

The Corner Stone

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

March 2005



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

From the President's chair...



Dwight Slaikeu



Finally, Spring appears to be right around the corner. And, with Spring comes our Prime Time bidding. I know, by the time you read this the bidding will be over. I just wanted to remind you of one item that seems to be forgotten pretty easily. If you are involved in a week in which all slots are full, and you decide to turn some, or all, of the time back in, please be sure to notify your Steward so we can make sure the time will be reposted for someone else. And also, please get it turned back with enough time left to get it posted. Some Locals have a minimum time limit that it has to be turned back in by or the employee will take the leave. I'm hoping we don't have to go that far, but we do need to watch it. It's a very simple thing really, if you don't want the leave, get it turned back in now, don't wait.

Also, on the subject of normal, day-to-day leave requests, keep in mind your 3971 request for leave has to be returned to you within 5 days. **Don't forget to keep that third copy when your Supervisor signs that they received the 3971!!** Once they receive the 3971 **and sign that they received it**, one of two things need to happen within 5 days. Either they return it approved/disapproved (with the reason for disapproval) or they come to you to discuss why they are having a problem getting it back to you within 5 days. The 5 day limit may be extended or waived so long as the supervisor and employee are both agreeable. If neither of those things happen within the 5 days, see your Steward right away. Please don't play games with this. If you expect them to be upfront about it, you need to be also. If you put the 3971 in properly, we can expect them to handle it properly. Simple as that.

Keep an eye on our bulletin board. I know I don't get it updated and cleaned up as often as I should but, believe it or not, it does change now and then. It may appear to be the same as yesterday but very often there are things added that aren't readily noticed. Take a look-see and if anything pops up that you don't understand, just ask.

We have a new member in our midst. Gary Acuff over in Automation has recently signed on and we not only welcome him, but thank him for his support.

With all the overtime going on recently, and liable to there

is one area that often gets shoved to the back. It is necessary for the supervisor to make every attempt to give at least 30 minutes notice for end-tour OT. No, it doesn't have to be exactly 30 minutes or more. We've had both manager and employee play with this one. One side, "She only gave me 29 minutes notice and I don't want to stay!"...Other side, "I looked for him for 10 minutes and didn't find him in time." I've found a compromise; to the supervisor I say, get them the 30 minutes notice, it's not that difficult; to the employee I say, don't start complaining until it's less than 25 minutes notice, especially if you're on the OTDL. And, if you're hiding from the supervisor...well, I shouldn't even have to address that.

CHECK OUR NEXT MEETING DATE! DUE TO THE TRI-STATE CONVENTION, IT HAS BEEN MOVED TO THE 4TH SATURDAY THIS MONTH...**MARCH 26th**. See you there.

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**A BUSINESS AGENT'S PERSPECTIVE**  
**Donald L. Foley, National Business Agent, APWU**

*"What does labor want? We want more schoolhouses and fewer jails, more books and fewer arsenals, more learning and less vice, more constant work and less crime, more leisure and less greed, more justice and less revenge. In fact more of the opportunities to cultivate our better natures, to make manhood more noble, womanhood more beautiful and childhood more happy and bright."*

... Samuel Gompers

"Solidarity forever..." Ah, the chords of our anthem ring in memory. Too bad the sentiment fails so often to ring true within the circle of brothers and sisters that make up the labor movement.

Within our own Union, the Crafts compete - as we should - for jurisdiction over tasks and jobs, and between postal unions there is competition as well - again, as there should be. However, there is something different from competition and the rejection of fundamental principles the labor movement holds dear. Solidarity among workers is one of those fundamental principles. It is characterized well in the old motto of the Knights of Labor of the late 1800's - "An injury to one is the concern of all." - which remains today as a slogan of the International Workers of the World and is often referred to as an old adage of the labor movement - "An injury to one is an injury to all." And, when the APWU first took on the battle with George W. Bush's presidential commission on the deconstruction of the Postal Service, we were rightly indignant with the NALC national leadership's failure to stand in solidarity with us. It was their parochial smugness about the sanctity of "the last mile" that amounted to a total failure to recognize the single fundamental principle that unites us.

It is always somewhat perplexing and sometimes shocking to hear, from respected unionists a lack of concern for the struggle of brothers and sisters outside their own backyards. Such failure to bear faith and allegiance to real solidarity is what lies at the heart of labor's inability to coalesce into the force that some of our greatest leaders have envisioned. We must come to the realization that we are all coworkers, brothers and sisters in the struggle with owners.

When workers become owners we should anticipate these owners would be model employers. But the present struggle between the APWU national leadership and the employees of the APWU represented by the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) once again causes one to wonder how we sometimes manage to forget where we come from. When a union is also an employer, its leaders must not abrogate their responsibility to remain true to fundamental, democratic principles of unionism. Nor can the members of the APWU act as if the contract struggle of OPEIU is of no concern to us. Yet, respected APWU local leaders have said exactly that.

Our brothers and sisters of the OPEIU have been continuing to work without a contract since October of last year. Our APWU leadership has refused to extend the OPEIU contract. Reminds one of that old rallying cry we have shouted at so many rallies over the years - No contract, no work! No contract, no work! OPEIU fought to continue health benefits clauses of its contract in its previous round of collective bargaining with APWU, coming away with a promise then from APWU leadership that this Union would not again seek to undermine what OPEIU had in health benefits protection. Yet, once again, APWU seeks to reduce this benefit of the OPEIU contract. Let's all chime in — No givebacks! No givebacks!

There are those who have said, *These OPEIU employees of the APWU should not have anything better than what APWU members have in our National Agreement. There should be parity.* There it is again. It is a failure to recognize that at each turn, where we hold back a brother or sister from achieving, we fail as unionists. Why would we want to deny our brothers and sisters contractual benefits simply on the grounds that we have not yet succeeded in wresting similar benefits from the grasp of postal management? Why would we want to emulate postal management? Sometimes it is painfully obvious that some of our national leaders have learned all their managerial skills from Postal Service managers. Some of our national leaders seem to relish the role of boss more than the role of worker, failing to recognize that the members own the APWU while its officers and the secretaries of those officers are coworkers — employed by the members. As I have said before, what this Union needs is more union Workers and fewer union bosses.

But the fundamental point here is simply that we cannot ignore the contract struggle of our sisters and brothers of the OPEIU, claiming that it does not concern us. Especially because we, as members of APWU, own this organization and these sisters and brothers work for us. Each contract struggle of every union is a matter of concern to the movement as a whole. We cannot continue to partition the labor movement into mere factional struggles of "ours" and "theirs". Solidarity demands more. We cannot tolerate merely hollow slogans. They have grown from the struggles of our forebears. So it must remain true that, an injury to one is the concern of all.

As a side note to all this, for those of our Clerk Craft members who have complained for so many years now about the Postal Service's "Secret Shopper" program, the APWU 'boys in Washington' actually seem to like the program. If they did not like it, why would they impose it on the APWU secretarial workers? And, Clerks, have you ever been "secret shopped" by the Postmaster General himself, or one of his headquarters VP's? It seems former Southern Region Coordinator, current Secretary-Treasurer Terry Stapleton is a real fan of the "Secret Shopper" program. By his own directive, our secretaries were instructed how to answer the telephone! Yes, including what to say to callers! And this directive has been followed up with warnings that corrective action could be taken for failure to follow the prescribed answering protocol. Brother Stapleton himself has "secret called" numerous secretaries to check for compliance. No discipline known. . . yet.

Solidarity, brothers and sisters!

## Postal and Government News

### Postal Board of Governors Ignites Controversy over Collective Bargaining Expansion.

The Postal Service Board of Governors (BOG) recently stepped up to the plate and identified the key elements that it believes postal reform should embody.

The BOG's views, set out in a February 24 letter to Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Susan Collins (R-ME) and House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA), were sent as the two lawmakers pushed to complete drafting of their respective reform bills.

The most contentious BOG position, involves the BOG's renewed call for making **all health, leave and retirement benefits for active and retired postal employees subject to collective bargaining** between postal management and the unions, with any impasse resolved by mandatory arbitration. In the event of a labor-management impasse, the BOG said, an arbitrator should consider broad economic factors, including the economic history of the Postal Service, its present financial health and ability to pay, as well as anticipated future growth, productivity and total labor costs.

Under current law, collective bargaining covers: the wages of postal union or craft employees; the percentage of health insurance premiums the Postal Service contributes toward all active employees (including non-bargaining unit employees); and to work rules. Changes to the scope of issues subject to collective bargaining require Congressional approval of a change in the law.

In testimony before the President's Commission on the Postal Service in 2003, Postmaster General John Potter said, "... [W]e recommend creating a negotiation process that includes not only wages and work rules, but also puts all benefits -- **health, leave and retirement, just to name a few -- on the table.**" The President's commission declined to recommend any change in the scope of collective bargaining. The Postal Service, nonetheless, has continued to emphasize that nearly 80 percent of its total costs are driven by labor, and that rising health care costs, particularly those associated with retirees, are a major contributor to postage increases.

Postal reform proposals in Congress have largely avoided confronting sensitive workforce issues, like major realignments in the terms of collective bargaining, in order to preserve union support for postal reform. The conventional wisdom is that without union support, no postal reform measure can succeed in Congress.

### Security and Defense workers to see pay-system overhaul!

More than 800,000 federal workers in the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and Defense are facing changes that would sweep aside longstanding regulations on how they get paid, where they work and how much their union can do for them.

The government plans to install a pay-for-performance plan like the one familiar to most American workers. The changes, which apply to workers ranging from immigration agents to blue-collar arsenal workers repairing Humvees to Pentagon employees tracking U.S. troops overseas, would also make it easier for the government to hire, fire and relocate workers.

"What's being proposed is the ability to put the right people in the right jobs as quickly as possible because we can't afford to be this slow, cumbersome beast," said Charles Pena, a defense policy specialist for the CATO Institute.

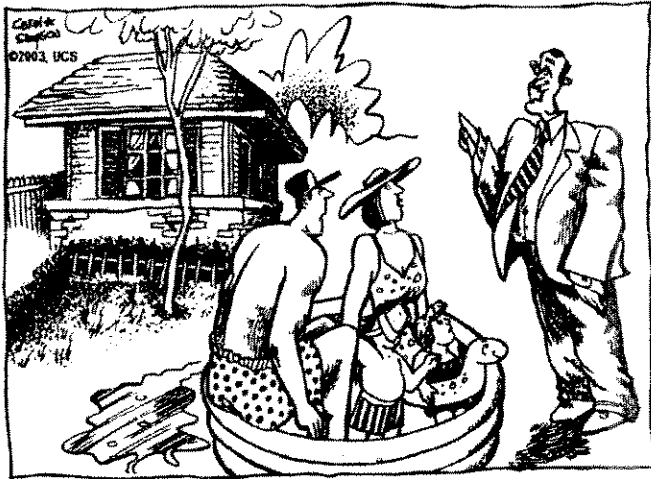
Barring any legal defeats, the government hopes to implement the changes over several years, beginning this summer. If all goes well with these two agencies, officials say there is no reason not to impose the **same system on all 1.8 million federal workers**, from janitors on up.

But a number of unions, skeptical of the government's motives, recently filed a lawsuit in federal court to block the changes at the DHS. The unions say the government's streamlining efforts go beyond Congress' intentions for a more modernized workforce for the nation's defenses and that they violate workers' collective bargaining rights.

"This whole thing is really set up to change the workplace culture and put in a management that will rule by intimidation and coercion," said John Gage, president of the 600,000-member American Federation of Government Employees. Though union officials vow to keep up their legal fight and to extend it to Congress, some privately predict that they will only be able to soften the changes. As it is, federal employees' unions are relatively weak. They do not have the right to strike, nor can they bargain over wages. Rather, they bargain broadly over workplace conditions. They also are required to represent all federal employees, not just their members.

Diane Scott, president of a 300-member American Federation of Government Employees local at the Rock Island Arsenal, says damage has been done already.

"This administration is treating us like we are the threat," said Scott, a 27-year blue-collar worker at the arsenal, where workers last year helped boost efforts to produce more armor for Iraq-bound Humvees.



"See.... Even after my postal reform bill passed, every postal worker can still afford a backyard pool!"

## From the VP's desk...



By: Kim Karol



Recently I was asked to assist in presenting a stand up talk on Harassment. In preparing for that presentation I discovered a few things that I think is worth sharing with all of you. I just wanted to highlight a few things in this article.

First and most important, it is not the intention of your words or actions that are important. What is important is how the other people around you perceive those words or actions. PERCEPTION carries all the weight in a harassment case. The key to keeping yourself out of trouble is be careful what you say or do; if you are not 100% sure how what you are about to say or do will be received by everyone in your audience, don't say or do what you are thinking.

Remember harassment may occur when an individual gets upset, feels disrespected, is made to feel invisible, or becomes offended. It is important to avoid any topics that may cause yourself or others to feel this way. We do not all come from the same backgrounds, what we think is acceptable personally may not be acceptable to, another. Work is not the place to try and "toughen up a co-worker", nor is a place to try and "expand someone's horizons". Just avoid any sensitive topics.

If you are in a position in which you feel you are the victim of harassing behavior or you may have said something that upset a co-worker it is important that you take responsibility to get the situation corrected. This meeting will go better if you are calm and factual when addressing the other person. Simply identify the action or statement you believe to be the problem, listen to their reaction, and then apologize. Many times things begin with a simple misunderstanding, if it isn't clarified then the situation can get worse. Don't bring that kind of attention on yourself or others.

One of the references that I used in preparing my presentation gave an example of "Interpersonal Relationship Accounts" or IRA's. It compared your individual relationships with a bank account. It is important to make regular deposits into your IRA, by kind gestures or comments. Occasionally you may also withdraw from the IRA, say or do something that a person may feel is objectionable. Everyone trips now and again, but if you have made enough deposits in your account that person is likely to let you slide by without getting upset. If you withdraw from your account too often, much like a bank, that person is unlikely to extend you credit or give you the benefit of the doubt. So pad your accounts with others, it is really much easier to be pleasant to others. Not to mention it keeps management out of your hair.

Now for something entirely different, just a reminder- DON'T SHORT CUT YOUR DUTIES! You may think you are saving time and helping out, but the only thing you are doing is cutting your own throat. You will get burned for not following procedures; you could lose a duty assignment (possibly your own) because there is not enough time recorded for the duties that you perform; you could be injured it means you are not working safely. In all of these examples YOU are the person that will be held responsible, which means disciplined for not following procedures.

DON'T TAKE THE RISK!

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### A THANK YOU LETTER

Dear Members of the APWU,

I want to thank you all for your dedication to the APWU by paying your dues and supporting your union. Without you, your union would suffer and we would all suffer under management's unruly hands.

I also would like to thank the union for its hard work in providing me with my wages, job security, annual and sick leave, enforcement of my rights in the contract and many more things I could mention.

I look forward coming to work everyday because of the union and members like you! I look forward working side-by-side with you.

Sincerely;  
Your Scab!

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AMERICA WORKS BEST WHEN WE SAY ...

**UNION YES**  

# Secretary's Meeting Minutes.....



**Mike Burke**



**APWU LOCAL 451**  
**Date: February 19, 2005**

The February meeting of the APWU Local 451 was called to order at 11:10am. @ the OP with 17 members present and retirees Jim Anderson and Bud Venenga.

A **motion** to accept the minutes as printed in the Corner Stone was made by Kim Karol and seconded by Chuck Konig. **Motion carried.**

The Treasurer's Report was read by Meri Kay Chase. A **motion** to accept was made by Kim Karol and seconded by Mike OBrien. **Motion carried.**

## Officers Reports:

### **President's Report:**

1. COPA- Members passed the hat and collected \$38.11.
2. Dwight stated some people are being scheduled on holidays because they haven't replaced people.
3. We have an arbitration coming up on March 8 2005 and another one on approx. March 21st
4. If you take food or drink onto the floor clean up after yourself or else!!!!!!
5. Prime time vacation bidding schedule is posted so look for your time period to bid.
6. A- VOMA job has been posted if you are interested.

### **Steward's Director:**

Cindy Miller stated that we should try to avoid using profanity while here at the Post Office because they have tried to discipline people for it. Also when you miss work for whatever reason make your own copy of a 3971 and get it signed to cover yourself because discrepancies are being found between 3971's and 3972's.

### **Old Business:**

The next meeting will be March 26, 2005 at the OP at 11:00 am. due to the Tri-State Convention.

**Tabled Issue** - We need to decide the four delegates who are going to be going to the Tn-State Convention in Dubuque, IA. March 18th and 19th. A **motion** was made by Kim Karol to reconsider the original motion from last month to send 3 delegates plus the President to the convention. The motion was seconded by Chuck Konig. Kim also called the question. **Motion carried.**

Paulette Woods **motioned** to change the number of delegates from 3 to 4 plus the President. The motion was seconded by Cindy Miller. **Motion carried.**

A **motion** by Kim Karol to send Meri Kay Chase, Cindy Miller, Kelly Schneiderman, Mike O'Brien and our President to the Tn-State Convention with usual and customary

expenses. The motion was seconded by Paulette Woods. **Motion carried** on discussion and the main motion.

### **New Business:**

State Convention May 6th and 7th~ in Sioux City Ia. Registration is \$25 and current room rates are approx. \$70 per night. The state will be sending Kim Karol, Chuck Konig, Meri Kay Chase, and Chris Salinas from our local.

Paulette Woods **motioned** to send 3-4 people including our president to the State Convention with customary expenses. The motion was seconded by Cindy Miller. **Motion carried.**

A **motion** was made by Kim Karol to nominate all officers, our elected officials, and anyone interested in going to the State Convention, with final election to be held at the March meeting so they can properly submit their 3971's during prime time bidding. The motion was seconded by Cindy Miller.

Stan Drewelow stated that the books are done for 2004 and checked out ok. Thanks Stan!

### **Drawing:**

A **motion** for the drawing was made by Jerry Kemmer and seconded by Kim Karol. **Motion carried.** Mike Burke won!!!

### **Adjourn:**

A **motion** to adjourn was made at 12:05 am. by Kim Karol and seconded by Chuck Konig. **Motion carried.**

### **Members Present:**

Mike O'Brien, Kim Karol, Cary Purcell, Chuck Konig, Dean Price, Cindy Miller, Steve McAhren, Meri Kay Chase, Dave Knebel, Greg Kuehl, Linda Youngberg, Jerry Kemmer, Dwight Slaikeu, Mike Burke, Paulette Wood, Nancy Hemsath and Stan Drewelow.

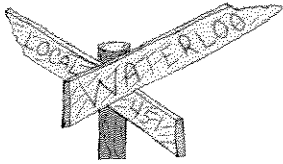
**APWU does many things  
for you!**



**You can make  
it better!**

**Attend your Local's  
meetings and learn more!**





# The Corner Stone

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Union Meeting

Mar 26th @ 11 am  
**THE OTHER PLACE**  
3904 Lafayette Rd  
Evansdale, IA

### Waterloo Local #451 Officers

|                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| President - Dwight Slaikeu      | 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      |                        |

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

## NON-MEMBERS (SCABS) 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



Let's make them part of the team.