Social Securtiy workers protest 2 percent pay hike

By Manotti L. Jenkins
AFRO Staff Writer

During a demonstration on Monday, Sept. 8, protesting a proposal for a two percent pay increase for federal employees by the Reagan Administration, the president of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 1923 said his organization considers the proposal a "dismantlement" of the Social Security program instead of a way to improve it.

John Gage, president of the union local and former claims examiner with the Social Security Administration (SSA), spoke before an enthusiastic and angry crowd of 200 Social Security workers at the SSA Metro West Building in Baltimore.

Gage read a telegram which he sent to President Reagan expressing the outrage of the union to the administration's recent proclamation.

In the telegram, Gage said the government workers "stand ready to make Social Security and Medicare even more effective," but consider the decision very unfair.

He explained that there is a stipulation that the two percent increase must come out of existing funds of the SSA. In light of this, said Gage, while some workers will get the small increase in pay, others will be laid off.

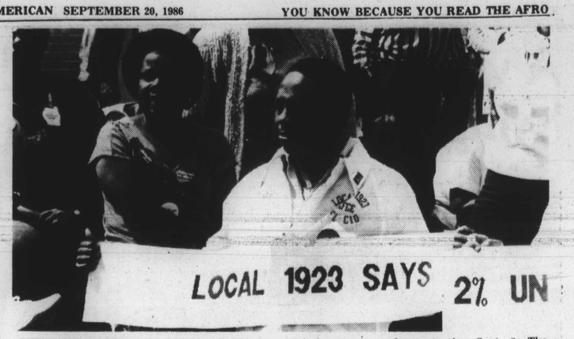
"If they (the Reagan Administration) were truly concerned about this program, they would see to it that the agency is able to attract and retain capable individuals by compensating us fairly for the job that we do," argued Gage.

According to an AFGE press release, federal employees receive nearly 25 percent less pay than their counterparts in the private sector. This income disparity has contributed tothe SSA workforce in Baltimore declining from 20,000 in 1980 to 16,000 presently.

"SSA employees have been experiencing an increase in work over the past several years due to the shrinking federal workforce," asserted the local president of AFGE. "Our health benefit premiums have been tripled over the past few years and the cost of living in general is up nearly six percent, yet President Reagan has the audacity to propose a lousy two percent raise for our workforce."

Gage noted that Social Security claimants are disadvantaged because workers "simply don't have enough time to properly handle the growing backlog of cases."

Also speaking at the demonstration in support of the government workers were Rep. Parren J. Mitchell, Attorney General Steve Sachs and Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate Barbara Mikulski.



MEMBERS OF THE ACLU Local 1923 held a sign protesting the recent Reagan Administration proposal for a two percent pay increase for federal employees at a demonstration Sept. 8. The demonstration was held in front of the Social Security Metro West Building.

Food committee observance began 'Hunger Month' events

By Manotti L. Jenkins
AFRO Staff Writer

"Our ability to change the conditions that create hunger has to do with the grassroots of our organization," asserted Jan Houbolt, executive director of the Maryland Food Committee (MFC), during the anti-hunger organization's Second Annual Appreciation Day Awards Dinner held recently in Baltimore.

The event, held at St. Wenceslaus Church, 2100 E. Madison St., was a dedication to the volunteers "who staff the feeding centers we (MFC) fund and provide the administrative and technical manpower that make our organization viable," according to Houbolt.

The event also initiated "Hunger Month," which Houbolt described as the month when "citizens of Maryland and elected officials renew their committment to fighting hunger." He noted that Mayor William Donald Schaefer, Governor Harry Hughes and various county executives in the state have recognized the occasion.

"The 1980s has become the decade of 'me first' . . . of doing things for yourself," the executive director acknowledged. In the midst of this attitude, he said, he has felt a sense of pride because the volunteers show that there are people who care about the plight of the hungry, and a sense of shame "because we have the wealthiest country in the world and still we have so many people that are hungry."

MFC presented several awards at the program. Recipients were: Jane Doble and Rita Arrington of the Allen Center for Senior Citizens, located in south Baltimore; Donna Green of the Emergency Services of Baltimore, a part of the Department of Social Services; David Rimbach of Hampden United Methodist Church in north central Baltimore; Ruth H. T. Christian of Eldersleie/St. Andrew United Methodist Church in northeast Baltimore; Joanne Cooper, a freelance artist and volunteer, who designed the MFC 1986 Annual Report; Dennis Flowers and Rosemary Knott of Baltimore Gas and Electric, which produced a 10-minute video on the work of MFC; Pearl Thames, a general volunteer; and Laura Cosner and Gillian Kirstel, children volunteers of south Baltimore.

Houbolt congratulated the volunteers for thier hard work in maintaining the 30 soup kitchens and emergency food centers in the city and the 400 kitchens and centers in the state.

Speaking on "Hunger Month," Houbolt condemned the fact that two years ago the U.S. government spent $30 billion subsidizing farmers for not producing food while so many people in this country are without food.

Tying this fact in with the role of MFC, he stated, "We do what we do because it is necessary . . . It would be good when the day is here when it is not necessary."

Cand P seeks customer refund

The Office of Peoples' Counsel, the staff of the Maryland Public Service Commission and The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company of Maryland have jointly filed a stipulation with the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) seeking to refund $13.8 million to Maryland telephone customers. The refund, which equates to $6.56 per customer line, would appear as a one-time credit on customer bills as soon as possible, pending PSC approval. The credit applies to both residential and business customers and represents revenue collected under bond by C&P between April, 1983 and December 31, 1983.

The petition also requests that the PSC approve an accounting change which would reduce C&P's rate base. This represents a charge to the company's expense of $32.5 million in 1986 alone. According to C&P Vice President Hank Butta, "The combined actions, if approved by the PSC, would substantially benefit both current customers, through the credit; and future ratepayers, through the reduction of the rate base.

"By reducing the rate base, our future revenue requirements are thus reduced. That will go a long way toward stabilizing the rates we charge customers in the future," Mr. Butta said.

According to Mr. Butta, the credit stems from a 1983 rate case decision and follows a Supreme Court ruling which gives regulators the authority to set telephone utility depreciation rates for their respective jurisdictions.

The issue dates to the early 1980's, when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a series of accounting orders that required state regulatory agencies to accept certain depreciation methods and policies. Many state commissions — including the Maryland PSC — opposed this in principle because it infringed on their exclusive ratemaking authority. In its rate case decision of February 1983, the PSC rejected adopting the depreciation methodologies set by the FCC.

C&P then filed a request for an injunction with the U.S. District Court; an injunction was granted in April, 1983. At that time C&P was allowed to recover the revenue requirement associated with the depreciation methodology mandated by the FCC. The revenues were to be collected under bond and were subject to refund, with interest.

The U.S. Court of Appeals, in November 1984, upheld the decision of the court.

However, the PSC appealed that decision, and on May 27, 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the lower court ruling.

Bettye Moss

IF YOU ASK ME

Janet's bill

If a consumer has a gripe, does it pay to protest and take it to your lawmaker?

Answer: Yes, indeed.

Ask Mrs. Janet C. Woolridge, the retired public school counselor.

Here's what happened: — Earlier this year, she bought a new car. The dealer insisted on attaching the little sign advertising his firm. She objected, and took her complaint to her state senator, Clarence W. Blount, (D-41st).

He agreed with her and introduced bill no. 1030 during this year's legislative session. Governor Hughes signed it. The law became effective July 1, 1986.

Entitled, "vehicle lawsdealers, advertising insignia, logo or name plate," the bill prevents auto dealers or their agents from placing advertising signs on consumers' cars against their will.

Further, if the dealer places such signs on motorists' cars, they are required to remove them.

However, a dealer can negotiate with a buyer and place a sign on his car for a price they mutually agree on.

Blount says:

Senator Blount says he has gotten more reaction from this bill than from measures of greater substance.

Of his constituent, Mrs. Woolridge, he says: "Janet has always been resourceful as an educator, and as a community worker and as an activist. She called me up one day and asked, "If I buy a car, do I have to have a dealer's sign on it?" I said there was no law and drafted the bill."

"Car dealers all over the country have been calling me. But it's the law here in Maryland. The dealer just can't slap it on your car. He has to ask you, and if you don't want it, he can't leave it on. But a consumer can ask him to pay up to advertise his firm on his or her car."

Consumers should doff their hats to Mrs. Woolridge. She has gumption. A lot of folks have objected to car dealers' free ads on their vehicles, but they have suffered in silence.

Many know Mrs. Woolridge is not afraid to speak out and stand up for her rights. AFRO files show she won this newspaper's 1971 Honor Roll citation for superior public service without thought of personal gain.

At the time, she was counselor at Dunbar High School in East Baltimore. She conducted a campaign to secure college grants for Dunbar students.

When she finished, some 85 percent of Dunbar students (340 of them), received financial aid, in excess of a million $ to attend colleges all over the U.S. That period, Dunbar had more college scholarship grants than any other city public high school.

Remember?

More congrats

One of the hardest working schoolmarms in our town — and dedicated too — is Dr. Gwendolyn P. Cooke, principal of the Lemmel Middle School.

She will get well-deserved honors on October 2. The second annual "Forever Morgan Gala" has chosen her to receive the Morgan State University's outstanding graduate award. The event is sponsored by the university's Foundation.

Many know Dr. Cooke as the co-chair of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's Social and Political Action Committee, (Baltimore Alumnae Chapter).

The Greater Baltimore Committee honored her as Outstanding Middle School Principal of the Year, (1984-85).

Plus, she keeps us busy as a member of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement Advisory Committee.

This committee will give advice on the content and form of a "Principal's Selection Handbook" to be published by the U.S. Department of Education. Other members of the committee include researchers, superintendents, principals, state education representatives, and professional organizations and association representatives.

Cuff note: — Dr. Cooke was elected to the Board of Directors of Arena Players, Inc. for a term of three years (to August, 1989), on August 11, 1986.

On the Move

Good news about a Community College of Baltimore grad on the move: The college's September bulletin highlights Barnett (Barney) Carroll. He's a 1972 CCB grad who is supervisor of the Baltimore City Bureau of Budget/ Management Research.

The article notes that Mr. Miller's "elegant" office is on the fourth floor at City Hall, where he oversees a staff of 40.

What does he do? The article states:

". . . The city agencies and departments are tantamount to the divisions of a huge corporation; their annual budgets comprise a $1.3 billion annual outlay, and they employ some 28,000 workers.

"It's Mr. Carroll's job to assure that money is properly allotted to needed salaries, goods, services, materials and equipment, and to provide the decision makers with the best information possible so that future budgets meet Baltimore's needs. . . .

Cuff note: Mr. Carroll is a Vietnam vet, resides on Madison Avenue in west Baltimore, has reared three foster children, serves on the State Foster Care Review Board, and is in the Army Reserve.

More cuff: Mr. Miller earned his B.S. degree in criminal justice at the University of Baltimore.

Nice gesture: In the article Mr. Miller credits his CCB instructors, Dr. Cyril Byron and Hayes Larkins for "implanting a basic approach to problem solving," and "developing communication skills," and a U. of Baltimore prof for exposing him "to the challenges of municipal finance."

UMES-100 years

State officials, university administrators joined alumni, students and faculty at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, (UMES), in a glorious two-day celebration of the Princess Anne institution's 100th birthday.

Those who were there are singing the praises of UMES Chancellor William Hytche for the inspiring program he and staff arranged on Friday and Saturday, (Sept. 12 and 13).

The opening event on Friday morning was a convocation, with eloquent Dr. Samuel Proctor, the noted educator and pastor of Abysinia Baptist Church in N.Y. as guest speaker.

The packed Ella Fitzgerald Auditorium rocked with applause as Dr. Proctor challenged the audience to make a difference — strive for intellectual thought. ("UMES has meant so much to so many during turbulent times.")

Honoree

There followed a graduation ceremony with honorary degree, the doctor of community service,

Continued on page 13

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A victory on the 'wings of prayer'

By Bettye Moss

"Victory on the wings of prayer," was the theme as members and visitors packed the recently renovated New Unity Baptist Church on Sunday afternoon.

The church, at 2654 Polk St., two blocks north of Harford and North Aves., was celebrating burning of mortgages-three of them-because the people had worked together, by tithing to pay for the refurbished worship quarters.

Rev. James S. Williams, said he was a grateful for the generosity of members and friends," and, "for the earnest labors of auxiliaries" and the united prayers of and untiring service of church members."

He explained that the church was retiring a $170,000 mortgage it secured for a 20-year period, but was able to pay off in just seven years. He observed he and members tithed to pay the debt.

In addition, he said, New Unity member send funds to South Africa-$1500 this year-maintain a mission for the needy, and, "we do this because the way to be blessed is to continue our missionary work.

"We have come this far by faith, prayer and the word, as we travel 30 years on to victory on the wings of prayer," he added.

New Unity was founded in 1930, by the late Rev. John S. Taylor. It was located on Oak St. (now Howard St.), when Rev. Williams became pastor in 1956.

Membership had dwindled, but under his direction, the congregation moved to the 1000 block E. 22nd St. Mrs. Rachel Hill, Barney Green, Mrs. Annette Hinton and Mrs. Mary Jones represented this period during the ceremony.

In 1967, the membership had grown and needed larger quarters. It moved to 2654 Polk St. Mrs. Dorothy Davis, Mrs. Lillian Guest and Deacon Arvie Davis spoke for this segment.

Subsequently, this site was sold; and the church relocated at 2650-52 Polk St. Deacons Raymond Clapp, James L. Carter Trustee Chair James O. Thomas Sr. represented this period.

Sunday's mortgage burning ceremony not only marked the retirement of the $170,000 mortgage, but also-highlighted the previous mortgages paid of in short periods.

The church's renovated quarters provide a sanctuary, which seats 300, a multipurpose room and meeting areas. If Sunday's crowd is any indication, it will soon need to expand its facilities.

"IT BELONGS TO US" — Officers and pastor of New Unity Baptist Church, 2600 block Polk St., in East Baltimore, pictured as they prepared to burn mortgage on Sunday. From left, Paul M. Silva, trustee; Arvia W. Davis, deacon chair; James E. Scovens and Herbert Rice, trustees; James O. Thomas, Sr., trustee chair; Raymond E. Clapp, treasurer; John R. Kearney, deacon; the pastor, Rev. James S. Williams; and deacons James L. Carter and Walter A. Carter. Insert, Ms. Zelma A. Brown, Advance Federal Savings and Loan vice president, who congratulated church for retiring $170,000, twenty-year mortgage in just seven years.

Rev. Williams says his members come from all sections of the city.

Guest speaker at the service was Rev. P.M. Smith, pastor of Baltimore's Huber Memorial Church of Christ.

Ms. Zelma A. Brown, Advance Federal Savings and Loan Association vice president, was commended for working closely with the church in securing its mortgages. She congratulated members for investing their funds in Advance Federal.

Other program participants: Revs. Avery Smith Sr. and Elwoid Carroll, associate ministers; Deacon Walter Carter, and Deaconesses Connie Clappy and Mary Jones.

Music was by the massed choirs, Organist and pianist were, Michael Johnson and Dorin Lyles.

Rev. Williams, a Baltimoreean, is a graduate of Dunbar and Douglass High. He did his religious studies at the Moody Bible Institute and the Md. School of Religion. His wife, Mrs. Rosie Williams, is a deaconess, choir member and superintendent of the Sunday School primary department.

The church program gave these historical notes; John and Latricia Kearney were the first couple to be married in the present church and the late John Kearney Jr., was the youngest and the first chairman of the trustee board.

UMAB chancellor hosts picnic for black student groups

The Chancellor of the University of Maryland at Baltimore (UMAB), Dr. Edward N. Brandt, Jr., in conjunction with the school's Black Student Organizations, sponsored an Orientation Picnic at the Chancellor's Mansion, "Hidden Waters", in Pikesville on Sept. 6.

The event was planned to facilitate the creation of a cohesive Black community at UMAB, and to provide a relaxed forum for the discussion of issues affecting Black students on campus.

An open forum concluded the afternoon's activities, at which time students and others in attendance were able to air and discuss their concerns . Among the need for more Black faculty; apathy among some students towards organizational involvements; and the need for financial support for the Black Student Organizations not currently receiving funding.

Vincent Davis, second year Dental student, moderated the discussion.

Present at the picnic were students representing the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Pharmacy, Social Work, Nursing and the Graduate School.

Also present were UMAB Chancellor, Dr. Brandt and Mrs. Brandt; Board of Regent Members, Joel Carrington and Paul Moss;

Also members of the Lois Young Minority Scholarship and Leadership Guild, Drs. Aris Allen, Anne Emery, Robert Harrell, Louis J. Murdock, Roland Smoot and Roy Broom;

And, Dean of the School of Medicine, Dr. John Dennis; Associate Dean of the School of Medicine, Dr. Bernice Sigman;

Also, Acting Dean of the School of Dentistry, Dr. Warren Morganstein and Mrs. Morganstein; Assistant Dean, School of Social Work, Dr. Iona Hiland; Administrative staff members, Valerie Williams, Wilhelma Spruill, Cynthia Rice and Joy Morgan-Thompson.

Student leaders present included Leighton Forrester, and Rochelle Rollins, medical school; Patricia Bell and Debbie Ollivierre, dental school; Duane Dennis, School of Social Work and Community Planning; Delphia Simpson and Crystal Chissell, law school; and Mark Gadson, pharmacy.

More testing set for lead in schools' drinking water

(UPI) — Drinking water in Maryland schools will be tested for potentially harmful lead levels health officials say.

State health officials asked local health departments to help check lead levels in water at any school less than 4-years-old or those drawing water from a private well.

The lead apparently contaminates water by flowing from soldered pipe joints for about four years after the solder is applied, said Ray Feldman, a state health department spokesman.

Nineteen Maryland schools were found to have lead concentrations above recommended levels during a check of 43 schools across the state this summer.

Water at 65 more schools will be tested this fall, Feldman said.

Health officials have not identified any specific cases of illness from exposure to water at any school, but said lead found in water could combine with other sources to cause a variety of physical and learning disabilities.

The danger of contamination in a commercial building, home or school with lead-soldered pipes can be minimized by flushing the pipes each day before using any water, health experts said.

In the Baltimore school system, custodians at eight buildings each morning open faucets and flush toilets about an hour before students arrive.

Curtis Lantz, assistant school superintendent for physical plants, said tests showed that action has reduced lead content to a safe level. He said water fountains are left running through the day so water does not remain in pipes long enough to absorb any lead.

Lantz acknowledged that running water constantly is expensive, but contends it is less costly than using bottled water.

Montgomery County spokesman Bill Henry said six schools are using bottled water this fall and 11 more schools are to be tested for lead contamination this week.

Henry said it cost the school system $7,000 to provide bottled water to five schools during the last two weeks of classes in the spring.

Montgomery County is preparing contracts for a $20,000 project to replace lead-soldered pipes leading to drinking fountains and cafeterias at affected schools, he said.

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