

# The Corner Stone

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

## February 2005



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

From the President's chair...



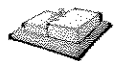
**Dwight Slaikeu**



Steward Director's corner.....



**Cindy Miller**



Due to an extremely high frustration level caused by spending too much off time and too many breaks trying to keep up with the backlog brought on by revolving managers, delayed grievance decisions, delayed grievance adjustment pay-outs, delayed answers to requests for information, lack of any real time needed to develop the cases I'm responsible for, and co-workers who seem to forget that 1) I'm not responsible for the shortage of Clerks and 2) the trouble Supervisors are causing them only multiplies when it goes down on paper by way of Letters of Warning, OT records, etc. or just plain lack of doing their jobs properly, this is all the time I'm going to spend on my article this month.

Now there's a sentence for you!

See you at the meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

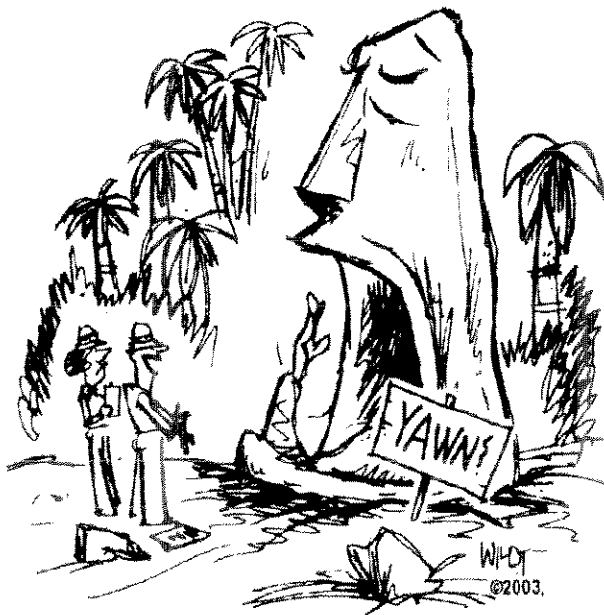
Happy New Year!!!!!! Hope you all had a great holiday. I sure did but I'm glad their over.

New Year's Resolutions????? I do not make any because I can't keep them, but one thing I'd like to improve on is STRESS. Especially at the workplace. I found some tips on how to reduce some stress that frequently occurs during the holiday season. Here are some suggestions. They'll work if you work them!

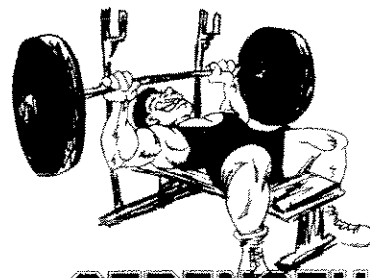
1. Don't put yourself in stressful situations. Know your limits.
2. Set realistic goals.
3. Learn to say "No". Establish boundaries for yourself.
4. Eat properly. Reduce caffeine and sugar. (RIGHT)
5. Relax as much as possible. Meditate
6. Exercise. (Another RIGHT)
7. Develop a positive attitude
8. Except imperfection and problems to arise. Accept them.
9. Avoid confrontation when necessary.
10. Spirituality.

Please also remember, there is a need for compromise and negotiation with others. Let's act mature and communicate with each other. This can work!

See you at the meeting, Cindy



"At last we've found it! The ancient god of Postal Compassion!!!"



# STRENGTH IN UNIONISM

## ANTI-POSTAL COMMENTARY

### STOP THE US MAIL!!

By: Andy Kessler

It's been said that Americans will put up with anything - as long as it doesn't involve waiting in line. And as I wasted half a day mailing a gift this past holiday season, I asked myself why that sentiment doesn't apply to the US Postal Service. In the age of instant communication, with trillions of dollars crossing borders in nanoseconds and grandmas sending email, why do post offices even exist?

As a kid, I subscribed to *National Lampoon*, which had about a dozen blow-in cards per issue that basically read, *pay us \$7.95 a year and we will have a snappily dressed government employee personally deliver our magazine to your door*. How'd they do that? Well, in 1825, Congress outlawed private mail delivery within cities and gave the USPS a monopoly over first-class letters and third-class items like magazines, catalogs, and junk mail (a prize if you can tell the difference).

But why does the USPS still have this monopoly? The only possible argument is that the US economy would grind to a halt without the postal service. It is, after all, one of the largest civilian employers. Its 707,000 workers need 37,000 post offices, 200,000 vehicles, and 15,000 daily flights to deliver some 550 million pieces of mail a day.

Sure, the numbers look impressive. But so would track miles of horse-drawn trolleys if that industry had a monopoly on travel. Consider that each day 35 billion emails are sent, 1 billion SMS messages traverse the ether, and 2 billion instant messages are delivered by AOL alone. Does any of this take almost three-quarters of a million workers? Nah, just a few latte sippers in data centers to reboot the servers a couple of times a day.

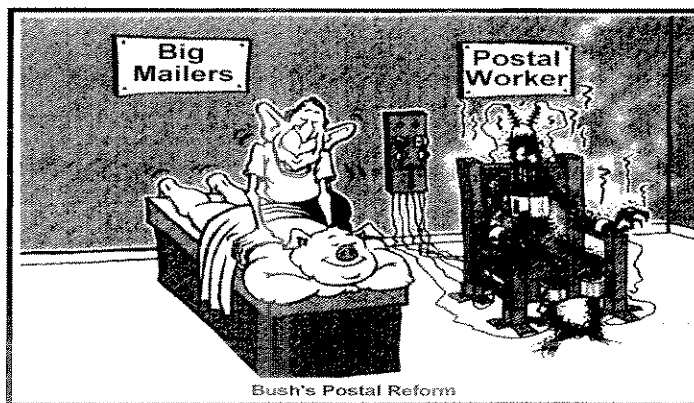
Meanwhile, the USPS raked in a \$3 billion profit in fiscal 2004 (untaxed) and plans to raise its rates, again, in 2006. The price hike is needed to cover the rising labor costs that make up a majority of their \$65 billion in operating expenses. The Ludditious American Postal Workers Union has time and again fought labor-saving technologies that would increase efficiency. And postal workers' wages seem to stay above those of average factory employees. The USPS monopoly means no shareholders to complain, and no lawyers to file class actions against it.

So what would happen if this 180-year-old trust disappeared tomorrow? Would the US seize up like an engine without oil? Hardly. Better alternatives to the USPS are already here, and plenty of others would emerge. Bills offer the best opportunity to bury the USPS. Companies need to be paid. But mailing bills and checks is terribly inefficient, costing \$2 to \$10 per transaction. Some analysts suggest that 25 percent of the cost of a phone call covers billing. Companies should persuade more of us - through incentives - to pay bills online, a method that could easily scale to 105 million households. Bank and brokerage statements, too, are a click away. For those without computers, banks would fill the void. After all, they already deal with all those personal checks. Tellers could pull up your bills and assist you with those to be paid, for a fee (and a wait in line), of course.

Private carriers would compete for contracts to deliver catalogs and magazines. Junk mail doesn't make the cut - like you care. Electronic payment replaces stamps, removing a lucrative float enjoyed by the USPS. Innovation coupled with a free market would lead to profitable opportunities in rural areas, currently subsidized by city dwellers and suburbanites.

Which leads me to the best reason for ending the postal monopoly: to make home package delivery cheaper. UPS and FedEx can, and almost do, handle many of the packages that Amazon.com and eBay and my household rely on for their existence. But it's no secret that UPS and FedEx *hate* delivering to our homes, because of the time it takes to get out of the truck and ring the bell. The penalty is staggering - residential deliveries often cost 10 to 20 percent more than those for businesses. Allowing these package humpers to carry first- and third-class mail would make this "suburban tax" disappear.

Let's take the first step and end the postal monopoly now. As the USPS collapses under its own weight, entrepreneurs will start companies that will offer today's mail carriers more productive jobs. And the new firms may even offer snappy outfits.



## Postal News

### UPS - Canada Post union set to battle over NAFTA clause

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers and Council of Canadians have asked Ontario's Superior Court of Justice to declare Chapter 11 of NAFTA null and void in response to a \$200-million claim against the government by giant U.S.-based courier company UPS. UPS claims federal subsidies for Canada's public mail system gives Canada Post an unfair advantage over private-sector courier companies.

The Crown Corporation also owns 94 per cent Purolator Courier -- a 1,300-unit parcel delivery fleet that competes directly with UPS and Fed-Ex.

The union claims the NAFTA provisions cited by UPS in their suit threaten Canadian sovereignty and would damage Canada Post's ability to deliver cost-effective services across the country.

Moreover, the provision -- which could allow private companies to challenge public services deemed to harm their business through non-judicial tribunals -- could also threaten public programs like socialized health care or the CBC, the union argues.

The union says this is the first time a court will consider the constitutionality of international trade rules that allow foreign corporations to sue governments. Arguments in the case began this week.

"UPS claims that simply by having a public postal system, Canada is allowing unfair competition," Jean Yves Lefort, a Council of Canadians campaigner, said in a release. "By this logic, every public service from health care to education to the CBC could face similar lawsuits. We don't intend to let foreign corporations destroy our public services without a fight."

### St. Cloud P&DC in Minnesota gets anthrax detection gear.

A machine that detects anthrax will soon be checking the stamped mail collected in St. Cloud, Willmar and Brainerd.

The state's first Biohazard Detection System will be installed in the U.S. Postal Service's St. Cloud Processing and Distribution Facility in Waite Park.

The machine will be installed Feb. 5 and will begin checking mail Feb. 17, said Ronald Gustafson, who is coordinating the installation of the detection units in Minnesota and parts of Wisconsin.

The installation is part of an \$800 million nationwide plan to protect mail and the Postal Service's employees, Gustafson said. Anthrax scares swept the nation shortly after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The presence of anthrax in the mail system only was found on the East Coast, postal inspector Randy Guertin said.

The Waite Park mail site became the first in Minnesota to receive the equipment because of a consolidation in Michigan, Gustafson said. That made equipment available for a processing center the same size as St. Cloud's, he said.

The machine will scan stamped mail picked up from blue public mailboxes and residential mailboxes, Postmaster Roy Reynolds said. Stamped mail brought to area post offices also will be scanned, he said.

About 170 post offices bring their stamped mail to the St. Cloud processing and distribution site, which handles 250,000 to 350,000 pieces of stamped mail on an average day, Reynolds said.

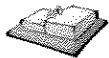
The Biohazard Detection System, which has been tested at 15 sites nationwide, takes continuous air samples to check for anthrax, Gustafson said. The machine collects air as stamped mail passes through another machine that cancels the stamps. An alarm sounds if anthrax is detected, setting the site's emergency action plan into motion.

It is not intended to detect other potential biohazards but its capabilities could be expanded.

In that plan, the estimated 60 workers during the shift would be evacuated and decontaminated, he said. Incoming mail would be taken to other sites.

"It's the first step in protecting the mail stream in the case of a biohazard attack," Gustafson said. "This would be a lot of trauma for employees to deal with."

# Secretary's Meeting Minutes.....



**Mike Burke**



**APWU LOCAL 451**

**Date: January 15, 2005**

All elected Officers were sworn in by our National Business Agents Dennis Taff and Robert Kessler at this time. If you missed the results, please check the bulletin board.

The January meeting of the APWU Local 451 was called to order at 11:17 am. at the OP with 12 members and two guests present.

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

The Treasurers Report was read by Meri Kay Chase. A **motion** to accept the report as read was made by Paulette Woods and seconded by Mike Burke. **Motion carried.**

## Officers Reports:

### **Presidents Report:**

1. COPA-Members passed the hat and collected \$30.05. Dwight stated that he received a letter that stated ; the Waterloo Local has the highest amount donated to COPA per member per local than any other in the country. Congrats to the membership!
2. Thank you to Paulette Woods and Vein Berry and anyone else who may have helped with the election.
3. If you see a problem in the holiday scheduling let Dwight know about it right away.
4. Grievances are backed up due to management changing hands, again. Please be patient!

### **Vice President:**

Kim Karol stated that Jim Anderson did in fact get notice that his retirement has been finalized. Good luck to Jim!

### **Stewards Director:**

Cindy Miller stated that you should get a copy of your 3972 at least every quarter because we are finding so many mistakes. You should also watch your language because some people are getting disciplined for foul language. If you witness a situation where foul language is being used please write down who the one is using the foul language so someone does not get wrongly accused.

### **Treasurer:**

Meri Kay Chase stated that our State and National Legislators are now back in session.

### **Editor:**

Chris Salinas stated that HR22 is back at the top of the list so write your congressmen. Write as an individual not as a postal employee.

### **Old Business:**

The next meeting will be February 19, 2005 at 11:00 am. at the OP. Our new computer is in and installed and the old one is with the treasurer. Thanks to Greg Kuehl for donating a monitor.

### **New Business:**

Tri-State Convention is coming up on March 18th and 19th 2005 in Dubuque, Ia. Registration is \$40.00 and the rooms are \$49.00. Kim Karol **motioned** to send 4 delegates, 3 plus the President. The motion was seconded by Paulette Woods. Motion carried. A **motion** was made by Jerry Kemmer to table the selection of delegates until next meeting, and seconded by Chuck Konig. **Motion carried.**

A **motion** was made by Paulette Woods and seconded by Meri Kay Chase to move the March meeting to March 26, 2005 at the OP at 11:00am. **Motion carried.**

Trustee Stan Drewelow stated that the books for the first half of 2004 has been audited and is perfect. Thanks Stan!!!!!! Good job Meri Kay!!!!!

### **Drawing:**

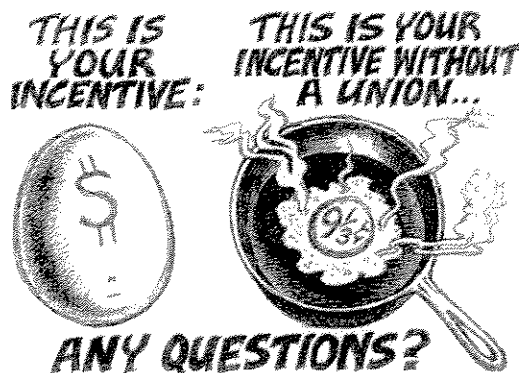
A **motion** for the drawing was made by Jerry Kemmer and seconded by Kim Karol. **Motion carried.** Dean Price was the winner.

### **Adjourn:**

A **motion** was made to adjourn by Kim Karol and seconded by Jerry Kemmer. **Motion carried** to adjourn all 2:14 pm.

### **Members Present:**

Greg Kuehl, Dean Price, Chuck Konig, Dwight Slaikeu, Cindy Miller, Jerry Kemmer, Chris Salinas, Paulette Woods, Stan Drewelow, Kim Karol, Men Kay Chase, Mike Burke and guests Dennis Taff and Robert Kessler.



## ATTENTION!!

It's happening again! The President wants your jobs for the private sector and now has more power to do it this term. Don't sit back and hope for the best... GET INVOLVED!!!

Use the sample letter as a guideline and write your Representative and Senators!!

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### A Sample Letter!

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To: Representative Doe (or Senator Doe)  
Washington Way  
Washington D.C. 12345

From: Jane Poe  
321 Main St.  
Anywhere, USA 98765-4321

Ref: The Postal Commission Report

Dear Representative Doe (or Senator)

*It has come to my attention about the President's Memo on the U.S. Postal Service bills that were proposed last year. I find the President's comments to these reform bills unacceptable.*

*I am upset that these bills didn't have a chance to be heard. It is also my understanding that the same authors may reintroduce these same bills.*

*The original House bill was more realistic than the Senate's version. The Senate's version hurts the workers and the users of the mail system.*

*I urge you to reject any bill that uses the Postal Reform Commission's report because of the harm that will come to the people that use this service.*

Thank You,

Jane Poe

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**This is just a sample letter, but it is short, sweet and to the point. If you would like more information or ideas of how to present your letter, you can talk to me (The Editor) and I will give you some help or additional information.**

**This will require a team effort to get those in Washington to see that WE are a special commodity.**



## For what it's worth....

By: Chris Salinas, Editor

It's a New Year and with a new war for our lively hood, nothing can be taken for granted no more. The stroke of a pen and the use of technology can give our jobs away.

I spend a lot of time reading commentaries about our work, both Pros and Cons. This month I'm including an anti postal commentary so you can see what I mean.

The wave is changing, but it's rolling away from us, the postal workers. More and more people are calling us the "horse and buggy" of technology. Outdated, inefficient and overpriced are the words they use today.

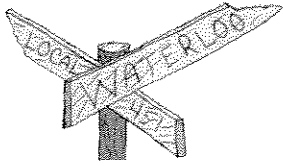
Of course, the upper echelon of management wants to keep their jobs as well, so they make changes to keep up with technology. They are buying more mail sorting equipment to be more efficient, offering early retirement to reduce their payroll and working on getting by with the employees they have rather than hiring.

The wave of change is coming! Technology could be the death of the postal worker. But again, that depends on you! Why?

How much time do you dedicate in learning a new skill? What skills do you have that will make you valuable to the USPS? What skills are you willing too learn to make yourself valuable? You really should ask yourself these questions as the future of your job security may depend on it.

Don't rely on the USPS to always have a job for you in the future, rely on yourself and be prepared.

In solidarity,  
Chris Salinas



## The Corner Stone

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

### Union Meeting

Feb. 19th @ 11 am  
**THE OTHER PLACE**  
3904 Lafayette Rd  
Evansdale, IA

### Waterloo Local #451 Officers

President - Dwight Slaikou      Trustees - Dean Price  
Vice-President - Kim Karol      Glen Staudinger  
Steward Director - Cindy Miller      Dave Knebel  
Secretary - Mike Burke      Editor - Chris Salinas  
Treasurer - Meri Kay Chase

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Cedar Falls, IA  
Permit Number: 41

ALL OPINIONS ARE THOSE OF THE WRITER  
AND NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE  
OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE WATERLOO  
LOCAL #451

## NON-MEMBERS OF THE APWU, LOCAL 451 WATERLOO

Nancy Huffman  
Nancy Kannegieter  
Jacqueline Murray  
Kevin Bash  
Norman Tolliver  
David Palmer  
Diane Knoop  
Kimberly Mettner  
Kathy Leyen  
Marcella Turner

The APWU stays strong because of  
its MEMBERS, but are weakened by  
the NON-Members.

## NO PERSON IS AN ISLAND



# Organize all of our Non-Members!