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QUEEN GIBSON REPORT

My dear colleagues and friends:

The IN BOX newsletter is one way of keeping up with what is going on with Professional Staff members. This newsletter grew out of the PSAC (Professional Staff Advisory Committee) to address our issues/concerns. I will continue to make contributions to the newsletter although the next elected person to the position of Vice President for Professional Staff and Librarians will assume a greater role in presenting articles on various topics.

As my tenure as Vice President of Professional Staff and Librarians comes to an end and as I reflect on what we have accomplished during my “reign” as VP, I am elated by our victories and saddened by the lack of others wins. Together, we accomplished:

- Tuition re-imburement for our members,
- Early registration for classes,
- Compensation for the Professional staff Peer Review Committee chair,
- Having a Professional Staff Peer Review observer during our promotions process, and
- Creating *The In Box* newsletter.

These are a few of the accomplishments that occurred during my tenure as Vice President for Professional Staff and Librarians. It saddens me that we are still without a contract, yet I remain hopeful about the future of AFT Unions and Local 1839. I also still am hopeful that the 40 Professional Staff agency fee members will join us in full membership. The union needs you; we need your support.

I hope more of you will become active in our Local to keep it strong and active.

In Solidarity,
Queen

This year, AFT Local 1839 began a new tradition at its annual scholarship and awards luncheon. Our Union invited Marcus Calero, this year’s winner of the Donald Silberman Scholarship to read aloud his essay about the importance of unions.

It’s become fashionable in recent years for politicians to blame unions for the ills of the world. Marcus’s essay reminds us that unions have a place in society and that they represent the best pathway for workers to improve their lot in life.

WHY UNIONS MATTER

MARCUS CALERO

PRESENTED AT AFT LOCAL 1839 AWARD AND SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON, MARCH 22, 2016.

Unions are more important to many people these days than before because of the circumstances we are in: our government including war and the debt. These factors have an affect on us.

Unions are the collective voice of workers coming together to express their opinions on matters that are important to them or the company. Union, a word that has heavy meaning behind it; when workers join together for something that can change their

work environment for the better, such as fairer wages, safer working conditions, and new ways to improve efficiency.

Unions matter in our history for they help change the working environment for workers so they can do their jobs effectively and be fully productive. Unions have helped workers by shortening the length of the work week or by enabling employees to receive sick or family leave so they can take care of a family member or bring a new baby into the world.

One voice alone cannot do much, but combining it with others can do amazing things. Having a collective voice makes a difference between living a healthy life or in having to constantly struggle just to make it through another day. Every type of worker who depends on unions needs them to just help living with life.

Without a union, my family wouldn't have been able to take care of my dad when he got hurt from his job in a cold storage facility where he prepared meat shipments for delivery to local supermarkets. He always was waking up early and coming home tired from a hard day.

When he was injured, he was forced to retire but he was paid compensation for his injuries. Between this money, coupled with my mother's job, we were able to pay our bills. Without a union, I don't think I would have had a home to grow up in, NOR would I have been able to attend college.

That's why unions are important to me. They give peace of mind by providing fair wages for workers and by making their work environment bearable. Not only do they help the worker: They also help the family as well, by allowing parents to know that they have a place of work to go to so they can raise a family.

DID YOU KNOW?

By Cynthia Vazquez

NJCU is not a very big campus yet there are many employees who have worked here for years who some of us may not know very well. Take for example Christopher Cofone, Assistant Director in the Career Advisement Center. Chris has worked for NJCU for a little over fifteen years as a career counselor and yet we have never interacted with one another professionally. As a matter of fact, I wasn't sure what being a career counselor exactly entails. After we spoke this is what I learned:

Chris serves an advisor for students who seek information regarding career choices and informs students of job opportunities, provides workshops on resume writing and also informs them of agencies and or organizations that may have internship opportunities. Providing information to students regarding career choices before and after graduation is extremely important according to Chris because career advice is not something that can be learned in the classroom. Chris stated that the job market today is extremely competitive, and yet students do not know how to sell themselves when they are preparing for interviews. For this reason Chris feels it is necessary to be that person who guides them in the right direction.

However what most of you do not know about Chris is that he is also a lover of animals...dogs to be specific. Chris is a regular volunteer at an animal sanctuary in southern Utah called "Best Friends Animal Sanctuary." He visits the sanctuary twice a year for about one week or two and spends time assisting with the rehabilitation of the animals. The sanctuary, located in beautiful and remote Angel Canyon, serves as a peaceful home to a variety of animals such as horses, cats, eagles, falcons, rabbits and dogs. Chris mentioned to me that he even spent time with "Lucas," the most well-known of the many dogs that were sent to the Best Friends sanctuary, after they were seized from Michael Vick, the NFL football player who went to jail for illegally operating dog fights on his property.

Chris expressed his love for protecting animals and said that many of the animals at the sanctuary are in need of medical attention due to being mistreated or being abandoned and found in distressed situations. His love for dogs have led him in recent years to adopt three from Best Friends: Bongo, Dinah, and Dottie.

Did you know....that in addition to being a hero for animals, Chris also takes professional writing classes in Manhattan and recently authored "The Perfect Game," an E-book (available online at Amazon) created for kids ages nine to twelve years old who have a love for the game of baseball. When I asked him what got him involved in writing he said, "Often while watching television or movies I would pay close attention to the story lines; it pushed me to learn how to express myself creatively, which is why I wanted to become a better writer. From writing I also became interested in acting."

Presently Chris has taken over sixteen professional acting classes; last fall he received a callback after going on his first audition and was cast in the role of Lieutenant Henry Bowers in the play "Terra Nova," which ran at Nutley Little Theater.

Such an accomplishment is why Chris feels that it is important for students to never stop pursuing their dreams. I asked Chris what advice would he give to NJCU students regarding their career goals and he replied, "Just like in sports, if you do what your coach tells you and invest time in practicing, you will reach your goals."

NEWS AND NOTES:

MADISON, WISCONSIN-APRIL 9, 2016 (*THE RECORD*)

Three labor unions in Wisconsin have won the first round in their efforts to overturn the state's right to work law espoused by Governor (and failed presidential candidate) Scott Walker. A County Circuit Court agreed with the unions who argued the law represented an unconstitutional seizure of union property.

The unions had argued the new law "amounts to the government taking union funds without compensation because under the law unions must represent people who do not pay dues..." The judge, William Foust, noted that no other union had ever used this approach before to argue against a state right to work law and he said the requirement that unions represent employees who do not pay dues "presents an existential threat to unions. State officials, including the Republican Attorney General, say they will appeal Judge Foust's ruling.

THE WASHINGTON POST: APRIL 5, 2016 (CITED IN THE RECORD)

Supporters of raising the minimum wage at the state and local levels may find themselves with an unexpected ally: business executives. A recent survey of 1,000 business executives by Republican pollster Frank Luntz, found that 80% of the responders said they supported raising their state's minimum wage, while only 8% opposed it.

The survey was conducted on behalf of state chambers of commerce. During a webinar where he presented the survey results, Pollster Luntz told the state chamber executives that the results were not a surprise to him, as he's seen similar results before. "...this is universal. If you're fighting against a minimum wage increase, you're fighting an uphill battle, because most Americans, even most Republicans, are OK with raising the minimum wage.

The survey was conducted by the Council of State Chambers and a copy of the survey was obtained by a liberal watchdog group, called the Center for Media and Democracy.

WORTH THE READ:

"YOU ONLY THINK YOU'RE COVERED" *TIME* (MARCH 14, 2016)

Most people at one point or another have experienced "sticker shock" where the item you want costs much more than you expected. But what happens if sticker shock occurs for a life-saving procedure for you or a loved one? What happens then? What can you do?

Sadly, according to a Consumer Reports study cited in *TIME*, that unexpected surprise is something one of every three Americans will face every two years. They're called surprise medical bills. They happen because even though your doctor and hospital may be in-network, some of the services you receive at the hospital were performed by out-of-network providers working under separate contracts. The problem, though, is that you don't know these contractors are out of network, until you get the bill in the mail.

In part, the problem is associated with Obamacare's growing pains. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) fixes part of the issue, but there are loopholes. While the ACA limits out of pocket costs for individuals and families, those limits apply only to in-network care. If you go out of network or "inadvertently receive out-of-patient care at an in-network facility...", then you're on the hook for those out of network costs, even if you didn't know about them.

The same problem exists with emergency room visits, when worrying about the costs is the last thing on your mind. Under the ACA, insurers must abide by in-network co-pays even if you're out of network. However, out of network doctors and medical staff who are not in the network at the time of your emergency room visit, "can still bill the patient the difference between what the insurer pays and the doctor charges."

It's all a matter of money. Someone has to pay for the services you receive and according to *TIME* that's usually the doctors, hospitals, or insurance companies who all point the finger at each other.

Some actions have been taken. In New York State, disagreements between insurance companies and health care providers must go to arbitration. There is also proposed

Federal legislation to require hospitals to tell their patients when they might receive care from out of network providers and give them an estimate of how much the out of networkers will charge.

GOOD TO KNOW:

"THINK TWICE BEFORE RESETTING YOUR PASSWORD" *CSM (CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR) PASSCODE, MARCH 9, 2016*

Don't be too quick change your password, unless you believe it's been compromised. You could be doing more harm than good.

Researchers cited by a division of the *Christian Science Monitor* say that changing your password too often can actually help someone compromise your cybersecurity efforts. It seems that most people when they change their passwords, make only minor adjustments to ones they already have. So, if an unauthorized person knows your old password, chances are they can figure out your new password pretty easily.

The way to avoid this: select a new password totally unrelated to the one you're using.