



Newsletter

AFGE Local 2578

JANUARY 2015

Message from the Vice President

To our Union Brothers and Sisters,

Hoping you and your families enjoyed a wonderful holiday season. As we look forward to 2015, I am excited that we have a lot to build on from 2014. Getting the newsletter started and now putting out our second issue is helping us to get our message to you in a positive way - thanks to the efforts of our editors and many contributors from across the country. We are starting a very aggressive recruitment drive in 2015. Our Secretary, **Jeremy Schmidt**, has come up with an incentive program which we hope will increase our membership by at least a third by the end of 2016. This May, we will have our annual representative and officer training program. We are also expanding on training opportunities through teleconference learning throughout the year. This is just the tip of the iceberg of what we hope to accomplish in 2015. Keep in mind that none of this is possible without the support of each and every one of you. Thank you!



In solidarity,

Mitchell Buffone, Vice-President Local 2578
AFGE Local 2578 Vice President

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Did you know . . .

If an employee invokes the right to have a union representative present for a meeting that could reasonably be considered to be related to a disciplinary or adverse action, the agency official must postpone the discussion for a reasonable amount of time so that a representative may be present.

Washington National Records Center 5th Annual Veterans Luncheon

Ebony Tate, Washington National Records Center



During the month of November, the Washington National Records Center held its 5th Annual Veterans Luncheon. The number of attendees was the highest it's been since the luncheon first began in 2010; guests included the Archivist.

The tradition of honoring WNRC's veterans was initiated by the Veterans Outreach Committee and funded through donations from the center's veterans. The vision of the committee was that this tradition would become contagious and veterans will be recognized across NARA.

This event has been eagerly received by participants and agency management. Everyone enjoys the camaraderie, food, and the touching speeches from guests. This year's success can be greatly attributed to a generous donation of \$250.00 from AFGE Local 2578.

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Archivist of the United States
David S. Ferriero
Washington National Records Center
5th Annual Veterans Luncheon



**Ballymore Navigator
Wide Aisle Ladder**
(without modification)

New Ballymore Wide Aisle Ladders

Kenneth West, Lenexa, KS

After collaborating with management, the Lenexa Federal Records Center (FRC) staff recently had the opportunity to work with the new Ballymore wide aisle ladders and came up with a new modification. This came about after staff expressed concern that there were no places for a box on the ladder (especially if it's an oversize box).

As a result of the complaints, management reached out to the Ballymore Company to see if a modification could be made. One possible solution is adding a drop-down table for placing a box. The Lenexa FRC did request one ladder to be modified and tested. Together, we decided to modify only one in the event that this modification did not meet our needs. If this works, we will go forward with modifying the remaining 59 wide aisle ladders.

Please stay tuned for updates!

Union Representative Teleconference Training

What's Negotiable under Title VII

Joseph Byrnes, National Archives at College Park

Union representatives and officers of Council 260 organized their first training teleconference on Thursday, October 30, 2014, from noon to 1 p.m. Folks in the area met at the National Archives at College Park (A2), in lecture room D. **Jimi Joseph** and **Ashby Crowder** gave presentations and answered questions about negotiability under Title VII and grievances under Article 24.

The presentations were based on the experiences of representatives from around the country. Before the day of the session, presentation slides were sent to participants in order to allow time to think and reflect, ask questions, or give suggestions on content.

This is the first time that we have held this type of training and it worked well. We plan to do it again before our annual training in April. In addition, there were requests to use the teleconference format for presentations to bargaining unit employees at specific sites or groups of sites.

Our October training was done on official time and counted against the normal monthly allotment of union time, per Article 29, Section 6.

**Federal Labor Relations Authority's (FLRA)
Guide to Negotiability**

https://www.flra.gov/webfm_send/726

Request the presentation slides from
Joseph Byrnes: joseph.byrnes@nara.gov



Money: Money-Saving Benefits Available Only to AFGE Members

When you join the union, you have access to these AFGE benefits. These benefits are backed by the collective strength of over 10-million members of AFL-CIO unions. By using one or two of the programs, many members save as much as their annual dues.

Each newsletter will have a new topic on benefits available to only to AFGE members. This article focuses on MONEY.

[AFGE Credit Card](#)

Features include cash back, a competitive-rate, no annual fee and a valuable Member Advocacy Program.

[AFGE Debit Card](#)

AFGE members, AFGE retirees, and AFGE family members are eligible to apply for the Union Plus Prepaid Card. A virtual card is immediately available for loading and shopping online. A permanent card is sent within 7-10 business days.

[Personal Financial Management Course](#)

Your AFGE membership entitles you to take a **no-cost** course from our partner, Grantham University, on personal financial management.

[Free Credit Report](#)

Members are entitled to a free credit report once every 12 months from each of the three credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion.

[Identity Theft -- What to Do](#)

What to do if your personal information has been compromised.

[Credit Counseling Program](#)

Provides AFGE members with high quality confidential financial guidance, free consumer credit counseling services and debt management assistance.

[Identity Protection: MetLife Defender](#)

MetLife Defender will provide AFGE members proactive personal information protection at a 15% discount.

[How To Manage Your Debt](#)

Are You Struggling With Debt? You're not alone. AFGE members have resources which can help identify any problems they might have as well as provide tips and resources to help them take action.

[Union-Made Checks](#)

Union-printed checks and return-address labels

AFGE Member Benefits Information

website: **www.afge.org**

Toll-free Benefits Line:

1-888-844-2343

In DC: **202-639-6941**

Fax: **202-639-6451**

Grievance Process to Pursue Allegations of Discrimination

Ashby Crowder

Local 2578 Delegate to the Council of NARA Locals and
Council 260 Executive Vice President of the Council

As the largest employer in the United States, the Federal Government has a special responsibility to be a model progressive employer. In the area of civil rights discrimination, federal employment has robust and multifaceted ways of dealing with allegations of discrimination. This does not mean that discrimination doesn't occur. Rather, it means that we have an institutional structure for raising and dealing with allegations. Union officials often get questions from bargaining unit employees about whether a particular matter is an [Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\)](#) complaint or a grievance to be submitted under the negotiated grievance procedure.

The law mandates that federal agencies have their own in-house EEO complaints process. NARA's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Programs is designed to enforce the laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination in employment and promote equal opportunities through a continuing affirmative employment program. The in-house EEO complaint process is available to all NARA employees—bargaining unit and non-bargaining unit—to process allegations of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, age (40 or over), disability, genetic information, and retaliation for prior EEO involvement. An [EEO Counselor](#) is a NARA official charged with initiating the informal stage of the EEO complaints process. The counselor is not your personal representative. An employee can, however, designate a representative in the EEO complaint process, including an attorney or a union representative.

Bargaining unit employees have additional EEO rights and protections secured in the collective bargaining agreement. In addition to the EEO groups protected by statute, Article 4 of the bargaining agreement prohibits discrimination based on political affiliation, parental status as defined in Executive Order 13152, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or any other non-meritorious basis covered by federal law, rule, or regulation. Their inclusion in the bargaining agreement gives employees a powerful enforcement mechanism in the negotiated grievance procedure. If an executive order is revoked, the protection would remain in the agreement. For example, Executive Order 13087 bans discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the competitive service, but it does not create enforcement rights under the EEO complaint procedure. (Discrimination based on sexual orientation may be claimed as an EEO violation on the theory of sex discrimination; this is an evolving area of interpretation.)

Grievance Process (continued)

Even if Executive Order 13087 were revoked, the protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation would remain in the contract and be enforceable through arbitration. This is when a neutral third party that the union and the agency have jointly selected rules on a grievance the union and the agency can't resolve on their own.

AFGE leadership at NARA would like to emphasize the availability of the grievance process to pursue allegations of discrimination based on sexual orientation. We believe this aspect of the contract is not widely known or used. At the same time, agency leadership must be commended for the model tone it has taken on this topic, exemplified by the Archivist's statement in NARA Notice 2014-117 on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month.

Certain complaints involving discrimination may be best handled through the negotiated grievance procedure, even if they could be pursued through the EEO complaint process. The EEO process is limited to allegations of prohibited discrimination. This means you can't claim a separate but related violation of the collective bargaining agreement in the EEO complaint process. In such cases, it may be advantageous to wrap all allegations into one grievance and put it before an arbitrator. But remember, the same civil rights violation cannot be claimed under both processes.

In conclusion, you're best equipped to protect your civil rights at work when you understand the parameters of Equal Employment Opportunity. This applies to both the agency complaint procedure and the collective bargaining agreement between NARA and AFGE. In reality, the landscape of procedures and remedies for allegations of discrimination is more complex than what I've presented in this brief discussion. Bargaining unit employees who have concerns in the area of EEO are encouraged to discuss their situations with a [union representative](#).

Helpful Links:

- Processing Complaints of Discrimination by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Federal Employees
http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/directives/lgbt_complaint_processing.cfm
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)
<http://www.nara-at-work.gov/equal-employment-opportunity/index.html>
- EEO Officials <http://www.nara-at-work.gov/equal-employment-opportunity/officials.html>
- National Labor Agreement <http://www.afgecouncil260.org/content/contract.html>

Find a related article by Ashby, *Basics of the Negotiated Grievance Procedure*, in Local 2578 Newsletter, August 2014, page 2.

Presidential Libraries Achievement Award



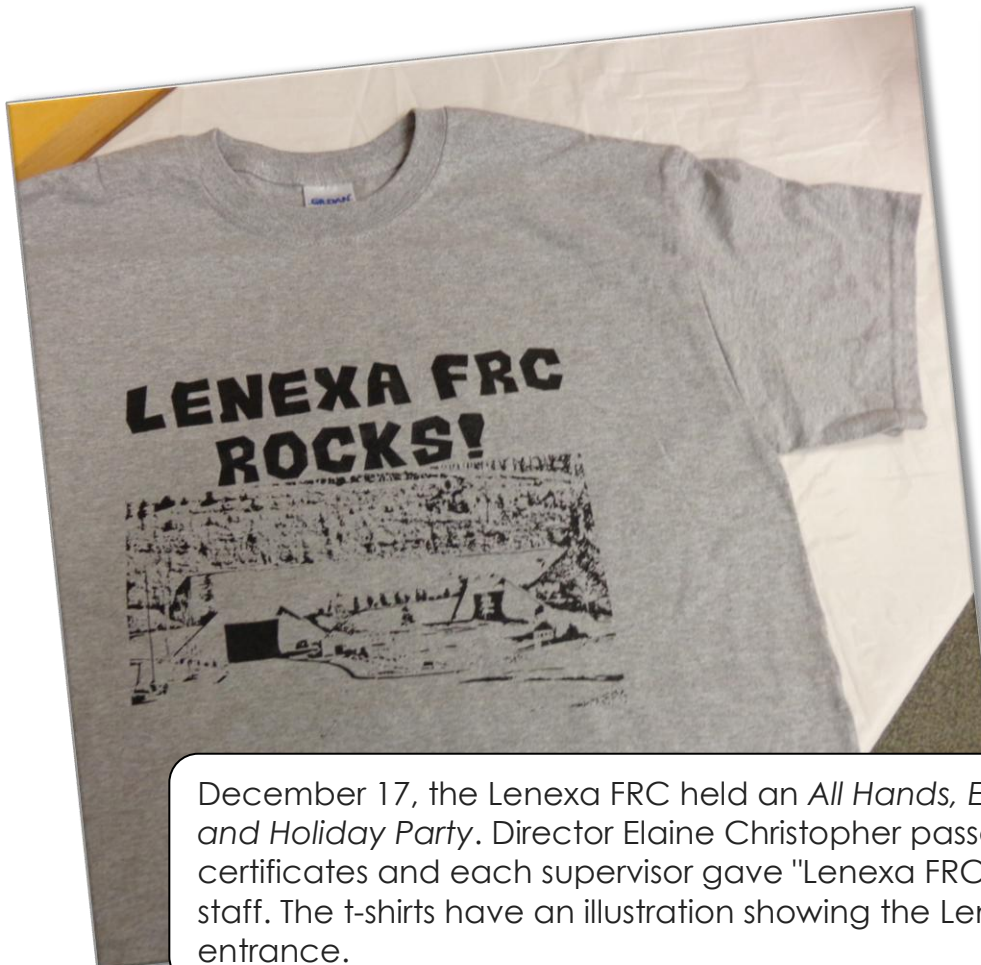
News from the Libraries: Union Members earn Presidential Libraries Achievement Award

The union congratulates Local 2578 members **Marcia Lesan** (Truman Library), **Jeremy Schmidt** (Ford Library), and **Lisa Trampota** (Bush 41 Library) on receiving a *Presidential Libraries Achievement Award*. Each recipient received a medal (pictured) and a certificate.

We are proud of the excellent work done by our local members in support of the mission of the National Archives. For more information about the awards see the ICN post.

ICN Post: <https://icn.nara.gov/blogs/presidentiallibraries/2014/08/20/read-about-the-quarterly-award-winners-here?et=watches.email.blog>

Lenexa Federal Records Center All Hands, Employee Appreciation, & Holiday Party



Events Committee in T-shirts

Top, left to right:

Sue Larson, Latrice Oliver, Velina Mais & Volanta Harris-Mitchell

Bottom, left to right:

Greg Schmidt & Kenneth West

December 17, the Lenexa FRC held an *All Hands, Employee Appreciation, and Holiday Party*. Director Elaine Christopher passed out milestone certificates and each supervisor gave "Lenexa FRC Rock's" t-shirts to their staff. The t-shirts have an illustration showing the Lenexa FRC of the cave entrance.