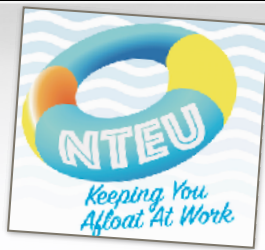




The Guardian



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I **BELONG** to **NTEU** because

a **Single Voice** is not enough!

“As a seasonal employee, I made vacation plans after my seasonal contract was going to expire. However, before the contract expired my front-line manager informed all of us that the contract had been extended. I went to my manger and explained that I had made vacation plans. The front-line manager informed me I had to cancel my plans as I had to work. I went to the department manager and was informed that I was required to work. a result, I went to the NTEU office. As soon as the NTEU heard about this issue they accompanied me to the department manager’s office. The department manager was informed that what they required to do was totally inappropriate. They went on to explain I had a right to make vacation plans and when I finished my vacation I could return to work without any issues.

I was totally satisfied with the attention NTEU applied to my situation, the fact they directly took me to the department manager’s office and resolved this issue without any real difficulty.” *Sincerely, Proud NTEU Member*

PROUD
NTEU
MEMBER

Share Your
STORY

Because your Story matters to NTEU Ch68!
email us @ nteuchapter68legislative@gmail.com



It's the **U** and **I** in **UNION** that makes us **STRONG.**

Many of us take for granted that IRS is a good place to work. But most of the benefits today were not always in place. The benefits were hard fought by NTEU and its predecessors. Your union negotiated many of those benefits including, but not limited to, an indoor air quality agreement, alternative workspaces for chemically-sensitive individuals, establishment of child care facilities, changes in the smoking policy, compressed and flexible schedules, reduction-in-force protections, fitness centers, as well as transit subsidies. Every day the union fights to prevent encroachments on these important benefits and give you additional rights.

NTEU Chapter 68 leaders work for the rights and benefits of our employees, at the bargaining table, through legislation, and by having a voice in the workplace where policies are implemented on a day-to-day basis. Management knows that Chapter 68 speaks for everyone in our bargaining unit. We can influence workplace rules in ways that make sense for employees and America's taxpayers. We turn back legislative attempts that harm federal employees and advocate for policies and laws that support you and help you do your job more successfully. NTEU leads the way in fighting for you!



We're more than halfway through summer membership campaign!

\$80 incentive for new members to join NTEU!

This year's 2019 membership drive will run from March 31 through September 28, 2019

When you join, you add your voice to the tens of thousands of federal employees fighting to protect our pay, workplace rights and retirement. Come see us in the **Union Office** or see your area Steward for assistance!

Performance

Appraisals for IRS Employees

Don't just sit back and take an appraisal score without checking to see if it's accurate! Perhaps a better way to state this is... if you're not certain that the score received on your most recently shared performance appraisal meets the actual work performed (during that particular appraisal period), talk with one of our Union Stewards about it! The best and most efficient way in doing this is simply

sending an email to your manager informing that you need to speak with a Steward. You do not need to share the content of your Union discussion with management and this time should be approved by your manager as staffing permits. Remember - You only have 15 days to grieve it! ... Performance Appraisals are documented on the Form 6850 and share your ... performance. (Right?)The higher your appraisal score, the better chances at achieving BQ (*Best Qualified*) when applying to different government positions. The higher your appraisal score, the greater any Performance Award amounts (whether *Monetary* or *Time Off*).



Question: My manager gave me an error on my monthly review and I do not agree with it.

Can I file a grievance? Answer: No. You are not able to file a grievance on a monthly (EQRS) review rating unless that rating is used to disadvantage you in other opportunity such as deny an overtime opportunity, or suspend Telework or AWS. Evaluative recordation are not considered rating of record and therefore are not grievable until used in an annual rating of record. (Article 12, Section 9, C4)

Question: When I signed my monthly review or annual performance appraisal does that indicate I agree with the rating? Answer: No.

An employee's initials on a performance appraisal, where the signature is provided for, indicates only that the performance appraisal has been received, not an employee's agreement with the performance appraisal. (Article 12, Section 4 (I))

Question: I recently received my annual appraisal and I disagree with it because the appraisal included three monthly reviews I disagreed with. I rebutted two of the reviews and one I did not. Can I file a grievance?

Answer: Yes. Supervisors or designees will discuss employees' annual or revalidated appraisals at the time such appraisals are issued to employees. Employees may make written comments concerning any disagreement with an annual or revalidated appraisal within fifteen (15) workdays of issuance. In the case of any appraisal which will be used in a pending competitive action, written comments concerning disagreements must be submitted within three (3) workdays of issuance. Such comments will be attached to and become part of the appraisal.

The Employer has determined that within the time frame provided in subsection 4G above, employees will be provided with a reasonable amount of administrative time, not to exceed four (4) hours, to prepare written comments concerning any performance appraisal that becomes the employee's annual rating of record. Such comments will be attached to and become part of the appraisal. Failure to rebut does not indicate employee agreement with the appraisal. Similarly, failure by the supervisor to comment on the employee's rebuttal does not indicate agreement with the employee's comments. It is not necessary or appropriate for a supervisor to prepare additional remarks regarding the employee's comments in that the appraisal constitutes the Employer's stated position. (Article 12, Section 4F-H)





The Steward's role with respect to FMLA Leave Practices.

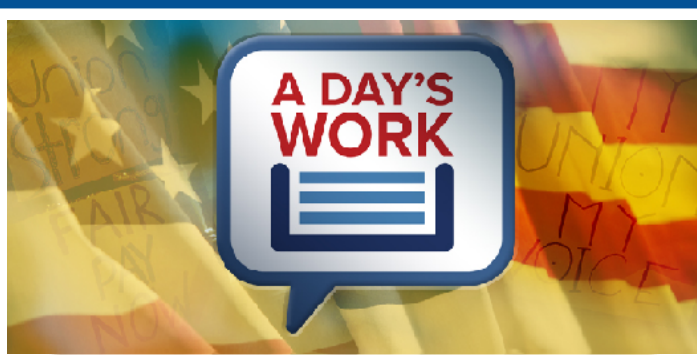
As a union steward, we can help employees understand what their rights and responsibilities are. The average employee requesting FMLA for the first time does not know much at all about FMLA. Navigating the FMLA process can be a minefield for the inexperienced. Because of our expertise, many employees will call us to ask for help with their leave situations. Even if employees know about FMLA, we offer to help guide them through the process. The timelines, the forms, the rules and regulations can be confusing...most employees will welcome the help! As union stewards, we have the skills to help employees successfully navigate the FMLA process.

We work with management to ensure employees request is processed smoothly. The sooner we get involved in the process of requesting FMLA, the better. LR and supervisors are looking out for the Agency not you! Experienced union stewards often facilitate the process by transmitting information to medical professionals in a secure manner and educating employees and physicians on how to complete the FMLA paperwork in a manner that ensures that the FMLA awarded fits the employee's needs.

We can help facilitate the process and avoid the inconvenience of grievance filing. This benefits the employees and the Agency. Many managers have a poor understanding of FMLA or may not have the employee's best interest at heart. With our expertise and help every step of the way, we'll increase the likelihood that management will approve the employee's request and decrease opportunities for confusion or arbitrary denials by management.

What is FMLA? FMLA stands for Family Medical Leave Act. Enacted into law in 1993, the FMLA allows up to 12 weeks of time off for employees to care for themselves or immediate family members who have a serious medical condition.

The FMLA expanded leave options and granted certain legal protections to employees: (1) Employees can take unpaid leave (LWOP) under FMLA, (2) Employees may "substitute" accrued paid leave, such as sick or annual leave, to cover some or all of the FMLA leave period, (3) The FMLA allows employees to maintain their health insurance under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave, (4) An employee's use of FMLA leave cannot be counted against them for purposes of discipline/adverse action.



The Steward's role with respect to FMLA Leave Practices.

For many years, NTEU has been working hard to expand upon the basic framework of the FMLA. Bills, “HR 1534 and S 1174”, The Federal Employees Paid Family Leave Act,” was introduced in the House and Senate. These bills, if passed, will provide all federal employees with 12 weeks of paid family leave upon the birth or adoption of a child, to care for serious personal medical condition, as well as any qualifying circumstance resulting from a spouse, child. NTEU is strong advocate of paid family leave.

- **What other situations are covered by FMLA?** FMLA is also available for: (1) the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within on year of birth; (2) the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement; (3) to care for the employee’s spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition.
- **Who is eligible for FMLA?** To be eligible for FMLA benefits, an employee must have worked as a covered employee for a total of 12 months (consecutive or non-consecutive). Time in non-work status by seasonal employees counts toward the 12-month service requirement.
- **How much leave is available under the FMLA?** FMLA and Military Exigency FMLA: 12 weeks (or 480 hours) in a 12-month period which runs when the leave is first taken; 480 hours total, not 480 hours for each condition.

We strive to educate our members on FMLA. It’s a great benefit, but believe it or not, some employees still don’t know about it. Now active member employees seek our help early and often. That said, we share FMLA information through newsletters, lunch & learns, etc. and feel free to stop by the union office for any further assistance.



Perfect Lemonade

Lemonade: sugar, water, lemon juice. Easy, right? Well, the problem is that if you just stir all of these together the sugar will sink to the bottom. So the best way to make lemonade is to make a **simple syrup** first, by heating water and sugar together until the sugar is completely dissolved, and then mix that with the lemon juice. The proportions will vary depending on how sweet and strong you like your lemonade, and how sour your lemons are to begin with. Late season lemons are less sour than early season lemons. Meyer lemons are sweeter than standard lemons.

Start with the proportions of 1 cup of sugar, 1 cup of water, 1 cup of lemon juice. Reduce the sugar amount if you are using Meyer lemons or if you like your lemonade less sweet. (I usually use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of lemon juice.) Make the simple syrup, combine with the lemon juice, and then add more water (and ice) to dilute the lemonade to your taste.



Strawberry Yogurt Popsicles

Get in line, boys and girls! It's popsicle time! When our daughter had the good sense to leave home after college, popsicles became obsolete in our kid-free zone. Silly me.

It's time for a comeback. Those cooling, refreshing treats are going to be in my freezer all summer! HOW TO MAKE YOGURT POPSICLES

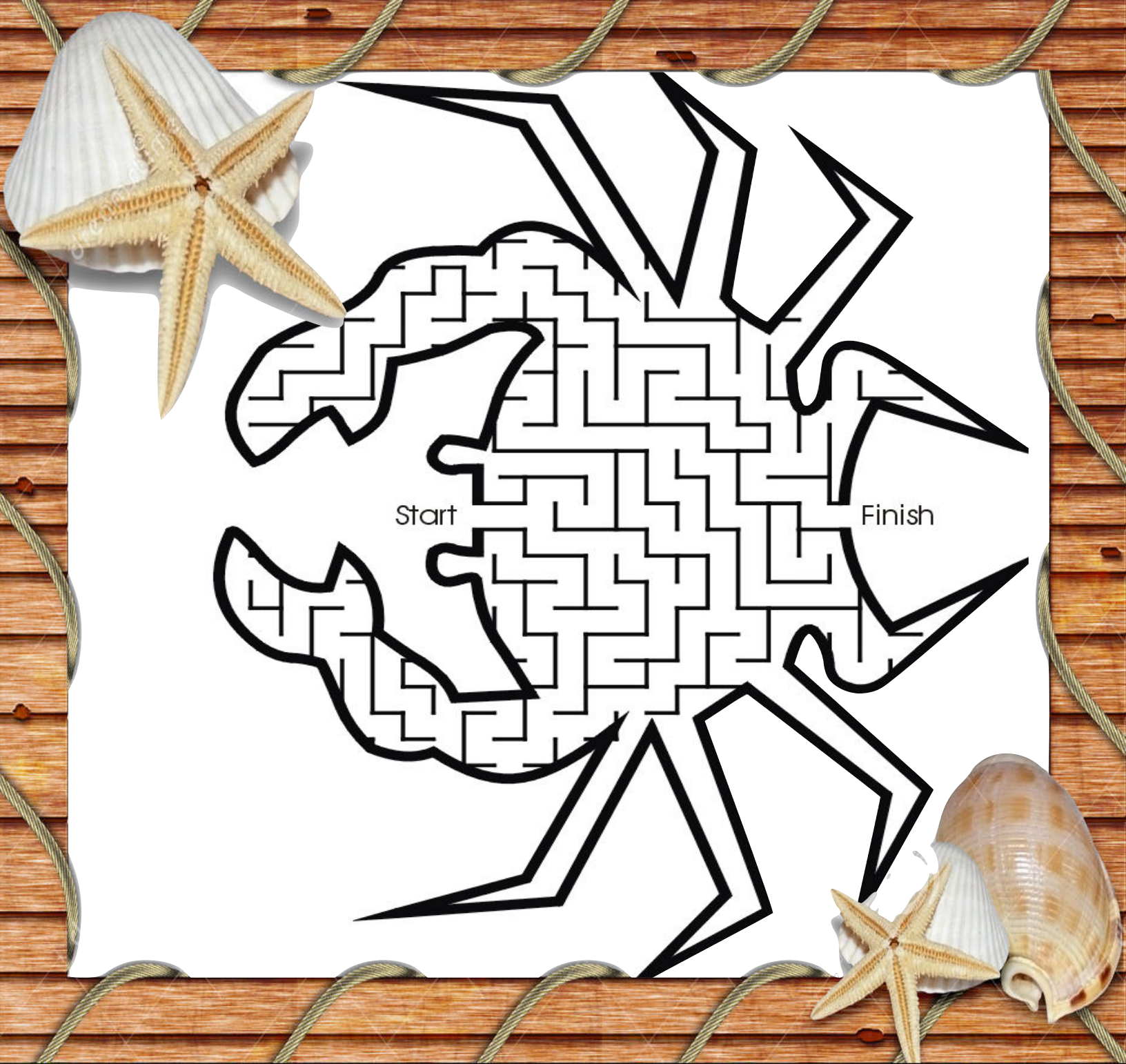
This recipe is a blueprint: Puree beautiful ripe fruit (in this case strawberries) with simple syrup (or not) and some lemon juice. Pour into molds, swirl in a little yogurt, and voila!

Once frozen, remove the pops from their molds and place them in plastic bags for longer storage. This also frees up the mold for MORE POPSICLES!

SWEETEN THE FRUIT...OR NOT

The fruit can be sweetened with honey, your preferred liquid sweetener, or simple syrup. (Make simple syrup by simmering equal parts sugar and water until the sugar dissolves, then letting it cool. Store leftover syrup in the fridge for several weeks, and use it for iced tea, coffee, cocktails or, even better, for more popsicles.) You can also leave out the sweeteners and go sugar-free, which makes for a handy snack when you are counting calories.





NTEU PARKING RAFFLE

Next drawing is for October and November

Enter by August 23rd @ NTEU Union Office/Stop 935 Union Office # (978)783-8426

Website: www.nteuch68.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/NTEU-Chapter-68

Name: _____

TOD: _____

PHONE: _____





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