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# Solidarity Now!

May-June 2007

Volume 24, Number 2

Communications Workers of America  
Local 4730



Indiana University

Poplars 331

855-7929 or 855-8508

<http://www.indiana.edu/~cwa/>



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## Cooperation and the Rubber Stamp

*by Peter Kaczmarczyk*

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I was recently inspired to write a rather lengthy letter to a local columnist regarding the idea of cooperation and consensus building. The columnist had put forth the idea that cooperation and working together, specifically between different branches and parts of government, are bad things. In a nut shell, he said that such cooperation is the equivalent of rubber stamping of one side's views by the other, and that there must always be push back, rather than coming together.

Cooperation and compromise have become a mainstay in my leadership of this union. It is an approach that I think has benefited staff greatly and has helped us garner more respect and more acknowledgement of our value and worth on campus. There are, of course, areas of strong conviction, where compromises are not possible. I think in the daily interactions between staff and IU that happens infrequently. Usually the truth of a situation, and the answer to its problems, is somewhere in the middle.

By no means do I think that one group (union) should be a rubber stamp for another group (management), but there is a tremendous gap between being a rubber stamp and working together toward a common goal for the common good. Two different sides sit down together, determine where they agree and where they disagree, and then if the gap between them is not too wide, hammer away until they reach a consensus that can meet both sides' desires. It's not always a perfect

method and doesn't always get the results needed, but often it does. It also allows both sides to better understand what the other side is thinking and why they believe what they do. Often in this process, both sides at the table will realize that they were not as far apart as they thought, that they both have similar goals, but perhaps different ways of attaining those goals. This is a good thing. This is how decisions are made in a society with a tremendous breadth of opinions and points of view. Some push back is fine and desirable, but pushing back just for the sake of pushing back is counterproductive and leads, if it is the only method used, to gridlock and a lack of action. So nothing gets done.

The leadership of our local will always be looking out for the interests of the people we represent – the support staff. We will never betray you just to get a problem resolved. However, we will always be willing to consider options, compromises and alternative points of view in trying to get staff, both individually and collectively, the best possible resolutions to the problems that plague us. That's how problems are solved and things are made better for all.

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**Attend the Next Meetings**  
**Thursday, May 24, 2007**  
**Thursday, June 23, 2007**  
**Poplars 185**  
**5:30-6:30 pm**

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## Stewards' Report – it must be time for a vacation

By Bernadette Robinson-Kinzer

Spring has arrived, and some of the situations the local has dealt with indicate it has indeed been a long, hard winter. Staff have begun requesting use of their vacation time benefit for the summer, and historically the most common complaint is supervisors failing to respond within the required three working days as specified in Policy 12.7 <http://www.indiana.edu/~uhrs/policies/ss/12.0/12.7.html>.

❁ This year is no different. Several stewards have dealt with vacation policy complaints. All complaints have been resolved to everyone's satisfaction, but please note that supervisors can perform their jobs best if they know about vacation requests well in advance. Give as much notice as possible, and your supervisor is more likely to grant an approval. Also, note that Policy 12.7 states, "All vacation must be approved in advance by the supervisor. The supervisor must approve or disapprove the request within three working days of the receipt of the request. Advance requests do not require a reason for the absence." What you do in your personal life, on your own time, is not your supervisor's business. The local has taken too many reports this year of management making judgmental statements regarding the quality of their staff's vacation plans and use of their vacation time. Supervisors who make demeaning comments about your vacation plans are acting unprofessionally and are out of line. Read the vacation policy and protect your privacy and self-esteem by not allowing others to criticize your life choices. If someone asks about your plans and you do not wish to share the information, smile politely and tell them it is a surprise. That should keep them wondering and confused for a while.

❁ We also have three stewards who have needed to meet with supervisors and staff on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis to ensure the two parties (staff and supervisor) behave profession-

ally in their dealings with each other. While stewards are aware that progress, like Rome, is built "brick by brick," there is a limit to one's patience. You do not have to like the people you work with, but you do need to work cooperatively with them toward a common goal. Hence, the reason we all collect monetary compensation for our time and efforts at IU—we are employed, not members of a social club. Be reasonable, be pro-active and try to remember you will normally earn respect if you behave as though you deserve respect. Reciprocating a supervisor's childish antics does not help anyone, especially you. Your behavior will only be cited as justification for disciplinary actions.

❁ One steward reports that a supervisor has taken to claiming credit for everything that is accomplished in the department of a positive nature, whether she had anything to do with it or not. When a clerical error occurs, this supervisor blasts off emails blaming one support staff or another for the problem, even when it was the supervisor's error. This entire soap opera has been well documented with emails, so if the supervisor ever tries to discipline staff for any bogus reasons, she will be in a most uncomfortable position. Lastly, morale in this department has suffered greatly. Good supervisors are good leaders. When leadership is lacking, it brings to mind my Italian grandmother's expression, "The fish stinks from the head down, not the tail up."

❁ The North West campus had a heating problem during the last cold snap in one of their buildings. At least one office was intolerably cold for an office situation, registering 50 degrees at the lowest temperature. The IU-CWA Safety Committee was notified, and Maurice Smith (HR-BL) worked with Carolyn Hartley (HR-NW) to bring the temperature up to an acceptable level. This was a temporary fix, and a plan for a permanent solution has been proposed for next year, but we do not yet know the details.

❁ A part-time employee who has been working full-time hours for two years requested a review

*Continued on page 3*

## So Take the Classes Already

By Jane Goldsmith

For the last few years, a trend has been gaining momentum in the hiring practices of the university. When F and G level positions are posted and filled, they are often filled by new hires. This is due to the fact that people who already work at IU have not kept up with the latest training in computer programs, while the people coming in off the street have upgraded their level of expertise in order to get hired. If you are a current IU employee and you are trying to get a higher level position, you owe it to yourself to upgrade your skills.

Here at IU we have the opportunity to improve our skills through classes offered through UITs. Departments are encouraged to have their employees take these classes. Some have allotted money in the departmental budget to pay for the classes and will allow you to have release time to take them.

But what if your department says they don't have the money to pay for the classes? UITs has tutorials that can be downloaded to your desktop from their site ([itraining.iu.edu](http://itraining.iu.edu)), and you can learn at your own pace. And you can download the exercises used in the UITs classes to practice on in the privacy of your own office/home.

As far as which classes to start with, analyze the types of job postings you are interested in. What do these positions require as far as computer skills are concerned? Start with the classes that reflect the requirements for these jobs, but don't limit yourself to them. Try to apply the lessons you have learned in the classes in your current job or in your personal life, so that you can practice what you have learned.

The policy that covers support staff says that "all things being equal," currently appointed staff with seniority should get a job over someone who has less or no seniority. If the deciding factors are computer program skills, you owe it to yourself to refresh what you have already learned or learn new programs.



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### Stewards's Report

Continued from page 2

of his position for qualification to a full-time appointed position. A professional level employee called the union to report the situation as well. CWA requested a UHRS investigation, and we hope to receive notification of the decision soon.

✿ Lastly, an employee needed a steward to contact her supervisor to solicit approval or disapproval of her requested participation in an HR training class. The supervisor explained he had been too busy to read her email request but did grant approval for her to attend.

We are headed into the summer months, and for many units the workload and tension level will decrease. If all goes well, most of us will profit from and enjoy some well-earned and deserved vacation time. If nothing else, I hope everyone enjoys the change in the weather.

## Why I joined CWA

by Jane Torres

For a couple of years, one of my co-workers had been gently prodding me to sign a union card. Truthfully, that was something that I had neither considered nor was interested in. I won't say that he was relentless, but he certainly was persistent. Finally I told him (not exactly in these terms) to just lay off! He never waved a sign-up card in my face again, but he also never missed an opportunity to share with me the issues and movements that CWA was supporting.

I grew up in a small, but heavily industrialized town in east-central Indiana in the 1950s. We had several manufacturing concerns and each of them had a strong labor union. When any of the various unions went on strike, it was a difficult time for the entire town. At that time there were also frequent wildcat strikes which always caused tension and concern. Some contract strikes were so long that the families and the companies were never able to financially recover what they had lost.

My father was vice-president of one of these manufacturing firms and was always involved in negotiations. It was a tense time for our family, as that was in the days when a company official might awake to find his house or his car splashed with black paint. In Dad's fifty-one year career with the company, his home was never vandalized nor was he ever threatened in any way.

It was also a different era, one in which employees were assets to the company, not liabilities as is the case today. There probably wasn't a day that my dad didn't leave his office to go talk to the people on the floor. Many of them became his life-long friends. He had great respect for them as individuals and the work they did.

This was most clearly brought home to me when I had occasion to talk to the former long-time president of the local. I had been quite hesitant to contact him, as I knew that he was one of the

most radical of the membership. His comment to me was, "Janey, your father was a wonderful gentleman. It was a privilege to have worked with him." I think that the operative word there was "with." That best describes business in the 1950s.

All this to say that I was raised squarely on the other side regarding labor unions. Knowing that my father was a man who was regarded as knowledgeable and successful, as a young adult I followed both his politics and his way of life. The politics were the first to fall. What worked well for him certainly wasn't working for me. That trickle just seemed to never get down to me.

Finally, the condition that tipped the scales on the question of union membership was when the gas and oil prices began to rise almost out of reach for my budget. The news was predicting heating costs for the winter at astronomical highs. I knew that this could be the time that could easily put me, as a home owner with a single paycheck, on a disaster course. It would also create an impossible burden for my children and their young families. I was thinking about all of this as I drove to work that morning. I knew that I could no longer fight the frustration of what was to come alone. As I walked past my co-worker's desk, I grabbed one of the membership cards that he has displayed prominently in his area. When he came in a few minutes later that morning, I just handed him my signed card. He sort of looked at me and raised his eyebrows but didn't ask any questions. Basically, he just said welcome!

If you might be wondering who my co-worker is, I think that the name will be well-known to most of you -- Peter Kaczmarczyk! Peter has become a wonderful asset to our CWA local. He is both a fair and intelligent man. His approach to union business is one of reason and well thought-out action. We are lucky to have him as President and I am lucky to have him as a co-worker.

--Jane Torres  
Serial Cataloger  
Herman B Wells Library

## A Letter from the Vice President

by Edward Vasquez

Hello, I am Edward Vasquez, the new Vice President of CWA Local 4730. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to be the vice president of our local. Although we face many obstacles, this is a fighting union. We are working to receive the respect and benefits we are entitled to. I accepted the vice president's position because I believe that President Peter Kaczmarczyk is taking this union in the right direction. We must be an activist union to make sure that we preserve all our benefits and rights and gain some more.

Currently we face many challenges. The most pressing issue at this time is the question of privatization and the university. We must of course oppose this. If we allow the administration to privatize one segment of the university, we are going to let the camel's nose into the tent and the entire camel will follow. Who knows where they will hit next? We must point out everything that will go wrong with these projects. Privatization means hitting working people where it hurts the most—taking away their appointed positions and salaries. But it will also make it impossible for them to attend IU, because it will eliminate the workers' fee courtesies. Soon IU will only be attended by the affluent and will be priced beyond the average worker.

It is imperative that we maintain the public face of this union and make sure not only to take our interests into account in our struggles, but also that of the entire university community. We have to fight any sacrifice of appointed positions for the sake of some scheme contrived only to enrich corporations and politicians.

I encourage the membership to become active in union business, because union power is directly proportional to our numbers and our willingness to struggle. If you are dragging your feet to get involved in union activism, it is time to stop it and get involved. We welcome all thoughts and recommendations regarding the direction of the union and keeping it your union. Also, and I know this is hard to do, encourage your co-workers to join the union. Our strength relies on numbers and the more we are, the stronger we are.

I would also like to take this opportunity to propose that we reactivate the Diversity Committee to represent the grievances of minorities in the CWA and at IU. Our union already courageously took the stance against the marriage amendment proposed in the Indiana State Legislature. It is vital that our union make all our brothers and sisters feel welcome in the IU system, regardless of sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity or race. If benefits are going to be taken from any section of our membership, we must fight this tooth and nail. It should be the task of our union to demand equal and just treatment for all its members, and dare I say, for all in the IU system. Thank you for the opportunity to address you, and I look forward to serving you.



### NOTICE OF STEWARDS' TRAINING

Interested in becoming a steward? Or are you a current steward who would welcome some additional training? Stewards' training is being planned for early summer. You will be notified by email of possible dates, and we will be choosing the date that most stewards can attend. This will be a half-day training session. If you are interested in becoming a steward and attending training, please contact Bernadette Robinson-Kinzer at 855-8508 or 361-8292.

## A Request from the Safety Committee

By Jane Goldsmith

The CWA members of the IU/CWA Safety Committee have a request to make of the constituency we represent. We would like you all to become *ad hoc* members of the Safety Committee. You can become an *ad hoc* member by noticing the physical conditions around you in the buildings you work in and reporting conditions that are threatening (for example, mold growing) or situations that can be improved (for example, low lighting at an exit from a building or a slippery spot on a brick sidewalk). The members of the Safety Committee can't be everywhere on campus, and we are not familiar with the condition of every building.

If you notice changes/problems in your personal environment, the first thing to do is to let your supervisor and the building representative know about the problem. If they are unsure about what to do, you can contact Environmental Health and Safety or the Physical Plant yourself (see policy number 7.1 Health and Safety about who to contact regarding what kind of problem), and they will inspect the area. If you are apprehensive about contacting anyone, contact a CWA member of the Safety Committee, and we will make the calls. The current representatives are Jane Goldsmith (goldsmi@indiana.edu or 855-8237), Marilyn Saum (msaum@indiana.edu or 855-3114) and Natalie McKamey (nat@indiana.edu or 855-2809).

## Backstreet Missions Thrift Store Bargains Galore

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## CWA Calendar

May 2007

**Thursday, May 17, 2007**

Members' Meeting  
Poplars 185  
400 E. 7th. St.  
5:30-6:30 pm

**Wednesday, May 30, 2007**

WRCLC Meeting  
840 West 17th Street, Suite 9  
7:00 pm

June 2007

**Thursday, June 21, 2007**

Members' Meeting  
Poplars 185  
400 E. 7th. St.  
5:30-6:30 pm

**Wednesday, June 27, 2007**

WRCLC Meeting  
840 West 17th Street, Suite 9  
7:00 pm

### CWA BLOOD DRIVE

WHEN: MAY 30, 2007, 11 AM TO 4 PM

WHERE: FOSTER GRESHAM AUXILIARY FOOD COURT

(corner of Law Lane and Fee Lane, one block north of the Kelley School of Business)

To make an appointment to donate, please email June Wickboldt (jwickbol). Appointments are preferred; donors may also walk in, but may have to wait to donate.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help welcome and register donors, offer snacks to donors, and offer general help at the drive should email Jean Rhoads (jrhoads). General information is available on line at [www.givebloodnow.org](http://www.givebloodnow.org).

At <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPEk6ZX8kUs> several people tell the impact a blood donation has had on their lives, and two people from Bloomington let us watch them go through the donation process.

# Parking News – the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

by Linda Harl

The Transportation and Parking Advisory Committee (TPAC) met in late April and set the decal prices for next year. The increase is \$1 per month for the A decal and even less for the other categories. A's will cost \$300 and C's \$108. That's the good news.


The bad news is that there are at least two groups on campus, The President's Parking Committee and the Committee on Sustainability, who recommend a large price increase for the A decal. The idea is that if the price gets high enough, people will stop buying the product and use other means of getting to campus. I

believe that in economic circles this is called the elastic/inelastic supply theory. The same theory is often applied to gas prices when experts say that as prices rise, people will buy less gas. We all know how accurate that prediction has been. Likewise, as far as I can determine, no one has yet proved that an increase in decal prices has resulted in fewer decals being sold.

I have not seen the sustainability report, but I have read the one from the President's Parking Committee. It realizes that parking at the stadium is not an attractive option for most staff and faculty and says "incentives must be developed to make this an option of choice for more people." One suggestion is a time credit for stadium to campus travel. While it is wonderful that the committee realizes that in this case, time is just as important as money, most of the emphasis remains on raising the decal prices for spots in the inner campus.

I can't think of any incentives that would make parking at the stadium attractive to me that wouldn't cost the university money to establish. More shuttles to more spots on campus and some sort of emergency service for those who need to get somewhere quickly are two that come to mind. So, and here's the ugly part, the university isn't going to make the shuttle more attractive without the money from the increased decal prices.

So, what's really going to happen? My best guess - based on years of experience working on parking issues - is that nothing will really change. For years and years, I have said that there is no institutional will to really solve the parking problem, and I still believe that is true. The bottom line is that despite all the moaning and groaning, people are managing to get to work, and that's really all that matters to the administration.



**LOCAL 4730**  
Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO

I hereby request full membership, and all the benefits that go with it, in Communications Workers of America (C.W.A.) Local 4730. I authorize with this form my membership and the deduction of dues from my pay as established by C.W.A.

NAME (print) \_\_\_\_\_

University ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address \_\_\_\_\_

Room # \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ST/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

# Communications Workers of America

Local 4730

Indiana University



## Things You Should Know

By Peter Kaczmarczyk

✧ We frequently get inquiries about whether a job on campus has been filled and by whom. While a department should notify all applicants of a hiring decision in a timely manner, you can check on the job yourself. Go to <https://webdb.iu.edu/humanresources/secure/app-new/posaccept.cfm>. This site is updated weekly.

✧ In the same vein, did you know IU has changed the beginning and ending dates for job postings? It changed from a Sunday-Saturday schedule to a Friday-Thursday schedule. Don't miss out. A better job may be waiting for you.

✧ Have you ever had to work with a union steward? If so, you know they can be a great help. However there is one sure way to lose the trust and support of your steward, and that is to lie to them. Never lie to your steward! We can almost always help you in dealing with your work place issues, but only if you are straight with us. If it turns out you have lied about something, especially if it comes out in the middle of a meeting with management, then you are seriously jeopardizing our ability to help you at all. We can help you and will help you, but only if you are honest with us and give us all the facts we need to beat off the hounds of management.

✧ A personal pet peeve—when I ask someone if they want to join the Local the most frequent response is, “I can't afford it.” This may be true for some of you—two hours pay/month might make the difference between feeding your family or keeping the lights on. However, for most of you, it wouldn't. The fact is you choose not to afford it. You choose to spend your money elsewhere. That's fine and is your right. But be honest with me, and be honest with yourself. If having a union is truly important, you need to make the choice to spend the small amount of money needed to be a member and support the best interests of all Support Staff. Can you really afford not to join?

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