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NTEU Chapter 73 Stewards

Day Shift:

4th Street - A.J. Allen, Dorothy Barry -Elliot, Tommie Braswell, Ron Cunningham, Nicole Guethlein, Brenda Herrin, William Kohler, Lynn Krueger, Daniel McNamara, Laura Mitchell, Michelle Robinson, Jeff Seibert

GWC—Pat Breitenstein, Joe Ciaramitaro, Steve Clark, Tomeka Cottrell, Liz Herald, Marlo Hodge-Hummond, Vicki King, Jessica Jacobs, Bob Krekeler, Staci Lee, Tonya Morris, Debbie Mullikin, Chris Pierce, Rick Riley (**President**), Michelle Ryan, John Selmeier, Melinda Smith, Michele Townsend, Karen Walsh (**Vice President-Chief Steward**), Virginia Watson, Julia Wiley (**Secretary**)

IRRC - Florence - Jan Colwell, Sarah Corea, Robyn Johnson, Geoffrey Rash, Stacy Rust

Swing Shift:

4th Street—Julie Orick, Beverly Johnson, Stephanie Slayton, Crystal Taylor, Torika Thompson

GWC—William Dreier, Ron DuMoulin, Jim Gregory, Terri Hampton, Cheryl Meadows, Karen Payne, Robert Starks,

After Challenge: Election Will Not Be Rerun

After a challenge to the recent NTEU73 election, National President Colleen Kelley decided that three positions were impacted and that they need to be rerun. The positions include Vice President and two of the executive board spots. However, since affected candidates have withdrawn their names from consideration there will be no rerun and the election results will stand.

A few NTEU73 members had challenged the results of the election of new officers. Ms. Kelley, after an

exhaustive investigation, found there was a problem with some members getting their ballots with 13 in question. If an officer won by less than 13 votes, in theory, it could have affected the outcome, so a new election for three positions was ordered.

Bev Johnson, who ran for Vice President, withdrew her name from the candidate list, as did Virginia Watson and Tomeka Cottrell, who both ran for positions on the Executive Board. A second election is no longer needed and a challenge no

(See Election, pg. 4)

Laura Mitchell Appointed New NTEU73 Treasurer

A little over two months after the start of the new NTEU73 administration, the elected Treasurer resigned her position, citing differences with the current administration as the reason. The NTEU73 Executive Board appointed **Laura Mitchell** as the new Treasurer, per the chapter bylaws.

The bylaws require two names to be submitted to

the board, one from the President, the other by consensus of the remaining board members. The board then votes to fill the vacated office.

Ms. Mitchell, who has run for the treasurer in previous elections, is very capable of taking on this responsibility. Since her appointment on

July 8, she has busied herself organizing the chapter finances and preparing data for an independent professional consultant to do an audit of the chapter books. This is standard procedure.



Laura Mitchell

(See Treasurer, pg. 5)

NTEU Pushes for Lifetime Protections for Federal Employees and Family Members

The National Treasury Employees Union urged Congress to ensure federal employees and retirees are fully informed about what records were breached in the cyberattacks on Office of Personnel Management databases.

NTEU National President Colleen M. Kelley also pushed for quick approval of legislation (H.R. 3029) introduced by Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) to

provide lifetime credit and identify-theft protection to more than 20 million people whose information was hacked.

"Federal employees have had a difficult few years, facing multi-year pay freezes, furloughs, sequestration, and this type of exposure is simply unacceptable," President Kelley said in a statement submitted to two House subcommittees

(See Life-time, pg. 6)

The Force

A Chapter 73
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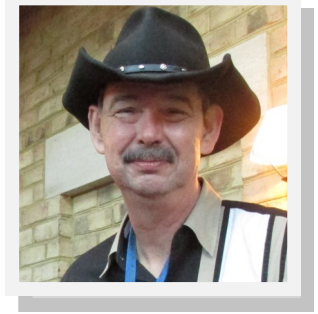
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From the Desk of NTEU73 President Rick Riley

**“As always, At Your Service”
— Rick Riley**



Chapter 73 began a new day and a new era on April 23, 2015. In the 90 days I've been here, I've seen this chapter move forward time and again on many fronts.

On the grievance front, I'm seeing cases resolved at a fast and successful rate under the leadership of my Vice President Karen Walsh. She is also adding new stewards and making sure they are trained to represent our members. Communications have picked up as we've increased the editions of the Force, sent it home to members, redesigned the webpage and created the Official NTEU Chapter 73 Facebook page. We have also been publishing a quick newsletter called The ALERT, which contains information you need right now.

One of my goals is to increase your participation in our chapter. We recently sent a survey via email and in the Force, asking you to let us know your priorities. Your responses will help us focus our energy and resources on your needs. In addition, we will be hosting a lunch for each area, and will invite you to meet with the chapter leadership for updates, discuss ways to improve your area and issues you would like to see addressed. It will take us a little time to get to each area, but keep an eye out for your invite. If you'd like to see us sooner, let us know and we'll make your area a priority.

Looking forward to the new budget year for the chapter, our new treasurer is reviewing how money was spent before and assuring we're spending funds in ways that directly benefits our members. We currently have a large surplus, and will be voting on reducing the dues withheld locally.

The By-Laws committee will finish its work in two weeks. The Executive Board will be meeting next month to work on our budget for fiscal year 2016. We'll be looking at adding new services and events for our members and of course, more value to being a member.

Nationally, there are so many pressing issues in Congress; our future and our livelihood are potentially on the line. We must make this one of our most important missions. We are facing a Congress that is cutting the IRS budget and threatening the TSP G Fund — that appears to have been stopped in the Senate. Colleen Kelly is telling every member of Congress about the damage these budget cuts are causing and how their proposed 1percent pay increase creates more hardship for the workforce. We're fighting for a 3.8 percent increase.

We need every employee to join us in this fight for our today and our future. Together we bargain, individually we beg! NTEU provides the letters on the issues for your Congressmen. We ask that you provide the chapter with your home email addresses and we can send you links to these letters as different issues need arise. Given the fights we face in Congress, we need to be united. We must convince the potential members they no longer have the luxury of not standing with us. The results could end up being more than just the cost of dues.

We're currently driving to increase our membership. As part of the membership drive, we are offering a \$25 reward to the recruiter for every member recruited and a \$50 VISA card to those who join. If you know someone who isn't a member, ask him or her to join. We will be doing recruiting events on a recurring basis until when the drive ends in September. I believe Chapter 73 can be the best chapter in NTEU again. I also believe we're a big part of the largest independent union in the federal sector. The stronger we are locally, the stronger we are nationally. I think we all want to be the best; we all want to defend our rights and benefits. You are the key! You are NTEU, both locally and nationally!

Brand New Steward Doing Great Things!

Ron DuMoulin, a Tax Examining Technician, has been a steward on swing shift for only a little over two months, but he has already made a huge impact. Ron works night shift at Gateway and even covered the NTEU office while most of the steward force was attending training in Las Vegas. At that time, he was brand new, having been a steward for less than two weeks.

The list of Ron's accomplishments is extensive. Here are just a few of them.

- Prevented one employee from being charged AWOL without having to file a grievance
- Convinced management to rescind the resignation after the employee had resigned and had a change of heart (The



Ron DuMoulin, Tax Examining Technician, AM Ops 1

- employee is now still employed.)
- Contacted an OPS manager and stopped the harassment of an employee by the

manager

- Negotiated the removal of leave letters for an entire team
- Helped submit hardship papers and had one employee's Tour of Duty changed in less than 24 hours

Ron always makes himself available to stewards and members alike to give advice and help them with their issues.

"Ron is a rising star," said Karen Walsh, Vice President and Chief Steward of the Chapter. "It is rare that a new steward is so competent so quickly and is able to make such a positive impact on the Chapter."

NTEU73 Wins Huge Telework Arbitration Case

NTEU73 has won an arbitration case that will soon see some employees working from home. The case was won in Florence for employee's in Innocent Spouse.

"This is a hug win for the union," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "This paves the way for work in other areas and we plan on vigorously pushing to get other employees the opportunity to work from home."

"This will have an impact all over the center," Mr. Riley continued. "If you want to work from home, you should request it from your manager. If they deny your request, come to the union office and we will grieve it. There are provisions in the contract that require management to allow it under certain circumstances and we will push to make sure management follows the contract."

Mr. Riley says that several areas are on a list to be tested by the union.

"The IRS wants this, the union wants it, and we are going to try to push the process along so that it becomes a reality sooner rather than later," added Mr. Riley.

In order for work to be able to performed at home it must be portable and not have an adverse impact on customer service. Phone work can be performed at home under certain circumstances. Also taxpayer information can be taken home as long as certain criteria are met.

NTEU Sues OPM Over Handling of Cyber Breach

NTEU has filed a lawsuit against OPM ordering OPM to provide free lifetime credit monitoring and identity theft protection to NTEU members. The lawsuit asserts that, by failing to protect their personal information from unauthorized disclosure, OPM violated NTEU members' constitutional right to informational privacy.

The lawsuit seeks a number of remedies aimed at righting OPM's wrongs and preventing future harm.

Members families and friends are not covered because NTEU's complaint was filed only on behalf of the members. The inclusion of claims for others would have greatly complicated and lengthened the lawsuit to union members' detriment.

NTEU has also been contacting members of Congress in an effort to get the situation under control and serve the membership.

More information and facts about our lawsuit is available on our website at:

<http://www.nteu.org/ers/opmlawsuit.aspx>.

There is also information on the chapter website at nteu73.org.

If you have further questions you can contact the union office and we will be happy to answer any questions.

NTEU73 Announces Partnership With "Old West Fest"

NTEU73 announces that it has formed a partnership with "Old West Fest" and will be offering tickets to the popular event to members at a reduced cost. The event is held in Brown County, Ohio every year and features Cowboys and old west entertainment, including a replica Dodge City. There are many activities for the kids. The event will be held in October 10-11.

NTEU members will receive \$3 off adult admissions and \$1 off child admissions.

The union office will have paper coupons for use at the gate or members can go online and purchase tickets using a special code that will be provided as the event draws closer.

"It is a very good family event," Said NTEU73 President Rick Riley, who has been actively involved in Old West Fest for years. "I have been a cowboy at the event and it is a barrel of fun. I am glad the union can offer discounts. It is a great thing for the family to do."

Mr. Riley will be involved in a lot of the activities, including a gun fight.

"Kids get a kick out of it," he said. "We even take them to 'jail' and they love it."

For more information go the Old West Fest website at:

www.oldwestfestival.com

Hope to see you there!

Know Your Rights — An Article on the Articles

The Force will provide information on the Articles in the NTEU/IRS contract each month. This month we chose to focus on Article 5 so you **Know Your Rights**.

Article 5, Section 1, Subsection A, Paragraph 1

You have the right to file grievances, in good faith, and freedom from management's restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, intimidation or reprisal.

Article 5, Section 1, Subsection A, Paragraph 2

You have the right to a NTEU Chapter Steward and freedom from management's restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, intimidation or reprisal.

Article 5, Section 1, Subsection C

Discussions between a NTEU Chapter Steward and an employee are strictly confidential, unless a criminal act or a criminal investigation is involved.

Article 5, Section 4

Any employee who reasonably believes that they might be the subject of a disciplinary action can request and receive a NTEU Chapter Steward to represent them. This includes, conduct investigations, TIGTA interviews, Third Party Witnesses, and any other representative of the employer, including

your manager and your department manager.

Article 5, Section 5

If an employee is facing termination then the employee has the right to resign from the IRS. When an employee resigns then any mention of the termination is removed and only that the employee voluntarily resigned remains in the permanent record.

Article 5, Section 6

You are required to tell the truth. The employer is entitled to require truthful answers from employees in response to questions in matters of official interest. An employee may properly to refuse to answer questions regarding matters in

which the employer has no official interest. The employer has decided that no employee will be required to play the

role of a corrupt employee or to operate undercover.

Article 5, Section 7

Relationships between employees and their managers should be **"mutually"** conducted in a businesslike, courteous and tactful manner. Moreover, managers are **"expected"** to respect the privacy of their employees, protect confidential information regarding their employee and

only share such information with individuals with a **"Need to Know."**

Article 5, Section 8

The employer is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination because of sexual preference or orientation.

Article 5, Section 9

Statement of Basic Employee Rights

- * To be treated with courtesy and tact
- * To expect appropriate assistance from managers to do their job
- * To work in a safe and healthy working environment
- * To have job expectations explained to them
- * To receive assistance in planning self-development
- * To develop ideas or suggestions to improve work methods
- * To be free to seek redress of grievances through the negotiated grievance procedure
- * To receive cash awards for exceeding standards under the awards program negotiated by NTEU and IRS

Article 5, Section 10

Employees shall not be required to disclose an arrest or conviction that a court has ordered purged from the employee's record in any interview, on any official form or statement, or during any investigation with the employer or an employer representative.



Election.....pg. 1

longer exists because these candidates withdrew their names,

"Not running the election again saves the chapter at least \$5, 000," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "I want to thank Bev, Tomeka and Virginia for withdrawing. They were selfless and did it for the good of the chapter. I truly appreciate it and I know the majority of our members do as well."

Candidates have challenged NTEU73 elections before, so that was not unusual. However, it is unusual for an election to be overturned. The last chapter election that was overturned was in 2000.

Apparently, the addresses had not been updated prior to the election even when some members requested that they be. Also, the post office did not deliver some ballots properly because of the way they were addressed by the company hired to handle the balloting.

NTEU73 keeps members informed with chapter news as well as national news. Visit nteu73.org.

**On Facebook:
Official NTEU Chapter 73**

**National Web Site
nteu.org**

Training You Want ... and It's Free

Are you looking to improve your current skills or develop new ones for that dream job, but can't afford college tuition? Unfortunately, most internal training teams can't meet everyone's individual training needs, but there are many resources available that can. One is the IRS University IRS University (<https://organization.ds.irsnet.gov/sites/HCOIRSU/SitePages/Home.aspx>).

IRS University is designed to be a resource for eventually all IRS employees. IRS U puts employees in charge of their own development and allows employees a central location to network with peers across the Service.

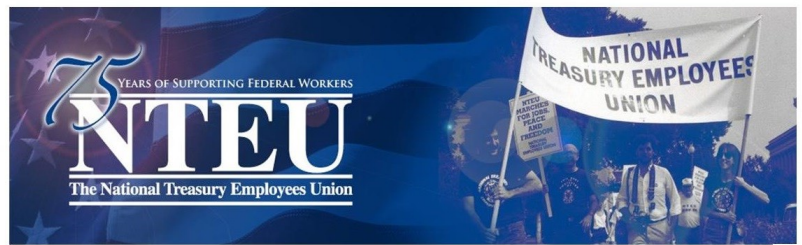
To get started, you can find general career development resources on the homepage. Or, you can explore the tabs above to browse job occupation-specific libraries, job aids, events, links and more. As IRS U expands its reach, we invite you to explore the site and use any resources that you find useful!

There are tabs for administrative professionals, analysts, and leadership. Courses, books, videos, websites and other resource suggestions are located in each library. Many of the courses allow you to take them at your own pace.

The libraries are not limited to just those employee titles. The items listed in each may be of interest to any employee looking to enhance a current skill or develop a new one.

Remember, it's free and it's for you.

When it's happening now.... NTEU73 ALERTS



**That's right! You can get a free \$50 Gift Card
just for joining!!!**

And you will be doing yourself and your union a favor. Help NTEU73 fight for your rights, pay and benefits in Washington. IRS and Federal employees in general are under attack by some in Congress. Help us help YOU by joining.

There truly is STRENGTH in NUMBERS!



Treasurer.... Pg. 1

"Laura will make a great addition to our team," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "She is qualified and honest; the two most important characteristics of a treasurer. So far, she has already discovered a few things we will have to be checking out. She is amazing and is working tirelessly to get our records correct.

"The bylaws have provisions for the replacement of officers who leave a position for whatever reason," added Mr. Riley. "We followed the bylaws to the letter. We are moving forward and I am sure we will not skip a beat.

"Virtually nothing had been done with the books since before the election, but the chapter has all documents and receipts," Mr. Riley said.

"It should be a simple matter of reconstructing everything, but it's a lot of hard work," he added. "I am confident Laura will handle it well."

Ms. Mitchell will be working out of the Fourth Street union office.

Life-time...pg. 1.

that conducted a joint hearing on cybersecurity at the Department of Interior.

Rep. Norton's RECOVER Act (Reducing the Effects of the Cyberattack on OPM Victims Emergency Response Act of 2015) seeks free credit monitoring and identity-theft coverage for life for federal workers, contractors, military personnel, and other affected individuals and requires the government to provide at least \$5 million in ID theft insurance for them.

The Senate proposal (S. 1746) was introduced by Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.), along with Sens. Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Tim Kaine (D-Va.).

While data breaches at OPM have dominated the headlines of late, "It is important to remember that all federal agencies, including the DOI, house huge amounts of personal information on the federal workforce, as well as for many other Americans," President Kelley told members of the Interior and Information Technology subcommittees of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

According to media reports, the Interior Business Center — a unit within the DOI — may have been affected by the data

breaches that the OPM disclosed in June. IBC serves as a shared services provider for a number of federal agencies and offers a range of administrative functions such as payroll, benefits and data storage.

"While the U.S. government cannot now undo the damage caused by the breach, it can at least be transparent about the data compromised, and duly inform affected employees and retirees," President Kelley said.

NTEU continues to seek notifications for individuals affected by the background investigations breach, which was announced a month ago. These individuals have given the U.S. government the most sensitive personal information that exists, and they deserve to have credit and identity-theft protections already in place.

Federal employees and retirees continue to be fearful and outraged in the wake of the breaches, Kelley told lawmakers.

NTEU's July 8 lawsuit against OPM says the agency's failure to properly secure personnel data violated the privacy rights of its members. That lawsuit seeks lifetime free credit monitoring and ID-theft protections for all NTEU members.

NTEU is the largest independent federal union, representing 150,000 employees in 31 agencies and departments.

NTEU73 Stewards Working for the Members

Your NTEU Stewards work for you, and are available if not in person, by phone or email. There are multiple stewards located in most Cincinnati IRS Center location. Here is a list of stewards manning the current NTEU73 offices:

Gateway:

- ◆ Chapter President **Rick Riley**
- ◆ Vice President/Chief Steward **Karen Walsh**
- ◆ National Vice President **Pat Breitenstein**
- ◆ Chief of Staff **Steve Clark**
- ◆ Secretary **Julia Wiley**
- ◆ Stewards **Virginia Watson** and **Debbie Mullikin**

Fourth Street Center (Flattop):

- ◆ Stewards **Michelle Robinson**, **Tommie Braswell**
- ◆ Treasurer **Laura Mitchell**
- ◆ Director of Communications **Jeff Seibert**

Currently, NTEU73 isn't able to staff the Florence site full time. However, that is under review, as are the offices in Covington on night shift.

If you have any issues or concerns, call an NTEU73 office at 859-669-5700 or 859-669-5370.

Here are just a few of the local items stewards completed for July.

Ron Dumoulin:

- Stopped a manager from giving AWOL without grievance filed
- Helped with timesheets for those members not able to complete the task themselves

- Got leave letters removed for an entire team
- Helped a member revoke their resignation and contacted their manager
- Contacted an Operations manager and put a stop to a manager harassing an employee
- Helped submit hardship papers for some members
- Got a hardship tour-of-duty change approved in less than 24 hours

Rob Starks:

- Raised employees evaluation to a 5.0

Geoffrey Rash:

- Got an employee moved back to the position previously held per the employee's request.

Bill Dreier:

- Restored an employee's evaluation to the previous level
- Got an employee's evaluation raised

Nicole Guethlein:

- Got two employee's tour-of-duty's changed to AWS
- Had an employee's valuation raised from 4.2 to 5.0
- Got an employee's LWOP reversed to FMLA

Liz Herald:

- Got an employee's Release-Recall appraisal raised
- Secured approval for an employee to change PODs

First Chapter Meeting with New Administration Held at Holiday Inn

NTEU73 held its quarterly Chapter meeting, Wednesday, July 15 at the Holiday Inn in Covington. For the first time in Chapter history, chapter officers held the meeting twice so night shift employees could attend without having to use their leave.

The night shift meeting was at 2:30, with the day shift meeting following at 4:30. The turnout for both was sparse. These were the first Chapter meetings since the new administration took office.

President Rick Riley updated the members on what the union has been doing since he was elected a little over two months ago. Among other things, was the resolution to the partially overturned election (see Election, pg. 1). Mr. Riley said the peaceful resolution saves the chapter \$5,000.

Secretary Julia Wiley gave a report, reading the minutes of the most recent Executive Board meeting. Newly appointed Treasurer Laura Mitchell gave a summary of the Chapter finances. Even though she had been treasurer for just about a week, and nothing had been done by the elected treasurer, Ms.



Mitchell also released a Treasurer's report in paper form and it was distributed to the members in attendance. It can also be obtained in the union office. The Chapter is also in the process of conducting a complete audit with an independent professional auditor, Ms. Mitchell reported.

Steve Clark gave an update on the Bylaws committee that is the process of improving the Chapter bylaws. He said they should have recommendations ready in a few weeks to present to the President. Mr. Clark also gave a brief report about the safety committee for the Service

Center, since he was recently named chairperson.

Jeff Seibert gave a report on the Chapter membership, saying that the Chapter has signed up about 14 members since the new administration came into office. As Director of Communications, he also updated the chapter on the website, saying that it will be completely redesigned and that it should be online soon. When it is, audio of Chapter meetings will be available at nteu73.org. They will also be able to be accessed through Facebook. This has never been done by the

Chapter in the past.

The next NTEU73 Chapter meeting will be the annual business meeting in October. During that meeting, the new budget for the next fiscal year will be announced.

More information will be provided once a time, date and location are set for the meeting.

60 Second Updates

*** Address changes:** It's important to note that NTEU is not informed by an agency when a member submits a change of address to that agency.

Unless the member or the chapter contacts NTEU or uses the Personal Contact Info area of www.NTEU.org, all mail from NTEU will continue to be addressed to the "old" address.

*** Update on legislation introduced to provide lifetime protection to OPM breach victims:** NTEU-supported legislation has now been introduced in the House of Representatives that would provide lifetime protection to federal employees affected by the recently announced OPM breaches.

*** More cuts?** Congress is again proposing significant funding cuts to the IRS for 2016. The House fiscal year (FY)



2016 budget proposal, in real terms, is smaller than IRS' budget in FY 1991 when the tax code was far less complicated and the country had 38 million fewer individual taxpayers. NTEU believes the administration's FY16 request for the IRS would provide critical funding it needs.

*** Congress Urged to Not Change TSP's G Fund:** NTEU pressed Congress last week to reject proposals that would weaken the federal Thrift Saving Plan's (TSP) G Fund. Lawmakers are reportedly considering tapping the personal retirement savings of federal employees, retirees and members of the military to offset a highway funding bill by reducing the rate of return.

*** NTEU has approached IRS regarding initial feedback it has received with respect to the CSSC Employees Scheduled Break MOU.** To date, NTEU has received feedback from NTEU chapter presidents regarding issues and concerns being experienced by CSSC technicians

with regards to their lunch schedules, including some lunch breaks being scheduled too early in the day.

Pursuant to the MOU, NTEU has notified IRS regarding the early lunch breaks in order to resolve this issue. NTEU is evaluating all other feedback and will continue to monitor and update NTEU chapters as developments occur.

*** Senate Finance Committee approved draft legislation to reinstate parity between transit and parking benefits.**

The Bill to extend certain expired tax provisions, would reinstate parity between transit and parking benefits through calendar year 2016. Currently, employers, including the federal government, can provide employees with tax free parking subsidies of up to \$250 per month, but can only provide subsidies of \$130 per month for the use of mass transit. This legislation would increase the amount allowed for transit subsidies to \$250 per month for all of 2015 and 2016, including retroactive coverage back to January 1, 2015.
