



Runoff election

Dear Union members,
We hope this message finds you well. We are writing to inform you about the upcoming runoff election for AFGE Local 987.

Key details:

Positions to elect: VP At Large and Trustee

Date of election: Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024

Time: Ballot pickup is at 4 p.m.

Location: Ballots will be counted at the AFGE Union Hall located at 1764 Watson Blvd. Only candidates/candidate observers are permitted during the count. The results will be posted after the tally on the glass doors at the Union Hall building and then will be emailed to the membership and posted in the union paper thereafter.

Voting method: The runoff will be a mail ballot election. Ballots will be placed in the mail by True Ballot, Thursday, Aug. 22, 2024 and will go to the last known address on file with the local. Please ensure that your membership information is up to date to avoid any delays. If you gave your updated address to me for the last election process but did not update it with Linda Baxter at Union Hall, you will have to provide me that information again. It is only updated with the Local if you have updated it through her. If you do not receive your ballot reach out to me at 256-458-8127 or afge1987EC24@gmail.com.

In solidarity,
Casie Nation
National Representative
AFGE-AFLCIO

AFGE councils elect, re-elect officers

Local's Marion Williams named Council 214 vice president

By AFGE Leadership

Several AFGE councils held elections during our national convention. Here are the results. Congratulations to the elected officers!

AFGE Council 220, Social Security Administration Field Offices

President- Jessica LaPointe
Executive Vice President- Angela Digeronimo
First Vice President for Labor Relations- Edwin Osorio
Second Vice President for Labor Relations- Amad Ali
Third Vice President for Labor Relations- Mark Rogers
Teleservice Center Vice President- Shonda Johnson
Secretary- Monique Buchanan

AFGE Council 109, Social Security Administration Payment Centers

President- Beverly Parks
Executive Vice President- Cheryl Bellamy-Bonner
First Vice President- Cynthia Marshall Johns
Second Vice President- Yvette Wilson
Treasurer- Bruce Friedman

AFGE Council 215, Social Security Administration Office of Hearing Operations

President- Richard Couture
Executive Vice President- April Lott
Treasurer- Brandon Epps
Secretary- Gregory Senden
Region 6 Regional Vice President- Kimberly Young

AFGE Council 119, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
President- Adam Holly

See COUNCILS, page 3



Membership meeting

Local 987 will have a membership meeting Sept. 19 at 5 p.m. (Doors open at 4 p.m., with refreshments/available.) It will be held at Union Hall, located at 1764 Watson Blvd. (It will also be on Zoom.) As always, membership will be verified before admittance into the meeting. You can make updates to your contact information - address, phone, email - by calling Union Hall at 478-922-5758 or by emailing Linda Baxter at linda@afgelocal987.org or Jeanette McElhaney at jmac@afgelocal987.org.

Pre-Labor Day cookout brings out community, election hopefuls

By **DON MONCRIEF**
Editor, The Union Advocate
don.moncrief@afgelocal987.org

AFGE Local 987 and the Macon Central Labor Council joined forces Aug. 31 for a pre-Labor Day cookout. The event was held at Union Hall and feature food, fellowship, some giveaways and a chance to hear from a number of leaders/politicians, a number of which are running for office and/or re-election.

AFGE Local 987 Treasurer Jeanette McElhaney helped kickstart the event by calling it the “most important election in our lifetime.” She also focused on Project 2025, known as the Presidential Transition Project. Even though former President Donald Trump has distanced himself from it – even disavowed it in some cases, per media reports – those within the Democratic party are not taking him at his word, nor taking the chance.

The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank operated by many of Trump’s current and former allies, is leading the initiative. It, 1,000 pages in length, per



Local 987 Treasurer Jeanette McElhaney takes care of the log-books. (AFGE Local 987 photo Don Moncrief)



Local 987 Executive Vice President Henry Brown listens to one of the speakers. (AFGE Local 987 photo Don Moncrief)



Local 987 President Marion Williams, left, and Steward Curtis McCants fire up the grill. (AFGE Local 987 photo Don Moncrief)

Snores.com – a fact-checking agency/web-site – “gives the executive branch more power, reverses (Joe) Biden-era policies and specifies numerous department-level changes. People across the political spectrum fear such actions are precursors to authoritarianism,” reads the website, “and have voiced concerns over the proposal’s recommendations to reverse protections for LGBTQ+ people, limit abortion access, stop federal efforts to mitigate climate change – and more.”

It’s like this, McElhaney said, “If you want to keep your job, you better read it. If you’re a member of a union you better read it. Because if you don’t, and we by chance don’t do what we’re supposed to do ... Because you know they’re already putting stuff in place to try to ensure that whoever they want to win is going to win. If they don’t want us in there, they’re doing everything in their power to keep us out.

“So, we can sit here ... And when you go to the polls and vote. If you’re voting for the Democratic Party. Don’t just vote for Kamala Harris. Because I’m here to tell you. Kamala Harris by herself can’t do ... If I’m offending you, I apologize. But you need to get the message.

“Back during (Barack) Obama’s day. Do

you know there were a lot of people who went to the polls and only voted for him. And wanted to brag about it. They should have been ashamed to say it. But if you don’t vote for them top to bottom, she will not have the support. She won’t be able to do nothing for you.”

President of the Georgia AFL-CIO Yvonne Brooks spoke following that. She started by saying she wanted to add to what McElhaney’s said. “I’m from St. Louis. I require all of my nieces, nephews, sisters, brothers, cousins, children to join hands with me. Send me where you voted. And if they don’t vote,” somewhat tongue-in-cheek, “don’t talk to me.

“We have these conversations, but requirements from me, and as an elder in the family, I think it’s a good requirement. My mother died at 102 and she voted in every election she could. Even when she was wheelchair she wanted to go to the poll, and I cannot forget the night Barack Obama won. I called her and you would have thought one of her children had won.

“And so we have to have that when they’re young. We have to teach our children what’s right. And it’s not because she’s a black woman. Or that she’s a woman.”

See COOKOUT, page 6



Local 987 Vice President At-Large Sharon Kornegay serves guests. (AFGE Local 987 photo Don Moncrief)

8 takeaways from AFGE’s 43rd National Convention

By AFGE Leadership

The 43rd convention concluded last week in Las Vegas with a message of growth and solidarity, the key components that will help us defeat attacks against working people.

The gathering took place only a few months before the most important election in our lifetime where our values and very existence are on the line. AFGE activists and leaders reaffirmed our commitment to building a better future for government employees.

If you missed AFGE’s 43rd national convention, here are some of the highlights:

1. AFGE President Everett Kelley fired up the crowd,

urging members to stand up against attacks with the power of WE

Kelley reminded members the power they have when they stand together in solidarity. From overturning the previous administration’s anti-worker executive orders to becoming the fastest growing large union in America, AFGE members proved that when we come together, we win.

“Through every challenge we face, one thing remains constant – the power of WE. When we stand together, when we are united, when are pulling in the same direction, when we aren’t distracted, when we aren’t divided, when we are speaking with one voice – we have power,” Kelley told the crowd.

2. Coalition of Black Trade Unionist President Terry Melvin brought the house down as he urged union leaders to think about their members’ interest when voting in November

Terry Melvin has spoken at AFGE gatherings many times, and each time his message resonates with AFGE members, and this convention was no difference. Melvin reminded people that this convention is about our survival and the threat against unions is very real.

“I know some of you voted for 45. But it’s not about you. It’s about AFGE. It’s about your members,” he said. “My point is the future is never given. Nothing is guaranteed. You are the leaders of now. The future of

this country rests in your hands. AFGE, now is the time to lead. Now is the time to stand up for your members. AFGE, you are the leader. AFGE, be the union we know you are. AFGE, be the future we need you to be!”

3. The P word was the talk of the town

Every speaker talked about how bad Project 2025 would be for unions and members. Everyone agreed that the conservatives’ blueprint for the next Republican government threatens the very existence of unions, the civil service, the merit system, democracy, and everything else we value and stand for.

“What’s at stake? Workers’ protections.”

See TAKEAWAYS, page 6



Jacob Lunce, 580th Software Engineering Squadron technical specialist, discusses the new Special Mission Display Processor at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, July 30, 2024, that will function on the C-130J aircraft. The deployed SMPD launched in July 2024 and will enhance avionics capabilities and improve mission situational awareness. (U.S. Air Force photo by Kisha Foster Johnson)

580th SWES - Cutting-edge software empowers warfighters

By KISHA FOSTER JOHNSON
78th Air Base Wing
Public Affairs Office

The Air Force Sustainment Center's 580th Software Engineering Squadron at Robins Air Force Base announced a new milestone for the C-130J, Super Hercules, aircraft.

A new software platform called the Special Mission Display Processor has been launched for this aircraft.

"It's a new capability for the C-130J," said Jacob Lunce, 580th SWES technical specialist. "This software provides an important increase to the government's ability to produce software changes for the C-130 enterprise and assist our industry partner, Lockheed Martin, that are proprietors of the software.

"We are excited about the

initial operational capability of the SMDP," said Lunce. "This massive achievement, which has been in development since 2019, has large implications for the aircraft's software and hardware."

Lunce described the SMDP as a very powerful system. He said it plays a vital role in situational awareness, safety and communication for the aircraft. The software allows the aircraft to communicate with ground troops, and ships in real time via a tactical radio network.

With over 1.2 million flying hours collectively, the C-130J operates in 68 countries and serves the U.S. Air Force, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, NASA and foreign militaries.

The SMPD is deployed on the C-130J to enhance its avionics capabilities. The SMDP provides a large display with color, digital moving maps, and

integration with the multi-mode color radar for mission situational awareness. The SMDP also ensures compatibility with night vision devices, crucial for nighttime operations.

"The SMDP will allow the government to better meet warfighter needs and deliver software at the speed of need, rather than delivering late to need," Lunce said.

"This effort is monumental by proving it's possible for the 580th and Lockheed to work together to benefit the warfighter and increase capacity of the workload for this new platform."

The C-130J is a versatile aircraft that can perform various missions. It can transport troops, cargo, and equipment, conduct aerial refueling, fire-fighting, and special rescue operations.

Have a heart for caregivers

8 tips for volunteers to help themselves

(Family Features) Survivors of heart attacks or strokes may have additional health and personal care needs, often relying on a family member or close friend to help. While caregivers take on a valuable role, they also pay unique physical and emotional tolls.

In fact, a growing body of scientific research shows people who serve as unpaid caregivers may not get the care they need to live longer, healthier lives, according to the American Heart Association, which is celebrating 100 years of lifesaving service.

Caregiving typically involves a range of duties from providing health care services, such as changing bandages and giving medications, to helping with personal needs like bathing, dressing and meal preparation.

Administrative tasks like scheduling medical appointments, filing insurance claims and paying household bills may also be necessary.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 1 in 5 U.S. adults provides some form of regular care or assistance to a family member or friend with a health problem or disability; 58% are women and nearly one-third provide care for at least 20 hours per week.

"The typical caregiver likely has an ever-growing and changing to-do list and most of them probably do not add 'take care of myself' to that list," said American Heart Association volunteer Lisa Kitko, Ph.D., R.N., FAHA, dean of the University of Rochester School of Nursing and vice president of the University of Rochester Medical Center. "While caregiving can be a very rewarding



Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

experience, it can also take a huge physical and mental toll on even the strongest person."

Prioritizing your own physical, mental and emotional health allows you to better help your loved one, Kitko said. Consider her tips for caregivers to care for themselves:

Knowledge is power. Learn everything you can about your loved one's condition.

Set boundaries. Say "no" when it's appropriate, don't dwell on what you can't change and recognize you're trying your best.

Maintain a healthy diet, limit caffeine and get adequate rest.

Stay current with your own medical and dental appointments. Inform your health care provider if you're experiencing any signs of depression.

Find a support system. Share your feelings with someone who wants to listen or understands what you're feeling, like the American Heart Association's online Support Network, which includes a section just for caregivers. Nurture your spiritual life and focus on things you're

grateful for each day.

Make time for yourself and friends. Participate in activities you enjoy, including regular physical activity.

Be prepared for possible medical emergencies. If you're caring for someone at risk for heart attack or stroke, recognize the warning signs and call 9-1-1 if he or she experience any.

Learn Hands-Only CPR; research shows most out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen in the home. Be ready to save a life by calling 9-1-1 and pushing hard and fast in the center of the chest.

"Take care of yourself so you can take care of others," are definitely words to live by for caregivers - everyone tells you that and it certainly makes sense, but it's hard," Kitko said. "There is a lot of stress associated with knowing someone is depending on you ... That is why taking care of yourself really should be the first item on your caregiver checklist."

Learn more about caregiving and cardiovascular disease at heart.org.

'Brushing' scam indicates a serious problem for victims

Free boxloads of merchandise from Amazon or other companies right on your doorstep! What could be bad about getting the Santa treatment all year long?

Plenty! Better Business Bureau warns consumers that this recent scam has a scary downside. You are not the one who hit the jackpot; a scammer is the real winner.

This scam is called brushing, and it has recently been popping up nationwide. Suddenly, boxes of unordered (by the recipient) merchandise from Amazon or other online sellers begin arriving. There is no return address, or sometimes it just appears to come from Amazon or another retailer, and the receiver has yet to learn who ordered the items.

The items are varied. For example, in one case, a humidifier, a hand warmer, a flashlight, a Bluetooth speaker, and a computer vacuum cleaner arrived unordered. Often, the items received are lightweight and inexpensive to ship, such as ping pong balls, face masks, or seeds from China.

Why would such merchandise be sent to you if you didn't request it? The companies, usually foreign, third-party sellers that are sending the items are simply using your address that they discovered online.

They intend to make it appear that you wrote a glowing online review of their merchandise and that you are a verified buyer of that merchandise. They then post a fake, positive review to improve their products' ratings, which means more sales. The payoff is highly profitable from their perspective.

In a recent BBB Scam Tracker Report, one consumer shared, "A mysterious package was delivered to my home from a person I do not know, without me ordering any such package. When I tried to look up the return address, the search returned 'brushing scam' hits."

Why it's bad news for you

The fact that someone could have the items sent to you as if you purchased them indicates that they have some of your personal information, such as your name, address, and, possibly, phone number.

Once the information is online, it could be used for numerous crooked enterprises.

The fake online review angle is only one way they benefit. By using the brushing scam, they also are increasing their sales numbers. After all, they aren't purchasing the items since the payment goes right back to them. Increased sales numbers, even though padded with fake



Kelvin Collins

before the resident gets it.

What can you do?

Notify the retailer. Brushing and fake reviews are against Amazon's policies, so contact Amazon Customer Service if this happens to you and the product appears to come from Amazon. They will investigate and take action against the bad actor. Amazon also takes security seriously and encourages customers to report fraudulent purchases or other security issues.

If the package appears to come through another established business, go directly to their website to get their contact information. If you prefer to contact the business by phone, be cautious about searching for support phone numbers.

Attempt to identify the sender. If you can identify the sender of unordered packages, consider checking for potential false reviews in your name - and ask for the reviews to be removed.

Check your account for recent orders. Some targets of brushing scams can be deluged with unordered packages, creating a serious problem. If this happens, consider whether to refuse package delivery at your home address and temporarily direct items that you did order to a package acceptance service.

Change your account passwords. This may be a sign that personal information has been compromised, and to improve account security, keep a close eye on credit reports and credit card bills.

You are allowed to keep the merchandise. The Federal Trade Commission says you have a legal right to keep unordered merchandise.

Protect your identity. BBB advises to take all necessary precautions to prevent identity theft. Be careful when entering personal information online, and ensure you use a secure site.

Visit BBB.org for more information regarding shipments of unordered merchandise or to report suspicious activities to BBB Scam Tracker.

3 tips to help children stay on top of their homework

(StatePoint) When a new school year begins, most teachers don't wait long before they begin scheduling tests, and assigning loads of homework and reading assignments. Here are three tips for helping kids stay on top of all their coursework:

1. Focus on organization: One of the most valuable life skills a student can develop while in school is time management.

Teach kids how to prioritize assignments with upcoming deadlines and those which are easy to knock off their to-do list.

Encourage them to find an organizational tool, such as an academic planner or calendar, that works for them. Depending on their preferences and learning style, they may prefer to use app-based tools.

The important thing is that they always know what is on their to-do list and when it must be completed by. If they are struggling, help them chunk their afternoon into segments so that they budget enough time for each of their tasks.

2. Equip them with high-quality math tools: Math can be a frustrating sub-



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) Photodjo / iStock via Getty Images Plus

ject for many students. To make learning simpler, equip them with tools that are incredibly easy to use.

With Natural Textbook Display and an intuitive icon menu, the fx-9750GIII graphing calculator from Casio is a solid, affordable choice for quickly grasping new mathematical concepts.

3. Set boundaries: As a parent, it's essential that you support your child in their academic pursuits, however being too hands-on during homework time could lead them to rely on you to provide them with answers,

not guidance.

While this approach may mean they turn their assignments in on time, if they aren't absorbing the material themselves they could quickly fall behind in the classroom.

Set clear boundaries about what your after-school role will be and stick to it. You can also foster your child's independence and confidence by helping them differentiate between reliable educational resources and misinformation.

With the right tools and habits, students can keep up with their assignments and make the most of their study time.

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Please submit articles, photos, etc to don.moncrief@afge-local 987.org. For questions about story content, to pass on story ideas or to request coverage, please contact the aforementioned.

Go Meatless on Mondays to Carry Family Nutrition Into Fall

FAMILY FEATURES

Getting back into a routine during the fall can be a struggle. Consider a schedule that dedicates more nights to long-term wellness with easy, nutritious recipes.

Registered dietitian Alexis Joseph recommends Meatless Mondays, which help her family create fruit- and vegetable-forward dishes with nutrient-dense ingredients. One ingredient to consider is California grown prunes from Sunsweet – a good source of vitamins and minerals that help maintain bone and heart health, keep you feeling full and are an all-natural source of fiber and healthy fat.

“Dedicating time each week to your overall nutrition with ‘Meatless Mondays’ will motivate you to add healthy staples like California grown prunes from Sunsweet to your diet and make getting back into a routine easier,” Joseph said. “It can also yield results. Research suggests eating 5-6 prunes each day may help prevent bone loss and improve risk factors for heart disease and inflammation.”

Consider Joseph’s Cauliflower Tacos with Peanut Sauce or Veggie Stir Fry for your next weeknight meal. Both spotlight California grown prunes as a substitute for unhealthy fats and sugars to reduce calories and increase health benefits without losing flavor.

Find more mealtime inspiration at sunsweet.com.



Photos courtesy of Alexis Joseph

- Cauliflower Tacos with Peanut Sauce**
Cook time: 30 minutes
Servings: 4
- 1 medium head cauliflower, chopped into florets (about 6-7 cups)

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt

8 tortillas


chopped green onions, for garnish

California grown prunes from Sunsweet, for serving

peanuts, for garnish

lime wedges, for serving
- Cabbage Slaw:**
3 cups shredded red cabbage
1/2 cup shredded carrots
1/3 cup cilantro, chopped
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons pure maple syrup
1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt

- Peanut Sauce:**
4 California grown prunes from Sunsweet
1/2 cup unsweetened non-dairy milk
1/3 cup natural salted peanut butter
3 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1/2 tablespoon maple syrup
1/2 tablespoon minced ginger
1 teaspoon sriracha
2 tablespoons water, plus additional for thinning (optional)
- Preheat oven to 425 F.
On large baking sheet, place cauliflower in single layer. Add olive oil and salt; toss well to combine. Roast 30 minutes, tossing halfway through.
To make cabbage slaw: In medium mixing bowl, add cabbage, carrots, cilantro, lime juice, olive oil, maple syrup and salt. Toss to combine; set aside to soften.
To make peanut sauce: In blender, blend prunes, milk, peanut butter, soy sauce, lime juice, maple syrup, ginger, sriracha and water until smooth. Taste and add more water, if desired.
Warm tortillas, fill with roasted cauliflower and top with slaw, peanut sauce, green onions, prunes and peanuts. Serve with lime wedges.



Veggie Stir Fry with Prune Teriyaki Sauce
Cook time: 15 minutes
Servings: 4

1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil

1/2 large onion, diced salt, to taste, divided

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon minced ginger

2 cups shredded carrots

1 red bell pepper, sliced

1 medium zucchini, diced

8 ounces sugar snap peas

pepper, to taste, divided

1/2 cup roasted salted cashews, plus additional for serving, divided

1 cup edamame

2-3 cups cooked jasmine rice, for serving

1/3 cup sliced green onions, for serving

California grown prunes from Sunsweet, for serving

Prune Teriyaki Sauce:
1 cup canned pineapple, plus 1/4 cup pineapple juice
1/4 cup California grown prunes from Sunsweet (about 6 prunes)
6 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 garlic clove
1 teaspoon sriracha

In large skillet over medium heat, warm sesame oil. Once hot, add onion and pinch of salt; saute 5 minutes. Add garlic and ginger; cook 30 seconds, or until fragrant. Add carrots, bell pepper, zucchini, snap peas and pinch of salt and pepper. Saute 10 minutes, stirring often, until veggies are crisp tender.
To make teriyaki sauce: In blender, blend pineapple, pineapple juice, prunes, soy sauce, maple syrup, rice vinegar, garlic and sriracha until smooth.
Remove veggies from heat and stir in 1/2 cup cashews, edamame and teriyaki sauce to coat. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, and serve on bed of rice garnished with green onions, prunes and additional cashews.

TAKEAWAYS

From page 1

“Everything we work hard to protect,” said Nevada AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Susie Martinez.

4. AFGE declared August 13, 2024 Representative Bennie G. Thompson Day

AFGE delegates passed a resolution designating Aug. 13, 2024 Representative Bennie G. Thompson Day in honor of his unwavering support for government workers.

Since the establishment of the House Homeland Security Committee in 2005, Rep. Thompson has served as either chairman or ranking member in every Congress. He has been a tireless advocate for DHS workers, especially those at TSA and has introduced legislation to provide full collective bargaining rights for TSOs since 2009. He was also instrumental in providing a historic 31% raise for TSOs in 2023.

Addressing the AFGE convention, Thompson said we still have other things to do between now and Election Day.

“If you want to go forward, you’ll put your car in D. If you want to go backward, you’ll put your car in R,” he said to the cheering crowd.

5. AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said workers are discovering that unions are a major source of power to fight against the economic injustice

Shuler told a story of a Phoenix airport concessions worker named David Bonilla who represents a new generation of union members. Before joining UNITE HERE, he worked dead-end jobs and felt powerless about his future. After getting the union job at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and becoming a local leader, he threw himself in the contract fight after seeing his coworkers work 60 hours a week but not getting by.

The next thing he knew, he was part of this historic win for airport workers to raise pay to levels they had never had before with better schedules and dignity on the job.

“Something amazing is happening all over this country. Workers are reclaiming their power. Workers are realizing there is a way to fight back. There is a way to come together and win. It happens in a union. It’s better in a union!” Shuler said. “AFGE is proving that every single day.”

She urged each AFGE member to volunteer and recruit at least one person to help mobilize union households to vote for Vice President Kamala Harris and Gov. Tim Walz who are strong supporters of unions.

6. AFGE took a moment of silence in honor of a BOP correctional officer who recently died in the line of duty

Correctional Officer Marc Fischer died after being contaminated with fentanyl in the mail room at the U.S. Penitentiary Atwater as part of his job preventing the drug from coming into the prison. Addressing the AFGE convention, AFGE Council of Prison

Locals President Brandy Moore-White said most people don’t understand how dangerous the officers’ job is and how understaffed the prisons are. She urged AFGE members to help the council reach the goal of sending 30,000 letters to Congress asking for increases of staffing and resources.

7. Union leaders sent in videos greeting AFGE members and stressing the importance of solidarity in the labor movement

NTEU President Doreen Greenwald said she and NTEU members are excited to work with AFGE members to elect a president and vice president that support government workers and the work they do.

AFLCIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond said he looks forward to AFGE members leading the way to elect candidates who put workers first this November.

AFSCME President Lee Saunders said two out of three Americans support unions, and we need to sustain that momentum. “We must stick together

and have each other’s back. Together we rise, united we triumph! I’m excited what our unions can accomplish together.”

8. Nevada members of Congress reaffirmed their support for government workers

Addressing the convention, Rep. Steven Horsford and Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto told AFGE members how they and their work are important to the American people, and they can always count on them for support.

“Working men and working women must have their voices heard when Congress debates policies that will have an impact on your lives. Your input is invaluable, and you will always be able to advocate with the Labor Caucus,” said Rep. Horsford who co-chairs the Congressional Labor Caucus and chairs the Congressional Black Caucus.

“Unions are why we have good health care, good pay, dignity,” said Cortez Masto. “Everybody should have that access.”

COUNCILS

From page 1


Executive Vice President- Michael Knowles
Vice President, Western Region- Rose Saraceno
Vice President, Eastern Region- Nicholas Walsh
Vice President, Central Region- Michael Overman
Secretary-Treasurer- Vicente Lopez
Fair Practices Coordinator- Jency Rodriguez
Women’s Coordinator- Shari Merlano

AFGE Council 214, Air Force Material Command
President- Troy Tingey
Vice President- Marion Williams

Secretary-Treasurer- Pamela McGinnis
AFGE Council 241, Census
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Women’s and Fair Practices Coordinator- Jodi Rutland

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Vice-President, Midwest- Magnus Jean-Baptiste
Vice-President, Western/Pacific- Silvestre Chaco
AFGE Council 263, NVAC
President- Elizabeth Turner-Nichols
Vice President- Gabriel Lopez
Treasurer- Sona Anderson
Secretary- Luz Fuller
AFGE Council 100, Transportation Security Administration
President- Hydrick Thomas
Executive Vice President- Mac Johnson
Secretary-Treasurer- Johnny Jones
Region 1 Vice President- Carlos Rodriguez
Region 2 Vice President- John H. Hubert
Region 3 Vice President- Janis Casey


Region 4 Vice President- Becky Mancha
Region 5 Vice President- Duncan McGuire
Region 6 Vice President-Bobby Orozco, Jr.
Region 7 Vice President- Joe Shuker
Council 120, U.S. Coast Guard
President: Lydell King
Executive Vice President: Angela Hicks
Secretary-Treasurer: Latrice Smith
Council 243, Navy Southeast
President: Brandon Hertzog
Vice President - CNRSE: Mark McCabe
Secretary-Treasurer: Michael Barrow
Fair Practices Coordinator: Gil Pastrana
AFGE Council 240, U.S. Marine Corps
President- Kelly Keating
Executive Vice President- Donald Topliff



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)





Combatting Loneliness in Older Adults

FAMILY FEATURES

The bonds found in friendships and other relationships are an important factor in health and wellness – even science says so.

According to the American Psychological Association, forming and maintaining social connections at any age is one of the most reliable predictors of a healthy, happy and long life. Studies show having strong and supportive friendships can fend off depression and anxiety, lower blood pressure and heart rates in stressful situations and change the way people perceive daunting tasks.

However, statistics show approximately half of U.S. adults lack companionship and feel socially disconnected, according to the U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community. In fact, 12% don’t have anyone they consider a close friend, per the Survey Center on American Life. This “epidemic of loneliness,” as coined by U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, can take a severe toll on mental and physical health.

As people age, the risks of isolation increase. With America’s older population growing rapidly – the 65 and older population reached more than 55 million in 2020 – discussing how older adults can combat loneliness is relevant to public health and individual well-being.

Consider volunteering, which is one of the best and most rewarding ways to combat loneliness.

Volunteering Combats Loneliness

People often volunteer to find a sense of purpose, learn new skills, improve their



communities or establish new routines after retiring or becoming empty nesters. For many, making friends through volunteer work is a welcome bonus. The act of volunteering provides proven benefits for older adults.

Forming connections can make all the difference in a person’s volunteer experience and sense of well-being. People who meet through volunteer work inherently share a

common interest and something to bond over. These friendships can carry over outside of volunteer work and lead to bonding over other hobbies and interests.

Connection-Focused Volunteer Opportunities

In addition to making friends with fellow volunteers, many older adults also form

relationships with the people they’re serving, especially if those recipients are their peers.

For example, AmeriCorps Seniors is the national service and volunteerism program in the federal agency of AmeriCorps that connects adults aged 55 and up to local service opportunities that match their interests. Its Senior Companion Program pairs volunteers with other older adults or those with disabilities who need companionship or assistance. Volunteers may help with tasks such as paying bills, shopping or getting companions to appointments. In some cases, volunteers may also provide support and respite for family members caring for loved ones with chronic illnesses.

“We often think of volunteering as ‘giving back,’ but we’ve seen firsthand that it often becomes so much more than that,” said Atalaya Sergi, director of AmeriCorps Seniors. “By spending a few hours each week with another older adult in need of support, our volunteers are not only giving back to others, but they’re adding meaning to their own lives and establishing new connections. They’re helping to fight the loneliness epidemic one visit at a time.”

Growing older can come with challenges, but some of those can be minimized with a positive mindset and commitment to remaining connected and engaged – whether with friends, relatives or fellow community members. Fostering relationships is a key ingredient to a healthier and more fulfilling life.

For more information and to find volunteer opportunities near you, visit [AmeriCorps.gov/YourMoment](https://www.AmeriCorps.gov/YourMoment).

Meet Friends Who Connected Through Service

Ray Maestas felt unfulfilled post-retirement and began volunteering with the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program. He was connected with Bob Finnerty, a man with blindness looking for assistance a few days each week. They quickly struck up a routine of errands, reading and conversation that’s since become a friendship they both cherish.

“The Senior Companion Program has provided an avenue to enrich the lives of not only the participants but the people who are volunteering,” Maestas said. “Bob and I have gotten to the point where he’s a very important part of my life.”

Finnerty echoed those sentiments and shared his own appreciation for Maestas’ friendship. “I’ve always relished my independence and I feel Ray is not just a person who reads for me – he’s a friend,” Finnerty said.

In the last few years, Maestas moved and now serves with a different chapter of the Senior Companion Program. He and Finnerty keep in touch. Maestas said they talk about every third day.



Bob Finnerty and Ray Maestas

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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.

Why can pirates not finish the alphabet?
Because they're always stuck on C.

AUGUST	BARBARQUE	BATHING SUIT
BEACH BALLS	BEACHES	HOT
ICE CREAM	JULY	JUNE
LEMONADE	POOL	POPCICLES
SAND	SANDALS	SHORTS
SUNBURN	SUNGLASSES	SUNSCREEN
SURFING	TAN	TEA
UMBRELLAS	WARM	WATERMELON



Why would Snow White make a great judge? Because she is the fairest of them all.

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.



Local 987 Vice President of Maintenance James Watson looks on during the event. (AFGE Local 987 photos/Don Moncrief)

COOKOUT

From page 1

“Or that she’s a Democrat. It’s about what is the right thing to do. What is right for working people. ‘Well, the Georgia AFL-CIO, unions are just Democrats.’ No. We are for the ones who vote for us. People who do the right thing for us. And if we

don’t have people who are for us ... If you are privy to the veterans that have been made in this state over the last four years, then you understand why it’s important. “And not just the investment, but what the stipulations are. Stipulations are that unions should be involved and communities should be involved. And we all live in this community

and all of the union folks live in this community, so take that with you and welcome, welcome, welcome.”

Congressman Sanford Bishop, who is up for re-election – with a number of political candidates, as mentioned earlier, speaking before – took the floor near the end.

“It’s important,” he said after a short introduction. “It’s really important. We (he and his wife) just got back from Chicago. Everybody. Everywhere in this country and abroad is fired up. With energy. The energy was like electricity in Chicago and it was all over the country.

“It is there. And it’s not a flicker or a spark. It’s burning. And it’s burning deep and I’m just happy to be here with folks who are keeping the fire going.

He continued: “Politics is nothing more, nothing less, than who gets what, when and how. And it’s elected officials about who gets what, when and how. And so whether it’s on the local level. Or whether it’s on the state level. Whether it’s on the national level with the Congress and Senate, or whether it’s in the White House. Those are the folks who makes those decision of who gets what, when and how. And that’s what affects our everyday life.”

Bishop also agreed it with it being the “most important election of our lifetime.” He went on to speak in length about the dangers of Project 2025.



President of the Georgia AFL-CIO Yvonne Brooks speaks to those in attendance.

Transitioning, he said, “The way it plays out in our political system, there are some who want to have that for some, but not for others. There are those who want to have it for the wealthy, not for the middle class. There are those who believe the government should work for their self-interests.

“Democrats deliver for the people. ‘All’ the people. Not just some of the people, all of the people. Doesn’t matter where you live, whether a rural community or an urban community. Whether military or civilian. Whether male or female, black, white. Wherever you are. Democrats support you. Support the opportunity for everyone to realize their full potential.”

Bishop said he was not going to go through the whole litany of what had been accomplished. “But you know where we’ve come,” he said. He also said there were those who wanted to go back to the “good old days. Well, four years ago our economy was shut down. A million people had Covid. Schools were closed. Our grocery stores. Shelves were empty. That’s what the Biden-Harris administration inherited. We had to beat them back. To get folks in. And thanks to AFGE and all of the unions and all of the people in Georgia who came out. They worked so hard. We were able to get two senators. And we were able to get Kamala and Joe Biden.

“When they got in they spent their first year cleaning up his mess.” He went on to detail what he said had been done. For instance: The American Rescue Plan. “Shots in arms.” Help for every citizen, every entity, local, state government. Schools. Colleges. Jobs. Stimulus checks.

Et cetera.

“You know. The United States of America was the fastest to come back from all of the country’s that suffered.”

He continued on with his detailed list – roads, bridges, infrastructure, etc, before saying: “We can’t go back. We can’t afford to go back. We’re here every today, and we’re here to make sure we don’t go back.

What we want to do is go forward,” he said, mapping out what that meant – lower health-care costs, more jobs, a better economy, for example.

“Let’s get down to it. We were in a hole, but we had folks who came and they lifted us. But we’ve got folks now who want us to go back ... We ain’t going back. We are not going back. We are going forward.”



Richard Hollar, IMAW and President of the Central Georgia Labor Council, left, gives a few words to the audience. At his left is Andrew Bennett, S/T District 243, IMAW. At front are Barbara Whitehead, APRI and Leanne Bennett.



Congressman Sanford Bishop speaks to those in attendance.



Jackie Harris, Voter Registration Ambassador for Georgia (back row in orange), Vivian Bishop, Congressman Sanford Bishop's wife (back row in white), Vice President of AFGE Local 0554 (in yellow), AFGE Local 2316's Cynthia Stubbs (next to her in glasses) and others listen to the speakers.



Yolanda Pickstock, in her new position as Deputy Director of "We Vote. We Win" speaks.



Anissa Jones, House District 143 representative speaks.



Candidate for House District 145 Tangie Herring talks about what she would like to do if elected in the position.



Johnathan Mungo, who replaced Pickstock as AFGE District 5 Legislative/Political Organizer, talks to those in attendance.