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Volume Two Marie Penington, Editor June , 1990  
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LOCAL MEETING

The last meeting of Local 2505 was held June 3, 1990 at The Elk's Lodge in Shawnee Ok.

Members present at the meeting discussed Commissioner King's upcoming visit to Dallas on June 6, 1990. President, Sy Overturf, plans to meet with her while she is in Dallas. Members also discussed organizing, performance standards, the VDT questionnaires that had been returned and the leave roster. Expenditures of the local were approved.

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WHY YOU DON'T HAVE AWS (ALTERNATE WORK SCHEDULES)

The AWS system we have in the field offices is "5-4-9" schedule; it is one of several types of Compressed Work Schedules (CWS). An employee works eight 9-hour days, one 8-hour day, and gets the tenth day of the pay period off. Time to do with as you please. SSA's own studies have shown that AWS increases productivity; offices with AWS report increased morale among employees. So, if AWS is so effective, why doesn't every office have it? It's a long story.

It began on two fronts. Supplemental negotiations under the 1982 contract dragged on concerning several issues, among them Compressed Work Schedules. When mediation failed to resolve the issues, the Union and SSA took the matter to arbitration. The arbitrator ruled in 1986 against CWS and in favor of a flextime plan. He also provided, however, that any such plan would be subject to Union ratification. The plan was voted down by the members, and this allowed the Union to re-submit CWS for bargaining. SSA bitterly fought further negotiations.

Under the Federal Employee's Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1978, SSA experimented with various compressed work schedules (among them AWS) in 25 offices in the Atlanta Region from January 1980 until August 1981. Since SSA had not met its obligation to bargain with the Union on these experiments, the Union filed charges to this effect with the Federal Labor Relations Authority, and won. SSA refused to abide by that decision, and the FLRA had to file suit in the D.C. Court of Appeals in order to get SSA's compliance in 1985. SSA was ordered to reinstate CWS wherever it had improperly terminated the. During this same time, other negotiations had established AWS in 14 other offices in the Atlanta Region beginning with June, 1985. However, in October 1987, SSA served notice that it intended to terminate all types of compressed work schedules in all 39 offices.

Negotiations on the proposed terminations went nowhere, so this issue, along with the national bargaining dispute mentioned above, was submitted to the Federal Impasse Panel (FSIP), which has final authority in such matters. SSA argued that AWS reduced the productivity of the Agency, diminished the level of services, and cost too much. However, the evidence was clear that the Atlanta Region was the most productive in the nation, and management's own studies showed that lowered level of services was caused by staff reductions and an increase in the number of clientele. The FSIP in April 1988 ordered

In new contract negotiations about this same time, the Union proposed that AWS be extended nationally. The Agency's negotiators then took the position that AWS interfered with management's right to assign work, and therefore was not negotiable! Eventually, a tentative contract was agreed upon in July 1988 which established AWS in offices which had 55 or more bargaining unit employees as of July 1, 1989; but that meant that only 5% of the field offices would have AWS.

It was because of this and other issues that the membership did not ratify the new contract. New bargaining was stalled because SSA took the position that the very same failed contract must be submitted again for a ratification vote. SSA refused mediation of the dispute, so the contract issue went before the FSIP.

AFGE's National Office submitted only two issues to the Impasse Panel: a smoking policy and a gradual phase-in of AWS which by the 3th year of the contract would extend AWS to offices with as few as 20 employees. The Union's position was certainly reasonable, considering the FSIP's early decision on AWS.

Surprise. The FSIP decided, with very little discussion, that the contract was initially negotiated would be imposed, with no changes, and without ratification of the membership. This may be the first time that a decision denying the right of ratification has been made.

The result? Nationwide, 55 offices have AWS.

There it is. If AWS isn't available to you, it's because of some very unpleasant facts that Union activists have known for a long time. We are up against a truly anti-employee attitude that got bad under Jimmy Carter, and has only gotten worse. And, we have an Agency that fought bitterly against a system that their own studies proved to be effective and beneficial. Apparently, AWS was just too much of an inconvenience for them. Or too complicated.

However, Commissioner King recently stated that she favors extending AWS to smaller offices. Provided the new Commissioner can move the old guard bureaucracy to her way of thinking, we may still have a chance to make a good system available to as many employees as possible.

We'll keep you informed.

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CITING CRITICAL NEED, AFGE ASKS CONGRESS TO INCREASE FULL-TIME STAFF AT SSA

Concerned that the Social Security Administration is an "agency in crisis," and will be unable to properly serve the American people in the coming years, National President John N. Sturdivant asked the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies to increase full-time staff by 4,000 in the next fiscal year.

In his testimony, Sturdivant reminded Chairman William Natcher (D-KY) and the panel that massive staff reductions and shortcuts taken by the agency over the past several years have "resulted in great harm to many of our nation's most vulnerable citizens."

"The best example of this," Sturdivant pointed out, hurt "tens of thousands of SSI beneficiaries who were wrongly terminated as the agency desperately sought to generate statistics that would make it appear that workloads were under control."

Sturdivant cited the following problems that have resulted from staffing reductions:

- 0 The number of field representative has been reduced by almost half. The remaining staff go into the field less and less frequently. Outreach, particularly SSI outreach, is suffering.
- 0 Many field offices have seen their staff reduced by 25% to 50%. This is across-the-board, not just in large metropolitan offices.
- 0 AFGE, SSA and field office managers' studies all show that employee morale has dropped dramatically.
- 0 Surveys reflect that "shortcuts" are regularly used to generate the agency's statistics.
- 0 Hundreds of contact stations have been closed in recent years.
- 0 Referrals from teleservice centers have created increased work for field offices, exacerbating staff shortages.
- 0 Clerical shortages exist virtually everywhere, consequently managers are performing clerical functions. Also, many claims representatives report they are spending over 50% of their rime on clerical functions.

In addition, Sturdivant pointed out the problems that have occurred since SSA implemented its 800 toll-free number system, which has resulted in endless busy signals and erroneous responses. "Employees need more t raining. The system was intended to absorb field office work, but instead has increased that workload," Sturdivant explained.

NOTE:

October 1, 1990 is the day that the Union negotiated eye benefits go into effect.

Mark that date on your calendar!

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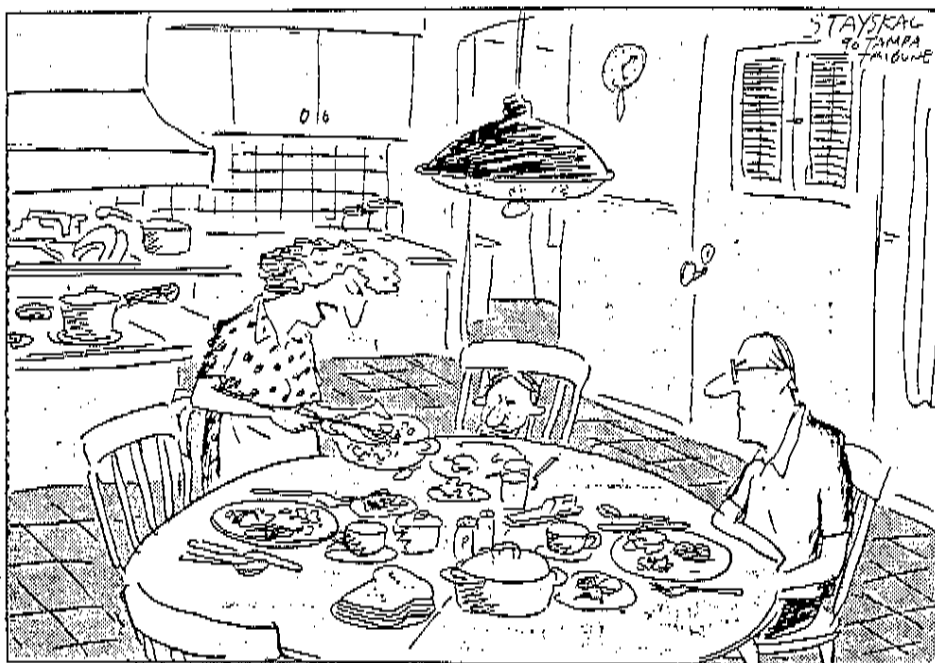
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## CUTTING AUTO INSURANCE COSTS

The Insurance Information Institute has published a booklet on "Nine Ways to Lower Your Auto Insurance Costs." Here are some highlights:

1. Comparison shop. Prices for the same coverage can vary by hundreds of dollars. Shop around.
2. Ask for higher deductibles. Higher deductibles on collision and comprehensive (fire and theft) coverage can cost less.
3. Drop collision and/or comprehensive coverage on older cars. It may not make much sense to have coverage on cars worth less than \$1,000.00.
4. Eliminate duplicate medical coverage. If you have adequate health insurance, make sure you're not paying for duplicate coverage in your auto policy.
5. Buy a "low profile" car. Cars that cost a lot to fix or are high-risk theft targets have higher insurance rates.
6. Consider area insurance costs if you are moving. Costs tend to be lower in rural areas and higher in more congested cities.
7. Take advantage of low mileage discounts. Some companies offer discounts if you drive less than a predetermined number of miles a year.
8. Find out about automatic-seat belts/air bags or antilock brakes. Some insurers discount coverage if you have automatic seat belts/air bags or antilock brakes.
9. Inquire about other discounts. Discounts might be offered if you have more than one car, have had no accidents in three years, are over 50 years of age, etc.

The complete booklet on auto insurance costs can be ordered from the Insurance Information Institute by calling 8-800-221-4954.



"When the president said to 'Just say no,' he meant drugs, not broccoli!"

## UNION GRIEVANCE PRODUCES BIG \$\$\$ FOR EMPLOYEES

Perhaps you will recall several months ago that the Union filed a grievance against the Regional Commissioner because trainees who had attended the Dallas Training Center during the period May 31, 1986 through December 31, 1988 had been underpaid in their M&IE reimbursement. Since this was a Field Office Council level grievance, it benefited any field office employee who had been detailed to the Training Center regardless of their permanent duty station.

The results from this grievance are essentially final. In the Dallas Region, there has been 93 employees reimbursed for a total of \$14,190.00. Included in this total were several employees from offices represented by Local 2505. There were 18 employees in the Denver Region who received an additional reimbursement of about \$3,744.00. Also, at least 2 employees in the Seattle Region received at least \$416.00. Since each Regional Office reimbursed the employees from its region, it was very difficult to determine the exact total; however, the total amount exceeded \$18,000.00. In the absence of a Union, there would have been no vehicle through which this issue could have been raised. Consequently, these employees would not have received this money to which they were entitled.

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## UNION NEGOTIATED BENEFITS

Federal sector Unions do not have the authority to negotiate salary rates; however, this does not mean that they cannot negotiate monetary benefits for employees. This is demonstrated by the recent MOU that provides for the Agency to pay toward the costs of eye examinations and eyeglasses/contacts for VDT users. This is an example of additional rights that occurs to employees through the institution of the Union. Individual employees have no standing to negotiate with Agencies. The Statute, 5 USC 71 of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, reserves this right only for labor organizations.

The provisions of the VDT MOU are remarkable when one considers the following: (1) There is no minimum amount of time that an employee must use a VDT in order to qualify as a user. The supervisor merely has to certify that an employee uses a VDT in the course of his/her official duties. (2) There is reimbursement of up to \$40.00 for eye examinations and \$150.00 for eyeglasses/contacts. (3) Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of excused absence to get the examination and glasses/contacts. (4) Employees are entitled to re-participate if they need new VDT-related prescriptions.

Even though the Statute creates a special status for the "Union institution", the effectiveness of the organization is directly related to the support of the employees that it represents. In other words, if there are no members, there is, in effect, no union. Perhaps, it has never occurred to you that non-members are, in effect, riding on the backs of members. If you are a non-member, do your part in making the Union a more effective organization in representing yourself and your co-workers. You can become a member of AFGC Local 2505 by doing the following: (1) Complete the Form 1187 on the reverse. (2) Obtain from your Office Representative an AFGC Form 1 and complete it. The Form 1 is used to designate your beneficiary on the life insurance policy that accompanies your membership. (3) Give these completed forms to your Office Representative.

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# REQUEST FOR PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS FOR LABOR ORGANIZATION DUES

## Privacy Act Statement

Section 5525 of title 5 United States Code (Allotments and Assignments 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 action. Completing this form is voluntary, but it may not be processed if all requested information is not provided.

Your record may be disclosed outside your agency to: 1) the Department of the 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.

Name of Employee ( <i>Print or Type—Last, First, Middle</i> )	2. Employee Identification Number ( <i>SSN or Other</i> )	3. Timekeeper Number
Home Address ( <i>Street Number, City, State and ZIP Code</i> )	5. Name of Agency ( <i>Include Bureau, Division, Branch or Other Designation</i> )	

### Section A—For Use By Labor Organization

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

## AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

I hereby certify that the regular dues of this organization for the above named member are currently established at \$ 5.95 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 ( <i>Month, Day, Year</i> )
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### 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):

AFGE LOCAL 2505

I intend to remit such amount to that labor organization in accordance with my 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. 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.

Contributions or gifts (including dues) to the labor organization shown at left are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. However, they may be tax deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

Signature of Employee	Date ( <i>Month, Day, Year</i> )
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**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