

THE 411 FORUM



A publication for the hardworking men and women of AFSCME 411

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

A member called me last week and said, "Why don't you give your name and the telephone number to the office in your President's Corner?" Sometimes, the hardest thing to see is what's right in front of your face. My name is Donna Cangemi and the office number is 465-5292. I'll try to include both those items in all future issues. I hope the holidays and the new year were good to all of you. As some of you may know, I had a death in the family over the holidays. The quarterly newsletter got pushed back a little bit but I am certainly hoping to get it out on time from now on. I have mentioned the meaning of union brotherhood in prior issues. I always believe it is a subject worthy of mentioning again. Union brother and sisterhood means you will be there to help your fellow workers when they're having a bad day. It means you will cover for them when they have to run out early because their child is sick at school. It means you will try to compromise when there is an issue at work. I mention union brotherhood in this issue because I found out how much it really means when my brother died November 24th. Thank you to all my union sisters who were there when I needed you.

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AFSCME Continues To Negotiate Testing for Clerical

AFSCME 411 has been meeting with the Human Resources Department for over one year to come to an agreement on the conditions of testing for all clerical. AFSCME has been successful in changing the passing scores to a composite score instead of having to pass each individual test, in getting the re-test time reduced from one year to six months and in getting training and a pre-test available for internal candidates. AFSCME has proposed testing *only* for promotions and not for downgrades or jobs within the same family. At a meeting last November, AFSCME asked for all testing data from the date of implementation of the new testing on non-union clerical to evaluate the passing rates for each job family. Human Resources has made this data available to AFSCME 411. However, the data did not separate internal candidates from applicants outside Macomb County. AFSCME 411 was provided updated data from January 1, 2003 indicating the scores of internal applicants who have tested since that date. On January 13, 2003, AFSCME 411 sent a request to bargain this issue to Human Resources. On January 24, 2003, we met with Human Resources once again on the testing issue. At this meeting, Hu-

man Resources agreed to a one month period in which AFSCME 411 members will not be required to test within the same job families. After one month, we will meet again to try to finalize an agreement. During the next month, AFSCME is asking for all members, especially those who are clerical and have opinions related to this issue, to attend the February 5th membership meeting at the Verkuillen to discuss issues and concerns over the testing. There are a lot of rumors surrounding the content of the test. We can clarify these rumors; officers have taken the test. If you are considering applying for other clerical positions in the county, we encourage you to take the test while we negotiate this issue. Also, **WE NEED TO KNOW THE CONCERNS OF THE MEMBERSHIP ON THIS ISSUE.** Attend the meeting to make your voice heard or call the office at 465-5292. We cannot prevent management from giving a test but we can negotiate to assure it has no effect on our contract. This is an issue that will impact members for many years, we need your help to get it right.

We're on the WEB. Our address is www.afscme411.org

THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

If you or a family member gets sick and you need to take extended time off work, knowing the details of this act will save you a lot of worry. Every issue, AFSCME 411 will feature a law that affects unionized workers or information that could save you money or aggravation. This issue, we are featuring the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), enacted in 1993, provides job-protected leave to employees who need time off to care for themselves or their families. This law sets a minimum national standard, and state laws or collective bargaining agreements may provide additional benefits.

Major Provisions of the FMLA:

- Is available to employees who have worked for the employer for 12 months, but this period does not have to be consecutive. Is available to employees who have been employed for 1250 hours during the 12-months preceding leave; Employer must have 50 or more employees who are employed within a 75 mile radius.
- Defines a serious health condition as an illness, injury, impairment or mental condition that involves one of the following: Inpatient care; Absence plus treatment; Pregnancy; Chronic conditions requiring treatments; Permanent/long-term conditions requiring supervision; Multiple treatments of non-chronic conditions.
- Requires the employer to maintain health benefits during FMLA leave.
- Guarantees employees can return to the same or equivalent position, with equivalent pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment, following FMLA leave.
- Allows employers to require employees to use vacation or sick leave for all or part of their 12-week FMLA entitlement.
- Gives employees the right to use accrued paid vacation and sick leave during FMLA leave. Because FMLA absences can not be counted under employer attendance policies, employees may want to count paid absences as FMLA leave to avoid disciplinary action.
- Is enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor. If you believe your rights have been denied, you may file a complaint with any local office of the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division. You may also file a lawsuit. Complaints and lawsuits must be filed within two years of the violation of the act.

Member's Benefits

Every issue, a newly added member's benefit will be featured. This issue, you and your family can feel comfortable away from home when you stay in a quality hotel where the employees are union members. And your wallet won't suffer when you choose from among the union member-only rates at lodgings in premier U.S. vacation spots. Save when you stay union at selected unionized hotels, resorts, and casinos. Go to www.afscme.org/about/aa-hotel.htm for details. Some examples: save 48% at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in Los Angeles, save 41-52% at the Hotel Royal Plaza in Orlando or 12-60% at the Hilton in Anaheim. There are also savings at the Las Vegas Hilton, Bally's, Paris and the Flamingo in Las Vegas, Nevada.



"We need a temporary employee to approach our CEO and demand we be unionized."