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Volume 1 Marie Penington, Editor March 4, 1991

LOCAL 2505 OFFICERS

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 Executive Vice President: Robert Smith Tulsa DO 918-581-6379
 Secretary/Treasurer: Marie Penington Stillwater BO 405-624-4454

Feel free to contact any of these three officers at any time.

MORE WORK

Thanks to certain provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, Field Offices will have the honor of assuming additional labor intensive and time consuming duties. All of this is on top of the Zibley Case workload and other current duties that we do not have the capability to properly handle. The Agency has released a video to be viewed in conjunction with a fact sheet. If the video has not made it to your office, get braced for the shocker.

The FY 1991 SSA budget was reduced below what was needed for the current workload. Obviously, the situation becomes more critical with this additional work. Commissioner King stated during the AFGE General Committee meeting on Feb. 10, 1991 that she is trying to get additional funds for the current FY from the SSA contingency fund and a supplemental appropriation. The contingency fund must be released by the Director of OMB, but so far, he has refused to do so. Congress must approve the supplemental appropriation; and a request is pending. She expressed her doubts as to whether she could persuade Congress to provide the supplemental appropriation and solicited the Union's assistance in lobbying in support of it.

AFGE is working for a longer term solution to funding by getting the SSA administrative budget out of the Federal unified budget. The Bush Administration opposes this, but there is considerable support for it in Congress. The removing of the SSA budget from the unified budget will not affect FY91; so AFGE will be lobbying in support of the commissioner's efforts to get additional funds. Individual employees can be helpful to AFGE's lobbying effort by contacting by phone or writing their House members or Senators concerning our staffing and workload situation.

ARTICLES NEEDED FOR NEWSLETTER

We would like to issue this newsletter monthly and with your help. We intend to have articles of local interest in each issue. But to do this the editor needs your help. The type of new articles that we would like to try to run are human interest articles, i.e. achievements of our members at work as well as at home. Let us know when there is a new baby in the family, an approaching marriage, your children's achievements in school, 4-H, etc.

Anyone wanting to contribute to this new section of the newsletter please send your articles to Marie Penington, R R 2 Bx 236, Crescent Ok 73028. They do not need to be typed, just readable.

Let's see this human interest section take off.

This is a reminder of the AFGE Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance Plan that is available to members. The Plan is underwritten by Mutual of Omaha. Unlike many accidental insurance plans, this Plan provides coverage for essentially the full range of accidents. For example, employment related accidents are covered. In addition to the death benefits, there is also live benefits for the insured in event of dismemberment or loss of sight due to an accident.

The annual cost of this coverage is .66¢ per \$1,000. Coverage is available in increments of \$20,000 up to a maximum of \$100,000. Members may also insure their spouses and their dependent children. This is an inexpensive way to obtain protection for survivors, in event of accidental death, and for the insured in case there is dismemberment and/or loss of sight, in at least one eye, due to an accident. For more information, you should check the brochure. Contact either Marie Penington, Secretary or Sy Overturf, President for a copy of the brochure.

AFGE APPLAUDS SENATE INTRODUCTION OF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE BILL

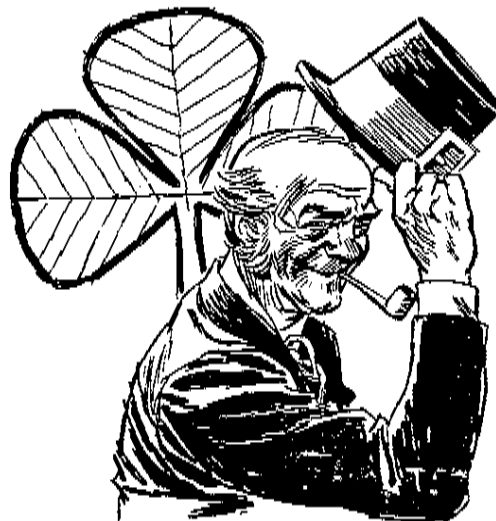
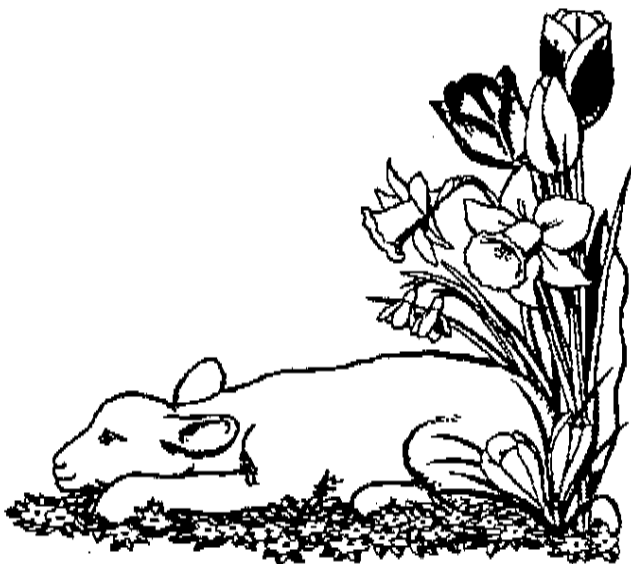
Applauding the Senate's introduction of the Family and Medical Leave Act on January 14th, National President John N. Sturdivant "called on Congress and the Administration to recognize the critical needs of the two-wage earner families in today's America and pass this important piece of legislation."

Sturdivant noted that like all Americans, federal workers face on-going problems with the arbitrary granting of leave for maternity and paternity purposes, as well as for illness. "Government workers are routinely denied leave, terminated or otherwise disciplined for such absenteeism," he stated.

Explaining the importance of this legislation, Women's Director Joan Welsh pointed out that, "This bill guarantees job security, seniority and continued health insurance coverage for workers who need to take leave to care for a newborn, newly-adopted, or seriously ill child, or to care for a seriously ill parent or spouse, as well as leave to recover from their own serious medical condition."

"With the change in our society to single-parent families and two-wage earner families, this bill is vital to the financial well being of America's family structure," Welsh concluded. "To deny this security is to deny the very foundation of this great country."

The House of Representatives introduced a similar bill (H.R.2) on January 3, 1991.



The on and off DC Upgrade appears to be on again. You will recall that the Commissioner initially announced her plan to upgrade the DC to a GS-5 in June 1990. However, the action seemed to vary from going very slowly to going nowhere. It appeared that the Commissioner had made her announcement without having fully informed herself about the upgrade process. Also, the Union was told by an "inside source" that the upgrade would probably have to be delayed because of budgetary limitations.

During the regular meeting on February 10, 1991 with the AFGE General Committee (i.e., AFGE representatives from all six of the SSA components), Commissioner King indicated that problems holding up the DC upgrade had been solved. She expected the upgrade action to be taken by the end of April. It will be a blanket action and will require no recommendation by local management. However, the upgrade will apply only to GS-4s in the DC position. The union is trying to identify GS-4s in other positions (such as Receptionist and SSN Number Clerks). The objective is to persuade management to reassign employees from these other positions to DC so they will be eligible for a GS-5 after they have sufficient time in grade.

CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT MOUNTING IN AFGE EFFORT TO TAKE SSA "OFF BUDGET"

Members of Congress are joining with AFGE in its battle to assure that all administration expenses for Social Security programs are removed from the budget and future budget calculations.

That was Congress' intent last year when they voted to remove the Trust Funds from the budget and that is what they are telling Office of Management and Budget Director Richard Darman who is trying to keep administrative costs for the agency under the thumb of the infamous Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget law.

So far Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), Earnest Hollings (D-SC), John Heinz (R-PA), Donald Riegle (D-MI), and Jim Sasser (D-TN), as well as Congressman Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), have all emphatically stated their positions in letters to Budget Director Darman.

Senators Moynihan, Hollings and Heinz stated in a joint letter to Darman, "It was always our intention, and we believe the legislation clearly provides, that the budget calculations would be complete, with no exceptions for administrative spending or any other spending from the Social Security Trust Funds.

In a similar letter, Senator Jim Sasser wrote, "I wish to express in the strongest terms my view that these administrative expenses should not be included in either the deficit or the domestic discretionary cap for purposes of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings."

AFGE will continue its aggressive campaign to take "off budget" all Social Security spending, including administrative expenses, to assure that these programs are fully funded and free of political manipulation.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

Breast cancer is the most common and serious cancer among women with about 120,000 new cases being diagnosed annually. Also, breast cancer is the cause of about 40,000 deaths each year. Early detection is a very important aspect of preventing death. Self examination is a very important technique for early detection and a vast majority of breast cancers are initially discovered by this method. The American Cancer Society has published a pamphlet designed to instruct women in proper self examination techniques. Local 2505 has obtained a supply and interested employees can get one by requesting it from Marie Penington, Secretary.

The 102nd session of Congress began on January 3, 1991. During the first few days, over 300 proposals were introduced. Listed below are some of the major bills that would affect federal employees and retirees. Let's begin by taking a hard look at these so we will be better prepared to deal with them.

HATCH REFORM. Rep. William Clay, D-Mo., has introduced HR 20 which simply reintroduces his measure to reform the 1939 Hatch Act. His bill last year passed the House, then was modified and passed the Senate. President Bush vetoed the bill. Representative Clay is determined to get the measure passed this year, and as head of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee, there is a very good possibility it will pass.

DESERT SHIELD TAX RELIEF. It will relieve service members and civilians in the Persian Gulf from tax filing pressure, but won't cause them to lose interest on tax refunds paid after April. It is considered likely to pass.

BAN ON "SOURCE TAXES". HR 431, proposed by Rep. Barbara Vucanovich, R-Nev., would prohibit states from taxing the annuities of retirees who worked in that state, but now live in another state. Presently "source taxes" are imposed by 12 states. With 41 sponsors, there is a good chance for its passage.

SPOUSE ANNUITIES. Rep. Constance Morella, R-Md., has introduced HR 108 which would allow spouses of federal employees to receive spousal annuities even if they divorced from federal employees before September 15, 1978. Current law permits former spouses divorced before September 15, 1978 to get their spouse's retirement benefits only if their former spouses have not remarried. Another Morella bill, HR 110, would eliminate the requirement that former employees who remarry during retirement pay back retirement contributions when they elect survivor's benefits for their new spouses. Some retirees have had to pay back as much as \$20,000 with \$3,000 interest.

TIMELY RETIREMENT CHECKS. Rep. John Hammerschmidt, R-Ark., has reintroduced a measure that would require agencies to process employees' retirement applications within 30 days thus alleviating the problem of new civil service retirees not receiving their first retirement check for months. This legislation has not received the support of other legislators and the Administration in the past because OPM has provided evidence that agencies have "cleaned up their own act," and the problem has been largely corrected.

POULTRY INSPECTION. Rep. Neal Smith, D-Iowa, has introduced a bill that would tighten the procedures for checking poultry. It is aimed at curbing an escalation in the number of reported cases of salmonella, a potentially deadly bacteria often found in raw meat and poultry.

AFL-CIO "DON'T BUY" LIST

Brown Corporation of Ionia, Inc. in Michigan has been added to the AFL-CIO's "Don't Buy List" at the request of President William H. Bywater, International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers.

The 135 workers of the Brown Corporation have been on strike since their contract expired July 15, 1990. After taking cuts from the company for the past eight years, workers were forced to strike when additional wage cuts and higher employees health insurance costs were proposed by the company. The company has hired scabs and has vowed to keep them on as permanent replacements if their offer is rejected.

"We want to inform consumers that Brown Corporation is making scab-made products used by major manufacturers," stated President Bywater. "With the help and support of all union members, a fair and equitable contract can be achieved for the workers of Local 436."

AFGE TAKES EMERGENCY ACTION TO PROTECT WORKERS FROM HONORARIA PENALTIES

On December 21, 1990 AFGE filed an Emergency Motion for Emergency Relief (90-5407) with the U. S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia, in order to protect rank-and-file government workers from being penalized under the new law barring federal employees and Members of Congress from accepting money for making speeches and publishing articles that are unrelated to their jobs.

The Union took this action after Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson of the U. S. District Court refused to issue a Temporary Restraining Order and a Preliminary Injunction filed on December 13, 1990 (CA. No 90 3027).

"AFGE is determined to protect the First and Fifth Amendment rights of government workers, who were inadvertently included in the law, which goes into effect January 1, 1991," said AFGE National President John N. Sturdivant.

"Since these government employees are not elected officials, they were never meant to be restricted from publishing articles, addressing groups, or otherwise engaging in off-duty, fee-paying activities that are totally unrelated to their employment duties," he said. "To allow such penalties to stand would place a severe burden on many good and honest people who should have the opportunity to earn extra money sharing their special interests and talents with others.

"In fact, the Constitution specifically grants American citizens the right to free speech and guarantees that they will not be deprived of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law..'," Sturdivant said.

"We want the court to uphold those rights today," he concluded.

TREASURY EMPLOYEES OVERWHELMINGLY ELECT AFGE AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVE

Workers at the Treasury Department's Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS) have overwhelmingly elected AFGE as their labor representative in an election held January 8th in Washington D.C.

"The final tally of ballots--AFGE: 187, No Union: 5--sends a clear message to OTS management that, like it or not, the union is here to stay," National President John N. Sturdivant stated in announcing the results of the election.

The Office of Thrift Supervision was created when the Financial Institutions Reform Recovery and Enforcement Act of 1989 (FIRREA) was enacted to enable the various banking regulatory agencies to deal with the savings and loan crisis. Many of the more than 400 workers currently employed at OTS were former employees of the now-abolished Federal Home Loan Bank Board. Although AFGE Local 3295 was the certified bargaining agent for employees at the Bank Board, once the new agency (OTS) was created, workers were again given a choice regarding union representation.

"The enactment of FIRREA resulted in a major reorganization which affected hundreds of workers represented by our union," said 14th District National Vice President David Schlein. "We promised our members we would stand with them during these uncertain times and we have done just that."

Union organizers report that nearly 100 workers have already signed applications for union membership. Once the election results have been certified, AFGE plans to submit its proposal to bargain over pay and other employee benefits.

Nine Economic Development Realities for the 90's

First of a series of ten articles.

What This Is All About

"The difficulty lies not with the new ideas, but in escaping the old ones." John Maynard Keynes.

The rules of the game have changed. The sweeping economic changes of the past decade have altered the ways in which states and communities must seek to strengthen their economies and provide good jobs for their people. What seemed to work well and make sense for most of this century is suddenly obsolete, pushed aside by a rush of new realities linked to the internationalization of the U.S. economy and the introduction of information technologies into the workplace.

Almost overnight, nearly three-quarters of the goods and services produced in this country face stiff foreign competition, frequently from nations that pay much lower wages. This has prompted many U.S. firms to move plants and offices that employ unskilled labor overseas. It has compelled other firms to compete on the basis of new, higher quality service and production approaches, utilizing new technologies and a more skilled workforce. Caught in this new global competition, most U.S. firms are undergoing constant upheaval and change, causing disruption and uncertainty for their employees and communities.

Throughout the 1980s, many states and communities worked with their companies and people to help them battle this new competition from abroad. Governors and mayors, legislatures and councils, professional economic developers and private business people, union leaders and educators, forced to re-think their traditional economic development strategies, are replacing them with a new set of guiding principles and policies.

Playing by New Rules is a synopsis of what they have learned. What follows is nine of the most commonly-held leftover conventional wisdoms still encountered when people discuss state and local economic development--and the new rules of the game that are replacing them in state capitals and city halls across America.

We hope Playing by New Rules will contribute to America's escape from the old and foster our readiness to embrace the new ideas about our future.

So much is at stake.

To be continued.

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