

Alert!

Chapter 52
National Treasury
Employees Union

November, 2003

4.1 Percent Raise in Homestretch

FedWeek November 19, 2003

The proposed 4.1 percent average general schedule raise in January is now only a few steps from becoming final, following a House-Senate conference on a spending bill (HR-2989) to provide that amount. The full House and Senate could vote at any time on the bill and send it to the White House. While the administration all year has advocated a 2 percent raise for January, it has not threatened a veto over the size of the raise. Language in the House version of the bill that did spur a veto threat--which would have blocked implementation of the revised rules the administration issued earlier this year governing contracting-out of federal jobs under Circular A-76--was dropped in favor of less restrictive language that keeps or modifies some protections for employees under the old rules. The measure would allow the in-house side to reorganize into the "most efficient organization" before being put up for bid, require that the contractor's bid save at least 10 percent or \$10 million, and allow employees or their unions to appeal contracting decisions to the General Accounting Office. Meanwhile, a provision of the Defense Department authorization bill would bar use of the revised A-76 policy at that agency pending a report on the revision's effects there.

Mileage Rate Could Rise

FedWeek November 5, 2003

Reimbursement rates for using personal vehicles on official business could rise slightly in 2004 if past practice is repeated. The IRS has announced that for tax year 2004, the rate used for determining deductibility of those expenses will rise from the current 36 cents per mile to 37.5 cents. The federal travel reimbursement rate, which also currently is 36 cents, is set through a different process but generally tracks the IRS figure (the government payment rate can be lower, but not higher, than the IRS deductibility rate). Mileage rates typically are announced by the General Services Administration early in the calendar year and are effective with the start of the year.

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Time Line

- Schedule "use or lose" annual leave by November 29
- FSA & Federal Employees Health Benefits program runs through December 8
- TSP Open Season to run through the end of the calendar year

NTEU CapWiz Legislative Website

November 6, 2003

As you know, NTEU members have a lot at stake in the legislative process. Because pay, benefits, and funding for federal employee jobs are decided directly by Congress, it is imperative that we monitor the legislative process and contact our representatives to let them know our positions on important legislation. To assist in this important and ongoing mission, NTEU has added a website that will make correspondence with Congress much easier and more efficient.

The new website, which can be found at www.capwiz.com/nteu or by clicking on the "Action Alerts" box on the front page of the www.nteu.org website, features up-to-date information on all the legislative issues being followed by NTEU, while spotlighting those issues that are most urgent at any given time. The website provides explanations of the issues, tracks cosponsors of important NTEU legislation, and reports how members of Congress voted on important NTEU votes.

In addition to providing information about NTEU legislation, the website also makes it simple to contact one's member of Congress or Senators about important federal employee issues. Each issue on the website has associated with it a message to Congress which NTEU members can send automatically with a few mouse clicks. By simply choosing the issue about which she is concerned, entering her mailing address into a simple form, and pressing "send," an NTEU member can have NTEU's positions on important federal employee issues communicated to her member of Congress via e-mail. This allows one to correspond with Congress in a fraction of the time that traditional letter writing requires.

I encourage you to begin using the new website and encouraging your chapter members to do the same. Please let them know about www.capwiz.com/nteu, and we can expand our influence and power on Capitol Hill.

Colleen M. Kelley
National President



THE FUNDS – TSP Rates of Return

Rates of Return were updated on **November 3, 2003**.

	G Fund	F Fund	C Fund	S Fund	I Fund
October 2003	0.30%	(1.00%)	5.68%	7.65%	6.06%
<u>Last 12 Months*</u> (11/1/2002 - 10/31/2003)	4.05%	4.89%	20.64%	38.27%	26.66%

* The G, F, C, S, and I Fund returns for the last 12 months assume unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month, and assume that earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.

Be Safe During the Holiday Season

Remember these during your upcoming shopping season!

Please take the time to read this. I know you are smart enough to know these pointers but there will be some, where you will go "hmm I must remember that".

After reading this, forward it to someone you care about. It never hurts to be careful in this crazy world we live in.

1. Tip from Tae Kwon Do: The elbow is the strongest point on your body. If you are close enough to use it, do!

2. Learned this from a tourist guide to New Orleans. If a robber asks for your wallet and/or purse, **DO NOT HAND IT TO HIM**. Toss it away from you.... chances are that he is more interested in your wallet and/or purse than you and he will go for the wallet/purse. **RUN LIKE MAD IN THE OTHER DIRECTION!**

3. If you are ever thrown into the trunk of a car: Kick out the back tail lights and stick your arm out the hole and start waving like crazy.

The driver won't see you but everybody else will. This has saved lives.

4. Women have a tendency to get into their cars after shopping, eating, working, etc., and just sit (doing their checkbook, or making a list, etc. **DON'T DO THIS!** The predator will be watching you, and this is the perfect opportunity for him to get in on the passenger side, put a gun to your head, and tell you where to go. **AS SOON AS YOU GET INTO YOUR CAR, LOCK THE DOORS AND LEAVE.**

5. A few notes about getting into your car in a parking lot, or parking garage:

A.) Be aware of your surroundings, look around you, look into your car, at the passenger side floor, and in the back seat.

B.) If you are parked next to a big van, enter your car from the passenger door. Most serial killers attack their victims by pulling them into their vans while the women are attempting to get into their cars.

C.) Look at the car parked on the driver's side of your vehicle, and the passenger side. If a male is sitting alone in the seat nearest your car, you may want to walk back into the mall, or work, and get a guard/policeman to walk you back out. **IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY.** (And better paranoid than dead.)

6. **ALWAYS** take the elevator instead of the stairs.(Stairwells are horrible places to be alone and the perfect crime spot).

7. If the predator has a gun and you are not under his control, **ALWAYS RUN!** The predator will only hit you (a running target) 4 in 100 times; and even then, it most likely **WILL NOT** be a vital organ. **RUN!**

8. As women, we are always trying to be sympathetic: **STOP IT!** It may get you raped, or killed. Ted Bundy, the serial killer, was a good-looking, well-educated man, who **ALWAYS** played on the sympathies of unsuspecting women. He walked with a cane, or a limp, and often asked "for help" into his vehicle or with his vehicle, which is when he abducted his next victim.

9. Another Safety Point Fwd: Crying Baby Someone just told me that her friend heard a crying baby on her porch the night before last, and she called the police because it was late and she thought it was weird. The police told her "Whatever you do, **DO NOT** open the door." The lady then said that it sounded like the baby had crawled near a window, and she was worried that it would crawl to the street and get run over. The policeman said, "We already have a unit on the way, whatever you do, **DO NOT** open the door." He told her that they think a serial killer has a

baby's cry recorded and uses it to coax women out of their homes thinking that someone dropped off a baby. He said they have not verified it, but have had several calls by women saying that they hear baby's cries outside their doors when they're home alone at night. Please pass this on! and DO NOT open the door for a crying baby. This e-mail should probably be taken seriously because the Crying Baby theory was mentioned on America's Most Wanted this past Saturday when they profiled the serial killer in Louisiana.
Confessions of a Government Travel Agent

Around the Office

By Alert! editor Mick Eskew

- Mollye Mithcell will retire from the IRS on November 29th after 43 years and 5 months on the job. Mollye was also a Union steward for over 10 years. We would like to wish Mollye the best of luck and thanks for the memories.
- The move to the new San Antonio Post of Duty has been delayed. TPS/TAC was scheduled to move in mid-December but will move no sooner than mid-January. TAC's management may decide to delay their move until after the filing season is over to avoid a weeklong shut down during the busiest part of their year. The other business divisions have been moved back to the end of March. Delays have been caused by acquisitions of building permits and the budget .
- Last month I reported on a concern about the water quality the drinking water at the new San Antonio POD. I have been provided a copy of the water analysis report from the San Antonio Water System, no contaminants were found. You may drop by the Union office in room 604 to review the report.
- You may have noticed the Alert! has changed its format and typeface. Let us know if you have any concerns or comments.

TOM'S HUMOR PAGE

(Editor's Note: I wasn't sure where to put this in the newsletter, the humor section or more toward an editorial comment. Because have you ever wonder who writes those memorandums where the person writing it has no clue what the job is or how the job is done? Working inside the Belt Way and New Carrollton has twilight zone implications. I decided to put the following here and let you be the judge.)



Confessions of a Government Travel Agent

I had a New Hampshire Congresswoman ask for an aisle seat on the airplane so that her hair wouldn't get messed up by being near the window.

I got a call from a Candidate's Staffer, who wanted to go to Capetown. I started to explain the length of the flight and the passport information. He interrupted me with, "I'm not trying to make you look stupid, but Capetown is in Massachusetts." Without trying to make him look like the stupid one, I calmly explained, "Cape Cod is in Massachusetts, Capetown is in Africa." His response ...(click). ??

A Senior Vermont Congressman called, furious about a Florida package we did. I asked what was wrong with the vacation in Orlando. He said he was expecting an ocean-view room. I tried to explain that is not possible, since Orlando is in the middle of the state. He replied, "Don't lie to me. I looked on the map, and Florida is a very thin state!!!"

I got a call from a Lawmakers Wife who asked, "Is it possible to see England from Canada?" I said, "No." She said, "But they look so close on the map."

An Aide for a Bush cabinet member once called and asked if they could rent a car in Dallas. When I pulled up the reservation, I noticed they only had a 1-hour lay-over in Dallas. When I asked him why he wanted to rent a car, he said, "I heard Dallas was a big airport, and we will need a car to drive between the gates to save time."

An Illinois Congresswoman called last week. She needed to know how it was possible that her flight from Detroit left at 8:20am and got into Chicago at 8:33am. I tried to explain that Michigan was an hour ahead of Illinois, but she could not understand the concept of time zones. Finally, I told her the plane went very fast, and she bought that!

A New York lawmaker called and asked, "Do airlines put your physical description on your bag so they know whose luggage belongs to who?" I said, "No, why do you ask?" She replied, "Well, when I checked in with the airline, they put a tag on my luggage that said (FAT), and I'm overweight, I think that is very rude!" After putting her on hold for a minute while I "looked into it" (I was actually laughing) I came back and explained the city code for Fresno, CA is (FAT), and that the airline was just putting a destination tag on her luggage.

A Senator called and said, "I need to fly to Pepsi-Cola, FL. Do I have to get on one of those little computer planes?" I asked if he meant fly to Pensacola, FL on a commuter plane. He said, "Yeah, whatever!!!"

A Senior Senator called and had a question about the documents he needed in order to fly to China. After a lengthy discussion about passports, I reminded him he needed a visa. "Oh no I don't, I've been to China many times and never had to have one of those." I double-checked and sure enough, his stay required a visa. When I told him this he said, "Look, I've been to China four times and every time they have accepted my American Express!"

A New Mexico Congressman called to make reservations, "I want to go from Chicago to Rhino, New York" The agent was at a loss for words. Finally, the agent: "Are you sure that's the name of the town?" "Yes, what flights do you have?" replied the man. After some searching, the agent came back with, "I'm sorry, sir, I've looked up every airport code in the country and can't find a Rhino anywhere." The man retorted, "Oh don't be silly! Everyone knows where it is. Check your map!" The agent scoured a map of the state of New York and finally offered, "You don't mean Buffalo, do you?" "That's it! I knew it was a big animal"????

Now you know why the government is in the shape that it's in!

Chapter 52 *Alert!*, all the news that is fit to be copied!

This **Chapter 52 *Alert!*** along with all other ***Alerts!*** since January 2001, can be found on our Chapter Web Page at <http://www.nteu52.org/>

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Chapter 52 Board:

President, Tom Jones

Executive Vice President, Patricia Kelley

VP Area A & Chief Steward, Bill Grace

VP Area B & Asst. Chief Steward, Mick Eskew

VP of Finance & Recordation, Fran Dunagin

Send comments and/or articles to:
5835 Callaghan Rd. Stop 1700SANW
San Antonio, Texas 78228
fax 210-706-5376, attention Alert!
Editor/Compiler Mick Eskew

