The Government is Wasting Your Tax Dollars (Part 1)
By Ryan Grim with Joseph K. Vetter
Readers Digest January, 2008

Almost a decade ago, the federal government dropped $100 million for an Earth-monitoring satellite that never made it into space. Today it sits in a closet in Maryland. Cost to taxpayers for storing it, $1 million a year. And that’s just what is hiding in one closet. Who knows what’s in the rest of them. Reader’s Digest decided to find out.

Because we think the government should be held to at least the same standard as a publicly traded company, and because as taxpayers, we’re American’s shareholders, we performed an audit of sorts of the federal books. We’re not economists, but we do have common sense. We tried to be apolitical and got help from Congressional staffers from both parties, as well as various watchdog groups and agencies. In the end, we found that the federal government wastes nearly $1 trillion every year.

That’s roughly equal to the amount collected annually by the IRS in personal income taxes. Put another way, it’s also equal to about one-third of the country’s $2.9 trillion total annual budget. Reclaiming that lost trillion could help wipe out the country’s annual budget deficit, improve education, and provide health insurance for those don’t have it.

So how do you define “waste”? David Walker of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), a federal watchdog agency, calls it “the government’s failure to give tax payers the most for their money.” For our part, we used the kind of household test you would use on a piece of meat sitting in your refrigerator: If it smells rotten, it’s waste. And there is plenty to sniff out. Our government regularly pays for products and services it never gets, widely overpays companies to do things it could do more cheaply itself, loses money outright due to lax accounting and oversight, fails to collect what it’s owed, and ante up for unnecessary programs.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

How exactly does the federal government fritter away your hard-earned tax dollars? We’ve identified what we consider ten of the worst ways. Now, we’re not naïve. We know that not everyone will agree on every ripoff we’ve

Not a Spectator Sport
Unions are far more than a kind of employment insurance policy for working people. Plenty of union members and union officials have learned the hard way that when workers come to think of their union as a business that provides service rather than a group of people banding together to fight for common interests, the union quickly loses the clout and credibility needed to defend and advance the members’ interests.

When an employer looks and sees only a small handful of paid union staff or elected union leaders, and no one standing behind them, pretty soon the employer starts thinking that “the union” isn’t really much to contend with. And the truth is, that’s right.

Adapted from The Union Members Complete Guide, by Michael Mauer

Not the most important part of Easter but good information.

Easter this year is Sunday, March 23, 2008
As you may know, Easter is always the 1st Sunday after the 1st full moon after the Spring Equinox, which this year is March 20.

This dating of Easter is based on the lunar calendar that Hebrew people used to identify Passover, which is why it moves around on our Roman calendar. Here are a couple things that might interest you.

Based on the above, Easter can actually be one day earlier, March 22, but that is pretty rare. This year is the earliest Easter any of us will ever see the rest of our lives. (9972) Only the most elderly of our population have ever seen it this early. None of us have ever, nor will ever, see it a day earlier.

(cont. page 4)
American Association of University Women

Just in case you didn’t realize it, we are University Women! Are you aware that any Member of UAW Local 1950 can be a member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) if they have an associate’s degree or better?

The AAUW’s mission is, “Advancing Equity for Women and Girls through Advocacy, Education, and Research.”

Read more about the association at the Marquette Local Branch Website: http://www.aauwmi.org/localbranches/marquette/marquette.htm

or at their State Website http://www.aauwmi.org/

Should you have any questions, please contact Jeannie Wratschko at jwratsch@nmu.edu.

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Character is doing the right thing when no one is looking.

J. T. Wright

Membership meetings
March 5, 2008 - Michigan Room
April 2, 2008 - Michigan Room
May 7, 2008 - Explorer Rooms

Executive Board meetings
March 25, 2008 - TBA
April 29, 2008 - TBA

THANK YOU

Dear UAW Local 1950,

Thank you so much for your recent donations! Health and beauty supplies are always so useful here at the Harbor House.

Your thoughtfulness and generosity are truly appreciated.

Sincerely,
The Harbor House

NMU Local 1950,

Thank you for your condolences. The loss of my mother has been extremely difficult.

Sincerely,
Gina O’Donnell

2006-2007 Officers

President - Sue Tollefson
Vice President - Dawn Wilder
Secretary - Michelle Kimball
Treasurer - Rita Leppanen
Sergeant at Arms - Phyllis Zenglein
Guide - Karen Smith
Trustees - Angie McCabe, Joann Jordon, and Rhonda Peterson
Bargaining Team - Grace Albert, Gary Jerry, Jeff Roo, and Pat Woods

District Representatives
Chief Steward - Grace Albert

District 1 - Terry Williams: Alternate, Angie McCabe - Cohodas, UC, A&D, and Gries
District 2 - Ray Liubakka - Services Building, Jacobetti Center, PEIF, Superior Dome, and Berry Events Center
District 3 - Dawn Wilder - West Science, Learning Resources, Magers, New Science Facility, and Whitman
District 4 - Kimber Olli - McClintock, Thomas Fine Arts, and Hedgecock
EMPLOYMENT CHANGES

Position Hours Increase
Matthew Herbig’s job increased from 10 to 11-month status effective January 27, 2008.

Retirement
Cynthia Schwartz will retire effective 5/1/2008.

Replacements
Melinda Nelson transferred to the 9-month Account Clerk III 4C position in the Bookstore effective February 18, 2008.

FOR SALE

Charming 2 bedroom cottage near NMU and MGH. Large kitchen, porch/dining room. New roof and exterior doors. Highly efficient gas furnace and gas water heater. Finished full basement with beaver board system. Outstanding perennial garden. $109,000. Contact Cindy Schwartz at cschwart@nmu.edu or 228-8003.

BassTender Fishing Boat
10’2” in length, 16 ½” deep, 165 lbs. Fits easily into the back of pickup truck. Aerated live well, navigation lights, rod holders, two seats. Also comes with electric Minn Kota Trolling Motor. $700 takes all. Call Pat Wooldridge at 346-3792 and leave message.

An older gentleman was talking to his young neighbors. He said, “When you get to by my age, you spend a lot of time thinking about the hereafter.”

Why do you say that?” inquired the neighbor.

“Well, I often find myself going into a room and thinking ‘what did I can in here after?’”

Test your knowledge of the U.S. flag, history, government, and rights. Take this Citizenship Quiz at

http://content.gannettonline.com/gns/citizenship/citizenshiptrivia.html

Thanks to Christie Parsley, SSS

My sympathies to NMU’s UAW membership following the death of Douglas Fraser (former President of the UAW) this past week.

It was my privilege to talk with Mr. Fraser on a number of occasions during my graduate studies at Wayne State University and various professional events in the Detroit area. Those conversations contributed to my understanding of the role unions have played in creating a strong middle class, and strong America, and I would like to think that has helped me work effectively through union partnerships throughout my professional career.

Great leaders make an incredible impact, which cascades far beyond those they personally touch. It is not only the UAW which has lost an incredible leader and individual.

Sincerely,
Ann M. Sherman
Director of Human Resources
Dear Brothers & Sisters,

As you probably are aware, Senator Carl Levin is up for re-election this year. He has been a stalwart ally to the labor movement. He's stood with us on many important issues including trade, the economic stimulus package, and bringing sanity to our Iraq policy.

Now Senator Levin needs our help to get his name on the ballot next November.

To qualify, he has to collect a minimum of 15,000 and a maximum of 30,000 signatures from Michigan voters across the state. In the past, he’s always aimed for the higher number as an early demonstration of a grassroots support, and he wants to do that again this year. It’s a big job, and that's why he’s starting now.

You can become a key part of Senator Levin’s campaign by signing one of his official Nominating Petitions. If every Michigan voter who receives this message mails in their petition with just one signature, that's all the names he needs: http://www.democratsenators.org/o/10/t/153/signUp.jsp?key=1172

Feel free to also ask a few family members, neighbors, friends or coworkers to sign your petition as well. You'll find that completing a sheet or two doesn't have to take a lot of work. (9049) It's grassroots at its best.

Remember, every signature counts. You can just sign your petition and mail it back to him, or you can organize a petition drive in your neighborhood: http://www.democratsenators.org/o/10/t/153/signUp.jsp?key=1172

I hope everyone will join in this effort.

In Solidarity,

Mark Gaffney, President
Senior Citizen’s Corner

Senate Hearing Focuses on Future of Social Security and Medicare

The Senate recently held a hearing that could eventually affect the retirement and Medicare benefits of tens of millions of seniors. The U.S. Comptroller General and others testified on legislation that would establish a bipartisan commission to address the long-term financial stability of Social Security and Medicare. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) and other government economists are predicting that both programs are facing “large and growing structural deficits.”

Senators Kent Conrad (ND) and Judd Gregg (NH) have proposed a bipartisan task force whose recommendations would not be made until the new President and Congress are chosen in November elections. Those proposals would then be guaranteed to receive “fast track” consideration.

There have been several Social Security and Medicare commissions over the years, but none that achieved major changes since the 1983 Greenspan Commission, chaired by Alan Greenspan. That commission recommended a large number of major changes to Social Security that became law including the increase in the eligibility age for full benefits, imposing a tax on Social Security benefits, and even postponing the COLA increase for six months.

TSCL believes that Congress should start the process of examination of proposals to bring the programs back into fiscal balance, in order to avoid sudden and abrupt cuts. Congress should make changes in such a way that they are the smallest possible, and phased in over the longest possible period of time, to avoid giving birth to new generations of Notch Babies.


To learn more, go to The Senior Citizens League’s Website at http://www.seniorsleague.org

What Union Gave Us

John Sanchez, retired UAW
Traverse City

There are naysayers in every community who can look at a good thing and find fault with it. Just the thought of labor unions causes them to shudder. Collective bargaining usually brings fair and equitable salary enhancements to employees for work performance.

As a retired UAW member, I have always advocated that “bargaining” is a practice of labor and management sitting down together to openly discuss ways to promote productivity and establish trust and harmony between the two entities of the work force.

We should continue to look favorably at the labor union movement’s most significant accomplishments over the last few decades. Allow me to name some examples:

- The Social Security Act
- The National Labor Relations Act
- The Civil Rights Act
- The Fair Labor Standards Act
- The Occupational Safety & Health Act
- The Family Medical Leave Act
- The Overtime Pay Act

Judging from the above, it is quite evident that appropriate strides were made by labor unions to protect the interest of all employees whether union members or not. Perhaps if management were more forthcoming with labor at Worldcon and Enron, employees’ savings, pension funds and retirement nest eggs wouldn’t have been squandered or stolen by a few unscrupulous executives.

Therefore, if we can again break the shell of conformity and embrace those things that make the American workforce among the most productive in the world, we will continue to succeed.

This letter is dedicated not only to the nurses at the Northern Michigan Hospital who are enduring the longest strike ever, but to all those union members who continue to show solidarity for a fair wage and benefit package enabling them to support a family as our forefathers strived for many years ago.

Ed Note: I found this in a Traverse City newspaper in August 2004. Unfortunately, I didn’t keep the exact information. I wrote the paper but have not received a response. The nurse’s strike lasted 2 years, ending unsettled. pz
This Month in History

On Sunday March 7, 1965, about six hundred people, lead by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., began a fifty-four mile march from Selma, Alabama to the state capitol in Montgomery. They were demonstrating for African American voting rights and to commemorate the death of Jimmie Lee Jackson, shot three weeks earlier by an state trooper while trying to protect his mother at a civil rights demonstration. On the outskirts of Selma, after they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the marchers, in plain sight of photographers and journalists, were brutally assaulted by heavily armed state troopers and deputies.

EASTER (conclusion)

The next time Easter will be this early, March 23, will be the year 2228, 220 years from now. The last time it was this early was 1913. So if you’re 95 or older, you were around for that.

The next time it will be a day earlier, March 22, will be in the year 2285, 277 years from now. The last time it was on March 22 was 1818. So, no one alive today has or will ever see it any earlier than this year.

Thanks to Christie Parsley, SSS

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**MARCH 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Puerto Ricans granted US citizenship—1917 US Steel Corp recognized Steel Workers Organizing Committee w/o a strike. This came on the heels of the Auto Workers’ victory at GM—1937</td>
<td>3 Star Spangled Banner adopted as National Anthem—1931 Florida entered Union—1845 Over 5,000 women marched in DC to demand the right to vote—1913</td>
<td>4 Jeannette Rankin sworn in as 1st woman to serve in US Congress—1917 Pres. Lincoln gave his 1st inaugural Address—1861 Vermont entered Union—1791</td>
<td>5 Boston Massacre; Crispus Attucks killed in lead-up to the U.S. Revoloution—1770 Free Speech struggle ends in victory for Industrial Workers of the World—1910</td>
<td>6 Dred Scott Decision handed down—1857</td>
<td>7 Alexander Graham Bell granted patent for telephone—1876 Five Detroit workers gunned down in Ford Hunger March—1932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Women’s History Month

American Red Cross Month

| 1 Ohio entered the union—1803; Nebraska—1867 | | | | | | | |
2008 America @ Work AFL-CIO Union-Industries Show at Detroit’s Cobo Hall in Detroit, May 16-18!

Guaranteed to amaze, amuse, entertain, educate and impress – the 70th Annual America @ Work AFL-CIO Union Industries Show has something for everyone! It’s for kids, adults, high school seniors and senior citizens. It’s the largest collection of union-made-in-the-USA products ever assembled under one roof.

From May 16-18th at Cobo Hall in Detroit, hundreds of exciting exhibits and hands-on demonstrations will celebrate America’s union workers and the work they do. Meet the folks who train guide dogs and watch as they put their canine students through their paces.

For the first time in the show’s history, many of the exhibitors will be encouraged to sell their high-quality products on the floor — including automobiles, tools, work clothes, appliances, work boots, sporting equipment, building products and more — at prices you won’t see anywhere else.

See the latest in autos, trucks and vans from Daimler Chrysler, Ford, GM and Saturn. Kick the tires on the concept cars of the future. Indy fans are sure to see one of their favorite cars from the circuit.

Enter your name for drawings for a brand new Harley-Davidson motorcycle or any of a score of valuable prizes like appliances, groceries and household goods. Get fire safety tips from safety professionals.

Learn what it takes to be an airline pilot or an air traffic controller. Listen and dance to your favorite tunes performed by union musicians. See how stagehands from IATSE create special effects for movies.

Interested in a union career as a craft worker? Visit with any of a dozen or more apprenticeship trainers who will be on hand to talk about the training you can get. Try your hand at any of a score of craft jobs. Talk to electricians, operating engineers, iron workers, sheet metal workers, bricklayers, painters, plumbers, cement masons, tile setters and roofers about their careers and the training they got to prepare them.

All this stretched across an area the size of three football fields! So much to see and do it may take more than one visit to take it all in. And, admission is free!

For more info, please visit www.2008america-at-work.com.

Wasting Your Tax Dollars (conclusion)

with nearly eight million undocumented workers having a less than stellar relationship with the IRS. Getting more of them on the books could certainly help narrow that tax gap.

Another group that costs taxpayers billions: hedge fund and private equity managers. Many of these moguls make vast “incomes” yet pay taxes on a portion of those earnings at the paltry 15 percent capital gains rate, instead of the higher income tax rate. By some estimates, this loophole costs taxpayers more than $2.5 billion a year.

Oil companies are getting a nice deal too. The country hands them more than $2 billion a year in tax breaks. Says Walker, “Some of the sweetheart deals that were negotiated for drilling rights on public lands don’t pass the straight-face test, especially given current crude oil prices.” And Big Oil isn’t alone. Citizens for Tax justice estimates that corporations reap more than $123 billion a year in special tax breaks. Cut this in half and we could save about $60 billion.

THE TAB

1. Tax Shortfall: $290 billion (uncollected taxes) + $2.5 billion (undertaxed high rollers) + $60 billion (unwarranted tax breaks) = $325 billion

2. Healthy Fixes. Medicare and Medicaid, which cover elderly and low-income patients respectively, eat up a growing portion of the federal budget. Investigations by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) point to as much as $60 billion a year in fraud, waste and overpayments between the two program. Coburn is likely underestimating the problem.

The U.S. spend more than $400 per person on health care administration costs and insurance — six times more than other industrialized nations.

That’s because a 2003 Dartmouth Medical School study found that up to 30 percent of the $2 trillion spent in this country on medical care each year — including what’s spent on Medicare and Medicaid — is wasted. With the combined tab for those programs rising to some $665 billion this year, cutting costs by a conservative 15 percent could save taxpayers about $100 billion. Yes, rather than moving to trim fat, the government continues such questionable practices as paying private insurance companies that offer Medicare Advantage plans an average to 12 percent more per patient than traditional Medicare free-for-service. Congress is trying to close this loophole, and doing so could save $15 billion per year, on average, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Another money-wasting bright idea was to create a giant class of middlemen: Private bureaucrats who administer the Medicare drug program are monitored by federal bureaucrats — and the public pays for both. An October report by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform estimates that this setup costs the government $10 billion per year in unnecessary administrative expenses and higher drug prices.

Continued next month ...
I want to thank the membership for allowing me to attend the annual labor conference. I have been attending these conferences for many years and I believe this is the best one yet!


Next on the agenda was Ron Crowfoot from Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Mr. Crowfoot gave a power point presentation on health care plans available through them and what the current trends are in health care insurance.

Congressman Stupak then arrived from the public forum at the Marquette Commons and spoke for about 15 minutes before he needed to leave for his next appearance.

Our International UAW CAP Rep., Gary Shepherd, presented a power point presentation on the 2004 election overview. Michigan, as a whole, did a great job electing people who represent working men and women in Michigan. Gary expanded on the work we need to do in this upcoming election to make sure we retain those seats and continue to put people into office that will protect our interests.

Russell LaFort, from the House Democratic Caucus, introduced Tony Jesuale who will be working in the U.P. through this next election to aid in the campaign. Russ reviewed the work that was accomplished in the last election cycle and what we can expect this time around.

Brent Gillett from the Michigan AFL-CIO, spoke on the national effort to get “Right to Work” (for Less) on the ballot. Last but not least, Don Maki, from the Federal Mediation Commission Service, gave a workshop on leadership skills. It was a great way to end the day – Don always makes learning fun!

Thank you again for allowing me to attend this conference. I hope more of you will consider attending in the future.

### Coffee Making Tips

- To preserve maximum flavor, store fresh ground or whole bean coffee in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 2 weeks.
- Long-term storage is best done in a freezer for up to 1 year.
- Unopened vacuum-packed cans or packages of beans or ground coffee can be stored in the pantry for up to 1 year.
- For the best-tasting coffee, always start with a clean coffee maker that has been washed with soapy hot water, and brew coffee with fresh cold water.

Source: Ad page from Birds and Blooms magazine

### Tea Making Tips

- You can store tea bags or loose tea at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 2 years. Be sure to keep each kind or flavor of tea in separate storage containers.
- To make the perfect cup of tea, pour boiling water over one tea bag or a tea infuser containing 1 tsp of loose tea. Allow to steep for 3-5 minutes or until the desired strength has been reached. Remove the bag or infuser.
- “Quick” iced tea can be made by pouring 4 cups boiling water over eight tea bags in a heat-resistant container. Cover and steep 3-5 minutes. Remove bags and sweeten if desired. Add 4 cups cold water or ice. Chill until ready to serve.

### How much is an Administrative Professional Worth?

Following is information received from President Tollefson taken from the January 2008 edition of Office Solutions. D.W. took the liberty of calculating the hourly and bi-weekly rates. The Source is listed as (3663) www.gaebler.com/Salaries-OF-Administrative-Professionals.htm. Go to that site for position descriptions.

Minimum wage is currently $7.15 per hour.

It is assumed that these are starting salaries with the high-end employees having some level experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Low-End Pay</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>High-End Pay</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Per Hour</td>
<td>Bi-Weekly Rate</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Per Hour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Salary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Assistant</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$15.38</td>
<td>$1,231</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>$20.19</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$15.02</td>
<td>$1,202</td>
<td>$38,000</td>
<td>$18.27</td>
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<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>$26,000</td>
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<td>$31,750</td>
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<td>Customer Service Rep.</td>
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<td>$798</td>
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<td>Receptionist</td>
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<td>$9.62</td>
<td>$769</td>
<td>$25,500</td>
<td>$12.26</td>
<td>$981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I dreamt that I went to Heaven and an angel was showing me around. We walked side-by-side inside a large workroom filled with angels.

My angel guide stopped in front of the first section and said, "This Is the Receiving Section. Here, all petitions to God said in prayer are Received."

I looked around in this area, and it was terribly busy with so many angels sorting out petitions written on voluminous paper sheets and scraps from people all over the world.

Then we moved on down a long corridor until we reached the second section.

The angel then said to me, "This is the Packaging and Delivery Section. Here, the graces and blessings the people asked for are processed and delivered to the living persons who asked for them."

I noticed again how busy it was there. There were many angels working hard at that station, since so many blessings had been requested and were being packaged for delivery to Earth.

Finally at the farthest end of the long corridor we stopped at the door of a very small station to my great surprise, only one angel was seated there, idly doing nothing. "This is the Acknowledgment Section," My angel friend quietly admitted to me. He seemed embarrassed "How Is it that there is no work going on here?"

"So sad," the angel sighed. "After people receive the blessings that they asked for, very few send back acknowledgments."

"How does one acknowledge God's blessings?" I asked.

"Simple," the angel answered. Just say, "Thank you, Lord."

"What blessings should they acknowledge? " I asked.

"If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep you are richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy."

"If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the many who will not even survive this day."

Thanks to Pat Woods, Music