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Western Arkansas Area Local

The Paper

Volume 21

October, 2002

President's Report

Greetings,

I want to thank all of our members who participated in the community awareness day. I also want to thank the members of the other crafts, the members of the Oklahoma Postal Workers Union, members of other local unions and the legislative candidates who also walked with us. I feel that the day was successful.

We handed out a lot of packets. I wish more of our members could have participated, but you can still help by distributing the remainder of our information packets. We need to get these remaining packets in the hands of the public and especially in the hands of our major customers. They need to be fully aware that they are in danger of losing more local service. Now is the time, because most of them are already upset because of local management eliminating the late pick up of collection boxes at the stations. Call me crazy, but eliminating service is not the way to increase business.

As you know our current OIC is reverting and abolishing some of our tour 2 positions. Not only have these actions disrupted the employees' lives, they have also caused delayed mail and long lines for our customers. We have grieved these actions, but unfortunately they will probably be tied up in the grievance procedure for a while because no one in management has the guts to settle these grievances and stop these violations. These violations are also happening in other offices around the country. It is apparent that management is hell bent on destroying employees morale and service to the public.

That is the more the reason we need to stand together. We must continue to make the public and our legislative representatives aware of the postal services attempts to "sell the store." as our National President has stated, "in this fight, all we have is each other."

See you at the next meeting.

Dennis Taff





Vice-President's Report

We are still having problems with Amel not doing adjustments for those of you that have a grievance that was settled. Yes, Amel still hasn't met with either Dennis or myself on any of the step 2s that we have waiting. I have 7 step 2s that Amel hasn't met on or given a decision yet. Hopefully, by the time this gets to all of you, something will have been done.

As most of you know by now, Ron Keeling did not do his job when we switched over to the new call-in procedure. He was supposed to send in all the FMLA packets on anyone that had them. He failed to do this and has caused quite an upset for those of you that have called in S/L or A/L FMLA and then received a certified letter stating that you didn't have a packet.

Also, there are those of you that have received a letter stating that the information was too vague and needed clarification in order to be approved FMLA. I have been trying to help most of you to the best of my ability and have gotten some results and answers to a lot of the questions. I have called and talked to Sandra Dokes, FMLA coordinator at LR, to find a solution to most of these problems with the FMLA packets. If you call in using FMLA, told there is not a FMLA packet, it will be pending documentation, and you get a certified letter, please let me know and we can make sure the original paperwork was sent to Little Rock. (before you go back to your doctor and fill out more paperwork).

There are other problems with the paperwork not being specific in the amount of time you are expected to be off with your condition. If the doctor does not know how many days per episode you will be off then it should be up to the medical doctor at Little Rock to call your doctor and get specifics.

You should not be going back and forth bothering your doctor. I will have more on this as time goes on and I learn more about what they want.

Chris Hagen

Editor's note: You must give management written permission to have LR contact your doctor, and remember, this can give them access to all medical records. KB

VP report continued...

I would like to thank all of you who walked the picket line. For those of you that walked more than one designated time or place, a double thank you. Thanks to Corky Hunt, who did a lot of the organizing and to Thomas Henry for getting the letters and packets ready. Thanks to Laquita Parks, Ginger and Bob Ballard, and Shonda Smith, for ideas and designs of the signs.

If I missed anyone I apologize but thank just the same. There was a really good turn out at the noon walk I heard, and I believe this will help keep us here in Fort Smith. Amel has started the rumor that we are leaving on the 5th of January, ignore this, it is just a rumor until confirmed.

Chris Hagen

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.



Minutes from Meeting

September 22, 2002

Meeting called to order at 1:30

Roll call of officers; all present

Chris Hagen made a motion to waive the rules 2nd by Corky.

Motion passed

Old business

Dennis discussed the positions that have been reverted. As soon as he gets more information in about the reversions he will get in contact with T0ery Stapleton office and file the grievances.

Dennis has talked to personnel in Little Rock about the letters sent out to veterans concerning the dd214's. LR informed him that some of the personnel records didn't have copies of the employees dd214. Thomas H said he faxed his in and two weeks later requested his OPF and his dd214 wasn't in his records. Dennis is going to contact LR again and ask why they are not being placed in the employee's OPF.

New business

Dennis has filed several grievances on the improper excessing of admin jobs and jobs being changed.

He working with Bob Harp on the improper reposting of jobs and duties at the downtown station.

The mayor is holding a public meeting Monday night at the civic center, Dennis asked for everyone who could to please attend. He has a prior commitment and will not be able to attend. He has left a statement for Corky to read at the meeting and asked him to be the chief spokesman for the union. He asked that we send flyers out to all the backdoor callers informing them of the meeting. Reminded those who attend the meeting to remember that you are not a spokesman for the postal service. Dennis has contacted Bozeman's office about the meeting. Thomas is going to the printers in the morning to have handouts printed

up to pass out at the meeting.

Dennis has contacted all the elected officials about the community awareness day. He wants to get letters and flyers out to the surrounding offices and communities. He will be contacting other unions to get support on the 3rd and send out letters to the editors of area papers.

Corky discussed the meeting that was held by the committee. There will be another meeting at 2:00 next Wednesday at George's. We will need help preparing signs. Everyone is asked to show up. The walk times will be 8-9, 11:30-1:30 and 3-6 on October 3, 2002 at the GMF and DT stations. Corky said all the info is on our web site @ www.apwu1211.com. Dennis thanked everyone for their help so far.

Tri-state- We will start preparing for the February meeting at the Oct. meeting.

Corky informed the membership that he purchased 20 t-shirts and 30 new contracts and that the expenses for the national exceeded the allotted amount. He made a motion to be reimbursed for the shirts and contracts plus an additional \$150.00 for the added expenses to national. 2nd by Sheryl Breedlove.

Thomas Henry amended the motion to raise the amount of expenses to national to 1350.00 2nd by Bob Ballard.

After a discussion the question was called. Dennis asked for a voice vote on the amended motion. It was too close to call, so he asked for a show of hands. The vote was 7 yea 6 nay; the amended motion passed. The vote on the main motion was 7 yea 4 nay; the motion passed.

The t-shirts and contracts were passed out at the meeting to members in attendance.

Next meeting will be 1:30 October 20, 2002 at Cavanaugh Pizza.

Motion to adjourn so move meeting adjourned

Randy Cope

Members Speak Out!

October 3, 2002

First, I have to say "Thanks" to Dennis, Randy, Corky, and all those who spent extra time & effort making our "" picket day" so successful. The time I spent with the public handing out flyers made me appreciate how much our community is with us in fighting to keep our MPC here.

I was surprised and a little dismayed to see so few of the newer employees involved in this, especially since moving MP to Fayetteville would more likely affect the junior employees. We really need to show strength and unity at this time.

I don't know if we can ultimately stop this move, but I do know we can make a stand, and make officials be held accountable for making decisions unilaterally, without employee and community discussion, as required by the USPS's own policy.

I was hired by the US Postal Service, and I sure hope that at least all the attention on it right now will at least bring light to the changes and cuts that are making it impossible for us to give good service. In my 17 years here, I have truly never seen such complete disregard for customers as I have seen in the past several months, and my work philosophy has been forced to change from "I'm here to do a good job" to "I'm here to do what they tell me to do" and **I don't like it**. Let's stand together, support our local, attend the monthly meetings, support Dennis and our officers & stewards, and show that we are concerned about our future.

Shelley Henson

PS! Sorry for being such a weenie at the town meeting!

Corky's Corner

Greetings to all, from the Community Awareness Committee. We just ended a month of planning and a week of "bring it all together" activities with another Community Awareness Day. Measured success was the order of the day in terms of media coverage and political involvement. The Community response this time was similar to last year, when we first told them about the proposed mail-processing move to Fayetteville. By in large their response was something like "that's crazy", "that's stupid" or "that doesn't make any sense". Many of them asked if it was a done deal or if there was anything that they could do. Mayor Ray Baker locked it down when, during a radio interview last month he asked Lisa Toliver-Gay, USPS Spokesperson "WHY?" When her response didn't make much sense the Mayor said, "You know, there is something to be said about a little bit of sanity"

The "Committee" thanks everyone who participated in these Community Awareness activities. It's always good to see "old" friends and this would have been impossible to pull off without their help. I am concerned however about the ambivalence that I sense from some members, the members who seem to have the most to lose if the processing moves. But mostly, I'm concerned about the lack of commitment some members display. Although it's the same level of commitment that you get from having one non-resident Postmaster after another. Not one Postmaster has been tied to this community or the concerns of their customers since Janis Rose. It's the same level of commitment you get from having a Post Office with more "supervisor temps" than real ones. So, (and this ought to feel better) I guess it's not your fault. It's the example that you have to follow. My advice however, would be to turn away from that example and find another. Choose one that is committed to the Union. Choose one committed to customer service. Choose one that's committed to keeping your job in Fort Smith. If you can't find one ... Be One!

Just a Thought!!

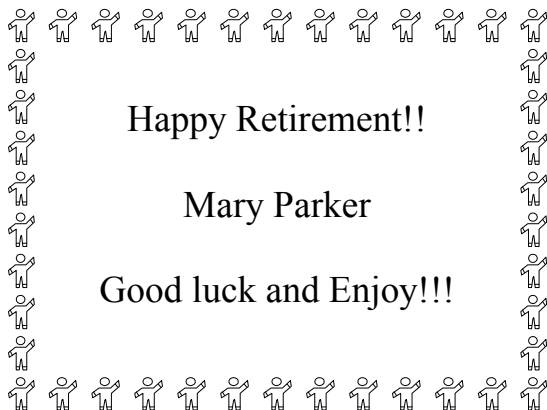
It's been a very busy last couple of weeks. The Monday night public meeting was a good opportunity to hear what the citizens thought of the mail moving. As expected, they were against it.

Our public awareness day was a chance to show our support to the public and union. Unfortunately we didn't have the member turnout we'd hoped to achieve. I thank all those who did help with the planning and work that is involved. It's a lot of both. I thank everyone who walked with us. I don't understand the attitude of those who won't help fight for **their** jobs. I'm glad to know we did what we could to stop the move. And we will keep fighting.

We will be planning the Tri-state convention at the next two meetings. It will be held in February and everyone is encouraged to help out.

See you Sunday!

Kerry



Greetings from apwu1211.com

Some of you already know that your Union has officially launched its website. We chose Earthlink.net as our provider and use them as our web host. Please visit **www.apwu1211.com** to see the latest Union news. We will be adding links frequently, so visit often.

When you stop by make sure you sign up for the Member email list. You MUST send an email with your name as the subject to **memberlist@apwu1211.com**. This will enable us to pass along information or notify you of any breaking news plus you will get the password for the **Member Bulletin Board**. Use the Member Bulletin Board to exchange ideas, concerns or just plain idle chat.

There is also an open forum called **SPEAK-OUT** letting the world know your opinion on the proposed Mail Processing Move, or any other issue that you wish.

If you have any matters of safety that you would like to pass along to the Safety Committee Representatives just send them to **safety@apwu1211.com**.

The **apwu1211.com** website will undergo a lot of changes as we head through this startup phase. We anticipate, and hope to have a lot of ideas from the members. We may not be able to incorporate everything that is asked for, or get to it as fast as you wish so, please be patient and understanding.

Your Editor will also be publishing *The Paper* online in addition to the regular monthly mail out thanks to a recent purchase of Adobe Acrobat 5.0.

All of the Union FMLA forms and Grievance forms are now online. There are some special forms developed "in house" at the request of your President, for casual work hour tracking. You will need to have Microsoft Excel to use these forms. One is manual the other is kind of automated. It does the work hour calculation automatically. Email your website suggestions to **webmaster@apwu1211.com**

Officers

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

Stewards

| | |
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| Mail Processing T1 T2 | |
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| Thomas Henry | 484-6384 |
| Maintenance T3 | |
| Kerry Botteicher | 484-6344 |
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Postmaster Vows Plant Reductions Won't Spur Layoffs

by Bill McAllister

(reprinted from the Denver Post Washington Bureau chief, Washington)

There will be no layoffs when the postal service begins to consolidate some of its more than 300 mail-processing plants next year, Postmaster General John E. "Jack" Potter has said in what could be a major concession to postal unions. As part of a transformation plan announced this year, the agency pledged to reduce the number of mail plants, centers where workers cancel letters and distribute mail to post offices. Potter offered the no-layoffs assurance Friday to members of the senate subcommittee on international security, proliferation and federal services, as its lawmakers probed for details of how the much-anticipated consolidations will affect mail service. But the postmaster general gave few details. George Gould, a lobbyist for the National Association of Letter Carriers, said he has seen an early version of the closing plan in which most of the areas affected would be regions that have lost population. Representatives of major mailing organizations are hoping that Potter will make major changes to a mail-processing system that has never undergone a fundamental, na-

tional review. Since many of the plants were established decades ago, the mail system has undergone drastic changes, including automation. And the regions they serve have undergone often dramatic population changes, the agency's critics note. Any closings are certain to be highly controversial with lawmakers who cherish the economic impact of the plants bring to their districts. That is one reason why the agency had decided to delay consolidation decisions until after the Nov. 5 election. Potter said that any closings will be followed by better customer service. The postmaster general endorsed the proposed presidential commission to study the agency's future. "Whatever vehicle is going to get us there is the model I'm going to jump on," he said. Potter also said delays in senate and house mail - forced by irradiation of letters and packages following the anthrax scare - is over. There still are security checks, he said, but that now adds only two to three days to mail headed for congress. "so to those of you have mail for the senate, send it," Potter said. "don't hold back."

AFL-CIO Special Convention

Recommended Candidates for November 5th General Election

US Senate.....Mark Pryor(D)
US House, Dist 1.....Marion Berry(D)
US House, Dist 2.....Vic Snyder(D)
US House, Dist 3.....No Position
US House, Dist 4.....Mike Ross(D)

Land Commissioner.....Mark Wilcox(D)
State Treasurer.....Gus Wingfield(D)
Supreme Crt. Pos. 3.....Tom Glaze
Crt. Appeals Dist. 2, (1).....Jo Hart
Crt. Appeals Dist. 3, (1).....Robert Gladwin

Governor.....Jimmie Lou Fisher(D)
Lt. Governor.....Ron Sheffield(D)
Atty. General.....Mike Beebe(D)
Sec. Of State....Charlie Daniels(D)
State Auditor.....Jim Wood(D)

84th Gen Assembly-Arkansas Senate

Dist. 13 Jo Carson (D)

84th Gen Assembly-Arkansas House

Dist. 62 Terry McMellon(D)

Dist. 63 Kevin Penix(D)

Dist. 64 Gary Gray(D)

Dist. 65 Buddy Blair(D)