



THE VOICE

SEPTEMBER 2015

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News

- ◆ USA is working on a brand new website! The planned launch should be sometime in December, but will be a works-in-progress as we figure out how to use all of the great features. Currently, our site is not free and is not optimized for tablets and small screens. The new site will be free (MTA sponsored), will use the same URL, is optimized for a small screen and will allow us to have a secure area for certain things that are for your eyes only...and will be very user friendly.
- ◆ We are thrilled to announce that USA now has a computer/software instructor who will be working strictly with USA members. Her name is Cate Burlington and you'll soon be hearing more about her. Cate has a Bachelor's in Economics from Washington State and is working on her Master's in Education from the Memorial University of Newfoundland. Cate has experience and expertise in many software packages and has trained and assisted folks from all walks of life (seriously, ask her about working with the Big Apple Circus). Stay tuned!
- ◆ With a new provost in place, there are rumors around campus about re-organizations. Please stay in touch with your steward, or someone in leadership when you're approached about anything – whether it's a new location, new job duties or additional job duties. So far, we aren't seeing any layoffs, just job changes.

Contract Update

Great news about our retroactive monies! The retro will be paid October 23rd and will cover the first pay period in July, 2014 thru May 3, 2015 (check the back page for a rough calculation of what you may get). This doesn't take into account step raises or overtime compensation worked during that time period. Retirees will receive a retro check as long as they were on the payroll during this time period – **but** checks are unlikely to arrive on the day current employees are getting the retro. Unfortunately anyone who has left UMass employment during these time periods will NOT receive retro.

“LET THE WORKERS ORGANIZE. LET THE TOILERS ASSEMBLE. LET THEIR CRYSTALLIZED VOICE PROCLAIM THEIR INJUSTICES AND DEMAND THEIR PRIVILEGES. LET ALL THOUGHTFUL CITIZENS SUSTAIN THEM, FOR THE FUTURE OF LABOR IS THE FUTURE OF AMERICA.”

JOHN L. LEWIS

© Lifehack Quotes

Contract Articles Highlighted

Article 17D – vacancies and promotions

Our Special Projects Coordinator, Sue Couture, is working on tracking open positions and whether union members get hired into these positions. She is also tracking Form 30s of new jobs to look for those annoying little things like “bachelors degree required” and “must have driver’s license” or “must be able to drive” or “cleaning duties.” You can help Sue with this by keeping us posted on jobs you applied, are qualified for, and didn’t get an interview. The new Interview Exchange doesn’t allow for union members to get first shot at jobs. The more we know about these jobs being taken by 03s, temps and students, the more grievances we can file.

Overtime or compensation

Reminder! If you are asked to work overtime, you have the choice of being paid or getting compensatory time. We know that some of you are not being given a choice, but please remember that this is in our contract.

Out of Title work

The OTW article is in effect as of 5/3/15. If you’re doing work of a PSU member, you are entitled to \$15 a day. This was a big win for us in bargaining. If your supervisor agrees and signs the form, you will receive the \$15 a day. If they do not, HR is required to audit what you are doing. Please read the new article on the website.

RUM (Raise Up Massachusetts)

Working together with the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition (RUM) and MTA members across the Commonwealth, USA members can get involved in a great campaign called the Fair Share Amendment, an effort to amend the Massachusetts constitution. This amendment would help equalize taxes between the 99% and the 1% while also raising significant state revenues to be dedicated to public schools, public colleges and universities, and transportation and infrastructure. Besides the MTA, RUM includes other labor organizations and unions, religious organizations, and community groups. RUM was behind the successful campaign to enact a paid sick leave law in Massachusetts and raise the minimum wage.

The leadership of USA has chosen to participate in the Fair Share campaign because they believe the super-wealthy need to pay a more fair share of taxes and because of its great benefit to our communities and the students that we serve. By participating, board members and stewards are collecting signatures from USA members and others. RUM needs to collect 64,750 certified signatures this fall to get the constitutional amendment process going, and USA has been asked to collect about 250 member signatures. We believe that we can collect more, but to do this, we need your help. For more information or to sign a petition, contact an officer, Miles Stern, or your steward, or come down to the USA office during a break or other time off the clock. The MTA has a wealth of information on the campaign at www.massteacher.org/revenue.

According to the MTA, RUM's Fair Share Amendment filed on Aug. 4, 2015, would:

- ◆ Add a **4 percentage point tax** on the portion of a tax filer’s annual income in **excess of \$1 million**. Income tax rates would remain unchanged for the bottom 99 percent of the population.

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- ◆ Index the **\$1 million** threshold to inflation so that it would never affect anyone but the very wealthiest taxpayers.
 - ◆ Dedicate the more than **\$1 billion** raised annually to public education, public higher education and transportation infrastructure.

Workplace Bullying

The Workplace Bullying initiative has been in effect for over a year now. USA members that have been working on panels are Donna Johnson, Linda Fish, Linda Hillenbrand, and Dora Ramos. We've had many cases and, although there have been some wrinkles, the system put into place has been working well. If you feel that you are being bullied, please find your way to the Chancellor's website and fill out the form.

MTA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting is now a distant memory but some of the highlights are still on our minds. There is usually spirited debates on almost every subject, even those that pass overwhelmingly. Perhaps the most contentious at this past meeting was the debate about whether to hold the MTA summer conference at UMass. At first glance, it was a great idea. It would have been the first time EVER that it would have been held at a unionized public university. It would have given many of those in our area the opportunity to get involved. There were a group of folks, however, that made some very good points about not having it at UMass and our own President, Donna Johnson, gave us a very passionate speech. The University did not negotiate in good faith and these folks felt that UMass didn't deserve the business, so they brought forth a new business item to cancel the summer conference. Testimony was emotional and rang true – and it passed – MTA didn't have its summer conference. Maybe it worked.

USA Judiciary

USA needs someone to serve on our judiciary board. The judiciary procedures are outlined in our constitution with a new, detailed policy recently passed by the Executive Board that expands the policy to make more sense. Check the website to see both the constitution and the new expanded policy. The Board worked on the extended policy to make it clearer. If you're interested in serving on the Judiciary, you cannot be a stewards, a member of the Executive Board of Elections Board. Please contact [Donna Johnson](#) if you're interested.

Reclassification News

We now have a new person in charge of reclassifications – Valerie Vazquez-Alexander. Some of the things you may be seeing soon are a dedicated email address and a committee of members who will be working with members on upgrades and appeals. We're also working on putting Form 30s on the udrive (soon to be on something called The Box). This will enable members to look at other job descriptions on campus. Once we have them uploaded, you can get a link to a specific folder of, for example, Accountant II positions. We are still building the committee, so please contact [Valerie](#) if you are willing to help. Many hands make light work!

Health & Safety News

The first week of school was blistering hot. It's hard to imagine that we're going to have to deal with cold soon, but we're now starting to feel it in the air. Public employees in Massachusetts do not have protection of OSHA standards of heat and cold. If you're curious, this is the opening paragraph.

Under the [General Duty Clause](#), Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970, employers are required to provide their employees with a place of employment that "is free from recognizable hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees." The courts have interpreted OSHA's general duty clause to mean that an employer has a legal obligation to provide a workplace free of conditions or activities that either the employer or industry recognizes as hazardous and that cause, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to employees when there is a feasible method to abate the hazard. This includes heat-related hazards that are likely to cause death or serious bodily harm.

We recommend that in extreme heat or cold, take a room temperature reading at the start and mid-point of your shift. Having verifiable data helps in establishing the need for a remedy in your situation. Notify your immediate supervisor and/or department head in writing or email of your concern, reporting the temperatures you have taken. Call Environmental Health & Safety at 545-2682 to report your situation. Also notify your USA District Steward. Allow for a reasonable amount of time for your supervisor to investigate the problem and determine a resolution. If no solution has been offered, request a temporary reassignment to another area until the conditions are corrected.

*Suggested Ranges of Temperature and Relative Humidity
(Assumes typical summer and winter clothing at light/sedentary activity levels)

<u>Relative Humidity</u>	<u>Winter Temperature</u>	<u>Summer Temperature</u>
30%	68.5° F-75.5° F	74.0° F-80.0° F
40%	68.0° F-75.0° F	73.5° F-80.0° F
50%	68.0° F-74.5° F	73.0° F-79.0° F
60%	67.5° F-74.0° F	73.0° F-78.5° F

* These guidelines are taken from the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Standard 55-1992.

Health and Welfare change

We have a few things to announce about our dental plan. Effective July 1st, cleanings are covered once every six months instead of twice per year. This change is small and shouldn't be a hardship, but please make sure your dentist is aware of this change. The other change is that Linda Hillenbrand, our representative on the trust for about 10 years has resigned and Sue Couture will replace her as a trustee. Linda replaced Sue about 10 years ago, so we're grateful that she's willing to be a trustee again.

Steward's Council News

Our stewards work directly with USA members in their districts to resolve issues in the workplace. If you have a question about our contract or think you might need help from the union, I would like to

encourage you to get in touch with your steward first. In addition to addressing member concerns, the Stewards Council is taking up several projects this year which will benefit our members and strengthen our union. The stewards will be contacting members throughout the year for support on some of these projects. If you can volunteer some time and talent to our union, please get in touch with your steward to see how you can help.

Legislative News

As many of you may have heard, the Supreme Court will soon decide a case that may free agency fee payers from paying their fair share to support union bargaining and contract administration costs. Not only is this likely to damage the union, this will hurt workers. Average wages in “right-to-work” states are 3% lower than other states. Like any other organization, unions need revenue to cover day-to-day costs if they are going to keep performing their mission. If the union loses a significant portion of its financial resources, staff will be stretched too thin and bargaining will suffer. This will result in lower cost of living increases and less generous employee benefits for all classified staff on campus – members or not.

Considering the fight we had to put up during the last round of bargaining and the rigmarole that the President’s Office put us through to get our cost of living increases and retro pay, we are concerned about what may happen if agency fee payers are not required to pay their fair share. Would we have been able to get a cost of living increase for our members if we were short-staffed or underfunded? Would we still have won the battle over capping sick time? These are all issues that we as employees and members must consider. No one reading this article has any say in the Supreme Court’s decision. All we can do is stand together and continue to support the union as the union has supported us.

Executive Board (new folks and updates from others)

Jo-Anne Bourguignon comes to us from Polymer Science and has been on campus for 14 years. JoAnn has been on campus for 14 years started in the library – works in Polymer Science, Program Coordinator. JoAnne felt there was a need to be active and we appreciate her for her willingness to take on the new treasurer/membership secretary position. JoAnn believes we need a better public relations effort and more respect.

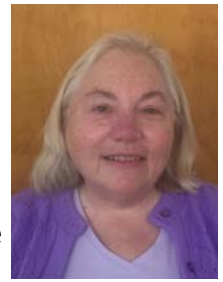


Sue Couture, as Special Projects Coordinator will be responsible for special projects. Currently, she’s working on monitoring the yellow sheet and department to department changes and how the job are backfilled. It’s important to keep an eye on these to make sure they are fair. Sue has been on campus a total of 17 years – she took a break and moved to Florida – and now Sue is back working in Residential Life Student Services. She has served twice on the bargaining team and was appointed the new trustee on the Health and Welfare Trust.



Linda Fish has been working for 21 years in the WEB DuBois Library as part of the Materials Management Team. She is the student trainer, and responsible for the end processing of all physical materials, as well as fast cat/copy cataloging of books and occasional DVDs. She has been involved in our union for 18 years, serving as a steward, chief steward, Chair of the Stewards Council, and as the general secretary of the USA Executive Board. She is the steward for

UHS and Extension Services, our new Grievance Officer, and also serves on the Chancellor's Bully Panel. In her spare time, she enjoys performing in community theater, having spent 19 years acting in musicals. A single mom of 5 adult children, and a grandmother of 6 (from 19 to 2 years old) keeps her hopping. Linda has spent the last four years trying to keep up with knitting baby blankets for her daughter's expectant friends as well as her own grandson. Taking a break from that, she enjoys reading mysteries. She has been the treasurer for the Granby Charter Days Committee since 2007, and is looking forward to her town's 250 celebration of the Charter in 2018, after which she plans to retire from the committee. She is a Eucharistic Minister, Lector and homebound minister at her church, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Granby.



Donna Johnson, President, I am honored to work with each and every one of you and I love my job. Thanks to all of you I get to advocate for our work lives at the local, state and national level. Our working conditions are important and making sure our contract is upheld is a must. In my spare time I spend time with my family, I have 11 nieces and nephews, 19 great nieces and nephews, and 1 great great nephew, 5 siblings, and my 90 year old Dad and I love them all dearly. Life is good.



Linda Fortin has worked in the Department of Environmental Conservation for 19 years and was a member of the health and safety committee. Linda filled a void left by Deb Warner, who served for many years (thanks Deb!) and we appreciate her service to the union. On a happy note, Linda became a grandmother for the first time on July 30. His name is Zachary Kaius Fortin. For those of you that recall being taught “Phonics” in school, the “A is silent” and the name has a “long I”. He is a 4th generation in the family. He has a paternal great-grandmother and great-grandfather .

Congratulations to **Leslie Marsland**, USA VP for being selected for the 2016 National Education Association Leaders for Tomorrow Program. NEA Leaders for Tomorrow program is an intensive, hands-on leadership development program intended to train NEA ESP members to be strong local leaders. The program is a three session training process held over an eight month period that is open to dues paying NEA ESP members who meet the program’s eligibility requirements.



Candidates must be nominated for the program and have their application acknowledged and signed by their state Association (MTA). This program was created to train future ESP leaders in leadership attitudes, skills, and knowledge. The overarching goal is to develop skilled ESP leaders across the 50 states. Selection is done through an extremely competitive process and all chosen are funded through NEA. Leslie was one of 5 ESP members selected from the east coast to participate in the 2016 program and one of 16 selected from the entire country.

Sheila Seuffert came to us originally as our new Legislative Coordinator. Since the election, our Steward’s Council Chair, Maryelen Caulderwood was offered an opportunity to work with MTA temporarily and is now on leave. Sheila has shifted positions and is now our new Steward’s Council Chair. Sheila has worked in Institutional Research for 2 years and thought it was time to get involved after being shocked at the classism she’s seen and experienced – and especially wanted to be around like-minded folks. She came to us from the Air Force and served for 8 years. Sheila is working on her masters in Public Policy and Administration. We look forward to having Sheila take on this new position of guiding the stewards.



Valerie Vazquez-Alexander has been on campus for 9 years and now works in Labor Management/Workplace Education as Office Manager. Valerie will be taking on the role of Reclassification Manager and would love to have you on the new committee. If you're interested in helping others with upgrades and learning more about the process, we can use your help. Valerie loves being a union member and wants to be a part of things.



Vince Wurster is General Secretary of the USA Executive Board, a Steward and also served on the Bargaining team for our current contract. Vince writes: *"After a professional career in the private sector, I came to UMass in 8662 and am currently working as a Clerk IV for the Department of Languages Literatures and Cultures. I enjoy keeping up my French language skills and interacting with the diverse population of the department. I also own and maintain a multi-unit rental property in the area and am continuing my education in the Building Materials and Construction Technology major. In my free time I enjoy travel, hiking, carpentry and gardening. I've been lucky enough to have traveled extensively over much of the world. I became involved in volunteering with the Union for several reasons. Foremost, my work in the private sector did not prepare me for the shocking amount of classism, blatant discrimination and bullying I have observed and experienced here over the years here at the University in various different departments. This is mostly due to having had proper HR oversight and practices in the places I worked at in the private sector. Seeing and experiencing this, coupled with an already existing sense of volunteerism, it was natural for me to want to help my fellow co-workers by volunteering and running for Union service."*



Member's Stories

Laurie Banas, who works in Polymer Science, is currently training her 12th pup for the Guide Dog Foundation and America's Vet Dogs in Long Island, an organization listed with the UMass Caring and Sharing campaign.

Stephanie Covelli, from Psychology had a baby boy on May 13 and is now back at work. His name is Emmett Ethan Covelli and was 6 lbs., 1 oz. *Congratulations Stephanie!*

Antonia Dancivoo, an Account Specialist in Student Services, is getting married on October 31 at the Lord Jeffrey Inn. Both are UMass alums from 2011!

Betsy Dawn-Williams (Physical Plant) has been working on a recording project for the past 2 years and just finished this summer. It features 15 original compositions that she's written over the past 10 years. She has secured the interest of the indie-European roots musica label, El Toro Records based in Barcelona, Spain and they will release this upcoming CD on their label, hopefully this fall.

Margaret Ludlam is helping to get the message out about the Tennessee Gas Pipeline (Kinder Morgan). Margaret tells us, "many people don't know about the impact the project will have on their towns, even if they are not on the pipeline route. Last week there was a meeting with Stan Rosenberg at GCC where we learned that 60 acres of Whately's prime agricultural land

will be taken to be used as a staging area and most likely paved.”

<http://www.nofrackedgasinmass.org/notgp/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/NED-VolII-App-L ECP-MA 072415 Public-FINAL.pdf>

Trouble Erin Mandeson of Polymer Science & Engineering recently celebrated 10 years at her current staff position and in the community of Greenfield she was awarded "2015 Outstanding Volunteer of the Year" by Hospice of Franklin County, one of several local organizations where she volunteers.

Connie Milne (Astronomy) is thrilled to be welcoming her 3rd grandson by her son Brandon who is a Maintainer II in AFSCME. Zander is due on 12/24/15!

Katherine Pipczynski, recently retired from Health Services, is planning a bus trip to New York City on November 15th. Although this is not a UMass sponsored event, UMass employees, their families, students and retirees will be given first preference for seats. There are 27 empty seats. Bus leaves at 7:00 and will leave the city at 6:30 – your time is your own when you get there. Email Katherine at kpipski@gmail.com if you're interested.

Jan Valego, for the first time ever, is actively campaigning for Bernie Sanders for President of the United States. If there are any like-minded folks on campus, or any groups, please email her (valego@umass.edu) about Bernie's campaign.

Some links to look at:

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/labor-unions/>

<http://laborunionreport.com/>

<https://www.workplacefairness.org/labor-unions>

<http://www.jwj.org/>

<http://www.mypaycheckdirect.com/mta/>



Thanks to Linda Fortin, Sheila Sueffert and Miles Stern for their contributions and to the rest of the Executive Board for their input, editing and suggestions.

Linda Hillenbrand, Writer/Designer/Editor

These figures are approximate (This is based on 13 pay periods at 1.5% increase and 9 pay periods at an additional 1.5% . Increase)

Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10	Step 11	Step 12	Step 13	Step 14
1	313.16	318.87	324.67	330.58	336.60	342.75	348.98	355.33	361.81	368.41	375.76	383.28	390.94	398.76
2	319.36	325.05	330.88	336.80	342.81	348.95	355.20	361.55	368.03	374.59	382.08	389.73	397.51	405.47
3	324.58	331.00	337.55	344.23	351.04	358.02	365.10	372.33	379.70	387.23	394.97	402.88	410.92	419.14
4	333.69	340.15	346.70	353.39	360.23	367.16	374.27	381.49	388.85	396.36	404.28	412.37	420.60	429.01
5	339.45	346.42	353.53	360.80	368.20	375.75	383.48	391.35	399.40	407.59	415.73	424.05	432.52	441.16
6	352.07	359.00	366.12	373.34	380.73	388.25	395.93	403.75	411.74	419.87	428.27	436.82	445.56	454.47
7	360.84	368.46	376.21	384.17	392.27	400.56	409.03	417.65	426.46	435.47	444.18	453.06	462.12	471.36
8	369.35	377.57	385.97	394.56	403.35	412.34	421.54	430.92	440.51	450.33	459.32	468.52	477.89	487.44
9	383.48	392.47	401.65	411.05	420.69	430.55	440.62	450.93	461.49	472.32	481.75	491.38	501.21	511.23
10	398.44	408.01	417.79	427.81	438.08	448.58	459.35	470.37	481.64	493.20	503.06	513.11	523.37	533.84
11	412.43	422.84	433.52	444.47	455.69	467.19	478.99	491.08	503.47	516.18	526.50	537.01	547.76	558.71
12	430.72	441.69	452.92	464.45	476.25	488.36	500.77	513.52	526.56	539.96	550.76	561.77	572.99	584.45
13	454.97	466.57	478.47	490.67	503.18	516.00	529.16	542.63	556.48	570.66	582.09	593.71	605.57	617.69
14	474.00	487.48	501.38	515.68	530.37	545.49	561.03	577.02	593.48	610.39	622.59	635.04	647.73	660.68
15	497.90	512.56	527.65	543.18	559.17	575.62	592.56	610.00	627.96	646.46	659.38	672.58	686.03	699.76
16	524.83	540.83	557.28	574.24	591.72	609.72	628.26	647.41	667.11	687.41	701.16	715.17	729.47	744.05
17	556.48	573.11	590.22	607.88	626.03	644.75	664.02	683.86	704.31	725.36	739.85	754.65	769.73	785.13
18	583.11	600.81	619.06	637.85	657.23	677.20	697.76	718.93	740.78	763.27	778.55	794.09	809.97	826.17
19	613.29	632.12	651.51	671.54	692.14	713.39	735.28	757.87	781.14	805.12	821.22	837.64	854.39	871.47
20	646.23	665.70	685.73	706.38	727.63	749.53	772.09	795.33	819.26	843.92	860.80	878.02	895.56	913.47
21	676.29	696.97	718.26	740.22	762.84	786.15	810.19	834.97	860.50	886.80	904.53	922.61	941.06	959.87
22	709.86	731.70	754.22	777.43	801.36	826.02	851.45	877.65	904.68	932.51	951.17	970.18	989.58	1,009.37
23	746.20	768.69	791.86	815.73	840.31	865.63	891.73	918.60	946.27	974.80	994.30	1,014.17	1,034.45	1,055.13
24	779.95	803.51	827.77	852.79	878.54	905.07	932.42	960.59	989.60	1,019.51	1,039.90	1,060.68	1,081.89	1,103.52
25	813.67	838.43	863.91	890.15	917.24	945.12	973.85	1,003.46	1,033.97	1,065.41	1,086.71	1,108.45	1,130.61	1,153.21
26	843.73	869.52	896.09	923.50	951.72	980.83	1,010.79	1,041.70	1,073.52	1,106.35	1,128.47	1,151.04	1,174.05	1,197.52

MTA Benefits

Are you taking advantage of these benefits from MTA yet? If you're not an agency fee payer, check out this list. To see more check the website:

<http://www.mtabenefits.com/index.htm>

- ◇ Long term care insurance
- ◇ Disability Insurance
- ◇ Free prescription drug card (for those not covered by insurance)
- ◇ Hear in America (NEW!)
- ◇ Home heating oil
- ◇ Propane Program
- ◇ Berkshire Bank Checking Account
- ◇ Purchasing Program (paycheck direct)
- ◇ MTA Discount Director program savings (reduced admission to 1,000 museums, theatres, concerts, retail stores, parking, ski areas and more)
- ◇ Discounts through Access
- ◇ Auto Insurance
- ◇ Car Rental
- ◇ Hotel Discounts
- ◇ MTA Travel Programs
- ◇ Home Mortgage Program
- ◇ Wireless Services
- ◇ Eyewear discounts
- ◇ Prepaid legal plan (non employment matters only)

Also, check out interest free shopping—right from your bank account.

<http://www.mypaycheckdirect.com/mta/>