

The Newsletter of the National Federation of Federal Employees,

Making It Happen!



Special Edition



**A Farewell to Susan M. Sheftel
August 2019**



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2019 Meeting Calendar

Membership Meeting: 4th Thursday of each month
 Board Meetings: 1st Thursday of each month
 Steward Meetings: 2nd Thursday of each month
 January 3 Board Meeting
 January 10 Steward Meeting
 January 24 Membership Meeting
 February 7 Board Meeting
 February 14 Steward Meeting
 February 28 Membership Meeting
 March 7 Board Meeting
 March 14 Steward Meeting
 March 28 Membership Meeting
 April 4 Board Meeting
 April 11 Steward Meeting
 April 25 Membership Meeting
 May 14 Board Meeting
 May 9 Steward Meeting
 May 23 Membership Meeting
 June 6 Board Meeting
 June 13 Steward Meeting
 June 27 Membership Meeting
 July 8 Board Meeting
 July 11 Steward Meeting
 July no Membership Meeting

Newsletter Editors:

Toulu Thao – Communicator
 Janie Lopez – Chief Steward

From the Desk of The President

Too much to say, too many good things accomplished to recall in too short a period of time.

Sue transformed how the union works as the operating officer for all the moving parts of NFFE. She initiated much of the work and developed many of the processes that allow NFFE to function more effectively. The result is that the officers and stewards can focus on our sole mission which is to be advocates for all employees.

And, Sue worked endlessly as that advocate. Every employee bringing a problem to Sue or asking for advice found a sympathetic voice who always remembered that the person walking through the union office door was a person, a human in need of support.

She always helped people, not simply because this was her job, but because it is part of her as a person.

We will miss Sue working to keep the union functioning efficiently.

We will miss her mostly because of who she is.

Sincerely,

Dennis T. Murakami
 President, NFFE-1450

Making It Happen!

A Farewell from Susan M. Sheftel



A Warm Goodbye...

I have been a working stiff for over 50 years and I never really knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. Working for NFFE has come pretty close, though.

When I graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in English, I thought I would be a poet. In the Master's program in Children's Theater at the University of Hawaii, I was ready to devote my life to educating children through puppetry.

I needed more money than what I was making as a wait person (waitress in those days) at the Wailana Coffee House, so I did a complete U-turn and got a real estate license. From there I moved into construction management and contract administration for multi-million dollar construction jobs and then finally went to law school.

So, what does a person with a BA, $\frac{3}{4}$ of an MA, a real estate license and a law degree do? The State of California hired me to work at the Public Utilities Commission.

While working for the PUC I got certified as a volunteer neighborhood mediator. One of my fellow mediators who also worked for the State, wooed me from the PUC to the Department of Fair Employment and Housing where I really settled in and found my calling in civil rights enforcement. I stayed there for 18 years—11 as a housing discrimination investigator and 7 as a district administrator before I joined FHEO here at HUD.

How does the Union figure into all of this? I grew up in a union household. My mom was a proud member of the California Federation of Teachers and refused to allow any of her kids cross a picket line. We listened to Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and the Weavers.

(Continued on page 5)



**Women's Leadership Program
February 18 - 23, 2018**

First row: Susan (4th from Left) with colleague Janie Lopez (2nd from Left)



Above: Susan in class at Leadership Training in WWW



Above: First row, Second from Left, Susan M. Sheftel at Winpisinger Educational Training Center

Below: on the right, second row – Susan, with colleagues en route to the Capitol Hill for bargaining training



(Continued from page 2 – A farewell from Susan M. Sheftel)

In the early 70's, Utah Phillips became my idol and I learned about the Wobblies, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, and the San Francisco Dock Strike. I understood the power of collective bargaining and the force of organized labor.

I joined SEIU when I was with the State and then NFFE when I came to work for HUD. Truthfully, though, I paid my dues and that was it...until Dennis Murakami asked me if I would be on the bargaining team to bargain the move from the old San Francisco HUD office to the new one. When the bargaining was done, I went back to my FHEO enforcement job and worked there quietly until Liz McDargh asked me if I would be a union steward.

I started working a few hours a pay period for NFFE. Slowly, under the mentorship of Charron Alfonso, Karen McNamara, Jan Thompson and Liz, I learned how to be a steward. I attended six week-long steward trainings at the Machinist's training center in Maryland, and built up my confidence to advocate for bargaining unit employees.

As a NFFE steward, I came to understand HUD as a whole—starting with FHEO and then learning how PIH, CPD, Multi-Family, FPM, BFS, OPM, etc., etc. contribute to making HUD HUD. My HUD contacts increased from my 25 FHEO colleagues to over 400 bargaining unit employees and managers in Region 9.

I've helped employees get reasonable accommodations, hardship transfers, back pay, locality pay, and voluntary leave donations. I helped convince management to waive an \$11,000 debt it insisted on collecting from an employee because of a clerical error.

I've filed numerous grievances for employees disputing performance evaluations, reprimands and contract violations and I've advocated for them in grievance meetings with management.

I have sat with employees in formal mediations and informal meetings with managers to establish respect and better communication.

I was a substitute bargaining team-member for the last Labor Management Agreement and I've been on a number of mid-term bargaining teams bargaining important issues for employees.

NFFE is the only entity that does all of this for non-management employees, and because I know that our strength is in our numbers, I've recruited 38 members.

I've come to love and appreciate nearly everyone I've worked with in every office and especially my NFFE sisters and brothers!!

I thank Dennis and Liz for bringing me in and putting me on the path to one of the most fulfilling things I've ever done.

I'm retiring on August 31st to head off to new and different adventures.

With a tear in my eye, I wish you a warm goodbye. Solidarity forever!!

-- **Sue Sheftel**

Regional Chief Steward

San Francisco Chief Steward

Executive Board Member/Recording Secretary



Susan Sheftel, after hours at Winpisinger with colleague, Tolu Thao – November 2015



Susan M. Sheftel with colleague Janie Lopez at Leadership Training in Winpisinger, May 2019

Comments from members

“Sue is an excellent listener and teacher. She is first and foremost, completely dedicated to helping HUD BUEs resolve disagreements with management. Sue is also fun-loving and a joy to be around. I’ve learned a great deal from her and I will miss her” – **Greg T. Harrick, San Francisco**

When Sue took over as NFFE’s Regional Chief Steward, it was amazing how she so successfully recruited new NFFE members in minimum time. I believe her success was due to her passion for the Union’s role in employees’ workplace improvement, but mostly it was her caring attitude towards her fellow HUD colleagues that drew them in. I was fortunate to know and work with Sue as a fellow FHEO colleague prior to her taking NFFE by storm. Then, as we worked together more closely as Union sisters, we become good friends. I can’t imagine NFFE without Sue. I can only hope that we will continue to stay in touch after she has retired! Thank you for your dedication, Sue. I will miss you mi querida amiga! – **Janie O. Lopez, Las Vegas**

“I’ve worked very closely with Sue during my 2 ½ years as a steward and she is absolutely the best mentor anyone could ever have. Sue is patient, kind and transparent. She is a true and passionate advocate for fairness and equality...jack of all trades and master of them all. As the Regional Chief Steward, and the many hats Sue wore, she will be GREATLY missed. Farewell Sister and Friend...I know you’re only a phone call away.” – **Anna M. Dennis, San Francisco**

“Sue, working with you was a joy. Your smile, intelligence, passion and commitment to our BUEs will greatly be missed. **Dr. Toulou Thao, San Francisco**



Farewell

Thank you to the following members for their past support.

Gregg Wynn

Janet Levesque (Retired)

Lolinda Portlock (Lifetime member)

Annaliza Bascom (Transferred)

Raphael Cedillos (Lifetime member)

Welcome to our newest members

(February 2019 – June 2019)

Annaliza Bascom
Anonymous
Collin Evenson

Eric Christensen
Jennifer Estrella
Luthene Andrews

Vicki VanDreel
Mimi Woodruff

FEEDBACK, SUGGESTION or REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

LET US KNOW HOW WE ARE DOING. **NFFE 1450** is doing a _____ job.
Please provide comments or look into the following matters:

Name/Contact Info if you want us to get back to you:

Email Your Comments to:

Dennis Murakami at Dennis.T.Murakami@hud.gov
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