



The Corner Stone

PUBLICATION OF WATERLOO LOCAL #451
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO
MEMBER OF APWU POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2007



Retiree's Get-Together
Mondays at 1:00pm
University Ave. McDonald's
Across from HY-Vee

A NEW YEAR....

From the President's chair...



Dwight Slaikeu



Happy New Year and away we go with 2007! As I write this we're in the midst of the first week of the year. Three non-delivery days in a row makes for a real mess, huh? Hopefully we'll get caught up and things will be a bit more under control by next week.

Speaking of the 3 day gap, be sure to watch your paycheck if you didn't work on President Ford mourning day Tuesday. If all is as it should be, you got paid leave. If not, there's a problem you need to talk to your Supervisor about. Those of you who worked need to determine when you want your day off and get a 3971 to your Supervisor. Make sure it's clear that it's for the Ford day and request Administrative Leave. Don't forget to get that 3rd copy back with the Supervisor's signature as received.

Unless there's some sort of problem, I imagine we'll know whether the new contract was ratified or not by the time of our meeting the 20th. It won't take long for them to count the ballots and my guess is it'll be ratified by a large margin. I've heard arguments both ways; as always in a situation like this there are parts people like and parts they don't. While there are areas of it I don't think benefit our office specifically, I realize they are negotiating for more than just Waterloo, IA. There are problems out there that we never see and problems here that others don't see. The National contract has to try to cover all of us as best possible. I read one article pointing out there seem to be some areas the contract leaves unfinished, as if the negotiators agreed to meet later to finish it. Good point...what if management decides their words were misinterpreted?

Or what if they just don't get around to formulating their task forces, question & answer teams, etc? Blank spots don't exactly help our situation. But I don't think the general population of APWU members, many of them in

small offices with no outside influence, will see that side of the argument. Also, most of those I talked to, while agreeing there are problem areas, don't believe an arbitrator would get us any better and, of course, maybe worse. I could be wrong, but I don't think so...the contract will be ratified.

Well, while most of your officers were off to a well-run and informational Fall Seminar in Iowa City in November, several of you tried to have the monthly meeting anyway. While there was no quorum, and consequently no meeting, you gave it a good try. Thank you to those who showed up, sorry it didn't work.

Thank you also to our local election committee of Kris, Meri and Terry for a job well done as well as to all the members who voted. You may feel it's not that important but it is and I'll bet our voter return percentage would rival any in the country. Congratulations to those elected and for those outside of our membership who read this paper from time to time, yes, you will continue to see my articles for another 2 years.

To our newest members, Jo Scott, Nate Burdine and Bonnie Salinas, welcome to the APWU.

Don't forget the meeting is on the 20th and I'll be starting up the 2007 COPA drive shortly...maybe right after we get our first pay raise of the new contract, whaddya think?

★ APWU COPA APWU ★

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**LET
YOUR
VOICE BE
HEARD**

APWU COPA APWU

★ APWU COPA APWU ★

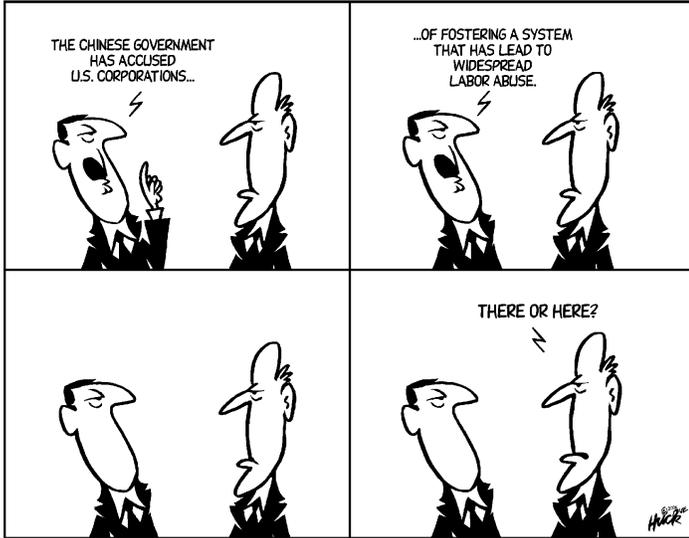
Secretary's Report



By: Mike Burke

APWU LOCAL 451
November 18th, 2006

The meeting of the APWU Local 451 was not called to order do to a lack of a quorum. No minutes available this month.



APWU Contract Agreement Ratified

APWU members ratified a four-year Collective Bargaining Agreement by a vote of 84,486 to 12,016, in balloting that concluded Jan. 12. The new National Agreement, which is retroactive to Nov. 21, 2006, will expire Nov. 20, 2010.

Rank-and-File Advisory Bargaining Committee members Thomasine Derricks, Princella Vogel, and Jack Dougherty observe the vote count in Washington on Jan. 12. Vogel chairs the committee.

"I consider this contract to be among our union's strongest achievements," said APWU President William Burrus. "Wage increases, upgrades, and Cost-of-Living Adjustments were secured, and 'no-layoff' protection and other benefits were continued."

The agreement provides for a 1.3 percent wage increase, effective Nov. 25, 2006; upgrades for all APWU-represented employees, effective Feb. 16, 2008; a 1.2 percent raise, effective Nov. 21, 2009; and two Cost-of-Living Adjustments each year. New contract language will result in the conversion of approximately 10,000 part-time flexibles, and will eliminate Clerk Craft PTFs as a workforce category in offices of 200

work-years or more, effective Dec. 1, 2007. (A list of offices of 200 work-years or more will be posted at www.apwu.org as soon as it is provided by the Postal Service.) The agreement also will change the restrictions on the use and number of casual employees.

The Postal Service will pay 95 percent of healthcare premiums for employees enrolled in the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan, effective in 2008. The employees' share of healthcare premium costs in other plans will increase 1 percent each year in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011.

In accordance with Article 13.9.C of the APWU Constitution, members of the Rank-and-File Bargaining Advisory Committee unanimously approved the agreement before it was mailed to union members for ratification. The mailing took place Dec. 18-20, 2006.

More than 215,000 ballots were mailed to union members covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement. In addition, in an unprecedented organizing effort, non-members were invited to vote, provided they completed union sign-up cards enclosed in their ratification packets.

In a letter accompanying the mailing to non-members, Burrus wrote, "The stakes are too high for you to defer to others the decision on your future. The only way you can have a voice in whether or not the changes to the National Agreement are enacted is by becoming a union member." More than 700 non-members did so.

"We are very pleased that so many new members joined the APWU as a result of this process," Burrus said. "This is the most successful short-term organizing effort in union history." Participation among members was above 40 percent, which is a significant improvement over previous balloting. Nevertheless, Burrus said that he had hoped for a higher level of membership involvement in the vote.

"APWU-represented employees have made substantial progress," the union president said. "That is what the negotiation process is all about."

The next step, he said, is to convert the agreement into contractual language. "Once that is done, the Postmaster General and I will affix our signatures to the official document."

The vote count occurred Jan. 12, under the supervision of the American Arbitration Association. Members of the Rank-and-File Committee monitored the vote count. Princella Vogel, chairperson of the committee, announced the results at 4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, shortly after the counting of ballots was complete.

Results showing the voting by individual locals will be posted on the APWU Web site as soon as they become available. The local-by-local count is expected to take several weeks.





APWU files lawsuit on RI-399

The APWU has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court, charging that the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and U.S. Postal Service have violated a national-level three-party agreement that establishes procedures for resolving disputes over work assignments.

The memorandum, signed on April 16, 1992, outlines methods for the unions to challenge USPS work assignments they consider improper, and requires the parties to appoint a national-level arbitrator to resolve the disputes they are unable to settle. The agreement also requires the parties to meet frequently enough to render timely decisions, and to schedule arbitration hearings for unresolved cases.

In the 15 years since the agreement was signed, however, only two national arbitration awards have been issued. Five years elapsed before Arbitrator Dana Eishen was appointed in 1997, and he issued only one ruling before his term expired. It was not until 2003 that Eishen was replaced by Arbitrator Joseph Sharnoff, who issued a single ruling in 2006, after his term expired. Although the parties agreed to reappoint Sharnoff on June 28, 2006, the suit notes, the Mail Handlers Union (MHU) has refused to finalize the appointment.

“The MHU has obstructed and delayed the appointment of a national arbitrator, at least in part,” the suit asserts. 12 of the 14 pending disputes “concern claims by the APWU that the Postal Service has erroneously assigned work to the Mail Handler Craft which should have been assigned to the Clerk Craft.”

APWU President William Burrus said the lawsuit was “absolutely necessary.”

“Regrettably, the Postal Service and Mail Handlers Union have acted in tandem to delay and deny justice to APWU members.” said Burrus.

As a result of the breaches of the 1992 agreement, the APWU and the Clerk Craft employees it represents “have suffered and continue to suffer substantial injuries,” the suit charges. This

includes the reassignment of APWU-represented clerks to lower-level work at distant locations, while the Postal Service assigns and hires Mail Handlers to perform the duties in question.

It also has denied the APWU of the opportunity to challenge work losses. The failure of the USPS and MHU to adhere to the agreement has left the APWU without an alternative method to resolve its claims, the suit contends.

The suit, filed Jan. 5 in District Court for the District of Columbia, seeks “injunctive relief.” It asks the court to find that the MHU is in breach of the 1992 agreement, and to order it to schedule “forthwith” arbitration hearings of the disputes over the assignment of work on the APPS (Automated Package Processing System) and in the Priority Mail Processing Centers (PMPCs).

The suit also seeks to compel the MHU to schedule and attend meetings of the Dispute Resolution Committees; to act in good faith on the issues pending before it; to sign a letter re-appointing Arbitrator Sharnoff as the parties’ national arbitrator, and other relief.

Senators Question President’s signing statements

The Republican sponsor of a postal reform bill called on President Bush yesterday to explain why he used it to claim he can open domestic mail without a search warrant.

Sen. Susan Collins of Maine questioned Bush's controversial Dec. 20 "signing statement" in which he stated if there were an emergency he wouldn't need a warrant to open letters. The bill he signed into law that day, co-sponsored by Collins, requires search warrants for mail.

"It is my hope that the administration will clarify its intent with this recent statement," said Collins, a GOP moderate. The former Senate Homeland Security Committee chairwoman added that she has long had concerns about Bush's broad use of signing statements that attempt to reinterpret laws passed by Congress.

But White House spokesman Tony Snow insisted that "there is nothing new here." Snow said Bush's signing statement - which followed a bill signing ceremony during the winter congressional recess that was off-limits to reporters - merely stated "present law."

Questioning his claim yesterday were civil libertarians, veteran law enforcement agents and lawmakers, including Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.). He called it a "last-minute, irregular and unauthorized reinterpretation of a duly passed law."

Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) said Bush's latest power grab shows he's "willing to circumvent those legal protections intended to safeguard both our citizens' privacy and our national security."



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AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION
WATERLOO LOCAL #451
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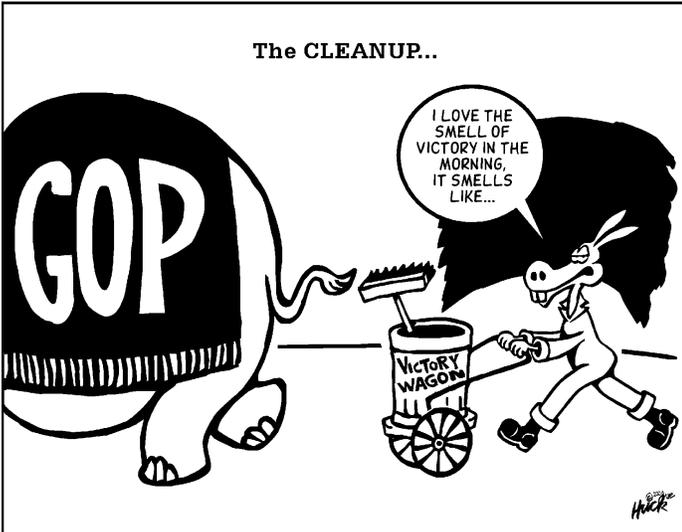
Union Meeting

January 20th @ 11am

THE OTHER PLACE

3904 Lafayette Rd
Evansdale, IA

MAKE YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!
ATTEND THE MEETING!



Let's keep an eye on the 110th Congress!

Write your congressman and let them know what you think they should do for you.

APWU Tri-State Convention (IA-AR-MO)

March 16th - 18th

St. Louis Convention Center
Holiday Inn Select Downtown
811 N. 9th St., St. Louis, MO

Room rate is \$119/night plus tax

If interested in going, please see Dwight for more details

***Now is the time to sign up
that non-member!***

