

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

MARCH 2004

President's Report

By: Dwight Slaikeu

Having just returned from the Tri-State Convention in Kansas City, I guess I'll start there this month. As usual, it was a very well put together conference with a lot of information and training. Invited speakers included several national officers who touched on subjects ranging from the national budget and ways they're trying to cut costs, to COPA and how important it is for you to help, to the President's Commission and what it's trying to do to you. Seminars I took part in had to do with how to handle situations involving the Postal Inspectors and grievance/arbitration remedies. I want to thank you for the opportunity to attend these conferences. With very little exception, I find them interesting and informative; rarely coming away without picking up something new.

As I mentioned, the subject of COPA happened to come up at least once or twice during the conference. Many of you know that I have begun my annual sweep to get your donations. For those of you who received the letter and information from me, I'm asking that you pull it up to the top of the pile now and get it taken care of. Don't forget that the allotment choice will keep me off your back next year. It's not that difficult to do and you'll find it much better to have a few bucks pulled out of your paycheck than to come up with a bunch of them at one time. And my offer still stands, if you don't like the idea of putting up with the sometimes not-so-user-friendly menus of *Postal Ease*, I will be more than happy to help you out with it. The existence of your job as you now know it is being scrutinized and attacked like you can't imagine. Your donations are important. A special thank you goes out to the retirees who have answered the call for COPA. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Please don't forget we'd like to see you at the picnic this summer.

I had a conversation about the Thrift Savings Plan the other day so thought I'd throw in some info on it. I don't have anything new at all, just a reminder of how important it is. We're all trying to work our way to retirement and TSP will be a large part of whether your retirement is pleasant or not. I'll be aiming this at FERS employees so to the CSRS people, I apologize, but please check the brochures you receive to see what your rules are. Rule #1: If you're a FERS employee and not contributing at least 5% to the plan, shame on you, you're passing up free money that's being put right under your nose by way of matching funds.

You can contribute up to 14% this year, but changes in this percentage can only be made during open season, which by the way, should be coming up here shortly. Every other thing you do with your TSP account can be done at any time. You can change the distribution amounts around between the 5 available Funds (3 of which are doing quite well right now). You can slide already existing dollars around between the Funds. And, if you're over 50, you are eligible to throw in "Catch-Up" Contributions of up to \$3,000 this year. These contributions can be started, changed or stopped anytime at your discretion. Keep in mind "Catch Up" Contributions will stop automatically if you reach your lawful maximum for the year or at the end of the year, whichever comes first. You have to sign up again after the first of the year to continue.

That's it for this month, see you at The O.P. on the 20th.

In Solidarity,
Dwight

Call someone and save some cash!!

If you have a cell phone or plan on joining a new service, take advantage of the discounts offered by the US Postal Service!! Employees can get discounts on new or existing services from four of the leading wireless providers. Save yourself some money now!!



15% off of monthly service!
50% discount on Accessories and Equipment!
Offer available from retail stores and the internet. Discounts apply to family members as well. If you have an existing account, call 800-388-3235. For new accounts, call 877-632-1904. For either calls, use Reference Foundation Account Number 19297.



15% off of monthly service!
20% discount on Accessories and Equipment!
Offer is not available from retailers or kiosks. This offer is NOT available for family members as well. Existing accounts call 866-246-4852 and use option 1 from the menu. New accounts, call 800-356-9752. For both numbers, reference Foundation Account Number 7777.



18% off of STANDARD plan!
38% off Handsets and Phones!
20% off of Accessories!
Family plans are not eligible!! This offer is not available at retail stores or kiosks! Call 886-242-4190 and ask about these discounts.



20% - 25% off of STANDARD plans!
45% - 70% off of Handsets and Phones!
20% off of Accessories and other Equipment!
Family plans are not eligible! This offer is not available at retail stores or kiosks! Call 866-378-1535 and ask about these discounts.

Secretary's Report

By: Mike Burke 

APWU Local 451

Date: February 21, 2004

The February meeting of the APWU Local 451 was called to order at 11:15am. at the OP with 20 members present.

The minutes were read by Secretary Mike Burke. Corrections to the minutes were brought up by the President Dwight Slaikau. The corrections are as follows:

#3 under New Business should read August 19-27 and the word (ate) in #4 should read (at).

Also the comment by State Union Rep. Chuck Konig about Congressman Nussle should read:

"he is on a committee to try to get the U.S. out of NAFTA. "

The minutes were accepted as read with these corrections.

The Treasurer's report was read by Merri Kay Chase and accepted as read.

OFFICERS REPORTS:

Presidents report:

- (1) Dwight brought up the point about COPA and the letters he sent out. He stated that these should be taken very seriously as we are still fighting the President's Commission.
- (2) On the subject of PRIME TIME BIDDING, Don Hegvedt will be helping out because Dwight will be in Kansas City. Also, after prime time bidding is over, it is **important** if you turn back in any leave you should do one of two things;
 - (a) notify Dwight that you turned it back in only if the slot is full; **or**
 - (b) watch the board to make sure it gets re-posted. If the slots are not full, you do not have to worry about it.
- (3) Dwight commented on the fact that due to people retiring we are going to be losing approx. \$100.00 per pay period in dues. Dwight also stated that we will only have Lnon-union members. We urge these people to join us in the fight for our jobs. The job you save may be your own.
- (4) If any member has any issues that need to get to the Tn-State or State conventions for our Business Agents. get these to Dwight or Cindy.

Stewards Director:

Cindy Miller commented on the fact that attending your caucus can be interesting and self-satisfying. Remember that you can leave work to attend and return to work when it is over. You

just have to make sure that you fill out the proper paperwork early enough.

Please let Cindy know when you get paid for a grievance.

Cindy also has applications for NARFE now.

Cindy also stated that if you want a weekend off after the prime time bidding is over the supervisor should let you know if that time is open. If not, contact your steward to look for you.

Retiree Charles (Terp) Terpstra brought to our attention that the retirees have moved their meeting location to McDonalds on University, across from Hy-Vee at 1:00 pm.

Editor:

Chris Salinas commented that if you want people to be informed about something, get an article to him about it. This is for all members. It's your newsletter!!

OLD BUSINESS:

The next meeting is Saturday March 20, 2004 at the OP (Other Place) in Evansdale at 11:00am.

A motion was made by Merri Kay Chase to pay normal and customary expenses for the Natl. Convention dates of 8/19-8/22 contingent on Dwight and Cindy's pursuit of roommates. Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Paulette Woods made a motion to have a picnic again this summer. Seconded by Cindy Miller. A date and time will be chosen later. Motion carried.

Dwight stated that our printer was shot and we needed to do something about it real soon. Cindy Miller motioned to buy a new printer. Seconded by Jim Anderson. During discussion on this motion editor Chris Salinas brought up the idea of printing our own newsletter. Cindy Miller then reminded the members of all the expenses that we have coming up. Chris stated a laser printer of the kind we need would run about \$2500.00 and that he could do this newsletter with some help. Chris is going to investigate this issue and cost and bring this information to a future meeting. Kim Karol motioned to table all motions to purchase a printer until Chris gets the members this information. The motion was seconded by Meri Kay Chase.

The motion to table all motions in regard to the purchase of a printer was put down in the vote. The original motion to purchase a cheap printer by Cindy Miller was carried.

Steward: Gary Schmitz commented on FMLA paperwork being lost. Dwight stated that if you have FMLA paperwork take it to Kim Karol's office so she can fax it.

Motion for drawing made by Jerry Kemmer, seconded by Cindy Miller. Secretary Burke won in protest !!! We will be having new numbers made up for the next meeting he also stated. Just for the fun of it!

Motion to adjourn made by Bob Berendes at 12:29 pm.. Seconded by Chris Salinas. Motion carried.

Members present: Dwight Slaikou, Cindy Miller, Chris Salinas, Gary Schmitz, Kris Engelmann, Patsy Millermon, Jerry Kemmer, Mike Burke, Dave Knebel, Paulette Woods, Gary Miller, Jim Anderson, Steve McAhren, Bob Berendes, Rose Ann Garvey, Gary Purcell, Merri Kay Chase, Stan Drewelow, Jane Cunha and Kim Karol.

Secretary,
Michael J. Burke

Treasurer's Report **By: Meri Kay Chase**

The Treasurer's Report is available at the meeting until further notice.

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

For what it's worth.....

First, I want to apologize about the commentary I made last month. It wasn't supposed to be printed because it wasn't ready, but I made a mistake. I sent the wrong page to the printer. I hope it didn't get anyone confused or upset over it. I promise I'll try and keep things more organize. I am human and I do make mistakes.

I hope that those who will be retiring (or are retired) will remember this union for what it has done. Especially for what is in store for us.

After listening too people talk about how conditions were before I was employed, I am grateful to those who fought for the tolerable conditions I work in.

Tolerable is a good word I think, because I think it could be worse. I've heard of so many problems from so many, I'm surprised at those who are still here and are retiring now. I guess I'm lucky to benefit from those who changed this service to the way it is now. I thank you for it and promise to do the same and defend it.

But the fight doesn't stop here, unfortunately. Not now, not ever! This is a new Century, which will bring new obstacles and new issues. We as a family (why else do we say brother and sister) have a new horizon ahead of us.

Technology has shown us that we are only a part of a true democratic system, compared to 20 years ago. The Internet may replace us, or can it? I personally don't think so.

I'm still finding myself sending cards during the holidays. As well as legal forms and documentation via certified mail (don't ask), and other hard copies.

Why do I do this? Because it's something that is real, delivered to your home or office, sitting in your hand when delivered that says 'I HAVE IT'. I don't think there is any form of media that can replacement it.

BUT,

The politicians, special interests and our own employer that want the public (and us) to think that way. Why? Too justify reducing the USPS work force and too save (or is that 'make') money. I hope it's to save. So why is it an issue to me?

Believe it or not, I use to PAY for personalized greeting cards online. Because it was simple to pick a card (with such a large selection when you pay for the service) online, personalize it and send it too someone because it was so convenient. I didn't have to mail it, get a stamp and (best of all) it was delivered the same day without being lost, stolen or damaged.

Then I looked at what it was costing me, how many people printed a copy of it when they liked it, how many I sent my greetings too and (worse of all) how many remembered what I sent.... period. It turned out that it wasn't the same thing if they would have got the card in the mail. This of course was based on family and a few friends. Yes, I do have friends outside of work....

So what am I getting at? Well, the Internet can be our friend and also our enemy. It depends on your perspective. But it can be a threat to us if you want it.

But it all depends on how WE look at and treat the mail. How to make sure WE provide the best service. How WE process the mail to make sure it gets to the customer. It's all about US when it comes to processing the mail. And that can be our greatest strength, but it could make it our weakness.

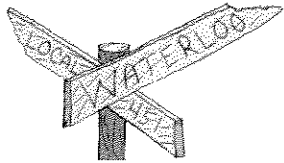
That means WE should respect the mail that comes in the door, at OUR plant, when it's from a TRUE (IE: first class) paying customer. I think we do most of the time.

I know I get upset when I have to remove a personal card or letter, that is jammed in the machine, and it gets damaged in the process. I start to ask, 'What if that was my letter or card?'. So I try to get it in one piece. The key word here is for me is TRY.

So I hope you feel the same way, because our jobs will depends on it. We are professionals at what we do. We provide a true service to this country, no matter what our job is (or how some think). What matter is the what we give to our job. It's a different war now than it was 30 years ago.

But enough from me, it's your turn too speak out and fight.

Yours in solidarity,
Chris Salinas



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Union Meeting

March 20th @ 11am
THE OTHER PLACE
3904 Lafayette Rd
Evansdale, IA

Waterloo Local #451 Officers

President - Dwight Slaikou	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

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

ARE WE UNDERPAID OR OVERPRICED?

20 years ago:

A candy bar cost 35 cents, loaf of bread was 60 cents and gasoline was 98 cents.

10 years ago:

A candy bar cost 45 cents, loaf of bread was 90 cents and gasoline is \$1.25.

Today:

A candy bar costs 65 cents, loaf of bread is \$1.39 and gasoline is \$1.79.

If you look at the percentages of what it cost to mail a letter during the same period, we're not getting enough money.

It was 22 cents in the 80's, 29 cents in the 90's and 37 cents today. At that price, we are able to get that letter to ANYWHERE in the USA.

Maybe we should do the same thing as corporations do, and charge accordingly. Maybe we need to make a profit. Oh wait, we are not a private company, just another wasteful agency of the government.

A clerk from N.C.

