what we have, we frequently lose sight of the importance of taking care of each other.

Unions are about concerted activity—joining together to improve workplace conditions. But unions are about so much more. From the beginning, unions have been about caring for each other, as well as improving conditions for the wider world. For me, our union provides the padding to protect me from the sharp edges in the world around me. Under John Krimmel's and Matt Wund's leadership our union has expanded its role to care for those in the Eastern Service Workers Association, as well as those students who need to "shop" in the on-campus pantry. Some of my happiest moments this academic year were those that I spent shopping for children's toys for Christmas and personal

## America the Meanie (continued)

care items this spring. And the overwhelmingly generous response from all of you with your time as well as your money has made me appreciate what a caring community we are.

As we move forward as a union, while we may not always agree on how to resolve certain workplace issues, we can agree on the importance of caring. And isn't that where our strength comes from?

Nancy Lasher

## Negotiations Update

Negotiations with the State have begun. Regular updates will be sent to members via our tcnjft-general-members off-campus email list.

## Membership

Last June the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Janus v. AFSCME*, decided that it is unconstitutional for public-sector unions to collect agency fees from nonmembers. Agency fees were meant to cover the costs associated with representing nonmembers as part of the collective bargaining agreement.

Surprisingly, many persons who were affected by this decision on the TCNJ campus do not realize that they are no longer paying to support our union's work to protect our rights. Conversations with some eligible faculty and staff reveal that they do not even realize that they are not union members. Becoming a union member is easy; simply sign the membership card that is available either from the union office as listed in "Contact Us" on this page or from any union officer. Please educate your nonmember colleagues and encourage them to join. There is truly strength in numbers.

## Looking Ahead

General membership meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 3:00 pm. A quick look at next fall's academic calendar shows that we should be able to have our regularly scheduled meetings without conflicts. This past academic year, our monthly meeting schedule faced an extraordinary number of disruptions from scheduling conflicts with holidays, breaks, and a snow day. Just a reminder: the time for our meetings has been designated via our contract and all faculty and professional staff members are granted the time to attend these meetings.

## Did You Know?

Hello TCNJFT Local 2364 members!

I am Lisa Simeus, your Local Secretary. I have been with TCNJ since 2002, first with Financial Aid and for the past 15 years in Student Accounts. I am currently the Assistant Director of Client Services within the Student Accounts Office and have responsibility for the office's front line customer service, parking services, card services, and payment plans.

On a more personal note, I am married and have two biological children (fun fact: ages 4 and 25—"no" that is not a misprint and "yes" it was planned) and two step-children (ages 16 and 20). Please do not hesitate to say "hi" at the next membership meeting!

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