



# The Corner Stone

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

## May 2008



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

## Big Thanks

From the President's chair...



**Dwight Slaikeu**



First up is a big thank you to those involved in our recent hosting of the State Convention; Kim, Cindy & Vanda as your delegates; Glenn, Lora & Mike for taking care of registration; Carp & Kathy and Chris & Bonnie for helping with the hospitality rooms; food volunteers(not all, I'm sure, but the ones I know of) Marna, Rose Ann, Kris, Julie, Kim, Cindy, Chris & Bonnie and I apologize for any missed; and again, Chris & Bonnie for their bang-up job with the COPA raffles. Last, but certainly not least, a special thank you goes to Meri Kay for her long hours and hard work coordinating and running the hospitality rooms both nights. She wore the hats of event coordinator, entertainer, waitress, bartender, busboy, janitor, supply clerk, cook and bouncer, often going several directions at the same time. Nice job, Meri, and I think they'll remember Waterloo was the one with the mouse races. Things got a little busy at times so parts of the convention didn't go exactly as I planned but I guess we did OK. As far as I know, all business was finished and I only remember one serious complaint because I decided not to supply morning coffee at the meeting. That may have been a miscalculation on my part. Thanks again everybody and I am sorry for any I neglected to mention. And, congratulations to those elected to state office.

The extra money in local members' paychecks this pay period was not due to any past pay error. It was thanks to the involvement of your local officers and Nat. Business Agent Bob Kessler in showing management they once again hired Casuals improperly in the latter part of 2006. I tried to tell them at the time but they chose not to listen and it cost them \$76,000+. Add it to your tax rebate and get out there to stimulate the economy...just keep in mind, buy Union where possible but definitely buy American!! ([www.howtobuyamerican.com](http://www.howtobuyamerican.com))

Speaking of Casuals, I'm having a little trouble trying to understand why USPS thinks this system works. By

quick glance, we've had approx. 16 of them go through here since the beginning of this contract, 7 of which are still with us. Of those 7, only about 3 of them are regularly utilized in all the areas they should be in. Some can do this, some can do that, some don't want to do one thing or another so they don't. That then gives rise to the obvious, the ones who do all the work asked of them become work horses and in some cases, depending on if we have time to give them a full lunch or if we have time to fit in a break, we've returned to the 1960's style of no dignity, no respect and just do what I say or you'll be fired. These folks are not as fortunate as you & I in that they are not represented by a union, but they are human and should be treated as such. On the other hand, they are hired to fill in for several different areas and should be trained to do exactly that; not pampered in some cases and slave-driven in others. On top of all that, I remember the days of PTFS when we just *had* to have them to maintain flexibility (what a crock!) and now the Casuals are in the same boat, to maintain that flexibility, but are working basically the same schedule every week, in most cases full-time, 40 hours, or close to it but, of course, for less pay & no benefits. Still looks like a crock to me!

Can anyone explain to me how a person bids to a scheme job, gets themselves qualified and awarded the job, works the job for an extended period, then has the job reposted for a change in NS Days, bids it again and now is considered unqualified? Similar to the Casual program above, I'm having a little trouble understanding how the Shared Services/Personnel thing is better. Once again, postal logic escapes me.

OK, one more...the other night I went out to the lobby to mail a letter. There was a guy there wanting to buy some stamps. Oops, the last machine just went out that day (I know it was still there the day before). Can anyone explain why we can't sell stamps to the nighttime public anymore? After all, many, many of us are part of them, we should understand, right? His last comment as we both were shaking our heads was "I thought the S stood for SERVICE!" Not anymore, I guess...what a crock!

See you at the meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

# Secretary's Meeting Minutes.....



Bonnie Salinas



APWU LOCAL 451

April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008

The meeting of the APWU Local 451 was called to order at 11:16 a.m. at the OP with 15 members and retiree Charles Terpstra present.

A motion was made by Chris Salinas and seconded by RoseAnn Garvey to accept the minutes as printed in the Corner Stone. **Motion carried.**

Glenn Staudinger presented the Treasurers Report and a motion was made by Glenn to put the report on file for review. The motion was seconded by Jerry Kemmer. **Motion carried.**

## Officers reports:

### Presidents Report:

- 1) Leave – If you have taken sick or annual leave check your pay stub to make sure you were charged correctly.
- 2) COPA – Right now we are at \$3250.00, our goal is \$6000.00. The hat pass netted \$51.00 – Nice Job everyone.
- 3) Power outages at work – When a power outage occurs you should be directed to go to the breakroom, a supervisor should not force you to work in unsafe conditions. There are incidences where someone can be working during a power outage as long as it is safely done and you don't have to walk through a dark building to do the work.
- 4) The Vice President of the National and the 4 National Union Presidents created a DVD with them discussing the Post Office and where its headed. This is supposed to be shown to all employees.
- 5) The Cornerstone was put out a week before it usually did. Dwight asked if everyone liked to receive it earlier or not? The majority of those present like receiving it a week prior to the meeting.
- 6) There is a website for everyone to check out, it is **www.howtobuyamerican.com**, and this has many links to companies that have American made products.

### Editor's Report:

- 1) The town of McCausland, IA was told they were going to lose their Post Office. If the town wanted a new Post Office they would have to pay for it. The town raised \$80,000.00 toward the \$110,000.00 they would need. The National APWU will be giving the town a check for \$30,000.00 so they can meet their goal. The presentation was on April 19<sup>th</sup> in McCausland.
- 2) From the COPE convention – a) The AFL-CIO is trying to get a million signatures for the Employee Free Choice Act. Chris Salinas has postcards that you can sign, these signatures will be given to the Presidential candidates and again to the new President to show that we want the Employee Free Choice Act. b) As of the end of March the U.S is \$712 billion dollar trade deficit. Our jobs are going overseas, now more then ever we need to support unions, not just our own but all unions. To keep the jobs here we

need to be a stronger force, we need to go out and help other unions. Right now there is a union (the United Steel Workers), locked out at a pipe fitting company in Council Bluffs, if you're in that area they could use your help picketing. c)The Columbia Free Trade deal is off the table in Congress, our Iowa Congressman voted to take it off the table due in part that in 2007, 39 trade unionists were killed and 17 so far this year. d) In our state the average voting difference between the winner and the loser is .6 %, this means it doesn't take much for the anti-laborer to take over. The IFL and the AFL-CIO want all members to get involved in the political arena because of the small difference in this state. e) On May 17<sup>th</sup> the AFL-CIO is having a National Walk in support of labor, more information will be posted.

- 3) If anyone wants to know the endorsements and voting records for labor for our State Legislature Chris Salinas has that information available. Dwight added that the National APWU has announced that they have endorsed Presidential Candidate Barack Obama.

**Old Business:** The next meeting will be Saturday May 17th, 2008 at 11:00 am at the OP.

### New Business:

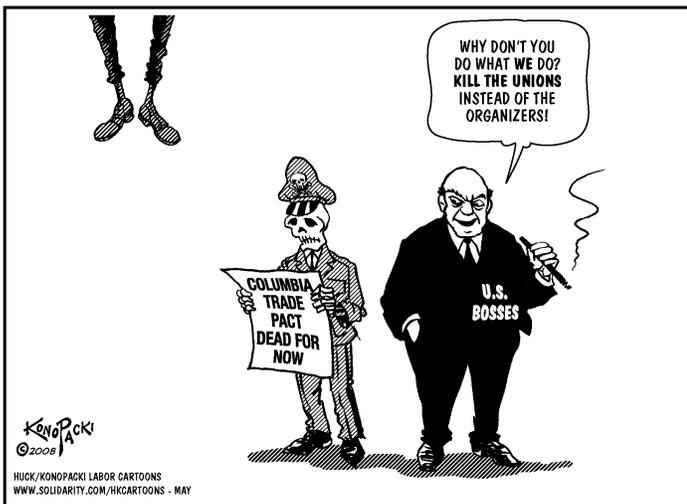
- 1) There is a Secretary/Treasurers conference the 27<sup>th</sup> through the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2008. Meri Kay Chase made a motion to send Glenn Staudinger to the conference with all normal and customary expenses. This was seconded by Kim Karol. **Motion carried.**
- 2) Mike Burke brought up discussion on the National Reassessment program, which is a reevaluation of individuals on work restrictions.

**Drawing:** Jerry Kemmer made a motion to hold the drawing, seconded by Gary Acuff. **Motion carried.** Kim Karol won the door prize.

**Adjourn:** A motion was made by Chris Salinas to adjourn, seconded by Gary Acuff. **Motion carried.**

**Members Present:** Terry McEntee, Bonnie Salinas, Kim Karol, Chris Salinas, Gary Acuff, Glenn Staudinger, Dave Knebel, Rose Ann Garvey, Kristen Engelman, Lora Thompson, Jerry Kemmer, Mike Burke, Meri Kay Chase, Dwight Slaikeu and Paulette Woods.





### When Right Becomes Wrong – (continued)

The reality of what is happening is that this country is losing jobs at an alarming rate. In February this country lost 68,000 jobs and then in March 80,000 jobs were again lost due to “downsizing”. This is a direct result of the current policies which allow companies to take these jobs to foreign countries. Countries that do not have laws in place to protect workers rights, do not have minimum wages, or guarantees for work hours or days off. Consequently almost everything that is being sold in this country in some way has been produced in sweatshops overseas. Companies like Wal-Mart are only carrying brands that have been produced in this type of atmosphere. Workers in these foreign factories are subjected to deplorable conditions; they are forced to work 16-20 hours everyday, with few if any breaks, they are paid pennies for their work if they are paid at all, and in many cases are not allowed to leave the factory complex; if they attempt to escape these conditions they are hunted down, brought back or killed as an example to others. They are housed in dormitories with no running water, heat or air conditioning so that the rooms are either unbearably hot, or miserably cold. These workers are many times forced to take showers in their clothes because they are not provided enough water or soap to perform these tasks separately. (Don’t take my word for this, see the misery for yourself. Go to [www.nlcnet.org](http://www.nlcnet.org) to get additional information on this terrible truth.) Essentially, this countries trade policies have created slave labor colonies in other parts of the world and if we do not take action to eliminate this reality these type of working conditions will return to this country as well. If you don’t believe me take a look at what has been happening in our own back yard with John Deere. In recent years Deere has opened factories in multiple countries around the world. In this country they have successfully forced the union to make concessions in workers compensation and benefits in order to keep some of the production in this country. The company did not make these concessions out of the goodness of their heart, but rather out of the practical need to keep the illusion alive.

We have been told not to worry about the jobs being sent overseas, because the jobs that will remain in this country will be the higher paying, intellectual positions. WRONG! This lie directly appeals to our arrogance and vanity. Increasingly this country has cut corners in the education of our youth; reducing funding while costs skyrocket. For years it has been reported that The United States has been falling behind other countries in

test scores, and yet we continue to believe in our superiority. It seems to me that it is not a huge leap of logic to guess that the intellectual, higher paying jobs are going to be in other countries, and provided to only those who have access to the education required to secure one of these positions. It is also not a huge leap for me to believe that the only people that will have access to the RIGHT type of education will be children born into elite households in this country or born in other countries.

In the face of a possible recession I continue to hear reports that our government leaders are seeking foreign investment in this country. The logic is that having an infusion of foreign money will stimulate consumer confidence and be the RIGHT choice for correcting the economic downturn. WRONG! This country already has a huge dept with foreign countries. The largest portion of this debt is owed to China, 45% of our National debt is owed to China, mostly in loans to fund the war in Iraq. The consequence of this debt is that we no longer have any influence with this country, we can only politely make requests. It is no surprise to me that when products made in China were contaminated with lead this country there was not a stronger government response. It is no surprise that China’s purchase of foreign oil has caused the skyrocketing cost of gas in this country. This political imbalance is the reason that the United States currently can not take a stronger position against Chinese aggression in Tibet. To continue to allow foreign countries like China to buy into this country’s economy is an even bigger threat to our National Security than terrorism. It is possible that foreign governments will call in the notes for all of our loans, making the people of this country victim to predatory lending policies of foreign governments due to the arrogance of our current policy and the people who created those policies.

All hope is not lost in the midst of all this dismal reality. Currently legislation is being circulated on Capitol Hill that will eliminate the import/export of sweatshop goods. Since this country is still one of the largest import countries in the world banning the import of these goods would force countries to provide basic human rights to workers producing their goods. It would make moving production off shore less desirable for companies, helping to keep decent paying jobs in this country as well as derail the current downturn in workers compensation and benefits in this country. This legislation has made Corporate America very nervous and they are spending millions of dollars on employing lobbyists to kill this legislation. You can be a part of the solution by either supporting the National Labor Committee in getting congressional support for this legislation directly, ([www.nlcnet.org](http://www.nlcnet.org)) or give generously to COPA so that sympathetic legislators are elected to our governing bodies. In addition, pay close attention to the candidates that are seeking election. Find out what their policies will be for getting this country back on track. For too long officials have been creating an illusion we have been lead to believe is reality and inevitable, now hard and sometimes painful choices will have to be made to correct current trends. It will be WRONG to do nothing and feel justified by thoughts of individual insignificance. Now is the time to take action, to stand together and shake off the tapestry of illusion that has blanketed this country. It is time to regain control of our country, it’s policies and political significance. The only choice that is RIGHT is to send a message that the current direction of this country is WRONG and we will not “Stay the course.”



## The Corner Stone

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION  
WATERLOO LOCAL #451  
P.O. BOX 387  
WATERLOO, IA 50704



### Waterloo Local #451 Officers

President - Dwight Slaikeu	Trustees - Dave Knebel
Vice-President - Kim Karol	Jenelle Brucher
Steward Director - Vanda Blankenship	Julie Schmitz
Secretary - Bonnie Salinas	Editor - Chris Salinas
Treasurer - Glenn Staudinger	

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## From the VP's desk...



**By: Kim Karol**



### **When Right becomes Wrong.**

I have recently been struggling with issues concerning the possibility that what I have been taught as being right actually has detrimental consequences that make the choice more wrong than right. In wrestling with this idea I have discovered that arrogance seems to be the underling element for this problem. It has become so prevalent that it permeates every aspect of life, such that now it has become hard to recognize what is right. No person or group has remained untouched by this truth. The unfortunate reality is that biggest perpetrators of this illusion is The United States Congress, and our Presidents past and present with Corporate America as the enchanters weaving the tapestry we call reality full of half truths, misdirection and out right lies.

Recently this truth became evident to me when I discovered the truth about our Global Economy. For years this country has been told that it is necessary to create policies that provide for improved trade relations with other countries. We have been told not to worry that tax breaks are being given to companies which allow them to take production of products to foreign countries. It is all for the greater good. The RIGHT choice for improved relations with these countries. **WRONG!**

( Continued on page 2 )

## **NON-MEMBERS of the APWU Waterloo Local 451**

~ ~ ~

**Marcie Turner**  
**Nancy Kannegieter**  
**Tammy French**  
**Jackie Murray**  
**Dave Palmer**  
**Kim Mettner**  
**Betty Murphy**  
**Kathy Leyen**

The union is only as strong as its  
weakest link!