

Submission Processing's Peak Comes to a Close

SUBMISSION PROCESSING- Walking into the Butler Site was like walking into a time warp. Various units covered their walls with Tie-Dye & 60's memorabilia. Words like "groovy" were spoken but words like "gimme-five" were quickly replaced. One logical explanation could be that phrases like "gimme-five" were not primarily used until the 70's. This season's motivational theme was focused on the 60's and it was highly promoted throughout the Butler Site. Earlier this season, Submission Processing Director, James Gaither, proposed a "gimme-five" campaign during his Annual Town Hall Meetings, which was supposed to encourage employees to be more productive for just 5 extra minutes a day. The intention was to take one less bathroom break, keep breaks and lunches at exactly 15 and 30 minutes, and avoid unnecessary trips. The reasoning behind it was to increase productivity on the annual reports. Although employees did push out the work, kept within their breaks and lunches, they could not help from making necessary trips to the NTEU office on a daily basis.

Manager's in Data Conversion, Code & Edit, and Error Corrections -who encouraged these motivational activities, forgot to display one of the most famous phrases during the 60's... "Make Peace, Not War." Over the last 4 months, the vibe in the air was not groovy, it was as if we stepped into a war zone. Various unit managers dropped AWOL charges like bombs, harassed and tormented employees as if they were enemies, dropped evaluations without counseling (that is if the employee received their evaluation, at all), and violated the 2006 National Agreement, as well as, the Submission Processing Unit Expectations on a daily basis.

Chapter 97 Stewards have been keeping a close eye on management's shenanigans and has filed multiple grievances, institutional grievances, and has set up meetings with the Director regarding management's misconduct on behalf of the Submission Processing Employees. NTEU will be posting the outcome in upcoming newsletters.



NTEU Hosts Annual Membership Meeting

Now is the time mark your calendar and make plans to attend NTEU Chapter 97's Annual Membership Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss important member issues, give an overview of the 2007-2008 year, and provide members with a quarterly financial report. All members are invited to attend.

Date: Saturday July 26, 2008

Time: 10:00am

Place: Post 509 (West Hall) Address: 3509 N. First St. Fresno, CA 93726

Refreshments will be served.

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Issue: The Use of SSN

Area: Submission-Entity

Management was using Employee's full SSN for Quality Reviews although employees had disclosure concerns. Submission Stewards Chris Killian and Assistant Susan Vasquez-Quiroz addressed the issue with Department Managers and were successful in getting the procedure changed so that only the last 4 digits will show.

Issue: Extended Lunch Hour

Area: Submission- Data- Swing

8 hour employee completed the AWS Bid Sheet requesting an extended lunch only. Management originally stated their unit did not work til 2:30am, when in fact, surrounding units stayed until 2:30am. Steward Dawn Horton addressed the issue and was successful at getting the employee's extended lunch granted. No grievance filed.

Issue: NTEU Notification

Area: Submission-Numbering- Swing

Several employees informed NTEU that overtime meetings were being held without union representation. Employees were also being told that visiting the union must be done during breaks and lunches. Assistant Marcella Gutierrez addressed the issues and Article 8 violations with the unit manager, as well as the Department Manager and management immediately began to comply regarding union notifications. Management also corrected their error regarding employees visiting the union office on breaks or lunch. Employees are allowed to visit their union steward once they have checked out with their manager.

Issue: Safety Hazard

Area: Submission-ERS- Swing

Employees contacted NTEU after work trucks were illegally parking in restricted areas and have repeatedly hit employee's desk when dropping off the work. Issue addressed to unit manager but no action was taken. Issue was then addressed to the DM and Operation Manager- signs were posted up the next day and no other issues were reported.

Issue: AWOL

Area: Submission-Data- Swing

Management charged employee with AWOL since management claimed it was standard procedure when employees did not have enough leave on the books. Kathy Thurman (Tulare Site) filed the grievance and with the help of Tulare Assistant Ruth Abad and Steward Lorena Morales, the AWOL was removed and the employee was allowed to use 4 hours of Annual and 4 hours of sick leave. Article 5, 34, 36

Issue: Evaluation

Area: Compliance-Days

Management lowered employee's evaluation from 4,4,5,4,5 to 3,3,3,4,4 without counseling. Steward Jill Guzman immediately filed the grievance and 3 minutes into her grievance meeting with the Director, she received word that the Department Manager decided to return the evaluation to its original rating. Violations: Article 12

Issue: Sick Leave Restriction Letter(SL)

Area: Compliance- Days

Management put an employee on a Sick Leave Restriction Letter only 9 days after issuing the warning. Steward Jill Guzman filed the grievance and argued the point at the Director's level that not enough time was allowed to improve. Jill was successful in getting her point across and getting the Sick Leave Restriction Letter removed from the employee's drop file. Violation: 34

Issue: Advance Sick Leave

Area: Compliance- Days

Management denied an employee a request for Advance Sick Leave based on the fact they believed the employee would not pay it back. Steward Jill Guzman filed the grievance due to management's misinterpretation of Article 34 Section 5. The belief that the employee would not pay back the sick leave is not one of the required conditions mentioned in Article 34. Since the employee was able to meet all conditions, the employee was offered the Advance Sick Leave.

Issue: AWOL

Area: Submission- Data

Management charged employee with 3 hours of AWOL that was unwarranted. Steward Chris Killian immediately filed the grievance and received word that management issued AWOL letter to employee without actually charging the employee the AWOL. Article 34

Issue: Evaluation

Area: Compliance-Days

Employee contacted NTEU immediately after being notified that their annual appraisal had been lowered without counseling. Steward Karen Jenkins met with the employee's manager and Department Manager and was successful in getting the employee's evaluation restored to its original rating. Article 12

Issue: SL Restriction Letter

Area: Compliance-Swing

Management misinterpreted Article 34 when putting 2employees on sick leave restriction letters. Assistant Jeannie Presswood immediately filed the grievance and prior to the grievance meeting, Department Manager informed NTEU that the sick leave restriction letters were being removed from both employee's files. Article 34

Issue: SL Restriction Letter

Area: ICT- Days

Employee was placed on a sick leave restriction letter that was unwarranted. Employee was charged AWOL instead of allowing the employee to use sick leave. Steward Martina Subia filed the grievance and was successful at getting the AWOL removed from the employee's record. Management stated in the grievance response the AWOL was charged in error and due to an administrative error, the AWOL was removed. Article 34

Issue: Evaluation**Area: ICT- Swing**

Employee received evaluation that reflected inappropriate negative narratives in the narrative section. Steward Chris Killian met with the manager and was successful at getting the negative narratives removed. Article 12

Issue: AWOL**Area: Submission- Data- Swing**

Employee was charged with 30 minutes of AWOL after coming in 30 minutes late due to a medical reason. Due to the fact that management did not give the employee the opportunity to use sick leave or annual leave, Steward Dawn Horton immediately filed the grievance and was successful at getting the 30 minutes of AWOL removed and replacing it with Sick Leave. Article 34

Issue: AWOL**Area: Submission- Data-Swing**

Employee was charged with 13 hours of AWOL after being out of work for a day and a ½ for medical reasons. Management denied LWOP pay request and charged employee with AWOL. Steward Chris Killian addressed the issue informally with the unit manager and was successful at getting all 13 hours of AWOL removed and changed to LWOP. Article 34

Issue: UNAX**Area: Complaine- CSCO- Days**

Compliance employee was given notice that IRS intended to remove them for a UNAX violation. Vice President Michelle Gardea, presented an oral reply on behalf of the employee. She addressed the laws, rules, and regulations outlining managements requirements as well as the Douglas Factors and was successful at getting the removal mitigated down to a 3 day suspension. Proof that another career was saved because of union membership and quality representation.

Issue: Conduct Counseling**Area: Submission- Data- Swing**

Employee was given counseling for failing to follow management's directive. Counseling included allegations of disruptive behavior and misconduct in the work area. Assistant Chief Steward Marcella Gutierrez met with management regarding the counseling letter and pointed out where the wrong dates were used as well as incorrect allegations. Management agreed to remove the letter from the employee's drop file.

Issue: Release/Recall**Area: Submission-Code & Edit**

Employee was informed that she should have returned to duty on Feb 19th but was not called to duty until Feb 21st. Employee contacted NTEU and Assistant Chief Steward Marcella Gutierrez immediately filed the grievance. After meeting at the Director level, the employee was awarded back pay from Feb. 19th- Feb. 21st, 2008 including the night differential. Article 14

Issue: AWOL**Area: ICT- Swing**

Employee requested 5.5 hours of sick leave but management charged employee with 5.5 hours of AWOL instead. Steward Chris Killian filed the grievance and was successful at getting the 5.5 hours of AWOL removed and changed to 5.5 hours of Sick Leave. Article 34

Issue: Negative Narratives**Area: AM-Swing**

Employee received inappropriate comments in the narrative section of her evaluation. President Jason Sisk filed a grievance and was successful at getting the inappropriate comments removed and preventing them from becoming a permanent part of the employee's evaluation. Article 12

Issue: AWOL**Area: Submission- Data- Swing**

Employee requested to leave 1.5 hours early due to child care issues. Management charged employee with 1.5 hours of AWOL. Steward Chris Killian met with management and was successful at getting the 1.5 hours of AWOL removed and changed to LWOP. Article 34

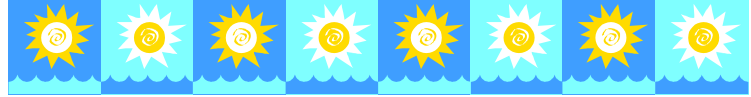
Issue: Opportunity Letter**Area: Submission- Data- Days**

Data Employee approached NTEU with the issue of being placed on opportunity letter from her previous years appointment. Management tried to carryover the opportunity letter to the present date. By keeping employee on this letter, she was not allowed to work overtime. Steward Keith Richards spoke with employee's team leader, and explained to her, per Article 40 Section 2, an opportunity letter is for a period of 60 CALENDER days only. Management removed the opportunity letter from the employees file, and allowed her to work overtime that upcoming weekend.

Issue: AWOL**Area: Submission RAIVS- Days**

RAIVS employee came to NTEU because management charged her with AWOL for not calling in on time. The employee made attempts to call in on time, but could not reach anyone. Steward Keith Richards met with management and informed them of guidelines mentioned in Article 34 Section 2. Management agreed to remove the AWOL and replace it with leave without pay.

NOTE: Never talk to TIGTA without union representation.....ever!



NTEU Members Only.....



With gas prices at a record high, planning a summer vacation may be taking a back seat to the local water parks. The good folks at Wild Water Adventures and the Island Waterpark offer NTEU members a fabulous discount on one day passes. Members can enjoy fun in the sun at Wild Water Adventures for only \$16.00 per person. Members also have the option to set sail to The Island for only \$15.00 per person which includes an all day drink beverage. Tickets are available at the Butler Site only on day shift by contacting Michelle Gardea at 454-7229/454-6626 or by contacting Marcella Gutierrez on swing shift at 454-6626.

Note: All tickets are sold on a cash-only basis.



New Discounts For NTEU Members

Fresno- NTEU members and IRS employees now receive a 15% discount on breakfast, lunch, or dinner at Denny's Restaurant just by showing your IRS badge!

Discount available at the Kings Canyon & Clovis location only.

Clovis- BC Pizza offers NTEU members a coupon good for any 4-Topping XL-Pizza for \$13.99. BC Pizza is located on Shaw Ave, Across from Sierra Vista Mall. Coupons available by contacting Membership/Benefits Coordinator Marcella Gutierrez.

Visalia- Got smokehouse style ribs and chicken on your brain??? NTEU members receive a 10% discount at Granny & Pappa's Smokehouse BBQ. Discounts cards available by contacting Marcella Gutierrez at 454-6626. Granny & Pappa's is located in Youngs Market on the corner of Walnut and Demaree. Say hello to Scoop (Owner) and tell him, Marcella sent you!

NTEU Member Ticket Prices:

Knott's Berry Farm Adult \$25.99 /
Child \$17.99

Legoland (Adult and Child) \$41.00

Monterey Bay Aquarium- Adult \$21.95/
Child Ages 3-12 -\$12.95

Universal Studios -Annual Pass \$64.00/
2-day Pass \$49.00

Movie Tickets \$7.00 - No Restrictions

Great America- Adult and Child tickets \$29.99

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk-Unlimited Ride
Pass \$22.95

Gilroy Gardens - Adult and Child tickets
\$23.00

Wild Water Adventures \$16.00

Island Water Park \$15.00 - includes all day
beverage

Six Flags Magic Mountain- Adult \$24.99/
Child \$15.00

Note: All members (including furloughed members) are eligible to purchase tickets. Day shift employees can purchase tickets by calling Michelle Gardea at 454-7229 between the hours of 10am-3:00pm or by calling Marcella Gutierrez on swing shift at 454-6626 from the hours of 3:00pm-11:30pm.

Tickets are kept at the Butler Site and are sold on a cash-only, exact change basis.

Over 120 Wins and Counting



Above: Chapter 97
President Jason Sisk and
Vice President Michelle
Gardea

It has been approximately one year since the current administration took office. President Jason Sisk and Vice President Michelle Gardea have many accomplishments 'under their belt', including first-ever visits from NTEU National President Colleen Kelley and 20th District Congressional Representative Jim Costa.

Jason and Michelle have corrected many errors of the previous administration. NTEU Chapter 97 had been non-compliant for tax years 2004, 2005, and 2006; Jason and Michelle took the necessary actions to address and correct these oversights. The end result was an abatement of penalties and interest for late filing in excess of \$10,000.00!

Jason and Michelle have made many strides in enhancing the credibility and strength of Chapter 97. Over the last 12 months, countless potential grievances have been won informally, over 120 grievances have been won formally, and close to another hundred cases have been invoked for arbitration by the stewards, attorneys, and officers of NTEU Chapter 97.

Grievance Wins Continued.....

Issue: Opportunity Letter

Area: Submission-Data- Days

Employee contacted NTEU after her supervisor would not remove an opportunity from her file. Steward Keith Richards met with management and pointed out that the employee's work performance had improved significantly, thus she should not be on an opportunity letter. After reviewing the employee's records once again, and reminding management of Article 40, management decided to remove the letter from her file. Employee is no longer on an opportunity Letter.

Issue: Advance Sick Leave

Area: ICT- Days

ICT employee came to NTEU because she had been denied 80 hours of advanced sick leave even though she had the proper medical documentation.

Keith Richards spoke with the Team leader and Department Manager. Management stated the employee had already been given 80 hours of advance sick leave in the past, and felt that was sufficient. Therefore additional time was denied. Keith directed their attention to Article 34 Section 5. Which states an employee is entitled to 30 workdays or 240 hours of advance sick leave. Since the employee had only used 80 hours of this time an additional 80 hours would still be within their means to grant to her. After the meeting, management approved the request for the 80 hours of Advance Sick Leave as well as the employees request for FMLA.

Issue: Part Time Schedule

Area: Submission- Data- Days

DATA employee came to NTEU because she was not allowed her request to work a part time schedule.

Employee has children under the age of six. Steward Keith Richards met with management and informed them of the verbage outlined in Article 22 Section 3 regarding Part Time Schedules. After speaking with the DM, The DM agreed to allow the employee to work a part time schedule.

Issue: Overtime

Area: Submission- Data- Days

Data employee came to the union office concerned with the fact that she was not notified of an overtime offer. The employee was on leave the day before. Steward Keith Richards spoke with management and was told by the employee's supervisor that she forgot to call the employee at home to notify her of the overtime. Although the issue was grievable, Keith met with management informally and informed them of procedures outlined in Article 24 and suggested she let employee make up the overtime, or pay employee for the day she missed. Management allowed employee to make up the overtime missed. Employee was pleased with the resolution and thanked Steward Keith Richards for his help. No grievance filed.

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Did you know

- As campus employee's, we all have the right to agency e-mail accounts. (Article 11, section 21A)?
- Email is accessible from any IRS kiosk by doing the following: click on the sixth red Employee Tools/Services button on the right (remote email). Then click "email now". You can check your e-mail from *ANY location within the IRS* using any computer that has a web browser?
- President Jason Sisk began his career at the Internal Revenue Service in 1989 in RPS as a Data Transcriber?
- Vice President Michelle Gardea began her career at the Internal Revenue Service in 1985 as Tax Examiner in ERS?
- Membership Benefits Coordinator Marcella Gutierrez and President Jason Sisk were successful in helping over 1,800 employee's join NTEU as union members during new hire orientations this past filing season?

Reader Contest

Question: How can we improve our newsletter? What do you like to read about? What would you like us to add to each issue or remove from each issue? We want to hear from you!

Comments and suggestions should be sent to Marcella Gutierrez via email at: marcella.m.gutierrez@irs.gov.

Deadline is July 31st. Remember to include your Name, Stop Number and Phone Number.

Enter the contest for a chance to win a prize! We will draw names from all who enter and randomly pick 3 winners.

April/ May NTEU Newsletter Winner:
 Accounts Management -Ronda Brown.

