Labor Union Organizing in the Archives

Sharmila Bhatia (NARA)
Jen Eidson (University of Maryland)
Kevin Delinger (Georgetown University)

MARAC Spring Conference 2019
Morgantown, WV
April 13, 2019
Unionization at the National Archives

Sharmila Bhatia
13 April 2019
MARAC Morgantown, WV
AFGE Council 260

AFGE Local 2578
- 303 Members
- East and Midwest Facilities

AFGE Local 104
- 249 Members
- 2 Facilities: National Personnel Records Centers, Military & Civilian

AFGE Local 1200
- 33 Members
- West Coast Facilities
- 2 Agency Local: NARA & USCIS
1966 AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

117 Charter Members

A few well known archivists:

Meyer Fishbein     John Taylor
Leonard Rapport    Harold Pinkett
Sara Jackson       James Moore
Challenges

● Educated professionals, such as archivists, IT professionals, educators, records managers, don’t believe unions are for them
● All Bargaining unit employees are entitled to representation
● Member Dues support the work of the union
● Dues can be barrier
  ○ Each local sets the dues for membership
  ○ Locals are obligated to pay tax to the Council and National organization
Collective Bargaining Agreement 2019

● Timeline:
  ○ November 2017: Training in Interest Based Bargaining and established ground rules
  ○ January 2018: Began negotiations
  ○ Each bargaining session consisted of 3 days for a total of 7 sessions.
  ○ July 2018: Completed negotiations
Collective Bargaining Agreement 2019

- May 25 President Trump issued 3 Executive Orders
  - E.O. 13837 - Ensuring Transparency, Accountability, and Efficiency in Taxpayer-Funded Union Time Use
  - E.O. 13839 - Promoting Accountability and Streamlining Removal Procedures Consistent with Merit System Principles
Collective Bargaining Agreement 2019

- February 7: Issued National Agreement
  - November 30: Ratification by the Executive Board of the AFGE Council 260
  - December 3: Notified Agency of Ratification Vote
Collective Bargaining Agreement 2019

Significant Changes

Safety in hot and cold environments

- Allows water in FRCs
- Stop work at 106 F (previously 130 F)
- Requires actions at 91 F - 105 F range (heat breaks, water)
- Provide cold weather gear for areas below 35 F
- Cold breaks (15 minutes per hour)
Collective Bargaining Agreement 2019

Significant Changes

Employee Rights and Representation
● Adds gender identity to the list of protected classes of employees
● Modifies grievance and arbitration procedures
● Provides computer access to all employees
Collective Bargaining Agreement 2019

Significant Changes

Work schedules
Performance Management Systems
Hiring, Details, and Reassignments
Contact information:

Sharmila Bhatia
National Archives at College Park, MD
sharmila.bhatia@nara.gov
301-837-1519
54 Years of AFSCME at University of Maryland

Jen Eidson
April 13, 2019
MARAC: Morgantown, WV
AFSCME Local 1072

Regional council #3 is made up of 42 other locals, including Local 1072 for University of Maryland, College Park.

In 2019, there are 3,500 exempt and non-exempt staff represented at University of Maryland.

Current President: Dawn Jackson
Current Vice President: Sally Davies

Image: The Diamondback, May 6, 1981
AFSCME here 18 months

Unionization efforts intensified

By ROB WISHART

Efforts to unionize unskilled employees of the University are being intensified, according to both University and union spokesmen.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, a member union of the AFL-CIO, has been on campus for at least 18 months, but only has about 20 members.

A union official said organizers are currently conducting a membership drive at College Park. "We have had representatives on campus all of this week," said Peter J. Moralis, international representative of AFSCME. He was contacted at his Baltimore office Wednesday.

Moralis said the union already has some 300 members in its local at the University's Baltimore campus.

When asked about the union's relationship with the University administration Moralis said, "you always have some resistance, but we hope to establish an amiable, harmonious relationship with the administration."

George Fogg, director of personnel at the University, said last night there was no antagonism at all between the University and the union. "We expect no trouble," Fogg added.

Moralis said the union "wants to bring the plight of the state employee to the attention of the public."

He cited the pay scale raises recently approved by the state legislature. "The raises range from 8 to 14 per cent," Moralis said, "and the lowest paid employees got the smallest percentage in the new scale."

"Currently, a University employee may have to work forty hours a week and make less than $32," Moralis said. "We would like to bring this level up to at least the minimum subsistence level," he explained. Moralis said the AFSCME considers the minimum subsistence level to be $3,000 a year.

"But, our ultimate goal is collective bargaining power," Moralis said.

But Fogg said the pay of University employees is controlled by the state civil service commission, so the union could not deal directly with the University about salaries. "They will have to take their financial grievances to the state," Fogg said.
Early members became University Libraries staff

Craig Newman
Carleton Jackson
Saul Schneiderman
Sally Davies
Donald Craig
Cynthia Rock
David Sawyer

Recent Library members
Mary Dalto
Jen Eidson
Jim Miller
Rebecca Wilson
Many others....

Image: Staff picket line outside North Administration Building, University of Maryland, December 11, 1969.
**AFSCME IN ACTION**

**OCTOBER, 1978**

**LOCAL 1072, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK**

**Vol. 8 No. 10**

Library workers benefit

**3 Win Reclassification**

Three AFSCME members who work in the library system have won a two-grade reclassification of their jobs. The victory will mean a pay increase of $300 per month or more for each of the three.

Benefitting from this action were Kathryn Phillips, Carleton Ochse, and Tini Nelson. The jobs were upgraded as a result of grievances filed and a re-evaluation of the positions by the campus classification analyst.

The jobs were upgraded: Billing Supervisor in McKeldin Library, currently held by Kathryn and formerly held by Carleton (who now works in the Undergraduate Library); CD cataloging supervisor in the Undergraduate Library, held by Tini.

The action is the happy ending to a story which began with the general revision of the library assistant series last spring. As a result of three years of work being mounted by library workers in April, pay rates in the library system were increased. Unfortunately, many other positions were left unchanged. Several members decided to file grievances to get their positions reclassified. A new series was created for the billing duties.

IN THIS MONTH'S ACTION

- **FIGHT RACISM**: P. 2
- **ANALYSIS: POSTAL WORKERS**: P. 3
- **UNION NEWSLETTER—HOW IT GETS DONE**: P. 4
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**Shop Talk**

A Newsletter for Library Classified Employees

**Published by Library AFSCME Members**

**January, 1978**

Union Pledges Help To Employees Once Series Is Implemented

The long wait for implementation of the new Library Technician series continues. In October, library administrators originally promised it would be in effect by January 1. Now, in a memo released January 7, Library Director R. Jonas Arrar said that library personnel administrators will complete their work on the series, which they have been working on for several months. The implementation date has been set for January 15, 1978.

Perseverance Pays Off: Switch Thrown On Exhaust Fumes

Technical Services employees can breathe a sigh of relief—the one crisis that has ended. On December 31, 1977, management representatives Ron Maylor and Carl Haynes met with employees and agreed to resolve the exhaust ventilation problem. Valerie Russell, Cindy Rock, Shelly Kirakor and I attended the meeting on behalf of the grievance.

The problem was the exhaustion system, which was installed to maintain pressure in the sprinkler system and was sucking hot air into the library. The problem was solved by switching the exhaust fumes to the ventilation system. Resolution of the problem was simple: Library management and Physical Plant agreed to switch on the generator only at times when employees are not in the building.

Management also agreed to patch the holes leading from the generator room to the Order Desk on the first floor. This repair work, which was completed on January 9, was suggested as a remedy by the Environmental Safety Department. They toured the building November 23.

Thirteen people signed a union grievance; we persevered in our efforts to get a hearing; the issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of all.

Now, if we can get the heat fixed...

—Sal Schinderman

Image: October 1978  
Image: January 1978
Union Leadership - “Dig where you stand”

1965-1976

First President - Gladys Jefferson  
(Housekeeping)

1976-?

Second President - Linda Clendening  
(Libraries)

Clip from “Pay Equity” film

Image: "Strike for Peace" sign on cross, University of Maryland, 1970
Union work, 1965-1998

AFSCME Local 1972 was very active

Shop stewards

Grievance procedure part of Maryland State law

Union representatives in University System by 1970s

UMD - College Park, UM-Baltimore,

Coppin State, Bowie State, Morgan State
Collective Bargaining

1998 – Collective Bargaining Agreement for Maryland State Employees

2001- Collective Bargaining Agreement for University of Maryland, College Park

Image: The Diamondback, December 6, 1967
Overview of Local 1072

Lots of opposition to AFSCME’s work

Gradual increase in membership -> gained more interest with each new group

- Housekeepers
- Libraries
- Grounds
- Skilled Trades
- Office Workers

Image: October 1979
Negotiate contracts with staff and University President

Represent exempt staff and non-exempt staff

The union does not represent students, graduate students, contracted staff, or faculty.

Administration of State of Maryland and higher education not centralized

Gov. Hughes promises large pay hikes

"The legislature is responsible for the governor's salaries," Adler said. "However, they believe, quite frankly, that they sent the right people into the legislature." The governor was to be sent to the legislature in a special election."
Current Initiatives

Social action and workplace organizing.

Working to get influence and create a better deal for staff.

Parking fees and safety on campus

Minimum wage: Campus versus County

Last time COLA was increased: 2% in 2015, 2% in 2019

Last time bonuses were received: $750 in 2012, $500 in 2019

Attending General Assembly to fight for additional 2% COLA
Current Initiatives

Merit increase a separate salary increase: 2.5% not distributed equally across campus

Ongoing improvements in CBA, long fought and won in 2001.

Campus Senate is a place for exempt/non-exempt to have a voice
AFSCME for the Libraries

Shop Steward

Library Assembly

Library Assembly Staff Affairs Committee

Library Assembly Staff Representatives

Libraries Human Resources

AFSCME Local 1072
Benefits of Union

Tuition Remission for Staff

COLA and Bonuses

Professional Development Day
Brief History of Archives Collecting Labor History

Several archival programs in the United States with labor history collections pre-dating 1950:

- State Historical Society of Wisconsin
- University of Michigan
- New York University
- Cornell University
- Catholic University of America

First labor history collection at UMD was the Marine & Shipbuilding Workers in 1967

- Cigar Makers
- Bakery & Confectionery Workers
- Tobacco Workers
- Carpenters
- AFL-CIO (most recent in 2013)
Sources

Notes from AFSCME meeting with Library Staff at University of Maryland, November 28, 2018.

Notes from meeting with campus AFSCME representative Sally Davies and library shop steward Rebecca Wilson, March 22, 2019.

Notes from meeting with Carleton Jackson, March 25, 2019.

Diamondback Newspaper: student newspaper at University of Maryland.

Digital Collections at University of Maryland
Contact Information

Jennifer G. Eidson
Special Collections & University Archives
University of Maryland
jeidson@umd.edu
301-314-1296
Before & After: an example from a union archive

Kevin P. Delinger
April 13, 2019
MARAC Spring meeting
Morgantown, WV
Summary of 1st two presentations: key issues

1. The importance of the legal/political environment on union power.
2. Innovation is possible when the economic and political context allows it.
3. Primary concerns of unionized workers are typically--but not exclusively--“meat-and-potato” in nature: pay, benefits, working conditions, health & safety, job classification.
4. Importance of labor in archives, and archives in labor.
5. Labor-management relating primarily through grievance process is a recipe for perpetual strife.
The changing context of union organizing as seen in the records of the B&C / BCT / BCTGM.

1970s: Labor-management cooperation, efforts to build trust and empower workers to take increased responsibility in decision-making.

1990s: Concerted management efforts to curtail union power, including decertification.
Quality of Work Life Movement

“Its central thesis was that work-tasks should be redesigned to generate worker satisfaction and harmony in the workplace.” -- Oxford Dictionary of Sociology

“QWL is a process of joint decision making, collaboration and building mutual respect between management and employees.” -- Deborah Shaw Cohen, Training Magazine, 1979

- Origins: both academic and governmental
- Psychological vs. political
- Underlying gendered perspectives
- Inspirations: Sweden and Japan
Swedish literature in BCTGM collection on work-life projects
General aims
1) Increase workers’ say on how they perform their work.
2) Increase workers’ desire to contribute to higher productivity.
3) Explore possibility of constructive, but limited, cooperation to achieve shared goals.
**Houston project: origins & early steps**

- Genesis: B&C/Nabisco CBA negotiations, Aug-Sept 1975. (MOU signed)
- Preliminary step: launch QWL project at Nabisco Atlanta in March 1976, assisted by National Quality of Work Life Center
- First steps: visits by B&C/NQWLC staff to Houston plant to discuss plan with workers (which wasn’t done in Atlanta); workers approve project in Dec 8 vote; project launches mid January 1977.
Core elements of Houston program: structure

Houston: Employees Joint Enrichment Committee, with numerous sub-committees organized by production lines & shifts (e.g., “Line 7 night shift”), or topic (e.g. social, training, working). Weekly meetings at each level.
  ● Given significant leeway to design their own goals, agendas, and methods.

National: JQWLAC: Joint Quality of Work Life Advisory Committee: equal membership between Nabisco and B&C national representatives (negotiating partners), with Lee Ozley from NQWLC. Monthly meetings? Joint meeting of Houston and National committees regularly (bimonthly?)
  ● Advisory capacity. Oversight of local activities. Keep EJEC’s activities within bounds of the possible.
Core elements of Houston program: sample

- Add burritos to cafeteria menu.
- Meats served on Thanksgiving and Christmas Menu be different; on one holiday serve turkey and dressing as usual and on the other holiday serve ham and brisket.
- Straps on trucks in distribution center need to be replaced.
- New elevator in the Bake Shop with 7500 lb. capacity: new requisition has been submitted and approved; elevator will be rebuilt or new one will be installed; present elevator still operating.
- Leaks in spray machines: requisition being submitted to alter machines so they can be cleaned in place; to include drains underneath; getting prices from contractor to resubmit requisition; will be completed last quarter of 1980.
- Computerized lard and water to south box mixers: requisition submitted and approved to update computer facilities to accommodate lard and water: micro processor will be installed for mixing department; should be completed December 15, 1979. (Completion date now extended to June 1980.)
- Tub ejector for spindle mixers: began work in June; one tub ejector has been installed although clamp does not hold tub; process is one-third completed.
- Labeling of switches on machine: need to identify which machine works on a series of buttons; packing #4 completed; line #4 is 35% completed; will be working in Bake Shop and on line #7 next month;
Problems

● Payment of committee participants
● Who should be included in project? Should non-union office workers? Should millwrights?
● EJEC participants not being replaced on production lines when pulled off to conduct committee business (as management pledged to do)
● Slow implementation of projects
● Grievances up or down? Productivity up or down? Divergent views a sign that collaboration never truly took hold?
● Division in rank & file between participants and non-participants?
Downfall

--Local union members’ petition to end the QWL program with Nabisco in Houston.
Part II: 1997 Decertification campaign at Frito-Lay, Vancouver, WA
Decertification

- Union members can petition NLRB to hold an election to decertify the union as the legally recognized exclusive bargaining unit.
- There are restrictions and thresholds that petitioners must meet.
- Regardless of management involvement, unions by definition see “decert” campaigns as union busting.
Background

Efforts through the 1980s and 1990s by corporate community to weaken unions.

Pro-management seminars on “negotiating tactics” a common platform for lawyers specializing in anti-union efforts to instruct companies on techniques to maximize leverage and undermine organized union locals. Key focus was on how to walk as close as possible to the line between legal and illegal tactics.
Union reaction--comparisons with non-union plants, facts (tax form, ballot)
Union reaction--database, plant map, visibility campaign
Union reaction--large plant map
Handbills from workers supporting decertification
Result and post-mortem reflections

Union defeats decertification effort, 192-146 (58% - 42%)

Lingering issues enumerated in post-campaign memos.
Contact information:

Kevin P. Delinger
Georgetown University Special Collections
kpd47@georgetown.edu
delinger@terpmail.umd.edu