Dear USA members,

Spring has finally sprung and I for one am grateful. Our Annual Meeting was held on April 12, 2001 and despite a low turnout it was a success. At the meeting I recognized some members for the work they do for our association and I would like to share them with all of you:

Rosemary Riley - her dedicated service to the University Staff Association paved the way for many of us to become involved and without her encouragement and mentoring many of us would not have advanced in this organization, myself included. So we thank her for all she does.

Jacqueline Gentl - Party person extraordinary, she has helped to plan such events as Read Across America, the benefits fair, and past Annual meetings. Thank you Jacquie for all your hard work.

Francis Caron - Past heath & welfare trustee, not an easy task but Francis took his responsibility seriously and he served us well. Thank you Francis.

Dan Kibe and the sick leave bank committee - this committee has been doing this for a long time and they do their job well. I really appreciate all the time and effort they put into this committee. Thanks for doing a great job.

Dave Litterer and the elections board committee - they have a tedious job and they are not always recognized for the vital role they play in our association. Thanks to all of you.

Linda Hillenbrand - She does an awesome job of putting together the newsgram and our web page. We owe her and her committee a great deal. Keep up the good work and keep the communications flowing. Thanks.

Frank Olbris - Steward's council chair amongst other roles. He is a man who spends many hours keeping us all informed of the current legislative issues. Keep up the good work.

Last but certainly not least I would like to thank Jane Litwin-Taylor our office manager. She is the glue that keeps the office running and she is helpful to the membership and to me personally. Thanks for all your hard work on behalf of the association.

There are many people to thank and I will continue to point them out to you in the future. Enjoy this lovely spring weather and I look forward to seeing some of you in the near future at a meeting.

In solidarity, Donna Johnson, USA President

Editor’s Note: A copy of the Annual Report is available in the office and will be available on the website soon. Call Jane in the office to request a copy.
CONTRACT CLARIFICATION

ARTICLE 20 - CLASSIFICATION AND RECLASSIFICATION

This is the article that refers to what are commonly called “reallocations” or “upgrades.” The right to file for reclassification if your job title is in the Massachusetts General Laws. This article provides that the procedures used on campus will be governed by that law (specifically, Section 49 of Chapter 30).

This article also provides for procedures governing trust funded (or any non-state funded) positions. The difference between the two procedures is noted. State funded reclassifications do not involve hearings (other than the actual job audit) on campus - it’s all done on paper. However, a negative decision may be appealed the Commonwealth’s Division of Human Resources, and a negative appeal there may be appealed to the Civil Service Commission.

The trust-funded procedures are all on campus. There are two levels of appeal on campus - the first level is conducted on a hearing, and the second level may be an appeal (at the Personnel Administrator’s option). The decision of the Personnel Administrator CANNOT be appealed.

If you have any further questions regarding the reclassification process, please leave a message for me at the union office, 5-0165.

Jim Kierstead, Acting Reallocation Officer

ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the Spring 2001 election for MTA delegates were done in April. There were 98 valid ballots and 1 invalid ballot. There were 66 votes cast at the Student Union, 12 at 120 Hampshire House and 20 absentee ballots returned. The following people will be going to the MTA Annual Meeting on May 18th and 19th: James Plaza (72), Frank Olbris (61), Lisa Persons (60), Linda Fish (59), Linda Merritt (59), Jim Kierstead (59), Jacquie Gentil (57), David Litterer (57), Pat Hardnett (55), Agnes Ting (51), Thad Dabrowski (50), Eugenie Harvey (48), Patricia Link (43), Carmen Rivera (41), Dora Ramos (40), Felicita Caminero (37), Cathy Sanderson (36), Mona Balichi (36), Sylvia Vasquez (35), J. Michael Jones (35), Judy Schaefer (34). Donna Johnson and Rosemary Riley declined because they are on the board.

BOYCOTT!

Down in Florida the Coalition of Immokalee Workers are urging us all to boycott Taco Bell. Farmworkers who pick tomatoes for the Six Ls Packing Company, a contractor for Taco Bell, are paid 40 cents for every 32 lb. bucket they pick. The same rate has been in effect 23 years! The workers have to pick and haul 2 tons of tomatoes to make $50 per day. They receive no overtime pay for overtime work, no health insurance, no sick leave, no paid holidays, no paid vacation and no pension. Taco Bell has refused to discuss the working conditions. Reported earnings for 1999 were $5 billion. Taco Bell’s parent company, which also owns Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut earned over $22 billion last year.

MTA NEWS & NOTES

Once again the Swift/Cellucci administration tried to raise our insurance contribution from 15% to 25%. And once again, thanks to the efforts of MTA and other unions, it will stay the same. This is a pretty regular attempt on the part of our governor and it regularly gets shot down. There are a lot of people to thank for this, our legislators, fellow members for voicing their concerns, and union leadership, here and across the state.

MTA has now turned their attention to funding. They are asking us to call our representatives and urge support for amendments to increase funding for higher education and also to thank them for maintaining your employee health premium at 15%. The House debate on the budget began on April 30. The proposed House budget significantly underfunds community colleges, state colleges and the university. Please send in the postcard that MTA provided!
How a Bill Becomes Law
Or
The Massachusetts State Budget Process

Once a bill is introduced in the Legislature, it goes through a series of steps to become law. The process is outlined below:

1. **State Agencies Budget Requests**
2. **Executive Offices - Public Hearings**
3. **Budget bureau**
4. **Governor**
5. **Document release as House 1**

### House Committee on Ways and Means - Public Hearings

- Document released as House 1
- House Ways and Means text sent to full chamber
- Representatives may offer amendments and debate bill

### Committee on Bills in Third Reading - Technical corrections

- New House bill number
- Bill passed to be engrossed

### Senate Committee on Ways and Means - Hearings

- New Senate bill number (Senate Ways and Means test)
- Senate Ways and Means text sent to full chamber
- Senators may offer amendments and debate bills

### Committee on Bills in Third Reading

- New Senate bill number
- Bill passed to be engrossed

### Senate bill sent to House

### Conference Committee - Conference Committee report

- Governor signs, vetoes or vetoes part of budget

### Chapter number, Acts of 2023

A 2/3 vote in each chamber can override Governor’s veto of a line item or outside section.

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**PERSONAL PROFILE**

As a new feature of the Newsgram and the website, and when there is room, we will be featuring a personal profile of USA volunteers. The profile questions are fashioned after the Hampshire Life Profiles in the Daily Hampshire Gazette. They are fun and informative and not too personal. They are a means for USA members to get to know the leadership of USA and what makes them tick. We will also be asking USA members to fill out the personal profiles (the insert in this Newsgram!) to be loaded onto the website in an alphabetical listing. This is completely voluntary. Our intention is not to have a personals page but to keep lines of communication open between members in every way possible.

As a kickoff to this new piece of the Newsgram, the featured volunteer is yours truly, the editor of the Newsgram, Chair of the USA Public Relations Committee and USA website designer. It was painless, fun and easy to fill this out.

**Name:** Linda L. Hillenbrand  
**Nickname:** none that stuck, thankfully  
**Birthday and place of birth:** April 10, Amherst native  
**Job:** Office Manager, Women’s Studies Program  
**Pet(s):** Carini, a golden hamster  
**Hobbies:** reading, hiking  
**Favorite Movie(s):** Grease, Dirty Dancing, Overboard  
**Favorite Song(s):** American Pie  
**Favorite Book(s):** Sword of Truth Series by Terry Goodkind or the Belgariad and the Mallorean Series by David Eddings  
**Favorite item of clothing:** my well-worn Levi's  
**Favorite way to pamper yourself:** a comfortable corner and a book  
**Name a TV show you can’t stand to miss:** X-files  
**Person or people you’d most like to have lunch with:** Stephen King and Dean Koontz  
**Name one achievement of which you’re most proud:** my son and quitting smoking  
**Most valuable lesson you’ve learned:** no how-to book written can prepare you for the real thing  
**Personal strength(s):** I never give up  
**Personal weaknesses(s):** impatient  
**Name one thing you’d change about yourself:** be more patient  
**What word(s) comes to mind when you look in the mirror:** so far, so good  
**People in high school thought you were:** cool  
**Secret ambition/fantasy:** travel writer  
**Best present you ever received:** my son  
**Name a little known fact that would surprise your friends:** no surprises  
**What gives you the creeps:** George W. Bush as our president  
**Finally, what does USA mean to you:** USA fights for our rights as workers – together we can make a difference.
BLUEBERRY GRUNT
FROM THE TASTE OF NOVA SCOTIA COOKBOOK
Submitted by Cheryl Lerch

Sauce:
4 cups wild fresh or frozen blueberries
½ tsp ground nutmeg
⅛ tsp ground cinnamon
1 tbsp lemon juice
½ cup water

Dumplings:
2 cups all purpose flour
4 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
1 tbsp granulated sugar
2 tbsp butter or shortening

In a large saucepan with cover, heat berries, nutmeg, cinnamon, sugar, lemon juice and water; boil gently until well blended and slightly cooked down.

In a mixing bowl sift flour, baking powder, salt and sugar. Cut in butter and add enough milk to make a soft biscuit dough. Drop by spoonfuls into hot berry sauce. Cover tightly with a lid and simmer for 15 minutes (NO PEEKING!). The dumplings should be puffed and well cooked through. Transfer cooked dumplings to serving dish. Ladle sauce over top; serve with whipped cream. Makes 6 to 8 servings
USA PERSONAL PROFILE

The following profile is fully optional. Your profile will eventually be posted onto the website in an alphabetical listing. See the profile on Page 3 for an example of how questions were answered. We’ve all done a few of these by e-mail and they can be fun! When finished fold over and mail back and then stay tuned to the website. Please note on the bottom a place for your e-mail address and whether you’d like an e-mail link on the website.

Would you like an e-mail link added? If so, e-mail address: ________________________________

Name:
Nickname:
Birthday and place of birth:

Job:

Pet(s):

Hobbies:

Favorite Movie(s):

Favorite Song(s):

Favorite Book(s):

Favorite item of clothing:

Favorite way to pamper yourself:

Name a TV show you can’t stand to miss:

Person or people you’d most like to have lunch with:

Name one achievement of which you’re most proud:

Most valuable lesson you’ve learned:

Personal strength(s):
Personal weaknesses(s):

Name one thing you’d change about yourself:

What word comes to mind when you look in the mirror:

People in high school thought you were:

Secret ambition/fantasy:

Best present you ever received:

Name a little known fact that would surprise your friends:

What gives you the creeps?:

Finally, what does USA mean to you?: