President’s Corner
In the next President’s Corner (January, 2004) FA President Mike Goho will be sharing information on upcoming negotiations and also on the Banner project and how it will affect the workload of those professional staff involved with the project.

FLEXIBLE SPENDING…
The Rest of the Story

Note: This portion of our article on Flexible Spending missed the last newsletter. Sorry for the inconvenience.

When are we going to get preventive dental coverage in the contract?
We have it already. When we negotiated the $762 the college puts into our flexible spending pool, we anticipated that people would use these funds to pay for preventive dental care through the flexible spending account. As I said before, pocketing the $762 after having taxes taken out makes no sense.

Are there any other expenses that can be reimbursed?
Human Resources informed me recently that the IRS will now allow purchases of Over-The-Counter medicines to be reimbursed through FSA’s. These medicines can now be reimbursed without the requirement of your doctor’s recommendation. These medicines include allergy medications, pain relievers, antihistamines, cough medicines, first aid creams, ointments for muscle/joint pain, sleep aids, and other types of OTC medications. With your doctor’s recommendation, you can also be reimbursed for OTC herbal medicines, fiber supplements, acne treatments, nasal sprays for snoring, vitamins/minerals, and weight-loss drugs. For those who are worried about not using all of the money they have set aside in their FSA, it is now possible to do some end of the year stocking up!

Anything else I should know?
Yes, our members with children have shared with us that summer day camp costs are reimbursable through Flexible Spending. It must be a summer day camp with no overnight stays to be eligible.

I hope you have decided to use the flexible spending account. When the form comes out, don’t toss it away. Take advantage of this great benefit and give yourself some extra cash every year. If you still have questions, Human Resources has a wonderful brochure explaining how flexible spending works. In addition, if enough people request (by e-mail to me) a training session on the ins and outs of flexible spending, the FA will arrange a time when those interested can learn more about this benefit.

December, 2003

Labor News from the American Federation of Teachers

SIGN THE ONLINE PETITION TO SAVE OVERTIME
The AFL-CIO is organizing a petition to submit to Congress and the White House demanding that the administration’s proposal to strip workers of their rights to time-and-a-half overtime pay
be withdrawn. The White House is threatening to veto any spending bill that includes an amendment barring the federal government from denying workers their right to overtime pay. Join thousands of Americans by signing the petition at http://www.saveovertimepay.org. With your help, the AFL-CIO hopes to get 150,000 signatures demanding overtime pay be protected.

DEC. 10 DAY OF ACTION TO HIGHLIGHT ORGANIZING RIGHTS
AFT affiliates are ready to make noise around the country Dec. 10 to mark International Human Rights Day and rev up the campaign to restore every worker’s freedom to form a union. Even though on paper America’s workers have the right to form unions, U.S. laws are not strong enough to prevent employers from routinely abusing workers’ rights. Hart Research reports that 42 million U.S. workers would form a union today if they had a chance. To that end, labor is supporting the Employee Free Choice Act unveiled last month on Capitol Hill. To find out more about the Dec. 10 events, go to http://www.aflcio.org/aboutions/voiceowrk/d10.cfm. If your affiliate is participating, let us know; the union can provide AFT T-shirts. E-mail Paul Devlin, assistant to the AFT secretary-treasurer, at pdevlin@aft.org.

Educator’s Tax Guides Available in January
The Educator’s Tax Guide 2004 Edition will be available to interested FA members. The tax guide gives tips for educators and highlights tax changes for 2003. There is a limited supply so call immediately to reserve your copy. THERE IS NO COST TO MEMBERS. Contact the office at extension 2019, or on Outlook, slenhard@monroecc.edu.

FA Office Closing for the Holidays
The Faculty Association offices will close at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, December 22 and will reopen on Monday, January 5. If you have business of an urgent nature, please contact FA President Mike Goho at 377-3987.

Marchese Seminar Held November 17
The Faculty Association and Human Resources sponsored a financial planning seminar led by Professor Joe Marchese from Business/Economics. Topics included investment principles and their applications both inside and outside MCC.

Our thanks to Joe for volunteering his time to present the seminar. If you are interested, the FA has a limited number of written materials from the seminar. Contact the FA at extension 2019 or via Outlook slenhard@monroecc.edu.

NYSUT eStore Coming Soon
In spring 2004, NYSUT will introduce the easiest way for local leaders and members to obtain clothing and other items bearing their union’s own logo, the NYSUT logo or both. The eStore will offer apparel, mugs, travel items, office supplies and much more—all USA made and 100% union made.

Speaking of logos, the FA has selected a new logo from designs submitted from a MCC Graphic Design student. The new FA logo will also have a color scheme for shirts and other items.
Education Loans for Union Members

AFT PLUS and Sallie Mae have partnered to provide educational assistance to union members and their families. Here are just a few of the AFT PLUS Education Loan Services features:

- financial aid counseling via a dedicated toll-free phone line
- college education loans from a network of federal and private lender partners
- “Paying for College” seminars

Call for more information:

1-877-881-1022

www.aftplus.org
These are just a few of the savings the State of New York could achieve by using state workers instead of consultants.

State workers. The best value for your money.