

# 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. McDonald's  
Across from HY-Vee

## MAY 2004

### President's Report

By: Dwight Slaikeu



Another State convention has come and gone already. My compliments to the Muscatine Local for their hard work and for the terrific job they did.

Congratulations to the elected State officers. Many incumbents remained while there were also some changes made. Our Local is well represented at the State level with 4 of our members involved. Recording Secretary Chuck Konig, Legislative Director Chris Salinas, and Trustee Meri Kay Chase are all on the Executive Board, while NE IA Area Representative Kim Karol gets to try to keep up with all of the small office problems in this corner of the state. Thanks to all of you, as well as those from other offices, for stepping forward to fill positions in areas that can be extremely frustrating, time-consuming, thankless and...and...and why was it again that you wanted to do that? Good luck, and again, thank you.

Besides the election and various committee reports, the delegation was successful in slugging their way through 60+ resolutions relating to the State and National Constitutions as well as items for negotiations on our next contract. The resolutions were on a wide variety of subjects. I'll have my copy available so if anyone would like to take a walk through it, let me know. The National items that passed will make their way to the August National Convention.

For some, this convention was the chance to say good-bye to retiring NBA Carl Casillas. He's been around for many years and will be missed. Good luck, Carl, make it long and healthy.

Our 3 new transfers, Winnie K., Karen S. and Nancy H. have all signed on with APWU. So when you run across them, welcome them not only as full-time Waterloo employees but also as APWU members.

We were finally able to get a Labor/Management meeting scheduled April 27<sup>th</sup>. You'll find highlights of the subjects discussed on the bulletin board. If you have questions, you know where to find me. Also, you'll see that we agreed to have regular meetings the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday each month so if you have problems, questions, whatever you'd like brought up, let me know.

Mentioning the elections earlier reminded me that it's time to start thinking about our own Local election as well as the National election this Fall. Nominations for our election will take place at the September and October meetings, with the mailing of ballots in November. Anyone interested in being on the Election Committee, please let me know as the time gets closer. Keep in mind you can't be on the committee if you're on the ballot.

As we all know, we're still working short-handed. With all the overtime and all the problems that come with not having enough help, I'll borrow a line from an old TV show (some of you are too young to recognize it except maybe from cable re-runs)... "Be careful out there." Use your head, work safely, and try to get the job done in spite of a supervisor trying to derail you.

Meeting coming up Saturday...See you there.

Dwight

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 **Come join the fun**  
 **at the APWU**   
**Local #451 Union**  
**Picnic!** 

**DATE: August 8<sup>th</sup> @ Noon**

**Location: Exchange Park**  
By the Waterloo Women's Softball  
Diamonds and Riverfront Stadium.

**Tableware and side dishes are requested.**

**Softball will be available, so is the skate park, volleyball, etc.**

## **Postal News**

Sources are from several News Organizations

### **Mailing Businesses Object to Provision in Postal-Reform Legislation**

A long-awaited proposal to reorganize the U.S. Postal Service hit a snag on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> when major mailing groups objected to a provision backed by the APWU.

Lawmakers scrambled to rewrite the section in order to get it on the floor by Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup> instead of May 6<sup>th</sup>.

The provision changes the way the U.S. Postal Service sets mail rates for mailers by removing the discounts that go below the actual costs of delivering the presorted mail.

The latest retreat reflects the difficulty that lawmakers have in drafting legislation that satisfies all sides.

Rep. John M. McHugh (R) said that the APWU has made it clear to him that this provision has top priority.

Rep. McHugh also said that if this provision is stripped, it is more than likely the APWU will drop its support for this bill.

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### **USPS seeks dismissal of workers' anthrax lawsuit**

The U.S. Postal Service has petitioned a federal court to dismiss a class-action lawsuit that accuses postal officials of endangering workers' lives by keeping an anthrax-contaminated facility open.

Lawyers for the Postal Service on April 29<sup>th</sup> asked the U.S. District Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to dismiss the \$100 million suit, saying that the court has no jurisdiction over the complaint.

Attorney Joseph Sher said the postal workers' claim should be handled by filing a claim to the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act.

The suit was filed on behalf of about 2,300 employees of the Brentwood Processing and Distribution Center, which was closed in October 2001 after being contaminated by anthrax. Two postal workers died and many others were sickened.

Postal workers accuse the Postal Service of keeping the facility open for four days when postal officials knew it was contaminated. The suit said the Postal Service wanted to avoid losing \$500,000 for each day the facility was closed.

Lawyers for the employees say the court should hear the case because the Postal Service endangered the lives of the workers.

The postal workers have also filed a claim under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act.

### **Postal Service Transparency and Accountability**

The House Government Reform Committee has published a 126-page discussion draft in late April. The legislation proposed will be the most sweeping overhaul since the new USPS was formed in 1970. The result of this legislation, if passed, will affect every American who uses the mail.

According to Treasury Secretary John Snow, over the past 30 years "the Postal Service has suffered real economic losses in excess of \$101 billion."

Postal reform will remain an impossible task until USPS accounting is straightened out and a much higher level of transparency introduced. The kinds of transparency private corporations are routinely required to provide.

The U.S. Postal Service is not required to break down its costs into standard accounting formats. In fact, its financials are deliberately obscured and utterly impenetrable.

The House Government Reform Committee's discussion draft includes these transparency measures, which will make the U.S. Postal Service accountable to its spending.

This would remove the generalization of postal expenses. Last year the Postal Service lumped over 42% of its cost (\$25 billion) into general overhead. A practice that is "not acceptable" by the IRS if it audited a private corporation.

The result is that Rate Payers pay over two-thirds of the USPS overhead and end up subsidizing its non-core businesses.

In 2002, first-class and standard mail made 89 percent of overhead contributions, according to Michael Schuyler, senior economist at the Institute for Research on the Economics of Taxation. Meanwhile, all other products and services only furnished just 11 percent of overhead contributions.

The Committee's draft also talks about restructuring the agency's rate-setting process, would return to the Treasury the military service costs for postal retirees who served in the armed forces, establishing an inflationary rate increase cap and creating a strong regulator to monitor rates.

Some in the mailing industry, however, believe the committee is so eager to maintain coalition support that it has produced a fatally weak bill.

"This is a horrible, horrible disappointment," said Association for Postal Commerce President Gene Del Polito, who represents large commercial mailers such as Time, Capital One and RR Donnelly. "We have made clear there are two things that have to be done to reform the Postal Service: Give them new methods for cost determination and give them the authority to withdraw excess costs and needless services, such as facility consolidation," he said. "There are no such provisions in the draft at all."

Once the bill reaches the floor, many in congress believe it will pass.

# Vice-President's Report

By: Kim Karol

You know the APWU has been sounding the alarm about Privatizing the Postal Service for a long time. Many of you have stopped listening because it appears like nothing is really happening. You are not being directly affected in some manner. The unfortunate thing is that you are being directly affected and you don't yet realize it.

It is a very complicated situation which would take up too much space in this publication to try and explain. (I started and it was several paragraphs long for the introduction.) Basically my feelings are that for many years the American public, those of us who are not among the top 5%-10% earnings bracket have been slowly conditioned to expect less. The stores that you can afford to shop in provide products of lesser quality. The foods you can afford to purchase are of lower nutritional value. The jobs that are available are for lower wages. This has been happening very slowly for a long time. It has skewed the American dream. You can no longer afford a home, good education, and good health. Now you hope to only have to work two jobs, or just a little overtime just to make ends meet.

Your job is not immune. The Presidential Commission's Report on Postal Reform is due out any day now and we are the big target. Check out the website for the public to see the statement that was issued in support of all the changes. (Sanitized so that it will be easy for the public to understand.)

*"Provide strong guidance for costs over which we have no control, such as the price of fuel our expanding delivery network, growth in statutory employee benefits, and wages."*

Now the first part I can understand, but to link that to employee benefits and wages which are negotiated; how is that out of their control? Your income is on the line.

Repeal the escrow requirements in the Postal Service Civil Service Retirement System. Eliminate CSRS military service payments. Your retirement is on the line. And don't think just because you are a FERS employee you are safe. You're not! Your contributions to FERS and any matching contributions can be eliminated in the swipe of a pen. One signature! Don't think it will happen? Talk to postal managers that banked their bonuses. One swipe wiped out all their money too!!

This is not craft vs. management. Everyone loses if we don't get our head out of our @\$\$!! I know that I haven't been able to do justice to this issue in this article. Please pay attention to what you hear about this reform. It is the back door approach to getting Privatization.

There is so much money to be made that it will be spun, and sugar coated so that we won't know what hit us until it is too late. The public has gotten so accustomed to the lower

standards that it will seem reasonable to them to make changes lowering your wages and benefits. It is going to happen.

Just my opinion.

Kimberly Karol-VP

# Treasurer's Report

By: Meri Kay Chase 

APRIL 2004

It's been a busy month between union and political activities. I see the per capita checks to our affiliates, Iowa Postal Worker's Union and the Iowa Federation of Labor, have not been paid this month but they are a patient bunch. I'll catch us up in May.

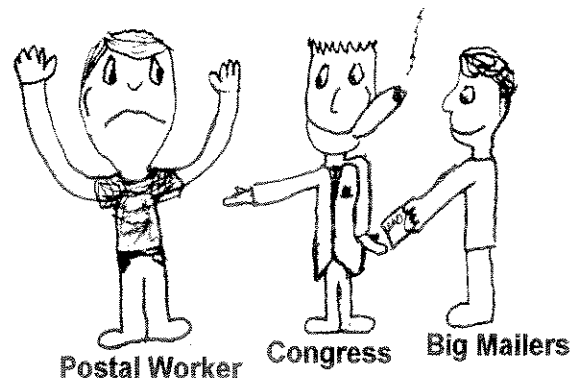
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	\$820.23
Phone:	\$44.24
Tri-State:	\$235.39
Postage:	\$31.63
Office Supplies:	\$10.65
Meeting:	\$85.00
Cornerstone Printing:	\$101.32
State Convention (advance)	\$312.00

Next month you can expect to see higher per capita, as explained above. We will have Federal taxes to pay and expenses for the State Convention in Muscatine, as well as the regular monthly bills.

As always, I welcome any questions and suggestions. Next meeting is May 15<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 a.m. at The Other Place in Evansdale. The pizza is hot and good, as well as the conversation.

Meri Kay

## Legalized Theft



Postal Worker

Congress

Big Mailers

# Secretary's Report

By: Mike Burke 

APWU Local 451 Date: April 17, 2004

The April meeting of the APWU Local 451 was called to order at 11:00 am. at the OP with 18 members present.

A motion to accept the minutes as printed in the Corner Stone was made by Chris Salinas and second by Mike Burke. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's report was read by Merri Kay Chase. There was no motion to accept the Treasurer's report, however, there was a motion to dispense with the portion of the Treasurer's report that was printed in the Corner Stone by Jerry Kemmer and second by Chris Salinas. Motion carried.

### OFFICERS REPORTS:

Presidents Report:

1. COPA-Dwight commented that we have approx. between \$2400 - \$2500. 00 so far and were trying to reach a goal \$3000.00.
2. TSP - Open season is coming soon watch for your brochures in the mail.
3. Jury Duty-Make sure you change your schedule if you are selected for jury duty. If your days off are not on the weekend you can change your whole weeks schedule.
4. Make-up overtime --- The supervisor must tell you if it is going to be make-up overtime.
5. USPS Form 991-Dwight stated that this is the proper way to apply for best qualified job positions.
6. Personnel Office - Everyone should get a copy made of your file since they have basically done away with this job in our office. Please submit a request in writing to the postmaster for this chance to view and copy your file.
7. Labor Management Meeting -- Dwight said the request is still in for the meeting.
8. PTF Hiring-Dwight is still waiting for the copies of the official paperwork for those PTF's coming to our office.

### OLD BUSINESS:

1. The next meeting will be Sat. May ~ 5~ 11:00 am. at the OP.
2. Picnic report - Stan says the picnic is August 8th at exchange park. See details in a future issue of the Corner Stone.
3. Editor Chris Salinas reported that Parkade Printers will drop-ship to us, and thus, save the \$150.00 we discussed at the March meeting.
4. The amendment was voted down with a clear majority vote by at least 2/3's.
5. Trustee Stan Drewelow reported that the audit of last years books were perfect.

### NEW BUSINESS:

A letter from member Richard Williams was read and he was asking for a donation of approx. \$80.00 for a project his daughter is involved with. They are sending school supplies to the children of Iraq and need help with the shipping costs. A motion was made by Stan Drewelow to donate \$80.00 for this cause. Seconded by Tom Blankenship. Motion carried.

Drawing: A motion to hold the drawing was made by Paulette Woods and seconded by Jerry Kemmer. The motion carried. The # 4 was drawn which was Jocelyn Druvenga

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made by Tom Blankenship and seconded by Chris Salinas. Motion carried.

Members Present were: Paulette Woods, Tom & Vanda Blankenship, Jocelyn Druvenga, Kim Karol, Patsy Millerman, Rose Ann Garvey, Cary Purcell, Ed Berry, Dave Knebel, Chris Salinas, Stan Drewelow, Dwight Slaikeu, Merri Kay Chase, Greg Kuehl, Mike Burke, Jerry Kemmer and Jan Harp.



.....  
Do you want to say something to your fellow workers?

You want to express something to make your union better?

**Then speak up!**

Say what you want to say on this forum. Write an article and submit it to the Editor and I'll make sure it is printed.

Don't be silent any more!

Make your feelings known!  
.....

# Steward Director's Report



By: Cindy Miller



Hello everyone! Just a short note to let you know I will be taking a leave of absence from my union position for the rest of this quarter due to some personal and health issues.

I will return on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2004. I will still answer any questions that you might have, but Dwight will be handling the Step 2's for me until then. See you at the meeting.

Thanks,  
Cindy

**For what it's worth.....**

## **GATT, NAFTA, WTO, FTAA They're Trading Away Our Jobs**

Current trade policy is not working for workers in America workers who have lost millions of good jobs and its not working for people in developing nations, who are seeing poverty and inequality grow.

This is a global system of broken promises: the number of people in the world living on less than \$2 a day actually rose during the 1990s; two hundred fifty million children are working; one-third of the world's labor force is unemployed. Instability is up, growth is down.

### **U.S. job losses top 2.5 million**

In the United States we've lost 2.5 million manufacturing jobs just during President Bush's tenure ----- these were jobs which paid a family-supporting wage and which are at the heart of a vibrant economy with a strong middle class. We're running a record \$500 billion annual trade deficit, which is accompanied by a flood of jobs being shipped overseas --- both old economy jobs, such as auto and airplane manufacturing, and new economy jobs, such as data processing and software programming.

### **Iowans have felt the negative impact of "free" trade.**

Here in Iowa, we have experienced first hand the impact of "free" trade agreements, such as NAFTA and the World Trade Organization.

Thousands of Iowa jobs have moved abroad, while family farms consistently find themselves unable to compete with corporate agri-business. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of small farmers in Mexico have been forced off their land, and manufacturing wages in Mexico have dropped 20%.

These changes have produced an unparalleled inflow of undocumented immigrants into Iowa and all across the United States and an outflow of jobs to the maquiladoras, the border factories in Mexico.

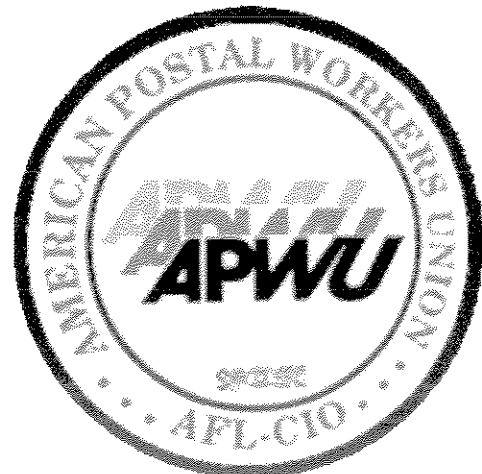
### **FTAA = NAFTA on steroids.**

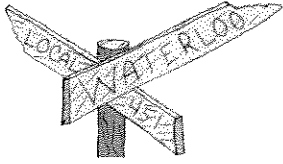
The Bush Administration currently seeks to expand NAFTA into a Free Trade Area of the Americas, encompassing nearly the entire Western Hemisphere. The proposed FTAA grants new rights to companies to privatize essential public services and limits the role government has in establishing social or environmental standards for services. The FTAA is NAFTA on steroids.

To maintain a domestic manufacturing base that protects workers, farmers, the environment and that ensures our national security, the United States must address flawed trade policies that encourage U.S. manufacturers to scour the globe for the lowest wages, the weakest labor laws and the most vulnerable workers.

It is time to say NO to trade agreements that grant special treatment to corporations and destroy sustainable economies and livable communities.

*Article from the AFL-CIO newsletter Vol.3 Issue 3*





**Waterloo Local #451 Officers**

President - Dwight Slaikeu	Trustees - Eddy Berry
Vice-President - Kim Karol	Stan Drewelow
Steward Director - Cindy Miller	Jenelle Brucher
Secretary - Mike Burke	Editor - Chris Salinas
Treasurer - Meri Kay Chase	

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 WATERLOO, IA  
 PERMIT NO. 1837

**The Corner Stone**

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

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Union Meeting**

**May 15th @ 11am**  
**THE OTHER PLACE**  
3904 Lafayette Rd  
Evansdale, IA

**Have you contributed to COPA?**

It's a way to let your voice be heard with the help of the APWU. It will let many in Washington know you mean business when it comes to your job, health care, retirement and many many things you take for granted.

Don't sit back and hope for the best, stand up and fight for your rights!

There are many ways you can contribute to COPA. Your local union officers can provide you information on how you can help contribute.

Take a stand and fight back. Your voice and thoughts matter.

★ **APWU COPA APWU** ★

**LET  
 YOUR  
 VOICE BE  
 HEARD**

★ **APWU COPA APWU** ★

It's our fight, let's bring it to them!