



IU
Local 4730

Solidarity Now!

The Award-Winning Newsletter of CWA 4730

Organize Educate Mobilize

Communications Workers of America
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Negotiations are Done, but the Race is Far from Over

by Todd Barnell

Working together, we've cleared
the first hurdles in front of us

CWA 4730 has once again completed another year of negotiations with Indiana University. It is never an easy task, but with the incredible growth in membership and the hard work and commitment of many activists in our local, we have taken a few more steps down the road toward economic and social justice on this campus and in our community.

Our gains this year have been discussed at membership meetings as well as being covered by both the *Herald Times* and the *Indiana Daily Student*. A few of the items we were able to win include:

Human Resources has assured CWA that officers and stewards will receive copies of all job listings and the names of successful candidates. This will allow us to better monitor some of the "unusual" hiring practices of certain offices.

Seniority will now be restored to former IU employees if they come back 18 months after leaving, instead of 15 months. Also, they no longer need to return to the same department they left, but can simply return to their same functional classification.

If you are temporarily doing another person's job while they are out of the office for more than two weeks, you *must* be paid their salary. Before, this was discretionary on the part of the manager.

Many employees who are between the ages of 60 and 62 will be able to retire with just 15 years of service without losing benefits.

It's no time to rest on our laurels

Two of our top priorities are still waiting to be won. The members of CWA 4730 continue to demand an equitable parking plan and a real wage progression system. With your active involvement, we have begun to make real progress on both of these issues. [See "Sliding Scale Still Possible" on page 3.]

Most of us are keenly aware that it is nearly impossible to advance in pay under the current wage system. The majority of the clerical and technical employees at IU are *still* at the bottom quartile of their pay ranges even after five, ten and sometimes even fifteen years of service. That is why our local has always kept a real wage progression system at the top of our list.

During this year's negotiations, one of the most important gains made was securing a firm commitment, in writing, from the IU administration that CWA 4730 would be a full partner in the development of such a wage progression system. This process is to be part of the overall reclassification project.

The only reason we won this guarantee is because the members of our local proved to IU that they will no longer passively accept things the way they are right now. We are tired of being stuck at the bottom of our wage scales. We are tired of receiving paltry raises each year. We are tired of being told over and over that the small raises are the result of falling admissions. (At IU Northwest in Gary, which recently joined our local, they were told they would be receiving a three percent increase because of low enrollment. Yet, when their enrollments were going

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NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING: JULY 25 AT 5:15 P.M. IN MAPLE ROOM, IMU

Keep Your Job from Being a Pain in the Neck—or Back, or Wrist...

by Gayla Bradfield

That Little Pain Now Could Become a Major Headache Down the Road

At last month's Bloomington Campus Occupational Safety and Health Fair, Judy Kiel of IUPUI's School of Allied Health Sciences spoke on "Is Your Job a Pain in the Neck? Or Ergonomic Considerations for the Sedentary Worker." She brought up a number of important topics which I would like to summarize for those of you who were unable to attend.

Cumulative trauma injuries, which can cause pain in any part of the body, are brought on by doing the same, repetitive activity all day every day, or by doing the same activity for only a few hours a day over a number of years. There are 3 stages to this type of injury:

(1) Pain occurs during the activity, but gets better when you stop.

(2) Pain occurs during the activity and does not completely go away when you stop.

(3) Symptoms are constant and interfere with sleep. It is important to seek medical attention at stage two.

It has been found that taking a 15-30 second break every 10 minutes during repetitious activity is more beneficial than the previous recommendation of a 15 minute break every hour. Taking a break doesn't necessarily mean doing nothing; in fact, it is best to do a physical activity which is just the opposite from the job you're doing.

Listed below are a number of helpful pointers to keep in mind during your daily office activities:

When seated correctly at your computer with your feet flat on the floor, the angles at your elbows, knees and hips should all be 90 degrees. The natural inward curve of your lower spine should be supported by the back of your chair. This is very important: your spinal column has 137 joints which are all subject to abnormal positioning when you are seated improperly. Your thighs should be fully supported on the chair seat and parallel to the floor, with 2 fingers' width of space left on either side of your chair. There should be 4 fingers' width of space between the front edge of your chair seat and the back of your knee joint.

To avoid carpal tunnel syndrome, keep the wrists in a neutral position while typing at the keyboard. Do NOT use a wrist rest while typing. Rest the wrists on it ONLY when you have stopped. Activities you do at home can also contribute to development of carpal tunnel syndrome. For example, you should avoid going home after a day at the computer to do needlework all evening. If possible, use hand tools with large, padded handles. Also, try to be aware of your sleeping posture. Sleeping with the wrists curled down in a flexed position, the so-called "fetal position," can contribute to carpal tunnel syndrome. If you begin to notice any numbness in your thumb, index and long fingers, it may be helpful to wear wrist braces at night to keep your wrists straight while sleeping.

If you use a mouse at your computer, you should be aware of a syndrome called "mouse shoulder." To avoid such shoulder pains, keep the mouse back by the keyboard. Adjustable mouse trays are now available which attach to your keyboard.

If you have a problem with tired eyes at the end of the day, it may be due to a decreased blinking rate while you are working at your desk or computer. The average blink rate while resting is 14-19 times/minute; during conversation it is 25 times/minute. However, while reading it is only 8-14 times/minute. If your eyes feel dry and painful, try applying non-prescription "artificial tears" eyedrops periodically throughout the day to rehydrate them. Many of these products are available without preservatives. Do not use eye drops which advertise that they "get the red out," as these actually shrink the blood vessels in your eyes and can dry them out further. Computer screen glare may also cause eyestrain. Anti-glare shields are available.

Frequent telephone use can also cause pain due to the abnormal postures you assume when you try to hold the handset between your shoulder and ear while keeping your hands free to write or shuffle papers. If you are on the phone for several hours a day, consider getting a shoulder rest or a headset. Remote headsets (no cord) are available to allow you to move more freely.

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Sliding Scale Still Possible

by Linda Harl

The Transportation and Parking Advisory Committee (TPAC) met on June 7 and had an extended discussion on CWA's proposal for selling parking decals on a sliding scale based on the buyer's salary.

Laraine Cooksey and I presented a handout which attempted to answer objections raised since the proposal was first put forward. Our main contention is that stickers are a kind of tax because their purchase is not an option for most people, but a necessity. We feel that they should be sold on a sliding scale, since taxes are traditionally assessed that way. We also feel that the total number of stickers sold will not increase because people who need them are already buying them.

Objections were voiced by George Smerk, who feels that the stickers are a kind of "user fee" rather than a tax. One pays for what one uses, regardless of other economic considerations. Laraine and Jim Sherman also got into an extended debate about the "principle of equity" and its application to this situation. However, Sherman ultimately announced his support of our proposal!

Tom Swafford, TPAC chair, announced that, since my letters had appeared in the HT and IDS, he has received 16 messages - 8 in favor of the proposal and 8 opposed. I also passed around petitions of support, signed by staff, faculty, PA's, and students.

Swafford ultimately decided to postpone a vote on the proposal until the first meeting of the fall semester. There were several valid reasons for this: the PA Council is surveying all the PA's before they will cast a vote; many members were absent; and it was thought to be too late to implement such a drastic change by this fall anyway. This gives us all summer to build support for the proposal. The downside is that many of the members of TPAC will change at the beginning of the year, so we will in some sense have to start over again in getting votes for the proposal. Nonetheless, we feel that we have got a lot of people thinking and talking about this idea and that we have a good chance of success.

Meanwhile, next year's prices will be \$191.50 for an A and \$69.50 for a C sticker. Beware also that fines will also go up \$5 for everything except handicap space violations which will go up \$10. The increases were necessary because parking operations now has to pay a private company for license plate searches which the state used to provide for free. The handicap fee now matches Indiana state law covering the same violation.

We had wanted to settle this sliding scale issue by next year, but everything around here takes longer than it should! Hopefully, though, this will be the last year that someone making \$20,000 pays the same for a sticker as does someone making 5 times that much.



Is Your Job a Pain in the Neck?

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If your job requires heavy lifting, use your knees as much as possible (the natural lumbar curve should remain in your back). Try to keep heavy objects close to your body and do not twist while lifting or carrying. Keep heavy boxes and files at a comfortable height (waist level). Heavy lifting above shoulder height or from the floor or low shelving is discouraged. If you have a heavy cart, it is best to push it rather than pull it. For those who have to stand for prolonged periods, a heavy rubber mat helps to reduce fatigue.

Finally, for your general health, try to get at least 30 minutes a day of moderate aerobic activity—any movement that increases your heart rate. Take a brisk walk on your lunch hour for example, or accumulate three separate 10 minute periods of blood pumping activity throughout each day. Try to build up your strength and endurance over a period of time. Many people find that regular physical activity also helps reduce stress. Take time to warm up and then Get Moving!

Look Out Your Window, President Brand

by Jane Goldsmith

On June 5, 1996, President Brand wrote a guest editorial in the Herald-Times bemoaning, "Where in the presidential campaign is the support for higher education?" In this editorial, he stated "In this land of opportunity, higher education is a first class ticket." That may be true elsewhere, but not at Indiana University. President Brand cited as an example the auto industry and how it has changed from a "bastion of secure jobs and good pay if you had a high school education" to demanding "sophisticated abilities at all levels of employment." President Brand, you don't need to look at the auto industry for this example; you can look out your office window and see a place where the same thing has happened.

President Brand, have you looked at the requirements recently for the clerical jobs at IU? Those skills you list as vital to the workplace - problem solving, decision making, written and spoken communication, intellectual flexibility - are listed as requirements on almost all the job descriptions for clericals and technicals at IU. If you compare the job descriptions and requirements between the old Weaver and recent Mercer classifications, it becomes abundantly clear that the job skills required by a CL/TE at IU have increased many fold but the compensation for that skill development is not reflected in the paychecks received. One recent job posting for a CL05 starting at less than \$18,000 per year lists as a preferred qualification a background in fine arts and two foreign languages. Is this the reward IU gives for education?

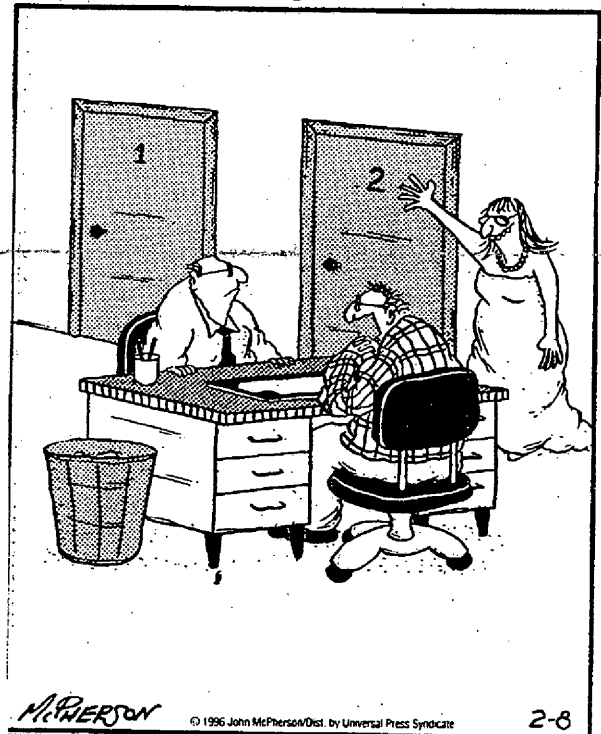
President Brand states that the average yearly income for a head of household in the state of Indiana is \$26,000. President Brand, have you looked at the CL/TE pay scales recently? To refresh your memory, the beginning rates are from \$13,700 for a CL03 to \$30,900 for a CL11, with most of the jobs beginning between \$17,950 to \$21,486 (CL05 to CL07). When you factor in that 90% of the CL/TEs are in the bottom 25% of their pay scale, you should realize that most CL/TEs earn CONSIDERABLY LESS than the \$26,000 the average high school graduate earns in this state.

President Brand also states that those who make less than \$38,000 a year "tend to consume more public services than they give back in taxes." President Brand, where do you think the CL/TEs rank in this equation? And it's not just the Bloomington community that's affected. It also creates an impact on the Monroe County area and the surrounding

counties. The low level of pay is felt by many of the surrounding communities and is one area where the trickle down theory of economics really applies.

As President Brand said "America is having its seasonal tryst with catchy phrases and empty promises" that needs to be replaced with good common sense. Here at IU the employees are having THEIR seasonal tryst with catchy phrases and empty promises. As the Weber report has shown, IU has more than adequate Liquid Expendable Balances to finance adequate raises and pay scales for its employees. President Brand, why don't YOU show good common sense and realize the importance of all the employees at IU and compensate them fairly for the work they do?

Close to Home by John McPHERSON



"You can take our standard retirement package, or you can trade it for what Carol has behind door No. 2."

Why You Can't Trust the Grapevine

Your local has just learned something astonishing. Apparently, there is some confusion in Human Resources Management about this year's negotiations. Personnel officers in a variety of departments and Schools have been calling HRM about some rumors that entry level salaries will be frozen at 1995 levels.

Well, at least that much is true. Indiana University has decided to freeze all entry level salaries at last year's levels even though IU admitted during 1995 negotiations that they were having a hard time attracting qualified applicants because of the low starting pay.

But some representatives at HRM seem to be providing some additional information to people who call regarding this "freeze". They are telling the callers that *CWA agreed to this freeze at the bargaining table!*

This is completely untrue. Your local never agreed to any wage freezes. In fact, this issue was never even brought up during this year's negotiations.

We strongly recommend that you contact the union office if you hear any rumors or statements that strike you as unusual. Just goes to show you often cannot trust what you hear from some quarters!



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Going for the Finish Line

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up they still received smaller raises than many other campuses!) In short, we are tired of being treated like second class citizens.

We have made some wonderful gains over the past four years, including securing a strong grievance procedure and advancing the causes of fairness and safety in the workplace. But we have an extremely long way to go. The only way we will ever ACHIEVE a real wage progression system or an equitable parking plan is if we all stay active and encourage our co-workers to join us in this struggle.

As we continue working on wage progression, our local will host a series of informal and open meetings over the lunch hour. Everyone will be welcome to attend and offer suggestions about how to achieve wage progression or to ask questions. Naturally, however, the final decision on what our next step should be will be in the hands of the membership.

While this process is continuing, we all need to keep focusing on the various elements of Phase Two of our ongoing campaign. We must continue publicizing the realities of working at IU; we must work with

with politicians at the local, state and national level; and we must ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE!

Our membership is our most important strength. If you are waiting on the sidelines to see what happens, the time to join the race is now! Help craft your own future and secure justice for IU staff today!



Local 4730

LOCAL 4730.

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO

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Solidarity Now! is the official newsletter of CWA Local 4730 and is made possible by the dues paying members of that local. We encourage all CWA members to submit or suggest items for publication. If you have any questions about the newsletter, or would like to serve on the committee, contact Linda Harl, Sycamore 026, 5-9503, e-mail: LHARL

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