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Western Arkansas Area Local

The Paper

Volume 31

October 2003

President's Report

Greetings,

As most of you know I have been re-elected as president of this local. It will be an honor to serve the members for next two more years. Also, Chris Hagen was re-elected as vice-president and Randy Cope was re-elected as secretary –treasurer. Both of the officers have done a great job in the past and I know that they will continue to do so. Corky Hunt was elected as editor. Corky has always been active in this local and he will continue to use his skills as editor. A thanks goes to Kerry Botteicher for serving as past editor. She did an excellent job.

I have received numerous requests as to when our members may expect payment for the casual in lieu of grievance. I am hoping we will be paid by the end of November...but a word to the wise. Do not spend the money until it is on your check because you know how the post office is when it comes to payment on grievances.

When you do receive your payment I am asking each of you to contribute at least \$25 to COPA. \$25.00 is just a drop in the bucket compared to what you will be receiving. And it may save your job. You all saw the President Burrus video at the September meeting concerning the president's commission so you know how important it is to contribute to this fund.

Specking of contributions-a big thanks goes to the members who attended the state convention at Jonesboro. The members at that meeting raised \$1100 for COPA.

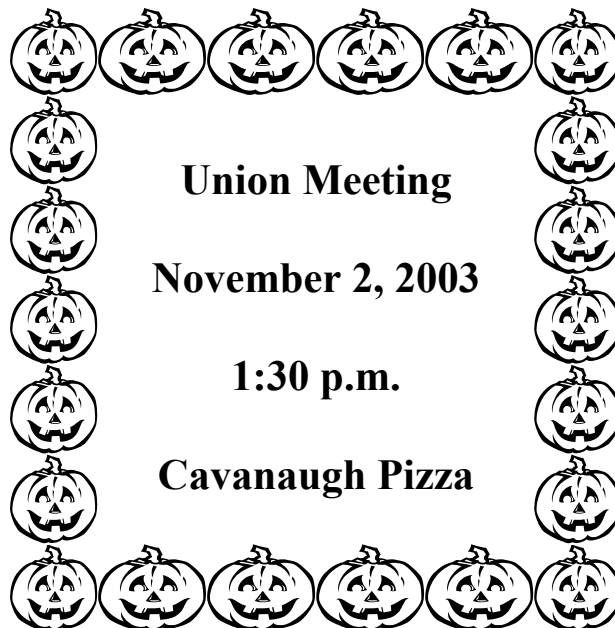
All of the employees in Fort Smith who were eligible for the early volunteer retirement received

letters of denial. The letter stated that the employees did not occupy a position that is excess to the mission of the postal service or is a potential opportunity for those employees whose positions are being excessed. It seems that the postal service talks out of both sides of their mouth. It was just a few months ago that the postal service sent out impact statements claiming that we were overstaffed and that excessing out of our office would occur.

Sorry, you can't have it both ways. With that in mind we have filed a grievance to have the impact statements rescinded and our PTFs converted to regular. The very same grievance is also being filed in numerous offices across the state since this issue affects the entire state. Also the issue of denial of early retirements is also scheduled to be in federal court in late October.

See you at the next meeting

Dennis Taff



Vice-President's Report

After giving more than 6 months warning that I would not run for the office of vice president, that some of you would have to step up, here I am once again your vice president. I actually thought this would be my last letter, oh well.

I've got 1 Step 2 on overtime that I'm waiting to meet with Amel about. I've got a Step 1 with Rick concerning his working the flat sorter, and I will be getting another overtime issue from Karla on Tour 2 that will be going to Step 2. I'm still maintaining charts for both the casuals in-lieu-of grievance and the grievance on the reduction of the PTF/TE hours.

There are still some of you out there that think you are above punching on the appropriate operation. Please use the correct punch code when you move from one operation to the other. If your 'base' is 160-08 and you move to 'prep flats' it becomes 035-08. You must manually punch this in. Please punch accordingly!

Any questions or problems with anything contact myself, Karla, Bob, Thomas or Kerry. We'll find and answer or file a grievance for you.

Chris Hagen

Officers

Dennis Taff...President
Chris Hagen...Vice-President
Randy Cope...Secretary-Treasurer
Kerry Botteicher...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.	

Meeting Minutes October 5, 2003

Meeting called to order at 1:30 pm.
All officers present.
Dennis read and turned in his report.
Minutes and financial report read and accepted.
No committee meetings.

Old Business

Dennis said no labor management meeting date has been set.

New Business

Motion made by Herb Jerue to spend up to \$300.00 on a new printer/copier/fax for the union office. 2nd by David Botteicher, motion passed.

Motion by Ron Davis, 2nd by Chris Hagen to send Thomas Henry, Chris Hagen, James Hunt, Randy Cope, and David Botteicher to Hot Springs for the 6 state meeting in January. Motion passed.

Dennis turned the meeting over to Sheryl Breedlove, election chairperson for officer nominations.

Nominations were: President, Dennis Taff nominated by Bob Ballard; Vice President, Chris Hagen nominated by Dena Dyer; Secretary/Treasurer, Randy Cope nominated by Kerry Botteicher; Editor, James Hunt nominated by Randy Cope. No other nominations being offered, all nominees accepting these positions these, proceedings are closed.

Next meeting will be 1:30, November 2, 2003, at Cavanaugh Pizza.

Motion to adjourn so moved.

Randy Cope

APWU-VER Dispute Information Form

The APWU has a pending national-level dispute over the Postal Service's refusal and failure to offer voluntary early retirement (VER) to all eligible APWU-represented employees.

It is not necessary to file individual grievances on this subject. The APWU is pursuing this dispute on behalf of all affected employees, including those who occupy jobs in excluded categories, as well as those who were notified they do not occupy positions that have been identified as excess.

The APWU at the national level is obtaining from the Postal Service information such as the identification of all VER-eligible APWU-represented employees, including those employees who received and completed a VER "Statement of Interest" letter, and those who submitted a "Statement of Interest" letter but were denied the offer for VER, the reason for disapproval, and other relevant information.

However, the union is requesting that eligible APWU-represented employees *who would have exercised the option to retire early* but were denied the opportunity to do so, complete the form below. Completion of this form will help the union identify those employees who would have retired early but were denied the opportunity.

Name _____
(Print)

Job Title _____ Craft _____ Level _____

Work Location _____
(Name of installation or facility) (Address)

I have not received a VER "Statement of Interest" letter from the Postal Service. I meet the service requirements of 25 or more years (any age), or 20 or more years of service and age 50 as of Nov. 1, 2003, Feb. 1, 2004 or March 1, 2004. (Please circle one.) I would have retired early had I been granted the opportunity to do so.

I have received and submitted a VER "Statement of Interest" letter to the Postal Service but have not received a response. I would have retired early had I been granted the opportunity to do so.

I have received and submitted a "VER-Statement of Interest" letter to the Postal Service but have been denied the offer for voluntary early retirement. I would have retired early had I been granted the opportunity to do so. (Please attach disapproval-letter, if available.)

Complete and return to:

Industrial Relations
ATTN.: APWU VER-Form
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
1300 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

State of the Union

Hello everyone, I went to the Fall Meeting in Jonesboro earlier this month. As many of these meetings that I have attended over the years, this one has left me with a bad taste in my mouth. First let me say that the Jonesboro local did a fine job hosting the meeting, the classes and hospitality were great as always.

The news coming out of our national officers about the state of our union/jobs has me wondering how much worse it can get for us. Everything was laid out on the line for those attending the meeting. Roy Braunstein informed those in attendance that he has been having breakfast and lunch with members of both parties from the house and senate for the last six months. Knowing that our elected officials do not do anything out of the kindness of their hearts, these meals cost a lot of money. This gets Roy and company ONE HOUR of our senators and congressmen's undivided attention. Roy gave a great presentation on what could happen if the President's Postal Commission report passes. So I will try and lay it out for you without beating around the bush. If the President's Postal Commission gets their way there will be a hell of a lot less of you reading this. Those of you who will be lucky enough (or maybe not so lucky) to still be reading *The Paper* will be working for less and paying more for insurance. Highlights include that the Postal Service will seek to close as many as 100 Processing and Distribution Centers nationwide, post office closings similar to base closings a few years back (i.e.: **NO INPUT FROM YOU OR THE PUBLIC**). If the Post Office is not making money, close it; Universal Service will be a thing of the past. Changes will be made to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (**everything goes on the table including benefits and retirees compensation**). I don't know about you, but I still have a long time left so the "Early Out" doesn't help me or a lot of people who thought they could go.

Remember, big money went into this report to help privatize us. **SO JOIN THE FIGHT GIVE TO COPA, CALL AND WRITE YOUR ELECTED OFFICALS.**

By the way, \$1100 was raised for COPA at the banquet Friday night in Jonesboro. This was the most I ever remember being raised.

Also in attendance at the meeting was Congressman Marion Berry, Southern Region Coordinator Terry Stapleton, Maintenance NBA Terry Martinez, and Clerk NBA's Bob Kessler and Carl Cassilas. All these people come across the same way but the saddest thing I heard was Carl announcing his retirement at the end of this term. He has always been a strong union advocate and a good friend to the members of Western Arkansas Area. We will miss him and wish him the best of luck in his retirement. Thank goodness Bob said he is not through being a thorn in management's side and has no plans to go anytime soon.

One more thing before I go. The National is thinking of holding a National Rally in Washington, DC soon. "TO SAVE THE U.S. MAIL & COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS OF THE 4 UNIONS IN THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE." Make plans to support this, your job depends on action and your union elected officials cannot do it all. Here is something else to ponder, the Mail Handler Union and NAPUS (management union) are looking at joining this fight with the APWU. Will you be joining?

And the struggle continues .

RANDY COPE

The Paper

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If you have a name or address change please let us know.

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