

Weekly Word

Monroe County Federation of Social Workers, IUE-CWA 381

167 Flanders St Rochester New York 14619

(585) 328-7170 voice

web site: www.fsw-union.com

John Vasko

(585) 328-2162 fax

e-mail: fswmessage@aol.com

November 7, 2005

Busy Time Again...

Here we are at the end of the year again and time grows short. In November, there are only 30 days of which four are holidays. Then we're into the holiday season that starts right around Thanksgiving and ends sometime before we die (early January). Plus, we have all of this work (the County's) to do. Don't let it get you down. Remember to take time for yourself. Know your limits and share them with co-workers and supervisors. Take lots of deep breaths, your lunches and breaks...you'll make it to the other side

Workload

I touched on the workload issue in the paragraph above in an obtuse way, but it's there, nonetheless. You have to remember to do what you can in a 7-hour day *and* remember to take your lunch hour and two 15 minute breaks. If you can't get it all done in the time allotted, notify your supervisor, ask for priorities and do all of this by email so you have a running record, and documentation for yourself. Include the Union in these email correspondences so we can keep it in your Union folder in case any issues arise regarding your performance.

Whatever you do, do not work any uncompensated hours. If you are working over 35 hours in a week, be sure to record those hours on the time sheets and time card. If people work for free the county will never know how many workers it actually takes to do the job right. Plus, your daily work life will never improve. In other words, your workload will continue to remain out of control.

The other thing to remember is that you must do the job correctly. Do not cut corners to try to maintain your peace. If you do not do the job correctly, you run the risk of disciplinary actions just as well as the person with the high caseload/backlog.

The mobilization committee continues to meet each Tuesday at lunchtime to develop strategies related to making workload more manageable. This can be a long process, but if we never undertake this process, there is no change for a better life. You must all take an active part in pushing the workload issue by paying attention to what I said in the first three paragraphs and giving some time to the mobilization efforts.

Also...to clarify the question regarding red shirts on Thursdays: the contract is settled in terms of wages and health care, but not in terms of workload. **Thursdays continue to be our solidarity day and red is the color you should wear.**

The next day for our "fair day's work for a fair day's pay" arbitration is set for December 7th at 10am at the Union office. This will be day two and folks who have already been prepped by our staff rep Jean Zimber will need to appear. We will contact you shortly regarding the time to appear.

Health Insurance Concerns

November is the open enrollment period for health care and flexible benefits. Due to the new contract, members that have Blue Point 2 extended have to enroll in an alternate plan. If you do not make a selection, the county will auto-enroll your coverage as Select.

If you have BC/BS Blue Million or the traditional plan and you want to take advantage of the buy-out, you must do that now. If you do nothing, your Blue Million will continue unchanged. If you take the buy-out (\$5000 family or \$3500 single), payments will be made somewhere around pay period 3 or 4 of 2006, which is around the beginning of February. Payment is taxable and will be issued in a separate check from regular pay.

The cost for health care in this country is killing individual workers and the employers who provide health care coverage. Our next focus should be working in conjunction with other national groups to develop a national health care plan. The United States should not be the only industrialized country in the world without a national health care plan.

Union Dues

This is a reminder that in accordance with the IUE CWA merger agreement, Union dues increase \$1 per pay period in January. In the merger agreement, dues increase a \$1 per pay period each January between 2000 and 2008 until we reach full CWA dues of 2 hours pay per month. We will still be behind in the increase by one year. As the membership voted in June of this year, another increase of \$1 per pay period goes into effect in July of 2006. This will get us back on track with the mandatory dues set by CWA.