

The Corner Stone

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



Retiree's Get-Together
Mondays at 1:00pm
University Ave HyVee

FEBRUARY 2004

President's Report

By: Dwight Slaikeu



“Several Die In Waterloo Post Office Fire”

This is what the headlines could have read on a cold morning back in mid-January. It all started just before 5:00 A.M. when the fire alarm sounded. From that point until about 10 after there were several mistakes made that could have caused injury, even possible death.

One of the first was the opinion of a supervisor that people shouldn't be sent outside because of the cold until it's determined that there is an actual fire. A fairly large group of people, instead of taking the closest exit, chose to walk the full length of the building going through the locker rooms to pick up their coats. The entire group of truck drivers on the dock chose to ignore the alarm altogether.

Nobody called the Fire Department. What happened to the automatic notification system?

While many employees followed emergency procedures and gathered at the designated points near the NW and SE corners of the property, there was never a head count done to ascertain whether everyone got out. A Maintenance employee had handed a radio to one of the people going to the NW site so that group was notified when it was determined to be all clear to return to the building. The 12 employees at the SE site were never notified.

The supervisors never came to that area, never looked to see where those employees were, didn't know that they were still outside somewhere, obviously didn't even know they were missing. Those people eventually determined on their own, since the Fire Dept. wasn't showing up, that there was apparently no fire. They went back inside on their own, arriving just in time to hear a supervisor on the intercom, which is not audible in the parking lot, that it was clear to go back to work.

No, this time there was no fire. But the all too obvious indication by this fiasco is that this installation is not prepared for an emergency. If the real one happens, the headlines written at the first of this article will probably be accurate. Until we all, Management and Craft employees alike, take safety seriously we are extremely vulnerable to anything that comes our way. The real sad part (in my opinion), to date there have been no safety talks to discuss what went wrong that day or what we could do to prevent another deadly situation.

Does the USPS take safety seriously? Not in Waterloo they don't.

COPA donation letters will be, or already have been, sent to all local members. Please take the letter to heart. Read it, act on it, and let me know what you've decided.

There will be a group of us headed to the Tri-state Convention the first weekend in March. So, if you have any questions, problems, etc. you'd like presented to other officers, Business Agents, or whomever, let me know.

Please be sure to notice that the meeting place has changed this month. We will be meeting at "The Other Place" on Lafayette in Evansdale at 11:00 A.M., Saturday, Feb. 21. If it works out well and everybody is happy with it, we'll plan on meeting there from now on.

Finally, congratulations to those who are on their way out due to the VER, as well as those already gone. We are envious.

See you at the meeting.

Yours in solidarity,
Dwight



ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT STUPIDITY!

Treasurer's Report

By: Meri Kay Chase



Report is available at the meeting until further notice.

If you can't make the meeting, see Meri Kay for more information.



Secretary's Report

By: Mike Burke



APWU Local 451

Date: January 17, 2004

The January meeting of the APWU Local 451 was called to order at 11:08 am. At Johnny Poppers with 18 members present.

A motion was made by Chris Salinas to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and second by Cindy Miller. Motion did not pass and so the minutes were read by Secretary Mike Burke with minor corrections to the minutes of the last meeting. The correction is in #8 under Officers Reports; the abbreviations of FMLA should be OWCP in both places. Minutes were accepted as read with corrections. The Treasurer's report was read by Meri Kay Chase. Motion to accept by Jerry Kemmer and second by Cindy Miller, motion passed.

OFFICERS REPORTS:

Presidents Report: Dwight commented on a couple of items at the national level.

1. The COPA annual drive is coming up. Dwight will be sending out a letter as-well-as an allotment form to fill out, if you choose, for COPA. The money would come directly out of your check and go directly to a new COPA savings account that has been set up. Our Waterloo Local 451 was in the top ten in the nation and first in the state for total donations.

2. Caucuses are Monday night January 19th. They officially start at 7:00 pm. If you are not a registered as a Democrat, you must get there plenty early to register if you are going to participate. You may go and just watch if you want to. In order to participate, you must be there on time, no exceptions.

On a local level:

1. Dwight stated that they are trying to hire a couple of clerks. This process may take a while. In the meantime we might see a few casuals around the office.

2. There will be no more RMO 1 week from today, however you will still have to call that same number until the automated system is in place.

3. Prime time will run from the first Saturday in April to the last Friday in September. Tour One will lose 1 bidding slot due to retirements. Watch the Union Board for your time to bid on prime time vacation slots

Stewards Director: Cindy Miller stated that she has copies of the Hatch Act if anyone needs them. She also has applications to join NARFE (Nat'l. Assoc. of Retired Federal Employees). Please let Cindy know if any of you get paid for a grievance so she can keep track of them.

State Union Rep: Chuck Konig urged everyone to write to congressman Nussle as he is trying to get the U.S. to pull out of NAFTA. Let him know how you feel as a voter on this smart move.

OLD BUSINESS:

Next meeting is Saturday February 21, 2004 at 11:00am. At Johnny Poppers.

Editor's Note: Do to Johnny Poppers being closed, the new location is THE OTHER PLACE in Evansdale for FYI.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Tri-State Convention - March 4th - 7th 2004 in Kansas City Mo. Motion by Glenn Staudinger to send our President and three delegates plus have one alternate. Seconded by Chris Salinas. Motion Carried.

2. State Convention - April 30th - May 2nd 2004 in Muscatine Ia. Motion by Glenn Staudinger to send our President and up to 5 other members. Seconded by Mike Burke. Motion carried. The people chosen were Dwight Slaikeu, Cindy Miller, Jerry Kemmer and Kim Karol.

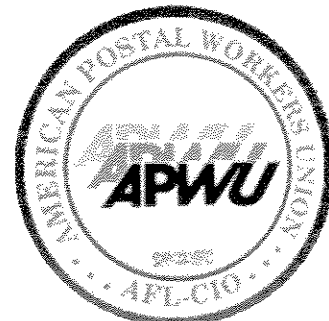
3. National Convention - August 23th - 27th 2004 in Los Angeles, Ca. Motion by Glenn Staudinger to send our President and 1 other delegate. Seconded by Kim Karol. Motion carried. Our President and Stewards director Cindy Miller will go.

4. Fall Seminar - Dwight commented that he would like to have our local host another Fall Seminar. The location will be decided at the State Convention in May 2004.

A motion for the drawing was made by Cindy Miller/seconded and won again by Mike Burke.

A motion to Adjourn by Cindy Miller/second by Mike Burke at 12:20pm.

Members Present- Dwight Slaikeu, Cindy Miller, Chnis Salinas, Marna & Jack Creery, John Clark, Mike Burke, Linda Youngberg, Bob Berendes, Dave Knebel, Greg Kuehl, Lou Ostlie, Meri Kay Chase, Glenn Staudinger, Chuck Konig, Jerry Kemmer, Stan Drewelow and Kim Karol.



Trivia Answer

Each of the answers has a history dealing with AirMail.

(C) is the correct answer. 300 pieces of mail was delivered from Dover to France by balloon on January 7th 1785.

In 1877, mail was delivered from Nashville, TN to Confederate soldiers during the civil war.

In 1912, experimental service was tried from NYC to Baltimore by airplane to see if this service was feasible.

In 1918, Congress approved the use of planes for delivering of the mail.

For what it's worth.....

Technology effects us in every way. Many of us use computers, TVs and other assorted electronics. It's part of our daily lives if we like it or not. We become dependant on this technology in many cases.

I went through this myself with this newsletter and my hardware crashing. But my training and experience help me bring this back and continue with getting the newsletter out. I was lucky as well.

The USPS is no different when it comes to technology. It has become dependant on this technology. But with all this technology, good ol' human common sense and training is still needed. Machines can't do it by themselves like many want you to believe.

You're probably wondering what I'm getting at. Well, for all of us to make the best use of the technology at work, we all need to understand why it works and use the resources that are available. Even if it's just an operator that pushes the start button on the DBCS or to an ET that looks for why the button doesn't start the machine. We all need to know why that device does what it does at our level and training.

Which brings me to the point of our skill level and training. Operators know there is something wrong with the machine they are using when it's not doing the job properly. Many times it's something that an operator knows how to correct because they know the machine. But there are times when an operator (not all) knows that the problem is beyond their skill, so they call maintenance. The GM, MPE or ET has to figure out what's wrong with the use of the operator's input.

As an ET myself, one of the things I was told at my training in Oklahoma is that we are the teachers (as well as the technicians) of the machine. But at the same time, we have to do what the supervisors say we have to do. Lately, it's just to keep the machines running during operations and Preventive Maintenance and parts replacement during down time.

In Waterloo, I have not yet seen any supervisor ask anyone in maintenance to teach any of the operators the proper procedures, when operating any of the machine(s) that they (the operators) work on. Or to give any adequate training themselves for the operators to learn the machine and it's function. Also, those in maintenance can only teach the machine's proper operation if they are trained on that machine as well.

But on the same note, many operators (and a certain supervisor) will take it upon themselves to perform higher level work on their machines. Many in maintenance are also following the "letter of the law" in performing their maintenance duties to the letter, with no variances. This has caused some tension with many parties (operators, maintenance and supervisors) and I'm tired of it personally.

We (Clerks, Operators, Maintenance, etc) in the APWU are supposed to be a team. Brothers and Sisters doing what we are trained to do, to the level and PAY we are entitled. In many ways, those who are placed in charge, train us in the wrong way or in an inadequate nature.

If we were given the time for proper training, we would be more efficient in our jobs. That's a given!

Unfortunately, we are not and we have to deal with that reality. Or do we? I think we shouldn't. I also think we should demand proper training (from fire drill procedures, going to proper schools, etc) from those who are in charge.

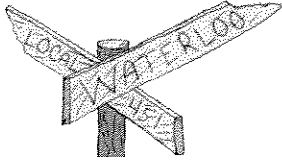
Why should a lower level person do higher level work when they are only paid at a lower level? If the operator is trained at that level, shouldn't they be placed in that higher level? But like so many stories I've heard, the supervisors don't care if you are following the rules or not. They only care about one thing; the numbers that make them look good. How else are they going to get their bonuses and promotions? Certainly not from following the REQUIRED guidelines.

So I ask everyone to do his or her JOB DESCRIPTION for your level. Don't go above and beyond that because you won't get the credit. You're certainly not going to get paid more. Only those who benefit from your hard work, are those who would care less about your job.

It's time to stand up, tell those that it's not in my job description. Don't do something that requires more pay based on that description (IE level 5 doing level 8 work). If they make you do it, file a grievance. Because I feel if you do a higher level person's work, you should be paid for it. At least file it to protect your fellow brother or sister's job.

That's it, watch your back. No one else will. The USPS is no different from the private sector, they want they cheapest labor they can find. Those who do it (do higher level work) only hurt those who worked for that level.

Yours in solidarity,
Chris



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Union Meeting

Feb. 21st @ 11am
THE OTHER PLACE
3904 Lafayette Rd
Evansdale, IA

Waterloo Local #451 Officers

President - Dwight Slaikeu
Vice-President - Kim Karol
Steward Director - Cindy Miller
Secretary - Mike Burke
Treasurer - Meri Kay Chase

Trustees - Eddy Berry
Stan Drowelow
Jenelle Brucher
Editor - Chris Salinas

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OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE WATERLOO
LOCAL #451

Trivia Question:

In what year was the first letter delivered by air? (Be careful)

- (a) 1918
- (b) 1877
- (c) 1912
- (d) 1785

Answer inside newsletter.

AMERICA WORKS BEST WHEN WE SAY ...
UNION YES 

