



AFGE March training classes

The AFGE Field Services and Education Department is offering the following classes for March. Visit afge.org/events to sign up.

March 6: Online Stewards Orientation

This introductory webinar overviews the role of the steward, active worksite representation, and one of the most important laws that outlines the rights of union representatives: 5 USC Chapter 71.

March 27: Bargaining Basics

This introductory collective bargaining webinar discusses what can and cannot be bargained over under federal law, “good faith” bargaining, use of official time, information requests, and how to access

additional relevant resources.

March 29: Strategic Bargaining

This advanced bargaining skills class is for AFGE leaders and members already experienced in the collective bargaining process who would like to further develop their skills in negotiating collective bargaining agreements for federal employees.

This course explores how to determine the best bargaining strategy for your situation, implementing a strategic bargaining plan, and effective strategies for educating members and gaining their support.

Participants should be experienced bargainers and/or have already attended the Bargaining Basics webinar.

AFGE calls for mobilization to get FAIR Act passed

By **DON MONCRIEF**
Editor, The Union Advocate
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“For far too long federal pay has lagged behind our counterparts in the private sector. So, it’s up to us to keep the pressure on to raise our pay.”

So begins a release from AFGE. At the heart of it – the statement – is an initiative to mobilize federal workers to in turn contact their lawmakers, to in turn encourage them to cosponsor – support – the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates Act. Approval of the Act – H.R. 536/S – would authorize an average 8.7 percent pay raise for federal employees in 2024.

“Federal wages and salaries need a substantial adjustment both to restore the living standards of federal employees and to help agencies recruit and retain a federal workforce capable of carrying out the crucial missions of our government,” reads the website introduction set up to help you in this endeavor.

“Not only are federal employees paid less than our counterparts in the private sector and state and local government, but our wages and salaries do not begin to keep up with the cost of living,” it continues.

It can be found at <https://actionnet-work.org/letters/tell-your-lawmaker-to-cosponsor-the-fair-act/>

work.org/letters/tell-your-lawmaker-to-cosponsor-the-fair-act/

Fill in your name, street address, zip code and click on the “Start Writing” link (highlighted in dark blue). It will take you to a page with a “pre-drafted” letter, which contains at the bottom a list of your representatives (i.e. for Georgia Sen. Jon Ossoff, Sen. Raphael Warnock and Rep. Sanford Bishop. Fill in “Your Letter Topic” (i.e. “Labor”, “Veterans”, et cetera) and hit the “Send Letter” link at the bottom.

That’s all there is to it. As of Tuesday, 15,982 letters had been sent, with a goal of 25,600.

Bureau releases summary on union membership

By **DON MONCRIEF**
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The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released its annual summary on union membership. While the percentage of “wage and salary workers” who were members of a union decreased to 10.1 percent – down from 10.3 in 2021 – the number of wage and salary workers belonging to unions actually increased by 273,000.

What appears to be a discrepancy is resolved, according to the summary, as follows: “The total number of wage and salary workers grew by 5.3 million (mostly among non-union workers), or 3.9 percent. This disproportionately large increase in the number of total wage and salary employment compared with the increase in the number of union members led to a decrease in the union membership rate.”

The 10.1 percent is also the lowest on record, according to the report, but per an AFL-CIO release, “Union density declined because of broken labor laws, not because of disapproval or disinterest.” (Note: The highest on record was 201.1 percent – 17.7 million. That was reported in 1983, the first year where comparable union data was available.)

The AFL-CIO release added: “Unions currently have a 60-year high approval rate. Last year there was a 53% rise in union elections. It’s clear: Workers want unions.”

“So why did union density decline? Because non-union jobs were added faster than we could unionize them. This isn’t surprising. Workers face a stacked deck when they organize a union. And corporations know that stalling an organizing drive is an effective union-busting tactic.”

Other highlights from the data were:

■ The union membership rate of public-sector workers (33.1 percent) continued to be more than five times higher than the rate of private-sector workers (6.0 percent).

■ The highest unionization rates were among workers in protective service occupation (34.6 percent) and in education, training, and library occupations (33.7 percent).

■ Men continued to have a higher union membership rate (10.5 percent) than women (9.6 percent). The gap between union membership rates for men and women has narrowed considerably since 1983 (the earliest year for which comparable data are available), when rates for men and women were

24.7 percent and 14.6 percent, respectively.

■ Black workers remained more likely to be union members than White, Asian, or Hispanic workers.

■ Nonunion workers had median weekly earnings that were 85 percent of earnings for workers who were union members (\$1,029 versus \$1,216). (The comparisons of earnings in this news release are on a broad level and do not control for many factors that can be important in explaining earnings differences.)

■ Among states, Hawaii and New York had the highest union membership rates (21.9 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively), while South Carolina and North Carolina had the lowest (1.7 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively).

Industry and occupation of union members

■ In 2022, 7.1 million employees in the public sector belonged to unions, about the same as in the private sector (7.2 million).

■ Union membership was little changed over the year (+80,000) in the public sector, after a decline the prior year (-191,000). The public-sector union membership rate continued to decline in 2022; the rate went down by 0.8 percentage point to 33.1 percent. In 2022, the union membership rate continued to be highest in local government (38.8 percent), which employs many workers in heavily unionized occupations, such as police officers, firefighters, and teachers.

■ The number of union workers employed in the private sector increased by 193,000 to 7.2 million over the year. The private-sector unionization rate edged down by 0.1 percentage point in 2022 to 6.0 percent. Industries with high unionization rates included utilities (19.6 percent), motion pictures and sound recording industries (17.3 percent), and transportation and warehousing (14.5 percent). Low unionization rates occurred in insurance (1.2 percent), finance (1.3 percent), professional and technical services (1.3 percent), and food services and drinking places (1.4 percent).

■ Among occupational groups, the highest unionization rates in 2022 were in protective service occupations (34.6 percent) and in education, training, and library occupations (33.7 percent). Unionization rates were lowest in sales and related occupations (3.0 percent); computer and mathematical occupations (3.3 percent); food preparation

See **SUMMARY, page 3**



The theme: ‘Black Resistance’; The aim: fighting all forms of oppression

By **AFGE Leadership**

Each February we recognize Black History Month as a time to honor Black culture, community, and contributions throughout American history.

This year’s national theme is “Black Resistance,” which explores how “African Americans have resisted historic and ongoing oppression, in all forms, especially the racial terrorism of lynching, racial pogroms and police killings,” since the nation’s earliest days.

Throughout history, Black people have sought ways to defend and nurture Black lives, bodies, and spirits through resistance in many forms, including education, art, music, worship, literature, boycotts, nonviolence, legislation, organizing, protest, fashion, cooking, humor, joy, and more.

Black labor has always been a key site of Black resistance. There is a long history of organized and everyday Black resistance to oppression through labor. Enslaved people resisted by breaking tools, pretending to be sick, slowing down pro-

duction, committing arson and sabotage, running away, and organizing armed uprisings and rebellions.

In the early 20th Century, Black men and women formed labor unions like the American League of Colored Laborers, Colored National Labor Union, the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters, Colored Musicians Club, and others, to not only resist ongoing inequality and capitalist exploitation, but to resist exclusion from the growing labor movement.

Black labor played an integral role in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, providing organizing expertise, funding, and transportation to actions like the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

These are just some of the many stories of Black resistance through labor U.S. history. As we continue to grapple with systemic racism and white supremacy culture, we know labor still has an integral role to play in resistance.

During the Summer of 2020, See **MONTH, page 3**

LegCon - 5 expectations

From **AFGE reports**

A good number of AFGE Local 987 staff are/were attending – through today – the AFGE 23023 Legislative Conference being held in Washington, D.C.

The theme was “AFGE Rising: Building Our Power By Raising Our Voices.” “Indeed,” reads an AFGE release, “AFGE

members will strategize on how to build power and raise our voices so that we have the tools we need to serve the American people while protecting our rights at work.”

But first, it continued, here are five things attendees could expect at the conference (with plans to report in detail in our next issue upon their return): See **LEGCON, page 3**



Dr. Everett Kelley
AFGE National President

Volunteers are still needed for the following committees:

- YOUNG
- Stewards
- Resolution
- Training and Education
- Grievance/Arbitration
- Publicity
- Fair Practice
- Retiree
- Women’s
- Entertainment
- Veterans

Call Union Hall at 478-922-5758 for more information or to sign up.

Did you know?

If you recruit a new member, you get \$50 and the new member gets \$150. Sign up on your own and you get \$200. (Note: Restrictions apply if you got out of the union; i.e. you had to have been out for at least a year.)



Membership meeting

Local 987 will have a membership meeting **March 16 at 5 p.m.** Note: Per AFGE Local 987 President Marion Williams, barring any unforeseeable circumstances, it will be in person (and still via Zoom for those who prefer/choose to attend via that format, he said.) As always, membership will be verified before you are admitted into the meeting/teleconference. To that end, you must ensure you have a current email on file or you will not receive the Zoom link. You can make updates by calling Union Hall at 478-922-5758 or by emailing Linda Baxter at linda@afgelocal987.org or Jeanette McElhaney at jmac@afgelocal987.org.

Keep Your Car Safer and On the Road Longer

FAMILY FEATURES

For many families, cars are huge, long-term investments second only to homes. Many are looking for ways to keep their cars on the road longer and make them safer to continue to serve their needs for years to come.

No matter what or where you drive, you can keep your current vehicle looking and performing its best – and even update it to make it safer – with these tips inspired by eBay Motors' Parts of America tour, a cross-country tour exploring unique car cultures across America.

Choose the Right Tires

If it's time to trade your tires in, take the time to learn what options are available for your vehicle.

For those in fair weather states, summer performance tires offer the best possible fuel efficiency all year round. Families living in milder states with occasional snow may consider all-season tires that trade efficiency for safety on a variety of surfaces. Finally, when it comes to driving in a winter wonderland, there is no substitute for specialized rubber and tread patterns – purchase a dedicated set of snow tires to ensure you're safe all winter long. No matter your situation, a new set of tires can maximize safety and extend the life of your car.

New Look, New Ride

One way to breathe new life into your ride is to take it to the next level aesthetically. With enthusiast communities growing around nearly every make and model of vehicle, it's easy to find parts to make your vision a reality. One of the most eye-catching additions is a new set of wheels, and there are thousands of brands, styles and sizes to choose from for every car. The addition of front, side and rear aerodynamics kits, such as front splitters or rear spoilers, can give any ride that athletic look. Upgrading stock headlight and taillight units – many fitted with high-visibility LEDs – has never been easier.

Upgrade Your Tech

Safety and creature comforts alike can add to your enjoyment of your vehicle, even if you've been



driving it for several years. Many cars can be updated with the latest and greatest features available in new rides, including high-tech infotainment equipped with digital assistants, front and rear cameras, parking sensors, blind spot warning and even collision avoidance systems. As families look to extend their cars' lifespans, these technology upgrades can make driving comfortable and safer.

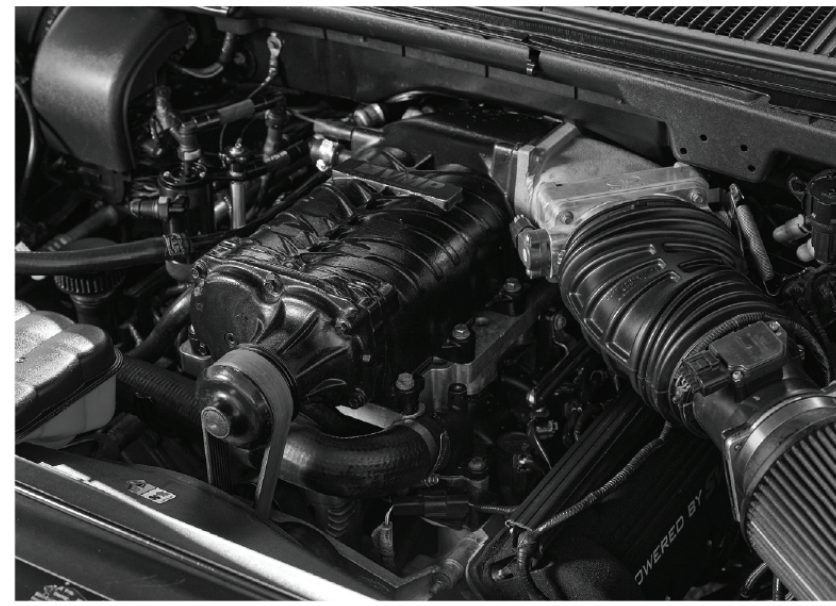
Power and Performance

While looks and tech can bring new experiences to your car, no change has quite the same impact as improving its performance. Options abound for those looking to improve the power and handling of their ride, such as replacing the exhaust system, lowering springs, adding a coilover kit or conducting a full suspension replacement.

Find Purpose-Built Parts

Whether you're an amateur DIY-er looking to maintain and make small upgrades to your vehicle

or an expert looking to make bigger modifications, finding parts and accessories that fit your vehicle is crucial. From hard-to-find performance modifications to made-to-fit cosmetic accessories, eBay Motors offers parts and accessories for nearly any vehicle, skillset and project. The app offers an entire catalog of inventory with 122 million live parts listings at any given time, giving auto enthusiasts the ability



to purchase from an expansive inventory from the convenience of a smartphone. What's more, features like Buy It Now, My Garage and Fitment Finder enable users to easily search parts and accessories, verify the items fit their vehicle and make immediate purchases for what they need.

Skip the Wait

The global supply chain continues to recover from disruptions that have stretched back several years, and many customers are feeling the strain when it comes time to upgrade, maintain or repair their vehicles. Some shops around the country are quoting waiting times of several months just to have the right part delivered for service. However, families can find relief and get their car back on the road quicker by looking online to source their much-needed parts. In fact, many technicians work with customers to have parts delivered directly to their shop from online sources to expedite and simplify the process.

Auto enthusiasts can find more helpful tips, tricks and resources at ebaymotors.com.

SHOPPING

From page 2

they shop," said Kim Melvin, global leader of marketing and communications, Sensormatic Solutions. "When it comes down to it, shoppers want safer,

quicker, and more affordable and sustainable options."

Along these same lines, consumers are still invested in what retailers are doing for the sake of the environment, with 69% noting that it is important to them that retailers continue to improve environmental performance and energy

management in their stores.

Consumers are looking for this to happen with the following changes: less plastic and packaging waste (62%), recycling bins for shoppers and employees to use (42%), and increased sustainable product and brand options (41%).

Further, consumers are planning to

create their own sustainable habits in 2023, with 39% buying more items in-store to reduce shopping trips, 38% shopping in-store more often to eliminate packaging waste, and 33% shopping at thrift stores more often.

What's clear from these trends and insights is that the industry's march

toward more sustainable, flexible, streamlined and efficient operations is just beginning.

To learn more about the evolving retail industry, as well as how emerging technology can help stores meet customers' expectations in the 2023, visit sensormatic.com.

Your Union Insurance Benefits



Life: Permanent, Portable, Cash Value, Living Benefits. A Much Better Plan than FEGLI.



Dental & Vision: 3 Plans to choose from, dependent children covered to age 26, extended family is eligible for their own plan.



Aflac Accident: Pays over fifty Benefits for on or off-the-job accidents.



Aflac Hospital Indemnity: Pays Benefits for on and off-the-job accidents and sickness/surgery/maternity.



Aflac Critical Illness: Pays Benefits up to \$30,000 upon the occurrence of cancer, heart attack, stroke, and many other Critical Illnesses.

NEW AFLAC DISABILITY

- Pays benefits for off-job accidents, sickness (covid included), surgery, & maternity.
- No health questions asked to enroll.
- Benefit amounts up to *\$6,000 per month.
- It can be used with leave, or independently.

*Max Benefit of \$6,000 per month.

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ENROLL



MORE INFO



Make your St. Pat's Day spread green with envy

(Culinary.net) Freshen up your St. Patrick's Day menu with easy, light sandwiches inspired by the traditional color of the festivities. These open-faced noshes can be perfect for lunch, snack time or even as an appetizer for get-togethers with friends and family.

Layered with a smooth cream cheese and mozzarella mixture then topped with crisp cucumber and a stem of green bell pepper, these St. Patrick's Day Sandwiches are easy and cute, which makes them a fan favorite at nearly any green gathering.

They're also sprinkled with lemon juice to add a little acidity and create a nice, light bite.

Plus, this recipe is quick to make. When you're in a rush to get everything on the table for the party, it's easy to throw together and get on the platter in next to no time.

The sandwiches pop off the plate with their bright, seasonal garnishes. While sure to attract attention and have your loved ones asking "Where did you get this idea?" they're also an easy way to sneak a few vegetables into your kids' diets.

For more festive recipes and ideas at Culinary.net.



St. Patrick's Day Sandwiches

Yield: 8 sandwiches

- 8 ounces plain cream cheese spread, softened
- 1 cup finely shredded mozzarella cheese
- salt
- 4 English muffins
- 24 slices cucumber
- 8 thin slices green pepper
- fresh cilantro leaves
- lemon juice
- lemon slices, for garnish (optional)

In bowl, mix cream cheese spread, mozzarella cheese and salt well.

Split English muffins in half. Cut each muffin half into shamrock shape.

Spread cheese mixture over each muffin half.

Place three cucumbers on each "shamrock," one on each "leaf." Use green pepper slice as stem. Place cilantro leaf on top of each sandwich.

Sprinkle sandwiches with lemon juice and add lemon slices, for garnish, if desired.

A delicious sandwich A sweet-minty shake

(Culinary.net) In honor of the day when everyone is Irish, welcome family and friends to a traditional St. Patrick's Day

lunch with this Reuben Sandwich recipe. Find more seasonal recipes at Culinary.net.

(Culinary.net) St. Patrick's Day may call to mind hearty meals and pots o' gold, but that doesn't mean sweets can't be part of the equation, too.

Add dessert to your celebration with this green Minty Shake, a cold, refreshing way to honor the colorful tradition.

Minty Shake

Serves: 1

- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 2 teaspoons powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 3/4 ounces Baileys Irish Cream liqueur
- 3 scoops mint chocolate chip ice cream
- chocolate syrup
- chopped sugar cookies, for garnish (optional)
- pistachios, for garnish (optional)
- mint chocolate candy, for garnish (optional)

Using mixer, whisk whipping cream until soft peaks form. Add peppermint extract and powdered sugar; mix until well blended. Set aside.

In blender, blend milk, liqueur and ice cream until smooth.

Drizzle chocolate syrup inside soda glass. Pour ice cream mixture into glass. Top with whipped cream and garnish with cookies, pistachios and mint chocolate candy, if desired.



Reuben Sandwich

Servings: 2

- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 4 slices rye and pumpernickel swirl bread
- 4 slices swiss cheese
- 6 ounces corned beef
- 2 tablespoons, plus 2 teaspoons, Thousand Island Dressing, divided
- 4 tablespoons sauerkraut

Heat nonstick skillet over medium heat.

Spread 1 tablespoon butter on one side of two bread slices. Place buttered side down in heated skillet. Add two slices cheese to each bread slice. Spread 2 tablespoons dressing over cheese slices. Add 3 ounces corned beef to each bread slice.

Spread 2 teaspoons dressing over corned beef. Spread 2 tablespoons sauerkraut over corned beef.

Spread remaining butter on one side of remaining bread slices. Place buttered side up on top of sauerkraut.

Cook 4-7 minutes each side, flipping once, until golden brown and cheese is melted.



JOIN AFGE IN 4 EASY STEPS

STEP 1:

Go to www.joinafge.org



STEP 2:

Select your Agency and Local Number



STEP 3:

Fill out the one-page membership form and click "Join"



STEP 4:

If you're a new member, select a rebate campaign and fill out the brief form (local participation may vary)

