



Voice of America Exports Jobs to China

“These jobs should be done by Americans with security clearances,” the local president says.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Voice of America (VOA), the taxpayer-funded international broadcasting service, exists to “represent America” to the world, according to the VOA Web site. Now VOA is shutting down its Washington, D.C.-based night shift and exporting the jobs of eight newswriters and broadcasters to communist China.

“We’re not moving to Hong Kong because it’s cheaper labor,” VOA Director **David S. Jackson** told the Reuters news service. “We’re moving to Hong Kong because it’s

an increasingly important part of the world.” Nonetheless, Jackson conceded, VOA expects to save about \$300,000 in salaries and benefits, thanks to cheaper labor in Asia.

“These jobs should be done by Americans who have security clearances, and there is no need to outsource these jobs to communist China,” said **Tim Shamble**, president of AFGE Local 1812, which represents the jour-

nalists whose jobs are moving across the ocean. “They could be done right here in the United States.”

At present, VOA says it has no plans to outsource other jobs, and Jackson says they will keep the former night-shift crew on staff at a lower salary (due to the loss of their overnight differential).

(continued on page 7)

Union Members Stage Teach-In at Customs Building

Intent on throwing light on the attempt to silence federal workers now taking place in the Department of Homeland Security and the Defense Department, members of AFGE Council 1 took to the sidewalk outside the U.S. Customs headquarters earlier this month in an effort to educate the public. The employees of both agencies are fighting proposed personnel rules that will eliminate all meaningful collective bargaining and due process, thereby undermining whistleblower protections.

“How will national security be served when morale takes a nose-dive among the employees who protect our borders and support our troops?” asked Council 1 President **Avis Buchanan**. “How will it serve the American people when federal employees dare not blow the whistle on wrongdoing within the government because unions are powerless to protect them?” Council 1 represents federal workers in the Washington, D.C., area.

The AFGE members rallied after attending a memorial service held in honor of fallen



Kurt Gallagher for AFGE

Members of AFGE Council 1 teach Washington what’s at stake in personnel regs fight.

law enforcement officers of the Customs and Border Protection bureau of the Department of Homeland Security.

“I can think of a thousand better ways to honor the memory of fallen colleagues than to strip current federal workers, including federal law enforcement officers, of workplace protections, adequate training and a sense of fairness on the job,” said **Charles Showalter**, president of AFGE’s Homeland Security Council, which represents the CPB officers.

Table of Contents

Page 2

A Message from National President John Gage

Page 3

CaseTrack: Track Grievances Online

Page 4

National Labor College:
Credit Where Credit is Due

Page 6

Criminal Justice Degree Program
Whistleblower Protectors Canned

Page 7

TSA Screeners Address Press Corps

Page 8

Spotlight: FIS Finance Department



John Gage

A Message from National President John Gage

KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY

“I am... against all violations of the Constitution, to silence by force—and not by reason—the complaints or criticisms, just or unjust, of our citizens against the conduct of their agents.” —Thomas Jefferson, 1799

There is a movement afoot, among the political appointees in the federal government, to silence your voice in the workplace, to shield from public view the shenanigans too often taking place behind the scenes: the diversion of taxpayer dollars to bloated corporate contracts, the management-heavy ranks of a government grown suddenly large in the face of a deficit, and the politicization of federal agencies. From agency to agency, different are means are employed, but they all add up to the same end.

In the Department of Defense, a draconian new personnel system is proposed that will enable managers to transfer civilian employees at will—even to war zones. Like their brethren in DoD, workers in the

Department of Homeland Security stand to lose all meaningful collective bargaining rights. Less famously, career employees at the Social Security Administration have been made to carry the White House’s political message, flogging the morally bankrupt idea of a transfer of public funds to private accounts. And countless others live every day under the threat that their jobs will be sold off to the lowest bidder, usually a contractor operating on the Wal-Mart Plan—low wages and lower (if any) health benefits.

All of us at AFGE, from the local to the national level, do battle every day on behalf of the American people, seeking to maintain the constitutional rights that ensure a politically neutral government workforce, and one that provides, on behalf of our fellow citizens, a watchful eye on the powers that be.

In shutting the operation of the government from public view, our opponents seek victory through ignorance. They’re counting on public unawareness of their efforts to yank your 1st Amendment rights to free speech and free association. And they’ll keep you so busy fighting for your very livelihood that you won’t have a moment to pick your head up and look at how it’s being done in other agencies. At last, that’s the plan. It’s up to us to foil that plan. There’s only one way I know of to battle ignorance: education.

At AFGE, we have launched a range of initiative designed to educate our members and staff. Some, like our partnership with

the National Labor College, are formal. Others are simply our everyday work, for what is organizing, if not a form of education?

In this issue of *The Government Standard*, you’ll learn about a number of your union’s education initiatives, including a new service internship through which you can earn college credit for your activism. In another program, we’ve arranged, through Union Privilege, discounted tuition for enrollment in a reputable online university. You’ll learn

about our partnership with the National Labor College, about our most recent Organizing Institute, as well as the sad case of our members at the Voice of America—who educate the world in the ways of democracy, and who just saw their jobs outsourced to China.

Ultimately, though, the most important education initiative begins with you. We must each commit ourselves to learn not just what is going on with our respec-

tive agencies, but in each of the federal agencies. We must stay up to date on the latest lawmaking and the most contentious public debates. We need to familiarize ourselves with the Bill of Rights, and refresh our knowledge of the elegantly simple U.S. Constitution.

It was Thomas Jefferson who most eloquently made the case against the silencing of citizens and for the cause of freedom of speech. Jefferson once told his friend, James Madison, “I cannot live without books.” Neither should we. So let’s crack them open, brothers and sisters. Armed with the knowledge of a larger picture, we can let our stories be known.

“In shutting the operation of the government from public view, our opponents seek victory through ignorance.”

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AFGE Introduces Online System to Track Employee Grievances

AFGE has launched CaseTrack, a Web-based grievance-tracking system that allows local presidents access to up-to-the-minute reports and case information at their own convenience.

Having members' entire grievance data in one place helps local stewards manage and respond to cases. Most importantly, it ensures that no grievance gets overlooked.

CaseTrack is user-friendly. Cases can be retrieved through searches by agency, local, concerned party, case type, case designation or issue. Additionally, cases can be sorted by such categories as employee grievance, union-management grievance, unfair labor practice, MSPB, EEO, notice of change or congressional contact.

In order to have access to all the cases in your local, and to designate who may use the system, the local president must reg-

(continued on page 8)

AFGE-TV *Getting our message out*

In the AFGE's continuing effort to reach our members across the country, and to educate the public on the role of federal employees in the life of the nation, the federation has launched AFGE-TV, a series of 30-minute television programs on the issues of the day.

The first AFGE-TV program focuses on the proposed new personnel system for the Department of Defense (DoD), offering a mix of news items and interviews, as well as a roundtable discussion featuring General Counsel **Mark Roth**, Director **Sharon Pinnock** of the Mobilization and Organizing Department, and National President **John Gage**.

Future programs will focus on issues of national importance. Next up is a look at staffing and other concerns in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The programs air on regional cable television stations in areas targeted for their concentration of employees of the agency on which that particular show is focused. So far, the first show has aired in Norfolk, Virginia; Warner Robins, Georgia; and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. These media markets were targeted for their high concentrations of DoD employees.

Taped copies of the programs are available from the AFGE Service Department for \$PRICE TK. Note that taped copies are available **only in the BETA format**. These will not run in your VCR. They are formatted for broadcast, so that locals wishing to buy air time on a local station may provide the station with tape in the appropriate format.



AFGE Membership Provides Assistance With Education Services



• AFGE Online Education and Degree Program

AFGE members can get a bachelor's or master's degree online at a 22% discount

• On-Line Training Program

Learn new technical skills. More than 1200 courses offered over the internet. MCSE, MOUS certified courses. A+ certification

• College Funding

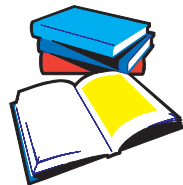
AFGE members' one-stop college shop. Get answers on everything from "How do I select a college?" to "How do I pay for college?"

• Union Book Store

Great prices at AFGE's online unionized bookstore

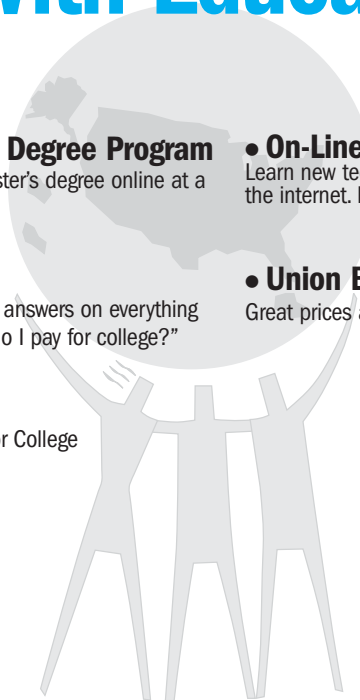
• Scholarships

- ★The JNS Scholarship for the National Labor College
- ★The Union Plus Scholarship



For more information about all the money saving benefits brought to you by AFGE visit:

www.afge.org 



Programs are subject to change and certain restrictions may apply

AFGE, AFL-CIO
80 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
www.afge.org

Toll-free Benefits Line:
1/888/844-2343
In DC: 639-6941

Credit Where Credit is Due

New College Degree for AFGE Members Gives Credit for a Lifetime of Learning

For too many people, the dream of earning a college degree seems almost impossible to make real. Life's demands allow little time for attending classes on a rigid schedule, and tuition cost keep going up.

Yet in today's world, a bachelor's degree is often a requirement for moving ahead in one's career, or even just to keep pace in the middle class. "That's why we're finding new ways to help members who never had a chance to go to college get the education they deserve," explains Virginia duRivage, director of the federation's Education Department.

DuRivage is working with her counterparts at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Maryland, to put together a degree program for AFGE members that awards them college credit for their real-life experience as union activists and federal employees, and offers AFGE training courses as accred-

ited college curricula that will count toward the Labor College's undergraduate diploma, including the new Bachelor of Technical/Professional Studies (BTPS).

Get credit for your service

"This is one bachelor's degree that really is within reach of most working people," duRivage explains, "because nearly all the course work can be done through distance-learning, online."

"This is one bachelor's degree that really is within reach of most working people, because nearly all the course work can be done through distance-learning, online."

"Even more exciting," she continues, "is the new AFGE Service Internship, which will award both college credit and a \$2,500 stipend for doing the work that union activists do all the time: working on one of our issue campaigns or on a mobilization effort."

Under the three-credit internship, a member will be required to work with an academic adviser and write about the work she or he has performed as an intern. Members may earn up



Soon AFGE members will be able to get college credit for training sessions like this recent Local Presidents' Training at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md.

to 27 credits through internships toward the BTPS degree, or up to six credits toward a Bachelor of Arts degree from the National Labor College.

AFGE issue campaigns eligible for internships include advocacy for veterans' health care, as well as activism to delay implementation of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations, stop Social Security privatization, create a fair pay-for-performance system, and save civil service protections in the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security.

Credit where credit is due

If you don't already have a bachelor's degree, chances are you've already earned a number of college credits, even if you never started college. That's because in the National Labor College's undergraduate programs, your life experience is regarded as accumulated knowledge worthy of degree credit. Your work experience, military service, union apprenticeships and union training are rewarded with credit toward your degree.

Soon, several AFGE training programs will also count toward your degree. If you're

AFGE staff take pride in their role as educators. Here Beth Moten, director of legislative and political action, teaches a session on lobbying for local presidents.



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Janet Winghart



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Sharon Pinnock, director of membership and organization, lays out the Lunch 'n' Learn tool kit during a session of the Organizing Institute.

planning to sign up for Local Presidents' Training or Local Financial Officers' Training, you'll be studying a standard curriculum, and your completion certificate will earn you a credit hour at the National Labor College. Enrollment and participation in AFGE's week-long Organizing Institute sessions will do the same. (See related article on the next page.)

The right program for you

In addition to the online Bachelor of Technical/Professional Studies degree program, the National Labor College also offers a more traditional Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in which a student majors in a particular course of study. Among the majors offered by the Labor College are Labor Studies, Labor Leadership & Administration, Labor History, Political Economy of Labor, Labor Education and Labor Safety & Health.

While studying for a National Labor College BA degree, students do in-residence coursework at the College for a total of three weeks out of the academic year. The courses are conducted in one-week sessions, so the degree plan usually requires the student to travel to the Labor College campus—a few miles from Washington, D.C.—three times during the year. The degree usually takes three years to complete.

undergraduate level, and AFGE offers eligible members up to \$3,000 per year in tuition costs through the John Sturdivant Scholarship Fund. And you may transfer up to 90

Paying the freight

credits—at no cost—to apply to your 120-credit undergraduate degree from the National Labor College.

“There’s no doubt that a college degree will help to advance your career,” says duRivage. “But that’s not the only reason to pursue it. Learning keeps us young, and arms us with the knowledge we need to fight the good fight for our families. Knowledge is power.”

“Don’t kid yourself; this is hard work,” says National Organizer **Tea Williams**. “Not that we don’t have fun—we surely do. Members who participate in the Organizing Institute get to know each other *really* before the week is out.”

Get Organized!

Organizing Institute is a crash-course in motivating members and winning new ones

The most comprehensive form of education is that which combines classroom learning with hands-on field work. Over the course of one week, that’s what participants in AFGE’s Organizing Institute take in.

“We like to keep people on their toes, because in real-life organizing situations, they’re going to have deal with unforeseen circumstances,” adds Professional Employees Coordinator **Cathie McQuiston**, who conducts the Institute with Williams.

The institute program kicks off with two days of intensive course work, beginning with the dinner hour on the day participants check in. The fun really begins on the third day with the field work, when participants plan and execute an organizing action such as a Lunch ‘n’ Learn. “This is not a vacation,” McQuiston says with a smile. “At the Philadelphia Organizing Institute, we began the field work with a 6 a.m. literature distribution.”

Criminal Justice Degree Program

AFGE members can earn a Criminal Justice Degree online through our partnership with Grantham University, a fully accredited long-distance learning institution. Members enjoy an exclusive discount off tuition and fees that are up to 50 percent less than charged by other major online universities.

AFGE members can earn, completely online, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice (CJ). None of the programs require on-campus or traditional classroom attendance. And Grantham students are not required to log onto the internet on specific days or specific times.

Accelerated degree programs are available in Criminal Justice General, Criminal Justice Homeland Security, and Criminal Justice Computer Science. The university also offers associates', bachelors' and masters' degree programs in Business Administration, Computer Science, Engineering and much more.

For those AFGE members who are veterans or military family members, or military on active duty, be sure to ask about other unique scholarship programs Grantham offers.

And if you don't have a home computer, or need to update your current equipment, take advantage of AFGE home computer purchase options including discounts from Apple and Dell.

For more information visit www.afge.org or call Grantham at 800-955-2527. Be sure to have your AFGE local and member numbers handy.

Turn your union activism into college credit with an AFGE Student Internship!



BRAC, Veteran's Health Care, NSPS, DHS, Pay for Performance, Social Security Privatization — there is no end to the campaigns AFGE is engaged in to support job rights and fair treatment for all federal employees. Become a key player in these campaigns through an AFGE Service Internship! Each internship pays a \$2500 stipend and offers 3 credits towards a degree at the National Labor College.

Find out how you can play an active role in fighting for the rights of federal workers and contributing to the strength of AFGE. Contact the Education and Leadership Development Department today at 202-639-4013. Or e-mail us at education@afge.org

NEW BENEFIT FOR AFGE MEMBERS

Professional Liability Insurance

Imagine you're accused of misuse of government property, insubordination, refusing to cooperate, inflating an expense report, creating a hostile work environment, retaliatory actions, or simply telling a joke taken the wrong way. Did you know that for such allegations, a lawsuit could be filed against you—personally—placing your family's assets at risk?

Lawsuits against federal employees are increasing at an alarming rate. It's hard to accept that should we somehow make a mistake, our employer or a member of the public could turn against us. But in reality, all it takes is one complaint against management, one angry supervisor, one vindictive inmate, one failed assignment, or one jealous coworker, and both your job and your personal assets could be on the line.

That's why our Professional Liability Insurance program has been developed exclusively for members in consultation with AFGE law enforcement representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Bureau of Prisons and Department of Homeland Security. Underwritten by an A-rated insurance company, this policy draws on the expertise

of a large, experienced law firm to give members the legal representation they deserve.

Available to any member of AFGE for \$11 per pay period, this policy includes such benefits as:

- \$1 million of insurance for judgments arising from acts or errors and omissions involving personal injury, bodily injury, or property damage while you are performing within the scope of your employment
- \$100,000 for defense costs arising out of administrative proceedings
- \$10,000 for accidental death while on the job

For a full description of benefits, you'll want to refer to the policy. The policy and application are available in the Member Benefits section of the AFGE Web site: www.afge.org; or call 1-800-236-1154 for more information.

WIN AN IPOD!

Download iTunes. Download music.

Join the digital music revolution.
Carry a music library in your hand.

We are giving away an iPod to one lucky member!

All AFGE members are invited to enter a sweepstakes for a chance to win a 20GB iPod, courtesy of the AFGE Apple Computer discount program. *The winner will be chosen on June 30, 2005.*

Still using a CD player? You're so old school! Carry hundreds of your favorite songs on the iPod, which fits in your hand. And it's easier than you think to get started.

iTunes software for Mac and Windows is free to install, and there are no subscription fees. Just purchase and download the songs and albums you want. You can also import your CDs, burn new CDs, print CD inserts, and turn your computer into a music jukebox.

There are two ways to enter: online under the Member Benefits section of the AFGE Web site: www.afge.org, or by mail. Send your entry to:

AFGE • M&O Department
80 F Street, NW • Washington, DC 20001

And check out the Apple Member Purchase Program, which offers AFGE members a variety of great deals on popular Apple products with discounts of up to 6% off consumer products; up to 8% off Pro audio products, and up to 17% off Apple software.

Voice of America Exports Jobs

(continued from page 1)

The symbolic import of VOA's move is attracting public attention. VOA, after all, was founded, according to its own literature, "in response to the need of peoples in closed and war-torn societies." The Washington, D.C., chapter of the National Writers Union (NWU-DC), a member union of the AFL-CIO that represents independent writers, issued a statement of "vigorous and vociferous solidarity with our colleagues represented by the American Federation of Government Employees at the Voice of America."

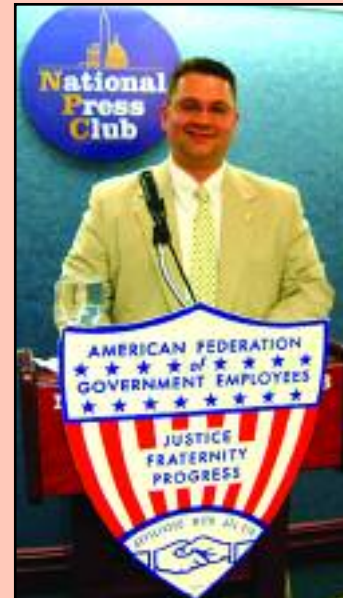
In a letter to VOA chief Jackson, the chapter's executive committee wrote, "This decision [to outsource the jobs to China] is appalling enough in its face. The irony of spreading a message of freedom while removing employment protections, dismantling jobs and off-shoring them to a venue renowned for press repression and serial human rights abuse is cruel and contrary to Americans' best interest." The letter was signed by outgoing NWU-DC chair **Hans Johnson**, and executive committee members **John Feffer**, **Sam Smith** and **Ann Hoffmann**. The writers also sent their letter of protest to Senators **Susan Collins** (R-Maine) and **Joseph Lieberman** (D-Conn.), as well as Reps. **Tom Davis** (R-Va.) and **Henry Waxman** (D-Calif.), the leaders and ranking members of committees that have oversight responsibility for the Voice of America.

A link to the full text of the letter from the National Writers Union can be found at www.afge.org at the "Privatization" section of the "Issues & Action" menu.

Screeners Address Press Corps

Members of AFGE TSA Local 1, which represents federal airport screeners nationwide, addressed the Washington press corps in May to highlight the inadequate training and resources given the screeners. At an AFGE press conference at the National Press Club, **Justin Rooney** of Buffalo-Niagara International Airport and **Kim Kraynak** of Pittsburgh International Airport offered accounts of the obstacles faced by screeners as they try to safeguard the flying public.

They were joined by NVP **Andrea Brooks**, Professional Airways Systems Specialists National President **Tom Brantley** and National Aviation Disaster Alliance/Foundation Vice President **Cindy Sterle**.



Justin Rooney of TSA Local 1/ Buffalo-Niagara International airport.

A.J. Castilla

JOIN TODAY!

AFGE VOLUNTEER ACTION CORPS

Join hundreds of other AFGE members who are actively involved in educating and mobilizing other government employees on workplace issues that directly affect our jobs, our families, and our communities. Fill out the form below and mail to: AFGE Volunteer Action Corps, 80 F Street NW; Washington, DC 20001.

NAME: _____

LOCAL: _____ EMPLOYER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

E-MAIL (HOME): _____

E-MAIL (WORK): _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

At Your Service:

FIS Finance Section

By Dionne Davies

There's not a person in AFGE—neither member nor staff—who is not a consumer of the services of the Finance Section of the federation's Finance and Information Department (FIS). Whether preparing the payroll, cutting expense checks or paying the federation's bills, employees of the Finance Section keep the wheels of the union turning.

The section's 12 employees comprise but one section of FIS, of which the Data Processing Section and Management and Information Systems Section are also a part. The FIS Department is the purview of National Secretary-Treasurer **Jim Davis**. In the Finance Section, employees often speak of their section as a family. FIS

Director **Faye Beardsley**, who began with AFGE 15 years ago, came to the federation because she grew up in a family that worked for unions, and immediately felt it was where she was supposed to be. "I like what AFGE stands for—the cause, its well-developed culture and the family-like traditions and values it encompasses," Beardsley says.

Beardsley stresses the importance of letting staff know that their contributions are valued. "We work to build teams by holding each other accountable and focusing on each other's strengths," she says. Keeping the big picture in mind, Beardsley is responsible for ensuring that the department stays on track with its overall objectives. "I try to facilitate the department's goals through leadership and guidance," she says. In this task, Beardsley works with FIS Deputy Director **Sue Thomas**.

Administrative Assistant **Rosa Reid** has worked at AFGE since 1968. She started as

a file clerk and worked her way up to her current position. Reid's responsibilities include answering correspondence, scheduling meetings, administering the death benefits program and other duties.

"I enjoy working for AFGE because of its benefits and flexibility," says Reid. "The people that I work with are like family to me; we've seen each other through the good times and the bad, and we always have each other's back," says Reid. A sharp dresser, Reid ranks shopping as among her favorite pastimes.



Rodrigo Munera for AFGE

(L-R) *Fronnie Barlow, Charles Smith, Faye Beardsley, Deloris Johnson and Rosa Reid of the Finance and Information Systems Department.*

Deloris Johnson, who has worked for various unions, says she came to AFGE after someone she worked with on a previous job told her about an open insurance clerk position at the federation. Now, 27 years later, she works as a word processing clerk. While she shares some of the same responsibilities as Reid, her responsibilities also include supporting the accounts payable department and managing the Help Desk, which fields requests for computer support from headquarters staff. Johnson says she enjoys the atmosphere in the Finance Section. "The people I work with help to make my job a lot easier," she says. The tall and elegant Johnson is known to move rather well on the dance floor.

Fronnie Barlow, work leader and accounting clerk, has been with AFGE for

30 years. Barlow handles an array of projects including managing expense vouchers for the federation.

She not only enjoys her job, but her co-workers as well. "We've worked together for so long that we know each other's moods; therefore we can act accordingly," she says with a smile. "I've even had the opportunity of watching my co-workers' children grow up."

Also part of the Finance Section family are Accounting Services Manager **Lynn Edwards**; Payroll Administrator **Anna Piper**; Insurance Clerk **Jean Fowler**; Staff Accountants **Tony Davenport, Kevin LaDana** and **Tanya Dorsey**; and Accounting Clerks **Tonya Kelly, Joyce Makonnen** and **Sam Smith**.

Online System to Track Grievances

(continued from page 3)

ister as an administrator. An additional administrator may also be authorized by the local president for his or her local. Presidents should e-mail the following information to casetrack@afge.org:

- Name
- Street address (including city, state, zip)
- Preferred e-mail address
- Desired user name
- Desired password

Local stewards or union reps who will be inputting the cases may also register for access using the registration link located at www.afge-casetrack.org, and

the president or alternate administrator can approve their application for immediate access to the system.



More information is available at www.afge-casetrack.org