
Solidarity Now!

July-August 2006
Volume 23, Number 3

Communications Workers of America Local 4730



Indiana University

Poplars 331

855-7929 or 855-8508

<http://www.indiana.edu/~cwa/>



Honoring our Colleagues

by Peter Kaczmarczyk

I attended the Long Service and Retiree Recognition Program last month. As in the past it was quite entertaining, thanks in large part to the humor of Terry Clapacs, who should have had a career as an MC. It was a fitting recognition for deserving people.

There were a number of members of the local who have reached 25 years or more and were honored. I would like to add my personal thanks to all of you for your time and commitment to the university.

I would specifically like to mention two people who not only have served the university a long time but have also put in untold hours serving the union.

Gayla Bradfield—25 years at the University, she recently completed a 3 year term on our Executive Board.

Jean Collier—30 years at IU and almost 5 years as treasurer of the local.

Thank you, Gayla and Jean. Your leadership helped guide the union through a time of transition. We couldn't have done it without you.

Thanks to all of you who are support staff at IU, whether here 1 year or 40. Thank you for your commitment to the university, and especially to those of you who have made a commitment to the local. You all make the university and the union, and neither would be here without you. Be proud and keep up the good work.

Now, Everybody Stretch!

by Marilyn Saum

The following is information about the IU Stretch Breaks Program. We encourage all support staff to get training on this program. Taking regular breaks from the computer is a healthier way to work and may help in delaying or eliminating the effects of working on a keyboard all day. Please note that some departments have procedures established for requesting work station evaluations so that they can track usage and gather information. Before contacting the Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) on your own, check with your supervisor to see if you need to go through your department.

The EH&S employs campus ergonomists who routinely conduct computer workstation evaluations as a free service to all university employees. They also head up a cutting edge program called "Stretch Breaks", which is a free intervention that the university offers to help people work healthier at their computer workstations. Often, individuals have proper ergonomic workstations yet they continue to suffer from repetitive strain. For many people with this problem, it is no longer an issue of what equipment they're using, but how they're using it. The stretch breaks program helps with this problem by fostering healthy computer habits using a "jump-start" approach.

How does this program work?

STRETCHING

Continued on page 3

Attend the Next Meetings
Thursday, July 20, 2006
Thursday, August 17, 2006
Poplars 185

Carpooling – Please Think About It!

by Linda Harl

As reported in the May issue of *Transportation*, the Transportation Services Division of the university is offering several incentives to promote car pooling. It is an idea which deserves serious consideration by those for whom it might work.

A carpool is defined as 3 or more people riding together. Each carpool would be given one guaranteed reserved parking space. This alone may make it worth doing. Further, each member is guaranteed a ride to anywhere within 50 miles should an emergency arise. For example, your mom has a heart attack and is rushed to the hospital. Parking Operations will arrange for you to get to the hospital at no cost! This “free ride” is for anywhere within 50 miles of campus.

Another incentive is that each carpool member can get a certain number of free one-day parking decals to allow individuals to drive to off-campus appointments.

OK – I can hear your question now: Am I in a carpool? I have to admit (journalistic honesty and all that) that I’m not and am not likely to be. Why? My reasons are the same as they are for many of you: I rarely go straight to work and straight home. And I live far enough away that going home and coming back to town would be a real waste of time and gas. Plus, the only other person I know on my street who works at IU has a job on the opposite side of campus from mine. Do I want to take the time to drive across campus to pick him up? No. Then too, my work schedule is somewhat erratic, especially in the summer.

I have been in carpools in the past as has Maggie Whitlow, Executive Director of Transportation Services. (I asked her.) But in both cases, the

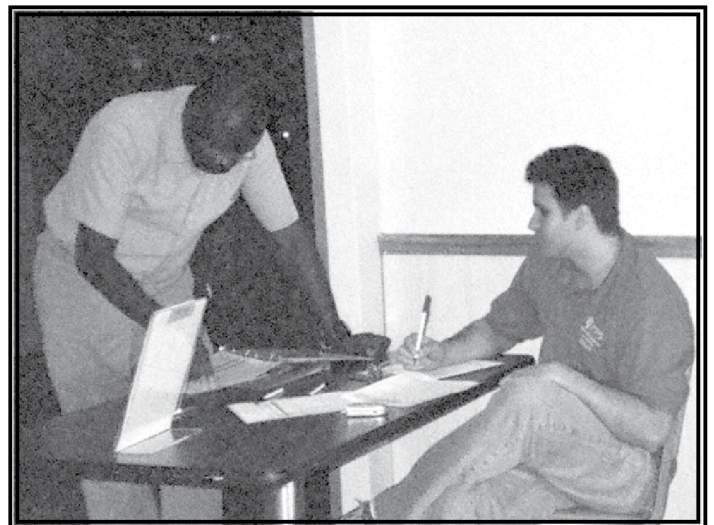
people involved worked at the same place and worked the same hours. This is the key to successful car pooling, and that key is often missing for IU workers.

There is no doubt that car pooling saves money and is the ecologically proper thing to do. But it also takes time—picking up riders or waiting for the driver and making other arrangements to do whatever you might do on the way to or from work are two examples. Sometimes, unfortunately, time is more valuable than money. But, as gas prices go up, perhaps more of us will begin to think about sharing rides, in a formal carpool, or just once in a while with someone else. Remember, any time there is one less car on campus, there is one more parking space for those who HAVE to drive. Think about it.

Blood Drive Successful

by Jane Goldsmith

On May 31, CWA sponsored a blood drive on campus. I am happy to report that we exceeded the goal set by the American Red Cross. Our thanks go to Jean Rhoads, June Wickboldt, and Connie Vaughn for organizing this worthy event.



Stretching

Continued from page 1

The university ergonomist will visit with you at your workstation. After the initial evaluation, they will review any stretching exercises a doctor may have recommended and introduce several new arm, hand and neck stretches. A free software program that gently reminds you to take short stretch breaks every half-hour will be installed on your computer. The ergonomist will check with you to track your progress and ask you to fill out an informational survey. The idea is to help you to help yourself by slowly building up healthy computer habits at your own pace. Research shows that this method is effective.

Will this interfere with my work?

Absolutely not. The program will ask you if you're ready for a break. You can choose to take a break or continue working or even quit the program altogether.

How do I know this program really works?

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends that everyone working at computers take a five-minute break every 40 minutes. Research from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), a research institution of OSHA, has found that such a break helps people work more efficiently and with less repetitive strain.

How long does the intervention last?

The university stretch breaks program lasts two weeks. During this time, the software is activated and your perceptions of "self efficacy" (motivation to break) and actual break counts will be reviewed.

Who can I contact?

Diane Tollinger and Brad Muise are the Indiana University ergonomists and administer the stretch program as a free service. They can be reached at the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, 855-06311.

A Testimonial from the Northwest campus

by Anne Koehler

I have worked in the library at IU Northwest since 1988. Around 1990 there was a push to get a union for the campus to represent biweekly staff, in which I actively participated. We were successful, and in 1993 we chose the CWA to represent us. My membership dates from that time. I have always believed in the importance of the union. It is the ONLY thing a working person has to back him/her up and to stand up against abuses from employers and administrators.

Some years ago I had a need for that support. Human resources questioned my reported hours. In ignorance of the rules, I had mistakenly used break times for attending class. So some hours were taken out of my vacation time, and this was correct. Then an attempt was made to take out additional hours for lab, which was not a mandatory part of the course so I had not attended. With the help of Steward Patty Woosley and the professor, this attempt was thwarted. Without their help, I would have been unfairly punished.

I always encourage people to join the union. One person alone cannot stand and defend their rights nearly as well as when backed by the union.

Sincerely, in solidarity,

Anne Koehler

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Why I Joined the Eboard

by Anthony Feschyn



Simply put, I joined the eboard because the union is doing good things, and I wanted to be a part of it. From our recent blood drive to wage negotiations with the university and membership participation in search and screen committees, the union is having a positive effect on our community.

I have been a member of CWA for the past five-and-a-half years. Until recently, I had been wondering how to increase my involvement with the union, but like most people, I felt somewhat apprehensive. Truth be told, I had never even bothered to attend a monthly meeting of the local. I had volunteered for a couple search and screen committees, but what else could I do? Time was also a concern, since my wife and I, like many of you, have young children. Moreover, southern Indiana is not exactly a labor-friendly environment. Asking people whether they have ever considered joining CWA often elicits responses ranging from indifference to contempt.

What could be better, however, than being part of an organization that attempts to make life better for working families, especially during times like these? There is no denying that these are economically tough times for working folks. How often have you read about factories closing and jobs that used to provide a middle-class standard of living being out-sourced? It's also no secret that while costs continue to rise, for many people wages have stagnated. Personally, I can't remember the last time my wife--a full-time student until recently—and I weren't trying to figure out how to pay the bills, or which ones we could ignore a little while longer. Union membership is as important now as it ever has been in the past, and it is my belief that we should seek to grow our membership. Do you know fellow employees who might be interested in joining CWA? If so, ask them.

Finally, I think we should increase the visibility of CWA in our community. We need to get involved and stay involved. Do you know of a worth-while cause? Come to the monthly membership meeting to discuss it. As I mentioned earlier, we recently sponsored a blood drive. I had never given blood before, but I have to say that it was

quick, relatively painless, and my co-workers, students, and daughter all seemed envious of my new Red Cross t-shirt and cool green tourniquet.

Hope to see you at our next membership meeting.

Since You Asked...

by Bernadette Robinson-Kinzer

Am I correct in thinking that when a person retires, they can convert sick to vacation days, and it is at the rate of two weeks sick into one week vacation? It seems as if I remember that from last summer's steward training.

You do remember the conversion benefit correctly, but staff members are not required to wait until retirement to convert their hours. There is a reasonable limit to the frequency for conversion and a minimum number of income protection hours to qualify.

A bit of history:

The union negotiated this benefit for support staff in 1995. Check the link below for the agreement. (Policies have been renumbered since then, so don't let the reference to policy number confuse you.) See Item 17.

<http://www.indiana.edu/%7Euhrs/policies/ss/Appendices/1995.pdf>

I also provide the current link for Policy 12.7 Vacation Time. See Section F.

<http://www.indiana.edu/%7Euhrs/policies/ss/12.0/12.7.html>

Why I Joined the Eboard

by Charla Lancaster

Am I a financial wizard? (No!) Do like to pay bills? (No!) Do I like to write big checks? (Ok, maybe on this...) But the members still voted me in as your treasurer! Of course these aren't the reasons I wanted to join the eboard. I am the kind of person who likes to be involved. I like to know what's going on and find what I can do to help. I enjoy getting to know people, hear their ideas and have a positive work environment for everyone. I look forward to serving on the eboard and hope to meet many of you as I fulfill my duties as treasurer.



CWA Calendar

July 2006

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Members' Meeting
Poplars 185
400 E. 7th. St.
5:30-6:30 pm

Wednesday, July 26, 2005

WRCLC Meeting
840 West 17th Street, Suite 9
7:00 pm

August 2006

Thursday, August 17 2006

Members' Meeting
Poplars 185
400 E. 7th. St.
5:30-6:30 pm

Wednesday, August 30, 2006

WRCLC Meeting
840 West 17th Street, Suite 9
7:00 pm

Since You Asked

by Bernadette Robinson-Kinzer

I received an inquiry from a staff member regarding progress on her equity increase request. I contacted the UHRS Classification Department and provided them with basic information on the request, including when the paperwork had been initiated in the department and the names of professors supporting the request, and asked about the status of the request in their office.

The Classification Department informed me that the school in question "has not submitted an equity request," and they referred me to the school's departmental Human Resource Manager for clarification.

That HR Manager responded to my email and informed me that she was sending several requests for equity increases to UHRS that very day! The staff member who initiated my inquiry got her equity increase at the end of the month.



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USSERRA Changed

by Peter Kaczmarczyk

There have been a number of changes to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). These are changes in federal law that are already in effect and can be found in policy.

These changes all give greater job security and protection for members of the military, including the National Guard, Public Health Service and others. It is a pleasant and welcome surprise to see such policies coming from the current administration. Below is a brief summary of the changes in the law and IU policy.

- 1) The Act has been broadened so that all PER-eligible part-time staff, and possibly many other part-time staff, are covered.
- 2) The period of time in which you may be serving and still have a job to return to has been increased to 5 years.
- 3) Numerous improvements in benefits, including accrual of vacation and seniority while on military leave, have been added.

These are only a few points. If this information is of interest to you, you can find more details though the IUHR website and by reading the updated policy.

<http://www.indiana.edu/~uhrs/policies/appointed/military.html>

From the editor

By Jane Goldsmith

Recently Peter Kaczmarczyk, the president of CWA 4730, issued a request to the membership to submit articles explaining why they became members. We will be publishing them in Solidarity Now as we receive them. The reasons for joining are as varied as our membership and we welcome their testimonials.

Warden Training for Emergencies

by Marilyn Saum

Eleanor Lahr, Risk Management, was a guest at a recent meeting of the IU/CWA Joint Safety Committee. We learned that the Risk Management web site has a list of buildings, building representatives, and emergency action plans.

What was of great interest to the committee was that Eleanor and Marilyn Mundy, are available to help departments, schools and buildings set up "warden" plans for fire and severe weather. These are plans where designated employees receive training and supplies to assist in emergencies within that building. As is obvious, the wardens would be in charge of getting everyone out of the building in a fire emergency and making sure everyone is in a safe area during a tornado.

I was in the education building during a tornado alert and saw such a plan in action. I was very impressed with the wardens who alerted us and checked on us to make sure we were OK. To me, every building should have such emergency preparedness.



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A Testimonial from the Bloomington Campus

by *Marta Johnson*

I come from Prague (now Czech Republic). It was my birth duty there to become a union member. Everyone was formally unionized. So when I moved to this country, nothing was farther from my mind than the thought of becoming a member of anything. And volunteer? You had to be kidding me.

Enter IU. Overall, IU is not a bad employer. Things that go wrong and/or hurt employees, mostly come from a mix of well-meaning and ignorance of IU administration. A memorable occasion was the first reclassification of our jobs. IU meant well and it cost a bundle. It was designed to equalize injustices. Yet it ignored most principles IU (specifically IUL) employment was based on. It ignored the knowledge that individuals were hired for and needed to do their jobs. The reclassification felt like being equalized by a steam roller.

I was very disappointed and angry at IU. I began to feel that an employee organization would make sense to have around, if for nothing else, then just to provide balance within the IU enterprise. So I voted for CWA, but still could not make myself become a member. Too much baggage, I guess.

This year it hit me. The staff's salary raises based on longevity are a solid reflection of one aspect of the diversity of the staff. CWA created enough wiggle space in negotiations with the administration to achieve this. Even though we are seen as one large group of support staff, we are also viewed as smaller groups of (dare I say?) individuals. I like to be represented by an organization that comes from us, speaks for us, sees us all objectively and treats us fairly and justly as individuals. So I became a proud member of CWA.



CWA Local 4730 Treasurer Charla Lancaster gives \$100 check to Hoosier Hills Food Bank Director Julio Alonso. They are flanked by local President Peter Kaczmarczyk and United Way AFL-CIO Community Service Liason Liz Feitl.



LOCAL 4730

Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO

I hereby request full membership, and all the benefits that go with it, in Communications Workers of America (C.W.A.) Local 4730. I authorize with this form my membership and the deduction of dues from my pay as established by C.W.A.

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