

National Federation of Federal Employees

Inside The Fishbowl

P.O. Box 76082
Washington, DC 20013



Local 2050
(202) 382-2327

EPA Headquarters Professionals

March 1987

Vol. 3 No. 1

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ASK NOT ONLY WHAT YOUR UNION CAN DO FOR YOU, BUT---

By now every EPA Headquarters professional has received a copy of the new contract in the mail. Among other things the contract establishes a new grievance procedure that invokes peer review in most performance-based grievances, creates a Labor-Management Committee (LMC) as the vehicle for reaching binding agreements with management on a virtually unlimited range of workplace issues (see stories on day care, smoking/clean air and EPS professional status review), and recognizes the Union's vital role on all Headquarters Human Resources Councils (HRC). Through these provisions, the Union is now able to do a very great deal for you and all EPA Headquarters professionals.

The next sound you hear will be that of the other shoe dropping, because the contract that conveys to you rights unprecedented in the Federal service also places a heavy burden of work on your Union.

At present the Executive Board and a few volunteers are handling eight active grievances; sitting on four HRCs; opening LMC negotiations on professional development (sci-tech) issues, day care, time and attendance, RIF procedures, awards, moves/space, performance management, discipline, smoking/clean air, security, ethics, participation in Agency committees, implementation procedures for HRC recommendations, and re-classification of Environmental Protection Specialist jobs; sitting on the Board of Directors of the nascent child care center; preparing to conduct regular, monthly orientation sessions for new employees and contract orientation meetings with ca. 1200 members of the Headquarters professional bargaining unit; working on several non-grievance conflict situations; and last, but not least, trying to publish this newsletter on a more regular, less encyclopedic, basis. And this is only part of what your Union could be doing!

Needless to say, those dealing with these duties are stretched to the limit with this work load.

For example, opening LMC negotiations on the topics listed above means that the Union must--if it is to truly and democratically represent Headquarters professionals--obtain the views of those workers on each topic. This means conducting open meetings on the topics, recording all bargaining unit employee points of view, integrating them with Union members' points of view, distilling a Union bargaining posture from this information, and finally conducting negotiations, establishing an implementation program and monitoring it for compliance with the negotiated agreement. Once the current topics are dealt with, others are waiting in the wings, e.g. merit staffing (promotions), contracting out, ombudsman, Gram-Rudman consultation, etc.

Sure, there is a lot of work to do, but think of the influence you, as a Local 2050 member have over how these issues are decided. Your vote on what the Union's position will be in negotiations will have great and unique weight. Your actions as negotiator, surveyor or HRC representative will directly affect the course of events. While Local 2050 must represent all Headquarters professionals, your voting membership and active participation in labor-management activities of the Local give you a unique position from which to further your point of view on workplace issues.

For all this to happen, for your views to receive the respect they ought to command, the Union will need some degree of time commitment from each member. If each member devotes one hour per week to doing these jobs, we can really bring the contract to full, robust life. Depending on the job you choose to do, official time may be used to do it.

For instance, if you choose to sit as the Union representative on the HRC in your work unit, that's on official time. Or if you choose to help the LMC conduct its work, by being a negotiator, by helping with solicitation of bargaining unit members' opinions, by surveying Union members', by drafting implementation plans or monitoring compliance with them, this too can be done on official time. If you want to help a colleague with a grievance or help informally to resolve a dispute, these can be done on official time. We also need people to staff the Union office during lunch hours, and to help write, produce and distribute newsletters and other communications. The Union will train you to do these jobs.

Attached to your copy of the newsletter is a form which lists the activities in which you can participate. Please look over the list and select jobs you would like to do and send the form to the address shown or give it to any Union officer. And it's likely that you will be visited by members of the executive board who will explain in person the importance of doing a bit of work for the Union.

After years of struggle it may seem hard to believe, but if we look up from our day-to-day work, we can see in our hands the powerful tool with which we--in cooperation with management--can transform EPA into a model Federal work place.

One final note. There is a limit on what your Union leadership can--or should--do all by itself. This Union is not, and must never become, a device by which a few leaders gain individual advantage or pursue personal agendas. This Union is, and must remain, an open, democratic organization that focuses the tremendous energy in EPA's professional workforce--through the lens of the contract--onto workplace problems.

In truth, only you, through your contribution of time and effort, can keep this Union moving in the right direction.

OPP TOXICOLOGY BRANCH--PROBLEMS UP-DATE

There is, unfortunately, still an oppressive and demoralizing work environment in one segment of the Office of Pesticide Programs, but the Union is continuing to work toward a remedy.

"Paper time-clocking", use of un-authorized piece-work performance management and apparent favoritism in hiring continues in the Toxicology Branch, Hazard Evaluation Division.

Two other significant problems have arisen--release of confidential personnel information, some of which was false, in the Branch Chief's appraisal of Branch accomplishments in FY 1986; and downgrading the 1986 performance appraisals of some Branch employees in what seems to have been a curve-fitting exercise within the Division. The Branch Chief has apologized for the release of personnel information.

On December 3, Union representatives Irv Mauer, Dave Ritter, Bill Coniglio and Bill Hirzy met with Paul Jean (Personnel), Ted Farber (Chief, Toxicology Branch) and John Melone (Director, HED) to try to resolve these problems.

The curve-fitting exercise involved downgrading 1986 performance appraisals for 8 people from Outstanding to Exceeds Expectations--which might not seem like much now, but if a RIF were to occur, a single appraisal point could make the difference between keeping your job and losing it.

Mr. Melone had been told by his superiors that he gives too many Outstandings. He over-rode first-line supervisors' ratings on 8 of 18 Outstandings, explaining to the Union that his impression of over-all Branch performance didn't justify the higher number.

The first issue here is whether individual professionals can be downgraded based on management's opinion of "over-all" work unit performance. The Union believes that an individual's scores must reflect that individual's accomplishments under his or her Performance Agreement, and nothing else. The second issue is one of ethics--"tech hours" (described in the last issue of Inside the Fishbowl) were not to be used in 1986 performance evaluations, according to an understanding reached last summer between Dr. Farber and the Union. "Tech hours" were the basis for the downgrades.

Regarding "tech hours", at the December meeting, Dr. Farber said he would continue to work with Union people to "put more objectivity" into the performance management system of the Branch, but the Union has yet to see a written description of this piecemeal performance management system now afflicting professionals in the Toxicology Branch. (This is an issue the Union will be negotiating on a broader scale in the Labor-Management Committee.)

Regarding "paper time-clocking", Dr. Farber complained that the last issue of Inside the Fishbowl mistakenly characterized his sign-in/sign-out program as a paper time-clock. He asserted that he just used that information to keep track of where his people were during the day. We said we would be happy to publish exactly what his policy was if we could get a copy of it. We have seen nothing on the subject as yet.

Regarding release of information that falsely characterized some Toxicology Branch staff as "weak" performers, use of "tech hours" was also involved in that problem.

Dr. Farber had prepared a FY86 Performance Highlights piece in early October which said, under "Recruiting, Hiring, Personnel Actions", "weak performers spoken to:---", and named three people. The essence of this tale is that errors in the "tech hour" tracking system had led to labeling these people as "weak performers"; that the error had been identified in July, so that October inclusion of a "weak performers spoken to:---" item in FY86 Performance Highlights listing these people smells fishy.

That conclusion derives in part from a detailed investigation of the problem. Using one of the abused employee's case an example, this is what happened.

On or about June 16, Toxicology Branch Section Chiefs were called in to discuss people with "low tech hours". The employee's Section Chief then called her in and said her hours were unacceptably low, and that there was no way she could bring them up to snuff by October. This was quite a shock to the employee who had only had very high performance ratings in the past. The employee wrote a memo to the Section Chief asking what Critical Job Element in her performance agreement applied to her "unsatisfactory" mid-year rating, and she asked what she could do to bring her performance up to a satisfactory rating. The Section Chief, knowing that "tech hours" were involved (and that they were not authorized for use in the 1986 performance agreement?) refused to reply in writing. He told the employee that since he had never put anything in writing about the unsatisfactory rating, no written reply to her memo was called for. (Let's all stand up and cheer for Zenger-Miller training!)

About a week after the meeting between the employee and the Section Chief, he came to her saying there had been a foul-up in the tech hour accounting system (see related story on the Seifter Award, below). Upon learning of the brouhaha, another employee came to the abused employee and said that Dr. Farber had been told "in June" that there was a problem with the accounting system and that there had been 2 or 3 other breakdowns in the system even before June.

When the abused employee got the 1986 performance rating in October, it was 100 points lower than the previous year, and she went to Dr. Farber to ask why. "Tech Hours," he replied. When the employee pointed out that tech hours aren't in the Performance Agreement, "He just shrugged his shoulders and walked away," she said.

So where does this leave us? First of all, these abusive management practices occurred before the effective date of our new contract, so we cannot grieve them under its terms. To have grieved under the old terms would have been an exercise in futility, because chain-of-command disposition of grievances under the old system means higher levels of management just keep subordinate managers' backsides covered.

Second, one of the "weak" performers was put on an Individual Development Plan, which the Union has taken to arbitration for being impossible to complete within the allotted time. We have won the point, and now management must extend the time limit on the IDP. We were able to do this because the IDP was imposed after the date of the new contract. This is a clear demonstration of the importance of having such protection for professionals.

Third, anticipating the importance of having a record of the December meeting, the Union drafted minutes and circulated them for markup to all the participants. Management has failed to cooperate in developing the record. A suggestion has been made that, since it may be difficult to get management participants to devote the time needed to prepare an accurate meeting record, tape recordings of future meeting be made. Copies of the tape recording can then be made for each participant who wants one and for any mediator or arbitrator who might need the record.

Finally, remedies other than filing grievances are being pursued, such as what we in OTS know as "risk communication"--that is, for those contemplating working in that shop, look before you leap.

SMOKING/CLEAN AIR POLICY--NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN

As you know, last week the General Services Administration promulgated a new policy on smoking in Federal buildings. Assistant Administrator Howard Messner then delivered a draft Agency-wide implementation plan for the policy to EPA and asked if the Union wanted to comment. Since the Union has been working on a general clean air policy in cooperation with management for some time, and since a smoking policy for Headquarters can't be implemented until we negotiate it, we have requested that negotiations begin on the broad subject of smoking and clean air through the Labor-Management Committee. Lois Dicker and Mark Antell, who have been the Union representatives dealing with management and employees on health and safety issues, will continue as lead persons in this work.

As indicated above, the Union will conduct an open meeting to solicit professionals' views on this subject. Lest you think we begin from a dead stop on this, Lois has already drafted a smoking policy for the Union and has gathered written inputs from Local 2050 members. She and Mark will update this material and make it available to you prior to the open meeting, which is set for March 2 in the Training Center Auditorium.

CHILD CARE--NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS; OPEN MEETING ON MARCH 2;
NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN---BY BILL HIRZY

An October letter to EPA employees from Mssrs. Thomas and Barnes announced that "EPA will soon be establishing a non-profit day care center at Headquarters", and that "the financial and management responsibilities of it will rest with a non-profit Board of Directors, made up of EPA employees". The Board consists of two professionals, four management officials, and five non-professionals. I (representing NFFE) and Laury Murray (representing AFGE) were invited as union representatives to join the group last August, before it constituted itself as Early Environments, Inc. and the corporate Board of Directors. Prior to our joining, the group and consultant, Bob Jennings, had been appointed by Jim Barnes to study the feasibility of setting up child care at EPA after Mr. Barnes had been asked about the issue by Beverly Gregory and Mary McCaffery. When the Corporation and its Board, which includes Ms. Gregory and Ms. McCaffery, were formally constituted, the bylaws stated that there were to be no representatives of groups on the Board, only individuals. (The reason for all this detail on the Board's organization will become apparent later, but first a report on its activities.)

This group is very hard working and competent. It is a pleasure to be associated with them. Daiva Balkus is Chairperson; Shirley Smith, Vice-Chair; Beverly Gregory, Treasurer; Jennifer Williams, Secretary; Gail Johnson, Personnel Committee Chair; Sylvia Correa, Counsel; Mary McCaffery, Fundraising Committee Chair. Others on the Board besides Laury and me are Sherry Kaschak and Bob Hahn.

During the Combined Federal Campaign and Holiday fundraising periods, the Board raised over \$20,000 toward our goal of having \$40,000 in the bank by the beginning of summer, when staff hiring will start.

Architectural design of the facility is largely complete. It has been approved by EPA management which will foot the bill for modifications to the first floor, West Tower, site of the center. Cost of the modifications and other start-up items will be about \$300,000.

Throughout the Fall, the Board has been visiting several other child care centers in the D.C. area, both Federal and private, for-profit facilities, to gain the benefit of others' experiences. We also had a visit from representatives of an EPA child care center in Research Triangle Park. Based on this information and other research by Counsel, the Board's Personnel Committee has put together job descriptions for the staff, and the Board is now reviewing a draft personnel policies manual. A generous employee benefits package has been agreed upon, one which the Board believes will attract the competent staff that EPA parents want looking after their children. We expect to bring the center's Director on board in mid-summer, and that the Director will help select the remaining staff.

Fundraising will go on throughout the Spring, with plans underway for a dance, a celebrity auction, a bike-a-thon, and a corporate fundraising drive. Our tax-exempt status is being pursued on schedule, as is the necessary licensing from the District government.

A child care report would not be complete without mention of the tremendous help given by about seventy volunteers during the fundraising and other start-up activities of last Fall. EPA employee volunteers continue to serve on the center's various committees. The vast amount of work required to get this center up and running just could not be done without the help of these employees.

With all this excellent work being done, why are negotiations pending? Simply put, negotiations and the binding agreements that will flow from them are aimed at ensuring that the center will be guaranteed existence beyond the present administration, that future Boards of Directors will be as competent and reflective of employee concerns as the present Board, and that child care will be available to those who need it most.

A March 2 employee meeting will be held in the EPA Training Center Auditorium to solicit professionals' views on the negotiations.

FLUORIDE--THE STORY GOES ON---BY BOB CARTON

Last September, Local 2050 filed a petition to enter NRDC v. Thomas as amicus curiae in the matter of the new drinking water standards for fluoride. On December 18, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia denied our petition without comment by a 2 to 1 vote. Perhaps Judges Bork and Buckley did not want to set a precedent by allowing the Civil Service to point out, in a judicial forum, that an agency's technical expertise rests with its professional staff, not its managers.

Oral arguments in NRDC v. Thomas were held on February 2. Judge Ginsberg criticized NRDC's brief for, in her opinion, misleading the court. There was a question of whether crippling skeletal fluorosis (CSF) would be expected in 1% of the population (ca. 180,000 people) drinking water at the new Recommended Maximum Contaminant Level (RMCL) of 4 ppm, or in 1% of the U.S. population as a whole. The EPA representative admitted that CSF would occur with the new RMCL. This could hardly be denied, since there are documented cases of the disease at levels below 4 ppm. Judge Buckley then pointed out the law's requirement to protect all people, including the most sensitive, from adverse health effects.

The EPA's representative was asked to justify the fact that a panel of mental health experts had advised EPA that mental health may be adversely affected by moderate to severe dental fluorosis and that the new RMCL will allow this disease. The representative said that the Administrator was free to ignore the advice.

When challenged by the court to explain why EPA ignored studies on CSF in India, the representative said that qualitative, but not quantitative, judgements could be made from those studies. This was because, in EPA's view, those studies were unreliable due to low levels of calcium and protein in diets there. (This implies that there are no areas in the U.S. where poor nutrition is a problem--lucky for us!)

The right of South Carolina (which thinks there shouldn't be any regulation of fluoride levels) to be in court on a non-enforceable RMCL was challenged by the judges.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT RETREAT PROMPTS INVITATION TO UNION TO GIVE ITS
"VISION" FOR EPA--BUT ELSEWHERE

Senior EPA management met in Baltimore February 23-27 to discuss where the Agency is and where it should go over the next few years, an exercise in developing a "vision" for the Agency. The memo announcing the meeting came to the Union's attention in December, and we wrote to Lee Thomas requesting time to give the management team a chance to hear what the Union thinks about that subject and how we see the contract's role over the next few years in realizing an Agency "vision".

Associate Administrator Rob Cahill recently replied to our request in a generally favorable way, but suggested for several reasons that another forum would be a more appropriate way to convey the Union's views to the specific, Headquarters element of EPA management. We are following Rob's suggestion, and will be discussing how to get the Union's message to our management in the Labor-Management Committee.

A draft of the Union's "vision" statement has been put together by Bill Coniglio and the Executive Board, and it will be circulated to Local 2050 members for comment soon. In addition to helping management understand the professional staff's point of view on a vision for EPA, the Executive Board plans to use the statement in contract orientation meetings for EPA professionals.

OPTS JOSEPH SEIFTER MEMORIAL AWARD RAISES QUESTIONS

Dr. Joseph Seifter was a world renowned toxicologist whose career included distinguished service at EPA. He died while on duty in the East Tower on June 2, 1982 and was universally mourned by his friends and colleagues. To honor his memory, the Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances established an award to be given at the beginning of each fiscal year to a person or group deemed to have reflected Dr. Seifter's "high commitment to scientific excellence and understanding of the public impact of toxicological science."

The award given last Fall went to Dr. Ted Farber, Chief of the Toxicology Branch, Office of Pesticide Programs.

A number of OTS staff who were close to Dr. Seifter came to the Union and expressed doubt about whether this year's recipient of the Seifter Award was qualified for it. This group included former Seifter Award winners.

Responding to these concerns, the Union asked EPA for information about the 1986 award. We did not ask if others had been nominated.

The reply contained this information: Dr. Farber was nominated by his Division Director, John Melone; the review panel consisted of Don Barnes and Dick Hill of OPTS, Gary Kimmel of ORD and Reva Rubenstein of OSW; the panel, which always includes Dick and Don, changes from year to year, and its other members are selected by the two permanent people based on the technical disciplines of the nominees; nominations are solicited each year with a standard memorandum to the Directors of OTS and OPP from the DAA of OPTS; the panel members review nomination materials independently, then meet to hear the history behind the award (which also lays out selection criteria) and to collegially discuss each nominee's case against the historical criteria.

Professionals with whom we have spoken about the matter question much of the material in John Melone's nomination memo. They also have serious objections to Mr. Melone's statement that

"Dr. Farber has established a number of management systems and procedures for ensuring that work products are technically sound, of high quality, produced on time, and produced with available resources. At Dr. Farber's direction, a computer-based action costing and tracking system was developed. This system not only tracks the schedule for all work assignments for each toxicologist within his branch, but also tracks resources including the amount expended on a particular project".

First of all there is considerable doubt as to whether the Seifter Award should be in any way based on management rather than "working science". Secondly, it is these very "systems and procedures"--at least one of which was used in violation of an agreement, and management of which was so sloppy as to result in false accusations of poor performance--that are the basis of employee disaffection with Dr. Farber's leadership.

The problem is not one of lazy performers finally having to get to work on the public's business--quite to the contrary. It is the result of over-worked professionals, harassed by a sign-in/sign-out paper time clock, being forced to routinely work more than forty hours per week simply to achieve "acceptable" performance ratings. How close are we to a return to "cut and paste" reviews in that Branch?

The days when managers could pull these shenanigans with impunity are over. Life inside the fishbowl is changing.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SPECIALISTS "NON-PROFESSIONAL" STATUS TO BE EXAMINED BY LABOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

In the Risk Analysis Branch of OTS, major risk assessments have been developed for formaldehyde, methylenedianiline, glycol ethers, methylene chloride, perchloroethylene, and 1,3-butadiene. Five of these six assessments involved the question of whether to invoke the priority cancer review section 4(f) of TSCA. They were individually written by a chemist (2 assessments), a biochemist (1), and three biologists (1 each). Substantial EPA, OSHA, CPSC, other Federal agency and private sector risk control actions are underway based on these assessments.

Your job: figure out which of these staffers is "professional" and which "non-professional". No joke.

From Local 2050's very beginning we have been faced with this knotty problem: there are people here at Headquarters with professional degrees, doing professional work and getting professional recognition whom the Agency personnel system has classified as "non-professionals", based on their being Environmental Protection Specialists. It is obvious to the Union, to the employees and to the personnel people we've talked to that at least some EPSs are doing jobs that are properly classified as professional, and that those employees should be represented by NFFE Local 2050.

A problem of major concern to these employees is that their time in grade as an EPS, even though spent on professional work, does not count when they apply for promotions into a professional job class.

Heretofore, EPSs have been able to be re-classified into professional jobs on a case by case basis, but this is a very laborious process for all concerned. The Union has requested negotiations with EPA to see if there isn't a mechanism by which all professionally trained EPSs doing professional work can be recognized as such and be brought under the umbrella of protection afforded by our contract. Vince Giardano, Rich Hefter (both EPS), Rufus Morison, Bill Coniglio and Bill Hirzy are the Union people working on this problem. A meeting will be called soon to elicit your input on a negotiating strategy--please watch for the announcement.

NEWS FROM NFFE NATIONAL

Lobby Week Is March 2 Thru 6 The 1986 elections broke six years of dominance by conservatives in both Houses of Congress, and we now find control firmly in the hands of legislators far more supportive of Federal workers. This gives us tremendous opportunity to pursue a legislative agenda of improving working conditions, rather than merely hanging on by our fingernails as we have had to do in recent years.

Our Union brothers and sisters from around the country will be in Washington through the week of March 2nd, carrying the message to the Hill that **We Work For America Every Day**, and speaking with Congressional delegations about these specific topics:

The right to earn a salary consistent with rates in the private sector

The right to political freedom and, at the same time, the right to be free from political coercion (a legislative goal that our Local 2050 pushed hard at the last National Convention!)

The right to job security free from the threat of contracting out

The right to freedom from wage discrimination

The right to privacy free from the threat of random drug tests

This is an ambitious agenda, and it will not be achieved without long and concerted effort by your National Union, supported by individual Locals and individual members.

Headquarters for Lobby Week will be in the Dupont Plaza Hotel, 1500 New Hampshire Ave. NW, and the week's schedule looks like this:

Sunday, March 1: 1-6 pm, Registration at the Dupont Hotel

Monday, March 2: 9am-5pm, Orientation and Training

Tuesday, March 3: 9am-11:30am, Appointments with Members of Congress;
11:30am-1pm, Rally on Capitol Steps; 1pm, Appointments
with Members of Congress

Wednesday, March 4: 9am-5pm, Appointments with Members of Congress;
7-10pm Banquet at Hotel Washington—\$25/person

Bob Carton and Bill Hirzy will participate in these activities. As a Washington Local, we have a special duty and opportunity to make Lobby Week a success.

Federal Employees Retirement System The new Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) is now law. If you were hired before 1984, you have an important choice to make: whether to join this new system or stay in the old one. To help guide your decision, the Office of Personnel Management has published a guide that EPA will soon make available to all employees.

In the meantime, we have obtained from NFFE National an advance copy or two, and you may use these to get a head start on your planning. Call Bill Hirzy to get one. The National may also soon have another, private publication on sale at a discount from Government Retirement and Benefits Inc. You may order a copy now from GRB on your own (no discount) by calling 461-9100. The National Office will also soon have a computer system under contract that can take your personal data and analyze your individual retirement options for a small fee. We will alert you when the system comes on-line.

What's So Hot About NFFE? For over 68 years NFFE, the first and largest independent Federal employees union has worked closely with Congress, Presidents and agency heads to protect and advance the rights of Government workers. You and some of our non-union colleagues may not be aware that NFFE is responsible for these benefits we all take for granted: 1923-Classification Act, providing equal pay for equal work; 1936-Cumulative annual and sick leave; 1945-Forty-hour work week; 1959-Health benefits for Federal workers and dependents; 1969-High 3-year average salary retirement formula; 1974-Amending FOI Act, opening agency record to public inspection (thanks for the fishbowl, NFFE); 1985-Blocked attempt to raise retirement age to 65 & increase retirement contribution to 11%; 1986-Upped proposed 1987 pay raise from 2 to 3%.

No other union can match NFFE's experience, independence and exclusive, effective representation of Federal workers. This column will continue to up-date you on the National's progress toward achieving our legislative goals. Stay tuned.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Soon after winning the representational election in June 1984, Local 2050 began earnest efforts to get a contract in place. Alex Arce, a 1985 retiree who was then on the Executive Board of the Union and a man with much experience in dealing with oppression, used to agitate at every meeting to "get the damned contract in place--we are nothing until we have a contract". How right he was!

Reflect back on the dark days of 1981-2, when we lay at the dubious mercy of the Gorsuch crew, when Hernandez, Horton et al. laid out the options for those who were not eager to join that sleazy bunch in politically manipulating EPA's work--"Do what you're told or get out!

That's what good little drones do". If you think, "Hey, that's all ancient history, the Ice Queen is gone for good", listen to presidential candidate Jack Kemp. He is saying that career staff are getting in the way of political policy setters, and should be prevented from "interfering" with those policy makers (like your friend and mine, Lt. Col. North?)

Times have indeed changed. Through the efforts of EPA employees organized as NFFE Local 2050, and with the advent of a more humane, rational upper management team, we Headquarters professionals now have the power to affect many improvements in working conditions and to protect ourselves against a repeat of the Siege of '81-82, power guaranteed us by the contract for as long as this Union lives--if we will but use it.

All the elements for giving workplace democracy a start at EPA Headquarters are in place. But by definition, democracy cannot work unless the people do. Workplace democracy will either develop and flourish as Union members work at it, or it will wither and die if we don't. The choice is ours, and ours alone, to make. Let's not wait for a President Kemp to force the issue.

Inside the Fishbowl is the official newsletter of Local 2050, National Federation of Federal Employees. It is produced under the direction of the Vice-President for Public Information and the Editorial Board of the Local. The Editorial Board solicits articles and opinion pieces from the workers of EPA.

Editorial Board: Mark Antell, Bob Carton, Irwin Pomerantz and Bill Hirzy (editor).

Local 2050 Executive Board

Bob Carton, President	Bill Coniglio, President-Elect
Mark Antell, Secretary	Morris Blumenfeld, Treasurer
Lois Dicker, Vice-President	Marc Turgeon, Chief Steward
Bill Hirzy, Vice-President	Irvin Mauer, Vice-President
Rufus Morison, Vice-President	Dave Ritter, Vice-President

"No organ is an island unto itself. If the liver goes, ask not for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee". Salvatore Biscardi

WHAT CAN I DO FOR MY UNION?

Please count on me to help with the Union's work load. I am interested in those jobs checked.

- Conflict Resolution (grievances or other conflicts) _____
- Human Resources Council Representative _____
- Newsletter (writing, production, distribution) _____
- Outreach (Congress, public interest groups, unions, etc.) _____
- Office Staffing ("being there", organize files, etc.) _____
- Labor-Management Committee (negotiator, surveying, etc.) _____

child care	_____	awards	_____
time/attendance	_____	EPS status	_____
smoking/clean air	_____	RIF procedures	_____
moves/space	_____	performance mgmt.	_____
discipline	_____	security	_____
ethics	_____	sci-tech issues	_____
promotions	_____	contracting out	_____
intellectual proerty	_____	any topic	_____

Other jobs I'd like to do _____

Name _____

Phone _____

Division/Office/AA-ship _____

Note from the Executive Board: Please don't ask why the Union isn't doing something about X or Y or Z unless you sign up to help out with X or Y or Z. The "Union" doesn't exist in the abstract; its just the people who are willing to work working.

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Washington, DC 20013



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THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF THE UNION IS TO ENSURE PROFESSIONALISM
IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY SO THAT THE PUBLIC AND THE
ENVIRONMENT WILL BE SERVED WITH DEEP HEARTFELT DEDICATION AND
THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF COMPETENCY.

Bill Coniglio, President

IS RESURRECTION IN SIGHT?

A new wind seems to be blowing at EPA. It feels like the evening zephyr that soothes after a very long day of blistering heat and insufferable humidity. This gentle wind that dries our brows, fills our lungs with cooling air, revives and refreshes. But where does this cool breeze come from? At one time it came to us from the Administrator as a memo encouraging EPA people to join and take an active part in professional societies, to travel and attend meetings, to receive certification in our selected fields of expertise. At another time this cool breeze came from the Human Resources Council expressing appreciation for the public service EPA people render. Another whiff of fresh air is the creation of the center for child care. EPA came into existence in December 1970. This expression of humanism finally occurs in 1987. There are other telltale signs of revival after the funerary past such as the movement of mid-level administrators around the Agency. The pain in any one spot diminishes as it is spread more evenly over a larger surface. These new winds also whisper refreshing rumors that finally EPA will move into its own new building. Now perhaps we can eat in a cafeteria, have sufficient parking space, bathroom facilities, just one library centrally located, decent work stations, air conditioning that works and life saving security measures. Another breath of fresh air comes from the recent formation of a confederation of professionals (Local 2050), a confederation of professionals expressing selfless demands for professional integrity, freedom for the expression of scientific judgment and distinction between scientific evaluation and political expediency. As the new fresh air clears our mind, the possibility dawns that these recent expressions of humanism, expressions of care for EPA employees, are occurring most coincidentally

(Continued Page 4, Column 1)

NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS OF LOCAL 2050 OF NFFE

The following is a list of officers elected in EPA Local 2050 of NFFE. This list includes their function. If any union member (OR NON UNION MEMBER) wishes to address this union with some burning issue, the following will indicate the proper person to contact.

FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

- I. President/President Elect
(Bill Coniglio/Bill Hirzy-87/88)
 - Labor Management Committee (LMC)
 - Administration of Moves/Reorganizations
 - Meetings with Upper Management
 - Monthly Meeting & Agendas
 - Ratification of Contract/Amendments
 - NFFE-National
 - Other Labor Unions & EPA Groups
- II. Special Projects (Marc Turgeon)
Knowledge Transfer (Chief Steward)
Human Resources Mini-Councils
- III. Fiscal Management Committee - Treasurer
(Morris Blumenfeld)
 - Membership List
 - Dues Status
 - Accounting Record
 - Cash Disbursements
 - Yearly Budget
 - Financial Reports
- IV. Record Keeping/Office Management-Secretary
(Bob Carton)
 - Correspondence
 - Minutes
 - Files
 - Schedule of Events Calendar
 - Office Hours
 - History

- V. Membership Committee - Vice-President (Lois Dicker)
 - Training and Orientation of Supervisors and Members
 - NFFE Benefit/FERA Programs
 - Social Activities
- VI. Professionalism/Communications Vice-Presidents (Sal Biscardi, Krys Locke)
 - Communications
 - A. Newsletter/Productions Distribution
 - B. Bulletins
 - C. Press Releases
 - Professionalism
 - a. Scientific/Technical Community
 - b. Quality of Science
- VII. Health and Safety - Vice President (Mark Antell)
 - Facilities Management Committee
 - Health Survey
- VIII. External Affairs - Vice President (Dave Ritter)
 - Congress
 - Academia
 - Industry
- IX. Grievances - Chief Steward (Rufus Morison)

ON RISK EXPOSURE

If there are 72 heart beats per minute,
 If there are about 4,320 heart beats per hour,
 If, therefore, there are 103,680 heart beats per day, and
 If there are 37,843,200 heart beats per year,
 If there are 2,649,024,000 heart beats in 70 years, and
 If there are 60 cc blood delivered in each systolic heart beat,
 If therefore there are 158,941,440 liters pumped in 70 years, and
 If man weighs 70 kg and
 If, therefore, there are 2,270,592 liters of blood given to each kilogram man body weight per lifetime, and
 If there is systemic absorption of a chemical pollutant,
 Then how much shall we say constitutes low risk exposure at any point in one life time?

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF HUMAN RELATIONS

1. Speak to people. There is nothing so nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
2. Smile at people. It takes 72 muscles to frown, only 14 to smile.
3. Call people by name. The sweetest music to anyone's ear is the sound of his own name.
4. Be friendly and helpful. If you want friends, you must be one.
5. Be cordial. Speak and act as if everything you do is a joy to you.
6. Be genuinely interested in people. You can like almost everybody if you try.
7. Be generous with praise and cautious with criticism.
8. Be considerate with the feelings of others. There are usually three sides of a controversy. Yours, the other fellow's, and the right side.
9. Be eager to lend a helping hand. Often it is appreciated more than you know. What counts most in life is what we do for others.
10. Add to this a good sense of humor, a huge dose of patience and a dash of humility. This combination will open many doors and the rewards will be enormous.

GOD, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

--Kristone

THE FILE

Need a secure file to hold special reports or correspondence? NFFE Local 2050 would be happy to offer such a service to EPA Professional Union Members. The file will safeguard documents written by professionals to Administrators stating professional opinion, positions, critiques on a particular issue. This union file will hold the documents that may eventually be used if controversy ensues. No confidential business information (CBI) should be submitted since the union at this time does not have the authority to keep CBI documents. Papers will be put into envelopes, sealed, held for three years and considered property of the sender. No access will be permitted except to the professional submitting the file. The files may be signed by a Notary which the union will provide witnessing signatures, seals, and dates. Shredding machines WILL NOT, WILL NOT, WILL NOT, be available!

BLOOD DONATION?

As Shakespeare said, it is better to give than to receive. We can take this literally when we talk about donating blood but especially for those who have high cholesterol levels. It seems logical that when high cholesterol is diet induced, giving blood should be an enormous benefit to the donor. If a half pint of blood is donated, then the cholesterol aliquot in that half pint of blood is removed from the individual donating the blood. The remaining amount of endogenous cholesterol is diluted with new blood being formed without additional cholesterol (hopefully). If diet is controlled, it may be the quickest way to diminish cholesterol levels without much second thought. The donation of blood is not only an exercise in humanism, it may be self-serving healthwise. Give it some thought.

SCIENCE ISSUE:

THERE IS A TIME FOR REALITY

When the occurrence of tumorigenicity is statistically significant, the occurrence of tumors is related to the administration of test material and tumorigenicity is not due to chance occurrence. The statistical significance of an oncogenic response is a matter of fact and not a matter of judgment. The trend of logic followed in some reports raises the agonizing question of the significance of statistically occurring tumorigenicity at the low dose level when there is no statistical significance at the high dose level. The thought exists that statistical significance at the low dose level cannot be sustained (logically) unless a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming why there is a lack of statistical significance at the high dose level. A satisfactory explanation for this inconsistency might involve metabolism studies, pharmacokinetics, or whatever discipline is needed to scientifically explain the lack of statistical significance at the high dose level. A balanced viewpoint must consider that the lack of statistical significance is also an event and this event cannot be used to disqualify the statistical significance which occurred at the lower dose level. A myriad of biochemical explanations can help to explain logically the factual statistical significance at the low dose level and the lack of statistical significance at the high dose level. For example, some "ONCO" studies will show a decrease in background tumors with increasing dose levels of test materials. While hard to explain, facts cannot be dismissed simply because these events do not conform to a previously devised train of logic. Facts can be questioned on the grounds of validity but not on the grounds that facts, when they occur, do not conform to expectations. Facts can only be accepted or invalidated. In the latter case, they are not facts. The harm that can ensue by discounting an oncogenic agent on the basis of faulty reasoning can be disastrous. What seems on the surface to be inconsistent should not be the driving force to reach an erroneous conclusion. Any weighing of evidence approach to evaluate the carcinogenic potential of a test compound must clearly distinguish between that which is fact and the action of weighing or interpreting the facts. This weighing process must accept that which is fact and not use one set of facts to nullify another set of facts. To arbitrarily nullify one set of facts while accepting another set is to render the weighing of evidence both capricious and arbitrary and is called cooking the science to meet personal expectations.

Salvatore F. Biscardi

Resurrection - Continued from page 1, column 1

with the creation of this organization of professionals. Are we to believe the wind tells us a story or is this instead another example of EPA Brinksmanship? This question has yet to be answered. Perhaps some wisdom floats in with the cool air. Could it be that same doubt is being raised by many who see how badly people have been treated in EPA and could the conclusion be reached that if EPA Management doesn't really care of its own people, what basis is there for believing that EPA cares for the people in the hinterlands? Only time will tell if EPA is real of if the breeze we feel is just EPA pushing wind with a broom.

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President
Bill Coniglio

President-Elect
Bill Hirzy

Vice Presidents
Mark Antell
Sal Biscardi - F.B. EDITOR
Lois Dicker
Krystyna Locke
David Ritter
Marc Turgeon

Secretary
Bob Carton

Treasurer
Morris Blumenfeld

Chief Steward
Rufus Morison

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
LOCAL 2050
"Professionalism in Public Service"

Environmental Protection Agency
401 "M" St. S.W., P.O. Box UN-200
Washington, D.C. 20460

(202) 382-2383

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

SERVING FEDERAL EMPLOYEES...AND THE NATION...SINCE 1917

Local 2050



RESOLUTION

Whereas:

The Books Not Bombs Campaign correctly identifies distorted national priorities as the reason-for-being of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, and whereas,

The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act perpetuates the present distortion in those priorities by requiring unreasoned and unreasonable cuts in domestic programs, and whereas,

The programs of the Environmental Protection Agency and the interests of our Union are in jeopardy from Gramm-Rudman-Hollings mandated cuts, as are programs at the Library of Congress,

Be It Resolved That:

The Executive Board of Local 2050, National Federation of Federal Employees welcomes the action and endorses the principles of the Books Not Bombs Campaign in holding open the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress for discussions of our national priorities and for scholarly pursuits as being in the public interest and in harmony with the principles and goals of our Union.

And Be It Further Resolved That:

The Executive Board of Local 2050, National Federation of Federal Employees calls upon the members of our Union to join in the discussions of national priorities at the Library of Congress each Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evening at 5:15 pm.

William A. Coniglio, President
Robert J. Carton, President-Elect
Lois Dicker, Vice-President
Patricia Hilgard, Vice-President
Donald Rodier, Vice-President
Alejandro Arce, Vice-President
Irving Mauer, Vice-President
J. William Hirzy, Vice-President
Mark Antell, Secretary

IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 13, 1986
Contact: Bill Hirzy 202-382-2327(O) 202-544-3998(H)

STATEMENT ON THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS ACTION

The civil disobedience action that we took last night, as part of the Books Not Bombs Campaign, is the beginning of a concerted effort aimed at re-ordering our nation's priorities-- just as the small civil disobedience action at the South African Embassy started an avalanche that buried America's "constructive engagement" policy toward South Africa and apartheid.

We intend to build--or to re-build--a coalition of concerned citizens who will join us at the Library, just as they did at the South African Embassy. In this effort, the goal will be to re-focus national attention on the needs of the American people for education, housing, jobs, security for family farmers, and an adequate, reasonable national defense.

The continuing campaign will make it possible for people to participate in legal demonstrations of their concerns, and--as the need arises--to participate in civil disobedience to emphasize those concerns.

This is an opportunity to re-vitalize the real American dream, the one of opportunity coupled with concern for human rights and humane values. Now is the time for action.

Contact: Bill Hirzy 202-382-2327(O) 202-544-3998(H)

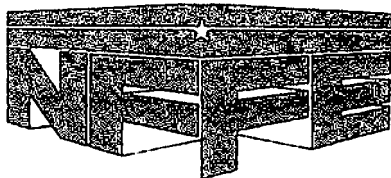
We need your presence—

- Mon's, Tues', Thurs', Fri's 5-7 pm
- Sun's. 1 pm ... The Great American outdoor Read-In -- bring a picnic lunch, read, speak, listen —

Make a Difference

Bill H.

PATRICIA M. HILGARD
TS-796



FISHBOWL SPLASH

AGD Impact

An official publication of the Academy of General Dentistry February 1987 Vol. 15, No. 2

The science and politics of fluoride

Dental and medical groups have been battling anti-fluoridationists since the first dose of fluoride was metered into the water of Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1945. For decades, it seemed that dentistry was winning those battles—that science was prevailing over the rhetoric of the anti-fluoridationists.

Today the battle lines are not so clearly drawn. The anti-fluoridation movement has found supporters on the left as well as the right, particularly among groups dedicated to safeguarding the environment. And as the base of support broadens, community fluoridation appears to be losing ground. About 60 percent of the 2,000 referendums on fluoridation held in the U.S. since 1950 have been voted down. A 1985 poll by ADA found that 36 percent of the 255 fluoridation programs surveyed had been cancelled, and 14 percent had been delayed or cut back.

As the "antis" have become more effective, organized dentistry and other supporters of fluoride have become less effective. The reason may be, in part, our unwillingness to release any information that could cast fluoride in a negative light. That unwillingness probably comes from the antis' penchant for distorting and misusing scientific information. But organized dentistry's reduced effectiveness comes mainly from losing its objectivity—the ability to consider

varying viewpoints together with scientific data to reach a sensible conclusion.

The current dispute at the Environmental Protection Agency over raising the maximum safe level of fluoride in public water supplies is a case in point. The EPA was pressured by supporters of fluoride, however well-meaning, and by states that would have to remove excess fluoride, to raise the standard to a level that now borders on unsafe, according to EPA's own scientific review.

EPA's actions were not driven by science, but by political pressure from

supporters of fluoride. In its zeal to fight the anti-fluoridationists, dentistry appears to be overlooking data that shows that some communities will face harmful effects from high levels of fluoride. The American Dental Association supported South Carolina's bid to remove fluoride from the list of drinking water contaminants regulated by EPA. When they took that tack, they mirrored the antis' argument against fluoridation because they ignored the issue of dosage. At optimal levels, fluoride reduces decay and produces no harmful effects; at the higher levels that

deregulation would have permitted, it is a toxin.

The supporters of fluoride, from the U.S. Surgeon General on down, need to return to objectivity in fighting the antis. Regulating fluoride along with drinking water contaminants may provide a bit of fuel for anti-fluoridationists, but dentistry's attempts to deregulate it will supply the antis with even more ammunition. Fluoride is too effective a public health measure to be held back by political gamesmanship.

Zev Remba,
Washington Bureau Editor

CONTACT: Bob Carton 382-2325