



NTEU 73 Moves Forward with Ike Grievances

Last September, Hurricane Ike blew through the tri-state area, yet we are still dealing with damage control. Not just physical property, but also emotional and personal needs of individuals. Here at the IRS we are beginning to deal with the callous management action of denying administrative leave for employees affected by this horrendous act of nature.

Being so far inland, the Greater Cincinnati area was totally unprepared to deal with the wide spread destruction. Tornadoes have been known to strike this area, but they are confined to the relatively narrow corridor that it passes through. A hurricane touches the entire area. It destroys everything in a wide path. The amount of destruction depends on the strength of the wind. Power outages were common most due to fallen trees. At one time it was estimated that over a million households were without

power in the Greater Cincinnati area. This caused employees to miss work.

Being good IRS employees and looking for the Service to understand their plight, they completed the form to request administrative leave due to



Pictured is an example of some of the less serious wind damage

inclement weather. IRS management acting with the speed of a herd of turtles took their good nature time denying these requests. Anticipating this action by IRS management, Jackie Huff named Darrel Clay to serve as a contact point for the employees. As the denials started to pour in and Darrel started to take action a management roadblock soon materialized in the form of denying Darrel's release to work on these cases. This appears to be an attempt on the part of management to sabotage the

union attempt to achieve justice for the employees. Recognizing this and also due to the sheer number of cases that developed President Huff mobilized her forces and instructed the chief steward to reassign these cases to the permanent office staff to pursue through the grievance process. Now we start the journey of getting each employee their due process; their day in court. NTEU wishes to ensure each bargaining unit employee that filed a grievance that we will do our utmost to get your case resolved as quickly as humanly possible. However, it is more important that we explore every avenue to come to a successful conclusion. This includes keeping our attorney informed and seeking his advice.

Over the next several weeks the stewards will be making their arguments to management, unfortunately in most of the cases to the same manager who callously denied the original request for administrative leave. Maybe this time management will show their concern for the well being of their employees. Maybe this time employees will receive justice at the local level. Maybe this time

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Straight from the President's Desk



By Jackie Huff,
NTEU73 President

So often I am approached by employees with questions regarding the contract. Until recently I have had to answer that the IRS has stalled the contract negotiations. However I am happy to announce that the negotiations are now moving forward! Additionally, it was my honor to be selected for the negotiations team. I recently helped with negotiations, advocating for your rights under this new contract. Of course, while gone your rights remained protected here under the watchful eye of Chapter 73's competent staff, with whom I remained in constant contact.

I also wanted to address the Accounts Management "enhancements" to CJE 5. I attended two of many CJE 5 meetings that AM was holding with the BU employees. In the two meetings I made sure management told the employees that there are no changes to the CJE's and explained what the changes were and why they were being called to a meeting. After receiving many complaints from our members about management wanting to make the CSR's measured and held to a standard that was not negotiated I attended the meeting to see what exactly these CJE 5 meetings were about. I found this to be the case, after attending two separate meetings it

seems management is not changing the CJE's but added to the EQ system and the attributes relating to CJE 5. While at the meeting I ask the management official if the addition to the EQ was negotiated with national NTEU and she assumed it was. They are claiming the CJE has not been changed and employees will NOT be measured. That management will look at the number of cases closed based on the CSR's paper time and if needed will talk to the CSR if they see that the time given and the number of cases closed are questionable. This is not new. Per article 12 sections 8 explains what management can do. I have been in contact with our national NTEU office over this and they are looking into the EQ issue. CSR's if you are approached with this situation by your manager per article 12 you have a right to explain why you took the actions you took and given time during you TOD to write up a rebuttal. I suggest all employees members or not to read your contract especially article 12 and the national CS agreement when it comes to your reviews. If your manager is telling you any different such as "you have to close a certain number of cases per hour" please let the union know.

There are still many battles to be fought. Together we are THE FORCE guiding the Agency in the right direction. The more union members we have in our chapter the stronger THE FORCE. So I ask that you encourage your co-workers to join you as a member. UNITED WE BARGAIN, DIVIDED WE BEG!



At This Time Of Year

As 2008 comes to a close we have a tendency to reflect back before looking forward. For some of us 2008 saw family members, friends and neighbors lose their jobs. We saw our economy go down the tubes fueled by risky banking practices and outrageous gasoline and diesel fuel prices. We survived another Presidential election which outcome made some of happy and some of us sad. The stock market is like a yoyo and many CEO's are wishing that their Christmas stockings be filled with government bailout monies. At the IRS we saw another year in which management both locally and nationally trying to grab back employee rights that were hard fought for by NTEU. That in a nutshell was 2008.

What about 2009? No one can wave a magic wand and make it all better. However, we have a vibrant, enthusiastic new leader to tackle our nation's problems. We will survive and the job market will expand. As long as we, as a nation, pull together we can and will make it happen. At the IRS, NTEU and IRS nationally are in the process of negotiating a new National Agreement. Along with this and other expected changes coming from Washington there is hope that our working environment will change allowing a healing of relationship between management and NTEU.

At the *Force* we have a new look planned for 2009, so watch for it in January. From the editorial staff at the *Force* we wish you a warm, happy holiday season and a prosperous new year.



Writers Wanted

Do you have writing skills?
Do you have information that is newsworthy?
Submit your article to **The Force**.
If your article is accepted, we will print it with or without your name attached; your choice.

Email your submission to NTEU73mailbox@aol.com
or bring it to the Union office.
Identify it as "article for The Force"
The Force reserves the right to edit all articles it prints.

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 A.M.—4:00 P.M. & 7:30 P.M.—11:00 P.M.
(859) 669-5700

Industrial Road Retention Center

Monday—Friday 12:30 P.M.—2:30 P.M.
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Listen to Chapter 73 NTEU Minutes on Artists Club Radio

www.artistsclub.tripod.com

The Force

"NTEU73's Hard Hitting Newsletter"

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

Letters we like to get from managers

Jackie,

I just wanted to let you know that my group had their initial Survey 08 Workgroup meeting today. Jim [Gregory] was a very professional and positive presence for our workgroup. So much, in fact, that the entire group has specifically asked that we try and have Jim attend our next workgroup meeting on December 18. (I am trying to get the notification together now.)

Please pass my sincerest thanks to Jim for his participation in our Survey 08 Workgroup meeting.

The Force thanks the manager who wrote this email and sent it to President Huff, you have real class—ED



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IRS At Night

By Kelley Loetscher

NTEU Steward

Swing Shift Swingers' Issues



How is Swing Shift different than working Day Shift? In spite of loving working this shift, we definitely have our issues. We are not second-class citizens or are we? There are those that think working Swing Shift is easier-more relaxed. Common stereotyping that there is less pressure, less phone time, easier parking, less management, etc, as though we are less qualified. Some of these thoughts may be honest, but maybe it would be assist us all to "swing" into this article. We could bridge gaps and perhaps resolve problems.

The most egregious problem for Swing Shift is availability of hot food for dinner. The canteens are closed. The neighborhood restaurants that can meet our 30-minute dinner are closed at night. It's vending machines or THE BROWN BAG.

Parking? Parking is easier, but who wants to walk into Kenton County Garage at 1:00 AM. Also, there are no buses after midnight which eliminates eligibility for the free passes.

Phone time? For CSR's that is our job, like it or not. Some "Swingers" are regularly on the phones up to four hours a night. I believe the phones are "job security" and perhaps the most important aspect of customer satisfaction. The problem is not the time on the phone-it is the inventory indiscriminately assigned that causes the problems. Because of this, daytime employees are overwhelmed with inventory, which cannot be completed when they are on the phones all day. It would be an obvious resolution to assign the work more efficiently in the first place. Receiving work that is already well over age, when, had it been assigned to an employee with less phone time, could have been resolved timely.

Pressure? We don't see much of the "upper management," and that is shameful that they do not seem to want to spend any time with us. The pressure is still there-but no one to bounce off of. No one is available. Swingers would like to see upper management walking around to see how well we do our jobs. We are not the second-class citizens of the Cincinnati Service Center. We would like to be appreciated for the work we do. Upper management may forget us in many of their projections. And example is the pressure of inheriting work that is old and becoming responsible for it because it is old, when the employee never had it timely enough to resolve. This is the fault of management inventory control for which we employees are rated.

Another issue is that all cleaning is done at night. Emptying trash, interrupting our work for vacuuming of our cubicles, maintenance work done at night, and the restrooms being closed for cleaning. We aren't opposed to cleanliness, but why isn't this done after we leave. The cleaning would then be completed without having to inconvenience employees and the quality of the cleaning would improve. It would take less time and even save money.

These are a few issues from us Swingers. We like our shift, do the same work as day employees, face the same pressures without equitable support, availability of good food, and the interruption of often loud and inconvenient cleaning. I hope this helps everyone understand our shared work environment and realize no one shift is more important than another.

Kelley Loetscher is a swing shift steward who will be contributing with this monthly column "IRS At Night" - ED

Now Available in the Union Office

Water Bottle	\$1.00
Automobile Coffee Mug	\$2.00
Desk Coffee Mug	\$5.00



Attention NTEU 73 Members!!!!

The NTEU 73 Chapter election is in April of 2009. If you have recently moved please furnish us with your new address to insure you will receive your ballot.

If so, you should complete this address change form and return it to: NTEU 73 Union Office.

Name: _____

Home email

(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.

Once Upon A Time

By Heather Phillips
NTEU73 Steward

Once upon a time at the IRS in the kingdom of TEGE lived a Lord named Steve Brown. He ruled his little kingdom with an iron fist or at least he tried. One of his favorite targets is the knights that work in his kingdom. These knights are there to protect the rights of the bargaining unit villagers both in the TEGE kingdom and the surrounding kingdoms. Lord Steve harassed the knights and routinely denied their release in an effort to interfere with the knights doing their honorable duty.

Is this a fairy tale? Unfortunately, it is not. It is about an individual who by his very actions shows contempt for the union and its stewards. It has been my experience that managers who display this type of attitude toward the union do so because they do not want to take the time to do their jobs right. They want to take short cuts and generally show little concern for their employees. Lord Brown hides behind JOC. However, if he were to follow article nine concerning the release of a steward, he would push back to other call sights to see if one of them could cover so the steward could be released. By denying a steward release Lord Brown is denying or delaying an employee their due process.

It appears that Lord Brown's harassment is geared to coerce a steward into abandoning their union duties. This action is a violation of Title 5 of the United States Code and constitutes an unfair labor practice on the part of Lord Brown. Lord Brown you have met the Revolution. So Lord Brown this butt is for you!

NTEU 73 Presents The Monthly Horse's Award



To TEGE Manager Steve Brown

Winners of the Artists Club Labor Recognition Contest.

The following were winners of the giveaway conducted by the Artists Club Treasure Hunt contest.



Sheila Jones

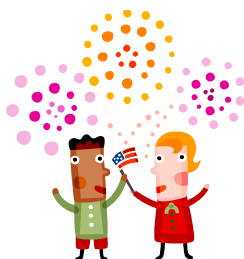
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Jackie Morris



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11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
The Gateway Building Room 502

Thursday, January 8, 2009
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. The
Gateway Building Room 502

Topics of Discussion:* • Retirement Eligibility • Annuity Computation • Military Time • Survivor Benefits • Federal Employee Group Life (FEGLI) • Flexible Spending Account (FSA) • And much more...

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Please Respond by 01/05/2009. This is an informative seminar and no products will be sold. * These sessions are NOT related to the sessions sponsored by the IRS where you are granted time to attend one session within the last 5 years of your service. Unlike the IRS sessions where a video is used, VEBS offers a LIVE person.

No official time is granted for this event, so please request the time from your supervisor to attend this informative seminar.