



DEFCON sets goal of 5,000 new members this year

By AFGE Leadership

AFGE's network of Department of Defense locals and councils, DEFCON, has set a goal to recruit 5,000 new members by the end of the calendar year.

The strategy it's using to achieve this goal provides lessons for all AFGE locals and councils as they embark on their own organizing initiatives.

The 5,000 foundation:

Step 1: Map it out

Step 2: Plan it out

Step 3: Make it happen

Step 1: Map it out

Even though the recruitment goal is new, DEFCON began working to achieve it more than three years ago. That's when leaders launched an ambitious project to map all the AFGE locals representing DoD employees.

Through this mapping project, DEFCON has collected invaluable information on the size and composition of DoD locals – understanding who is and isn't part of the bargaining unit, reconciling membership rosters, and identifying current and potential members by job classifications.

"We have to parcel this out at the most basic level," DEFCON Chair Felicia Sharp said. "It's one thing to talk about having a lunch and learn, but when you're talking about mapping, you have to build a plan with that foundation."

Step 2: Plan it out

Armed with the mapping information, DEFCON is now moving to the next stage – setting a specific recruitment goal and planning out the steps to get there.

To ensure DEFCON achieves the organizing goal, Sharp is borrowing lessons from a leadership

coaching class she teaches during her off-hours – specifically, using an action plan to break down each step into manageable pieces.

The action plan subdivides the 5,000 goal by quarters, months, and individual locals. AFGE's Membership and Organizing Department has identified locals that have budgeted for organizing activities and are therefore in a better position to hit the ground running.

"I think we're at a good place as an organization," Supervisory National Organizer Tracie St. John said. "We're not sitting and waiting for locals to reach out to us. We know the locals where we can go in right now."

Step 3: Make it happen

As part of the action plan, DEFCON is working with locals to set achievable milestones with weekly steps – or "homework"

See GOAL, page 3

AGE (Aerospace Ground Equipment) old problems

By HENRY BROWN
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Brown

Union busting is a range of activities undertaken to disrupt or prevent the formation of joining unions and/or attempts to prevent, stifle, deter, et cetera, membership growth in a workplace. Union busting tactics can refer to both legal and illegal activities and can range anywhere from subtle to overt intimidation.

We find that there are instances of supervisors playing on the emotions of the employee who are talking about either joining the

union ... to make them feel bad about even considering joining the union for instance. And/or, they also employ scare tactics designed

to prevent employees from joining the union.

The term "union busting" as described in this article is a planned course of action taken by supervisors in a surreptitious manner to stop employees from joining unions or to destroy unions already in the workplace. (The headline of this article itself is an allusion to one such example.)

There must be a grassroots challenge of the status quo of these woefully outdated and ineffective practices and instead be those meant to protect and enforce the employees' rights to join unions without being

harassed. It has instead become common practice for some supervisors to interfere with the rights of the bargaining union employees' rights to freely band together to have a voice on the job. Supervisors who have a hostile, kneejerk reaction to the possibility of employees becoming union members fear employees having a meaningful say within the organization and the ability of addressing aberrant treatment by supervisors through the grievance process.

The broken labor laws offer no real deterrent for holding supervisors

See BROWN, page 3

RAFB Airman's Memorial Service



As the names of those who passed away are read, a bell is rung in their honor/memory.

By DON MONCRIEF

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The 44th Annual Robins Air Force Base Airman's Memorial Service was held May 27 in the Museum of Aviation Century of Flight Hangar.

Eighty-six civilian, active duty and retired – even one military working dog – were honored during the service. (This is actually the 45th year of its existence – there was no service in 2020 due to the pandemic.)

"They represent a wide range of titles and duties," said 78th Air Base Wing Commander Col. Brian Moore as part of his remarks. "From mechanics, sheet metal workers, supply chain program managers, engineers, scientists and many more. All unsung heroes, who did their best to ensure our mission was a global success. We salute and thank them for helping to keep America free."

"This memorial is significant for 'Team Robins,'" he continued a little later on. "It's important for us to remember those who have served here. It stands as an inspiration for those who continue to serve. We must never forget their service. We are thankful for their families."

Houston County Board of Commissioners Chairman Tommy Stalknaker added during his remarks that it was a "solemn" event, but at the same time it was a celebration and remembrance as well.

"I humbly stand before you today as we honor the lives of both military and civilians," he said. "These individuals have served our community and the base, but above all else, they have served our nation. Robins Air Force Base has been a part of the community for 80 years. It has served multiple generations of airmen and civilians. What the airmen and civilians do at Robins Air Force Base is important for our country's freedom."

He continued a little later: "Let



Two wreaths are laid in honor of those who passed away. The second wreath was added to represent those who fell to Covid-19. They numbered 10.

us not forget those who have served. They gave it their best to make Robins and our nation a better place to live.

"Their physical presence is missed, but the service they provided will strengthen this base and this nation in future years to come. Each honoree had an important role at Robins Air Force Base. They will never be forgotten as members of the Robins family."

Those honored were:

- Abel Orona
- Alexander "Alex" Compottie
- Anthony "Lemar" Jones
- Anthony D. Sapp, Sr. Master Sgt. (retired)
- Augustus Lee Brake
- Brian Eric Underwood (AFGE Local 987 - 1/2009)
- Carey W. Carter Sr.
- Carla Harris (AFGE Local 987 - 4/2011)
- Carol V. Jones (AFGE Local 987 - 10/2010)
- Chadwick Mullis
- Charles Bradford
- Charles Lee Gay
- Charles Weston Moran
- Christopher Adams
- Christopher R. King
- Clarence Compton
- Cynthia McClendon
- Daniel Raymo (AFGE Local 987 - 3/2011)
- Darlene Coleman
- David C. Ballengee, Chief Master Sgt. (retired)
- Dennis Oliver Englund
- Derrick Cadwell
- Derrick Lee, Master Sgt.
- Dr. James Wareham Burnham, Jr.
- Earl Warnock

See SERVICE, page 3

Calendar

Membership meeting

Local 987 will have a membership meeting June 17 at 5 p.m. It will be held via Zoom. 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 be able to call in. You can make updates by calling Union Hall at 478-922-5758 or by emailing Linda Baxter at linda@afgelocal987.org or Jeanette McElhaneey at jmac@afgelocal987.org.)

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VA bargaining team slapped with bad faith bargaining violation

By AFGE Leadership

In another victory for AFGE's National Veterans Affairs Council, an arbitrator ruled that the VA had engaged in bad faith bargaining during contract negotiations with AFGE.

This is the second arbitrator to find that the Trump administration's VA violated its duty to bargain in good faith during these negotiations.

In December 2017, the VA told NVAC it wanted to reopen the 2011 contract. During ground rules negotiations, the VA engaged in bad faith bargaining by declaring an impasse on permissive subjects and delaying providing requested information. NVAC filed a national grievance against the VA in Oct. 2018.

In May 2020, an arbitrator found that the VA indeed committed several unfair labor practices. The VA later filed an appeal. The case is now pending with the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

But the first grievance didn't stop the VA from engaging in further bad

faith bargaining.

The second grievance

After the parties agreed to the ground rules, the VA proposed to remove 28 articles from the contract in its initial proposals. It also reduced the language in 12 articles, rendering them overbroad and difficult to enforce.

The VA's initial proposals also listed unfair labor practices that could be committed by labor unions but not agencies and required the union to pay attorney's fees to VA lawyers and reimburse the salaries of HR officials who were "required" to participate in grievance proceedings and arbitration hearings.

Prior to the first bargaining session in Long Beach, Calif., the VA failed to secure travel arrangements for several members of the union's negotiating team. Once the parties arrived in Long Beach, the VA failed to promptly provide the necessary equipment and technology for bargaining - in violation of the ground rules.

In addition, the VA nego-

tiators caucused for more than 26 hours during these two weeks (more than 40% of the time).

In that session, they failed to explain their proposals, insisted that the union waive its statutory rights, and went backwards in bargaining and withdrew previous concessions.

As a result, NVAC filed another national grievance in June 2019, the second of eight bad faith bargaining causes ultimately filed against the VA during the negotiations.

The VA and NVAC participated in arbitration hearings in January 2020 and January 2021. The arbitrator last week ruled that the VA did engage in bad faith bargaining in violation of the 2011 agreement and the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute.

She ordered the VA to cease and desist further violations of law and contract, to negotiate in good faith with the council, and to issue a notice signed by the VA secretary saying the VA has engaged in unfair labor practices.

BBB tip: Planning your next family vacation trip

When planning an event, looking for a good deal for a family vacation, or a getaway, BBB encourages people to plan ahead to save money, avoid scams, and travel safely.

Scammers will often target people looking for great deals online by offering tempting vacation packages at unrealistically low prices. One place to begin an online search is BBB.org for finding reputable travel agencies, agents and websites.

BBB adds the following tips to help ensure an enjoyable vacation:

Plan ahead. Allow plenty of time to research hotels, flights, and the area where you will be staying.

Typically, the earlier reservations are made, the better the deals and the lower the risk of the destination being booked solid.

Making reservations in advance also locks in rates and prevents higher prices later during prime spring break, peak summer, or holiday travel seasons.

Avoid broad internet searches. Entering phrases like 'best deals' into whichever search engine used can sometimes bring up-websites that look official but are designed solely to rip people off.

Be alert for travel scams. Watch out for phone calls or letters claiming a 'free trip' or websites offering prices that appear too good to be true. It's easy to extend questionable offers like these, but the vast majority of them leave hopeful travelers in limbo - and out money.

Do your homework. Ask family and friends to recommend a travel agent or travel website and visit BBB.org for free Business Profiles. Research the business and read customer reviews about any rentals under consideration.

Get trip details in writing. Before making a final payment, get all the details of the trip in writing. This should include the total cost, restrictions, cancellation penalties, and names of the airlines and hotels.

Also, review and keep a copy of the airline and hotel's cancellation and refund policies, as well as the cancellation policies of the travel agency or booking site used.



Kelvin Collins

Consider travel insurance. Travel insurance covers things like trip cancellations or medical emergencies. There are different levels of coverage based on what type of plan purchased. Ask a lot of questions, and always read the fine print to see what's covered and what's not.

Pay with a credit card. Paying with a credit card provides additional protection if something should go wrong with the travel reservation.

No matter when or where you are traveling, take extra precautions:

Wait to post on social media. It's fun to post adventures with friends and family but wait until getting back from the trip. Photos and social media posts of the family having a great time also lets thieves know the house is empty.

Check your home insurance. If your home will be unattended while away, make sure you know your responsibilities under your home insurance policy.

Some policies do not cover damage if nobody checks on your home for a certain amount of time.

Share a copy of the itinerary with a family member or close friend. Include the contact information of someone joining you on your trip.

Take a map. People rely heavily on smartphones and GPS. Consider having an atlas or hard copy map just in case of technical difficulties.

Check the weather conditions where you will be traveling and pack appropriate supplies and clothing.

Avoid traveling alone. Use the buddy system and stick with the group.

Use a hotel safe to store extra cash and keep any valuables under lock and key.

For more BBB tips or to find a travel agent, visit BBB.org.

Is your home at risk for an electrical fire?

(StatePoint) Spring/summer time is peak home-buying and building season. And it's critical to protect one of the largest investments you'll make in a lifetime - as well as your loved ones.

May was National Electrical Safety Month. It was and still is a good time to brush up on potential electrical hazards and learn more about Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter circuit breaker technology, an important life and fire safety device for any new or newly-renovated home - and a National Electrical Code requirement.

"Ensuring your home is outfitted with life-saving technology like Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters is critical," says Ashley Bryant, National Electrical Manufacturers Association Low Voltage Distribution Equipment AFCI Task Force co-chair. "AFCIs are smart devices proven to detect dangerous arcing in damaged wiring behind walls, as well as in damaged electrical cords under furniture or connected to unsafe appliances, preventing deadly electrical fires from occurring."

According to the National Association of Certified Home Inspectors, some of the top things to look for in a home are: insufficient electrical service, inadequate overcurrent protection, and dangerous, damaged or non-compliant wiring and wiring connections.

To help you ensure the home you're buying or building is protected from future electrical problems, consider these additional tips:

■ Hire a certified and licensed home inspector. A professional home inspector can tell you a lot about the safety of a home's electrical system and what may need to be repaired and updated.



Courtesy photo

someone qualified, visit the NACHI website at nachi.org/certified-inspectors.

■ Meet National Electrical Code requirements. Make sure your home's electrical system meets National Electrical Code requirements, including AFCI circuit breaker installation, which offers key areas of the home protection from electrical fires.

While there's a common misconception that this technology is unaffordable and hard to find, the average cost to protect a new 2,000 square foot, four-bedroom home is only \$300, and AFCI circuit breakers are available at electrical supply houses, home improvement stores and online, according to NEMA.

Rooms where water is present, like kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms and outdoor areas, should be equipped with Dual Function AFCI/GFCI circuit breakers. GFCI stands for Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters and work with AFCI technology to help prevent possible shock and electrocution.

If the home doesn't have this protection, be prepared to ask the owner or builder to make updates in accordance with your state electrical and building codes, or

be ready to hire a licensed electrical professional to install these life- and property-saving devices once you move in.

A great resource for more information is www.afcisafty.org.

■ Practice safety at home. A few simple steps can be taken around the house that will help protect your home from electrical fires and keep your family safe.

Check to see that light bulbs are the correct wattage and tight in the socket. Make sure no furniture is placed on appliance cords or up against plugged-in receptacles.

Protect valuable electronics by installing surge-protective devices and prevent circuit breaker tripping by not overloading any circuit.

■ Ask the right questions. Ask the seller if they made any updates to the home's electrical system.

Be sure to find out if this was a DIY project or if a licensed electrician did the work under a permit.

"During the often overwhelming process of buying or building a home, understanding a bit about electrical safety can help ensure you're making a sound investment and offer you greater peace of mind," says Bryant.

Improve your backyard life with these lawn care tips

(StatePoint) The backyard is one of the most popular spots of the home to relax, host and have fun.

However, it all starts with a beautiful lawn. If you're in the weeds - literally - there are great resources available to help you tackle lawn care so you can make the most of your outdoor spaces and have a better overall outdoor experience.

One place that can help you get started is Exmark's Backyard Life site. Exmark, a leading manufacturer of lawn care equipment, created this multimedia destination to provide homeowners with everything from barbecue recipes and design tips to gardening and lawn care advice.

The fourth episode in the Exmark "Backyard Smart" video series, offers the following steps for repairing bare spots in the lawn:

■ Remove dead grass and weeds,

■ Loosen the soil a few inches deep. If it's hard and dry, add fresh topsoil.

■ Next, sow seeds that match your lawn type.



Courtesy photo

Gently rake them into the soil.

■ Now, feed that new grass using a granular starter fertilizer.

■ Lightly cover the area with straw to hold in moisture and keeps birds from snacking.

■ Water it and keep it damp at all times.

■ Sprouts will appear soon! But wait a few weeks before mowing.

Experts also say that ongoing maintenance is essential to keeping that lawn looking great.

"One of the worst things you'll have to fight, no matter what type of grass you have, is weeds," says Exmark partner Brian Latimer, a professional angler and yard fanatic. "And you'll have to fight weeds all year."

To ensure a lush, healthy lawn, Latimer offers these additional weed-fighting and green-up tips:

1. Fight weeds. Although hand-weeding works, applying pre-emergent treatments to your

See **LAWN**, page 3

Get your issues heard and answered:
afgeactionline@local987.org

To all AFGE Local 987 members:
Please ensure that your contact information is current by updating/providing it to the Local office by email.

Please send all updates to Linda Baxter at linda@afgelocal987.org or Jeanette McElhaney at jmac@afgelocal987.org.



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Please submit articles, photos, etc to don.moncrief@afgelocal987.org. For questions about story content, to pass on story ideas or to request coverage, please contact the aforementioned.

Playtime: It's not just for kids, say experts

(StatePoint) While most of us associate playtime with childhood, adults are increasingly acknowledging the importance of play and leisure time for themselves.

A new survey commissioned by The Genius of Play and conducted by OnePoll finds that 89 percent of adults have learned to appreciate the importance of play and leisure time over the past year.

What's more, 84 percent say taking time to play helps them be more productive at work.

"You're never too young or too old to play," says Anna Yudina, senior director of marketing initiatives at The Toy Association, which spearheads The Genius of Play. "In fact, research links play with a number of well-being benefits in adults, such as reducing stress, boosting life satisfaction, and empowering people to be creative, flexible thinkers."

To incorporate play into your life, consider these tips from The Genius of Play:

- **Take on a hobby:** Seventy percent of adults picked up a new hobby or leisure activity over the past year - and with good reason. Hobbies can be a source of positive emotions, get you outdoors, encourage physical activity and social interactions, and spark creativity.
- **Plan a game night:** While play often occurs spur-of-the-moment, life is hectic and schedules are jam-packed. Consider scheduling time for fun to ensure it happens.
- For example, make one evening each week a totally screen-free, stress-free experience. Order pizza (or your household's cuisine of choice) and break out games and puzzles.
- You might even consid-

er planning themed trivia nights delving into your favorite subjects.

- **Hop in the car:** Whether you choose a destination that allows you to simply relax, or you take on a more active adventure, a trip can broaden your horizons and rejuvenate you when you're feeling down or just trapped in the daily routine.
- Consider taking a just-for-fun trip on your own, with a friend or partner, or pack up the car and bring the kids.
- **Bring out your inner child:** Parents, grandparents and other adults with a kid in their life can spend more time playing with the little ones.
- Not only is play the perfect way to bond, research highlights a number of associated health benefits. Those who play with children burn 20 percent more calories per week, and researchers link playfulness to creativity, spontaneity and positive attitudes. Intergenerational play can help adults maintain cognitive skills as they age and even extend their life.
- A study published in the journal "Evolution and Human Behavior" found that grandparents who help out with grandchildren live longer.
- If you're looking for some inspiration, visit thegeniusofplay.org for tons of fun, free games and downloadable activities.
- "While our primary mission is educating parents and caregivers about play's vital role in child development, adults need time to play too," says Yudina. "We hope to motivate people of all ages to play more -- whether it's by embracing personal hobbies or by spending more time playing with their kids."



Courtesy photo

GOAL

From page 1

assignments," as Sharp refers to it - to keep them on track throughout the process.

"It's really teaching them in the long run how to do this," Sharp said.

DEFCON has purchased individual Zoom accounts for each component to use to schedule meetings with their locals to introduce them to the organizing plan, help locals work through any mapping issues, help them set achievable goals,

and discuss methods for organizing in a post-pandemic environment.

"I'm very confident we'll get to the 5,000 goal," she said.

Bonus step: Stay connected

DoD locals can email defconsupport@afge.org with any questions or to request log-in details for the biweekly DEFCON Steering Group meeting.

In addition, all current AFGE members are invited to join DEFCON's private Facebook page.

LAWN

From page 2

lawn can help combat opportunistic weeds preemptively. Just be sure any chemical being applied is safe for the type of grass you have. Keep an eye on your lawn and manage weeds that appear.

2. **Mulch.** While weeds tend to thrive in bare soil, they hate thick mulch. Mulching can keep weeds from germinating. Use landscape fabrics beneath the mulch to keep sunlight out, but you'll want to be sure it's a type that will allow water to still permeate your soil. You'll also want to prune plants and trees.

This doesn't just include cutting back new growth, but also cleaning out dead limbs or branches, and sharp-

ing areas that have become unsightly.

3. **Scalp.** To start the season, "scalp" warm-season grasses like zoysia or Bermuda. Removing old growth by cutting your lawn super low will allow sunlight in, which warms root systems and soil temperatures. Bag clippings so sunlight, fertilizer and water can penetrate the soil.

More backyard life tips, advice and video tutorials can be found by visiting exmark.com/backyard.

When it comes to better backyard life, a beautiful lawn is fundamental. Taking your cues from the professionals can help you achieve lush, green spaces perfect for grilling, playing, kicking back and more.



78th Force Support Squadron June 2021 Newsletter

Find us on Facebook or Instagram. Be sure to like us to receive the latest information, specials and events!

facebook.com/78fss
instagram.com/78fss



Pizza Depot Annual Birthday Bash

Tuesday, June 8
11 a.m.-4 p.m. | Ages 18+ only
Come celebrate Pizza Depot's birthday with us at this unique tasting event!
NO WALK INS - RSVP Mandatory on Member Planet or by calling (478) 926-2670

- **Tips from the Pro**
June 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29
Pine Oaks Golf Course
- **Junior Summer Golf Play Days**
June 1 - July 30 - Pine Oaks Golf Course
- **Airplane Lift Challenge**
June 1 - 30 - Fitness Center
- **Triathlon**
June 1 - 30 - Fitness Center
- **Kettlebell Swing Challenge**
June 1 - 30 - Fitness Center
- **Sports Day**
June 4 - Fitness Center
- **Junior Golf Summer Clinics**
June 7 - 11 - Pine Oaks Golf Course
- **Bowling Movie Days**
June 9 - Soul
June 16 - Scoob!
June 23 - Spies in Disguise
June 30 - Monster Zone
Bowling Center
- **Give Parents a Break**
June 12 | 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Child Development Center & Youth Center
- **Rock & Bowl Doubles**
June 16 - Bowling Center
- **Target Golf**
June 18 - Pine Oaks Golf Course
- **Family Craft Activity**
June 18 | 3 p.m. p.m.
Child Development Center East & West
- **Top Golf**
June 19 - Outdoor Recreation
- **Bowling Father's Day Special**
June 20 - Bowling Center
- **Father's Day Golf Special**
June 20 - Pine Oaks Golf Course
- **Pine Wood Derby**
June 26 - Outdoor Recreation
- **Dive-In Movie**
June 26 - Outdoor Recreation

Father's Day Family Meal Deal!
Friday, June 18
\$24 Members | \$30 Non Members
Family Size BBQ Pulled Pork, Southern Coleslaw, Baked Beans and Buns for Four
ADD a Gallon of Southern Sweet Tea for \$5.00!
HOW TO ORDER: Call the Cash Cage at (478) 926-2670 or RSVP on Member Planet by Wednesday, June 16
Pickup Meals between 4-5:30 p.m. on Friday, June 18

Hops & Hogs - BBQ and IPA Beer Tasting Event
Friday, June 18
4:30 - 7 p.m.
\$20 Club Members | \$25 Non-Members
Ages: 21+ ONLY
BBQ, Cornhole and More! Come join for a fun Beer Tasting and BBQ event at Heritage Club Lawn
RSVP on Member Planet or by calling (478) 926-2670

Heritage Pool Open
10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Open to Active duty, Guard, Reserves, Retirees DoD Civilians and their Dependents

Swimming Sessions
Thursday - Tuesday
Closed Wednesdays
• 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
• 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
• 4 - 7 p.m.

Splash Pad:
10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Lap Swimming:
6:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Mon., Tue., Thur. & Fri.

For more information call, 478-926-4001 or email robinsodr@gmail.com

Hello **78TH FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON** Comm. 478-926-6559 DSN 468-6559

JUNE

TEAM ROBINS SPORTS DAY BASE PICNIC

June 4
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Lunch 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Robins Park

Contact your Unit Sports Rep to sign up
For more information contact Mr. David Yann at 472-7680 or david.yann.1@us.af.mil

ROBINS AERO CLUB DISCOVERY FLIGHT DAY

June 26 • 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Enjoy a spectacular bird's-eye view of Robins AFB and the local area on a scenic flight with the Robins Aero Club!

Flights by Reservation Only
Sign-Up opens June 5th/Closes June 20th
To celebrate Independence Day, the Aero Club is holding a Discovery Flight for potential pilot students ages 16+ and offering 30-minute introduction to General Aviation for only \$46. You can bring up to 2 additional passengers ages 6+ depending on airplane available. All with base access can sign-up and learn about the flight training and pilot services offered at the Robins Aero Club.
Cancellations must be made 24 hours prior to the event date. Flights depart from the Aero Club, Bldg. 186
Google Maps: J9PW+WJ Warner Robins, Georgia

Robins Lanes Bowling Center On Spot Café
DSN 468-5240 | Comm 478-926-5240
Turkey Lover's Month!
Turkey Burger, Fries and Med. Drink **\$5.85**

The Afterburner
Caramel Mocha Creamice
Grande 16 oz. \$5.50 Monday - Friday
Venti 20 oz. \$6.00 5:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
DSN 472-7827

TRI June 12
Open to all Robins AFB Personnel 16 years and older
A minimum of 20 participants are needed to host the event
Sign-in begins: 7 a.m. | Pre-race brief: 7:45 a.m. | Race begins: 8 a.m.
Racers must provide their 500M swim time to determine start position. Racers must register by June 10, 4 p.m. by scanning the QR code
https://www.memberplanet.com/events/robinsafclubs/robinstriathlon

Summer FUN!

Heritage Club: Comm: 478-926-2670 | DSN: 468-2670
Catering: Comm. 478-926-5665 | DSN: 468-5665

Cupcake Wars!

Kit pickup: Thursday June 10 - Friday June 11
Photo submissions due date: by Friday June 18
\$15 Club Members | \$20 Non-Members
• Pickup the Kit: 4 cupcakes, icing, and a cupcake decoration pack.
• Decorate 4 cupcakes in a "Summer Vacation" theme
• Submit a photo of your creations and these photos will be posted to our Facebook page for judging.
• Cupcakes with the most "likes" will win a summer themed family fun pack!



VA Whistleblowers save lives - 2 things Congress can do to protect them

AFGE Leadership

For decades, AFGE members working at the Department of Veterans Affairs' medical facilities and offices across the country have bravely stepped up and reported mismanagement that often endangers veterans and employees alike.

In 2011, a VA psychologist at the Wilmington, Delaware VA Medical Center testified before the Senate about staffing shortages, leading to additional hiring of mental health professionals throughout the Veterans Health Administration.

In 2012, when plumbers at the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania VAMC were asked by management to cover up a deadly legionella outbreak, their AFGE local testified before Congress and waged a long battle to ensure workplace and patient safety.

In 2014, at the Phoenix, Arizona VA Medical Center VAMC, an emergency room physician and patient scheduler represented by AFGE reported severe short staffing and wait list gaming.

The same year, at the Tomah, Wisconsin VAMC, the union's local president and a psychologist reported improper opiate prescribing practices.

These courageous VA employees rely on critical statutory and contractual rights that allow them to report mismanagement knowing that their union can help them fight back against unjustified terminations, demotions, suspensions, and other forms of retaliation.

But right now, employee protections have been weakened to the point that they undermine the ability to report wrongdoing, mismanagement, and unsafe conditions.

Protecting whistleblowers

AFGE and our National Veterans Affairs Council (NVAC) represent 260,000 VA employees, including over 100,000 veterans. As the union that VA employees turn to when they need protection to report mismanagement, here are our recommendations on how to protect these courageous whistleblowers:

1. Strengthen collective bargaining rights and union protections

AFGE applauds the House Veterans' Affairs Committee's passage of the VA Employee Fairness Act. We are urging Congress to swiftly pass this bill, fixing an unjust situation where certain workers do not have full collective bargaining rights and protections that other VA employees have had for decades.

Due to the VA's narrow interpretation of their collective bargaining rights under the law, Title 38 clinicians, including physicians, dentists, podiatrists, chiro-

practitioners, optometrists, registered nurses, physician assistants, and expanded-function dental auxiliaries, are not allowed to raise grievances about things like staffing shortages that undermine patient care or to file a grievance when their paycheck is incorrect.

Adequate staffing is even more important during a pandemic like COVID-19, and it is outrageous these front-line workers cannot even raise the issue if they are short-staffed.

In addition, they are also not allowed to challenge management violations of the VA's own policies.

2. Fix flaws in the VA Accountability Act

Congress needs to restore protections for VA employees when they report wrongdoing. To do that, Congress needs to rectify two of the fundamental flaws of the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017.

Restore the standard of evidence required for taking action against an employee to a "preponderance of the evidence" standard.

When the Accountability Act was enacted, it lowered the evidentiary standard from a "preponderance of the evidence" standard, which requires the VA to provide a majority of the evidence or 50% of the evidence, to the much lower "substantial evidence" standard.

This has allowed the VA to use this law not against the senior executives for whom the VA claimed it needed this disciplinary standard, but instead against rank-and-file employees who are identifying problems on the ground to protect veterans and employees.

By reinstating the "preponderance of the evidence" standard for employees, the committee would be restoring the integrity of the accountability process that never should have been taken away.

Restore the power of the Merit Systems Protection Board to mitigate the proposed disciplinary action taken against employees, including potential whistleblowers.

When the Accountability Act was enacted, it eliminated the MSPB's ability to determine that the VA had proven that an employee deserved discipline, but that the VA had sought too harsh a punishment. The only options available to the MSPB are to accept or reject the VA's argument and punishment decision in full.

By restoring the MSPB's ability to mitigate or lessen a punishment, Congress would protect employees and reduce the need for people to attempt to claim whistleblower status and appeal their cases to the Office of Special Counsel, reducing any backlogs that may exist.

BROWN

From page 1

accountable for their unlawful conduct thereby creating an added incentive for supervisors to engage in an aggressive attack on employees' rights to belong to a union.

Yet there is the potential of high hidden costs to these renegade supervisors. The price for the intimidating, prying nature of the one or two of these high-paid, ill equipped supervisors that have risen to such lofty heights - in a number of instances through cronyism - is that their greatest attribute is dividing the workplace and will eventually lead to low morale, less productivity and increased turnover.

Ostensibly, there are those who consider the actions of these ill-equipped supervisors as unanticipated consequences of promoting friends and family who have a strong disdain

for the union, which has in turn manifested itself into union busting and trampling on the rights of members in joining unions. The proclivity for union busting by these supervisors often may mean maintaining poor job standards that can drag down working conditions and adversely affect production across the enterprise.

Supervisors, who themselves have no legally protected right to be represented by the union, are often tasked with doing the dirty work of harassing employees who desire to join the union. There is a contract in place that governs the employees' rights to both representation as well as the fair and equitable treatment by management. I have yet to read a contract where there are articles that allow union busting or intimidating employees into not joining the union.

There's more than a little irony in the recycled supervisor that puts the wellbe-

ing of the workforce in the hands of a supervisor that has been shuffled from pillar to post looking for a fit for him. Amazing. But if you see these supervisors promoted under the friends and family plan on a promotion board rest assured they are cultivating the next generation of union busters and inept supervisors.

There is significant anecdotal evidence of the friends and family supervisors' adverse impact on the lag in production. There are various types of behavior in the workplace such as incivility, harassing employees, abusive overreaching. These supervisors have been empirically associated with a variety of effects, including fear of redressing an appraisal, which violates established guidelines.

The uncivil behavior of these supervisors are well chronicled and how they have refined the skill of shaming (the exercise of humiliation), sarcasm, potshots, or pointing with the

intent of reducing another's self-worth, passive hostility (the use of passive-aggressive behavior) with the intent of their continued assault on decreasing union membership. Attempting to ascertain the impact on both employees and membership continues to present challenges to the growth of the local.

Make no mistake, however. There is strength in numbers, and you should understand we have the numbers to make a difference.

The concept behind labor unions is straightforward: If you are, an employee here on Robins AFB, make no mistake, you will find your way through the doors of Local 987. Let not the friend and family supervisor deter you from being a member. There is safety in numbers. The only way to beat these union-busting supervisors at their own game is to not let them deter you from joining your local.

AFGE online training for June

Special to The Union Advocate

AFGE is offering the following online training opportunities for June:
NOW Bargaining Basics
 June 14, 1-5 p.m.
 Synopsis: This introduc-

tory webinar is aimed at members who are likely to be involved in the collective bargaining process at their local or council. Instructors/attendees will discuss 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.

Stewards Online Orientation

June 17
 To sign up visit afge.org.

- LIVE ASSISTANCE**
General information, directory assistance and technical support for VA.gov
- VA HEALTH CARE**
Eligibility, enrollment, locations and COVID-19
- COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE**
MISSION Act eligibility, copayments
- NATIONAL CEMETERIES**
Burial benefits, interment scheduling and headstone/Veteran marker
- VETERANS CRISIS LINE**
Immediate connection to caring, qualified responders
- DEBT MANAGEMENT**
Debt details, payment options and debtor rights
- FACILITY LOCATOR**
Locations of medical centers, benefits offices or cemeteries
- BENEFITS ASSISTANCE**
Information about a variety of VA benefits
- HOMELESS VETERANS LINE**
Information and support for homeless and at-risk callers
- COVID-19 INFORMATION**
Frequently asked questions and live assistance for COVID-related questions



AFGE members are our strength. They are the union, and everything we hope to achieve depends on growing and empowering our membership. The good news is, momentum is now on our side. The next four years will be crucial to our union and our workplace rights. AFGE has developed a new organizing initiative that focuses on our collective power and activism where every member is empowered to fight back and fight for our rights. Our immediate goal is to add 1,500 additional new members per month.

What does Organizing for Power mean?

- Organizing for Power means a union built from the GRASSROOTS, a network of members connected through their work on the issues they care about.
- Organizing for Power means identifying local leaders, having 1 on 1 conversations with members and potential members, and working on the issues important to them.
- Organizing for Power means developing engaged members, helping those members create stronger locals, and building a more powerful, effective union at every level.

Success comes from collective power of committed and engaged unionists who participate and engage in exercising their power through collective action. NOW is the time to organize for power!

Visit www.afge.org/NOW for details on AFGE's new organizing strategy

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8		4		1					7
	2								8
7				6		3			1
	9					7			
			8		4	1			9
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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

THEME: SPACE

- ACROSS
- Not slouching
 - However, poetically
 - "Poor me!"
 - Yo-Yo's instrument
 - Read-only storage
 - Clear the chalkboard
 - Macho one
 - Gobbled up
 - Prepare for winter takeoff
 - *"2001: A Space"
 - *First man in space
 - Rocketman's title
 - Green gemstone
 - Middle-earth creature
 - Dharma teacher
 - *Like space
 - Actress Gilbert
 - Heartburn relief
 - Parent, to a child
 - All over again
 - Pertaining to Os
 - Rani's dress
 - Great reviews
 - 1,000 grams
 - Moon pull
 - *NASA's human spaceflight program
 - Major European river
 - Huxley's choice
 - Bookie's quote
 - Two halves
 - *Robotic space explorer
 - *Kennedy Space Center location
 - Pleasant smell
 - Be indisposed
 - "___ death do us part"
 - Manicurist's office
 - Court
 - Underwater breathing organs
 - Benevolent fellows

- DOWN
- Acoustic phenomenon
 - Lou of The Velvet Underground
 - Abounding with elms
 - Teacher's audience
 - Throat lymph node
 - Carhop's carrier
 - *Like Venus
 - * ___ Centauri or ___ Nebula
 - * ___ 51
 - Bear's den
 - Fungal spore sacs
 - "As ___ on TV"
 - Push one's way into
 - One of the Muses
 - Internet pop-ups
 - Comfy nightwear
 - City in Japan
 - Piled up, as in debt
 - Words to live by
 - *Falcon Heavy entrepreneur
 - *Kind of frontier?
 - 21st century letter
 - Smart candy?
 - ___-and-true
 - Military no-show
 - Place for a house plant
 - Business-oriented programming language
 - *"For the Benefit of All," e.g.
 - "___ to Joy"
 - As much as necessary
 - A southern ___
 - Bert's partner
 - Bud holder
 - Instead of written
 - Part of an egg
 - Singer-songwriter Tori
 - Use a cat o' nine tails
 - It will
 - Popular pickling herb
 - Additionally
 - Promise to pay

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I intend to live forever ... or die trying.

I used to be in a band, we were called 'lost dog'. You probably saw our posters.

Vegetables - Word Search

Be cool as a cucumber to find all the vegetables hidden in the grid. The words in this word search are hidden across, down, and diagonally, with backwards.

T	Y	G	T	C	E	O	D	O	I	I	Y	O	E	O	Y	T	T	F	O
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D	Y	C	T	O	R	R	A	C	G	T	F	T	O	S	P	H	A	E	E
E	U	N	B	M	T	N	S	E	L	I	W	N	I	S	H	U	S	S	
T	B	C	E	E	A	T	O	T	O	L	S	C	N	E	G	N	L	H	E
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U	H	M	L	T	H	E	S	I	O	E	U	R	G	E	A	F	T	U	
O	V	B	E	A	H	E	N	M	I	T	M	R	Y	T	L	C	L	A	Y
T	I	E	W	S	I	R	I	P	Y	E	E	L	G	O	A	I	O	T	E
E	E	R	O	I	E	A	K	T	S	L	Y	D	N	M	K	T	W	O	K
T	T	T	H	T	C	R	P	S	N	H	O	U	D	A	A	O	E	P	O
B	B	L	M	E	U	K	M	D	U	A	T	I	E	T	R	N	R	T	D
A	K	T	H	H	T	O	U	U	D	G	L	G	O	O	T	I	I	E	E
S	O	B	O	R	T	S	P	E	H	O	A	P	O	E	K	O	R	E	E
N	Y	U	G	K	E	R	D	R	C	B	I	R	G	S	Y	N	I	W	O
A	N	O	D	N	L	T	I	C	B	T	S	E	A	G	I	A	R	S	A
E	O	I	C	S	W	Z	O	A	H	P	R	E	S	P	E	H	O	E	
B	I	U	N	C	N	R	O	C	H	O	P	D	R	B	S	O	E	M	C
C	I	C	T	N	B	R	B	S	E	O	U	D	A	H	K	A	R	T	A
L	M	A	P	U	E	H	L	S	O	H	S	I	D	A	R	R	I	H	E

- ASPARAGUS
- BEANS
- BEEF
- BROCCOLI
- CABBAGE
- CARROT
- CALIFLOWER
- CELERY
- CORN
- CUCUMBER
- EGGPLANT
- GREENPEPPER
- KALE
- LETTUCE
- OKRA
- ONION
- PEAS
- POTATO
- PUMPKINS
- RADISH
- SPINACH
- SWEETPOTATO
- TOMATOES
- TURNIPS

A little humor ...

A man is driving down the road and breaks down near a monastery. He goes to the monastery, knocks on the door, and says, "My car broke down. Do you think I could stay the night?" The monks graciously accept him, feed him dinner, even fix his car. As the man tries to fall asleep, he hears a strange sound.

The next morning, he asks the monks what the sound was, but they say, "We can't

tell you. You're not a monk." The man is disappointed but thanks them anyway and goes about his merry way.

Some years later, the same man breaks down in front of the same monastery. The monks accept him, feed him, even fix his car. That night, he hears the same strange noise that he had heard years earlier.

The next morning, he asks what it is, but the monks reply,

"We can't tell you. You're not a monk." The man says, "All right, all right. I'm dying to know. If the only way I can find out what that sound was is to become a monk, how do I become a monk?"

The monks reply, "You must travel the earth and tell us how many blades of grass there are and the exact number of pebbles. When you find these numbers, you will become a

monk." The man sets about his task. Forty-five years later, he returns and knocks on the door of the monastery. He says, "I have traveled the earth and have found what you have asked for. There are 145,236,284,232 blades of grass and 231,281,219,999,129,382 pebbles on the earth."

The monks reply, "Congratulations. You are now a monk. We shall now show you the way to the sound."

The monks lead the man to a wooden door, where the head monk says, "The sound is right behind that door."

The man reaches for the knob, but the door is locked. He says, "Real funny. May I have the key?"

The monks give him the key, and he opens the door. Behind the wooden door is another door made of stone. The man demands the key to the stone door. The monks give him the key, and he opens it, only to find a door made of ruby.

He demands another key from the monks, who provide it. Behind that door is another door, this one made of sapphire.

So it went until the man had gone through doors of emerald, silver, topaz, and amethyst.

Finally, the monks say, "This is the last key to the last door." The man is relieved to no end.

He unlocks the door, turns the knob, and behind that door he is amazed to find the source of that strange sound.

But I can't tell you what it is because you're not a monk.

A six-year-old boy walked up to his father one day and

announced, "Daddy, I'd like to get married." His father replied hesitantly, "Sure, son, do you have any special in mind?" "Yes," answered the boy. "I want to marry grandma." "Now wait a minute," said the father. "You don't think I'd let you get married with my mother, do you?" "Why not," the boy asked. "You married mine."



STR8TS

No. 524 Medium

	6	8							
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Previous solution - Tough

9	8		5	4	7	3	2	1	
7	6		4	5	3	2	1		
5	8	7	6		3	2	1		
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3	2		7	8		5	6	4	
4	5	3	1	9	8	6	7		
8	3	4			7		5	6	
6	4	5	3		2	8	9	7	
7	6		2	3		9	8	5	

How to beat Str8ts - Like Sudoku, no single number can repeat in any row or column. But... rows and columns are divided by black squares into compartments. These need to be filled in with numbers that complete a 'straight'. A straight is a set of numbers with no gaps but can be in any order, eg [4,2,3,5]. Clues in black cells remove that number as an option in that row and column, and are not part of any straight. Glance at the solution to see how 'straights' are formed.

You can find more help and strategies at www.str8ts.com along with more puzzles, Apple apps and books.

3 grilling hacks for delicious, plant-based summer menus

(Family Features)
Cooking and entertaining outdoors can bring friends and family back together, but it doesn't have to be complicated. Simple, flavorful recipes can be easy on the home chef yet still tasty and enjoyable for those at the table.

One of the best parts of the season is grilled fare like burgers, hot dogs and fresh vegetables. This year, consider adding a plant-based option to your menu. Made with simple, recognizable ingredients, Lightlife offers vegan, non-GMO options that are made for the grill, like Plant-Based Burgers, Smart Dogs and Italian Smart Sausage. These products can help satisfy the craving for protein and are made with ingredients you can feel good about serving your friends and family.

"Food brings people together, and now more than ever, grilling season and dining al fresco is one of the best ways to do that," said Tommy McDonald, executive chef at Greenleaf Foods. "Think of the grill as an additional seasoning element – a zero-fuss way to add miles of flavor. One of my favorite products is Lightlife's Smart Dogs, which have been reformulated to taste better than ever. Try topping them with a freshly made onion jam or quick-pickled relish."

Consider these tips from McDonald to properly grill

plant-based variations of your favorite meals:

Be mindful of cook times. Plant-based protein products typically taste best when cooked properly, usually over a low, open flame. When you're almost ready to dish them out in recipes like Grilled Pineapple Burgers with Honey Garlic Barbecue Sauce or Avocado Toast Dogs, give them a quick sear. If you're unsure, reference the recommended cook times on the packaging.

Keep it separate. During these seasonal celebrations, there's often some people who want traditional meat and others who crave plant-based options. To satisfy your group, drop a cast-iron skillet on the grill and allow it to heat up. Put your favorite plant-based proteins in the skillet, along with veggies, to keep the grill organized.

Top it off. Don't skimp on the toppings. The next time you're looking to jazz up burgers, sausages or hot dogs, make an easy DIY onion jam to spread on top. While the burgers and dogs are on the grates, prepare some extra coals; once they've burned down a bit, bury foil-wrapped onions in the coals. After the onions are soft and warmed through, pull them out and enjoy a smokey onion jam.

For more simple summer recipes, visit [Lightlife.com/Recipes](https://www.lightlife.com/Recipes).



Grilled Pineapple Burgers with Honey Garlic Barbecue Sauce

Total time: 30 minutes
Serving: 2

2 rings freshly cored pineapple
2 Lightlife Plant-Based Burger patties
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste
2 sesame seed burger buns, lightly toasted
1 cup baby arugula
1/4 cup crispy fried onions
2 tablespoons honey garlic barbecue sauce

Heat grill to medium. Grill pineapple slices 4-5 minutes per side until grill-marked and slightly caramelized. Cut slices in half and set aside. Wipe down grill.

Season burger patties with salt and pepper, to taste. To grill burgers from refrigerator, grill 4-5 minutes per side until evenly browned with internal temperature of 165 F.

To assemble burgers, layer toasted bottom buns with arugula then top each with burger patty and two slices grilled pineapple. Sprinkle with crispy fried onions and drizzle with barbecue sauce. Top each with top bun.



Avocado Toast Dogs

Total time: 15 minutes
Servings: 4

Oil
2 medium avocados
1/2 lemon, juice only
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
4 Lightlife Smart Dogs
4 hot dog buns
1/2 teaspoon everything bagel seasoning
sriracha

Lightly coat grill grates with oil and preheat to medium heat.

In small bowl, mash avocados, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Cover and rest in refrigerator.

Grill dogs 6-7 minutes, turning frequently. While dogs are grilling, lightly toast buns. Spread avocado mixture on one side of toasted buns. Sprinkle each with everything bagel seasoning. Add dogs and drizzle with sriracha.



SERVICE

From page 1

Edmund Jackson Davidson ("JD")
Edwardo "Ed" Aspera, Jr.
Emerson Foote Bronson
Eric Poole, Staff Sgt.
Gerald Lamont Daniels Sr.
Gordon F. Strong
Harry W. Schonau III
J. Wyman Herbert
Jackie Cleghorn
Jacque A. Keefer, Master Sgt. (retired)
James D. (Jimmy) Teuscher (AFGE Local 987 - 8/2006)
James Davidson
James Jeffrey Akin
James P. Brown, Lt. Col.
James Tyler Brown
Janice Borchet
Jason Michael Pinyan
Jean Spivey
Jeff Akin
Jessica Watters (AFGE Local 987 - 12/2008)
John Thomas Mattocks Jr.
Johnene McConnell
Judy Brooks
Karen Jackson Pless
Katherine Price, Master Sgt.
Kenneth Walker
Kenshone Hampton
Larry G. Pugh
Lloyd Bowling
Louis Matos Jr. (retired)
M. Evelyn Kukla
Marion "Shine" Collins
Mark E. Stokes
Matthew Zanders



Merle E. Busselle
Michael Bullard (AFGE Local 987 - 10/2008)
Military Working Dog Teddy V312
Moorie Carraway (AFGE Local 987 - 10/2007)
David W. Mardis, Master Sgt. (retired)
Nicky Lynn McCullough, Lt. Col. (retired)
Percy Skinner
Quintez Nibblett, Staff Sgt.
Raymond Merrill
Richmond T. Register
Robert Emerson
Robert J. Fisher
Ronald O. Neely

Roy L. Edmondson
Russell Jackson
Ryan Walker
Sammy J. Dame
Sean Lynn Oram (AFGE Local 987 - 11/2011)
Terry A. Landreth
Timothy Alan Chapman
Troy Mills (AFGE Local 987 - 5/2020)
Tysen Pullins
Vickie Odoms (AFGE Local 987 - 11/2018)
Victor Eugene Hambrick, Chief Master Sgt. (retired)
Wanda "Gail" Lee
William McKinnon Wildes Sr.
William Rozier