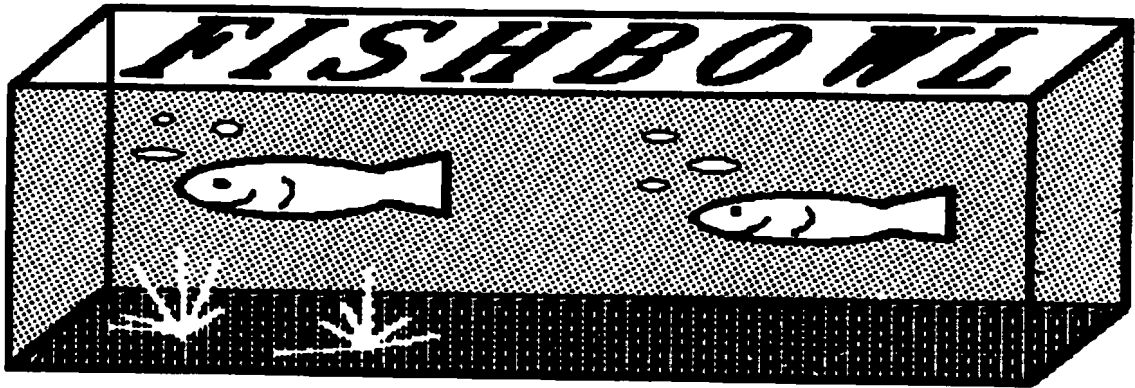


EXTRA! "Carpet and Illnesses not Linked", says Reilly (All by himself)
EDITORIAL P. 15

INSIDE THE



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
P. O. BOX 76082
WASHINGTON, DC 20013
OFFICE: ROOM 302 NE MALL
EPA HEADQUARTERS' PROFESSIONALS

NFFE

LOCAL 2050
(202) 382-2383

"We must conduct our affairs at EPA as if we worked inside a fishbowl—"
William Ruckelshaus, Former Administrator, U. S. EPA

JULY-AUGUST-1989

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 5--No. 7

- LOCAL 2050 INVITED BY CONGRESS TO TESTIFY ON OMB . . .
- CONGRESS RESPONDS TO NFFE'S EPA CABINET STATUS TESTIMONY
- SABBATICALS FOR PROFESSIONALS?
- THE "GALLOWS HUMOR" CONTESTS SECTION . . . ELEVATOR UPDATE
- MEDIA BEGINS TO DISCOVER NFFE AND THE FLUORIDE STORY
- CLIPPINGS TO CONSIDER: FLUORIDE REGULATION . . . EPA'S INDOOR AIR
- INDOOR AIR NEWS . . .

NEWS ON
FUNDING
OF EPA'S
CURRENT
BUILDINGS
AND
FACILITIES-

FACILITIES MEETING . . .

TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 29th, 10 A.M.,
CONFERENCE ROOM #2 (NEAR WIC)

. . . ATTEND AND SHOW YOUR CONCERN !

- ELECTION ANALYSIS SHOWS TRADITIONAL STRENGTHS, ROOM FOR GROWTH
- CONTRARIAN'S CORNER - "TRUE PROTECTION OR 'COMPETITIVE' MARKET PLACE?"


LOCAL 2050

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FISHBOWL STAFF

EDITOR---KRYSTYNA K. LOCKE

PUBLICATION---NFFE LOCAL 2050 EXECUTIVE BOARD

REPORTERS FOR THIS ISSUE :

BILL HIRZY
JIM MURPHY
BOB CARTON
RAY LOCKE
DAHLJT SAWHNEY



LOCAL 2050 INVITED BY CONGRESS TO TESTIFY ON OMB THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS 12291 AND 12498

Local 2050 was invited by Rep. John Conyers, Chairman of the House Government Operations Committee, to testify on the re-authorization of the Paperwork Reduction Act, the statute under which the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) controls government information gathering (among other things). The Union was also asked to present testimony on how OMB uses Executive Orders 12291 and 12498 to control regulatory activities of Federal agencies. The Union presented the testimony below.

Please contact the Union if you have items that should be brought to the attention of Congress. We are being asked increasingly often by Congress (and the media) to present staff views on how EPA operates (and sometimes doesn't operate). Local 2050 can be your confidential conduit to the Hill and the public.

"Mr. Chairman:

"I am William Hirzy, President-elect of Local 2050, National Federation of Federal Employees. Our union represents the 1100 professional employees at EPA Headquarters, many of whom participate directly or indirectly in EPA's activities related to the paperwork reduction act (PRA). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on re-authorization of the PRA and on other activities of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under Executive Orders 12291 and 12498. My oral testimony will be based on one specific example of how the PRA review process at OMB affected EPA's effectiveness and employee morale, and it will offer a recommendation that the union believes will improve both. I have also submitted written material comprising the union's testimony given earlier this year addressing OMB's "review" activities under the Executive Orders. This earlier testimony also contains recommendations of the union for improving the way EPA carries out your mandates for environmental programs. Finally, the written material also includes an analysis of the basis for OMB's interference with congressional intent on environmental (and other regulatory) matters.

"In 1987, EPA was engaged in the development of an effluent guideline regulation for the pesticide industry, pursuant to the Clean Water Act. One element of this process was to gather information from the regulated community by means of a

survey. EPA designed a survey instrument and submitted it to OMB for review in December, 1987. EPA also published a notice of its submission in the Federal Register and invited public comment.

"In January, 1988, EPA and OMB received word that the National Agricultural Chemicals Association (NACA) objected to some aspects of the survey. At this point (about 30 days into the OMB review period), OMB informed EPA informally that the new survey instrument would not be cleared until EPA met with NACA to discuss the objections.



"EPA was taken aback at this development, but moved immediately to resolve the problems by meeting with representatives of NACA and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an environmental organization which expressed concern about the delay in the rulemaking. In an attempt to keep the rulemaking project on schedule, EPA held three meetings with industry and NRDC during the remainder of the 90-day OMB review period, one of which was also attended by OMB staff. EPA was unable to elicit from NACA a clear statement of the industry's objections to the survey, other than statements about the sensitivity of providing confidential financial data. This objection is not a valid cause for disapproving a survey under the PRA: EPA demonstrated the need for the information in its submission to OMB, and had a complete set of procedures to protect confidential business information. Nonetheless, OMB saw fit to disapprove the economic portion of the survey at the end of its review period (April, 1988), stating that EPA had failed to 'collect the financial data in the least burdensome way' and did not 'demonstrate the practical utility of certain financial information.'

"EPA staff saw the OMB rejection as disingenuous, since the OMB staff had acknowledged early in the review period--before the NACA contacts--that the survey was well designed. EPA had also experienced continued opposition by OMB to development of the effluent guidelines program. It seemed that the 'burden' and 'practical utility' explanation was a convenient way of delaying or weakening the regulation.

"Since EPA's position was that the disputed economic questions were essential to the rulemaking project, it proceeded to elicit further comment on the form from several individual pesticide companies (several others had been contacted prior to the OMB review). Upon finding that some individual companies found the survey generally acceptable, EPA proceeded to inform NACA, NRDC and OMB of this at a meeting in August, 1988. Industry officials acknowledged at the meeting that EPA had demonstrated that the survey had 'practical utility,' but they did not withdraw their objections.

"It is ironic to note that in 1986 the pesticide industry had successfully challenged a previous EPA effluent guideline rulemaking on grounds of inadequate supporting data, and now was trying to prevent EPA from developing a more comprehensive data base for its rulemaking record.

"EPA prepared a re-submission to OMB in the Fall of 1988, with the original survey design, supported by an expanded justification statement. After the survey was re-submitted to OMB, NACA officials requested a meeting with Assistant Administrator Fisher and Acting Assistant Administrator Hanmer. At this meeting, NACA restated its objection to providing sensitive financial data, and EPA management, in attempt to keep its rulemaking project going, searched for a compromise that would require somewhat less data, but without weakening the regulation. A compromise was developed that made the completion of several questions optional for respondents, with the understanding that where a company chose not to provide the data, EPA would have to make certain assumptions about the firm in its economic models, as it developed the regulation. OMB was informed of the agreement, and after some additional delay, it approved the survey, one year after the initial EPA submission. EPA is now collecting the data and the rulemaking project continues, but promulgation will be delayed by about six months.

"The lesson we draw for this example is that OMB too often expresses a mind set that any paperwork required of the regulated community is suspect, and EPA must, through the kind of delay imposed in this case, be forced to prove that information requests are not too burdensome. We do not contend that EPA has never made a too burdensome information request, nor that a governmental entity such as OMB serving as watch dog is always superfluous and a hinderance to good government. Clearly, some level of review is warranted.

"What we do contend is this: with ever improving EPA operation (our EPA cabinet status testimony speaks to this point), with a greater degree of early, cooperative interaction among affected parties, with better professional accountability and tighter internal and external peer review of work products, as was the case in the development of and the reviews given the survey instrument in this case, the burden of proof should shift to OMB's shoulders. If a work product has been developed cooperatively and in a professionally first-class process, then OMB should be required to prove that such a product is unworthy of clearance. The current language in the PRA gives OMB very broad powers. It can determine whether a collection of information is 'necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency' and whether the information will have 'practical utility' [Sec. 3504(C)(2)]. It is very easy--and tempting--for OMB to interfere with EPA's substantive regulatory decisions by questioning the 'practical utility' of the data to be collected. Although the PRA does currently state that OMB authority shall not be decreased or increased with respect to Departments and Agencies [Sec. 3518(e)], in reality the PRA has increased OMB's ability to delay and/or influence regulations by deciding when, if at all, an agency may collect information, and what the content of those collections will be.

"We believe that you in Congress should set the level of proof required in such OMB actions. We believe that such a change would not only improve the efficiency of government directly by streamlining the OMB review process, but it would also have an indirect benefit by stimulating cooperation among the social entities involved and by improving EPA employee morale. When EPA employees know that professionalism is to be honored, not thwarted, in the OMB review process, they will have greater motivation to first-class work and their view of OMB can change from one of antagonism to one of collegiality. This changed situation will benefit all parties--environmental groups, the regulated community, EPA, and OMB, and Local 2050 urges you to consider making it possible in the Re-authorization Bill.

"We also ask that you take steps to keep OMB out of the business of substantive review of professional work products, especially scientific work products such as risk assessments. There is already sufficient political control over the use of scientific work of the Civil Service--some would say too damned much political control. To have a bunch of junior-grade, marginally qualified (at best) 'analysts' at OMB, who are under constant pressure to twist the professional work of sworn-to-duty civil servants to fit a political agenda, is to invite further well-justified degradation of the public's confidence in government. We in the Civil Service, like you in Congress, want to take pride in our work and we want the public to recognize our work as worthy of pride.

"Help us make professionalism and quality the watch-words of the Civil Service work by keeping OMB on the track of improving information resource management. Keep OMB--and by implication, partisan politics--out of the execution of our professional duties.

"Thank you, and I will be happy to answer questions."

CONGRESS RESPONDS TO NEEF's EPA CABINET STATUS TESTIMONY

Rep. John Conyers, Chairman of the House Government Operations Committee, responded to Local 2050's testimony on H.R. 534 (Dept. of Environmental Protection Bill) by calling for meetings among the General Accounting Office (GAO), EPA, Rep. Mike Synar, a yet-to-be-named Republican Committee Member, and Local 2050 to discuss the Union's recommendations for improving EPA's operation and management processes. These recommendations, you will recall from the June issue of Inside the

FISHBOWL - PAGE 5

Fishbowl were to institute a program of participatory management and to upgrade professionalism and professional career opportunities here.

Local 2050 is putting together its proposals in detail and will submit them to Headquarters professionals for written comment in the near future. Watch for a separate mailing containing this material. An open meeting will be held after comments are received to give you an opportunity for give and take discussion on the marked up proposals. Then, dues-paying NFFE members will vote on the proposals before the Local's team meets with Congress, the Agency, and GAO.

If you have suggestions to contribute to development of the first draft, please call the Union at 382-2383 or 382-2325.

This exercise is one more example of your Union's growing visibility and credibility on the Hill and with the public as it represents your interests. There is room for and a growing need for YOUR INDIVIDUAL INVOLVEMENT, YOUR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP in Local 2050. The only thing limiting your influence on how this Agency works—or should work—is your willingness to join the Union AND WORK EFFECTIVELY TOWARD IMPROVEMENTS. You don't have to be a manager to make telling contributions to more effective environmental action; you can do it as a practicing professional with drive, intelligence, and Union membership.

SABBATICALS FOR PROFESSIONALS ?

One of Local 2050's chief goals has been to upgrade professionalism at EPA by using the legally mandated provisions of the collective bargaining process. Local Vice-President Jim Murphy (a board-certified toxicologist with 10 years at EPA in OPTS and ODW and extensive teaching experience) heads our Professional Development Committee, which is charged with developing our program. One major element of the program that appears ripe for bargaining is sabbatical leave for professionals. The Union has been asked to put forward proposals on this subject, and Jim is doing that in cooperation with several Union members. If you have thoughts on how a sabbatical leave program can and should be operated, give Jim a call at the Union office, 382-2383 or 382-2325.

THE "GALLOWS HUMOR" CONTESTS SECTION

Part 1. As those who toil in the East Tower are well aware, our elevator problems in that location are getting worse. Another article in this issue gives details of the latest hair-raising experiences of East Tower elevator riders, some of whom were permitted by the Safety and Health Division to ride along as complaints about Car No. 2 were being investigated by contractor-inspectors. Car No. 4 is the "sudden acceleration" car; No. 3 is the "guess whether I'll stop at your floor" car; Car No. 2 is the "whiplash and watch-your-toes" car, and so far, Car No. 1 is simply a "maybe I'll go and maybe I won't" conveyance. Now, these numerical names are just not suitable for boxes that give the thrills and chills East Tower employees are used to, so Local 2050 wants your help in renaming them. The Union will offer a \$10 gift certificate to Roy's to the winner of this contest, which is to NAME Car No. 1, "Hindenberg", "Titanic", and "Challenger" have been assigned to Cars 2, 3 and 4. Send your suggested name for Car No. 1 to: Elevators, c/o Local 2050, Mail Drop UN-200. The winner will be announced in the September Inside the Fishbowl. (Of course, if some creative genius comes up with a whole new set of elevator names, we'll take those into consideration, too.)

Part 2. Local 2050 will award a \$10 gift certificate at Pizza Hut to the employee who sends in the winning entry in the following contest. As you know, "Project 1992" is the name given by EPA to the work toward a new building for Headquarters, the building into which we are/were to move in 1992. Send in a note with: 1) the month, date, and year you predict the new name will be assigned; and 2) your prediction of the new name, to: "Project ????", c/o Local 2050, Mail Drop UN-200. The winner will be determined by the accuracy in predicting the date of when the name change is announced. In case of a tie, the closest of the predicted new names will be the winner.

ELEVATOR SAFETY ISSUE RAISED BY NFFE LOCAL 2050

NFFE Local 2050 protested unsafe conditions after a series of incidents involving malfunctions of the elevators in the East Tower at the EPA Headquarters at Waterside Mall in June and July. After some initial reluctance to acknowledge that there was a problem, the EPA management responded with plans to prevent further incidents.

Around 1 p.m. on June 15, 1989, elevator #4 in the East Tower made an accelerated descent from the sixth floor, past a couple of floors, with an unplanned sudden stop somewhere between the first and second floors. There were four EPA employees aboard, some or all of whom were knocked to the floor, sustaining scrapes and bruises but apparently no major injuries. This was fortunate, because it took another 45 minutes to get the doors open. In the meantime, the EPA riders, who believed that the elevator had "fallen" (rather than "accelerated")—and might fall all the way to the bottom at any moment, were treated to an excursion to the 11th floor, without warning and for no apparent reason. Cheap thrills.

Around 7 a.m. on July 11th, elevator #2 in the East Tower started upward from the fourth floor, rose a couple of feet, then dropped back to the fourth floor. The doors opened and the single passenger, who decided he did not enjoy weightlessness, however temporarily, concluded that the ninth floor was not too far away to take the stairs after all.

Around 7:45 a.m., on July 11th, elevator #2 stopped about three inches below the floor level at the fourth floor. One passenger stepped up and out, whereupon the elevator sank down to about one foot below the floor level, with the elevator doors still open. Uncertain whether the elevator would move again, the other passengers (numbering about eight) decided to wait and try their luck on a different floor.

On July 24th, elevator #2 in the East Tower again had leveling problems, this time at the seventh floor, with EPA employees tripping while getting on.

After the two incidents on July 11th, Bill Hirzy, NFFE Local 2050 President-Elect, made a series of telephone calls to EPA management, demanding that elevator #2 be taken out of service until repairs could make it safe. The Union felt profound concern that someone could be maimed or killed trying to get on or off, if the elevator moved while the doors were open. Concern was especially great for the potential danger to persons whose mobility is restricted, including several employees in wheelchairs. No immediate response was promised, and elevator #2 was left in service in the East Tower. A couple of members of the Executive Board of NFFE Local 2050 then posted signs on elevator #2: "Unsafe. Do not ride." The facilities management staff then removed most of the signs, and an animated discussion ensued between the Union officers and them, later summarized as a "shouting match."

On July 12th, Bill Hirzy and NFFE Local Vice-Presidents Rufus Morison and Jim Murphy met with John Beecher of the Facilities Management and Services Division to reiterate the Union's concerns and to correct several misconceptions about the elevators, for example, that the elevators were overloaded. Overloading was not the case in any of the incidents described. The meeting was cordial and constructive. The Union learned from Mr. Beecher that EPA had taken responsibility for elevator maintenance and repair from Town Management, the owners of the building, that there was a permanent on-site elevator-maintenance person, and that not all incidents or repairs were reported to Facilities in the past, because the maintenance/repair contract called for doing the repairs but not making a report about them. Mr. Beecher said that better tracking would be instituted.

Around this time, homemade posters began to adorn the East Tower's elevators, in particular numbers 2 and 4, equating the elevators with a new horror movie for the summer: "HELLEVATOR—Coming soon to a building near you. When the doors close, they never open again!"

On July 20th, Mark Antell, NFFE Local 2050 Vice-President and Chairman of the Union's Health and Safety Committee, wrote a letter to Mr. Beecher, noting his meeting with the Union of July 12th and expressing concern at an apparent lack of follow-up to contact the persons who had experienced the malfunctions.

On July 26th, a considerable portion of the Facilities Advisory Committee meeting was devoted to a discussion of EPA's elevators. NFFE Local 2050 President Bob Carton, and Vice-Presidents Mark Antell and Jim Murphy attended, as did Loree Murray, President of the AFGE local at EPA. Key management people included John Beecher, Portia Cunningham, and Phil Wirdzek. Drew Papillon, a supervisor with the elevator-maintenance company, spoke on the safety features and control systems in the elevators at EPA Headquarters, and pronounced the elevators "not dangerous." Mr. Papillon noted the intense use of elevators, and recommended that EPA employees avoid unnecessary traffic, such as pushing both the up and down call buttons when summoning an elevator. He characterized the elevator system at EPA as low-rise, low-speed, and attributed the incident on June 15th to the automatic application of brakes after the elevator had accelerated beyond the programmed speed. Questioned by Bob Carton about the use of elevators for freight, Mr. Papillon said that the cables supporting the elevator are more than strong enough to support any expected load, and that the automatic braking system would prevent the car from falling any great distance even if there were no cables at all. Mr. Papillon recommended that an elevator being used for freight be taken out of passenger service, so that the call buttons do not summon it to other floors.

Mr. Beecher announced at the Facilities Advisory Committee meeting that steps would be taken to reduce the air temperature in the mechanical rooms on the roof, where the elevator control equipment is located, and that the elevator door operators would be repaired and replaced. Upgrades would be sought when the new lease is negotiated for the building. On July 26th, a desk-to-desk memo from Charles Grizzle, EPA Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management, confirmed that an independent evaluation of the elevators' safety and maintenance would be undertaken, that immediate steps would be taken to reduce air temperatures in the control rooms, and that the door closure mechanisms would be replaced over the next several weeks. Portia Cunningham said that she would try to arrange a meeting between the elevator company and affected employees.

Mr. Grizzle proposed that anyone who experiences difficulties with elevator service should contact Phil Wirdzek at 382-2085. NFFE Local 2050 would also like to be informed of any further problems: call Jim Murphy at 382-7591, or any of the other officers listed in the Fishbowl. The Union is interested to hear details of the newest slide taken by elevator #4 on the morning of July 28th.

As a general safety rule, look before you leap—on or off elevators. Keep your balance. Don't stand rigidly. Be careful if carrying anything heavy; put it down if you can while on the elevator. Report problems to the Union as well as to Facilities. Good luck!



CONTRARIAN'S CORNER *

* Views expressed in Guest Editorials are those of the authors; they do not necessarily represent those of NFFE Local 2050 or its members.

TRUE PROTECTION OR "COMPETITIVE" MARKET PLACE ? by Rufus Morison, Ph.D.

If the EPA's mission is to protect health and the environment from, among other factors, industrial sources of degradation, my question is simple: Is it realistic to believe that EPA functions only as a middleman (broker) in the market place between the Risk-Takers (the public) and the Risk-Makers (industry)? As with other competitive market places, the amount of financial resources (deep pockets) may well be the ultimate arbiter of environmental health, rather than decisions based on the understanding and practice of science.

To elaborate on the above, after technical and risk-benefit analyses of the

product/agent, the Agency may declare the health and/or environmental risks to be acceptable, unknown, or equivocate about them. (These cost-benefit analyses may be the point at which the science and policy equivocation begins). Then, both the Risk-Makers and the regulators (but not the scientific analysts) have a stake in the market and an investment in the decision to allow or disallow use, etc. In fact, both are now holders of territory: it is their turf. This may be viewed as a cozy, common territory of the Risk-Makers and the regulators who make choices in the absence of oversight from the Risk-Takers.

It is the Risk-Takers (citizens/taxpayers) with whom I am most concerned because, as it happens practically and apparently sometimes by intent, they are omitted from or limited in participation in a process that forces involuntary risk upon them. In a word, they are denied the type of access to EPA that industry is afforded through legal or lobbyist representation of that particular industry or industry trade associations. Industry frequently achieves this "equal" access with money and the coziness that comes from association with the regulators and, in many cases, the fact of having been one recently. It is my understanding of the several mandates of EPA that we protect the environment and public health because the Risk-Takers (citizens), through representation in the Congress, have desired and continue to desire this activity. Can the citizen-Risk-Taker come to EPA and, given the turf on which the choices are made, expect equal access to that demanded by Risk-Makers? The citizen may have the same recourse (court) as the industry or the government, but not the same resources (access and deep pockets).

In most cases, citizens are not joined by the Agency to right some error committed. Quite the contrary, in many cases! Sometimes environmental groups do confront EPA, and even sue EPA, but generally private citizens (without the financial resources) would have to sue EPA to hold the Agency truly "accountable." Finally, where is EPA in a leading public advocacy position against harm in major cases involving a large corporation or an established lobby? Not entirely absent, but not prominent, considering the number of pressing, large-scale problems!

In any case, the point is that, even in extreme cases, seldom is there any adversarial relationship between the Risk-Makers and the regulators. When such an adversarial relationship does occur, it is frequently between citizens (Risk-Takers) and the "dyad": industry (Risk-Makers) and the regulators. Acid rain—for 9 years it has needed more research, and, just now it's a problem! Fluoride—the "foozle" of the public by EPA and the dental cartel is seemingly endless! Toxic carpets—again, EPA management dodges the urgent National issue by declaring that people only "feel" sick! Sadly, the list of such topics could be continued and is apparently very long

Rufus Morison is a Senior Vice-President of NFFE Local 2050 and an Ecologist working within the Office of Toxic Substances.

AN INTERESTING NOTE ON EPA'S BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

A reading of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations' Report on the "Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill, 1990", submitted for printing on July 17, 1989, reveals some interesting facts concerning EPA's current buildings and facilities. The Agency requested \$8 million—and was given \$12 million, a full 50% increase over the original request. The following is an exact quotation from the Report regarding what Congress intends, and NFFE Local 2050 hopes, the funds will be used for:

"This activity provides for the design and construction of EPA-owned facilities as well as for the repair and improvement of facilities utilized by the Agency. The funds are used primarily to correct unsafe conditions, to protect health and safety of employees, and to prevent serious deterioration of structures and equipment.

"The Committee has included \$12,000,000 for buildings and facilities in 1990, an increase of \$4,000,000 above the request, to be distributed as follows:

"+\$3,000,000 for critical health and safety repair and improvements projects at the Administrator's discretion, and

"+\$1,000,000 for improvements to the Ada, Oklahoma research laboratory."

MEDIA BEGINS TO DISCOVER NFFE AND THE FLUORIDE STORY

If you were beginning to wonder if the stories you were reading on fluoride were just the hallucinations of NFFE, rest easy. Rumbblings are now being heard across the land through various media outlets that question whether fluoridation is actually "a 40 year mistake!"—as Longevity magazine put it in their July issue. Jack Anderson ran a very complimentary story on NFFE's role in opposing the fluoride-in-drinking-water standard (Saturday, June 6, 1989). You did not see the story because the Washington Post refused to carry it. Therefore, the Union has reprinted this column below. Discover magazine also ran a story on this issue in their July issue.

Dr. Bob Carton, NFFE President, was asked to participate in a special investigative report on the Gary Noll Show that aired live on WMCA radio, New York City, on Sunday, July 16th, from 10:00 p.m. to midnight. The show was taped and then syndicated to about 50 radio stations around the country who aired it the following weekend. Bob was also interviewed by CNN (Cable News Network), who will be airing a special report on fluoride sometime in the next few weeks.

Keep your eye out for other important stories anticipated in August. Science magazine has told NFFE that it will be doing an in-depth report on the fluoride controversy. Also, Dentists' Magazine and the Journal of the American Water Works Association plan to address the fluoride issue, and the American Dental Association has expressed interest.

EPA gnashes teeth over fluoride

WASHINGTON — William Reilly looks like the new white knight on the block fighting to reform his troubled kingdom, the Environmental Protection Agency. Now the workers in that kingdom want him to start with one of their biggest foes — fluoride.

Dedicated EPA staffers have tried for years to stop the EPA management from raising the maximum allowable levels of fluoride that cities can put in their drinking water. The official EPA line has been to allow fluoridation, which proponents say helps prevent tooth decay. But many of the rank-and-file employees think fluoride is dangerous, and they don't like being a part of any cavalier EPA policy.

In 1988, the EPA employees' union even tried to join in an environmental lawsuit against the EPA over the fluoride policy, but the judge refused to accept the union as a party to the suit, which was later thrown out of court.

Now, the union sees a possible new champion of its cause in Reilly, the first career environmentalist ever to head the EPA. The union recently wrote to Reilly asking him to stop the EPA's support for fluoride until better scientific studies are done on the health effects.

Jack Anderson

The fluoride issue has not had a minute of peace since 1945, when Grand Rapids, Mich., became the first city to fluoridate its drinking water. Fluoride has been called everything from the miracle cure for cavities to a communist plot. Today, 50 percent of Americans have fluoride in their water, and there is still no national consensus about whether it's a good idea.

Shelves of studies have asked the question, does fluoride prevent tooth decay? The resounding answer is, maybe. An equal number of studies have asked the questions, does fluoride cripple the bones, discolor the teeth and cause birth defects and cancer? The resounding answer has been, who knows?

Nowhere is the debate more heated than within the ranks of the EPA. The agency sets maximum allowable fluoride limits for drinking water, and it is up to individual cities to decide if they want any fluoride at all. The EPA employees' union thinks that when the EPA set the standard at 4 parts per million, in 1988, volumes of troubling evidence were ignored.

For instance, the EPA decided the possibility of dental fluorosis — pitting and discoloration of teeth — was a cosmetic problem instead of a health hazard and therefore not a worry for the EPA. The union also took the EPA to task, claiming the agency ignored the potential for bone deterioration in people who get large doses of fluoride because they drink a lot of water.

The fluoride controversy is just one millstone around the neck of an EPA workforce that has been demoralized by the pro-polluter policies of the Reagan administration.

The union has come to assume that the EPA will only react to environmental problems after the fact instead of trying to prevent them from happening.

Reilly has already given the employees reason to hope. He has gone on the offensive against polluters and brought a fresh tone of aggressiveness to the agency. But one of his toughest jobs may be to salvage the morale within the agency.

The above article was published in The Frederick Post on Saturday, June 24, 1989, and is reprinted with permission.



CLIPPINGS TO CONSIDER - - -

EPA TO REEVALUATE FLUORIDE STANDARD

"EPA plans to reevaluate the maximum contaminant level goal for fluorides in drinking water. A notice to this effect is slated to be published in the Federal Register by September. The union of professional employees at EPA (Ed. note: NEFE Local 2050) has expressed concern that the scientific basis for the current standard of 4 ppm fluoride is inadequate. According to staff members in the drinking water office, many studies of fluoride have been published since this standard was set in 1986. The Federal Register notice will ask the public to send in pertinent studies."

The above article was reprinted with permission from *Chemical and Engineering News*, July 24, 1989, page 19.

CONGRESSMAN SCHEUER'S STATEMENT ON EPA'S INDOOR AIR QUALITY

The following are excerpts from the statement of Congressman James H. Scheuer, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment, at a hearing on the Indoor Air Quality Act of 1989 held on July 20, 1989.

"It seems to me very ironic than an Agency like EPA that has the supreme responsibility for the environment, in the whole country, and mainly California, has dealt itself out of the responsibility for the environment for its own workplace in the buildings which it leases. I find that a really painful and pitiful irony.

"...But here, where the health of their own workers is at the risk, in the buildings which they rent themselves, and occupy virtually all the rentable space, they dealt themselves out of control of that space from the point of view of the health and safety of those premises for their own workers. What an amazing conflict this is. Well, you can be sure that we'll follow up and that we'll get to the bottom of this and if it takes legislation, we will propose legislation. And I think that the Congress, both the House and the Senate, Democrats and Republicans, across the board, will be horrified at the fact that this Agency no longer has any control over pollution in that building that affects the health and safety, indeed the lives, of its own employees, who have to work under those conditions."

INDOOR AIR NEWS - - -

-by Myra Cypser

MORE ON THE XYLENE RELEASE



On June 16th, fumes were released in the East Tower when a Town Center Management (TCM) contractor applied a sealer containing xylene on the roof near one of the air intake dampers. Fumes penetrated many floors of the East Tower and several

employees reported to the Health Unit.

Even though the Office of Administration (OA) did not know the identity of the chemical making employees sick, they did not evacuate the East Tower. Employees were told at the June 27th Facilities Advisory Committee meeting that the source of contamination was not found until an hour after OA was first notified of the release. The identity of the chemical was discovered an hour and a half after OA was first notified. An OA representative said he had division directors asking him what to do. If there had been a more toxic chemical or terrorist activity, the consequences of OA's failure to evacuate employees could have been devastating.

Also, employees are questioning whether OA took adequate precautions to protect their own personnel. I understand OA personnel did not wear protective gear when they investigated the fumes.

This was not the first time that OA failed to handle an emergency situation properly. Other examples follow. They help illustrate the serious need for better handling of emergencies.

ASBESTOS RELEASE IN 1987

On May 8, 1987, an asbestos release occurred in the West Tower lobby. More than 100 square feet of asbestos ceiling was accidentally removed by construction workers. The removal happened sometime during the morning and was detected around noon. The ventilation system was running during the removal and was allowed to run for an indeterminate amount of time afterwards. Even though OA officials had no idea how much asbestos had gotten into the ventilation system, they did not evacuate the building.

Air monitoring was begun at 5:00 p.m. that same day and wipe samples were taken later. OA reported that no hazard was found. However, it's not known how efficiently the ventilation system removed the contamination and how this affected the test results. We will never know if employees were exposed to unsafe levels of asbestos.

It's interesting to note that this incident was preventable. OA knew there was asbestos in this area. It was listed as one of the asbestos areas in an April 4, 1986, memorandum from OA's health and safety office.

PCB FIRES IN 1986

In late September and mid-October of 1986, there were two incidents in GAO space at Waterside Mall (WSM) when fluorescent light ballasts caught on fire. OA representatives were informed of the first incident as early as September 30, 1986, during a Facilities Advisory Committee meeting. Employees were concerned that the ballasts may have contained polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's), that PCB's may have been released, and the ventilation system may have carried the contamination to EPA's south conference rooms adjacent to the GAO space.

Despite pleas by employees, OA did not investigate immediately. When they scheduled the November Facilities Advisory Committee meeting in one of the rooms suspected of being contaminated, employees called for a boycott of that meeting in a memorandum distributed to the Ventilation Mailing List (including the Administrator's staff). A few days later, on November 13, 1986, an EPA contractor sampled for PCB's. It should not have taken OA several weeks to respond to this critical situation.

According to the EPA contractor's report on this, no contamination was found in EPA or GAO space. However, a study commissioned by GSA for the GAO space found PCB contamination at levels "exceeding the EPA and NIOSH recommended limit" in samples taken from light fixtures and panels on November 12, 1986.

PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCIES/COMPLAINTS

It is not clear what, if any, procedures OA has for identifying and addressing emergencies and for evacuating employees. A related issue is whether there are procedures for tracking and analyzing employee complaints about indoor-air-related illness and other health and safety problems on a routine basis. It is not clear whether there are now adequate safeguards to prevent an occurrence similar to the prolonged "carpet epidemic" that took place from October, 1987, through April, 1988.

On April 10th, employees sent a memorandum to John Chamberlin, the Director of the Office of Administration (OA), asking for a presentation at the April Facilities Advisory Committee meeting on how the EPA occupational health physician, the Health Unit, the Environmental Health and Safety Division (EHSD), and the Facilities Management and Services Division (FMSD) work together to identify early signs of building-related illness and to prevent this illness from developing further.

Months went by with no explanation, and then, at the June 27th Facilities Advisory Committee meeting, employees were told that procedures needed to be better defined and that EHSD would be drafting a paper which would describe the relationship between the various organizations and how they would handle emergencies and complaints.

FISHBOWL-PAGE 12

On June 29th, NFFE Local 2050 sent a formal information request to Charles Grizzle, the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM), asking for copies of any regulations or procedures the Agency had for handling emergencies, or, if there were none, to confirm that there were none. It also asked him to confirm that EHSD would be drafting procedures for addressing emergencies and to tell NFFE when they would issue a copy of the draft for negotiation. So far, none of this information has been provided.

RELEASE OF HEALTH DATA

The Agency failed to release the raw data from the health survey and other studies requested by NFFE Local 2050 on June 16th under 5 U.S.C. 7114(b)(4). NFFE asked OARM to release this information within one week. This information will be used by OARM to make decisions on whether to upgrade the air-handling systems and improve air quality. NFFE needs to know the basis for OARM decisions that directly affect the health and working conditions of thousands of employees. Most importantly, NFFE wants to analyze the data independently of OARM. There is no indication that the Agency will release the raw data when the reports are finalized. There is some doubt they will finalize their work in the near future. The release of the preliminary results for the health survey has been delayed three times and the report on air flow measurements is eight months behind schedule.

OUTSIDE AIR SUPPLY

On June 29th, OA issued a memorandum to all Headquarters' employees that stated that in the second floor of the SE Mall there was an increase to the air supply and, in the Library area, new units provide "more total air." I understand from talking to someone in FMSD that this means that there is an increased supply of outside air in these areas. However, for the SE Mall area, and for the vast majority of the 50 plus air-handling units throughout Waterside Mall (WSM), employees still have not been told if there is enough outside air to meet the standard set by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). According to the NFFE-EPA clean air contract of July 13, 1987, this should be the Agency's objective. Apparently, measurements were made in the Library area and this area does not meet the standard in the NFFE contract; but it does meet the new proposed ASHRAE standard.

COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER WSM TENANTS

In April, another tenant installed "toxic carpet," that is, carpet containing 4-phenylcyclohexene, near Room MG100 in WSM. OA followed NFFE's suggestion and put a sign in that area warning employees about the new carpet. There have been requests that EHSD communicate with other tenants in EPA Headquarters' buildings and ask to be kept informed of renovations or other activities that could affect indoor air quality. EHSD should work with the other tenants so they don't endanger the health and safety of EPA employees. It doesn't seem as though they are willing to do this.

NFFE APPEALS TO THE ADMINISTRATOR

NFFE Local 2050, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 3331, and the Committee of Poisoned Employees (COPE) sent a joint letter to William Reilly, the Administrator, on July 10th, describing the long history of the struggle for clean indoor air at EPA Headquarters and calling on him to appoint a technically qualified expert who would report directly to him and who would take charge of this situation, setting up and managing an indoor air program for EPA's Headquarters' buildings. It also asked him to listen to the 16 Congressmen and Senators who wrote to him in June concerning the "toxic carpet."

NO VENTILATION AFTER GLUING

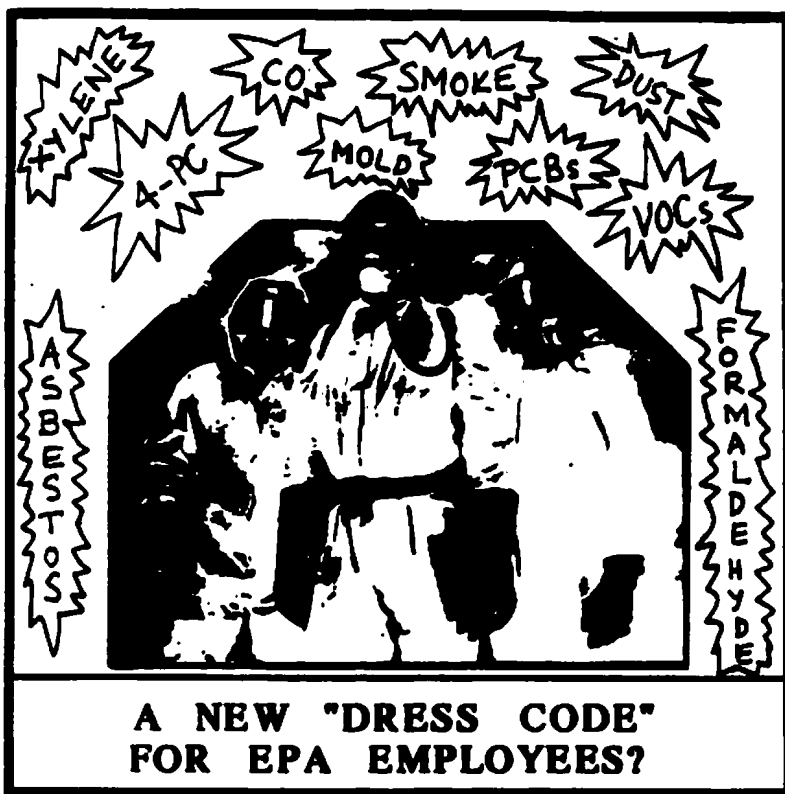
At the June 27th Facilities Advisory Committee meeting, an OA representative spoke about some wall coverings being glued in the NE Mall area of WSM during evening hours. In response to questioning, he admitted that the ventilation system had been shut down at night. In the morning, employees were exposed to the glue fumes that had offgassed during the night. Hopefully, OA will act soon to negotiate a "memorandum of understanding" with NFFE on procedures for renovations. ■ ■ ■

ELECTION ANALYSIS SHOWS TRADITIONAL STRENGTHS ROOM FOR GROWTH

In May, 13 members of NFFE Local 2050 offered their services as candidates for the 11 offices on the Executive Board of Local 2050. There were six candidates from the Office of Toxic Substances, four from the Office of Pesticide Programs, and one each from the Offices of Air, Drinking Water, and Enforcement. This reflects the traditional strengths and origins of Local 2050, which has had members of the Executive Board from most of these Offices since its inception.

Approximately 50% of the members of Local 2050 who were eligible to vote did cast ballots. Not surprisingly, most of the votes were cast by members from Toxic Substances and Pesticides. The percentage of members voting was up this year, from approximately 40% participation last year. The increase may be attributed to tighter races this year, as well as more up-to-date addresses to ensure that members received ballots. (Make sure that Becky Jones, our Election Coordinator, has your latest addresses, at home and office.)

The new Executive Board has six officers from Toxic Substances, three from Pesticides, one from Air, and one from Drinking Water. Ten of the new officers are men, with only one woman, a slightly more disproportionate ratio than last year's nine men and two women, but this is not attributable to voters' being biased against women: there was only one woman among this year's candidates. The bargaining unit represented by NFFE Local 2050 includes more than the three AA-ships on the current Executive Board. More diverse and extensive membership participation could be a goal for the future.



GIVE A HOOT!

We have recently learned that Dr. Stan Buckser, a strong union brother, has been operated upon for cancer. He is recuperating at his home (his boat) located on the waterfront at Maine Avenue behind the Flagship Restaurant, Capitol Yacht Club, Dock B-Slip 20. His phone number is 554-7013. He said he would like to hear from his friends.



FISHBOWL-PAGE 14

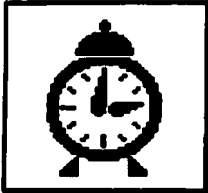
MEMBERS OF LOCAL 2050 AND COLLEAGUES

UNITED MINE WORKERS DISTRICT 28 NEEDS OUR HELP AND SUPPORT IN THEIR PEACEFUL STRUGGLE FOR FAIR TREATMENT BY THE STATE OF VIRGINIA, THE FEDERAL COURTS, AND LOCAL COURTS. Their struggle is our struggle

Messages of solidarity and contributions may be sent to:

Justice for Pittston Miners
UMWA District 28, P.O. Box 28
Castlewood, VA 24224
or
UMWA District 28 Fund
c/o NFFE Local 2050
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, S.W. (UN-200)
Washington, D.C. 20460

ATTENTION ASSOCIATE MEMBERS !



Please remember that June/July are the months during which you should renew your Associate Membership in NFFE Local 2050. Associate Membership dues are only \$35.00 per year—a real bargain!

Please pay your FY 1989/1990 dues by mailing a check to NFFE's current Treasurer, D. Sawhney (TS-796; 382-4289), or pay your dues in person to any of NFFE's Executive Board Members, listed elsewhere in this issue of the Fishbowl.

Also, please think of assisting NFFE Local 2050 directly with one or two hours of your time per week. Local 2050 is involved in many worthwhile projects and greatly needs your professional assistance! The Union thanks you for supporting our common goal of Professionalism and would appreciate your ideas for current or future projects, as well as feedback on your views on past activities. Just contact any of the Executive Board Members, call the NFFE-PHONE (382-2383), or attend NFFE meetings which are held each Tuesday, 12 noon to 1 p.m., Room 302 NE Mall. See YOU there!

CURRENT NFFE LOCAL 2050 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:

BOB CARTON 382-2325

PRESIDENT-ELECT:

BILL HIRZY 382-2327

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

NFFE-PHONE
382-2383

MARK ANTELL 382-2878

SAL BISCARDI 382-4288

IRV MAUER 557-7430

RUFUS MORISON 382-4273

JIM MURPHY 382-7591

DWIGHT WELCH 557-2783

SECRETARY:

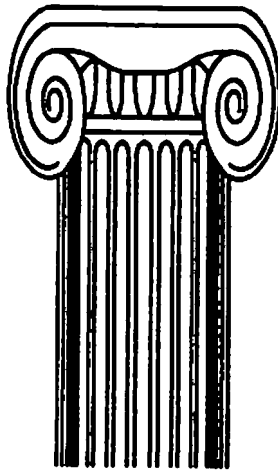
FRANCINE TEN EYCK 382-3562

TREASURER:

DALJIT SAWHNEY 382-4289

CHIEF STEWARD:

HALE VANDERMER 557-7336



SAY IT AIN'T SO, BILL A recent letter from Administrator Reilly to Senator John Warner about Waterside Mall's air quality problems exemplified (unexpectedly) continuing politicization/prostitution of science at EPA.

It was a troubling letter to behold--Bill Reilly, our hope for intelligent, ethical leadership, forced or duped into an untenable, fraudulent statement about the science of our "carpet problem".

In the letter Mr. Reilly tells Senator Warner that there is an "absence of a scientific link between any illness and the carpet"(emphasis added), and he invokes advice from experts in the Offices of Toxic Substances and Air and Radiation to support the claim.

Aside from the fact that the quoted phrase smells like something written in the counsel's office of a carpet or latex manufacturing firm, to assert that the surge of illnesses, both chronic/life-altering and transitory/less serious, that burst upon WSM's workforce last year had nothing to do with newly installed, stinking carpet is an insult to our collective intelligence. But more seriously and to the point of this editorial, Mr. Reilly's assertion is denied by the staff scientists involved, and not just those active in the Union.

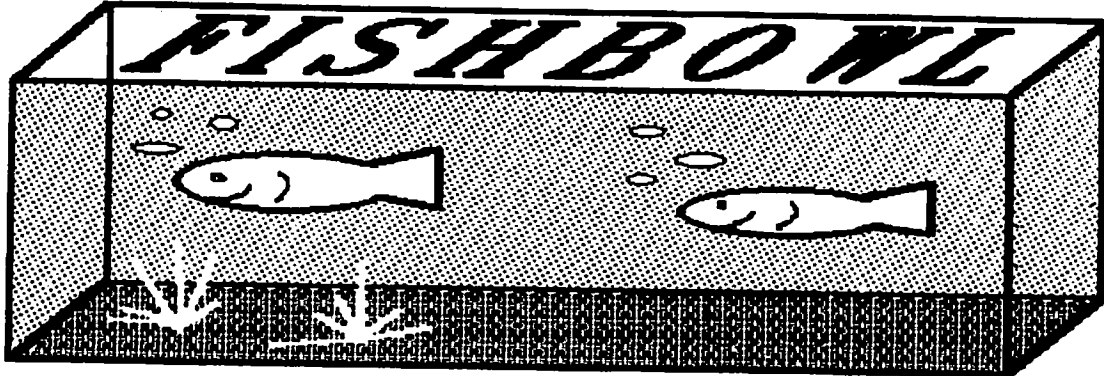
A check of the OTS Carpet/4-PC Workgroup leadership and of responsible OAR and ORD people who have been active on the management side of the carpet controversy revealed that Mr. Reilly's statement is without support.

The "aura" of science that surrounds WSM seems to tempt political appointees, especially those responsible for non-science functions like Administration and Resources Management, into thinking they can cloak industry-protecting policy decisions in the cover of scientific justification and get away with it.

There is much else to criticize in Mr. Reilly's letter, and we will be communicating with him and Congress about those points. Why doesn't the Agency just tell a straight story--there are aspects of EPA's actions worthy of commendation, e.g. inclusion of the unions in planning of the health survey.

But if Charlie Grizzle wants to protect the carpet and latex industries from the implications of pulling carpet that made over 100 EPA employees sick to one degree or another, we suggest he use some means other than fraudulently claiming scientific justification and duping or forcing Mr. Reilly to serve as his mouthpiece.

INSIDE THE



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
P. O. BOX 76082
WASHINGTON, DC 20013
OFFICE: ROOM 302 NE MALL
EPA HEADQUARTERS' PROFESSIONALS

NFFE

LOCAL 2050
(202) 382-2383

"We must conduct our affairs at EPA as if we worked inside a fishbowl—"
William Ruckelshaus, Former Administrator, U. S. EPA

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER--1989

VOLUME 5--No. 8

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- * UNION INVITED TO INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES SEMINAR
- * METHOD FOR NFFE REPRESENTATION OF BARGAINING UNIT EMPLOYEES' VIEWS IN DEALING WITH MANAGEMENT
- * BROTHER OR SISTER. CAN YOU SPARE A BIKE?
- * AGENCY TO BEGIN CARPET REMOVAL
- * EPA HEADQUARTERS' TOXICOLOGISTS RECERTIFIED BY AMERICAN BOARD
- * INDOOR AIR NEWS
- * CONTRARIAN'S CORNER--"Professional Courtesy"--by Alex Arce
- * DR. BRADLEY'S LETTER TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ON EPA'S "SICK BUILDING" PROBLEMS
- * LATE NEWS -- INDOOR AIR
- * POETRY--- KIRBY BIGGS


LOCAL 2050

JOIN TODAY —

FISHBOWL STAFF

EDITOR--KRYSTYNA K. LOCKE

PUBLICATION--NFFE LOCAL 2050 EXECUTIVE BOARD

REPORTERS FOR THIS ISSUE :

BILL HIRZY
JIM MURPHY
BOB CARTON
RUFUS MORISON



UNION INVITED TO INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES SEMINAR

Local 2050 was invited to participate in a seminar of EPA and the National Environment at the Institute For Policy Studies on September 20th. Bill Hirzy represented the Union and used the following material as the basis for his participation. This view of Local 2050's role may stimulate your thoughts and we invite responses.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

1. How is the national surge of environmental concern--inside/outside government--changing government, EPA, industry, and the environmental movement?
2. What relationship does/should governments and EPA have with the environmental movement and groups?
3. What is the enforcement (environmental management) process--from identifying problems to solving them--and can it/should it change?
4. How does technological research and progress (private and public) affect our environmental security?
5. How should EPA prepare for its more powerful role in decisions on the national economy, industry, and local communities?

I began my preparation for this seminar by looking at the five questions individually and preparing responses for each, hoping to bring an EPA union leader's point of view to each response. But it quickly became obvious that a better approach would be to simply lay out what we, as a labor organization, are doing inside EPA/government, and why and how that fits into the seminar theme and other historical developments.

Results of the presidential election of 1980 made it plain that environmentalism--among other cherished principles--had suffered a severe defeat and was in for dark

days. On the other hand, other indicators showed that much of the populace retained strong feelings about environmental matters. In the Spring of 1981, professionals at EPA began talking up the need for organizing to resist the oncoming tide of reaction led by Ann Gorsuch, James Watt, and the other Reagan ideologues.

This resistance had several foci: one was to protect the Agency's staff from the RIF's, reorganizations, and personnel policy changes that would affect individuals, their professional work environments, and their livelihoods; another was to defend the Constitution and protect the public interest--as our Civil Service oath compelled us-- from the predations its history has shown lay in store.

We quickly recognized that the Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA) gave to labor unions certain rights that we could employ in the resistance: the right to organize, the right to bargain over "terms and conditions of employment" (the definition of which we believe includes our accomplishing EPA's missions), the right to third-party adjudication of disputes--and it also gave us opportunities not specified in the language of the CSRA, but nevertheless apparent to the experienced activists in our ranks. The CSRA, in other words, created an extremely well-leveraged position from which to fight, by enabling us to have a separate legal existence--with all that implies--from the Reagan/Gorsuch EPA. That is, we could speak directly to Congress, the press, and the public about how EPA is or is not fulfilling its mandates without being muzzled by the Administration.

And we could do more than just speak to these constituencies--we could, and did--act. We brought down the wrath of Mr. Dingell and his Committee on EPA and OMB when the asbestos ban/phasedown rule under TSCA was interfered with; we worked with the Blueprint for the Environment Coalition in developing recommendations to the new Administration for changes in EPA's operations and organization; we've put forward proposals to establish enforceable professional ethics at EPA and to establish cooperative management; we've levered the "fluoridation lobby" from beneath the rock it has hidden under for many years and forced EPA into a dispassionate, professionally ethical assessment of fluoride risks; we've worked with our brothers and sisters in the labor movement (especially in Washington) to attack unhealthy conditions in our workplaces and have helped citizens fighting the same battles elsewhere, and on and on.

The point is this: first, that there has been a significant--perhaps revolutionary--change in government/EPA by the establishment of a labor organization within government dedicated to protection of the environment, its bargaining unit members, and the Constitutional government of the U.S.; second, that this labor organization establishes a new set of relationships--Administration/Union, Union/citizens, and Union/Congress--that will affect how environmental matters are dealt with in the future; third, that the process of managing environmental affairs can be put on a much more professional, apolitical basis, if these new relationships are nurtured and stitched together appropriately. Speaking to this last point, which is the keystone of my position:

We Civil Service professionals recognize that our form of government gives to the elected members of Congress and the Executive the power to make and faithfully execute laws, and to the courts the authority to interpret them. Our role is one of advising the constitutionally mandated branches in matters of our professional competence. If the Congress, the Executive, or the courts chose to ignore our advice and behave contrary to what objective facts teach is a proper course of action, that is their right, and the citizenry can take corrective action, if they chose, at the polls.

By creating and protecting an independent voice of professionalism, a voice that cannot be distorted or silenced or intimidated, our Union in a unique way makes it easier for the citizenry to assess how well or how poorly the Federal Government is carrying out its wishes. And if, over the next few years, the Union can show sustained and growing effectiveness in this endeavour, other Unions in other segments of government can do it too.

If those in elective or appointive office recognize the long-term value of having sworn-to-duty independent, ethical, and competent professional advisors, and if

the public takes advantage of the open avenues of communication with this sworn-to-duty professional community, then the contention and distrust that has so marked the relationship between government and the environmental movement can be at least softened--and perhaps radically altered. The Union, as an independent advocate of environmental professional excellence, can serve as a bridge, a builder of trust-in-government.

I point out, as I did in testimony this earlier this year on cabinet status for EPA, and as the Union did in its contribution to the Blueprint For the Environment project, and as the Union did in its comments to Mr. Reilly on Future Risk (a long-range plan for research and development in EPA), that reorganizing EPA, or giving it cabinet rank, or shifting research emphasis from this program to that one, will have but limited effect on how well the Agency can meet public expectations. We believe that without a major change in the professional work environment at EPA, the same old issue of trust--of who are those faceless bureaucrats of unknown competence in EPA really working for?--will bedevil the Agency's efforts to meet the challenges it faces.

Unless EPA, acting as a highly visible example, can show that rebuilding trust is possible--by trusting its professional employees to participate more fully and ethically in decisions that affect their work environment--we will never solve the problems of rain-forest destruction, ozone-layer erosion, ground-water pollution, acid deposition, toxics-induced loss of immune function, or the scores of other serious environmental health problems facing us, no matter how "high" on the Agency's action agenda we place them. The potential for contention, for goring each others' oxen, is just too high. If you doubt, just look at where we stand today on all those issues--no where close to solutions.

Of course, if we as a society chose to look at the implications of professionally competent analyses of environmental problems as too frightening, preferring instead to listen to the blandishments of the unlimited development and "band-aid-as-environmental-fix" schools, then the program our Union is pushing will only buy time....time to look for routes of escape from Mother Nature's wrath. --From which there is no escape.

History teaches that we can succeed. When we were as a Nation beset by analogously overwhelming military and naval threats in the 1940's, we responded by confronting the situation as a united people. We organized ourselves into an efficient social entity with clear goals and we set about accomplishing them in a rational, professional way. We recognized a clear and present danger and we went to work to overcome it. There is no reason why we can't do the same today, facing another awful set consequences if we fail.

There is no question but that at all levels of society we must organize to become efficient users of our resources, to really make recycling and energy conservation a way of life--the way we did in the '40's. We cannot continue to throw away the products of our industry, creating mountains of trash that have to be put into the ground, into the ocean, or into the air as toxic gases and incinerator ash. We must learn to live in harmony and equilibrium with each other and with our mother, the Earth. Local, State and Federal governments, private organizations and individuals must marshal the strength, the will and the resources to the task. It can and must be done, unless we are prepared to abandon this planet. It means cooperation on a revolutionary scale.

J.W. Hirzy, President-Elect
National Federation of Federal Employees Local 2050
September 19, 1989



FISHBOWL--PAGE 5
DRAFT PROPOSED METHOD FOR NFFE REPRESENTATION OF BARGAINING UNIT
EMPLOYEES' VIEWS IN DEALINGS WITH MANAGEMENT
(To be discussed at the next open Union meeting)

1. As soon as an employee concern over a negotiable matter comes to the attention of the Union, the Chief Steward notifies the authorized Agency representative of our desire to negotiate over the matter. Simultaneously, the Chief Steward notifies the President of AFGE Local 3331 of our intent.
2. Notice is given by mail to the bargaining unit of commencement of the bargaining process, and employee views are solicited for presentation to Union negotiators, in writing or in person, at Union meetings.
3. Insofar as possible, NFFE Local 2050 develops its bargaining position in consultation with AFGE, if appropriate.
4. A negotiating committee consisting of designated NFFE Local 2050 and management representatives convenes at the earliest convenient date to establish ground rules for the negotiations.
5. The ground rules include a procedure by which interested employees are invited to present any special information they may have relative to the matter under negotiation.
6. The committee meets in executive session to carry out negotiations. Union representatives keep the Executive Committee of the Local informed about progress of negotiations, and the Executive Committee provides guidance, as appropriate.
7. Agreements reached by the negotiators are presented to the members of NFFE Local 2050 for ratification by vote.

BROTHER OR SISTER, CAN YOU SPARE A BIKE?

Do you have a bike that you don't use anymore? It's a hassle to sell it, but it's easy to donate it to organizations that collect bikes for developing countries. And, your donation is tax-deductible.



One group, Bikes Not Bombs, has been collecting donated bikes for over five years. Over 5,000 bikes have been sent to Haiti, Nicaragua, and Mozambique. Bikes Not Bombs plans to ship 300 bikes to Nicaragua this fall. You can help make that goal by contacting Bikes Not Bombs and donating that bike that may be cluttering up your basement, garage, or attic. A \$15 donation to cover shipping costs is also requested, but that, like the bike, is tax-deductible. For more information, call Bikes Not Bombs at (301) 589-1810.

(Reprinted from the September, 1989, issue of "Ride On," the newsletter of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.)



AGENCY TO BEGIN CARPET REMOVAL

EPA announced on September 14th that it would begin removal of the carpet that caused problems in Waterside Mall. Needless to say, Local 2050, its sister union AFGE Local 3331, and the members of COPE are heartened by the announcement. Removal will begin in the M-2827 suite and move to other areas later. The unions will be negotiating with management on criteria for removal.

Many have asked what prompted the removal at this time. Only the upper reaches of the West Tower can answer that question with certainty. However, the letter sent by Dr. Mark Bradley—the prestigious occupational physician who worked here on contract from 11/88 to 5/89—to Mr. Reilly may shed some light on the reason. We have attached Dr. Bradley's letter to this issue for your information. You will note that he concludes there is a major public health problem here, likely to be of chemical, rather than biological origin, and that many people seem to be suffering from legitimate medical (as clearly distinguished from psychological) problems associated with the air quality of EPA's Waterside Mall building complex.

The unions are meeting with management to work on a comprehensive research effort to improve the indoor environment of Headquarters. One major outstanding issue is the adequacy of alternative work space for affected employees. As more people have continued to get sick, the space is filling up, and the air quality in it-- never very good--will be ever more of a problem as cold weather nears. You should know in this connection that your colleagues working there can only tolerate the space with open windows and fans blowing. They still need your support.

EPA HEADQUARTERS' TOXICOLOGISTS RECERTIFIED BY AMERICAN BOARD

Diplomates of the American Board of Toxicology must renew their certification every five years. One of the tasks required is passing an examination in general toxicology in the fourth year of each five-year cycle. This year was the first time that Diplomates who were certified in two different years (1980 and 1985) faced the same examination. Among the scientists at EPA Headquarters who successfully completed this year's examination were Bob Beliles, Marion Copley, Brian Dementi, Mike Dourson (on detail from Cincinnati), Bill Marcus, Reva Rubenstein, Dave Van Ormer, John Whalan, and NFFE Local 2050 Vice-President Jim Murphy.



INDOOR AIR NEWS - - -

--by Myra Cypser

NEW AIR SYSTEMS POORLY DESIGNED

At the August 29th Facilities Advisory Committee meeting, Facilities said they were repairing two air-handling systems in the third floor of the Mall, adding new air-handling units and air-intake dampers. They admitted that when they designed these systems, they gave no consideration to compliance with the outside air standard set by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). This is 20 cubic feet per minute (cfm) per person of outside air. When they repaired three areas on the second floor earlier this year, there was no consideration of ASHRAE. I estimate that they have spent more than a million dollars on these repairs. (The library area repairs alone cost EPA \$250,000.) They have spent an enormous amount of money and still have not demonstrated compliance with ASHRAE for even one air-handling system. What a waste!

REINFORCING THE STATUS QUO

Facilities says their goal is to provide a total air flow of 1 cfm per square foot of office space. They have characterized this as off-the-shelf design. It also happens to be the original building design. They are reinforcing the status quo. At the July 25th Facilities Advisory Committee meeting, David Weitzman, Director of the Environmental Health and Safety Division, said he estimated that this amount of air flow would be equivalent to half the ASHRAE standard when the air-intake dampers are at the minimum setting. The ASHRAE standard is an industry minimum. Shouldn't this be our goal?

NEW LEASE REQUIREMENTS DEFICIENT

In July, the Agency prepared a new lease with Town Center Management Corporation (TCM) for the space newly constructed on the roof between the West Tower and the Mall. This new lease says "Outside air intake during heating and cooling seasons shall be reduced to the greatest extent feasible. Under most conditions a 10 percent outside air intake will be adequate for general office space." Ten percent makeup air will not necessarily comply with ASHRAE; in fact, this amount will probably not be enough, if a lot of people are housed in that space. The 1987 NFFE/AFGE clean air contract with the Agency says that the goal is compliance with ASHRAE. On June 8, 1987, while they were negotiating this contract with the unions, the Agency signed a lease for the SE Mall with TCM requiring only 5 cfm/person of outside air. In June, the Solicitation For Offers (SFO) for additional space in Crystal

City specified 15 cfm/person as a minimum. Why not meet ASHRAE, especially when EPA is acquiring new space?

AIR FLOW STUDY LACKS ANSWERS

In August, the Agency released a report on 22 air-handling systems (AHS's). We had hoped that the report would contain recommendations as to how the AHS's should be maintained, operated and/or physically modified to achieve the ASHRAE outside air standard. This report does not address the ASHRAE standard and does not tell us if the air-handling systems meet it. The report unrealistically asserts that, for seven of the AHS's, the minimum damper settings provide outside air in excess of the cooling equipment's design capacity. The contractor for the report has stated that the explanation for this may be that the dampers were not really at the minimum setting during testing. Of course, we need to know what the air-flow rates are at the minimum setting, so we can be assured that ASHRAE will be met all year round.

A PECULIAR POLICY

What can explain the Agency's consistent refusal to address ASHRAE? Why won't they examine if there is enough outside air coming into the Headquarters' buildings? Why don't they design new air-handling systems to meet ASHRAE? Why don't they negotiate new leases that comply with the NFFE/AFGE contract? What economic or policy considerations prevent us from moving forward on this issue? We have been asking for four years whether there is enough outside air coming into the Headquarters' buildings to protect health. What does it take to get some movement on this vital issue? There have been at least 62 newspaper articles on EPA's indoor air and there have been inquiries from 20 Congressmen and Senators, yet we still have no indication that we are getting enough outside air.

CARPET TO BE REMOVED

NFFE asked to have the toxic carpet removed because it was associated with employee illness, the chemical emissions from the carpet continued, and we had no evidence that emission levels were safe. On September 13th, the Agency announced that it was going to begin removing the toxic carpet in room M2827. According to The Washington Times, this will be done to see if employee health complaints will be reduced. It is interesting that the Agency has finally admitted that the carpet made people ill. David Weitzman was quoted in the Times as saying, "The freshly manufactured carpet clearly caused the initial illness..." The Agency has asked NFFE to designate those areas where the carpet should be removed next.

PHYSICIAN'S LETTER ON INDOOR AIR

Dr. Mark Bradley's June letter to the Administrator was leaked to NFFE on September 7th. Dr. Mark Bradley was the occupational health physician at the EPA Health Unit for six months. In his letter, he linked employee illness to the building. He said that most of the people he examined had medical problems that were caused by working at Waterside Mall (WSM). People had symptoms typical of "Tight Building Syndrome." He asked the Administrator to intervene because his attempts to raise management concerns had been ignored. He said he got absolutely no response to his reports. His letter had many recommendations, including providing maximum fresh air exchange. The Agency has formed a committee to review Dr. Bradley's work.

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

On July 20th, Bobbie Lively-Diebold, one of the EPA employees who was a victim of the toxic carpet, testified before the House Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment about her experiences at EPA during a hearing on proposed indoor air legislation, H.R. 1530. When she finished, Congressman James Scheuer said, "I want to say how impressed I am with your statement," and later on in the hearing he spent several minutes speaking on how official EPA had failed to act to address indoor air issues in its own building. A transcript of his remarks was published in the July/August issue of the NFFE newsletter.

WHERE PRODUCTIVITY IS A CONCERN

A report was issued by EPA's Office of Air and Radiation and EPA's Office of Research and Development in August entitled, "Indoor Air Facts No. 6, Report to Congress on Indoor Air Quality." Page 5 states, "Labor costs may be 10 to 100 times greater per square foot of office space than energy and other environmental control costs. Thus, in cases where productivity is an important issue, remedial actions to improve indoor air quality are likely to be cost effective even if they require expensive retrofit." How much would it cost to provide adequate indoor air quality at EPA? When will the employees receive a cost analysis?

LETTERS TO SENATOR AND ADMINISTRATOR

NFFE sent a letter to Senator John Warner on August 17th commenting on EPA's July 25th letter to him on the indoor air quality in EPA's Headquarters' buildings. NFFE asked him for a Congressional investigation of this matter. The Committee of Poisoned Employees (COPE) sent a letter to William Reilly, the Administrator, on August 18th asking him to ensure that the new space being acquired in Crystal City will have adequate indoor air quality. Afterwards, Facilities set up a committee to address the new space in Crystal. On September 13th, NFFE sent a letter to the Administrator commenting on a memorandum to him from Charles Grizzle, the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Administration and Resources Management, and listing all the inaccurate and misleading statements in that memorandum. Mr. Grizzle's memorandum contained an analysis of the July 10th letter to the Administrator from the unions and COPE. There has been no direct response to the July 10th letter which asked the Administrator to aggressively investigate our air quality.

CORRECTION

The previous edition of Indoor Air News incorrectly stated that the ASHRAE standard was met in the Library area.

MEETINGS

The next Facilities Advisory Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 31, at 10 A.M., in conference room #2. (Check with NFFE (382-2383) if you plan to attend because the meeting may be held instead in one of the local hotels, to accommodate injured employees who cannot enter WSM.

In addition, the unions and the Committee of Poisoned Employees (COPE) hold regular meetings on EPA's indoor air.

WRITE TO CONGRESS

If you are interested in commenting on the legislation on indoor air, write to these Congressmen. They are considering H.R. 1530, the Indoor Air Quality Act of 1989:

Hon. Thomas A. Luken, Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation and Hazardous Materials
H2-324 HOB Annex 2
Washington, DC 20515-6119

Hon. Henry A. Waxman, Chairman
Subcommittee on Health and the Environment
2415 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515-6118. ■ ■ ■

IN MEMORIAM

We are saddened to report the death of our union brother, Stanley Buckser, Ph.D., on September 18, 1989, from cancer. We feel enriched for having known him and admired him for his spirit, humor, and fairness. May the fair wind be at his stern.



CONTRARIAN'S CORNER *

* Views expressed in Guest Editorials are those of the authors; they do not necessarily represent those of NFFE Local 2050 or its members.

PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

by Alex Arce

The point of view of the author is derived from continuous observations during his tour of duty at the Environmental Protection Agency.

Among savages in the woods, the older savage is respected, if not for his knowledge, for his age and wisdom.

Among artisans or laborers, a man or a woman gains self-respect and consideration by others because it is known that the elders have learned either, by schooling or by "doing."

Unfortunately, at the Environmental Protection Agency, in many instances, a person does not gain seniority even after displaying the well-advertized Ph.D. Why should a person be treated with respect and consideration because he/she holds a Ph.D.? For one thing, to obtain a Ph.D. a person must invest about \$15,000 per year for at least four years. Ph.D.'s are not given freely; they must be earned, and a person must have an excellent command of pertinent subject areas and must know how to write properly.

In our beloved little Agency, anybody is entitled to correct anyone else's paper with red ink, to re-write papers because "...the style is not of his liking" or because the texture of the paper itself is not the one desired. Sometimes I have the impression that it is more important to use a "good format" and the "right" word-processor than to express one's own meaningful ideas in one's own way and form.

This must not be allowed to happen again! The civil servants employed by our Agency are mature adults who know how to write, and deserve to be treated as such. While going to school, one must write as the teacher requires. In this Agency, as is the case in other agencies, what a person signs becomes his/her responsibility—and the person who "corrected" the paper, memorandum, or letter is not the one who has to answer in case of dispute.

It may be provocative to mention the famous "Cut-and-Paste Issue" in the Office of Pesticide Programs, a few years back, in which not one of the first-line supervisors or the "Chiefs" showed their necks at the time when the water got "hot!"

Please, no more corrections in red! Discretion and courtesy are a must. After all, one does not require a Ph.D. to make grammatical errors.

We should remember that Leonardo Da Vinci was brutally criticized and his efforts retarded because his spelling was not to the liking of the bureaucrats of that time!

Alex Arce works within the Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs.

CALL FOR ASSISTANCE - - -

NFFE Local 2050 is calling for volunteers to man the Union office (302 NE Mall), answering the telephone, greeting visitors, and performing other vital tasks. If you can spare your lunch hour, or otherwise arrange to spend just one hour per week assisting the Union, please contact Bob Carton at 382-2325 or 382-2383.

Together we will make a difference!

Dr. Bradley's Letter to the Administrator---

MARK E. BRADLEY, M.D., M.P.H.
OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE
9316 FALLS BRIDGE LANE
POTOMAC, MARYLAND 20854
U S A
1301 299-8826

June 25, 1989

The Honorable William K. Reilly
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Mr. Reilly:

I am a physician whose specialty is occupational medicine. From mid-November, 1988, until the end of May, 1989, I worked as a consultant physician at the EPA Health Unit. I am writing to you, because my previous attempts to raise management concerns have been ignored.

During the period that I worked at the EPA, I interviewed and examined approximately 60 of your employees who work at the EPA headquarters. I have very serious concerns about the health and well-being of these individuals, and many others who I did not examine. The purpose of this letter is to share these concerns with you, and provide a first-hand, third party view of the building related illnesses, which are occurring at your facility.

During the six and a half month period that I was a consultant at the EPA Health Unit, at least 80% of the individuals who I examined, had bone fide medical problems, which I believe are caused by working at the Waterside Mall complex. Fifty to sixty percent of these folks had symptoms and physical findings which were typical of a "Tight Building Syndrome", that is to say eye and throat irritation, headaches, and so forth. Some of these people were severely affected. Thirty to forty percent of the patients that I examined had symptoms and findings of airway hyperreactivity which can be considered to be a form of occupational asthma. Ten percent of patients had evidence of allergic

alveolitis, an inflammatory reaction in the alveoli and bronchioles of the lung resulting from an immune interaction between inhaled organic particles, circulating antibodies and sensitized lymphocytes. This condition can be progressive, leading to progressive pulmonary impairment and death. (You will note that these percentages total more than 80%. The reason for this is that a fair number of these patients had more than one process ongoing.)

I am certain that during the period of time that I was seeing patients at the EPA Health Unit, that I saw only a small fraction of the people who are potentially, adversely affected by the environment of the Waterside Mall complex. Based on my experience with problems of this nature, as well as patients reports of colleagues who were having difficulties, I estimate that 10 to 20% of the personnel at your headquarters are experiencing untoward health effects. I frankly consider that there is a major public health situation at this location, and that this is not being dealt with in a timely, positive and responsible fashion. What is particularly unfortunate is that this is a totally remedial situation.

On a monthly basis, I submitted reports which noted these findings and expressed my concerns. I made multiple recommendations for investigative and remedial actions. I got absolutely no response to these reports at all, and as far as I can determine no action of any sort has been taken to rectify this situation.

I have enclosed copies of my reports and other correspondence during this period, as well as a copy of my resume which describes my background and experience in occupational medicine.

I strongly recommend the following:

1. There are multiple instances of defective design and maintenance of the air handling and conditioning systems in the Waterside Mall, which may well be contributing to indoor air quality problems. These need to be rectified.
2. The epidemiological data that Westat has collected should be analyzed as soon as possible to determine those areas which are particular "hot spots".
3. A large scale pulmonary function screening program should be implemented to detect affected individuals.
4. Simply increasing the ventilation to provide maximum fresh air exchange would be immediately beneficial.

5. This situation does warrant consultation by a physician experienced in building related illnesses. Consideration should be given to requesting assistance from NIOSH and/or CDC. Alternatively, Dr. Kay Price is internationally recognized as an authority in this area. Dr. Price is currently Director of Occupational Medicine at the National Jewish Center for Immunological and Respiratory Diseases in Denver.

I will be happy to meet with you and your staff to discuss this situation. I recognize that this is an extremely sensitive and emotional situation, and feel that you are in the best position to address it.

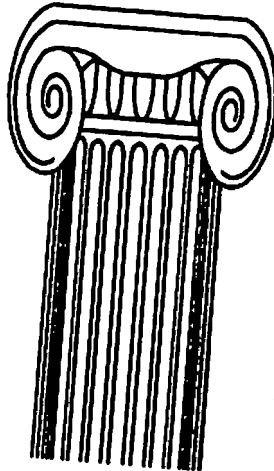
Sincerely Yours,

Mark Bradley
Mark E. Bradley, M.D.

CURRENT NFFE LOCAL 2050 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:
PRESIDENT-ELECT:
VICE-PRESIDENTS:
NFFE-PHONE
382-2363

SECRETARY:
TREASURER:
CHIEF STEWARD:



BOB CARTON 382-2325
BILL HIRZY 382-2327
MARK ANTELL 382-2878
SAL BISCARDI 382-4288
IRV MAUER 557-7430
RUFUS MORISON 382-4273
JIM MURPHY 382-7591
DWIGHT WELCH 557-2783

FRANCINE TEN EYCK 382-3562
DALJIT SAWHNEY 382-4289
HALE VANDERMER 557-7336

*****LATE-BREAKING NEWS*****

OPEN MEETING OF THE UNION RE: INDOOR AIR ISSUES A meeting open to all EPA professionals will be held Wednesday November 1 at 12:00 noon in WIC South Conference Room 4. Chief topic will be discussion of actions to be taken in response to the results of the February health survey ****SEE BELOW**** Another set of meeting will follow later in the month, as covered below.

FEBRUARY HEALTH SURVEY RESULTS TO BE RELEASED NEXT MONTH Watch for special announcements about an all-hands meeting toward mid November at which the results of the February health survey will be released and discussed. The EPA Technical Team, Kevin Teichman, Mel Kollander, Lance Wallace and Cecil Brenner will present the data. Both Unions will be there, along with our outside reviewers, to give our impressions of the significance of the results, and to announce follow-up meetings with each bargaining unit to discuss and vote on proposals for action based on the survey results.

We cannot reveal any of the data now, but we have had Dr. Bradley review the survey results, and he is convinced there are significant problems needing immediate attention, as you might guess from his letter to Mr. Reilly appearing on pages 10-12 in this issue.

A Union executive board task force under the leadership of Myra Cypser has been working toward developing draft proposals for action. Among the proposals being discussed and on which we need your thoughts include: temporary or permanent evacuation of some or all of the Waterside Mall complex; cleaning or replacing air-handling ducts, fans, chillers, etc.; decreasing the employee population at WSM significantly, replacing all porous floor covering with tile, conduct of a real epidemiology study on present and past EPA employees, routine collection and publication of health statistics, accountability for managers responsible for the present state of affairs, and institutionalizing workplace democracy so that a recurrence is unlikely.

Please plan to attend the follow-up meeting and let the Union know what you think. Members of Local 2050 will then vote on these proposals for action. You can become a member of the Local by completing the application in this issue and mailing it to "UN-200", or by calling 382-2383 or 2325.

SPECIAL HEALTH SURVEY IN OFFICE OF WATER In late August a cooling water line broke along the west wall of the East Tower, flooding several floors. Mold and other pollutants were released, and employees have had adverse effects, including one case of pneumonia. Both unions met with affected employees and managers to discuss a special health survey that management and the employees wanted to conduct, and to hear results of monitoring for biological contaminants. The unions did not object to the survey, but questioned the utility of more data gathering in place of ACTION. Results of the monitoring confirmed the need for action. Pneumonia bacteria, other pathogens, and evidence of rodent droppings were found in the drip pans in the office housing the employee with the disease, and in several other offices.

"EVACUATE THE 2ND FLOOR OF THE MALL", SAY SENIOR MANAGERS CANNON, CLAY, WAYLAND AND HOLMES TO MR. REILLY IN AN OCTOBER 20 LETTER.

COMPLETE SECTIONS MARKED "X" REQUEST FOR PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS FOR LABOR ORGANIZATION DUES

Privacy Act Statement

Section 5525 of Title 5 United States Code (Allotments and Assignments of Pay) permits Federal agencies to collect this information. This completed form is used to request that labor organization dues be deducted from your pay and to notify your labor organization of the deduction. Completing this form is voluntary, but it may not be processed if all requested information is not provided.

This record may be disclosed outside your agency to: 1) the Department of Treasury to make proper financial adjustments; 2) a Congressional office if you make an inquiry to that office related to this record; 3) a court or an appropriate Government agency if the Government is party to a legal suit; 4) an appropriate law enforcement agency if we become aware of a legal violation; 5) an organization which is a designated collection agent of a particular labor organization; and 6) other Federal agencies for management, statistical and other official functions (without your personal identification).

Executive Order 9397 allows Federal agencies to use the social security number (SSN) as an individual identifier to avoid confusion caused by employees with the same or similar names. Supplying your SSN is voluntary, but failure to provide it, when it is used as the employee identification number, may mean that payroll deductions cannot be processed.

Your agency shall provide an additional statement if it uses the information furnished on this form for purposes other than those mentioned above.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Name of Employee (Print—Last, First, Middle) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home Address (Street Number, City, State and ZIP Code)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Employee I.D. Number (SSN or Other)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. Timekeeper Number
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5. Name of Agency (Include Bureau, Division, Branch or Other Designation)	

Section A—For Use By Labor Organization

Name of Labor Organization (Indicate Local, Branch, Lodge or Other Appropriate Identification)

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES LOCAL

I hereby certify that the regular dues of this organization for the above named member are currently established at \$ _____ per (biweekly pay period) (calendar month). (Strike out whichever period is not appropriate, based on arrangement with the employee's agency.)

Signature and Title of Authorized Official

Date (Month, Day, Year)

Section B—Authorization By Employee

I hereby authorize the above named agency to deduct from my pay each pay period, or the first full pay period of each month, the amount certified above as the regular dues of the (Name of Labor Organization) _____ and to remit such amount to that labor organization in accordance with its arrangements with my employing agency. I further authorize any change in the amount to be deducted which is certified by the above named labor organization as a uniform change in its dues structure.

I understand that this authorization, if for a biweekly deduction, will become effective the pay period following its receipt in the payroll office of my employing agency; and that, if for a monthly deduction, it will become effective the first full pay period of the calendar month following its receipt in the payroll office of my employing agency. I further understand that Standard Form 1188, Cancellation of Payroll Deductions for Labor Organization Dues, is available from my employing agency, and that I may cancel this authorization by filing Standard Form 1188 or other written cancellation request with the payroll office of my employing agency. Such cancellation will not be effective, however, until the first full pay period which begins on or after the next established cancellation date of the calendar year after the cancellation is received in the payroll office.

Signature of Employee

Date (Month, Day, Year)

FOR COMPLETION BY AGENCY ONLY—The above named employee and labor organization meet the requirements for dues withholding. (Mark the appropriate box. If "Yes", send this form to payroll. If "No", return this form to the labor organization.)

YES	NO
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EPA's Air 10/17/88

Now I know how fishes feel,
in the aquarium,
when you accidentally put in too much food.

The water starts to get murky,
and the poor things,
they just begin to gasp for water.
It even gets so bad they come up to the surface
to gasp for air.

Pretty soon,
if I don't do something about it,
they start to die.
The most fragile go first...the exotics.
Of course, the catfish live the longest.
But they all just, one by one, get sicker, and sicker.

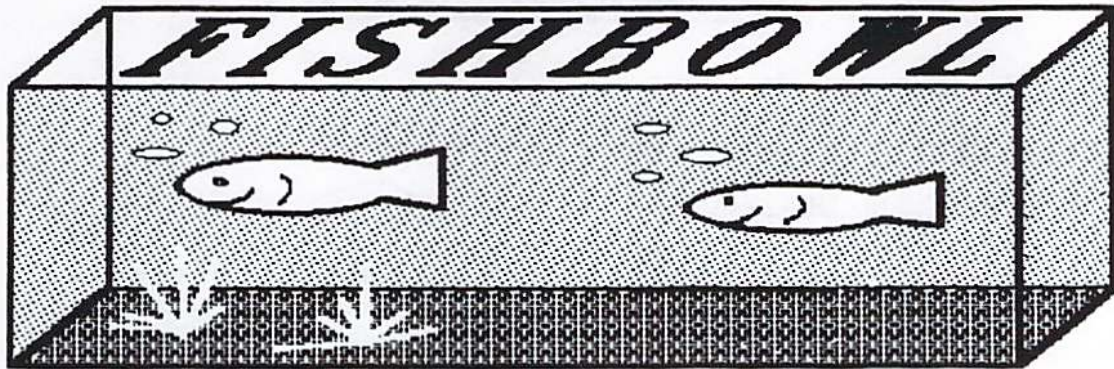
Lucky fish.
I know what to do.
I change the filters,
and I make sure the pump is working well.
Then I turn over 1/3 of the water.
And I stop feeding them so much.
Now I always do it before my exotics die,
it's the cheapest approach.

Before I knew how they feel, I'd think,
"Oh, too much trouble...
they'll be OK for another few days."
But no longer.
Their throats hurt me too much,
and I start getting this suffocating feeling
whenever the tank clouds up.

I guess I should be thankful in a way
I'd never be able to appreciate these fishes plight
if weren't for EPA's air.
If it weren't for the air there
I'd never have known how fishes feel.

Kathy Gigg

INSIDE THE



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

P. O. BOX 76082

WASHINGTON, DC 20013

OFFICE: ROOM 302 NE MALL

NFFE

LOCAL 2050

(202) 382-2383

EPA HEADQUARTERS' PROFESSIONALS

"We must conduct our affairs at EPA as if we worked inside a fishbowl—"
William Ruckelshaus, Former Administrator, U. S. EPA

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1989

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 5--No. 9

- * HEALTH SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED - CARPET TO BE REMOVED
- * NOTICE TO NEW MEMBERS - PICK UP YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARDS !
- * NFFE LOCAL 2050 AND AFGE LOCAL 3331 ISSUE PRESS RELEASE
- * 1989 - A YEAR OF GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR NFFE !
- * NFFE TESTIFIES ON NEW BUILDING
- * INDOOR AIR NEWS - - -
- * CONTRARIAN'S CORNER - "THE COMPUTER PEOPLE" - by Alex Arce
- * RESULTS ANNOUNCED IN OFFICE OF WATER EMPLOYEE QUESTIONNAIRE

WATCH FOR FLYERS ANNOUNCING MEETINGS
OF THE FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE OR
UNION MEETINGS DEALING WITH INDOOR AIR
AND OTHER HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES !



*Happy
Holidays !*


LOCAL 2050

JOIN TODAY —

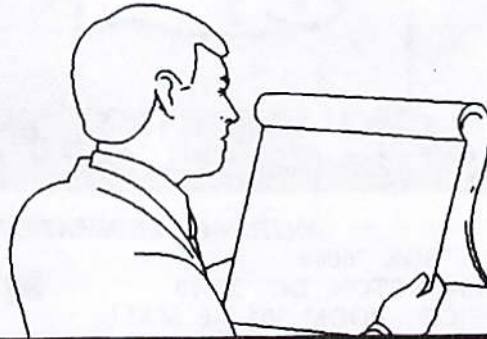
FISHBOWL STAFF

EDITOR--KRYSTYNA K. LOCKE

PUBLICATION--NFFE LOCAL 2050 EXECUTIVE BOARD

REPORTERS FOR THIS ISSUE :

BILL HIRZY
JIM MURPHY
BOB CARTON
DAHLJIT SAWHNEY



NFFE *IN ACTION* LOCAL 2050

HEALTH SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED-- CARPET TO BE REMOVED

Results of the health survey conducted at Headquarters last February were released at a press conference in the EPA Auditorium on November 21st. See the accompanying article in this issue for the statement released by NFFE Local 2050 and AFGE Local 3331.

In short, the survey showed that conditions at Headquarters, and especially in the 2nd and 3rd floor of the Mall and Southeast Mall, are simply unacceptable. Both incidence of employee health effects and "comfort" factors are unacceptable. Copies of the survey results and a supplementary document prepared by the unions are available in the union office, NE-302, or by calling 382-2383.

The supplement contains material that puts the health survey into perspective, and it includes several letters from Dr. Mark Bradley to Mr. Reilly, to

Dr. Pozo-Olano (prime contractor for the EPA Health Unit) and to the union, interpreting the results of the survey. It also has testimony of Bobbie-Lively Diebold on the Indoor Air Quality Act of 1989 that contains narratives of most of the employees who developed multiple chemical sensitivity and cannot work at Waterside any longer, the petition sent to Lee Thomas and the one sent to Mr. Reilly, the letter from senior OSWER managers recommending abandoning portions of WSM as employee office space, and other relevant material.

The unions will work closely with the employees they represent and with management to arrange changes in the work environment to achieve acceptable conditions. This will include re-locating people from portions of WSM.

During the hour-long conference, which many employees attended, Mr. Grizzle acknowledged that decisions about indoor air quality had been made in the past without taking employee views sufficiently into account. He announced that a labor-management health and safety committee was being formed to oversee the development and implementation of an indoor air quality plan, for which Mr. Reilly has indicated

there would be no shortage of financial support. "We'll find the money to do what it takes to provide a healthful work place," was the impression left by Mr. Grizzle. Bob Carton suggested that sale of a Stealth bomber would do nicely.

The conference was video-taped and you can arrange to view it by calling the Audio-Visual Division at 382-2044.

Mr. Grizzle noted that he felt he'd made two significant mistakes concerning air quality during the last year---not taking out the carpet immediately and insulating himself from advice of the unions. We look forward to working with him and new members of his staff--Rich Lemley (Director of Facilities and Services Management Division) and Julius Jimeno (Director of Environmental Health and Safety) in a new relationship.

The awful conditions under which we work developed over nearly two decades, during which all decisions about the work environment were made unilaterally by management. The event that precipitated the crisis we are now passing through, installation of stinking carpet in an already marginal environment--causing life-altering injuries to some of our co-workers--was also made in that mode. "Non-negotiable" was the phrase the unions heard over and over again as we tried to alleviate overcrowding and other adverse conditions through negotiation. With the formation of and the charter given the new labor-management health and safety committee, empowerment of employees is now a reality, and the days of dictatorial exercise of management authority are over.

Decisions about your work environment will now be made by you. The unions want to establish labor-management health and safety committees down to at least the Division level, where elected employees from each bargaining unit will sit with managers as equals in making work place environment decisions.

Democracy is really coming to this work place. Are you ready for it?

NOTICE TO NEW MEMBERS

Local 2050 has recently received the official membership cards for new members. Please call Dahijit Sahwney at 382-4289, or any of the other Union officers listed elsewhere in this issue, to obtain your card.

NFFE LOCAL 2050 AND AFGE LOCAL 3331 ISSUE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
DR. RUFUS MORISON 202-382-2383,
OR KIRBY BIGGS 202-475-9756

EPA INDOOR AIR STUDY CONFIRMS EPIDEMIC OF ILLNESS AT EPA HQ

"There is an epidemic of building related illness at EPA Headquarters..." according to Dr. Bob Carton, President of the National Federation of Federal Employees Local 2050, representing 1100 professionals, and Ms. Loree Murray, President of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 3331, representing 2500 non-management employees at EPA Headquarters' buildings. The union leaders were commenting on a health survey and other health effects information on EPA Headquarters' employees released today by EPA.

"The contractor-conducted study is deficient in several respects, but it nevertheless presents alarming data," Carton and Murray said. "The document minimizes the extent of long-term effects of the building and does not address the most serious adverse effects -- induction of multiple chemical sensitivity in EPA employees," they said. The Unions provided supplementary information along with the survey results, which they said presents a more comprehensive view of health problems. Data showed that over 60% of the respondents (4000 employees) reported frequent headaches, sinus congestion, unusual drowsiness, or eye irritation. Over 50% said they had difficulty concentrating and unusual fatigue. Thirty to 40 percent reported increased number of respiratory infections, shortness of breath, aching joints and difficulty remembering

Dr. Mark Bradley, former health consultant to EPA, in a letter to NFFE Local 2050 characterized the workplace as posing "...an immediate health risk..." In a June letter to Administrator Reilly, he reported that 80% of the employees he examined had medical problems such as occupational asthma, allergic alveolitis, and other workplace acquired illness. Dr. Bradley said that despite the dirty, under-ventilated, overcrowded workplace, workers are amazingly dedicated.

By allowing the survey to be conducted, the Agency responded to the greatly increased frequency and intensity of health problems experienced by EPA employees and to pressure from the unions and members of Congress. The injured employees were identified by the unions after the installation of new carpeting almost two years ago. However, EPA employees still await the announcement of a plan to address these problems and a time table to solve them. The deplorable state of our work environment evolved over two decades during which unilateral management decisions dictated changes in building and office configurations and crammed more employees into these facilities than they were ever intended to accommodate. Over the past two years, employee and union suggestions for solving these problems were denigrated, ignored, or flatly refused by management. "Non-negotiable" was the phrase used consistently by management during this time when faced by union recommendations for improvement," said Carton and Murray.

"But in the past few months, Bill Reilly and Hank Habicht have begun to respond," the union leaders noted. "We have been asked to help build a system that will give employees, through their representatives a much fuller voice in setting the conditions under which they will work," Carton said.

The unions joined management to apply immediate pressure on the General Services Administration to secure clean space for employees, to reduce the severe overcrowding and to evacuate the hazardous parts of the buildings.



Happy Holidays!

1989 - A YEAR OF GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR NFFE !

At this time of year, many of us reflect upon the events of the year past and attempt, at least, to learn something from that process. NFFE Local 2050 is very proud of its accomplishments during 1989, and is firmly committed to continuing its efforts to better the situation for all EPA professionals in the coming year. The following is a brief list of NFFE's accomplishments this year, and it goes without saying that, without the efforts of YOUR UNION, many of these accomplishments would not have come to pass!

- AGENCY-WIDE COMPRESSED WORK WEEK PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONALS
- INCREASED LABOR/MANAGEMENT EFFORTS TO INSURE EPA EMPLOYEES A HEALTHFUL AND LESS CONGESTED WORKING ENVIRONMENT
- UNION CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY ON THE UNHEALTHY WORKING CONDITIONS IN EPA'S CURRENT BUILDINGS
- UNION CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY TO INSURE THAT EPA'S NEW BUILDING WILL ADEQUATELY PROVIDE FOR EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND A HEALTHFUL WORK ENVIRONMENT
- REOPENING OF THE FLUORIDATION-OF-WATER ISSUE FOR REVIEW IN A TRULY SCIENTIFIC MANNER
- SUPPORT OF THE DC RECYCLING BILL AND EPA'S EFFORTS TO COMPLY WITH THE NEW LAW
- WORK ON A CODE OF ETHICS FOR PROFESSIONALS AND THEIR MANAGERS
- REPRESENTATION OF BARGAINING UNIT MEMBERS IN GRIEVANCES AND OTHER MATTERS

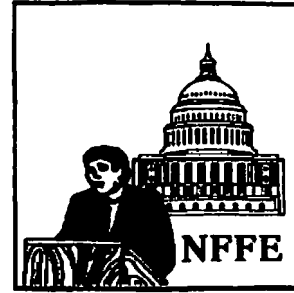
CALL FOR ASSISTANCE - - -

NFFE Local 2050 is calling for volunteers to man the Union office (302 NE Mall), answering the telephone, greeting visitors, and performing other vital tasks. If you can spare your lunch hour, or otherwise arrange to spend just one hour per week assisting the Union, please contact Bob Carton at 382-2325 or 382-2383.

Together we will make a difference!

NFFE TESTIFIES ON NEW BUILDING

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT J. CARTON, PH.D
PRESIDENT, LOCAL 2050
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
RE: NEW BUILDING FOR HEADQUARTERS
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS
AND GROUNDS
NOVEMBER 8, 1989

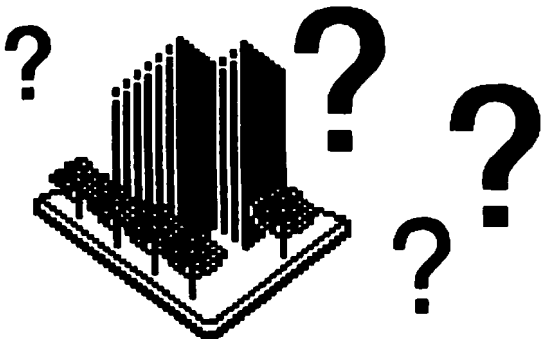


Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee; thank you for the opportunity to present the views of EPA Headquarters' 1100 professional employees regarding a new building for EPA. My testimony is based on two major points: 1) results of a survey the union conducted in 1987 on employee desires and needs in a new building, and 2) the recently prominent--but in fact, old--news about the hazardous conditions under which Headquarters employees conduct the nation's environmental protection work.

In the fall of 1987, when the new building project still had the optimistic title, "Project 1992", we asked EPA Headquarters professionals what points were of importance to them in the structure and location of a new building. I have attached to my testimony a copy of the results of that survey. You will note that 98-99% of employees responding said that adequate work space and good ventilation were important or very important to them. Since 1987, these concerns have taken on the character of demands--demands that EPA management now shares with the employees, as evidenced by the recent letter from senior managers to the Administrator advising evacuation of some parts of the Waterside Mall complex and its conversion from employees' office space to storage and other non-routine occupancy usage (copy attached).

Other key elements of the survey results relate to location: approximately the same proportions of employees prefer location in Maryland (28%), Virginia (38%), and the District of Columbia (34%). A surprisingly large number of employees (32%) said they would quit EPA if the new location were too far from their residences, and 11% said they would have to consider moving their residences under such circumstances. Thus any dramatic change in the present location appears to be a problem for employees.

With the survey results out of the way, I would like to now direct your attention to the need for speedy action to protect EPA employees from the hazards of working in the present facilities under the present employee-management relations situation. On the latter point, we note that problems at Waterside Mall have developed over the past two decades: they are not the sole responsibility of the present or immediately past Administrations. It has taken 15 years to create the over-crowding, poor ventilation and rabbit-warren configuration that now exist at Waterside, and these developments have occurred because of accumulated management decisions made in the absence of any employee input. I am happy to report that the present Administration is showing a willingness -- not seen before--to involve employees through their authorized representatives in such decisions. But I plead with you at the same time, in spite of this latter-day appearance of cooperation, to maintain a close and consistent oversight of how this new cooperative relationship is developing and working at EPA. If you do not, we fear that this nascent labor-management cooperation will evaporate, and that in another 15 years you will be listening to more horror stories of how exclusively management decisions are adversely affecting employee health, safety and productivity.



We have raised this point in previous testimony before Mr. Conyers' and Mr. Sikorski's subcommittees relative to efficiency of the service, and we think it no less significant relative to maintaining any new building in a safe, healthful and productive configuration.

Mr Chairman, let me emphasize how important speedy action on a new building is for employee health, safety, morale and productivity. According to Dr. Mark Bradley, with whom you may be familiar from his directorship of the Navy's hyperbaric pulmonary research program, and who examined a large number of EPA employees from November, 1988 through April, 1989, there are significant hazards to health in the present work space at Waterside Mall (letter attached). Further information on this point will come from the results of a February, 1989, health survey of Headquarters employees, which will be released next week. We simply must get as many employees as possible out of these over-crowded facilities as soon as possible to avoid further injuries. At least one new employee, a recent law school graduate hired in June, 1989, has joined the ranks of EPA Headquarters employees injured by the poor air quality to the extent of being unable to enter the building and suffering from multiple chemical sensitivity to a host of pollutants in the general environment--this is a tragedy which must not be repeated. We ask that you instruct EPA and GSA to find space forthwith to house employees now working in the most hazardous spaces as shown by the health survey. We hope that your staff will be able to meet with the unions and EPA to thoroughly discuss the implications of the survey when it is released next week, and that your staff will be able to expeditiously recommend to you and the subcommittee appropriate directives to be issued to EPA and GSA.

The causes of employee injuries, low morale and productivity problems at Headquarters include: the hostile, adversarial attitude of EPA's labor relations unit prior to this autumn, the dilapidated nature of much of our office space; the extreme over-crowding--especially in the Pesticide Program offices; worn out elevators that often drop or rise unbidden, injuring employees; floods when sewage- or cooling water-pipes burst (e.g., our child care center was flooded and closed three weeks ago); sources of air pollutants inside the building, such as the carpet that permanently injured a number of our

fellow workers, and sources outside the building, such as the four boilers/incinerators that ring waterside and put fly ash into our indoor air, diesel fumes from loading docks and exhaust from commercial facilities at waterside mall; and fresh air provision significantly below the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) code through the dirty air distribution systems at Waterside. Our new building must be free from these kinds of work place hazards.

We must have a building comporting with the recommendations to EPA of the prestigious architect, Hal Levin, and we must avoid the tenant situation that we now endure in the present Headquarters buildings--many, many problems of maintenance and security have arisen because of EPA's tenant status. Our new building must have full compliance with ASHRAE fresh air delivery standards, state-of-the-art air handling systems that can be maintained in a clean and fully functional condition, space adequate to house a professional staff in aesthetically acceptable conditions (a minimum of 125 square feet of working office space for each professional employee--and not an "average" that gives managers 3 to 10 times the space of professional employees, building appointments and furniture, etc. That are pre-tested to be free from sources of toxic pollutants, and finally a location and security system that protects us from assaults and thefts and that allows convenient and safe transportation and parking for employees. In essence, Mr. Chairman, we need this new building to be a model for office environments. We think of it as part of our mission, in fact, to be such a model, and we hope that you do too.

And speaking of models, I would like to close on the note on which I opened. With your help as overseers we hope to build, with Bill Reilly's and Charlie Grizzle's active help, a model relationship for government workers and their managers, a relationship that fully engages employees in decisions affecting their health, safety and their productivity for the American tax payer. EPA employees, and we believe managers, too, want to show the way into the twenty first century--a way marked clearly by the unmistakable signs of cooperation, professionalism, and effective action. With your help we cannot fail. Thank you.

**REMEMBER THE HOMELESS AND NEEDY --
ESPECIALLY DURING THE HOLIDAYS !**



INDOOR AIR NEWS - - -

--by Myra Cypser

PETITION ON INDOOR AIR

The OSWER Human Resources Council circulated a petition to William Reilly, the Administrator, on EPA's indoor air during October. The purpose of the petition was to express concern regarding indoor air quality and to encourage the Administrator to become personally involved in this issue. The petition was signed by 84 managers and 656 staff. An October 20th letter to the Administrator from top level managers in the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) accompanied the petition and called for the relocation of employees on the second floor and portions of the third floor of the Mall area of the Waterside Mall (WSM) complex.

HEARING ON THE INDOOR AIR BILL

On September 27th, the House Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment held a hearing on the Indoor Air Quality Act of 1989, H.R. 1530. During the hearing, Congressman James Scheuer asked Hank Habicht, EPA's Deputy Administrator, to consider how the controversy over indoor air was affecting the morale of EPA employees. Congressman Joseph Kennedy noted EPA's problems with its own building.

MEETINGS WITH THE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

Members of the Committee of Poisoned Employees (COPE) met with Hank Habicht, the Deputy Administrator, on October 4th. On October 11th, Mr. Habicht met with NFFE officials. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss indoor air and/or labor-management relations. AFGE officials are scheduled to meet with him in early November.

SENATE REQUEST FOR REPORT

On October 16th, Charles Grizzle, the Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources management (OARM), sent a four-page report on "plans to remedy the indoor air problem" to Senator Barbara Mikulski in response to a request by the Senate Committee on Appropriations. The report lists OARM indoor air quality goals in a general manner.

TOXIC CARPET REMOVAL

Toxic carpet has been removed in offices in M2827. At the Facilities Advisory Committee meeting on September 26th, employees were told that John Chamberlin, Director of the Office of Administration, had made a decision to surplus the toxic carpet

that had been warehoused since the carpet moratorium began in April, 1988. This carpet will probably be put in other Federal agencies.

EVACUATION OF WSM

On September 25th, employees were evacuated from the Mall areas of WSM because of paint fumes coming into the building from the roof. This evacuation represented a very welcome change in Agency policy.

FLY ASH ENTERING WSM

An Agency contractor analyzed particulate matter collected by an employee's personal air filter and found that it was 11% fly ash (by weight). The contractor's report says this suggests that the building's air intake dampers intercept emissions from one or more of the four coal-fired power plants located within an approximate one-mile radius of WSM. The report says consideration should be given to increasing the efficiency of the filters to control particulate matter.

LETTER ON CRYSTAL MOVE

NFFE and AFGE officials wrote to David Weitzman, Director of the Environmental Health and Safety Division (EHSD), on October 13th, asking him to block the planned Crystal City move and block all moves that put employees into workspaces smaller than 100 square feet. Excessive crowding of employees affects morale, productivity and air quality.

INDOOR AIR MANAGEMENT PLAN

A draft report entitled, "Indoor Air Quality Management Plan for EPA Headquarters," was delivered to the Unions on October 18th. This draft plan contains background information on indoor air pollution principles. However, the Unions are looking for a more specific plan with detailed schedules describing remedial actions and when they will take place.

MEMORANDUM FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

An October 31st memorandum from the Administrator to all Headquarters employees says that he has asked Mr.

Grizzle (OARM) to report to employees what "specific actions" are being taken to address health and safety needs.

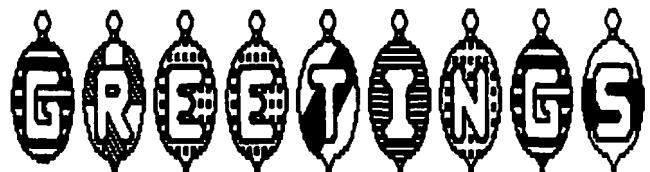
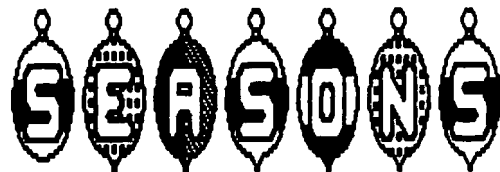
PRESS COVERAGE

The Washington Times and the Federal Times continue to cover our story. To date, there have been more than 76 articles in newspapers, magazines, and journals on EPA's indoor air. There have been eight national TV broadcasts on this subject. On October 26th, CBS ran a feature on EPA's indoor air on the "This Morning" show.

MEETINGS

The October 31st Facilities Advisory Committee meeting was cancelled to provide work space in the conference center for employees who had been dislocated by flooding in the West Tower the week before. A reminder: the Unions and the Committee of Poisoned Employees (COPE) hold regular meetings on EPA's indoor air. ■ ■ ■

COLUMN-EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the October issue of the Indoor Air News. Additional information and more recent news may be found in other articles in this issue of Inside the Fishbowl.



--and--

**Best Wishes for
the NEW YEAR !**





CONTRARIAN'S CORNER *

THE COMPUTER PEOPLE

by Alex Arce

The ancient Chinese used the abacus, "an instrument for performing calculations by sliding counters along rods in grooves." The ancient Peruvians used the quipu, "a device used by the ancient Peruvians for counting and for recording important facts and events." I am sure that many other "civilizations" used primitive and sophisticated instruments in order to maintain an accounting system for their money, crops, and cattle, and also to pass on to their children facts that were important to their civilization.

Later on, somebody decided that a calculator was going to solve the problems of humanity--and after it was invented, it was used in offices, laboratories, and by the scientific community, in general. The original calculator was cumbersome and too large to be carried in one's pocket. However, the slide rule was then invented, and everybody that was "somebody" always had a slide rule in his/her pocket, primarily to demonstrate to others that he (she's were not as demonstrative) was smart and knew how to use the slide rule. As time went by, the calculator was equipped with a battery, and tourists then became well known for using the calculator to compute their restaurant bills--which, of course, must be viewed as "tacky."

What did the ancient Chinese, the ancient Peruvians, and other ancient people have in common? For one thing, they were not boring. Nobody can accuse them of continuously talking about their abaci or their quipus, or of having endless meetings or conventions to wildly advertize the latest versions of these tools. In fact, these ancient people were even known to get together for a drink or other social function without even mentioning the type of abacus or quipu that they were currently using! Why am I mentioning these facts? Perhaps because, as others, I am tired of the new "Computer Fad" and its very boring implications. How we do marvel at how advanced we obviously are compared to the ancient Chinese and Peruvians--not to mention, so much more boring!

* Views expressed in Guest Editorials are those of the authors; they do not necessarily represent those of NFFE Local 2050 or its members.

I am one of the first to admit that great benefits have been derived from the use of the computer. However, with respect to its usual use in EPA, I have yet to find a real advantage for the "computer" over the "word-processor." As a matter of fact, the ancient typewriter has served many of us well--right up to the present time! Of course, those of us still using that ancient instrument are currently known as "computer-illiterate" and are somewhat regarded in the same way as stone-carvers in modern society. Society marches on--to be sure--but the City of Washington is filled with glorious examples of shrines, cathedrals, and monuments which, interestingly enough, were not the result of computer-programmers. I am also sure that many outstanding scientific documents of great importance are currently being produced on the ancient typewriter--outstanding, of course, with respect to content, without particular reference to font-style, three-dimensional graphics, and LaserJet compatibility--that is to say, reversing a frequently observed trend in the Agency to value form (fancy fonts, impressive graphics, etc.) over substance (what the document actually says).

Let's do an analysis of what I would call the "over-computerization" of EPA. Putting ourselves in the shoes of John Q. Public who visits Washington, D.C., in the summer and finds a temperature of over 98 degrees, 90 percent humidity, stagnated air, and a dirty Potomac River unused by swimmers, we ask: why can't the river be used for swimming? Hadn't promises been made that swimming would be safe in 1980, 1981, or, let's say, 1985? Yet nobody can use the Potomac for swimming--it is still filthy! So you won't see swimming in the Potomac--however, our colleagues in EPA's water quality-related units will be happy to show you, or John Q. Public, their many new computers crammed full of Potomac River data!

Let's go, then, to our own back yards. What is happening there---? Somebody is spraying a pesticide that we know, or, rather, our computers know, is deleterious to the health of most living things. Now, the public in general does not have this information--but it is in our computers! Yes, our computers store data, transfer data, analyze data

statistically, and personal computers even collect our electric, water, and department store bills. How strange that, in all my many years of careful observation, I have not yet seen one computer or its operator actively cleaning up the environment!

Have we, at EPA, achieved our goal of a cleaner America? Are we closer to realizing our purpose? How could we be--when the most noticeable product produced by the Agency is tons of computer-generated paper! The enormous trash cans at many places around the EPA complex are literally stuffed with EPA computer "outputs" and, if these are recycled, they just might result in some benefit to human health and the environment.

The Agency, in many cases, uses the risk/benefit approach (in which the use of computers is an invaluable asset) for decisions in a variety of areas that have national and even international significance. It should be recognized, however, that such important decisions are made by men/women, or vice versa (I really don't want to get into an argument over the word order), who are using their own human intelligence! Yes, there is an area of computer research known as "artificial intelligence," but I don't really believe that independent, reliable ideas currently spew forth from your local IBM (or other) PC's. Perhaps, in the future--but, by that time, I will be too old to change my thinking. In any case, with respect to intelligence, "artificial" is better than none, so why to worry? So, as mere humans, let's clean up the environment, let's save some trees, let's stop some waste now--and leave the big jobs for the computers to solve in the future. Instead of generating computer printouts, why don't we direct at least a part of our energies to implementing regulations? Why don't we combine manual labor with computer know-how to actively engage in clean-up activities (detailing, perhaps, half of the computer operators to currently polluted sites)?

If I want to clean my home, I have to get a vacuum cleaner, mops, and rags, and I have to do the job myself or pay somebody else to do it. Currently, at least, I cannot tell the computer to clean my house or prepare my meals. Similarly, if I want to clean the environment, I have to first identify those places that need the cleaning most urgently. Then, I may personally have to go to the identified places and do the cleaning, pay somebody else to do it, or make the polluter do his/her own clean-up work

(perhaps, by more stringently enforcing regulations).

Perhaps we, as environmentalists, should become personal "inspectors" of pollution sites and "implement" the paper rules and regulations both in the field as well as from the office. It would be healthy to see the computer people active, in the field, using their eyes and, perhaps, their hands doing some honest cleaning! Perhaps we could start by cleaning or beautifying our own buildings. Sometimes, practical actions start a positive chain reaction. If the country hears that an EPA bureaucrat is actually cleaning the environment instead of writing memoranda or generating long computer printouts, maybe everybody will start cleaning their backyards, streets, neighborhoods, counties, States, and finally the whole U.S.A. At that time, we will be rightfully able to tell the world: "Take heed--we are a responsible nation; we do not dump waste in our rivers; we do not destroy our forests; we do not over-fish our oceans--and we will rightfully condemn those who do."

When we, as a Nation, have reached this goal, and environmental protection would then consist of maintaining an already attained relatively "clean" state, perhaps computers might assume the bulk of the burden. In the meantime, let us use our brooms, rags, and other resources to clean our livingrooms, homes, and nation--and lessen the accumulation of computer-generated, frequently unused data! Action does, indeed, speak louder than words--computer-generated or otherwise.

Alex Arce is a toxicologist currently working within the Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs.



LET US GIVE THANKS---



RESULTS ANNOUNCED IN OFFICE OF WATER EMPLOYEE QUESTIONNAIRE

Craig Vogt, acting chairman of the Office of Water (OW) Human Resources Council, on November 7th announced the results of the questionnaire that was given to employees of OW during the summer. There were 308 employees who responded, out of a total of 626 in the Office.

The outstanding finding was that 80 percent reported that they like their jobs. Ten percent disagreed, and another 10 percent did not express an opinion. It would be valuable to know what aspects of their jobs the 10 percent who disagreed found objectionable. Perhaps adjustments could put things right for them. The Union stands ready to raise issues and suggestions on behalf of members of the bargaining unit.

The 10 percent who did not express an opinion on the question of liking their jobs are something of a mystery. If it were a case of apathy or fear of reprisal, then they might not have turned in the questionnaire at all. Maybe they are ambivalent or change their minds from day to day and won't really know until they "see the films."

Evaluation of supervisors by their employees should be done regularly. This position was supported by 70 percent of OW employees. NFFE Local 2050 has traditionally advocated such a policy.

Another 70 percent felt that the Agency's system for performance management and recognition was less than fair. There had been some discussion of EPA's experimenting with other approaches to performance evaluation, but this is on hold indefinitely, pending a government-wide review and modification.

About 60 percent felt that management did not provide regular opportunities for exchange of information among staff across different offices in OW. This complaint is not unique to OW, and may help to explain why EPA

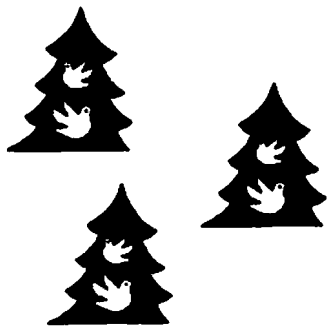
insiders feel obliged to subscribe to publications such as Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals News to find out what is going on at Waterside Mall.

A shortage of clerical support exists, according to 50 percent of OW employees responding to the questionnaire, but 50 percent also stated that people providing clerical support did not have too much to do. The OW report refers to this paradoxical finding as a "disconnect."

When the questionnaire was circulated in the summer, 40 percent felt that physical working conditions were inadequate for accomplishing assignments. One can speculate that the percentage might be even higher today, after two sewer line breaks and one air-conditioning water line break, not to mention further adventures with the elevators. One of the facilities staff, going to investigate the first sewer line break, got on an elevator in the Mall and got stuck between floors. The new roof over the EPA main library worked fine until it rained again; then the ceiling fell in, narrowly missing library staff who were putting tarps over the stacks, and putting out catch-buckets for the rain water. The Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances moved its library into the basement of the Northeast Mall, where it has to be kept cold as a meat locker to slow down the growth of mold on the books.

Suggestions included an office-wide work group to assess needed improvements and constraints. One constraint frequently mentioned is a federal law putting a ceiling on expenditures for improvements to federal office buildings. In other words, given the number of inadequacies, problems, and outright dangers in the EPA Headquarters' buildings, it may be possible to lessen the mess, but not fix things up right.

The OW Human Resources Council recommended that evaluation of supervisors by their employees be continued on a regular basis. They are open to suggestions on how to improve the regular system for appraisal of employees' performance.



CURRENT NFFE LOCAL 2050 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:

PRESIDENT-ELECT:

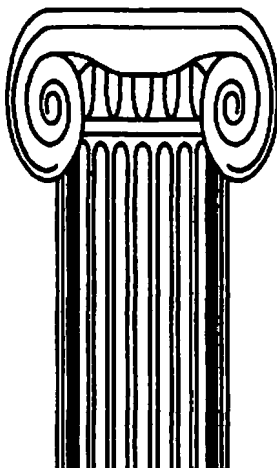
VICE-PRESIDENTS:

**NFFE PHONE
382-2383**

SECRETARY:

TREASURER:

CHIEF STEWARD:



BOB CARTON 382-2325

BILL HIRZY 382-2327

MARK ANTELL 382-2878

SAL BISCARDI 382-4288

IRV MAUER 557-7430

RUFUS MORISON 382-4273

JIM MURPHY 382-7591

DWIGHT WELCH 557-2783

FRANCINE TEN EYCK 382-3562

DALJIT SAWHNEY 382-4289

HALE VANDERMER 557-7336