

USA *Capsule*

VOLUME XXV, No. 2

UNITED STAFF ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

MAY 2006

A letter from the president...

Dear USA Members,

As reported in the last issue of the *USA Capsule*, certain representatives of NJEA management obtained an itemized receipt of a purchase made on a USA member's personal credit card. This was done without the knowledge or permission of the member.

Because I received no satisfaction from management when I reported this situation, I wrote directly to NJEA President Joyce Powell.

In a written response, Joyce expresses her personal regrets to all of us for what occurred. She assures us that "appropriate action" has been taken.

In her letter, Joyce refers to new procedural guidelines for the payment of expense vouchers. As reported in the March issue of the *Capsule*, any questions raised by Accounting regarding an expense voucher must be routed back to the division from which the voucher originates. Joyce assures us that management has been trained in this new procedure.

Joyce closes her letter with, "I trust that this satisfies your concerns and puts this unfortunate matter behind us." Her letter was copied to NJEA officers and Bob Bonazzi.

I am satisfied that Joyce, Barbara, and Wendell share our concern and have taken appropriate steps to insure that this will not occur again in the future.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our general membership meeting preceding the retirement dinner.

Sincerely,

Diane Spear

USA President

Mark your calendar...

The next USA General Membership meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, just prior to the NJEA Retirement Luncheon at the East Brunswick Chateau (yes, the Chateau, not the Hilton!)



USA election update

Please vote in the upcoming USA election, even for those positions that are uncontested. This will send a message to management that says: **WE SUPPORT OUR UNION!**

The persons listed below have indicated their intention to seek election to these offices. They are listed in alphabetical order. On the ballot, their names will be listed in order determined by lot. **Please note: USA recommends that you do not use company e-mail to seek votes for your election.**

For President (one position): Diane Spear

For Vice-President (two positions): Tom DeSocio
Debbie Pukel

For Secretary: (one position): Gale Quinn

For Treasurer: (one position): Steve Swetsky

For Executive Committee Member from the NJEA Field Offices (six positions):

George V. Huk	Linda Sacks
George J. Lambert	Ray Skorka
Mary Lou Tamason Mitchell	Kenneth I. Wiggins
Maureen Monaco	Janice Witmer
Myron Plotkin	

For Executive Committee Member from NJEA Headquarters (eight positions):

Steve Baker	Mimi McHale
Liz Saylor Castelgrant	Michele Oliver
Kim Cowing	Chris Ortiz
Linda J. Gould	David L. Rosenberg
Denise Hamilton	Skip/Karen Starkey
Carol Johnson	Jane Travis-Address

Terms of office will be for two years, commencing July 1, 2006 and expiring June 30, 2008. **The election will be by mail ballot during the month of May.** As provided in the bylaws, "If, in any case, no candidate receives a majority vote for a position to be filled, a runoff election shall be held at the annual spring meeting. One candidate more than the remaining number of positions to be filled shall be included on any runoff ballot based on the highest number of votes received on the preceding ballot." Write-in voting will be permitted on the first ballot only. If any runoff elections are held, write-in voting will not be permitted. If any runoff elections are necessary, they will be held at our spring meeting. You will be notified of the time and place of the meeting and the elections schedule.

If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Elections Committee: Arthur Lehrhaupt (co chair), Joyce Wardrop (co chair), Liz Campanile, Thomas Hardy, and Liz Rylak.

Post-retirement benefits and you . . .

What is the VEBA?

NJEA employees are entitled to two main post retirement benefits - a pension, and for those who have completed 15 years of service – paid medical insurance benefits.

At the present time, the cost of the premiums for the post-retirement health benefits is paid out of the annual NJEA budget. In order to fund the future cost of these benefits, the company has created a VEBA – a Voluntary Employee Benefits Association.

Our VEBA – *funded by employer (NJEA) contributions* – is simply a vehicle that allows the employer to place money in an account designed to grow over time. At some point in the future, it is expected that the account will generate enough money in income from investments to pay for the cost of the post-retirement health benefits. Over the past few years, through employer contributions and growth, the VEBA account has grown to over \$13 million dollars.

For the current year (2005-06), NJEA budgeted \$15.5 million dollars for pension/VEBA, \$15 million of which is for pension and \$.5 million of which is for the VEBA. Due to a combination of factors (*to be discussed in more detail at the June USA general membership meeting*) the actual pension contribution for this year is projected to be \$8.8 million dollars.

At a meeting between management (Ed Richardson and Tim McGuckin) and USA leadership (Diane Spear, Steve Swetsky, Gale Quinn, joined by Mary Ann Jandoli), we were informed that the \$6.7 million remaining after the \$8.8 million pension contribution is made will be deposited in the VEBA to fund the future cost of our post-retirement medical benefits. This deposit will bring the total amount in the VEBA to about \$20 million dollars. We were also informed that NJEA plans to continue to budget similar amounts in the future to fully fund the pension plan and continue building the VEBA reserves.

A more detailed discussion of NJEA pension and VEBA issues will be presented at the June USA general membership meeting.

Keep track of your time

Don't assume that the electronic calendar is an accurate record. Keep a separate calendar, preferably hard copy, to use as a back up. Clearly log your days off, overtime, and compensatory time earned. Indicate if the days off were vacation, sick, or comp days. Ask your AA to print a copy of your calendar every 4-6 weeks to verify that your time is logged correctly.

The logo for USA Capsule features the letters 'USA' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The letter 'A' is stylized with a white outline and a black shadow, giving it a 3D effect. To the right of 'USA', the word 'Capsule' is written in a bold, italicized, sans-serif font.

*The official newsletter of the
United Staff Association of New Jersey.*

*An affiliate of the
National Staff Organization*

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