

UPDATE

REMINDER

Elections for Conventions Monday, April 9, 2012 Check Union Board for Time and Place.

April Fools Day is not too far away, and this is when you could get back at all those people who were not really nice to you; however, you could still go ahead and play some pranks on those you like and love as well, making April Fools Day one of the best holidays every year.

It is celebrated in most parts of the world people either hate it or love it, but they just can't ignore it. Now that the holiday is less than a few weeks away, you certainly need to start preparing for all the wonderful pranks that might turn your loved or detested ones into gullible fools.

You could play a number of hoaxes and practical jokes on almost anybody including friends, family members, enemies, and neighbors. Since the aim of the prank is to embarrass the gullible and not physically or emotionally hurt them, you might want to be sure that you do not take the jokes too far, and cause offense to the victim.

In countries where British culture prevails, like in UK, Australia, Canada and South Africa the jokes can be played only till the afternoon. However in other countries like France, Ireland, Italy, Russia, The Netherlands, and the U.S. you could play the jokes and pranks all day long.



Weingarten Rules

Under the Supreme Court's Weingarten decision, when an investigatory interview occurs, the following rules apply:

Rule 1. The *employee* must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview. **The employee cannot be punished for making this request.**

Rule 2. After the employee makes the request, the employer must choose from among three options. The employer must either:

- a. Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and has a chance to contact privately with the employee; or
- b. Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
- c. Give the employee a choice of: (1) having the interview without representation or (2) ending the interview.

Rule 3. If the employer denies the request for union representation, and continues to ask questions, it Commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has the right to refuse to answer. **The employer may not discipline the employee for such a refusal.**

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Cape Cod College Student Caught with Gun on Campus

By NewsTips -

BARNSTABLE, Mass. (AP) — A Cape Cod Community College student is held without bail after police say he was found with a loaded handgun on campus.

Jason Whitehead of Yarmouth was arraigned Tuesday on charges of carrying a firearm on a school campus, carrying a firearm without a license and unlawful possession of ammunition. The Cape Cod Times reports Judge Joan Lynch ordered him held after a dangerousness hearing that followed.

A campus security guard called Barnstable police Monday to report he saw ammunition in Whitehead's car.

Police say Whitehead made comments about the end of the world and said the gun was for his protection.

Whitehead's defense lawyer noted there are no allegations he made any threats, and he made the comments to police because he felt pressured to give a reason for having a gun.



Photo's of Rally in Boston



STATE HOUSE, BOSTON - A member of Senate President Therese Murray's leadership team predicted Thursday that the Senate would support blocking a Patrick administration move to shutter Taunton State Hospital, a mental health facility that serves the state's southeast region. Sen. Harriette Chandler (D-Worcester), assistant majority leader, told a capitol auditorium packed with union members opposed to the closure that she believes "the Senate as a whole" would demand a comprehensive study before any changes are made to the mental health system. Chandler spoke at a rally organized by Sen. Marc Pacheco and House Speaker Pro Tempore Patricia Haddad to oppose the closure. The state Department of Mental Health announced the closure in January, indicating that it would move the bulk of the hospital's 169 beds about 55 miles to a new, state-of-the-art facility in Worcester slated to open this year. The closure is due to be completed before Dec. 31, 2012.

Under the administration's plan, a portion of the beds would also be transferred to Tewksbury, about 60 miles from Taunton. The Patrick administration has described the move as a sound decision to shift the state's focus toward community-based services, to move patients out of an antiquated facility to a more modern hospital, and the help DMH live within a budget that has been whittled down in recent years.

Advocates for keeping the hospital open have rejected those arguments as misleading and short-sighted. The proposal to halt the closure in favor of a study fueled an often ear-splitting rallying cry delivered by attendees of the rally: "Stop and Study."

A growing chorus of legislative leaders, southeastern and central Massachusetts lawmakers and municipal officials have warned that closing Taunton State Hospital would leave the region without easy access to long-term mental health beds, forcing patients and their families to travel long distances to the Worcester facilities or worse, cramming them into already-stuffed emergency rooms and acute care facilities.

In addition, advocates for maintaining the hospital say the facility's 415 employees would be redistributed throughout the mental health system, potentially creating havoc for less senior employees, who could be bumped to new facilities.

Although many of the arguments presented at Thursday's rally have been voiced by critics of the closure in recent weeks, the tone was markedly more militant.

Tony Caso, executive director of AFSCME 93, a union that represents 250 Taunton State Hospital workers, called the administration's plan a "threat that needs to be stopped." Rep. James O'Day (D-Worcester) said a "fight" to prevent the closure "begins today." Karen Coughlin, vice president of the Massachusetts Nurses Association, called the closure plan "a cold-hearted and dangerous decision that will have devastating consequences." Rep. Shaunna O'Connell (R-Taunton) called attendees of Thursday's rally "soldiers" who would not permit the closure of the facility.

"This is a fight. This isn't something that we're going to give it a shot and see what happens. We mean business," she said.

The push to keep the hospital open drew a bipartisan cadre of lawmakers - from Republican Reps. Keiko Orrall of Lakeville, Angelo D'Emilia of Bridgewater and Jay Barrows of Mansfield, to Democratic Reps. David Sullivan of Fall River, Sarah Peake of Provincetown and Tim Madden of Nantucket. Bristol County District Attorney Sam Sutter, a Democrat, was also on hand. The mayors of Taunton and Worcester joined the rally as well. Asked about the issue on Thursday afternoon, Senate President Therese Murray said southeastern Massachusetts hospitals lack the number of beds to handle the demand for mental health services in the region should Taunton close. "I think that's something the members feel very strongly about," she said.

Asked about the Patrick administration's contention that even without Taunton, the southeastern region would be left with 32 beds in Fall River and Pocasset, Murray said, "The hospitals are already suffering and you have people in the ERs waiting to get into the few beds they have so we need a bigger presence than that."

Administration officials say the opening of the Worcester facility will maintain the number of inpatient mental health beds across the state at 626 and that the southeastern region will be left with a broad array of community-based services.

Administration officials have distributed packets of information to lawmakers making their case for closing the facility. They noted that all employees from Taunton would be offered jobs at the new facility. They also noted that many of the residents at Taunton State Hospital hail from other regions of the state, including 61 who come from outside the southeastern region. They also point out that patients are admitted and discharged from the hospital every day, meaning that only 10 to 20 current patients will likely be at the facility when the beds are transferred to Worcester and Tewksbury.

Administration officials also distributed a chart detailing the hometowns of patients at other mental health facilities across the state, including Worcester State Hospital, Tewksbury, Shattuck, Solomon Carter Fuller, Corrigan and Pocasset. In each case, patients hail from across the state. Some patients at Worcester State Hospital, for example, come from New Bedford, Boston, Acton, and Brookline, while some patients in Tewksbury came from Westborough, Worcester, Marlborough and Quincy.

In addition, the administration counted as supporters the heads of the Association for Behavioral Health Care, the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the Disability Law Center, the Center for Public Representation and the Massachusetts Association of Behavioral Health Systems.

Marcia Fowler, commissioner of mental health, declined to respond to the more fiery rhetoric lobbed by protesters and sidestepped when asked whether she believed election-year politics has played a role in the tenor of the conversation. She said her goal is to "continue sharing what the facts are."

Fowler said that currently, there are more residents seeking to leave long-term care facilities than there are patients waiting to be admitted. She said that arguments that the closure of Taunton would pack emergency rooms, strain law enforcement or increase homelessness were ill-informed since only private mental health hospitals accept patients from emergency rooms. Fowler also noted that a 2004 mental health study - one that opponents of closing Taunton say bolsters their case - actually concluded that only about 613 inpatient beds were required in the system.

"We still have people in our facilities that are waiting for community placement," she said. "I think what we need to do is continue sharing what the facts are and to keep reiterating that there is not reduction in service and there is expansion in service. We are expanding community placements which is where our significant need is."

David Matteodo, executive director of the Association of Behavioral Health Systems, said his group has opposed previous hospital closures but views the closure of Taunton differently because the state will maintain its total number of mental health beds at 626. Although he said that each day, about 50 to 70 patients in acute care facilities often wait for "weeks" to get into long-term care beds, the Department of Mental Health "insists they have enough beds" and are attempting to reduce the average stay in long-term facilities to help see more patients.

Matteodo, who lobbies on behalf of mental health and substance abuse facilities, agreed with protesters' call for an independent analysis of the state's mental health needs, but he said a moratorium on closing facilities should not be a prerequisite.

"What we're saying is, as long as the total [of beds] stays the same, that's our key right now," he said. "Whether they need more, you can argue for that. DMH thinks - I think their message over the last few years they want to emphasize community so much, they could get by with less. What we're saying is, we're not sure."

The Massachusetts Association of Mental Health argued in budget testimony earlier this month that if the Legislature blocks the closure of Taunton State Hospital, it is obligated to find another \$20 million to \$25 million to ensure that both the Taunton facility and the new Worcester hospital are able to operate at full capacity. But even if those funds are available, said the organization's executive director Bernie Carey, it would be better spent on an expansion of community-based services.

Pacheco, a Taunton Democrat, rejected administration arguments, contending that they intentionally omitted facts from their argument, including the fact that the state's 626 mental health beds are already short of the 740 beds recommended by the agency in 2004. The new Worcester facility, he argued, was intended to be a hub for central and western Massachusetts's mental health needs.

"But on Day 1, as it opens, under the plan that is proposed, the overwhelming majority for those slots will be full because we'll be transferring patients from the Taunton facility taking up the slots that were promised for Central Mass," he said. "That's what they don't say. If I had that record, from a mental health perspective on this issue, I wouldn't want to be talking about it either."

Council 93 Seeks Members for “On the Job” Training as Volunteer Member Organizers

AFSCME Council 93 is seeking members interested in becoming a Volunteer Member Organizer (VMO). This is a tremendous opportunity for anyone who has ever wanted to participate in an effort to bring the benefits of union membership to individuals and families who do not enjoy the decent wages, benefits and security that comes with being part of a union.

As a participant, not only will you receive classroom training on the essentials of becoming an effective union organizer, you will participate and assist in an actual organizing campaign for homecare workers in Vermont. You will ride with a union organizer and make visits to workers’ homes.

This is a unique and exciting opportunity to make a difference in the lives of working families, build the ranks of your union and learn some new skills.

The program starts on Friday, April 13 and ends the following Saturday on April 21.

It will be based out of the Residence Inn, located at 71 Rathe Road in Colchester, Vermont.

Wage, transportation and lodging reimbursement is available to eligible participants. Interested members must email Alva Arellano to be approved for admission into the program. Alva can also be reached by phone at 617-367-3686.

Seating is limited so don’t delay. Reach out to Alva today.



Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring,

All of which have the potential to turn a life around.

Colleges eye satellite campus for downtown Haverhill

By Mike LaBella mlabella@eagletribune.com The Eagle Tribune Sun Mar 18, 2012, 12:22 AM EDT

HAVERTHILL — The comeback of downtown has featured the transformation of old factories into condominiums, apartments and restaurants. Local leaders want to add a college to the mix.

UMass Lowell and **Northern Essex Community College** said they are considering a partnership that would lead to a satellite campus in downtown Haverhill.

James Jajuga, president of the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce, said talks involving UMass Chancellor Martin Meehan and *NECC President Dr. Lane Glenn* are moving toward making the campus happen.

"The chamber wants to work with NECC and UMass Lowell to help create a presence in Haverhill, and specifically in the downtown area," Jajuga said. If it happens, the city would have three colleges: The main NECC campus, Zion Bible College on the site of the former Bradford College, and UMass Lowell.

Meehan came to Haverhill on March 6, where at a chamber of commerce luncheon he spoke to more than 60 business leaders and educators about partnerships with NECC, jobs and training opportunities to be provided by UMass Lowell's presence in Haverhill, and the possibility of a satellite campus in Haverhill.

John Chemaly, chairman of the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce and president of Trinity EMS, which provides ambulance service to Haverhill, asked Meehan if he would consider duplicating the vibrancy he brought to downtown Lowell in Haverhill.

Meehan responded by saying he and Glenn were discussing doing just that, including the possibility of opening a satellite campus downtown.

"I think it would be fantastic for Haverhill and would enhance the momentum the city already has going for it now," Chemaly said.

After the chamber luncheon, Meehan and several of his staff members visited NECC's Haverhill campus and spoke with Glenn and his staff.

"We are looking at what kind of presence by NECC would make the most sense in downtown Haverhill," Glenn said about the talks that have been taking place. "We've been in conversations with Mayor (James) Fiorentini and downtown business leaders as to what kind of programs or service would make sense for the college to have downtown."

The appeal of downtown

Northern Essex has a strong presence in downtown Lawrence. In 1991, the college opened the Dimitry Building on Franklin Street. Now the college has four locations in Lawrence, including the Louise Haffner Fournier Education Center on Amesbury Street, the iHealth building on Franklin Street and the new NECC Riverwalk on Merrimack Street. The college's plans for Lawrence include opening its new El-Hefni Health and Technology Center in the fall of 2013. The center will replace the former in-town mall on Common Street.

In the last five years, downtown Haverhill has had a resurgence, with developers converting old shoe factories into hundreds of apartments and condos. Several new restaurants have opened, giving the west end of downtown the nickname "restaurant row." The city also has a new downtown parking garage with more than 300 spaces.

Glenn said some of the benefits of having a satellite campus in downtown Haverhill include reaching a new population of students who work in the city center and can take advantage of a school close to where they work.

"Our roots are in Haverhill and, as the downtown grows and gets stronger, the college will grow and get stronger," Glenn said. "We have invited a few senior administrators from UMass Lowell to join us for a conversation in April about higher education opportunities in downtown Haverhill."

Glenn said City Council President John Michitson has been trying to get a green chemistry center up and running in Haverhill, and was closely involved in creating a business incubator on the seventh floor of the Burgess Building at 143 Essex St., where emerging, innovative businesses can share resources and ideas.

Glenn said Michitson has also been trying to get NECC to create a presence downtown.

"We are engaged in these conversations and are looking for the right opportunity," Glenn said.

Michitson said the missing piece of the puzzle downtown is attracting businesses that will use office space and research and development space.

"If Northern Essex and UMass Lowell come together to create a presence in the downtown, it will be a beacon to attract emerging businesses," Michitson said. "Most importantly, it would provide for training and work force development for those businesses and would increase foot traffic during the day in the downtown."

College partnerships grow

As the times change, so has NECC. The college now offers 101 online courses, as well as programs it created to meet the needs of industry. One of those, an associate's degree in laboratory science, sprouted from talks and in partnership with area employers such as Wyeth Pharmaceuticals.

Northern Essex has also formed new partnerships with four-year colleges. Students can earn a bachelor of science degree in early childhood education as well as elementary education through Fitchburg State University without having to leave NECC's campus. NECC students can also earn a bachelor of science degree in nursing that is offered through Salem State University.

"We have programs where students can get their two-year degree, then go right to a four-year degree program and I'd like to see more of those," Glenn said. "If we were able to do this with UMass Lowell, maybe in the area of a business program, I think that would be a great thing and might make sense for downtown Haverhill."

During the chamber luncheon, Meehan talked about the growth of UMass Lowell and partnerships it has developed with Haverhill High School and NECC, which Meehan said is the second largest feeder school to UMass Lowell. Through NECCUM — a consortium of 10 colleges — students can take courses and use the libraries of nine other colleges in the region and cross register between the NECC and UMass Lowell campuses at no additional cost.

Meehan said UMass Lowell also has a contract with Haverhill to provide dual enrollment courses to Haverhill High School students. The courses include science, technology, engineering and math. This semester, 20 students are participating in a blended learning course — introduction to engineering — that involves online lectures and monthly visits to the campus to meet with the instructor and do lab work, he said.

Gov defends unifying community colleges

Community colleges key to filling 120,000 jobs

Updated: Tuesday, 20 Mar 2012, 7:54 PM EDT
Published : Tuesday, 20 Mar 2012, 6:24 PM EDT

[Christine Lee, 22News State House Correspondent](#)

BOSTON, Mass. (WWLP) - Governor Deval Patrick addressed lawmakers and his top education officials Tuesday on the independent and localized nature of community colleges across the Commonwealth. While Patrick praised their regionalized agendas, he said there needs to be a "shared governance model" that unifies the community college system and keeps schools on track with statewide job goals.

"We have 15 different community colleges driving 15 different agendas, that's a fact, that's not a critique, that's a fact," said Patrick. "We ...need a system that is aligned with what we're trying to do Commonwealth-wide."

According to the governor, there are 120,000 vacant job openings in Massachusetts because there is a mismatch between job seekers and the skills needed to fill those jobs. Patrick's solution is to integrate community colleges with the state's economic goals and education systems, which has critics concerned.

"We have to be careful about not losing control of the local boards and you know it's concerning that the presidents of these community colleges might be chosen by someone in Boston," said Rep. Ellen Story (D-Amherst).

Administration officials said their proposal preserves local Boards of Trustees to manage daily campus operations, but holds them accountable for meeting statewide performance benchmarks using minimum intervention. Colleges will be expected to meet education goals and coordinate with vocational schools and other higher education institutions to make it easier for students to transfer.

"This is an effort to achieve a balance between responsiveness at the state level and local autonomy and local control so that the community colleges can be asked to fit into a statewide system," said Massachusetts Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland.

By the end of the meeting, Rep. Story said she felt more optimistic about the proposal, especially when members from the business community said they were willing to raise private funds to help community colleges.



Chris Olsen has left WSU but not AFSCME

Chris Olsen (Trades) has left the building, but is still available and at your service. He will continue in his role as a Trustee with AFSCME Local 1067 until November, 2012, and is still the vice president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. Chris began and ended his career at WSU as a HVAC Technician, and was the first AFSCME Fellow in the history of WSU. He's been serving the Westfield campus community for 21+ years participating in everything that he could, including volunteering to sit on various committees. He's enjoyed fund raising events, scholarship campaigns, sitting on hiring committees, and put together the first unity picnic, to name a few. "I always felt that students came first," said Chris. Always there for students, Chris says they would tell him things that they wouldn't tell their parents. "I often felt that I was a sounding board for them," said Chris.

Chris may have inherited his passion to help people and as he says, "equality for all and leveling the playing field," from his ancestor. Peter Stuyvesant served as the last Dutch Director-General of the colony of New Netherland from 1647 until it was ceded provisionally to the English in 1664. Later it was renamed New York. Also a very determined man, Peter had many accomplishments even while suffering the loss of his lower right leg to a cannon ball in a 1644 skirmish, which left him with a wooden peg for a leg. Chris also always believed in Mother Jones, an early 1900s prominent American labor and community organizer who said, "Pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living."

The National Labor Relations Act

The NLRA was enacted by Congress in 1935. It was hailed at the time and for many years after as the Magna Carta of America labor. Previously, employers had been free to spy on, interrogate, discipline, discharge, and blacklist union members. But in the 1930's workers began to organize militantly. A great strike wave in 1933 and 1934 included citywide general strikes and factory takeovers. Violent confrontations occurred between workers trying to form unions and the police and private security forces defending the interests of anti-union employers. Some historians believe that Congress adopted the NLRA primarily in the hopes of averting greater, possible revolutionary, labor unrest.

The NLRA guaranteed workers the right to join unions without fear of management reprisal. It created the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to enforce this right and prohibited employers from committing unfair labor practices that might discourage organizing or prevent workers from negotiating a union contract.

The NLRA's passage galvanized union organizing. Successful campaigns soon followed in the automobile, steel, electrical, manufacturing, and rubber industries. By 1945, union membership reached 35% of the work-force. In reaction, industrialists, and other opponents of organized labor sought to weaken the NLRA. They succeeded in 1947 with the passage of the Taft-Hartly Act, which added provisions to the NLRA allowing unions to be prosecuted, enjoined, and sued for a variety of activities, including mass picketing and secondary boycotts.

The last major revision of the NLRA occurred in 1959, when Congress imposed further restrictions on unions in the Landrum-Griffin Act.

Key Provisions

The most important sections of the NLRA are Sections 7, 8, and 9.

Section 7, is the heart of the NLRA. It defines protected activity. Stripped to its essential, it reads:

Employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid and protection.

Section 7 applies to a wide range of union and collective activities.

In addition to organizing, it protects employees who take part in grievances, on-the-job protests, picketing, and strikes.

Section 8 defines employer unfair labor practices.

Five types of conduct are made illegal:

Employer interference, restraint, or coercion directed against union or collective activity (Section 8(a)(1))

Employer domination of unions (Section 8(a)(2))

Employer discrimination against employees who take part in union or collective activities (Section 8(a)(3))

Employer retaliation for filing unfair-labor-practice charges or cooperating with the NLRB (Section 8(a)(4))

Employer refusal to bargain in good faith with union representatives (Section 8(a)(5))

Threats, warnings, and orders to refrain from protected activities are forms of interference and coercion that violate Section 8(a)(1). Disciplinary actions, such as suspensions, discharges, transfers, and demotions, violate Section 8(a)(3). Failures to supply information, unilateral changes, refusals to hold grievance meetings, and direct dealings violate Section 8(a)(5).

Section 8 also prohibits union unfair labor practices, which include, according to legal construction, failure to provide fair representation to all members of the bargaining unit.

Section 9 provides that unions, if certified or recognized, are the exclusive representatives of bargaining unit members. It prohibits the adjustment of employee grievances unless a union representative is given and opportunity to be present, and establishes procedures to vote on union representation.

The NLRA sets out general rights and obligation. Enforcing the Act in particular situations is the job of the NLRB.



Nobody's Perfect

We all make mistakes. We're human. Shop stewards even make mistakes. Some of these mistakes are particularly serious. Here is a list of 20 mistakes that shop stewards make. Read them over. Nod your heads. But don't make them again!

Always wait until a worker comes to you with a grievance.

Walk around the worksite with a chip on your shoulder.

Pretend to know all the answers to all problems.

Give out false information or spread rumors.

Fail to keep members posted on disposition of grievances.

Violate company rules.

Violate the contract.

Always try to talk members out of filing grievances.

Present a grievance that isn't one.

Forget to investigate a grievance thoroughly before handling.

Blow up when dealing with the supervisor or workers.

Use profane language to intimidate the boss.

Argue a grievance by taking personal issue with the supervisor and directing personal remarks.

Miss membership meetings.

Bawl out a member in front of co-workers or in front of a supervisor.

Stall when workers call you.

Keep all the information to yourself.

Permit workers to push you around.

Enhance the supervisor's prestige by permitting the supervisor to use you as means of doing his/her dirty work, such as enforcing company rules or calling the workers down for minor abuse of certain privileges negotiated by the union.

Manage the workers.



Ten Mistakes A Steward Should Never Make

1. **Miss your deadline.** You know what the contract says, but somehow you forget to file the grievance within the specified time. The grievance, in almost every case, becomes history. Two pieces of advice. Keep a calendar diary with dates marked in red so you won't miss deadlines. And if you need more time, ask for an extension from management and get it in writing.
2. **Never get back to the grievant.** This usually happens when the steward determines that the member has no grievance. Rather than be the bearer of bad tidings, the steward disappears. This is irresponsible. If the issue is not grievable under the contract, see if it can be resolved in another manner. If not, tell the member that the issue cannot be written as a grievance, and give him/her the reasons.
3. **Bad mouth the union.** If you have a problem with the way things are done or with your leadership, discuss the issue(s) in a rational manner. Get off the soapbox and see if the difference can be resolved. There's plenty of room for discussion and disagreement. But when it spills out on the shop floor or at a meeting when management is present, such disagreements can permanently weaken the union. A house divided against itself will fail.
4. **Drop the routine fly ball.** You are the steward with responsibilities outlined by the constitution and by-laws. You should not make basic mistakes. Grievances should be written correctly. Information should be shared. You should know your rights. If you are unsure or don't know the answer, ask.
5. **Sit down and shut up at meetings with management.** In your role as a steward you are the union advocate. This role is an active one. You are the equal of management. You may ask questions, ask for and get records to process grievances, and even raise your voice at meetings when necessary.
6. **Lose control.** A major no no. You or a member may be baited at a grievance meeting so that you will get angry. A steward who argues out of anger and not facts will lose the grievance. Period.
7. **Write long grievances.** Grievances should be short and sweet. Management is being paid big salaries to supervise. Don't do the work for them. Your grievances should identify the grievant, outline the problem in a sentence or two, state what article of the contract is being violated, and what remedy you want to make the grievant whole. Save the arguments for the meeting. A good poker player never tips his/her hand.
8. **Meet the grievant for the first time at the grievance hearing.** If this is the first time you've met the member, you are inviting trouble. Big time. You should talk to the grievant face to face when you investigate the grievance and write it. You should also talk to the grievant prior to the hearing to familiarize him/her with the process. When they walk into the room, they should feel as comfortable as possible. They should know that yes, no, and I don't know are acceptable answers at a hearing. Describe the room to them, who will be there, and what they will be asked.
9. **Wait for the member to come to you with the problem.** If you do this, you will never gain the respect of the membership you represent or the management you must deal with. Problems can often be resolved before they explode into grievances. And members may not be as aware of contract violations and grievable issues as you are.
10. **Forget to take a breather.** This is intense work. Stewards work a full-time job and then take on their union responsibilities. This kind of existence is rewarding but is fraught with burn-out. Take time for yourself and your family.