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Western Arkansas Area Local

The Paper

January 19, 2004

Chris — On Christmas, COPA, Corky and Clerks

I hope all of you had a very Merry Christmas and a joyous celebration of the New Year. I'm a little disappointed in not having any snow for Christmas. Most of you probably would prefer not to have snow, but I think snow adds to the occasion.

I have been busy with several step 2's. I settled two of the three that were discussed at the step 2 level. I have one that has not been discussed and will more than likely go to the next higher level. I am still staying on top of the PTF grievance with clock rings and charting. This is the grievance about the reduction of hours for PTF's and TE's.

I would like to thank all of you that have donated to COPA. Not all of you have yet, but there is still time. There is always time to donate to COPA. You have been challenged to donate \$25.00, this is not too much to pay for your jobs.

I did have an article for last month's newsletter, but our new editor forgot to print it. I must say that it wasn't much, but it was an article.

We've been having problems on the flat sorter machine on tour 3. There are not enough operators to run the machine so the Supervisors have been having mail processing clerks help out. This is a violation of the MOU of May 2002 for mail processing clerks.

The flat sorter operators and the mail processors are two different groups of clerks. The MPC (Mail Processing Clerks) cannot key on the flat sorter. They can run the OCR part of the machine, but cannot key. However, since the USPS has withheld positions on this tour there are now only four FSM operators to run the mail. This does not mean everyday. Some days there are only two operators and some, there is only one operator. This is highly productive **not!** A grievance

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Federal Judge Dismisses Lawsuit

BENTONVILLE - A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit Thursday brought by six former employees of the retail giant Wal-Mart.

The six claim that the language Wal-Mart uses in its 2001 health plan was anti-union, implying union employees would lose their benefits. The federal judge says the issue should be heard by the National Labor Relations Board, not a court of law.

A regional NLRB judge sided with the employees in February 2002. Wal-Mart has objected, and the appeal is pending.

Dennis — On COPA, The Conference, Cash, and Conversions

Greetings,

First I want to thank those who have made a contribution to COPA. Members of our local have given approximately \$1600 over the last 4 months. As for those who have not contributed—please make the effort to do so. There were some good articles in the last APWU national magazine concerning contributing to COPA. I hope you took the time to read them.

It has been a very busy month for me with the holidays and preparing for the Six-State Conference in Hot Springs. You will probably receive this issue of the paper either during or shortly after the Conference. Current records indicate we will have 400 plus attending the conference. National president William Burris and several other members of the national executive board will be attending. We are offering 22 different classes at this conference. I know it will be educational as well as entertaining and I know I will be glad when it is over. If I

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Voluntary Early Retirement

*Those Who Declined VER Last Fall
Get Another Chance*

Employees affected by this decision who fail to provide their names to the APWU prior to the deadline will not be permitted to retire early. Only those employees who declined early retirement last fall should submit their names.

The APWU and the USPS agreed Jan. 12 that employees who were offered but declined early retirement on Oct. 31, 2003, will be given another opportunity. APWU President William Burrus announced the agreement after meeting with Postal Managers.

To take advantage of this opportunity, employees who turned down early retirement on Oct. 31, 2003, must notify the union immediately if they are interested in receiving another Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) offer. The APWU will provide management with a list of interested employees by Feb. 2, 2004.

“Coupled with a wide-ranging agreement reached with the Postal Service on Dec. 19, the latest settlement puts an end to a bitter dispute between the APWU and postal management,” said APWU President William Burrus.

In December 2002, union members ratified an extension of the 2000-2003 Collective Bargaining Agreement that included provisions for Voluntary Early Retirement for all eligible APWU-represented employees. Last summer, however, management sought to limit the categories and number of employees who could retire early.

“I am pleased that the USPS has finally agreed to live up to its commitment to APWU members on this important issue,” Burrus said.

Editors Note:

VER Notification Form is on page 4

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was filed last year for the running of the machine with two operators. Now I will be filing for the running of the machine with one operator and whichever MPC helps. Why should we allow the violation because they will not fill the vacancies. I do not know how tour 1 is handling the fact that on some days they have only one regular operator. Although they do have casuals that work the flat sorter, I'm not positive on how many or when. I'll check with Karla on that.

Got a problem? Get with your steward!
Chris Hagen

ThePaper
PO Box 11196
Ft Smith AR 72917

Next Union Meeting

February 8th, 2004

1:30 p.m.

Cavanaugh Pizza

Opinions expressed by the writers of articles in this paper are those of the individuals and not necessarily those of *ThePaper*, APWU, or Local 1211.

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have been short with anyone as of late I apologize, but I think you can understand why. This has been a very large project involving a lot of people. I want to thank Corky for keeping the web page updated with information concerning this Conference.

I know several of you have applied for early retirement. I hope the Postal Service will let you go as soon as possible. I expect the Arkansas District will allow a few to go in late February or early March. But do not hold your breath or make any other hasty decisions because the Arkansas District and local postmasters have the final say on who will get to go and they have the entire year to implement the retirements. But we will hope for the best.

On 12/30/2003 I submitted to the Postal Service the other portion of the casual settlement. —a total of \$50,000 for those who received the maximum on the last payment you will receive a payment of \$400 minus taxes. I hope the payment will be forthcoming in a couple of more pay periods. But as before do not spend it till you get it.

As most of you have noticed management keeps reverting nearly every vacant full time position. They seem to have this obsession of never allowing our PTF's to be converted. But we all know there is plenty of work available for these full time positions and we will continue to grieve these reversions.

I forgot to say this at the last couple of local meetings. I want to thank all of you who take the time to attend the local meetings. I really do appreciate your interest in this local and the welfare of your fellow employees.

See you at the next meeting

Dennis

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www.apwu1211.com
Office 479-484-6323

Summary of Minutes from January Meeting

January 11, 2004

Meeting called to order at 1:35

All officers present

Dennis read and turned in his report

Chris reported on the cases she is working on

Financial report read and accepted

Minutes from last meeting read and accepted

No committee reports

- Old business
- Corky bought shredder for the union office
- New business
- Dennis is going to address the problem of management doing craft work with Hoobler next week.
- Those who have been denied retirement have submitted their info to the local and it has been forwarded to National.
- Motion by Sheryl B. to send Dennis to Houston in March for the Arbitration classes 2nd by Bob Ballard
- The Tri-State meeting will be in Kansas City on March 5-7, 2004
- Final information was turned in for the casual in lieu of. The last check will be cut soon.
- Other items discussed included withholding, abolishing jobs, converting PTF's, sick call from work, COPA, and the Van Buren grievance.
- Next meeting will be at 1:30 February 8, 2004 at Cavanaugh Pizza
- Motion to adjourn

Western Arkansas Area Local Officers

Dennis Taff President
Chris Hagen Vice-President
Randy Cope Secretary-Treasurer
Corky Hunt Editor

Stewards

Dennis Taff	783-7898
Window Services	
Chris Hagen	484-6371
Mail Processing Tour 3	
Karla Shaffer	484-6371
Mail Processing T1 T2	
Randy Cope	484-6384
Maintenance T1 T2	
Thomas Henry	484-6384
Maintenance T3	
Kerry Botteicher	484-6344
CFS	
Bob Harp	484-6425
Window/Customer Svc.	

VER Notification Form

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Job Title _____ Craft _____ Level _____

Work Location _____

(Name of installation or facility)

(Address)

I was offered Voluntary Early Retirement effective Oct. 31, 2003, but declined. I am interested in VER in 2004.

Complete in time for the union to submit to the USPS by Feb. 2 and return to:

**Industrial Relations, Attn: APWU VER-Form
American Postal Workers Union
1300 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20005**

Fax: 202-842-8587