POPA NEWS
Patent Office Professional Association

March 2006 Vol. 06 No. 2

USPTO Contract Will Speed Examiner Exodus

Agency Ignores Employee Input; Harsh Proposals to Worsen Pendency Problems

Rather than promoting examiner retention by providing more time per case and paying higher salaries, the USPTO has proposed a contract with POPA that reduces or eliminates most examiner rights and protections, attempts to kill the association that defends examiners, and threatens the integrity of the U.S. patent system.

The USPTO generally ignored the feedback from employees and their union on the contract it submitted in March 2005. The one-year postponement of negotiations gave the agency ample time to talk informally with POPA and employees to gain insight that would help it craft proposals to improve employee worklife while enhancing USPTO work processes. While it did make a few positive changes such as restoring some work schedules and expanding award provisions, in general the proposed contract is a slap in the face to examiner professionalism.

When the agency so critically needs to hire and retain a highly skilled workforce to improve quality and reduce pendency, this contract would make the USPTO a less attractive place to work. The current examiner attrition rate is in the double digits. These proposals increase production pressures on examiners and push the speed-at-all-costs mentality. They reduce or remove many of the worklife benefits that have

(*continued on page 2*)

Proposals to Reduce Examiners' Time per Case are Wrong-headed

The USPTO proposed two major rule changes in early January that would limit the number of claims initially reviewed by examiners and restrict the filing of second and subsequent continuation applications. Based on faulty assumptions, the agency thinks this will speed processing and wants to reduce examiners' time per case by as much as 10 percent depending on the individual technology.

The USPTO is suggesting that examiners review no more than 10 claims initially. To have more claims reviewed, an applicant would need to submit an "examination support document," according to the new rules package. In this document the applicant would provide the most pertinent prior art documents, the sources searched, and an explanation of why the invention is patentable over the prior art references.

"If we limit the examination to only 10 claims, including all of the independent claims, then the examiner has a much better opportunity to focus on the examination and to concentrate on doing a better quality job on what is most

(*continued on page 4*)

Spotty On-the-Spot Awards Offer More Harm than Good

Imagine two examiners in the same art unit with equal levels of production and quality, both with equivalent tenure and dedication to their work. Then imagine that their supervisor gives an "on-the-spot" award to one of the examiners and not the other for no apparent work distinction, and this situation is repeated in art units throughout the agency.

Imagine that's good for employee morale?

A More Effective Reward

Rather than implementing an OTS program, management needs to request that the Office of Personnel Management increase examiners' special pay rate to restore the initial 10 percent differential above the Washington-area General Schedule scale, which the USPTO pledged in the Millennium Agreement to do. With the agency's continuing refusal to honor this promise, examiners' annual pay is now more than 7 percent less than it

(*continued on page 4*)

USPTO Contract: Examiner Exodus

(continued from page 1)

attracted employees and keep them in government. As one primary examiner wrote, "If the USPTO is going to take away the time I can spend with my family, I will go to a law firm and at least get paid well for mandatory overtime." A mass exodus of skilled examiners will devastate USPTO production and quality.

The lengthy proposals (93 pages available at *www.popa.org*) display a subtlety that can mean the difference between an employee right/benefit and unfettered management discretion to do anything it wants. Watch out for phrases like "at management's discretion," "subject to supervisory approval," and "as determined by management." These mean that if your supervisor says "no," you cannot challenge the decision. Also remember that the agency's proposals will replace existing agreements and past practices. So if you don't see it, you won't have it.

Do not be fooled by the USPTO claim that these proposals are only its "opening bargaining position." The agency has stated that these proposals are already very close to its bottom line. It is trying to rush these negotiations as fast as possible, declare impasse, and thereby force the decision to the Federal Service Impasses Panel— the same group that gave you the Quality Initiatives. The FSIP most often sides with federal agency management.

More Family Unfriendly Changes

Employees now build compensatory hours when they anticipate taking leave for family or religious reasons. The USPTO proposes to bar comp time to any employee who has received any disciplinary action, no matter how small or seemingly unjustified, within the preceding three years. It also prohibits part-time employees from earning comp time altogether. Thus, many employees will be forbidden to work additional time in anticipation of a baby's arrival or a medical procedure.

(*continued on next page*)

Significant USPTO Contract Proposals

Equitable Treatment
- Eliminates current contractual obligation to treat employees fairly and equitably across art unit lines.

New Employees
- Hires examiners as "interns" outside of regular Civil Service system.
- No guarantees that interns will ever be hired as Civil Service patent examiners.
- Treats interns as probationary employees for 2-3 years compared to 1 year for Civil Service employees.

Physical Facilities
- No guaranteed private office for anyone. Any and every employee can be required to work in shared office space or cubicles.

Work Schedules
- No flexitime for 5/4/9 and 4/10 compressed work schedules, i.e., fixed arrival and departure times.
- "Management, at its discretion" can require you to work Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Limits Increased Flex Program (IFP) to require between 4 and 10-hour days.
- Can restrict IFP participation "to ensure office coverage," e.g., to cover for hoteling participants.
- If automated systems fail to function properly, requires IFP participants to leave work without administrative leave at the later of: after systems are down for an hour or participants run out of work that does not require automation.
- Requires submitting IFP schedule prior to the beginning of each bi-week. Supervisor must approve any changes to the schedule permitted.
- Increases core hours (Tues. and Thurs., noon-2 p.m.).
- Permits midday flex only with a detailed written request (time and hours) and supervisor's approval.
- Limits "trial" and probationary employees to 8-hour workdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the first eight months.
- If you do not "maintain at least a fully successful level of performance," may require you to work regular hours (8-hour days, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.).
- If you receive a disciplinary or adverse action, may compel you to work regular hours.
- For up to 3 years following a disciplinary or adverse action, may require you to work regular hours.

Overtime
- May require employees to work mandatory overtime at will.

Annual Leave
- Must submit leave requests at least three days in advance.
- May deny annual leave if there are "conflicts" with other employees, such as hoteling participants.
- May cancel already-approved annual leave.

Sick Leave
- Requires medical certification after 3-day absence.

Compensatory Time
- 400-hour yearly limit (currently 480 hours).
- Full-time employees only.
- Denies comp time if employee has received proposed disciplinary or adverse action in last 3 years.
- Limits maternity/paternity comp time to 80 hours per year (currently unlimited).
- Religious comp time requires written explanation of religious belief that necessitates absence.

Maternity/Paternity Leave
- Only for non-probationary employees.
- Operational needs of the agency determine length of time off.
- Employees can't earn comp time for parental leave if a disciplinary or adverse action received in the last 3 years.

Part Time
- Requires fully successful rating to participate in childcare/eldercare component.

Credit Hours
- Limited to employees who cannot work overtime or comp time due to restrictions on pay.
- Bars credit hours for employees on IFP.
- Restricted to 400 hours yearly.

Performance
- Abolishes Oral Warnings: performance-based actions begin at written warning stage. Puts employees only one step away from removal instead of two.
- Almost no defenses against allegations of error.

(continued on next page)

USPTO Contract: Examiner Exodus

(continued from page 2)

Throwaway Workforce

Many of the USPTO's proposals treat employees like a throwaway commodity. The agency wants to extend the one-year employee probationary period to two to three years. At the end of that time, even exemplary employees with high output have no guarantees that they'll be moved into the regular workforce. They may have met all objective standards of performance and still be terminated. The USPTO is already implementing this system in its new intern program, which POPA is currently challenging in a grievance.

Similarly harmful to employees' careers are the proposed changes to promotions. Currently if you meet the requisite objective production standards, you can progress up to the GS-13 level. However, the USPTO proposes to interject subjective supervisory judgments, so you may be making over-the-top production, but if your supervisor doesn't like you, you're held back on the career ladder.

Killing You Softly

Sometimes it seems easy for employees to overlook their union protections and grievance rights. You're a good examiner so you think you'll never need help. However, if your grievance and union rights are severely weakened as the agency plans, your supervisors and managers will be able to abuse any and all of your workplace rights at will and essentially say to you, "So? There's nothing you can do about it."

What You Can Do

POPA will wield all its power to retain the good working conditions that employees have enjoyed. You can help by reviewing the proposals (in condensed form here or in detail at the Web site) and providing feedback by clicking on "Contact > Feedback" at *www.popa.org.* Tell us the things you like and do not like about these proposals. Share your ideas for alternatives to the USPTO's plans and keep an eye on the Web site for further developments.

Significant USPTO Contract Proposals *(continued)*

Performance Awards

- Enables managers to change/abolish all awards virtually at will at the end of each fiscal quarter.
- Abolishes existing Gainsharing and Special Achievement Awards (SAAs) for examiners.
- Changes examiners' annual production award range from 2% for 105% production to 11% for 140% production.
- Limits single award payout for production to $10,000.
- Quality Award only available to examiners at GS-12 or above for the full fiscal year.
- Gives production awards on 2-quarter basis.

Training

- Gives agency complete discretion to fund or not fund non-duty technical and legal training.
- Supervisor controls examiner's non-production time for reading technical and legal literature.
- Requires OCIO employees specifically to justify their training requests at least 4 weeks prior to the training.

Promotions and Details

- May require unspecified prerequisite training and testing for promotion.
- Removes assurance of promotion for examiners even if they meet all objective promotion requirements.
- Promotion requires recommendation of immediate supervisor.
- No openness/transparency in the selection for details or promotions.
- Supervisors may choose to not release current employees selected for promotions to start new jobs.
- POPA can no longer grieve/challenge for employees': EEO abuses; withholding of within grade increases; removals; demotions; suspensions greater than 14 days; whistleblowing; reduction in force; written warnings for performance; denials of signatory authority.

Grievance Procedure

- Severely cuts other time for grievant's preparation.
- Reduces time for filing grievance from 20 to 14 days.
- Agency can ignore points raised by grievant and withhold any pertinent information.
- Removes employee's right to interview adverse witnesses before responding to a proposed action.
- Eliminates agency requirement for "just and sufficient cause" for a disciplinary or adverse action.

Union Activities

- Dramatically limits POPA's ability to represent employees.
- Cuts union time by about a third while workforce has tripled.
- Eliminates employee anonymity when seeking POPA representation.
- Requires supervisory approval before POPA reps can conduct union activities, e.g., talk with you.
- Mandates POPA reps who enter a work area other than their own to conduct union activity to obtain supervisor's permission.
- Prohibits POPA's use of e-mail to send general announcements to the bargaining unit.

Signatory Authority

- Shortens eligibility period and the trial period for partial signatory authority.
- Permits removal of examiners at midpoint if production or workflow dips below the fully successful level.
- Allows extension of the final decision period if examiner submits more than 30% of work in the last 2 bi-weeks for partial sig or more than 40% in the last three bi-weeks for full sig.

Proposals to Reduce Examiners' Time

(continued from page 1)

important in that application," said Commissioner for Patents John Doll in a Jan. 23 article in *Federal Times*.

While this idea may sound attractive to examiners at first, cutting examiners' time will harm examiners and just doesn't make sense. After the initial claims are approved examiners must still review extra claims, requiring more examination time.

The second rules change proposal—to additionally limit second and subsequent continuation applications, which examiners usually process more quickly—would increase the number of tough cases per docket and decrease examiners' action counts, automatically making it harder for them to meet their production goals.

"We're afraid what will happen is they'll put an even harder time constraint on examiners," said POPA President Robert Budens in the *Federal Times*.

The article noted how "many examiners already feel they're overworked and routinely work weekends trying to catch up." POPA continues to support more examiner time per case, not less.

Limiting second and subsequent continuations would disproportionately affect senior and primary examiners. The USPTO claims that the number of these continuations would equal one continuation per examiner per quarter, or four additional new cases annually. The agency neglected to say that this figure comes from averaging the limitation on continuations over the whole patent corps, even though more than half of examiners have few or no continuations on their dockets. Junior examiners generally don't get any continuations until they've put in approximately 18 months on the job.

This in reality means that senior examiners would have to do many more than four new cases each year. The time to examine them would have to come from somewhere. The USPTO would force senior examiners to cut even more time from each examination, would pressure them to take more shortcuts—in short, the USPTO would silently compel a decrease in the quality of examination.

Decreasing examiner time by as much as 10 percent as a result of these rule changes will push more employees to leave the USPTO. "The agency lost 10 percent of its examiner work force overall last year and suffered even greater losses in some divisions, including its key electrical technology branch, where 19 percent of first-year hires quit," noted the *Federal Times*.

During recent USPTO town hall meetings, the agency announced that it is developing a third rules package that would limit information disclosure statements (IDS) to no more than 25 references, but may also include the reduction or elimination of IDS fees. While POPA believes that some of the changes may benefit examiners to an extent, taking away their time is not an acceptable quid pro quo.

The USPTO is accepting public comments on these rule changes through May 3.

Spotty Awards

(continued from page 1)

should be—from $2,500 to $10,000 depending on the grade and step. That doesn't account for the income examiners have lost each year that the USPTO failed to seek the pay raise since it signed the Millennium Agreement.

In suggesting the OTS awards while refusing to honor the Millennium Agreement, the USPTO is stealing the examiners' dinner and throwing them the crumbs.

POPA strongly advocates compensating employees for their work, but such compensation needs to be provided fairly and equitably. In its discussions, the USPTO made clear that it would not accept employee-suggested guidelines for the on-the-spot (OTS) award program that would ensure that the program is administered fairly to all employees. Hence, the OTS program would allow one supervisor to award an employee for a particular action while other employees performing the very same activity may not receive an award from their respective supervisors. This inherently unfair system would anger and demoralize those employees who do not get the award yet are equally deserving.

The awards proffered by USPTO amounted to $25 to $75 each, to a maximum of $125 per year per employee. The agency did not give a total available to fund the agency-wide OTS awards.

Supervisors must complete a 10-line "narrative justification" for nominating an employee and a higher manager must then approve the nomination. Varying criteria determine the varying levels of awards, but the system doesn't include a mechanism for ensuring impartial presentation. For example, if an examiner "put forth that extra effort permitting early completion of a routine project"—the USPTO-stated criteria for a $25 OTS award—but that examiner's personality for some reason rubs the supervisor the wrong way, that examiner will never get the award and there's nothing to be done about it.

For a full description of the USPTO OTS award program, employees can go to *http://ptoweb/ptointranet/ohr/employees/benefits/onthespot.htm*

Awards for All, Please

If Not, Why Not?

The following was excerpted from an e-mail one supervisor received from an examiner. Examiners agency-wide can legitimately make the same requests for awards and specific supervisory rationales for why they are not granted.

I am requesting the largest available on-the-spot award please be awarded to each member of the art unit, immediately and as frequently as the program permits.

The vast majority of the patent corps and our art unit act professionally and provide a high level of customer service on an ongoing basis. Because these are the activities that the agency said warrant granting an on-the-spot award, each and every one of us deserves the maximum level of award available.

If you cannot grant each of us awards, please offer each of us an explanation as to what is preventing you from doing so and what if any changes we would have to make to earn these awards.

Bait-and-Switch Recruiting Demoralizes New Hires

Many newly hired patent examiners are discovering that USPTO workplace benefits are not as the agency described during the recruiting process, hurting their morale and sometimes speeding their exit.

Some new employees have been stunned to learn that they initially are ineligible for flextime, telework, and law school tuition reimbursement, that training is not as advertised, and that some Patent Academy supervisors insist on a dress code even when the USPTO and POPA have agreed that there is no dress code.

Read Between the Lines

At *www.USPTOCareers.gov*, in its section on frequently asked questions, the agency writes, "The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is one of the few federal agencies offering flexible work schedules," and goes on to detail the varying flextime plans where employees have a variety of schedule options. It closes with, "Once you are hired, your supervisor will advise you of your work schedule."

Indeed, once you report to work your supervisor will tell you that you cannot work flextime until your supervisor thinks you are ready, and that could be after many months on the job.

In answer to another question regarding training, the USPTO Web site states, "You will receive three weeks of Patent Examiner Initial Training (PEIT) before reporting to your new office. Additional on-the-job training from an experienced Supervisory Patent Examiner (SPE) is then provided."

In real life, the agency now trains new electrical area examiners in Technology Center 2600 for eight months, first placing them in open classrooms and then in blocks of cubicles. They will not be assigned to their permanent office for months. The USPTO plans to expand that lengthy training to other technology centers.

The law school tuition reimbursement program is a fine and appropriate carrot to dangle in front of potential examiners, but the USPTO needs to state clearly that it's only available to examiners who've been on the job for two years.

"It Seems Hardly Fair"

Regarding appropriate employee attire, the *USPTOCareers.gov* site states, "We prefer a business casual dress code. Since Patent Examiners maintain some contact with the public, they are encouraged to present a neat and clean appearance."

The USPTO Human Resources Web page repeats this view and adds, "However, the USPTO does not have a dress code."

Not so for many new examiners. One wrote in a letter to POPA that many "are surprised and concerned that the newly formed Patent Training Academy dress code has been declared to be 'business casual,' with individuals specifically rebuked for wearing jeans or not wearing collared shirts, either stand-alone or under sweaters."

"It seems hardly fair that the Academy should expect our hard earned first paychecks to be spent on clothing," the examiner added.

While acknowledging that a dress code may "make the Office look good for the public," the examiner wrote, "starting off by making us do something that many were told they wouldn't have to do before accepting their offers sounds like a lie to me, and no employee is happy when management says one thing and then acts completely differently."

Correction

The front-page story of the Nov.-Dec. 2005 *POPA News* should have noted that the Commerce Department rulebook clearly states that a Commerce space reservation can only be made after a completed CD-410 form is submitted with authorized signatures. The employee, who had been fired by the USPTO and subsequently reinstated after arbitration, followed that rule. The employee had only inquired about leasing space; no Commerce space reservation was ever completed, contrary to the USPTO's accusations.

In Memoriam

Former USPTO Commissioner Donald W. Banner

The former USPTO commissioner who oversaw the introduction of employee flextime, Donald Banner, died in January at age 81 in Tucson, Ariz.

During his tenure as commissioner from 1978 to 1979 in the Carter administration, Banner exhibited respect for employees' opinions. POPA and the employees had refused an earlier USPTO flextime proposal that required the paper equivalent of time clocks. Banner agreed with the union's sign-in sheet counterproposal, which worked very well for the 25 years before the agency moved to Carlyle.

One veteran examiner recalled a prophetic speech Banner gave in which he likened the USPTO to a three-legged stool that balanced equally on pendency, production and quality. If you change the size of any of those three legs without adjusting the others, Banner said, the whole system topples.

Banner was also the father of the concept of charging applicants additional fees for time extensions.

His dedication to the patent system includes serving from 1977 to 1978 as the president of the American Intellectual Property Law Association and co-founding the Intellectual Property Owners Association in 1972, as well as acting as its president in from 1981 to 1992.

European Examiners Join POPA in Seeking More Time for Quality

The Staff Union of the European Patent Office (SUEPO) documented its backing for POPA's request for more examination time per case in a December 2005 letter.

SUEPO also provided statistics supporting its own campaign for more time to do higher quality work at the EPO. SUEPO wrote that its examiners are "highly concerned about the current narrow-minded focus" of the EPO on production. "This blinkered approach to the future of the EPO is damaging the very foundation upon which the success of the organization was built: Quality."

Some of SUEPO's 2004 quality facts:

- 9 percent of EPO examiners believe the EPO management is actively involved in improving quality.
- 60 percent of EPO examiners are uncomfortable balancing current production demands and quality requirements.
- 77 percent of EPO examiners believe that current productivity demands do not allow enforcement of the quality standards.
- 90 percent of EPO examiners believe that current productivity demands do not allow them to keep up to date on jurisprudence, changes in procedure, technical developments, etc.

Clearly many EPO examiners have the same concerns about quality as the USPTO examiners.

POPA thanks its fellow EPO examiners for their generous support in POPA's continuing fight for high-quality patent examination.

IGEPA SUEPO USOEB

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT

The EPO Staff Union (SUEPO),

noting that:

- the complexity of patent application files and the volume of available prior art have increased steadily over the last 20 years,
- examiners in the USPTO and EPO are working at maximum capacity,
- patent offices world-wide are increasingly coming under public scrutiny and are being criticised for the quality of the patents delivered,

considers that:

the USPTO and EPO managements' focus on quantity at the detriment of quality is misguided and forms a serious threat to the long-term functioning of the patent system,

and therefore

strongly supports POPA's demand for a 20% increase in time allocated per patent file.

François Basty
Central President SUEPO

Vienna, 21 December 2005

Redesigned POPA.Org Hits the Web

Patent professionals will find a new design and updated information at *www.popa.org,* the POPA Web site.

POPA leaders plan to use the site to distribute more frequent updates on workplace and worklife developments. Patent employees and the wider patent community can also use the site's Contact/Feedback form to ask direct questions and communicate confidentially with POPA leadership. For example, answers to written questions handed to POPA after the recent series of membership meetings are now being posted on the Web site.

POPA.org also has a .pdf archive of POPA newsletters, formal agreements between POPA and the USPTO, salary tables and more under the Useful Information tab.

The site soon will give patent professionals the opportunity to sign up to receive important e-news delivered to their personal (preferably non-USPTO) e-mail inboxes. With contract negotiations on the horizon, getting facts from your association, not rumor in the hallways, will be more vital than ever.

FLRA Dismisses USPTO Appeal

Disabled Examiner to Regain Job

When the USPTO last year fired an examiner with a sleep disorder even after his performance dramatically improved to an "outstanding" level with medical treatment, an arbitrator ordered the agency to reinstate the employee. Rather than seeking to "retain an employee with a consistent record of the highest quality," as stated by the arbitrator, the USPTO pushed hard to fire the employee by appealing its case to the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA). The Authority recently ruled that it rejected the USPTO's legal arguments and dismissed its appeal, clearing the way for the long overdue rehiring of the examiner with backpay. [Read the details of the arbitration in the June-July 2005 newsletter at *www.popa.org*.]

In its conclusions, the FLRA stated that, despite the USPTO's unprecedented claims of FLRA jurisdiction, the Authority indeed lacks the ability to overrule in this case because this "ensures consistency and uniformity of process and discourages forum shopping, as Congress intended."

The USPTO's fruitless legal maneuvering added many months to the examiner's joblessness. The employee, whose production had fallen to 84 percent due to his illness, had resumed 118 percent production after receiving a diagnosis and treatment. Yet the agency fired him anyway.

"Saving the Careers of Good Examiners"

I'm a big believer in checks and balances; it's a basic principle of our government, and essential in the federal workplace. During my first couple of years as a patent examiner I observed that USPTO management could act in a very one-sided fashion; contract proposals often did not include things the workers found essential, and examiners often had a significantly different view from management.

I joined POPA because we need representation. Without POPA, we would have no voice in our working conditions. Personally, I've benefited from many of the protections POPA has negotiated, including things like other time for computer problems as well as from the flexible work schedules. I'm committed to making USPTO a better place, and I think POPA is integral to helping us do that.

While in my 14 years here I've never had any personal issues with management, I'm aware of many cases where POPA saved the careers of good patent examiners who've experienced harmful and unjust personnel actions. Frequently, the union representatives help negotiate fair treatment, protecting the examiner and avoiding the need to file a grievance. By paying my dues, I help assure that POPA will be there if I ever need that kind of help.

The U.S. patent system needs a fair and balanced workplace for its professionals, and we need POPA as our watchdog. We need the union because we need a voice.

—Lorraine Spector, Primary Patent Examiner, Technology Center 1600

POPA Budget – 2005-2006

The following report includes 2005 Association income and expenditures through Dec. 31, 2005, and the 2006 Association budget approved by the Executive Committee.

Income	**2005 Actual**	**2006 Projected**
Dues	$192,955.00	$195,000.00
Interest	$ 4,637.24	$ 3,000.00
Total Income	$197,592.24	$198,000.00

Expenditures	**2005 Actual**	**2006 Budget**
Litigation & Lobbying	$187,381.82	$150,000.00
Newsletter	$ 29,307.37	$ 30,000.00
National Activities	$ 1,499.00	$ 4,000.00
Training Conferences	$ 4,365.21	$ 6,000.00
Legal Info. Services	$ 4,205.00	$ 7,000.00
Elections	$ 0	$ 4,000.00
Administrative	$ 10,310.35	$ 13,000.00
Membership Services	$ 7,230.00	$ 9,000.00
Membership Meetings	$ 1,201.85	$ 2,000.00
Capital Expenditures	$ 3,217.40	$ 7,000.00
Total Expenditures	**$248,718.00**	**$232,000.00**
Net to Reserve	**($51,125.76)**	**($ 34,000.00)**

Notes

National Activities: Membership dues for national organizations such as Public Employees Roundtable, Fund to Insure an Independent Retirement and Society of Federal and Employee Labor Relations Professionals.

Administrative: Includes expenses for accounting, secretarial, postage, office supplies and equipment, insurance, software, service charges and miscellaneous.

Membership Services: Membership incentives, including purchase of the Federal Personnel Guide for current and new members and participation in Community Day.

Greener Pastures

"Seasoned patent and intellectual property lawyers continue to be in demand in the District offices of major law firms."

—The Washington Post, March 6, 2006

2006 POPA Executive Committee

	Telephone	Art Unit	Office
President			
Robert D. Budens	571-272-0897	1648	REM-3A35
Vice President			
Larry J. Oresky	571-272-6930	3652	KNX-3B11
Secretary			
Howard J. Locker	571-272-0980	1661	REM-2C81
Assistant Secretary			
Pamela Schwartz	571-272-1528	1774	REM-10C75
Treasurer			
Randy Myers	571-272-7526	2644	KNX-6B81
Chemical Area Delegates			
Dell Chism	571-272-0962	1654	REM-3C11
Dr. Kathleen Duda	571-272-1383	1756	REM-9A65
Dr. Patricia Duffy	571-272-0855	1645	REM-3B05
Jennifer Graser	571-272-0858	1645	REM-3B09
Adrienne Johnstone	571-272-1218	1733	REM-7B19
Geraldine Letscher	571-272-1334	1752	REM-9D55
Frank Prats	571-272-0921	1651	REM-3A41
Dr. Larry Tarazano	571-272-1515	1773	REM-6A69
Christine Saoud	571-272-0891	1647	REM-4E81

	Telephone	Art Unit	Office
Electrical Area Delegates			
David Blum	571-272-1687	2813	JEF-7C19
Sheila Clark	571-272-1725	2815	JEF-5B07
Bill Deane	571-272-7484	2642	KNX-7D77
Albert Gagliardi	571-272-2436	2878	JEF-5C83
Kim Lockett	571-272-2067	2837	JEF-10C73
William Luther	571-272-3142	2667	JEF-3B81
Gene Munson	571-272-1659	2811	JEF-7A51
Michael Shingleton	571-272-1770	2817	JEF-5D19
Scott J. Sugarman	571-272-2340	2873	JEF-3D11
Julie Anne Watko	571-272-7597	2653	KNX-8A75
Howard Weiss	571-272-1720	2814	JEF-5A15
B. James Peikari	571-272-4185	2189	RND-2C89
Mechanical Area Delegates			
Ella Colbert	571-272-6741	3624	KNX-5D61
Philippe Derakshani	571-272-4925	3754	RND-10D65
David Isabella	571-272-4749	3738	RND-6D15
Vinh Luong	571-272-7109	3682	KNX-3C03
David Reip	571-272-4702	3731	RND-6B81
Shelley Clement	571-272-6884	3641	KNX-5B09
Kimberly Wood	571-272-6826	3632	KNX-2D55
Designs and Others			
Terri Schenk	571-272-5842	OCIO	MDE-3B07
Melanie H. Tung	571-272-2613	2911	REM-5B87

Retirement Planning Seminars Available

POPA recommends that eligible employees attend the pre-retirement and retirement planning seminars offered by the federal government and the USPTO.

The two-day Mid-Career Planning Seminar, for employees with 10-15 years of service, uses a common-sense approach to financial planning by examining all aspects of FERS, CSRS, Social Security, TSP, FEGLI, FEHBP and financial/estate planning.

To register, go to *http://uspto-a-pattr-1/RetirementReg/index.cfm*

Employees who plan to retire within three to five years can attend the three-day Pre-Retirement Seminar. The course covers what participants need to know to plan a smooth transition into retirement, including: a review of FEGLI, FEHBP, CSRS, FERS, Social Security and Medicare programs; how annuity and survivor benefits are calculated; the importance of financial, estate, tax, and legal planning; plus the health and psychological aspects of retirement.

To register, go to *http://uspto-a-pattr-1/Hrregistration/index.cfm*.

JOIN POPA

Patent Office Professional Association

Letters from readers are welcome. Address to:
The Editor, Patent Office Professional Association,
P.O. Box 2745, Arlington, VA 22202

Officers

Robert D. Budens, *President,* (571) 272-0897

Lawrence J. Oresky
Vice President/Director of Grievances, (571) 272-6930

Howard Locker, *Secretary/*
Director of Adverse Action Challenges, (571) 272-0980

Pamela R. Schwartz, *Assistant Secretary/*
Director of Unfair Labor Practices, (571) 272-1528

Randy Myers, *Treasurer,* (571) 272-7526

Visit us on the Web at http://www.popa.org

© 2006 Patent Office Professional Association