

American Federation of Government Employees, Council 220  
Witold Skwierczynski, President

# National Council Digest

National Council of SSA Field Operations Locals

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## Congress hears Council President

The House Ways and Means Committee recently heard dramatic testimony from Witold Skwierczynski, the President of Council 220 and spokesperson for the AFGE SSA General Committee.

“The primary message the Union wants to convey to this Committee is that Social Security is in *dire need* of both additional administrative funding and Congressional oversight of its service delivery practices,” he said.

Skwierczynski also noted that “unacceptable backlogs have escalated and critical integrity workloads are not done. The employees who work in the SSA front lines and interact with the public are assigned impossible workloads...The unfortunate victims of the decisions that have been made to starve the Agency are the American public who rely on SSA to provide them and their families with retirement, disability and survivor’s benefit security.

“Also affected are the poor, aged, blind and disabled who rely on SSA to provide subsistence SSI benefits so that they can survive.”

AFGE is recommending that Congress support a recommendation from the House Budget Committee that Social Security receive an additional \$240 million over the President’s budget request.

“Unless there is a turnaround in Social Security’s operating budget, SSA’s ability to get its work done will completely break down within the next five to ten years,” Skwierczynski predicted.

He pointed out that if President Bush’s proposed budget for the next fiscal year is adopted, Social Security will have lost more than nine per cent of its staff in just four years. This is occurring as the “Baby Boom Generation” turns age 62 and record

numbers are expected to file for Retirement benefits, Disability, or both.

Another concern is a new Internet Social Security Claims Benefit Application (ISBA), which should be introduced this September. It’s considered a “simpler retirement application, and which will be the vehicle for the Agency’s ultimate goal of automated adjudication requiring *no human review or intervention*.”

“Additionally, SSA will implement a new procedure that will require SSA claims specialists to stop providing advice and assistance to the retirement applicant to help them decide on the effective month to start their retirement benefits (i.e., month of election),” Skwierczynski said.

He also stressed that Congress should “federalize” the state Disability Determination Services (DDS) so decisions become more uniform throughout the country.

“Unfortunately, the chances for a claimant to be approved at the initial level have a lot to do with where they live and their income rather than the nature of their disability. That’s inherent in the system...In effect, there are 50 different disability programs when there should be one.”

Skwierczynski also criticized the use of Card Centers and Field Office closures, and he is concerned about a planned reduction in Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs) and SSI redeterminations.

“These reviews return \$10 for every dollar invested in CDRs and \$7 for every dollar invested in redeterminations. Without these reviews, *billions* of dollars of incorrect payments result. SSA will never collect some of the overpayments caused by insufficient integrity reviews.”

## GAO report highlights more SSA problems

A study from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has shown that over a four-year period, the average waiting time to be helped at Social Security field offices increased by 40 per cent.

The report, entitled “Reduced Workforce Faces Challenges as Baby Boomers Retire,” was made public last month during a meeting of the Senate Finance Committee (see accompanying article).

It also pointed out that during Fiscal Year 2007, more than three million customers waited over an hour before they were served.

“Further, SSA’s 2007 Field Office Caller Survey found that 51 per cent of customer calls to field offices went unanswered,” the study noted. “These factors may have contributed to a four per cent drop in SSA’s overall customer satisfaction rating from fiscal year 2005 to 2007.”

The agency has initiated a pilot program called “Forward on Busy” in order to deal with that problem. Under this plan (which began last year), calls receiving a busy signal in 25 field offices are automatically forwarded to a teleservice center. Social Security plans to expand the idea to 100 field offices.

Another looming problem is the age of SSA’s workforce and their expected retirements.

“Today, 25 per cent of all SSA employees are eligible to retire, and that figure will grow to 39 per cent in the next five years,” the report stated. “Based on the agency’s projections, 44 per cent of today’s SSA workforce will retire by 2016...Field office managers and staff at many of the locations we visited stated that it typically takes two to three years for new employees to become fully proficient. Therefore, staff hired now may not reach full proficiency before the peak of the retirement wave.”

GAO also recognized that managers throughout the country are using Claims Representative to answer the office telephone, process requests for new and replacement Social Security cards, and do other types of administrative work.

“While all field office personnel recognize the need to serve visitors, many also told us that such work is taking away from time spent processing claims and managing the office,” the study concluded.

The use of online services – which high-ranking SSA officials continue to advocate – is not the time-saver that many of them think they are.

“While field office staff and managers welcome

automated tools that the public can use, some added that relatively few customers use them, and that due to erroneous or missing information in online forms, field staff can lose time having to contact the customers for clarification or more information.

“While they believe that automated tools should continue to be developed, many managers and staff told us that these tools are not sufficient to compensate for reduced staffing levels.”

The Government Accountability Office interviewed managers and bargaining unit employees in 21 field offices and two card centers to reach some of their conclusions. A large number (65 per cent) reported feeling stress to a “great” or “very great” degree every day.

### ***New parents could benefit from proposed legislation***

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has passed H.R. 5781, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2008.

The final vote was 21-to-10 and action by the full House could come as early as this spring.

The measure would provide four weeks of paid leave for new moms and dads – including adoptive parents -- who are in the federal workforce. They would also be able (for the first time) to use their accrued sick leave for an additional eight weeks of paid leave.

The original proposal called for eight weeks of paid leave, but that was scaled back by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), the committee chairman. He called the reduction a “prudent fiscal approach.”

A study by the Congressional Budget Office in 2000 estimated that six weeks of parental leave would cost taxpayers approximately \$95 million the first year it was implemented.

Under the current Family and Medical Leave Act, federal workers receive up to 12 weeks of unpaid parental leave but can use their sick or annual leave to continue to be paid during that time.

Bills similar to H.R. 5781 have been introduced since the Bush Administration took office, but they have received little or no attention from lawmakers.

Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) has put forth the Executive Branch Family Leave Act, and it would give new mothers eight weeks of leave. New and adoptive parents could only get one week of paid leave under his proposal.

## Survey reveals more problems at SSA

A poll recently conducted by Council 220 shows that nearly half of the respondents are either “dissatisfied” or “extremely dissatisfied” with their work experience at Social Security.

An overwhelming number (79%) also believe that most employees share those same feelings.

“These statistics should worry management,” says Dana Duggins, the Third Vice President of Council 220, who wrote the survey questions. “I’d like to be optimistic and think that the results will bring real change – but the people who run this agency have shown time-and-time again that employee concerns don’t really matter to them.”

More than 1,500 responses were received overall.

When asked “do you feel that you have enough time to devote to a quality work product?” a staggering 82 per cent answered “no.”

“I am constantly interviewing,” wrote one of the people who completed the online poll. “I feel pressure to make snap decisions as you are compelled to complete all actions during the interview, whether you have to research the topic or not.”

“Everything that we have is (a) priority and should have been done yesterday,” according to another employee. “It is more important to ensure the calendar stays within certain limits and then badger employees about other work.”

A large number (59%) believe *quantity* of work is considered more important than *quality*. Half of the respondents stated they only had between one and four hours of adjudication time *a week* to work on their pending cases, lists, and other assignments.

When asked to name three things that would improve their job performance, 76% said more staff. That was followed by additional adjudication time (67%), as well as additional training and better communication with management (42% each).

“I want to be treated like an adult, not a child,” was one of the comments received in that category. Other suggestions were “less management,” “less receptionist/telephone duties,” and “management has to quit manipulating statistics.”

The complete survey and its results have been provided to the House Ways and Means Committee for review.

“Congress has to know how Social Security employees feel about their jobs and what can be done to improve the work environment,” Duggins said.

Council 220 has also conducted a survey on the Internet Claims Processing procedure. Those results will be posted in the July, 2008 **UNITY**.

## Feds hire fewer disabled workers

A report issued this year by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) showed that the Federal Government now has *fewer* disabled workers than at any time during the last 20 years.

This same study shows there are just 90 people with disabilities in senior pay grades in the federal sector.

To help remedy the situation, Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) recently called on all sectors of the Federal Government – including Congress – to hire more people who have disabilities.

“We honestly don’t know how many people with disabilities work in Congress,” Durbin told an audience at New York Law School. “In the Senate, each office is its own little kingdom...”

“When millions of Americans with talents and skills that our nation desperately needs are shut-out of the workforce, you don’t need a Ph.D. in economics to tell that’s bad for the economy.”

Another study revealed that the average cost of accommodating a disabled worker was \$313 and that disabled workers take fewer days of leave. That report was prepared by researchers at DePaul University, the Chicago Chamber of Commerce, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

At the Fort Lauderdale, Florida teleservice center, Union representatives have accused Social Security management of targeting employees with disabilities.

Agency officials have been suspending and reprimanding TSRs if they don’t spend at least six-and-a-half hours a day on the phone, even though SSA does not have any specific “goals” for that group of workers.

Avon Sansone, the Executive Vice President of AFGE Local 2014, recently told **UNITY** about a teleservice rep who has cerebral palsy.

“He can’t always hold his head up, he can only type with three fingers, his speech is slightly impaired, and he needs a wheelchair. But he’s given 27 good years to this agency and now management has decided to go after him.”

For more details on that story, click on [www.afgec220.org](http://www.afgec220.org) - look under “newsletters” near the top of the page. Go to page five of the March **UNITY**.

# Reps' Corner: How to navigate the Agency roadblocks to getting information

By Jim Campana  
Council 220 Vice President

The Council 220 Arbitration Committee has, over the last several months, received many reports of Social Security denying Union information requests made under the statute, 5 USC 7114(b)(4). These denials are usually done by means of boilerplate language, no doubt generated and/or approved by SSA's Office of Labor-Management Employee Relations (OLMER). We have reviewed this matter with AFGE's Office of General Counsel, and it appears that some kind of national action may be appropriate in the future, but not just yet.

Because each individual request comes out of particular and individual circumstances, the Arbitration Committee continues to recommend that those faced with this problem do the following:

1. Respond to SSA's denial, answering as many of their objections as you can. If the denial states your request has not been specific, get specific. (e.g., tell them what you will do with the data when you get it). If the denial states privacy objections, make clear why you need names, and cannot do what you need to do without names on the records.

2. In your response, if privacy issues are involved and personnel files (among others) are the source of your requested data, use the routine-use language noted in the attachments referred to at the end of this story, found online at [www.afge220.org](http://www.afge220.org).

3. If you are again denied the data, respond again. Where the agency response repeats objections that you have answered, point out what you have already stated (and add to it, if you can). If, for example, management again states that you have not provided sufficient particularized need, point out what you have already stated, and ask in what way and in what sense your statement of particularized need is inadequate.

4. If you have played the above out as far as is reasonably possible, file an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge on the denials, or follow **Kirk Bigelow's** advice in the following article.

To assist you in the above, refer to the following, but make it *your* request by filling in the many details that only you know.

TO: (Agency official)

RE: Request for information (5 U.S.C. 7114(b)(4))

Dear [management official]:

This is a request by AFGE [INSERT Local # or Council #] for information under 5 U.S.C. 7114(b)(4).

Please furnish the following information: [INSERT what information you seek and, if relevant and correct, STATE that personal identifiers can be sanitized].

AFGE [INSERT Local #] has a particularized need for the information for the following reasons. The union needs the requested information because [INSERT why union is requesting the information]. The Union will use the requested information to determine whether [INSERT what the union hopes the information will or will not indicate]. The Union's receipt of this information will help the Union to determine [INSERT what the Union intends to pursue or argue in light of the information, such as a grievance alleging violation of which Article of the National Agreement].

[INSERT THE FOLLOWING ONLY IF personally-identified information (PII) is needed and the OPM routine use exceptions are applicable]. The Union needs the requested information with personal identifiers. The Union is entitled to the requested information because the information is included in records governed by OPM's "routine use" exceptions to the Privacy Act [65 Fed. Reg. 24731-24753 (April 27, 2000)], such as the information included in an individual's official personnel folder. The information will tell the Union whether the [INSERT what the PII will help the union determine]. The personally-identified information will help the Union determine whether [INSERT what the union intends to argue in light of the information, such as whether favoritism or disparate treatment will be included as arguments in a grievance]. The personally-identified information is relevant to [INSERT why]. The information is necessary because, as just stated, the union has a particularized need for the personally-identified information and the Union cannot satisfy that need by any other means.

Thank you in advance for your prompt compliance with this request.

Sincerely,  
Union Representative

Continued on next page

## Reps' Corner, cont'd: Getting information

### *How to ask the Arbitrator*

**By Kirk Bigelow**  
**Council 220 Representative**

Whenever a Union official makes a request for comparative data information under 5 USC 7114(b)(4) and the agency denies the request that the Union's request did not meet the particularized need test, then the Union official should make a motion to compel to the arbitrator assigned the case to force the agency to provide the requested information.

Prior to the Bush Administration, the Union would file an unfair labor practice charge against the agency with the Federal Labor Relations Authority for failure to provide necessary and relevant information. Now, that is a waste of time: 1) it can take up to one year for the FLRA resolve the issue, and 2) the FLRA is so anti-Union it often rules against the Union on the grounds that it failed to meet the particularized need test.

The particularized need test means the test that is applied by the FLRA (and the Agency) to determine whether the Union has provided a sufficient basis for obtaining the information. This test was articulated in the case of *Internal Revenue Service Kansas City Service Center and the National Treasury Employees Union*, Chapter 66, 50 FLRA 661 (1995) as follows:

*"Specifically, a Union requesting information under that section [7114(b)(4)] must establish a particularized need for the information by articulating, with specificity, why it needs the requested information, including the uses to which the Union will put the information and the connection between those uses and the Union's representational responsibilities under the statute."*

In reality, the particularized test is virtually impossible to meet: the agency uses the test to prevent the Union from obtaining any information it seeks.

After management officials deny the information request for data, do not waste any more time trying to convince them of your need for the requested information. Instead, make your motion to compel to the arbitrator handling the case. In your motion, inform the arbitrator of the nature of what information you are requesting under 5 USC 7114(b)(4) and why the agency won't provide it to you and then describe how you have met the particularized need test by articulating that you need the information: 1) to show possible disparate treatment of the grievant by management, and 2) a possible violation of one or more provisions of the parties'

National Agreement by management. In other words, argue that if you have this information, it could help you prove your defenses that the grievant was treated more harshly than fellow employees, and/or that the agency had not been following one or more provisions of the contract, which constitutes harmful procedural error.

I have won the following three separate motions to compel involving comparative data so far and the decisions in these cases (available in the Council 220 office) should be cited by you. They support the arbitrator's authority to grant the Union its motion to compel based on the fact that the Union met the particularized need test for the two reasons stated in the prior paragraph above: 1) the October 8, 2000 motion to compel decision by Arbitrator John Baker in Case No. KC-2000-R-0005 (Baker 2001) involving the termination of Christina Hollinger of Iowa Local 836; 2) the October 23, 2003 motion to compel decision by Arbitrator Stuart Goldstein in Case No. FL-2003-R-0019 (Goldstein, 2004) involving a suspension of Rose Robert of Florida Local 2014; and 3) the April 29, 2008 motion to compel decision by Arbitrator Joseph Celentano in Case No. BN 2008-R-0008 involving the termination of Susan Conrad of Local 1164.

In addition, Andy Krall, a Vice President with Local 1164 in Boston, has won a motion to compel with the decision of August 15, 2007 by Arbitrator Sharon Henderson Ellis in Case No. BN 2007-R-0023 (Ellis, 2008) involving a flexi-place case in Local 1164. These four decisions by four separate arbitrators over the past several years constitute settled case law for granting the Union's motion to compel in any subsequent case.

In addition to citing the above four decisions, argue in your motion to compel:

- 1) Article 1 of the National Agreement states the agency must comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Since 5 USC 7114(b)(4) is part of the Federal Labor-Management and Employees Relations Statute, it must be followed;
- 2) There are no applicable discovery provisions in Articles 21 (Performance) and 23 (Disciplinary and Adverse Actions) that conflict with 5 USC 7114(b)(4); and
- 3) If management raises an objection that the Union's request for unsanitized information violates the Privacy Act, concede this by requesting that the information be provided to the Union in a sanitized form.

## Union will go to arbitration over SSA's treatment of employees during 2007 fires

"There was no evidence of air quality being unsafe, unhealthy or in violation of any applicable laws or industry standards."

That assessment of the October, 2007 fires which scorched large portions of Southern California came from Milt Beaver, the Associate Commissioner of SSA's Office of Labor-Management and Employee Relations (OLMER).

His opinion was part of a four-page letter denying all of the grievances filed by Witold Skwierczynski, the President of Council 220 and Spokesperson for the SSA/AFGE General Committee. The Union contends that Social Security violated several articles of the national contract while the wildfires continued to rage and hundreds of homes were destroyed.

Those issues will go to arbitration.

Beaver's opinion that air quality in the San Diego area was safe contradicts pictures which were taken at the time; they showed thick blankets of smoke hanging over the region. At one point, City Attorney Michael Aguirre said a voluntary evacuation of the entire community should be considered because of air quality concerns.

Health officials also recommended that citizens stay indoors unless they were given an evacuation order. The elderly and children were considered the most vulnerable and it was suggested that anyone going outdoors wear protective masks and goggles.

"Commissioner Astrue went to the affected areas during the fires," Skwierczynski said, "but he, Linda McMahon (Deputy Commissioner for Operations), and Pete Spencer (the Regional Commissioner) showed callous disregard for the employees' health by forcing most of them to work. The three of them were more interested in members of the bargaining unit pumping out work." In his original grievance, Skwierczynski stated that Social Security should have closed all of the affected offices in the San Diego area during the week that the fires hit. He argued they should not have been re-opened until qualified inspectors had checked the sites.

Skwierczynski was also concerned about employees who became ill; most were not allowed administrative leave. Some members of the bargaining unit were assigned to work in offsite emergency centers but were not given night differential payments when they stayed after 6 p.m.

"Those are just some of the issues that the Union is concerned about," Skwierczynski said, "and I'm confident we'll prevail during arbitration."



**Josie Marrujo**

**Local  
Union  
President  
honored  
for her  
activism**

Josie Marrujo, President of Local 4041 in Albuquerque, has been recognized for her life-long commitment to the community as well as human rights.

She was recently honored with the Dolores Huerta Si Se Puede Award. It was given to her during the annual Cesar Chavez march and rally in Albuquerque.

Marrujo has been a Union member and Social Security employee for 18 years. She co-founded the National AFGE Hispanic Coalition and is a National Executive Board member of the AFL/CIO Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA). She is also President of the LCLAA Albuquerque chapter.

Marrujo was on the Board of Directors of "Operation Bootstrap," a grassroots organization that secured funding for several low-income housing projects in New Mexico, and she founded one of the first Ballet Folklórico dance companies in the state. Its members later toured the U.S. and Mexico and were featured in National Geographic magazine and on Good Morning, America.

Dolores Huerta (the award's namesake) was co-founder of the United Farm Workers and -- like Marrujo -- has been involved in many other causes.

## SSA's 'Ready Retirement' a recipe for disaster

By Pam Baca  
Regional Vice President,  
Denver



In 1957, the Ford Motor Company unveiled the Edsel. Fueled by the unparalleled success of the Thunderbird, Ford set out to revolutionize the auto industry by moving away from Henry Ford's "antiquated" business practices. Dubbing September 4, 1957 as "E-day", Ford executives rolled out the Edsel amid considerable fanfare, certain they had created a car everyone in America would be dying to own. They were wrong! The public reacted negatively to its body type and styling, particularly the vertical front grill. As a result, the Edsel became one of the most spectacular failures in the history of the American auto industry.

SSA recently unveiled an Edsel of its own—the new Ready Retirement system. Taking its cues from Ford, SSA dubbed "E-filing" as the wave of the future and staged an "E-day" of its own when it publicly recorded the first baby boomer filing for retirement benefits online. However, SSA's promise has not lived up to its hype. Ready Retirement is the same retirement system but with many more problems and much less style.

The agency believes that "through financial literacy, SSA will assist individuals in making an informed decision as to when it is most advantageous for them to begin retirement benefits." The hallmarks of this new system are a simplified application process that tailors questions to an applicant's personal situation and information already contained in SSA records. The end result is an automated adjudication of claims *without* employee intervention.

While this system sounds revolutionary, a closer look reveals an ugly vertical grill. SSA has failed to define how "financial literacy" will be used to assist claimants in selecting the most advantageous month to begin their benefits. Selecting the "month of election" is a complicated process that often begins with a claimant's first visit or call to a local field office. Information is provided by a Service Rep prior to an appointment. A Claims Representative (CR) later goes through the month of election analysis.

If a claimant applies online and doesn't select the correct month, he may disadvantage himself and lose benefits. He may also become overpaid, resulting in

repayment to SSA or a loss to the trust fund. Currently, these mistakes are being caught and corrected by CRs reviewing Internet claims. With no human intervention, there will be no oversight to avoid mistakes.

Ready Retirement tailors its questions on a retirement application to a claimant's personal situation and the information already known by SSA. However, this creates another set of problems. For example, Social Security may not know if a claimant is entitled to a "non-covered" pension (where they did not pay into the trust fund). As a result, some beneficiaries might not report that pension and become overpaid. Claimants may not provide information about former spouses, minor children, disabled children, or others who are potentially entitled to payments. The result: a potential loss in benefits to millions of Americans!

Another pitfall of Ready Retirement is the potential for fraud. If a person is the victim of identity theft, the thief can apply online for that person's benefits, even if they don't have a birth certificate. In many cases, Social Security has already stopped requiring proof of age and citizenship for retirement claims if a claimant's allegations match agency records. If the online claim information matches, the application will be automatically adjudicated with no human oversight. Fraudulent applications have already been attempted and thwarted by an alert Claims Rep in New Mexico. A thief applied under separate names and SSN's through SSA's online application system. He would have gotten away with it except for the alert eyes of a trained employee who noticed similarities in payment information. Without this type of oversight, many of the most vulnerable victims of identity theft -- the elderly -- will be placed at risk.

There is no doubt Social Security faces enormous challenges in the face of the "silver tsunami" of baby boomers. The agency has fewer people handling more claims. The Internet is a viable option when the public embraces its capabilities, trusts in its security, and wants the service. However, SSA could find itself with a spectacular failure if it abandons personal contact and valid documentation. Ready Retirement puts retirees at risk of being incorrectly paid, victimized by fraud, and left without quality public service. Just like Ford returned to building Thunderbirds, SSA needs to return to what it does best: building the public's trust with excellent customer service from top-notch employees. That combination will roll SSA into the future— with no vertical grill in sight.

## Union helps employee get AWOL removed

A Service Representative (SR) who was strangled – and then charged AWOL by her supervisor – has settled her grievance with Social Security.

“The employee feels very good about this,” said **Debbie Fredericksen**, the President of AFGE Local 3129. She was the Technical Assistant on the case, while **Lonnie Brackett** of the 8<sup>th</sup> District was the National Representative.

According to Fredericksen, the SR (who asked not to be named) was the victim of domestic violence inside her own home. After being strangled, she managed to get into her car, but the assailant followed her. The victim was able to call 911 and police found her attacker; he spent a year in jail because of the incident.

The employee later called her supervisor and left a voicemail message on her machine, saying she would not be into work that day. The SR also phoned the office administrative line but no one answered.

“Management knew she had a restraining order against the guy who attacked her,” Fredericksen said, “but they also told that she didn’t use the proper procedure when she called in.

“She was in no frame of mind to do that.”

The SR offered to provide a copy of the police report but found she couldn’t afford the cost of it. Her supervisor said that wouldn’t be a problem – but a few days later, the employee was charged with being AWOL.

Management refused to settle the case, and when the issue went to arbitration, the Union only needed to call one witness: the employee’s supervisor, who said she *probably would* change the AWOL to sick leave if she had the proper documentation (in this case, the police report).

The Union showed her the report.

“That’s when the arbitrator asked the agency’s attorney: ‘Are you willing to settle it now?’ Management was not too happy.”

The two sides then agreed that the AWOL charge would be replaced with sick leave and the employee will be paid for the one day she had to take off.

“She’s extremely happy that she’ll get her money back,” Fredericksen said.

## Union official continues to serve after 40 years

### By Howard Egerman

What were you doing on April 4, 1968? While that may seem like “just yesterday,” it was actually more than 40 years ago. And for anyone wanting to take a trip down memory lane, here’s some trivia you may have forgotten:

- In many parts of the country, the top song of the week was “Young Girl” by Gary Puckett and Union Gap, followed by the Beatles’ “LadyMadonna.” The Monkees were still hot and had put “Valleri” on the charts.
- Some of the top TV programs were the Andy Griffith Show, The Lucy Show, Gomer Pyle U.S.M.C., and Gunsmoke.

April 4, 1968 was also Sandy Matthis’ first day at Social Security. She started working at the Western Program Service Center, which was then in San Francisco and was spread-out over several buildings in the downtown area.

A few years later, Sandy transferred to the San Diego District Office and became a Claims Development Clerk (CDC). Back then, Claims Representatives and



Service Reps actually had clerical help who would process their mail and perform other assignments.

Sandy became a CR in September, 1975 and because of her background, she has always understood the needs and concerns of bargaining unit employees.

Since 1989, she has been President of AFGE Local 2879, which represents employees in San Diego and Riverside Counties, as well as Yuma, Arizona, Las Vegas, and Henderson, Nevada. At one time Sandy was Secretary/Treasurer of her Local.

She is also the senior Local President in Council 147, which includes field office workers in Region 9 (California, Nevada, Arizona, and Hawaii) and she has also been a delegate to the Council from her Local.

And if that’s not enough to keep her busy, Sandy also represents employees at the EEO level nationally for Council 220.

Congratulations, Sandy, on 40 years of excellent service to Social Security. We know the job isn’t getting any easier. Your work as a Union rep has always been outstanding and we hope that you stick around for another 40!