



The Force

Awarded First Place, National NTEU Newsletter Competition



A publication of NTEU, Chapter 73

Oct / Nov 2006

LIENS CASE PROCESSING GETS TO ENJOY LABOR RECOGNITION

Thanks to NTEU Chapter 73's president Jackie Huff, case processing employees that were told they could not have the fifty nine minutes they were entitled to take for labor recognition week finally got to take their fifty- nine minutes and they were also treated to pizza , potato chips and soft drinks, at management's expense.

Labor recognition is for every employee, NTEU always adds to it by fixing hot dogs, brats and metts for the Union members to show their appreciation for the employee's that are members, however you do not have to be a member to take the fifty-nine minutes of administrative time.

Page 5 of this months Force lists all approved administrative time for your information.



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Jackie Huff, NTEU 73 President



What a big success NTEU Chapter 73 annual Labor Recognition Grill Out was this year. I think the turn out was good. I hope our members enjoyed the light lunch served by stewards and members who volunteered some of their time to do this. I want to say thanks to all the new members who signed up in time to take an extra-added benefit with getting a lunch. Our current membership is at 71.9%. Your Chapter wishes to say thanks to all that donated to the Charity Foundation at the Labor Recognition grill out in September. NTEU Chapter 73 will be raffling off a 27" inch TV again this year. We will also be selling bags of chips at a suggested price of 25 cents a bag. All proceeds will go to the Charity Foundation. This foundation helps our fellow employees who meet the criteria in a time of need.

While working at the tables during swing shift Labor Recognition grill out I was approached by a concerned union member that ask why NTEU does not have management enforce the smoking areas rules particularly GWCW 2nd floor garage by the entrance way doors. I would like to remind every employee that it is not NTEU Chapter 73 intentions to go to management and talk about having employee disciplined. We have to represent these employees when management chooses to discipline the BU employees. I have not only seen BU employees in the spot mentioned by this person but managers as well. When he was speaking to me on this subject, I could not legitimately argue against what he was saying since I have seen and done this myself maybe not necessarily at that door but I have. He was right. Although I am a smoker and have stood up for certain rights we smokers still have while on government leased property when we smoke, I am required as all employees to follow all local rules of the IRS. We must all remember that non-smokers who prefer not to go to the designated smoking areas to be around smoke should not have to walk through an entrance while coming or leaving work. Especially when it is not one of the smoking areas. We should remember this and out of respect and adherence to our local rules choose not to smoke standing by any entrance door going into the building. I myself will remember not to do this. I hope all of you will as well.

Breaking News

NTEU Chicago Field Office

Eric Bruce, Chapter 73's Field Representative and attorney, informed the Chapter that the arbitration of the Incentive Pay Grievance has been scheduled for January 23, 2007. The outcome of this arbitration hearing will impact hundreds of IRS employees.

Wanted

An experienced webmaster to help maintain Chapter 73's web site. This is a volunteer position with no monetary compensation. If you are interested contact the Union Office at (859) 669-5700 or (859) 669-5370.

The Force

“NTEU73’s Hard Hitting Newsletter”

President: Jacqueline S. Huff
Vice President: Eric Johns
Secretary: Julia Wiley
Treasurer: Cathy Dunhoft
Director of Communications: Sandy Hauser
Photographer: Michael Murphy
Website Design: Ethan Gilbert

NTEU73
P.O. Box 12389
Covington, KY 41011
Phone : (859) 669-5370
Fax: (859) 669-5307

Website Address: NTEU73.org
Email: NTEU73mailbox@aol.com

“To Organize Federal Employees To Work Together To Ensure That Every Federal Employee Is Treated With Dignity and Respect.”

NTEU Files Grievance Over Awards

In a memo to Chapter Presidents Colleen Kelley informed the Chapters that she has filed an institutional grievance as the IRS has fail again to honor the terms of the National Awards Agreement. In the grievance filed NTEU has found eight violations. The violations cited were: under-funding of the National Performance Awards program, incorrect calculation of the awards due to incorrect application of formula, improper configuration of some awards pools, failure to pay employees who were properly due awards, improper calculation of participation rates in some pools, late payment of certain awards thus entitling affected employees to interest on overdue awards, charging the awards funds for payments that should have been deducted from prior years and improper payment of time-off awards and Quality Step Increase substitute awards. The Union is seeking to make the affected employees whole by having IRS immediately disbursing retroactive payments for the corrected amounts plus interest. Any local issues not covered by this grievance may be filed at the local level. Local Chapter officials are monitoring this issue.

Meet The Executive Board



Thomascina Braswell was elected to the executive board. She has worked with the Internal Revenue Service for twenty-four years; fifteen years have been as an NTEU Steward. Her expertise is in the training of how to handle grievances.

She is a member of the negotiations team that deals with local agreements. She has handled many cases all over the campus. Congrats to Thomascina for being elected to the Executive Board again.

Keep up the good work!

[Thomascina Braswell, Executive Board](#)

Ed Burton has twenty six years experience with the Internal Revenue Service. He has worked as the Fourth Street NTEU Office Manager for four years.

He sits on the Diversity & Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee. He serves on the Service Center Council, Security Enhancement team and served as the Lead Safety Inspector for the Fourth Street Center.

Congrats to Ed on being elected to the Executive Board.



[Edward Burton, Executive Board](#)



Dwight Cornett has worked for the Internal Revenue Service for twenty two years. He has been a Steward for four years.

Dwight was selected as Employee of the year in 1993 and again in 2006.

As a Steward he received a Silver Service Award in 2004 and again in 2005.

Congrats Dwight for being elected to the Executive Board.

[Dwight Cornett, Executive Board](#)



Know Your Rights:



New Sick Leave Regulations for family care apply October 1, 2006

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued new regulations regarding sick leave for family care (5 CFR Part 630). These regulations apply as of October 1, 2006, and are part of OPM's effort to standardize leave policies government-wide. The revised regulations will assist employees in balancing work and family responsibilities and needs.

The most significant regulatory changes:

A minimum sick leave balance is no longer required for an employee to use up to 104 hours (13 work days) of sick leave per calendar leave year –

- To care for a family member who is incapacitated by a medical or mental condition;
- For general (routine) family care such as medical, dental, or optical examinations or treatment; or,
- Make arrangements necessitated by the death of a family member or attend the funeral of a family member.
- Routine medical care includes an employee who takes his/her child to the doctor for a vaccination or who stays at home to care for a child with the flu.

Establishment of a Government-wide policy on the time limit for the receipt of medical documentation supporting an employee's need for sick leave. An employee is required to provide administratively acceptable evidence or medical documentation for the use of sick leave upon a manager's request for sick leave in excess of 3 work days or a lesser amount if deemed necessary. The employee must submit the requested information within 15 calendar days from the date the manager requests the documentation. If that is not practical, despite the employee's diligent efforts, the employee must provide the documentation within a reasonable period of time, but no later than 30 calendar days after the date the manager requests documentation. An employee who does not provide the required evidence or medical certification within the specified time period is not entitled to sick leave. As an untimely submission of medical documentation/certification may be the basis for denying requested sick leave, recordation of the date the evidence or certification is requested, the date the documentation is due, and the date received is recommended. This change ensures all employees are treated equitably and aids in establishing standardized Government-wide pay and leave policies.

IRS Procedures

Employees requesting sick leave should indicate when it is for general family care or to make arrangements or attend the funeral of a family member.

Managers will remind employees to use the appropriate sick leave SETR codes of for general family care and sick leave to provide care for a family member with a serious health condition (990-59528) or bereavement purposes (990-59527) on SETR timesheets.

Employees granted sick leave for family care purposes, will charge the time on their SETR timesheets as follows:

990-59527 Sick leave used to make arrangements necessitated by the death of a family member or attend the funeral of a family member.

990-59528 Sick leave used to care for a family member who is incapacitated by a medical or mental condition or to attend to a family member receiving medical, dental or optical examinations or treatment.

When deemed necessary, managers may request administratively acceptable evidence or medical documentation as to the reason for an absence in excess of 3 workdays. Managers will document all requests for medical documentation or certification along with the due date as an untimely submission may be the basis for denying requested sick leave.

The complete details concerning the proposed regulations, comments and final regulations (including other leave related provisions) are posted in the Federal Register.

CIRSC Activities and Approved Administrative Time

ACTIVITY	COMMITTEE	DATE	ADMIN TIME
Asian/Pacific Amer. Heritage	Special Emphasis	May	Up to 59 minutes
Black History Month	Special Emphasis	February	Up to 59 minutes
Blood Drive	Labor Relations	February, Septem-	Up to 4 hours (NTEU con-
Career Fair	Business Unit	Anytime	30 minutes, plus travel
Charities Food Drive	Campus Committee	March/April	None
Christmas Family	Campus Committee	December	None
CIRSC Employee of Year	SBSE Communications	January	Up to 59 minutes
Combined Federal Campaign	Campus Committee	September - Octo-	Mgr's discretion (canvassers)
Community Care Day	Campus Committee	September	Mgr's discretion (canvassers)
Disability Employment & Aware	Special Emphasis	October	Up to 59 minutes
Diversity Day	EEOB	June	Up to 59 minutes
Employee Appreciation	Campus Committee	Annually	30 minutes
Financial Counseling	Per Contract	Per calendar year	*** See note below***
Flu Shots	Federal Occupational Health -	Nov, Dec	Up to 59 minutes (Health
Great American Clean-Up	Campus Committee	April	None
Health Assessments	Federal Occupational Health -	September	29 minutes
FEHB Health Fair	Labor Relations	September	30 minutes
Health Insurance Fair	Per Contract	November	*** See note below***
Reviewing Health Benefits	Per Contract	Per calendar year	*** See note below***
Hispanic Heritage Month	Special Emphasis	September - Octo-	Up to 59 minutes
Holiday Luncheon		December	59 minutes
Labor Recognition Week	NTEU	September - Octo-	59 minutes
Life Insurance	Campus Committee	April - June	None
Mammogram Exams	Federal Occupational Health -	May - June	None
Martin Luther King, Jr.	Special Emphasis	January	Up to 59 minutes
Native/American Heritage	Special Emphasis	November	Up to 59 minutes
Oklahoma Remembrance	Campus Committee	April	Moment of Silence
Administrative Professionals	Campus Committee	April	59 minutes - Mgr's discretion
Retirement Seminars		Random	8 hours
Retirement Counseling	Per Contract	Per calendar year	*** See note below***
Savings Bond Campaign	Campus Committee	Any time	None
Federal Service Excellence	Federal Executive Board	April	59 minutes (for Nominee)
Team Spirit Day	Campus Committee	March - April	None
Thrift Savings Plan	Campus Committee	April - June , No-	None
Veteran's Day	Campus Committee	November	None
Women's Equality Day	Special Emphasis	August	None
Women's History Month	Special Emphasis	March	Up to 59 minutes
9-11 Remembrance	Campus Committee	September	Moment of Silence

Note: Per the contract, if workload permits, employee may choose from the four *** activities above and attend as many as they want provided they do not exceed the four hours total time provided per year.

CIRSC Management Denies NTEU Involvement In Inclement Weather Committee

By Eric Johns, NTEU73 Vice President

NTEU was recently informed by CSPC Director Sue Hansen that NTEU73 would not be invited this year to attend meetings of the campus Inclement Weather Committee. This committee is charged with reviewing the many applications for administrative leave filed by CIRSC employees when poor weather conditions and the like keep them from arriving to work on time or, in some instances, at all.

Acting in her role as the Senior Commissioner's Representative for the CIRSC Campus, Ms. Hansen told NTEU73 leaders at an information sharing meeting that it was the determination of management that since there is no partnership agreement at the national level between NTEU and the IRS, their instructions were clear that NTEU would be offered no pre-decisional involvement. As NTEU leaders have an equal vote with management officials as to what requests for administrative time the Inclement Weather Committee approves and how much time the applicant receives, management believes this to be a pre-decisional discussion with NTEU they are not legally required to have.

While it may be true that management does have the choice on whether or not to invite NTEU to the table for these discussions, it is a clear instance of management once again cutting off its nose to spite its face that it has chosen the most cumbersome and wasteful way to handle this issue. Employees retain the contractual right to request administrative time when they are blocked in their attempts to come to work due to bad weather. This is explained in great detail in Article 36 of the National Agreement. Although the National Agreement expired in June, 2006, the contents of this article are not considered "permissive" and must remain status quo until a new National Agreement is signed and ratified.

All management has really accomplished here is creating several potential new grievances they will be forced to hear. Now, instead of managers and NTEU leaders meeting informally to discuss the merits of each employee's request for administrative leave, management can rule however it sees fit and the employee must come to NTEU to file a formal grievance if they disagree with management's decision. We at NTEU fail to see how it is in any way more efficient to do things in a way that cause so many more overhead hours for everyone involved. But, if that is the way they want to do business, we have no choice but to take things through the process in the way they wish to dictate.

So that all bargaining employees are clear on this, if any BU employee cannot get to work or is late to work because of poor weather conditions, NTEU strongly encourages you to request administrative time for that absence rather than charging that absence to your own leave balances. A key component as to whether a request will be approved is if the employee continued to make attempts to get to work. **Continued on Page 7**

Don't forget, your income is important, protect it!

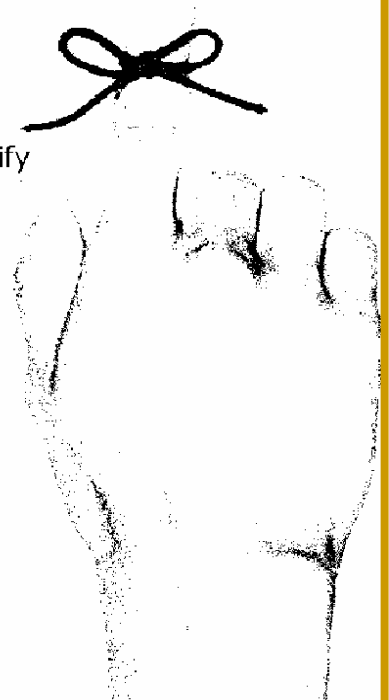
Don't miss out on our new income protection plan during open enrollment
Enrolling now, you can qualify for:

- Up to 60% of your income - Max. \$2,000 monthly.
- Choose a plan that will pay benefits up to 24 months.
- Starts after 14 days of disability, (First day if hospitalized).
- Does not offset for other benefits.
- Pays 50% of the benefit if hurt on the job, in addition to workers compensation.

**Guarantee Issue if actively at work full-time.
With NO medical examination or health questions.**

Schedule a meeting at the NTEU 73 office by calling:

(513) 842-0705



CIRSC Management Denies NTEU Involvement In Inclement Weather Committee Continued from Page 6

For example, if an employee's tour of duty starts at 6:00 AM and they state on a buck slip or request for administrative leave form that they gave up trying to get to work at 8:00AM they would only be eligible for two hours of administrative leave. Employees need to familiarize themselves with Article 36 of the National Agreement before making their request for administrative leave. When in doubt, we suggest contacting the union office for advice and guidance.

Any employee whose request for administrative time for inclement weather purposes is denied has the right to file a grievance requesting reconsideration of management's position. We at NTEU suspect we will be very busy with these this winter.

BRAVO goes to Michael T. Hopkins:

For all your hard work daily and for the help you gave to Teresa L Alexander and her Team as she stated below in her letter which we have copied with her permission: "On behalf of Entity, Team 308 and myself, we just want to say thank you!! We have had NTEU present at many of our meetings in the past 2 1/2 years regarding these same issues and were always promised they'd do this and that, only to never hear from them again. You said you would send out this email and you did exactly what you said. For that we are very grateful. Should any of these issues be addressed in the future, we would love to have you present along with any other NTEU representative. Again, thank you Mike.

Jackie Huff's response to this email : "Thank you so much for letting me know what a great job Mike has done for your team. I am very proud and honored to have him as part of NTEU staff. I would be lost with out the swing shift stewards and staff. "Way to go Mike".

BRAVO's go to Tina D. Wentz and Linda Joiner also for all the hard work they do daily.

Tina D. Wentz is acting Chief Steward and she handles many cases daily along with the training of the swing shift stewards. Bravo Tina!

Linda Joiner another swing shift steward helps with the training, sets up the office schedule monthly for the swing shift stewards, types our meeting notes in addition to handling her share of issues. Bravo Linda!

BOO's to Customer Service and Case Processing for not allowing all their employees to participate in Labor Recognition activities even though Chapter 73 extended the time one hour to accommodate the telephone schedule.

BRAVO's to Tommie Braswell, Ed Burton and all the stewards and members who helped make the Labor Recognition festivities a success.

BOO's to Glenda Kraft, a Manager in Exam , who denied an employee time off to make funeral arrangements and attend the funeral of a family member.

NTEU73 Union Office Hours

Fourth Street Office

Monday—Friday 6:00 A.M. –1:00 A.M.
(859)669-5370

Gateway Center Office Room 511

Monday-Friday 6:00 AM—4:00 PM and
7:30 PM—11:00 PM
(859)669-5700

Industrial Road Retention Center

Monday-Friday 12:30 PM –2:30 PM
(859)669-5024

Not a Union Member?

*Missing out on all the benefits Union membership brings?
Join Today!*

Have You Recently Moved?

If so, you should complete this address change form and return it to: NTEU 73 Membership Coordinator, Stop 77

Name: _____

Home email address

(street)

(city)

(state)

(zip)

Note: IRS Personnel does NOT inform NTEU when they are given a change of address form by an employee who is also an NTEU member. It is your responsibility to get your new address to the union so that you may continue to receive any mailings.



A Tale of Two Teams

*Heather Phillips
Steward*

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. Two Collection Due Process teams, Team 203 and Team 303 both work the CDP inventory and both teams had the Taxpayer Advocate assistance requests for all of the Collection operations thrust, without regard and apparently without much forethought, upon them. Team 203 is allowed to work credit hours to help them maintain the quality output and to compensate for the additional time the taxpayer advocate requests demand from their schedule. At the same time, Team 303 is being denied credit hours. It is the best of times; it is the worst of times. Both teams have their CDP inventory assigned from a common pool through Desktop Integration. Both teams work the return cases from appeals that have had determination letters issued making any adjustment needed and closing the case. Both teams work the taxpayer advocate request inventory. So, why is only one team working credit hours? Answer, different department managers. Team 203, which is part of Department two, has a Department Manager who knows the work. She knows the program intimately and knows the amount of time and effort it takes to work each case. She can look at the inventory levels and know what is needed to move this inventory timely. Then there is Team 303, which is part of Department Three, it has a Department Manager who obviously doesn't have a clue and apparently flying by the seat of her pants. It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.

However, it is not that simple. In the mix is the Operations Manager who should recognize such inadequacy and prevent it from occurring. If she knew the program, or at least take her lead from the experience Department Manager, both teams would be working credit hours. But if this scenario follows the normal course of events of this operation, we will see confusion followed by a knee jerk reaction and without much thought or research neither team will be allowed to work credit hours. This will be followed by finger pointing and retaliation as inventory levels start to climb with time frames not being met. It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.

Now into the mix enters NTEU73. After two unsuccessful attempts to let management rectify this situation files a mass grievance. Instead of jumping on the bandwagon and working with the Union to seek a remedy for this inadequacy, they resort to attempts to intimidate and retaliation toward this steward, thus, showing total disregard for the contract. Management is compounding their problems by facing additional action by the Union. In the end, the Union will prevail. It will be the best of times; it will be the best of times.

We Remember, We Mourn



Chapter 73 is saddened by the loss of two long time stewards, Mary Herndon and Bonita Britten.

Mary was beloved by many of her fellow employees. Over the years Mary has helped numerous employees resolve issues with management. She loved her family, friends, job and NTEU. "Mary was one of those people that when you met her right away you liked her" said Mary's Operation Manager Kim Brown. "As a Union Steward she was professional, sincere and wanted to do the right thing for the employee" continued Ms. Brown. "Aside from the working relationship, we were friends" Kim added. Another of Mary's close friends was NTEU Chapter 73 President, Jackie Huff. "Mary was a co-worker, a Union sister, a friend and a confidant" Jackie said. "I will miss our long talks; I will miss Mary" continued Ms. Huff as she fought back her tears. "Mary was a wonderful person who loved her family and friends and was dedicated to NTEU, her loss will be felt for many years" Jackie concluded. Mary was recently awarded NTEU Chapter 73's Lifetime Achievement Award.



Bonita Britten passed away in September. She was a long time steward recently serving the accounting area. "She had a will to live; she set aside her illness and plunged into her work" remembered Barbara Parker, Bonita's Team Manager. "She was well liked by her teammates" Ms. Parker added. "Bonita was a hard working steward that the Union could depend on" Jackie Huff said of Ms. Britten. Jackie went on to state that "Bonita would stay on top of things in her area and was always willing to represent NTEU at employee meetings". "She will be hard to replace" Jackie concluded. When asked what her manager would miss about Bonita, Ms. Parker said without hesitation "her laughter".

For our members who can not attend the Chapter Meetings due to illness, you are in our prayers.

The Open season for Federal Employees to sign up for Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) begins November 13 and runs through December 11. NTEU fought for this program which allows Federal workers to pay for many out-of-pocket medical and dependent care costs on a pretax basis.