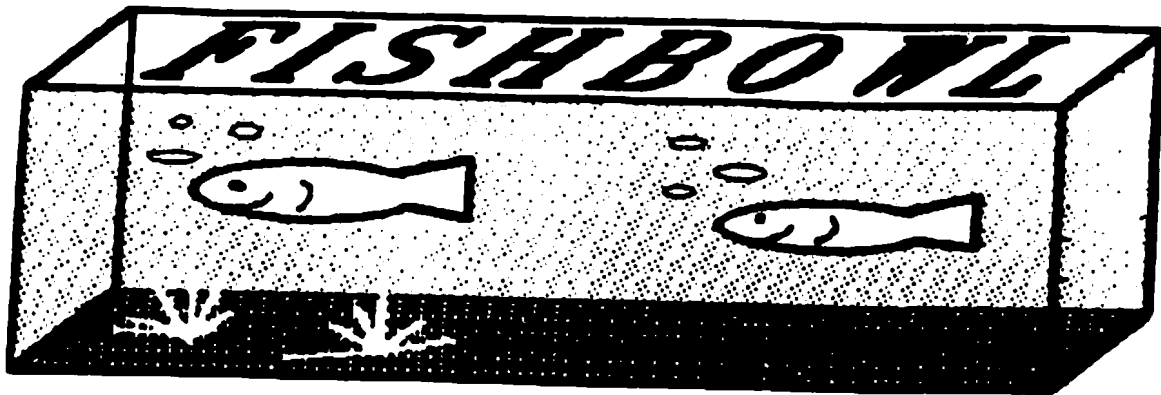


AUGUST 1993

VOL 9, No. 4

INSIDE THE



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES LOCAL 2050

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

NFFE LOCAL 2050 -- JOIN TODAY

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NFFE LOCAL 2050 EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Bill Hirzy - President	Dwight Welch - President Elect
Steve Spiegel - Chief Steward	James Handley - Sr. Vice Pres.
Vice Presidents: Otto Gutenson	Secretary - Pat Sims
Freshteh Toghrol	Treasurer - Bernie Schneider
Irv Mauer	

Editorial Committee: Bill Hirzy, Dwight Welch, Steve Spiegel, James Handley

Editorial Policy: Articles from any source are considered for publication by the Editorial Board. Items should be submitted on disk to UN-200. Articles indicating authorship reflect the views of the author, not necessarily those of Local 2050. We do not publish anonymously submitted articles, but when requested may conceal the author's identity.

ANOTHER TRANSITION - A NEW UNION TEAM TAKES OFFICE

by Bill Hirzy

On June 10, Local 2050 conducted its hotly contested 1993 election and the Democracy-Environmental Coalition (DEC) slate, headed by Dwight Welch, was swept into office. The new officers were sworn in by NFFE General Counsel Steve Gordon at a special general membership meeting on June 29.

Welch, the new President-elect, received a plurality in excess of 45% of the vote. Former Presidents Bill Coniglio and Tyrone Aiken, respectively received 33% and less than 20% of the votes for President-elect. Steven Spiegel was elected Chief Steward with over 54% of the vote over Rufus Morison who received nearly 46% of the votes. Chip Fletcher was elected Secretary, and Bernard Schneider was elected Treasurer. DEC members James Handley, Freshteh Toghrol and Otto Gutenson were elected as Vice Presidents. Also elected as Vice Presidents were Former Chief Steward and Acting Treasurer, Rufus Morison, former Vice President Irving Mauer, and Chemist Barbara Pringle. At the first meeting of the new Executive Board, Mr. Handley was elected as Senior Vice President by unanimous vote of the Board.

The campaign was unfortunately marred by a degree of bitterness by some candidates. Following the election, Ms. Pringle, who ran with the unsuccessful Aiken-Morison ticket, declined to accept the office of Vice President. Similarly, Dr. Morison has declined to take office. Additionally Mr. Aiken challenged the election. The Executive Board has responded to the challenge under provisions of the Local constitution. (See "Election Challenge," below.)

Following the election, Mr. Aiken and Dr. Morison refused to transfer union records and property to the new officers. Some of the records and property were eventually recovered. The new Executive Board contacted the Union's National Office to express concerns about possible adverse impacts on individual members and the local, and to pursue some hope of reconciliation.

Regrettably, due to a sudden illness in his family, Mr. Fletcher resigned as union secretary in early July, shortly after being sworn in. Patricia Sims was elected by the Executive Board to fill the vacancy. We look forward to Pat's participation on the Board. The Board is still considering candidates to fill the Vice President vacancy left by Ms. Pringle's resignation.

Democracy Environment Coalition Sweeps Local Exec. Board

The following are the results of the 1993 NFFE Local 2050 election.

President - Bill Hirzy (Last year's President-Elect)
 President-Elect - Dwight Welch
 Chief Steward - Steven Spiegel
 Secretary - Chip Fletcher
 Treasurer - Bernie Schneider
 Senior Vice President - James Handley
 Vice Presidents - Otto Gutenson
 Freshteh Toghrol
 Barbara Pringle
 Irv Mauer
 Rufus Morison

A record voter turnout in an election with a record number of candidates, the Local 2050 election resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Democracy-Environment Coalition (DEC). All seven DEC candidates were elected to all the offices for which they had run. Three candidates were elected as vice-presidents as well as to other offices. Officers, constitutionally prohibited from holding more than one office, had to choose which office to hold. Dwight Welch chose to serve as President-Elect,

Steven Spiegel accepted his election as Chief Steward and Bernie Schneider accepted the office of Treasurer. First-time office holders are DEC candidates Steven Spiegel, Otto Gutenson, Freshteh Toghrol, and Chip Fletcher. (Unfortunately, Mr. Fletcher recently left EPA because of a family illness.) Also newly-elected as was former steward Barbara Fringle, who declined to serve, as discussed in the previous article. DEC candidates Dwight Welch, James Handley, and Bernie Schneider, as well as Irv Mauer and Rufus Morison, have all previously served as officers.

"The membership desires change," according to DEC leader Dwight Welch. "Having given the Coalition a majority vote on the Executive Board, we had better give it to them.

Election Challenge Reviewed, Dismissed by Executive Board

Former local President Tyrone Aiken filed an election challenge alleging 16 "violations" of election rules. In a detailed response to each of the challenges, the Executive Board meticulously reviewed each charge and unanimously concluded that none were well-founded.

The charges, most of which were not supported by any evidence, contained many inaccurate statements (including misquotes of campaign literature and an assertion that some candidates were not qualified when in fact all candidates were certified by the elections committee). Some of the allegations would not have been violations at all, for instance, Mr. Aiken complained that when ballots were returned by mail to the Local just before the election, Mr. Hirzy personally delivered ballots to some members. Other complaints related to the removal of campaign literature (by unknown persons), or the fact that candidates targeted less than all the members for campaigning (as did Mr. Aiken). In some instances, Mr. Aiken chaired meetings where decisions were made about which he later raised complaints. For instance, Mr. Aiken delayed publication of a special election issue of INSIDE THE FISHBOWL to add an "Annual Steward's Report" apparently intended to cast a favorable light on himself and his running mate Rufus Morison. Yet he complained that his campaign was disadvantaged by the late delivery of the newsletter.

Any Local 2050 member may obtain copies of the challenge and the Board's decision by calling the Union office at 260-2383.

Charges By Coldiron Against Welch Dismissed. Coldiron Fails to Appear

On July 22, the Local 2050 Executive Board convened a hearing on the charges by member Cindy Coldiron against Dwight Welch. The charges were dismissed due to Ms. Coldiron's failure to appear following receipt of several notices of the hearing. The essence of the charges, submitted without supporting evidence, were allegations that Mr. Welch (who at the time the charges were filed was a candidate for president-elect) improperly handled a "grievance" on behalf of Ms. Coldiron. (Actually, the matter Welch handled for Coldiron was not a grievance, but an informal meeting with management to resolve her complaints against a fellow employee.) Coldiron charged that Welch talked to the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) undermining an EEO complaint by Ms. Coldiron and that Welch disclosed Coldiron's grievance strategy to her supervisors.

Prior to the hearing on Ms. Coldiron's accusations against Mr. Welch, Coldiron failed to exchange witness and document lists as directed by the Executive Board upon her request. Although she was at work the day of the hearing, Coldiron did not appear for the hearing, nor did she notify the board of her intention not to appear. The Local 2050 constitution mandates dismissal of charges if the accuser fails to appear for the scheduled hearing. The Executive Board voted unanimously to dismiss the charges. (Since Mr. Welch was a party, he did not participate in the decision). The dismissal was "with prejudice," meaning that the charges may not be re-filed.

Despite the ruling in his favor, Mr. Welch's attorney called witness Carmen Johnson who testified that Mr. Welch had not talked to her or anyone else in the Office of Civil Rights regarding Ms. Coldiron's EEO case. Mr. Welch also made a statement for the record to refute the charges and clear his name.

Following the decision, Mr. Welch stated he had no conversations with OCR regarding Ms. Coldiron's EEO complaint, he engaged in no ex-parte communications with Ms. Coldiron's management and during his representation of Ms. Coldiron, he never even met the colleague she accused of sexual harassment. Furthermore, Mr. Welch asserts that he obtained for Ms. Coldiron all the relief she requested as well as additional concessions from management beyond those Coldiron had requested. Mr. Welch indicated that both supervisors, Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Walker, were very sympathetic with Ms. Coldiron's problem, highly respectful of her rights and were very cooperative. Mr. Welch believes that the conflict with Ms. Coldiron was triggered by statements made by Tyrone Aiken that were later mis-attributed to Mr. Welch by Ms. Coldiron, and a misunderstanding by Ms. Coldiron when she saw Mr. Welch meet with Messrs. Jacobs and Walker to investigate a Health and Safety complaint in the office area. Mr. Welch had planned to resolve Ms. Coldiron's misunderstandings, but was blocked by then-president Aiken and Rufus Morison, who voted at the union's Executive Board meeting against motions by Mr. Welch's that would have authorized him to cooperate with Coldiron's EEO complaint.

[Editor's note: It is unfortunate that the time and resources of the Executive Board and the Union were unnecessarily spent pursuing charges and preparing for a hearing on the Coldiron charges which were apparently not filed in good faith.]

Ex-President Aiken Holds Illegal Hearing

Despite rumors to the contrary, no action was taken against Dwight Welch on June 30, 1993. Former Local President Tyrone Aiken illegally claimed to have held a hearing on June 30, 1993 based upon charges by Cindy Coldiron. The purported hearing was illegal for numerous reasons, including that Mr. Aiken was no longer President of the Local at the time. Mr. Aiken also did not give the constitutionally-required 15 days notice to the accused. The President also lacks the authority to set the date for the hearing; it is the Executive Board which sets the hearing date. Mr. Aiken and former Chief Steward Rufus Morison withheld documents critical to Mr. Welch's defense. By June 29th, the new Board had already ruled the hearing set for June 30 to be invalid and sent notice of the new hearing date. On June 30th, there was no quorum (only two past officers and one present officer attended), nor had all the members of last term's Executive Board even been notified of the hearing. Mr. Aiken's notice dated June 15, 1993 appears disingenuous since it set the hearing for conference Room C of Crystal Station, even though a check of the conference room reservations revealed that the room had been reserved since May 15, 1993 for another function. Mr. Aiken has since claimed that the "hearing" took place in the Crystal Station NFFE office but no notice was ever provided of the change in location.

Clues to Mr. Aiken's motivations: Ms. Coldiron's charges were not lodged until Mr. Welch started campaigning against Mr. Aiken for President-Elect (seven months after the alleged violations). Mr. Aiken only set the hearing after his third-place loss in the race for President-Elect. The hearing was apparently scheduled for what Mr. Aiken thought was the last day of his term.

TRANSPORTATION SUBSIDY, BARGAINING, AND REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

In early April, NFFE Local 2050 and AFGE Local 3331 put four proposals on the table including a transportation subsidy agreement. After Administrator Browner announced her support for the fare card subsidy program at her all-hands meetings in mid-April,

NFFE President Bill Hirzy wrote her asking that she get OARM moving to the table on this and the other three issues, because the Labor Relations office hadn't even acknowledged receipt of the proposals. His letter noted that because the unions had received no responses to negotiate on their proposals, Local 2050 had filed a negotiability appeal with the Federal Labor Relations Authority to compel a response from management.

One day after Hirzy's letter was delivered to the Administrator's Office, the Union received a note from Thorne Chambers, Director, Employee Participation Division, OHRM, suggesting we begin meeting on the issues. The Union responded with a set of proposed ground rules for conducting the negotiations. As of now, the Unions are still waiting for a response to even a set of proposed ground rules, let alone the substance of the four proposals.

Chambers responded to NFFE 2050's negotiability appeal by asking FLRA to dismiss it because there are no negotiations occurring, and he refuses to come to the table to open negotiations. (Catch-22?) This is Mr. Chambers' tactic to block your getting access to the transportation subsidy program now enjoyed by many other Federal agencies.

Now, about reinventing government... Worker morale is probably the single most important element in making any organization click - government or private sector. If government is to improve, then worker morale improvement is a key element. Chambers' attitude about labor relations is reflective of the residue of the past twelve years, during which morale has eroded badly. Many workers I talk to are asking, "When is the new government supposed to arrive?" They see almost all the old Reagan/Bush faces and attitudes still in the saddle, from Branch and Section chiefs to Office Directors and above. Doesn't "re-invention of government" include a thorough house cleaning at EPA?

Toxic Carpet Injures and Kills in Animal Experiments, Scientist Shows Dramatic Videotape to House Subcommittee by James Handley

After brief exposures to carpet fumes, mice showed signs of neurotoxicity and many died in controlled studies performed at Anderson Laboratories. The studies and carpet toxicity generally, were the subject of a June 11 hearing before the House Subcommittee on Environment, Energy and Natural Resources chaired by Rep. Mike Synar. Dr. Anderson's experiment, which was shown on videotape to the subcommittee, showed dramatic behavioral changes by exposed mice, including loss of balance and lethargy in some cases, and extreme hyperactivity or bizarre circling behavior in others.

Dr. Anderson exposed each mouse to carpet fumes by placing a sample of styrene butadiene latex carpet (typically 10 x 20 inches) in a glass aquarium and passing air from the aquarium into another chamber where the mouse was held. Each exposure lasted an hour, after which the mouse was observed and the exposure was repeated up to twice. In some cases the carpet sample was heated, but Dr. Anderson reported that the neurotoxicity and death that occurred in the mice, often after only one exposure, did not depend on whether the sample was heated.

Professor Yves Allerie of the University of Pittsburgh, supported Dr. Anderson's findings, noting that Dr. Anderson's method was the standard ASTM method, and using identical experimental apparatus, he was able to reproduce Dr. Anderson's findings in his laboratory. EPA was also able to reproduce Dr. Anderson's results at her laboratory but when EPA performed the experiments at its RTP laboratory under different conditions, it observed no adverse effects on mice exposed to carpet fumes, according to EPA's Dr. Victor Kimm, acting assistant administrator for prevention, pesticides and toxic substances. Dr. Allerie and Dr. Anderson suggested that EPA's inability to reproduce their results may have been due to interference of excessive moisture at the RTP lab. When Dr. Anderson added moisture to her experimental apparatus she found that it could block the toxic effects that she had previously

observed.

Representatives of the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) tried to discredit the study, particularly by suggesting that Dr. Anderson's method for restraint of the mice might have caused the observed behavior and deaths. (Dr. Anderson replied that in her experiment both the exposed and the control animals had been similarly restrained, so this could not account for the results.) Under questioning by Rep. Bernie Sanders, (I-Vt.) CRI representatives admitted that some people might have "allergic" reactions to carpet. They touted their voluntary "green tag" program to test the off-gassing of one sample a year from each type of carpet, as a sufficient safeguard to protect the public from carpet toxicity.

EPA and the Consumer Product Safety Commission, represented by Eric Peterson, came under heavy fire from the panel for not communicating the problems with carpet to the public and for not taking regulatory action. Peterson and EPA's Dr. Kimm pointed out that regulations could be successfully challenged if the scientific record were not fully and carefully developed. Kimm cited the fact that EPA's asbestos ban was overturned in federal court for inadequate scientific support, after 10 years of EPA effort. Peterson also admitted that his agency does not view carpet toxicity as a particularly high priority and was treating it accordingly.

The New York Attorney General's office presented testimony on their efforts, in conjunction with 26 other Attorneys General, to get the federal government to regulate carpeting. Following the hearing, Local 2050's Chief Steward Steven Spiegel wrote to the NYAG offering to join forces with them in petitioning EPA to require warning labels on carpeting pursuant to Section 21 of the Toxic Substances Control Act.

At several points during the hearing, Rep. Mica (R-Fla.) alluded to the potential for product liability suits relating to carpet toxicity and tried to imply that Dr. Anderson was motivated by a desire to become an expert witness in such litigation. Dr. Anderson stated that she had not yet been retained by any attorneys for people injured by carpet, but could not rule out such activity in the future. Given EPA and CPSC's reluctance to act on this issue, and the CRI's attempts to obscure the carpet's potential harm through its misleading "green tag" program, the situation seems to be wide open for aggressive product liability litigation based upon the emerging scientific evidence confirming carpet toxicity.

Gore Holds Town Meeting at EPA

On July 21, Vice President Gore held a National Performance Review (NPR) town meeting to EPA Headquarters to exchange ideas with EPA employees on "reinventing" government. The meeting was televised throughout Headquarters and Regional offices and laboratories were linked by phone to the session.

Gore asked for examples of rules or regulations impeding efficient government, personnel problems, and success stories. Procurement and contracting-out for services were cited as problems by a number of employees who noted that these policies increased cost to the taxpayer. The "management rights" clause of the Civil Service Reform Act, which inhibits cost saving negotiations between government unions and managers, was cited as another problem.

Gore heard success stories including the heightened national attention to indoor air pollution from carpeting precipitated by actions of NFFE 2050, along with the pioneering alternative work place arrangements and use of electronic tools for accomplishing work away from the traditional office that flowed from that activity.

EPA employees who participated in the various NPR teams were honored prior to the start of the Town Meeting; these included former Local 2050 President Tyrone Aiken who worked on the Quality Science Team.

Hirzy Elected to Early Environments Child Development Center Board

NFFE President Bill Hirzy was recently elected to fill a three-year term on the board of directors of EPA's child development/care center. This is Bill's second tour of duty; he served on the founding board in 1986-87. He has volunteered to work a suggestion by Deborah Martin to broaden the accessibility of the center to a wider range of employees.

Since its beginning, scholarships have been a part of the center's program, but funding for scholarships was severely curtailed this year. Charles Bressler had been providing one full scholarship (currently worth about \$7000) each year since the center opened, but withdrew that support for the upcoming school year.

Bill wants to get both unions, Blacks In Government, the Secretarial Advisory Council and others interested in the problem to develop a plan to put more money into scholarships. If every employee reading this would send a \$5 check to Early Environments, we'd have made up the lost funds. This is a fully tax deductible charitable contribution. Other ideas for fund raising are being discussed, such as union bake sales (they can raise several hundred dollars per event), auctions, and grants. If you would like to help, please give Bill a call at 260-2383.

General Counsel Nixes Caps For Boy Scout Volunteers by Dwight Welch

Every four years the Boy Scouts of America hold a massive Jamboree at Fort AP Hill, VA. Over 35,000 scouts and 200,000 visitors were expected at this year's Jamboree, including many VIPs--Bill Clinton and Al Gore. Exhibits by natural resource and environmental agencies are a natural for this event and EPA is sent approximately 30 volunteers. EPA volunteers decided to wear "uniforms" and asked the agency to buy caps with the agency logo on them. (Other agencies including the Forest Service, Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Park Service, etc. each have their official uniforms.) But EPA baseball caps, which would cost \$180, and could be bought with money from Environmental Education Youth Programs, were vetoed by OGC.

OGC's Hale Hawbecker, says that he and Bridget Shea determined that the expenditure of \$180 for the caps would not be legal--the cost of uniforms must come out of employees' pockets. But the reason that EPA's volunteers requested caps was that the agency does not have official uniforms. Although OGC claims that the employees will be keeping the caps, a representative of the volunteer employees said they were willing to turn the caps over to the Agency after the event. Was \$180 too much to ask for caps that would give the volunteers some EPA esprit de corps, and present a first class image to the quarter million or so visitors to the Jamboree?

Member Services:

CHIEF STEWARDS' REPORT by Steven Spiegel

New Stewards Appointed The following members have been nominated and appointed as your stewards: J. William Hirzy, Dwight Welch, William Coniglio, Carol Bass, James Goodyear and Jim Murphy.

Call for More Stewards Ideally, we should have a steward from each organizational office represented by the local. Traditionally, stewards in this local have represented members in grievances and counseled them in EEO matters. This function will certainly continue to be important, but it is only one of many roles stewards play. As a steward for your office, you would help communicate the concerns of your office to the officers of the local through the Chief Steward, and in turn, you would help communicate information from the Local Executive Board to the members in your office. This way the membership and the officers can be apprised of the concerns and problems facing the membership and respond early in the process, rather than after a management fait accompli.

One of the roles for stewards which will be of increasing importance, will be to represent your office when there are reorganizations and moves. Other roles will include counseling employees on alternative workspace availability, worker's compensation and other questions of employee rights and benefits.

Transition Unfortunately, my predecessor has not been cooperative in the transition of office and has illegally withheld files and property of the local. Anyone who has been represented by the local and wishes the local to continue to represent him or her, should contact me immediately to make sure I have copies of the appropriate documents on your case.

Family and Medical Leave Act Materials Available

A package of materials informing employees of their rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act and providing guidance to help employers meet their new obligations under the law is now available from local offices of the Labor Department and through Local 2050. Information is also available from OHRM.

The materials, published in anticipation of the law's Aug. 5 effective date, include a 22-page compliance guide, a background paper outlining the need for the law, and a medical certification form that employers may use to verify cases of serious illness. The Labor Department had earlier published a copy of the law, interim final regulations implementing the law, and a four-page fact sheet on FMLA. Still to come from DOL is a checklist describing eight pieces of information employers must provide to employees about the law.

The compliance guide summarizes the DOL regulations, explains the basic provisions of the new law, details the rights and responsibilities of affected employers and employees, and addresses specific questions about the law. The background paper explains that the law is intended to prevent workers from having to choose between job responsibilities and family obligations in times of medical emergencies, childbirth, or adoption.

NFFE Now On-Line

Not only is your local union "on the line" every day representing your interests, but now we are accessible on-line as well. The officers of your local now all have mailboxes on All-In-1 E-mail. It is EPA policy for all EPA employees to have an E-mail box. With your own box you can now send and receive messages and Wordperfect documents to and from local 2050. Contact the E-mail coordinator in your office about getting an E-mail box. The next introductory training is on August 19, 1993 - contact the WIC and your training coordinator.

NFFE Members Automatically Enrolled in PEER

Dwight Welch successfully negotiated with Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) a free one year membership for all members of local 2050. This is a \$30 value and employees may renew at their own expense after the first year. PEER is a coalition of activist employee environmental groups organized for assisting whistleblowers and restoring integrity and ethics in environmental protection and natural resource agencies. Jeff Debonis, formerly of the National Forest Service, is founder and director. He may be reached at 202/408-0041.

This November, Local 2050 in conjunction with PEER will co-sponsor (at no expense to union members) the second annual Protecting Integrity and Ethics (PIE) conference to be held in Bethesda. Invited speakers include Vice President Al Gore, and Rep. Pat Schroeder as well as (PEER founder) Jeff Debonis and local 2050's Dwight Welch along with many other environmental activists from around the country.

HEALTH AND SAFETY NEWS by Dwight Welch

PROPANE TANKS REMOVED FROM CRYSTALCIDE MALL

Local 2050's call-in campaign regarding the Propane tanks stored in CM-2 was a huge success. An hour after I started distributing the flyers, (I only covered 2 floors), the Arlington Fire Marshal called from the lobby asking where the tanks were. They were immediately removed to an outdoor area, demonstrating once again the power of acting together. (P.S. Brad Kennedy of Chas E. Smith Cos. promised he would get back to me, but never did.)

COMPUTER EMR EXPOSURE CORRECTED THROUGH LENGTHY TRIAL AND ERROR

A routine check for electromagnetic radiation at Dolphine Wilson's work station revealed exposure to Ms. Wilson in excess of 24 mG (milligauss), the limit of the Union's meter and the highest ever identified from a computer by Local 2050. A check on the other side of the wall found another monitor, belonging to Mr. Steve Robbins was also emitting a high level and Mr. Robbins was being exposed to about 12 mG. We tried changing Mr. Robbins' monitor and moving computers. After about a half a dozen moves of equipment, the problem was resolved by moving Mr. Robbins' monitor so that the back end (where highest EMR originates) pointed out the window. Ms. Wilson's monitor was moved to the opposite wall. Branch Chief Frank Sanders and Ms. Wilson's immediate supervisor Ms. Cynthia Giles-Parker were very cooperative. Mr. Sanders took extra steps: he requested testing of all the machines in his branch, and even traded Mr. Robbins' suspected high emitting monitor for his own. "Kudos" to Frank Sanders for his concern about the well being of the people in his branch.

WATERCIDE 3100 CORRIDOR STILL UNHEALTHY

Bad Air: Poor indoor air continues to be a problem in the 3100 corridor of Watercide Mall, often called "Death Row." A list of its occupants past and present reads like a "who's who" of the chemically sensitive at EPA. During the Union-Management Health and Safety Team's July 14th walkthrough, we were pleased to observe contractors busily working on measuring and improving the ventilation for the corridor, but a number of other problems in the area were noted by the team.

You Think You Have Dust Problems? While complaints of dust falling from air ducts seem to be almost constant and come from employees in both Watercide and Crystalcide Malls, the 3100 corridor takes the award. The H-S team noted not only dust, but larger grit, and indeed small pebbles. The dust, grit and (roof?) pebbles were falling to the window sills from the edge of the ceiling tiles that meet the windows. The dropping pebbles might have something to do with the abundance of rodentia species also reported by residents of this area. What else is up there in the ceiling? A supervisor in the area, reported that she had maintenance people remove some cinder blocks which she discovered up there. Didn't want any employees getting injured by falling concrete blocks. Well, at least the pebbles and blocks are not respirable.

Catch 22 on Drape and Venetian Blind Cleaning: Karen Shanahan, who is also a victim of roofing pebble fallout was concerned by the dirty state of the venetian blinds. She called to have the blinds removed and cleaned. The contractor told her that first the drapes would have to be removed, but that this was handled by another contractor. No problem, Karen thought, the drapes also need cleaning, so she called the drape contractor. The drape cleaning contractor told her that first the blinds would have to be removed, before he could remove and clean the drapes. After about 10 phone calls, Karen gave up. The story has a happy ending. Shortly after the Labor-Management Health and Safety Team reported this problem, both curtains and blinds were cleaned.

FAIRCHILD BUILDING REPORT

The recent inspection of the Fairchild Building had many of the usual complaints and problems: not enough air, a defective restroom lock, missing fire extinguishers. There were also some unusual problems. In one copy room the EMR levels were high throughout most of the room. NFFE Local 2050 Health and Safety Chair Dwight Welch brought this problem to the attention of the supervisors, indicating an area where the operator could sit without being exposed to excessive EMR. Copies of the correspondence were forwarded to Kirby Biggs, Health and Safety VP for AFGE Local 3331 for further action.

There was another problem which I don't know whether to report under "Crime Scene" or "Health and Safety News". Employees on the first floor of Fairchild reported a missing TV and VCR and 6 or 7 months later a stolen typewriter and "Walkman". What makes it a health and safety issue is that the items were probably absconded through non-functioning fire emergency doors. The team checked these doors, and sure enough we found easy egress, with no alarm sounding, and a secluded driveway in which to park a van or a car to haul the loot off. The malfunctioning fire doors were reported on a priority basis.

EPA EMPLOYEE DISARMS GUN TOTING JUVENILE JUST PRIOR TO AL GORE VISIT

An alert EPA employee sighted a youth loading his gun in the mall area, just prior to Mr. Gore's arrival, and quickly reported him to police. The gun turned out to be a starting pistol, but one can't be too careful when firearms are brandished.

Information Sought on Scientific and Professional Fraud

Local 2050 in cooperation with the Government Accountability Project (GAP) is compiling reports of instances where the work of scientists and other professionals has been distorted or used improperly. Several members of Congress, including Rep. Synar, have expressed interest in developing information on the manipulation of the work of EPA professionals. If you have experienced instances where you believe your work has been used improperly please call James Handley at 546-5692, or Dwight Welch at 260-2383. We view this as a very high priority for the new administration.

Office of Enforcement Restructuring: NFFE Involved

On July 22, Chief of Staff Kathy Aterno and several management officials met with Local 2050 President Bill Hirzy and AFGE President Carolyn Lowe to involve the unions in the restructuring of the Office of Enforcement. Later that day Administrator Browner announced that a task force headed by Mike Vandenberg would carry out an assessment of the Agency's enforcement operations and recommend changes. The task force's report is due August 27 to upper-level managers, who will respond by September 10. Ms. Browner will make her final decision on September 24, plans begin implementing the decision on October 1. A very tight schedule.

Aterno told Hirzy that there would be no job losses or degradation of positions, but that some changes in job activities for some employees were likely. Hirzy asked that the Union be informed as soon as possible as to which organizations were to be assessed by the Vandenberg team so that the Union could communicate with the employees about items needing negotiation.

Hirzy also asked that the Administrator's Office inform OARM officials that cooperation with the unions was expected. He stressed the need for OARM to avoid the confrontational and antagonistic attitudes exhibited last year in negotiations over reorganization of OPPT. He also reminded those present of Union's proposals (on the table since April) to negotiate over generic move criteria, the transportation subsidy, re-training, position description modifications and other items, which are

being thwarted by Mr. Chambers' office.

The OARM representative at the July 22 meeting pledged, after prompting by Ms. Aterno, that "a new day" was at hand for labor relations. Hirzy pledged that the Union would work swiftly and cooperatively in discharging its representational duties.

At a meeting of OE employees and the Administrator on July 23, Hirzy asked that the Union be represented on Mike Vandenberg's Task Force or be given a copy of its report, due on August 27, so that planning for bargaining can begin as soon as possible. James Handley attended the second Task Force meeting on behalf of NFFE, held on August 5, in which the goals of the reorganization were discussed. Mr. Handley suggested the goal "meaningful work, appropriately rewarded," and several participants stressed the need for a healthy and functional workplace.

Legislative Updates

Indoor Air: Legislation approved July 30 by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and introduced by Senator Mitchell and would give EPA a lead role in developing to a national strategy to combat sick-building syndrome and to analyze and report to Congress on the adequacy of existing ventilation standards and guidelines. Amendments to the bill deleted provisions that would have required EPA to establish a separate Office of Indoor Air Quality. The measure would authorize total funding of \$48.5 million for each of five fiscal years.

Federal Pay: House and Senate budget negotiators have dropped proposals to cut federal pay increases, clearing the way for a 2.2% increase in January. But the work is not over for representatives of the national NFFE who have been lobbying Congress not to cut federal workers' pay. The Washington Post reported on August 4 that President Clinton has stated that he still intends to cut federal pay, and that Congress may re-visit the issue along with locality pay in September.

OSHA Applicability to the Federal Workplace: In recent congressional hearings, NFFE has testified in favor of H.R. 115 which would make the same worker protection standards apply to the federal workplace that currently apply in the private sector.

Opinion and Commentary:

CONTRARIAN'S CORNER

CORRECTIONS PLEASE by Dwight Welch

The "ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STEWARDS" by Rufus Morison in the May 1993 FISHBOWL contained a number of serious errors. The "report" stated that I filed a grievance against Facilities Director Richard Lemley and that the resolution was unknown. In fact, the grievance was against former Assistant Administrator Herbert Tate for ordering the installation of carpeting and painting an office in Toxics Litigation in the middle of the week, in violation of the Indoor Air Agreement. The grievance was filed to Rich Lemley, because Mr. Lemley could grant the relief requested, namely to find alternative space for the employees made sick by the illegal installation. This relief was granted the next day. When I conveyed these facts to former Chief Steward Morison, he ordered me to withdraw the grievance. (Was I supposed to tell employees to go back into a toxic area?)

Mr. Morison's next "report" contains another inaccuracy: "Mr. Welch signed (an) agreement with an attorney without the knowledge of the Grievance Committee, contrary to union policy." The agreement I signed was a representational agreement with an employee who is an attorney and this agreement was at the direction of former President Tyrone Aiken written in compliance with parameters outlined by Mr. Aiken. At the time, Mr. Aiken indicated that this was "standard procedure". Mr. Morison was

aware of this directive by Mr. Aiken.

Yet another "report" outlines a case filed by a member who specifically requested that his/her name and case not be revealed. This member complained to me about both the breach of confidence and the inaccurate report.

A fourth "report" indicates that 20 hours were spent by former Chief Steward Rufus Morison and former President Tyrone Aiken for a person who was not even a bargaining unit employee. Such representation may be illegal.

LIFESTYLES IN AMERICA: LAND OF THE VIOLENT GORDO by Alex "El Condor" Arce

At the risk of offending some, I wish to discuss a touchy subject: lifestyles, with the hope of encouraging readers to do a little self-examination. I intend no offense.

Relying upon my own anecdotal observations, rather than any rigorous statistical research, it is obvious to me that we are gaining weight and taking up more space. We are becoming a "Nation of Gordos." Recently, when I was "without wheels," I rode Metro, and came face to face with the reality that we are a nation of "Fat People" and "Gordos Galore." We bump against each other while walking down a corridor or using public transportation; we "overflow" when we sit in a seat at the movie theater. Our garments are tight and uncomfortable; men can no longer properly button their shirts and women can no longer wear high-heeled shoes.

Our Obesity is obscene. On television we see emaciated people in Africa, Europe, and Latin America, while here in the U. S., people actually pay unscrupulous firms and "fat farms" to be trained to stop eating "junk food" and to reduce their bloated bellies.

Who is to blame? Should we blame the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration which is responsible for setting standards for our food and drinks? Don't they allow producers or packagers to put vitamins, hormones, and all kinds of "junk" into products that make us absorb the "daily bread" faster than any other homo sapiens in the world? Our cows are bigger than any other cows in the world because hormones to create larger cows that are easier to sell and bring more profit.

Why do we allow all of the additives in our food---including added vitamins? Do we really need to eat processed food whose labels rival the complexity of most prescription drug ingredients? Do we need to add minerals, surfactants, spoilage retardants and all the other "junk" that goes into our food? Certainly there is no shortage of food produced this country. We are accustomed to being "Numero Uno," the big ones, the strongest and the greediest ones. We are the "Big Ugly Americans," noticed for our ill behavior, violence, or insolence.

Not long ago, a man came into my home in early hours of the morning, put a gun in my face and robbed me of my money and my property. Simultaneously, he shattered my peace of mind and raped my self-confidence. These things happen every day: the police and the courts do not have enough resources to cope. The courts consider criminals "underprivileged." But who is truly underprivileged? I have taken advantage of every opportunity that I have had, and despite a chronic heart condition, I come to work every day, and use my earned sick leave to go the Emergency Room, if needed. However, I do not feel that I have the same protection of the law as those who often disregard opportunities, and are vulgar, violent, and insolent.

One day, I'd like to earn one-tenth of the money that Arnold, Sylvester, or Segal, or any one of the "Good Guys," the Gods of violence, earn in one of their movies. Somehow, they are a different kind of "Gordos,"---the "Violent Men." They teach our children to be violent---to be Gordos! Let's wake up and look at ourselves. Let's start thinking about alternatives.

If we don't, what is our future? Are we going to kill each other with guns like Rambo

or like Arnold? Or can we decide to control our insatiable appetite for food and our epidemic of violence?

I knew the Soviet empire was doomed when they began to eat our "junk food." The evil empire collapsed only a few years after they opened a McDonald's near the Kremlin. Maybe the Japanese will be next: at this very moment, their cholesterol levels are skyrocketing as they eat our famous Kentucky-Fried Chicken!

Obituary: NFFE Activist James Monroe Pierce, Jr.
Eulogized by Abraham Orlofsky, NFFE Historian

Abraham Orlofsky delivered a tribute to James Monroe Pierce, in Morehead City, NC at his funeral on July 9, 1993. "Monroe," whom Orlofsky had known since 1968, was an advocate for the needs and aspirations of Federal government employees. Politically astute and dedicated to the founding principles of the NFFE, "Monroe" was a humanitarian, a talented advocate for justice and economic opportunity for all Federal government employees and a foe of racial and gender discrimination. An innovator, planner and superb union organizer, "Monroe" energetically strived to enhance the national union at great personal sacrifice; he will be sorely missed.

ROACHEZ |

