

NTEU Chapter 73 receives award at National Convention



At left is Vice-President and Chief Steward Karen Walsh accepting the award for Chapter 73 Newsletter **THE FORCE** at National Convention with National Vice-President Jim Bailey.

NTEU Quarterly Chapter Meeting

October 18, 2017 at 4:30PM will be our NTEU Quarterly Chapter Meeting at The Radisson Hotel, located at 668 West 5th Street, Covington, KY 41011. This meeting will be for choosing the election committee so it is very important that everyone come and have a voice.

Hurricane Aid

Ways to Help Federal Employees in Need: As a series of storms continue to impact our communities, our thoughts are with the thousands of NTEU members feeling the effects. When crisis hits, federal employees are often the first responders, and NTEU is working on multiple fronts to help those impacted by the hurricanes. Here are some ways you can help your fellow federal

employees in need: Assistance is available for employees who need financial assistance, the Federal Employee Education and Assistance (FEEA) Fund offers grants exclusively for federal employees. NTEU works closely with FEEA following major disasters to distribute grants for food, housing and support. Disaster assistance applications <<https://feea.org/our-programs/disaster-relief/>> are available on FEEA’s website. Donate Leave to Emergency Leave Transfer Program The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced the ability of agencies to establish an emergency leave transfer program (ELTP) for their employees affected by Hurricane Harvey. Please read OPM's statement on retroactive substitution of donated annual leave: “Dependent on agency policy, [employees] may request advanced annual or sick leave, as appropriate (even if they have available annual and sick leave) or leave without pay, so that they are not forced to use

accrued leave before donated annual leave becomes available. This is necessary since donated annual leave may only be substituted retroactively for any period of leave without pay or advanced annual or sick leave used because of the emergency; it may not be retroactively substituted for accrued annual or sick leave used because of the emergency.” Individual agencies are responsible for creating their own ELTP. NTEU is strongly encouraging all agencies to set up a program as soon as possible. Employees at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) can learn more about their newly created program on IRWeb. NTEU will keep you informed about the status of ELTP at other agencies. Help Federal Employees in Need NTEU's dedicated FEEA fund matches dollar for dollar every contribution, up to \$30,000. Every donation—big and small—makes a difference. Donate here <<https://feea.z2systems.com/np/clients/feea/donation.jsp?campaign=32&>> .

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From the Desk of the President

“As always, At Your Service”
— Rick Riley

Meetings and More Meetings!

As I promised, that I would go to the Small Business/Self Employed Business Improvement Committee meeting, I did on September 5th. As interesting as it was, I really wouldn't recommend planning a vacation to go! However, I went as your representative. Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy of SB/SE represented management. For the union, besides myself, were

Tony Reardon our National President, Jim Bailey our National Vice President, 3 other chapter presidents and NTEU staff attorneys and negotiators. Several issues were addressed, and I got my turn to address our concerns. I made a passionate appeal for positions for our employees here in Covington. We are losing 1,800 jobs that is 1,800 families that are impacted. I went on to explain that is 10% of the jobs in Covington. Employees are not going to go out and find another job easily. Commissioner Murphy replied that even though the budget for 2018 was not passed yet, that SB/SE was committed to bringing work here to Covington.

I've talked with some SB/SE Directors and I came away with this opinion. It appears that money for jobs here won't come available in Fiscal Year 2018, however the plans are that for Fiscal Year 2019 and Fiscal Year 2020, plans are to bring work here. I know we will never replace all 1,800 jobs, but I am confident that there will be enough opportunities, and maybe even more than that, for the people who wish to continue their IRS careers. What does this mean for you if you wish to continue working for the IRS? If more work is moved here, and jobs are created, no one will be given a job; everyone must apply and compete for those positions. However, without those jobs coming, there would be no opportunities. I am encouraging everyone to plan for their future, be it getting your retirement papers together, or resume updated, or going back to school or taking additional training, get ready! September 28, 2019 is only 2 years away.

Karen and I have been having weekly meetings with the Director Jim Fish and Rick Goins going over our concerns with the consolidation. I'm sure you've heard by now, the VERA/VISP authority has been granted by OPM. The meetings we are having are always full of items to address and seems like more and more come every week. We will be returning to the negotiation table in March or April if not before. The Job Swap Board will open on October 10th, so, if you are interested, get ready!

NTEU National Convention News



CONGRATULATIONS DEBBIE MULLIKIN

Debbie Mullikin is re-elected as National Vice-President for District 10! Debbie is in the center.



FED NEWS RADIO

Vice President Karen Walsh and Consolidation Co-Chair and NTEU Steward Thomascina Braswell meet Mike Causey of Fed News Radio at the National Convention.

Special Solicitations for Hurricane Harvey

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Special Solicitations for Victims of Hurricane Harvey

Q: What is a special solicitation?

A: Federal regulations, set forth at 5 CFR §950.102, state that the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the Federal workplace on behalf of charitable organizations. Using an exception authority in this regulation, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may grant permission for special solicitations of Federal employees, to be conducted outside of the CFC, in support of victims in cases of emergencies and disasters.

Q: Does the Head of the Agency still need to provide a written request?

A: No. OPM Acting Director Kathleen McGettigan has authorized government-wide solicitations for disaster relief efforts at Agency discretion.

Q: Is there a list of organizations providing relief assistance in the affected areas?

A: Each Agency may determine which 501(c)(3) charity or charities will receive funds from the special solicitation. OPM does not make recommendations, but encourages Federal Agencies to review information on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) website (<http://www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly>).

Q: Who conducts the special solicitation?

A: Because the special solicitation is to be conducted outside of the CFC, the Federal Department, Agency, or component conducting the solicitation is responsible for the oversight and administration of the collection of contributions. OPM recommends that Federal Departments and Agencies holding a special solicitation request that the charities receiving funds from the solicitation be responsible for the collection and substantiation of all contributions.

Q: Can employees use a CFC pledge form to contribute during a special solicitation?

A: No. The special solicitation is not part of the CFC. Employees should receive instructions on how to make a special solicitation pledge by the Federal Department or Agency overseeing the solicitation.

Q: Are Local Federal Coordinating Committees (LFCCs), CFC Outreach Coordinators, or the Central Campaign Administrator (CCA) required to maintain records of special solicitations conducted by Federal Departments and Agencies in their campaign areas?

A: No. Federal Agencies and charities receiving the funds from the special solicitation are responsible for maintaining records of the solicitation. However, the Local Federal Coordinating Committees (LFCC) responsible for oversight of the local CFC in their area with Federal Agencies within their campaign borders to provide assistance for special solicitation efforts, if possible. Neither Outreach Coordinators nor the CCA are authorized to assist in special solicitation efforts.

Federal agencies conducting special solicitations should contact the Office of CFC to inform it of which charity or charities

were selected for donations and how much was donated. The Office of CFC can be contacted at (202)606-2564 or cfc@opm.gov.

Q: I can give more to the special solicitation if I use payroll deduction. Is payroll deduction available for a special solicitation?

A: No. Special solicitations are conducted outside of the CFC. In addition, special solicitations are intended to provide immediate financial assistance to organizations involved in immediate relief efforts for disasters and emergencies. The fastest, most direct way to process special solicitation contributions is in the form of cash or check payable to the recipient charity. The 2017 CFC will begin October 2. During that campaign, Federal employees may use payroll deduction to assist qualified disaster relief organizations to replenish resources expended on this disaster as well as prepare for those of the future.

Q: What if a Department or Agency wants to help a non-CFC participating charity involved in disaster relief services?

A: If a Federal Agency wants to solicit funds for a charity not listed in the CFC Charity List, it may do so in a special solicitation, since this collection effort is conducted outside of the CFC through a special solicitation.

Q: Our Department or Agency has employees who were directly affected by a disaster. Do we need to seek authorization to collect funds from Federal employees to be given directly to these employees and/or their surviving family members?

A: Yes. Federal employees may only solicit funds for fellow employees in need subject to established ethics requirements and non-CFC solicitation requests affecting Federal buildings. We strongly encourage you to contact your agency's ethics counsel or General Counsel if you are planning such an activity. Your Department or Agency does not need OPM's authorization for a solicitation to permit collection of funds for this purpose.

Q: Is this authorization solely for special solicitations for Hurricane Harvey or can it be used to conduct special solicitations for other emergencies/disasters?

A: The authorization applies only to relief efforts related to Hurricane Harvey which made landfall on the Gulf Coast of Texas on Aug. 26, 2017.

Q: Whom can I contact if I have further questions?

A: The Office of CFC staff is available to provide technical assistance to Federal Agencies and can be reached at (202) 606-2564 or cfc@opm.gov.



Address Change?

If you have recently changed your address, please let the union know so you can continue to get information from NTEU. IRS does not share changes you made with them, so you must also tell us!

Please send any address changes to
Laura Mitchell / NTEU73 Membership:
<Laura.L.Mitchell@irs.gov>

NTEU73 keeps members informed with chapter news as well as national news.

NTEU Chapter 73 Stewards

Day Shift:

4th Street - A. J. Allen, Brandy Belew, Tommie Braswell, Michelle Robinson-Cunningham, Ron Cunningham, Leann Gosser, Nicole Guethlein, Shannon Lovins, Laura Mitchell (Treasurer), Hillery Montgomery, Jennifer Smith

GWC—Michael Bradford, Phillip Cargile, Steve Clark, Jamie Coffman, Erin Cooper, Sarah Corea, Tomeka Cottrell, Loretha Hudson, Bob Krekeler, Tanesha McCants, Tonya Morris, Debbie Mullikin, Chris Pierce, Rick Riley (President), John Selmeier, Debbie Steiner, Dennis Stone, Rebekah Taylor, Michele Townsend, Karen Walsh (Vice President-Chief Steward).

IRRC - Florence - Jan Colwell, Brandon Mikusa.

Night & Swing Shift

4th Street— Jim Gregory, Stephanie Slayton.

GWC—Alison Bower, William Dreier, John Gilliam.

“I always feel like somebody’s watching me.”

Recently an employee came into the union office to ask if a manager was allowed to follow her to the bathroom. The employee has a serious medical condition, one referred to as “female trouble.” She made her manager aware of the condition. Upon leaving the ladies bathroom she saw her manager, a male, standing at the end of the hallway, watching her leave the bathroom. Later she received an OC from that manager stating, “from now on I want an email or OC every time you go to the bathroom.” This is a violation of Article 11, section 22, which states: “The Employer will not impose unreasonable restrictions on use of restroom facilities by employees.” Could it also be considered Sexual Harassment? Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states, “The terms “because of sex” or “on the basis of sex” include, but are not limited to, because of or on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions; and women affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions shall be treated the same for all employment--related purposes.” In this situation the employee, a female, was having medical issues specific to being a woman and this male manager was violating her civil rights. Bathroom breaks are our rights and management cannot monitor them! In this situation the employee agreed to settle informally with management. The employee could have chosen to file a grievance for a violation under Article 41 for discrimination. The employee could have also contacted EEO to file for discrimination at 1-800-669-4000. Either way stopping by The NTEU office as soon as a violation like this occurs is paramount. We have 45 days to file a grievance alleging discrimination. The time limit for an EEO claim is 180 days.

Chapter 73 Union Office transfers to new phone system

In early August, the CIRSC campus, along with the Union office in both Gateway and the Service Center, switched over to a new telephone system. The main telephone number for the Gateway Union office is now (859) 320-3617, and the FAX number (859)320-4073. The main number for the 4th Street Union office is (859) 320-4649, and the FAX number is (859) 320-4842. During normal business hours, a Steward should always be available to take your call.

However, the Union office is requesting that anyone who calls the office and leaves a message outside of normal business hours, please be patient for someone to get back with you. The new voice mail system and other features of the new phones are being worked on and tested. Therefore, if anyone calls the Union office for assistance and leaves a voice mail, please also follow up with a Contact Sheet or in person visit, if your call is not immediately returned.

If You Need Leave to Take Care Of Yourself or a Family Member, Make Sure You Request FMLA.

FMLA can be a great benefit, and really help when you need leave to take care of yourself or a family member, but you have to ask for it. Each year, you can take up to 480 hours of leave or leave without pay for FMLA purposes. This is especially useful, if you want to use your sick leave to take care of a family member or if you want to use leave without pay for your own absence. But remember, you have to request FMLA to use it, and you cannot request FMLA retroactively.

If you know you're going to need FMLA leave, you must give at least 30 days of notice to the IRS. Otherwise you should request FMLA as soon as possible, once you know you are going to need it. If you don't invoke your rights to FMLA, you won't be protected.

You can use FMLA for:

1. your own serious health conditions;
2. care for your spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
3. the birth of a child and care of the newborn or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
4. any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that your spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty (qualifying exigency leave) and to care for a covered service member with a serious illness (military caregiver leave),

You can use FMLA all at once, or intermittently through the year. The IRS can ask you to certify the existence of a serious health condition. However, to protect your privacy, you may provide the certification to the FOH, instead of your manager.

Further, your manager may not demand you sign a release allowing the FOH to contact your Doctor. Per the contract "The Employer may not demand that the employee authorize it or its medical professional to discuss the employee's medical condition with the employee's physician; or demand that the employee sign a release permitting the Employer or its medical professional access to the employee's medical records as a condition to granting FMLA leave."

It is very advisable to always keep some annual and sick leave in the bank. Otherwise, you will end up being charged AWOL, when you need leave unrelated to the FMLA. For example if your dog needs to go to the vet, or you have to be out for the flu, which is not considered a serious health condition under the FMLA.

If you are going to need more leave than provided for by the FMLA, you should contact the Union Office to discuss your options. You may want to consider a part-time schedule, leave of absence, or even disability retirement. If you need leave due to a work related medical condition, you should also contact the Union Office.

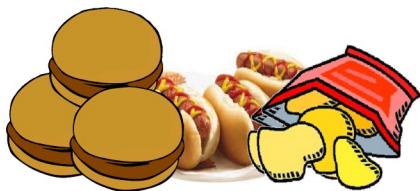
Finally, if you have questions, or are having problems getting your FMLA approved you should let the Union know as well. William Igoe

VERA/VSIP APPROVED!

The IRS has received notification that Treasury and OPM have approved our requests for Voluntary Early Retirement Authority/Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VERA/VSIP) for the Cincinnati Submission Processing Consolidation. As noted in the agreement signed by management and NTEU, the first open window for early retirement and buyouts will occur October through November 2017. The window will be open for 21 days with exact dates to be issued shortly.

Subject Matter Experts from The Human Capital Organization will be traveling to Cincinnati the last two weeks of September to conduct VERA/VSIP briefings for all Submission Processing impacted employees. Additional guidance will be issued at those meetings on topics including early retirements and buyouts, and the **job swap process**. **A briefing schedule is in the process of being developed and all employees will soon be notified of the date and the time of their briefing.**

NTEU Chapter 73 President Rick Riley states, "We are very pleased to finally have this decision approved for the employees of Submission Processing."



Labor Recognition Week Slated for September 27-28

The annual Labor Recognition celebration has been scheduled for September 27 and 28 at all locations. Like in recent years, members will be treated to hot dogs, metts and brats as well as chips and soft drinks. This year we will also be adding hamburgers , watermelon and cookies.

With the Chapters newly purchased commercial grills of last year we will be able to keep up with the demand. We also have additional tents to provide protection from the weather.

There will be many local vendors in attendance to give employees an opportunity to take advantage of various deals and discounts. Included will be Cinfed, United Benefits, US Bank, All State, Fifth Third Bank, Costco and many others. We will also have job opportunities with the addition of the Job Fair representatives returning that were here earlier this year. The Consolidation team of Ricky Riley, Karen Walsh, Thomascina Braswell , and Tanesha McCants will be on hand to answer questions.

“This is always well attended by the members,” said Ms. Braswell. “We provide a free lunch. It’s a way to give a little bit back, but there are also a lot of vendors and activities going on.”

Employees will also have a chance to talk to chapter officials, including NTEU73 President Rick Riley and Vice President Karen Walsh.

All employees receive an hour of time to attend the event and it can be used right before or after their half hour lunch time, giving them a total of an hour and half.

The first day, Wednesday, September 27, the union will set up in the Florence facility’s parking lot from 11am -1pm. The next day it will be Covington’s turn. It will be set up in the same place as usual; the Fourth Street building’s parking lot between the Service Center and the Gateway Center. Again, the time will be 11am-1pm and 6-9pm for swing shift.

“We hope to see everybody out there to help celebrate the labor movement,” commented NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “We have made great strides as a labor force because of unions and collective bargaining. We continue to work to make sure this is a great place to work” despite all of the obstacles that we must overcome.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT!

Green for Signing Up for NTEU!

The Summer Membership Campaign is **ENDING!!**

**If you sign up for NTEU between May 1-September 30
You get \$50 and whoever recruits you gets \$25!!**



**With all that NTEU is doing for you,
this is a deal you cannot pass up! Sign Up Today!
Just stop by any union office to get your form and \$50!**

Manager of the Month

Megan Conly is currently a manager in Accounts Management, Team 109. She was selected as Our Manager of the Month because of her devotion to her employees. Megan is known for her wealth of knowledge and her compassion. Megan started her career at The IRS 10 years ago as a CSR. She became a manager through The Leadership Development Program in 2012. I met Megan a few years ago while volunteering for CFC. Megan worked tirelessly to make sure everything was perfect. This is the same devotion she applies as a manager. When I spoke to Megan she admitted, “my job as a manager is to help you do your job to the best of your ability.” Her motto is, “Whatever I can do.” This might be one of the reasons her employees are so fond of her.

Her employees wrote: “I found out the team I was going to be on would be ran by Megan Conly. The first things I heard, ‘oh she’s very nice, but very technical.’ During the short few months on Megan’s team I learned that she was very nice and very technical. However, what nobody mentioned was her passion for teaching. Megan is always willing to sit down and explain things in detail, to give you encouragement, and to lead not boss. I appreciate the short time I had her as a manager and anyone who has her should be honored.”

“Since Megan started her career as a CSR, she knows first-hand what it’s like to be on the phones.”

“She genuinely cares about her employees.”

Megan thank you for all that you do for your employees. As you can see the work you do is appreciated. We are honored to declare you our Manager of the Month!



The Consolidation Committee

The Consolidation Committee has been hard at work over the summer. We successfully opened the “CORE Room”, Career Opportunity & Resource Engagement Room, on June 12, 2017 and have seen a steady flow of visitors. We have sponsored eight separate USAJobs seminars, in both Covington and Florence, and had over 350 people attend the sessions. In partnership with the AIM organization and NTEU-73, we have conducted multiple Job Fairs. The largest had 11 outside vendors and had over 500 employees attend to get information.

The CORE Room is staffed full-time on Mondays and Tuesdays by Donna King of the Human Capital Office (HCO). Donna can be reached best by email at Donna.S.King@irs.gov to schedule an appointment. She is available to discuss many specific issues regarding job applications or retirement benefits. The CORE Room also has a list of volunteers (managers, NTEU stewards, and front-line employees) on stand-by to help with USAJobs, resume writing, or to answer questions regarding the consolidation. If a volunteer is not in the room when you arrive, please sign up on the list and you will be contacted by one of the volunteers. But, the easiest way to set up an appointment is to email the Consolidation Committee and tell us what you need. In your email, tell us when you are available, and we will contact you with an appointment to meet with you. Email ***CSPC Consolidation Committee** and it will go to the entire committee.

We are starting to see numerous job announcements posted. Please continue checking USAJobs on a regular basis. Submission Processing is preparing to announce their Filing Season positions. This is an ideal time to apply for the GS-0592 Tax Examiner series positions. Anyone in a clerical or data transcriber series should strongly consider applying for the Tax Examiner positions. This will provide you with experience as a tax examiner. Submission Processing hopes to fill all tax examiner positions internally, and fill the clerical and data transcriber positions externally.

Finally, the Consolidation Committee is always looking for assistance. If you are willing to share your expertise, time, and talents please see your committee representative. You can email the entire committee at ***CSPC Consolidation Committee**.

Thank you, Edwin Dean Curry



**In These Troubled Times, United Benefits
can be a BIG Benefit to YOU!**



United Benefits will be in the Service Center throughout the coming months to help employees get a firm understanding of what faces them as they prepare for retirement. Their staff professionals, fully endorsed by NTEU, are experts on VERA/VSIP, the Thrift Savings Plan, the GRB Platform, your Health Insurance and all the paperwork involved. They can also take care of all your insurance needs, including disability, cancer, accident and life insurance!

They are here to help YOU!

Call today to set up an appointment with a United Benefits Representative to get your future in order!

**Call Roxy to set up your time to chat:
423-309-2758**