



1 2 1 1 Western Arkansas Area Local

The Paper

Volume 32

November 15, 2003



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Greetings,

Thanksgiving and the holiday season are upon us. In today's society the holiday season usually means go here, go there, drive long distances to see our children or parents, work hard to get our homes ready for relatives, and the inevitable rush out to get a gift for that someone you forgot. But hopefully after all that effort we get a couple of days to relax and truly enjoy being with our families and friends and to reflect on the true meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas.



We really do have a lot to be thankful for during this season. We live in the greatest county in the world. I feel that we live in one of the best places in the United States. We have the freedom to go anywhere we want (as long as we have the funds to get there) and visit any one we wish. We have a good paying job with many benefits. We have a great Union that has gained many benefits for us and is continually striving to gain more. We are lucky to even be able to join a union. Less than 20 percent of the work force has the opportunity to belong to a union. You will have to agree that we are far more fortunate than most. I am proud that our Local has voted over the last few years to generously contribute to the various organizations in our area that helps those who are less fortunate.

One final thought, although the holidays should be a joyous time of the year, for some it may bring some sense of sadness. The sadness could be from the recent loss of a relative or friend. It could be from not being able to be with a family member because they are miles away. It could be because a spouse or son/daughter is serving in the military far across the ocean. It could be from a recent loss of a job. It could be



Happy Holidays
from the
U.S. Postal Service!

from health problems.

We probably all know someone who needs their spirits lifted during this holiday season. Let's all make an effort this year to reach out to those who are less fortunate or those who need comfort. It is the best gift you can give and both of you will be blessed.

Dennis Taff

Suspicious Letter Discovered at the GMF.

Today (Tuesday 11/4/03) around 3:15 P.M. a GMF Mail Handler discovered a suspicious letter in the AFCS culling system. The letter was addressed to "Postmaster General". It had no postage and no return address. The greeting card sized blue envelope was described thick and heavy. The envelope was move to the vent hood area, then subsequently moved outside in a small tub. At this point Police, Fire Dept. Hazmat, were called and arrived onsite within minutes. The State Bomb



Photo By Ron Beller

Squad and FBI Agents arrived approximately 30 minutes later. State Bomb Squad setup a portable x-ray and about 10 minutes later, after developing the x-ray he determined the contents to be a set of car keys and a Post Office Box Key attached to a

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From the Desk of The Vice President

Already we have a new editor and he is pushing for an article. Good luck, Corky. I'd like to thank Kerry for all she has done while being the editor.

(Editors Note: Thanks from me too!)

Well, it's open season for TSP, FSA, and health benefits. Be sure and check out the material on the health benefits before

you switch over to a new carrier. Everyone should have received some mailings on Thrift Savings and Flexible Spending.

Also, I believe Blue Cross has mailed out information on their health benefits as well as the APWU. Remember, if you go to the APWU health benefits the money goes back into the APWU.

It's starting to turn cold and it is very wet out. Be very careful while driving watch for slippery conditions. Also be careful while you are raking leaves or doing any other fall cleanup.

Corky has informed me that I (rather, the Vice President) have an email account. If any of you care to email me, my email address is vicepresident@apwu1211.com. I'll try and keep up with it and answer any questions.

Have all of you who use FMLA received your letters giving you a number for your cases? When you call in to Attendance Control be sure to have these numbers available. Also, I'll be getting with Dennis to see if this isn't a grievance to have the Attendance control on automation. When we call in, we are supposed to talk to a supervisor. I'll let you know.

Chris

Veterans Day

Tuesday, Nov. 11. Congress created Veterans Day in 1954 to honor all Americans who served in the Armed Forces.

Minutes from the Meeting

November 2, 2003

Meeting called to order at 1:30

All officers present

President Dennis Taff read and turned in his report

Vice-President Chris Hagen gave her report on some of the grievances she is working on.

Editor Corky Hunt presented his report

Previous Meeting's Minutes were read and accepted

Financial report read and accepted

OLD BUSINESS

No committee reports

Ron Davis gave his report on the Jonesboro meeting.

Corky and Randy bought the new printer/scanner and installed it

NEW BUSINESS

Dennis and Thomas both gave a report on the clerk craft convention

Motion by Randy to donate \$200.00 to the Angel Tree, \$500.00 each to the Hanna House, Gospel Rescue Mission, and the Boys Shelter. 2nd by Sheryl B. motion passed

Motion by Corky to buy a shredder for the union office to replace the broken one. 2nd by Ron D. motion passed

The \$50.00 drawing went to James "Corky" Hunt

Next meeting will be January 11, 2004

Motion to adjourn, so moved

Next Union Meeting
January 11,
2004
1:30 p.m.
Cavanaugh
Pizza



(Suspicious Letter Continued from page 1)

lanyard wrapped in paper inside the envelope. A note inside the envelope explained, "this set of keys and been found at Tillis Park" and that "they" were sending them to the Post Office with the hope the Postmaster could determine who the keys belonged to by identifying the Post Office Box Holder. This handwritten note was on the back of an email printout. Fort Smith Police were able to "lookup" the senders name via their email address. A FSM Detective called the sender, thanked them for trying to return the keys, then asked them not to send a letter like that again.

Open Season

Four benefit programs are now open

It's open season — that time of year when you can sign up for benefit programs, change enrollments or cancel your participation. Thrift Savings Plan opened last month. Two other benefit programs — Flexible Spending Accounts and Health Benefits — opened Nov. 10. Annual leave exchange opens Saturday, Nov. 15. Here's a list of benefit programs and their open season dates:

- Thrift Savings Plan, Oct. 15 to Dec. 31, 5 p.m. Central Time. This open season you can elect to contribute up to 14% of your basic pay each pay period.
- Flexible Spending Accounts, Nov. 10 to Dec. 21, 5 p.m. Central Time
- Health benefits, Nov. 10 to Dec. 29, 5 p.m. Central Time
- Annual leave exchange, Nov. 15 to Dec. 15, midnight Central Time

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.

eReassign

If you are interested in reassignment opportunities the Postal Service has setup Web based application for career bargaining unit employees. You can search the USPS Human Resource Database from the comfort of your own browser.

From USPS website you can:

- Submit a reassignment request via the Internet
- View the status of your request
- View offices and positions within each Office

You can search any office in the country to find positions that are staffed at each office and if you wish eReassign will electronically send your request to the Human Resources Office that is responsible for handling reassignment requests for that district. There are only a few restrictions on the number of positions that you may request. If eReassign sounds right for you check out the website below

<https://ereassign.usps.com>

You must have your 8 digit Employee ID and PostalEASE PIN to access the system

www.apwu1211.com

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.	



PARS

The New redirection system

(Source: USPS Link Online)

When it's fully operational, PARS is expected to intercept and automatically apply the new address label on the majority of forwardable mail.

Deployment of PARS to 53 P&DCs will begin in January 2004. Eighty-six CFS units will receive equipment to scan change-of-address forms. The impact that the PARS deployment will have on the Fort Smith CFS unit is not fully known at this time.

PARS is expected to be fully deployed by 2006.



2001:

- Dennis was "re-appointed " President
- Chris won by one
- Randy had all the money — Again
- Kerry became editor of *ThePaper*.
- Anthrax killed two of our Brothers

2002

- We said goodbye to Tom and Sue.
- Dennis said there'd be rumors of early outs
- Thomas wrote "**The Wolf Is At The Door**"
- Shelley made all of us cry at The Meeting

Penalty Overtime Exclusion Period Set

There are four consecutive weeks each year during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable. This four week period is referenced in Article 8 (Sections 4 and 5) of the National Agreement. This year, the time period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable begins with;

Pay Period 26 2003, week 2 (Dec. 6, 2003),
and ends with

Pay Period 02 2004, week 1 (Jan. 2, 2004).

Employee Deals

The Postal Service offers employees discounts on various products and services. Below is a list from the uspsdotcom website.

- The USPS Employee Platinum Visa Card
- AT&T Wireless Agreement
- Cingular Wireless Agreement
- Nextel Wireless Agreement
- Sprint PCS Agreement
- Verizon Wireless Agreement
- Goodyear Employee VIP Program
- Greeting Cards through NetPost CardStore
- Magazine Subscription Discounts
- Maintenance, Repair, and Operating Supplies
- Emp. Connectivity Computer Program Deals
- Surplus Postal-Owned Vehicles

To check out the details of each offer go to:

<http://www.usps.com/news/online/deals/>

Thanksgiving Day Proclamation

In 1789, President Washington, recollecting the countless blessings for which our new Nation should give thanks, declared the first National Day of Thanksgiving. And decades later, with the Nation embroiled in a bloody civil war, President Abraham Lincoln revived what is now an annual tradition of issuing a presidential proclamation of Thanksgiving. President Lincoln asked God to "heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and Union."