

The Corner Stone

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

March 2006



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

The Union and Your Job.

From the VP's desk...



By: Kim Karol



It's been a while since I have submitted an article for the Cornerstone, for which I apologize to the editor. However I really didn't think what I wanted to say warranted space in the newsletter. Things are different today! I wanted to take the time to remind anyone who reads this article that life is all about priorities and choices. At the age of two, people develop the means by which they set their priorities and make choices. Basically we learn to survive. If we are lucky, we have been taught these strategies by parents who have had the forethought to also teach us how to appreciate the needs of others and the importance of cooperation.

This has been brewing for a while now, and I have to admit I have tried to ignore the issue, hoping it would go away. But I believe it has become a very dangerous mindset for the work place, and the community as a whole. I am talking specifically to anyone who has dropped out of the union, or is thinking about dropping out of the union. I don't understand... Stop being narrow minded or thinking about only yourself!

The union isn't a personality contest; it isn't a babysitting association; and it isn't expensive. You don't have to like the officers or agree with their decisions; that's why there are monthly meetings, and elections every two years. The union isn't around to make sure that a co-worker is pulling their weight, being respectful, showing up to work; that's Management's job. Membership is \$1 8.88/pay period, or \$1.25/day, \$0.15/hour; most of us spend more than that each day at the vending machine. This very minimal investment provides to you decent wages, affordable healthcare, and retirement benefits.

Without a union you would not have annual leave or sick leave, you would not be protected against layoff, you would not be afforded a lunch break, your working conditions would not be as safe, and you would have no protection against unilateral actions taken by management.

All of these things are easy to take for granted because for most current employees, they have always been a part of our working environment. Have you ever considered what it would be like without these benefits? If you are honest, you haven't even given it a thought, and you have no idea what is involved in maintaining these benefits.

Stop a minute and take stock of all the "things" that you have surrounded yourself with. Which ones are you willing to live without? Are you willing to give up your car, the cable/satellite TV, your cell phone, or your personal computer(s)? If you are not supporting the efforts of the union to maintain your wages, you may not have these for long.

Will you be able to pay for your monthly prescriptions, the dentist and the eye doctor? If you are not supporting the union in maintaining your eligibility for health care under the FEHB you probably will be paying much more of these expenses on your own.

Are you willing to support your children when the minimum wage stalls and they can't afford housing or groceries. Are you willing to visit your children in India, or China when they move there to get a decent paying job?

Without the efforts of the union, the APWU, some of our jobs would already be in Mexico! (APWU recovered REC site jobs sent to Mexico). All of these scenarios are possible, and if you don't think it will happen to you... Talk to the former employees at ENRON, Sunbeam, or more locally Maytag. This has been affecting workers in this country for a number of years, and postal union have been the only thing that has protected postal employees this long.

It is time for contract negotiations again. It is not a coincidence that all the postal union contracts are up for negotiation in the same year. It is not a coincidence that the postal service has requested an additional postal rate hike this year.

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The Union and Your Job. (Continued)

There are private businesses out there lobbying to prevent any positive growth for the postal service and assure their postal cost remain as low as possible. Do you think they are doing their lobbying for \$0.15/hour? Do you think that the army of lawyers employed by the postal service to advise management in contract negotiations are working for \$0.15/hour.? Do you think the union can find lawyers to provide the same type of services to us for \$0.15/hour?

I am hoping by now your survival instinct has been aroused and you realize the importance of paying dues to the union. Don't come and tell me you are dropping out because of the personality problems you have locally, I am not going to sweat the small stuff. Don't tell me you can't afford to pay union dues, I don't think you can afford not too.

Respectfully, Kimberly Karol

Secretary's Report

By: Mike Burke

APWU LOCAL 451

February 25, 2006

The meeting of the APWU Local 451 was called to order at 11:11 am. at the OP with 12 members present. Also attending was retiree Stan Drewelow, retiree Jim Anderson and his wife Cheryl.

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

The Treasurer's Report was read by Meri Kay Chase. A **motion** to accept the report as read was made by Paulette Woods and seconded by Chris Salinas. **Motion carried.**

Officers Reports:

Presidents Report:

1. COPA- Since there was a delay in our full amount of COPA funds to the national in 2005 approx. \$1,800.00 will be applied to this years fund. Were going for that \$6,000.00 goal again this year. The hat was passed during the meeting and collected \$33.49.
2. Dwight stated that the Wichita conference was very informative.
3. Dwight also sat in on a seminar on the use of casuals which was very informative.
4. When you fill out 3971s try not to put any medical information on it so this information stays with whom it should, such as your Dr. and the people in Des Moines.
5. Postal Inspectors - Under no circumstances let them in your home without a steward or a lawyer present. Do not sign anything without the lawyer or steward present.
6. Make sure any medical paperwork is legitimate or you could be disciplined or worse fired and fined etc.
7. Holiday bidding schedules are posted - check them out.
8. Word has it in the wind that there are more clerks going to be hired.
9. Dwight stated that he was told that Waterloo was not on

any list for an AMP study (facility consolidation study) in the Hawkeye District.

10. Dwight stated that he has a Labor Management meeting on Tuesday. The postmaster is making a list of rules for our office.

Stewards Director:

Cindy Miller stated that when this list of rules and regulations from the postmaster are printed take the time to read them and please take them seriously.

Old Business: The next meeting will be Saturday March 18, 2006 at 11:00 am. at the OP.

New Business:

1. A **motion** was made by Meri Kay Chase to pay mileage to Dwight for his trip to Des Moines for a union business meeting. The motion was seconded by Jerry Kemmer. **Motion carried.**
2. The IFL COPE Convention is Saturday March 25th 2006. A **motion** was made by Jerry Kemmer and seconded by Linda Youngberg to send Chris Salinas to the convention with normal and customary expenses paid. **Motion carried.**
3. We have the full State Convention coming up April 28th and through the 29th. It is all business, no seminars. We have four State Reps. from our office going Chris Salinas, Kim Karol, Meri Kay Chase and Chuck Konig. A **motion** was made by Mike Burke and seconded by Jerry Kemmer to send our President, Dwight Slaikeu and Stewards Director Cindy Miller to the State Convention in Ames with normal and customary expenses paid. **Motion carried.**
4. We have the National Conferences coming up in August in Philadelphia Pa. Aug.12th and 13th are the Craft Conferences. The convention itself runs Aug 14th through the 18th and seminars on Aug. 19th and 20th. A **motion** was made by Jerry Kemmer and seconded by Cary Purcell to send our president and two delegates to the national conference with normal and customary expenses paid. A paper vote was held among members present to chose the two people going because there were three people interested. The interested people were Chris Salinas, Cindy Miller and Kim Karol. The vote was close but Cindy Miller and Kim Karol were chosen by the vote totals.

Drawing: A **motion** to hold the drawing was made by Jerry Kemmer and seconded by Linda Youngberg. **Motion carried.** Chris Salinas won the door prize.

Adjourn: A **motion** to adjourn was made by Cindy Miller and seconded by Chris Salinas. **Motion carried** at Approx. 1:15 pm.

Members Present Cindy Miller, Meri Kay Chase, Stephen Fields, Cary Purcell, Chris Salinas, Mike Burke, Dave Knebel, Nancy Hemesath, Jerry Kemmer, Dwight Slaikeu, Linda Youngberg and Paulette Woods.

//SIGNED// Secretary Michael J. Burke

From the Mailroom Floor....

What you need to know.

I hope I don't offend anyone, but I need to set the record straight. Our union contract book is about 500 pages in length. It has taken decades to get every word, some one at a time, added during one contract negotiation or another. Nothing was added by either side without careful study so as not to concede what has been won or retained in the past.

But management has the power, that's number one. What can management do? Well they give orders on what they want you to do. They are responsible to hire, promote, transfer, assign and retain employees in their job they perform. If you are deemed a bad employee, they will suspend, demote or discharge you. Management decides what is efficient and how to do it. They can even tell you what to wear.

The Postal Family does not exist. It is a business and their business is to move the mail. You have agreed to a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. By accepting your position at the Post Office, you agree to be their worker and to their duties they assign to you in exchange for a negotiated wage the Union and the USPS have both agreed to.

That in effect is the Contract everyone is squawking about. Sure they allow us to tweak it in limited ways with local agreements. Sometimes it works for you, sometimes it doesn't. The National Agreement and the Local Agreement cannot be "fixed" to work against individuals.

Once a local contract is agreed too by our Local and its Management, they both sign it for a limited period of time. It can't be changed during that period because it is a contract and you would have to be crazy to even consider opening it for re-negotiations before the contract expires. I say crazy because if you were ever foolish enough to open the contract up, to re-negotiate one little item, you open the whole agreement. When you consider all our past local agreements that were negotiated had to go to arbitration to make management agree to little things like a fair number of employees allowed off for prime-time vacation, you would be tossing the baby out with the bath water. Your actions will always have a reverberating effect, whenever you mess with the status quo.

I've taken my hard-earned wages and I figure it is worth the mere, itty-bitty, teeny-weeny money that goes to my Union, in exchange for what I currently enjoy. Back in the 70's, my father's Union dues to his SteamFitters Union was almost two hundred dollars per month. What would that be in today's wages? At the same time I was working at John Deere and the Union dues there was two hours of wages per month. That would amount to about \$50.00 or a little more than twice what my dues are today!

I know a million of reasons why almost everyone in Waterloo's Post Office owes the Union. If it wasn't for their personal efforts, anyone short of about 8 years would be as a \$9.00 casual with no benefits, working god-for-saken long hours of overtime with no fixed days off, crying for a full-time

benefit filled job.

And the big bucks your Union President makes, it equals the amount of their Union dues they also pay and a tank of gas each three months. Our steward's are doing it for about 5 cents, after they pay their own Union dues. They give up lots of their free time for you, literally. One Saturday each month is a Union meeting. Time working on Union matters after work and without pay. Who is willing to give up a weekend to go to school, for me? That's a Union Convention, sitting in classes learning Labor law, for a hotel room and \$15.00 a day food allowance, often times stuck in some other city or state.

We don't have a Postal Family. What we have is a collective group of employees who pool their money or dues to belong to something that was here before any of us and, with God's grace, will out last all of us. But the last thing I am willing to do for the non-union (no capital letter deserving for this group) sludge, is to donate one penny towards them. What have they ever done for you, name one thing.. .TELL ME??! Don't feel sorry for them, shed no tears. They, not the Union members, decided to go it alone. So be it!

Steven Adsit, Proud Union Member

?? CAREER ??

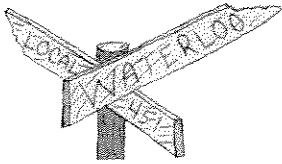
The bullying tactics of upper management never cease to amaze me, but this time I think they out-did themselves. I can't help but wonder what upper management was thinking if, in fact, their overriding concern is the welfare of the postal service. You know the uppers want us to look at what we do "as a career, not a job". But, after what happened to our supervisor on Tour 1, Christine Schirm, I have to think long and hard on that one.

After going through all the trouble, time, and expense of training a supervisor, then why not give her some help and support? Trial and error is not a bad way to learn, but it is a hard way; and you still need support. In Chris, we had a supervisor who really tried—she strived to bridge that gap between management and labor. I don't know nor will I probably ever know why the uppers trash-canned Chris. However, by doing so, I feel they not only failed her, but themselves, and all of us as well.

Chris was knowledgeable, dependable, and accountable. She was not afraid to make a decision and stand behind it. Chris not only cared about production but, also, about her people—a rare combination. For me, it was easy to work for Chris because she *did* care and she was *willing* to try!

If upper management does not want those qualities in a supervisor, what do they want? What is "the right stuff"? Are they looking for a yes man, a fast talker, and/or a brown noser? That does seem to be what we have in our current supervisors and 204B's, and if that's "the right stuff", heaven help us!

just a clerk, just doing a job, Nancy J Hemesath - Tour 1



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Union Meeting

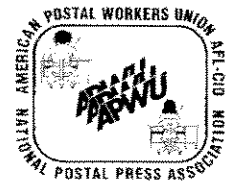
March 18th @ 11am
THE OTHER PLACE
3904 Lafayette Rd
Evansdale, IA
Open Agenda

Waterloo Local #451 Officers

President - Dwight Slaikeu Trustees - Dave Knebel
Vice-President - Kim Karol Jenelle Brucher
Steward Director - Cindy Miller Paulette Woods
Secretary - Mike Burke Editor - Chris Salinas
Treasurer - Glen Staudinger

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HEY!! Listen UP!!
NO PERSON IS AN ISLAND



Organize all of our Non-Members!

Our Future and Jobs depends on our Union's survival!