



1 2 1 1

Western Arkansas Area Local

The Paper

August 19, 2004

VOE

By Dennis Taff

In Early August numerous Arkansas District Employees, including myself, received a letter from the District Manager, E.W. Waldemayer, thanking them for participating in the Quarter 3 FY 2004 VOE Survey. I find this letter very strange since most APWU members and myself stopped participating in these type surveys many years ago when they were used against the APWU in contract negotiations.

I also find it strange that the letter stated that the response rate to the VOE (Voice of the Employee) Survey was 75%, the highest ever achieved in Arkansas. I would like to know how the USPS determined the response rate at 75%. The reason I ask is because I feel very certain that 75% of the members of the two biggest crafts Unions, APWU, NALC, did not participate in VOE Surveys. Unless of course Postmasters and Managers are telling our members that it is mandatory that they participate in the Survey.

I know that Postmasters and Managers, especially in small Post Offices, intimidate employees into filling out these worthless surveys. Some employees are even given direct orders to fill them out.

I feel that the letter was sent out to the all employees in hope that they would somehow believe that 75% of their co-workers fill these Surveys so it must be OK for me to do the same. As the old saying goes, "Do not believe what you read."

I want to make it very clear to our members. You do not have to fill out any USPS Survey, No matter

(VOE Continued on page 3)

The Strength in Union is "U"

By Chris Hagen

From the desk of the Vice President

How many of you still have the flimsy copy of your contract? You received it after the contract became effective. How many of you actually read the contract? I doubt that you have. I'm going to challenge all of you to read the contract when you think that management violated a certain article and then approach your steward with the article number of the violation and that steward will write the grievance. All of you must become aware of these article numbers that are being violated on a daily and weekly basis.

There will come a time when some of you will not have a steward to represent you. Some of you will have to do your own step one. I want to prepare you for that time. I want you to become familiar with the articles of the contract that are most violated. I want you to be able to represent yourself in case there is no steward on your tour. This will be what is going to happen if someone does not step up to be a steward on tour 1. I have done my best but I missed a very important grievance that occurred on tour 1, but I am aware if it now and will continue to fight against this violation.

I also want all of you to pay attention to the hours you work and your higher level pay. I have noticed that some of you are having "end of tour missing". The supervisor then has to go in and correct this problem. If you worked overtime that day and your end tour is missing, you will not be paid for that time. Some of you receive higher level pay for part of the day. I have noticed that

(The Strength in Union is U Continued on page 2)



(The Strength in Union is U Continued from page 1)

you are not receiving your higher level. Please keep up with all your times and different levels. If you don't have one now, then get yourself a calendar and mark your times on it. Mark even the smallest of digits that you work. You have a new 204b on tour one and she will be missing some of these things. You deserve to be paid for what you work. You should not have to wait three pay periods to get the pay you deserve. You clerks that go from level 5 to 6 need to approach Dena (or whomever the supervisor/204b is) every day to make sure the level 6 was entered. I need for all of you to be tough. I need for all of you to make the wrongs right. You need to start standing up for what is right. You may all be standing on your own and you will need to recognize the problems and how to correct them. Get to know your contract. Get to know the step 1 process. Stop the violations. Show management that each and every one of you will react to a violation of the contract.

Do any of you know what retreat rights are? Ask B.R.. He just exercised his retreat rights and is now no longer an unencumbered clerk. (Article 37.4.B.) (Article 12.5.c.)

The voluntary early retirement program will be allowing several members to retire by the end of the year. Management's response to those that will be retiring is that there is no word on replacing them. Management has hired all the TE's it can. The casuals still come and go. This is a fight that Dennis and I will continue until our last day with the local. Then it will be up to the next president and vice president to continue. We cannot operate with the few employees we have now, think what will happen when 6 or 7 more retire. All of you will be doing more than your job description requires. You must be aware of what your principal assignment is and if you are sent outside of the scope of your duties you must be willing to file that grievance. (article 37. 3. F. 10.)(article 37. 3. E. 5.).

Chris

WHY VOTE?

By Randy Cope

(Excerpted from www.insuredemocracy.com)

- Because it is your fundamental right as an American, and the most basic means by which you have a voice in how your government works. By voting, you participate in a process that determines who will represent you, your family, and your neighbors in your community, your state, and your country.
- You can register at your local election office, you may register by mail, when you get or renew your drivers' license, when you apply or are recertified for benefits in public assistance agencies, and in agencies serving people with disabilities. States must also conduct registration in an agency system of their choosing, such as libraries or unemployment offices. In addition to these places, many civic organizations and political parties sponsor voter registration drives at colleges and universities, shopping malls, work sites, fairs, and other community events.
- While the number of individuals registered to vote is at an all time high, we have yet to see a corresponding rise in active voting. In the last presidential election in 2000, 51.3 percent of the voting age population turned out to vote. The numbers tend to fall during the off-year elections for Congress: in 1998, only 36.4 percent of the voting age population made it to the polls.
- Why don't more Americans register and vote? The most likely reason—they don't think their one vote will make a difference. But what if just one person on every street or in every voting precinct thought that way? We might find that the course of history would change.

(Why Vote? Continued on page 4)

Chronic PVB

By Shawn Rapert

You know the feeling of coming back to work from a nice vacation of a week or two and having to face the same old routine! You kind of have this gut wrenching, empty, let down kind of feeling that seems about 10 times worse than getting up and going to work on a Monday morning after a weekend off. This is what I call Post Vacation Blues. I hate that feeling! It doesn't take but a day or two back to work to get over this feeling but I just hate it none-the-less. It's not that I dislike my job or dislike anyone at where I work. Because I love all you guys and am extremely blessed to have my job, but because of the brief change in routine and surroundings. I usually have such a wonderful time when I'm away on vacation that it's hard to face the reality of having to come back. You know, I could get use to vacation if the funds would hold out! But I know I must be content in all that I have and be thankful for my job, friends and coworkers. I do thank God for my job so that I can take time off and afford vacations and getting away. I am also thankful for all of you and for our Union that works hard to keep our jobs and to keep our jobs more secure, safe, and keeps us from being taken advantage of. This helps tremendously to overcome the Post Vacation Blues. May we all be content and thankful for what we have. Thank you and God bless!

ThePaper is the Official Monthly Publication of the Western Arkansas Area Local 1211 of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO.

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.

PO Box 11196 Ft Smith AR 72917

editor@apwu1211.com
www.apwu1211.com
Office 479-484-6323

(V O E Continued from page 1)

what line of bull your Postmaster or Managers gives you, these Surveys are strictly voluntary. If you are forced to fill out an USPS Survey then contact me immediately.

As stated above, the USPS will use these Surveys against the employees in one way or another. And besides, the VOE, is a joke. If the USPS truly valued your opinion we would not have many of the problems that we have today. So, if you are asked to participate in any USPS survey, please do the proper thing. . Don't fill it out!!! If you do it will only come back to haunt you and your fellow co-workers.

Next Union Meeting

August 29, 2004

1:30 p.m.

Cavanaugh Pizza

Western Arkansas Area Local Officers

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

Stewards

Dennis Taff Window Services	783-7898
Chris Hagen Mail Processing Tour 3	484-6371
Karla Shaffer Mail Processing T1 T2	484-6371
Randy Cope Maintenance T1 T2	484-6384
Thomas Henry Maintenance T3	484-6384
Kerry Botteicher CFS	484-6344
David Botteicher GMF Window/Customer Svc.	484-6495



(Why Vote? Continued from page 2)

Did you know...

- That several of our states, including California, Idaho, Oregon, Texas and Washington, became states by just ONE vote?
- That in 1948, Lyndon B. Johnson, our 36th president, became a U.S. senator by a ONE vote margin?
- And that same year, if Thomas E. Dewey had gotten ONE vote more per precinct in Ohio and California, the presidential election would have been thrown to the U.S. House of Representatives, where Dewey enjoyed more support than his rival -- incumbent Harry S. Truman? In fact, Dewey was expected to win the general election by a landslide, so most Republicans stayed home. Only 51.5 percent of the electorate voted in 1948, and Truman defeated Dewey.

Not convinced?

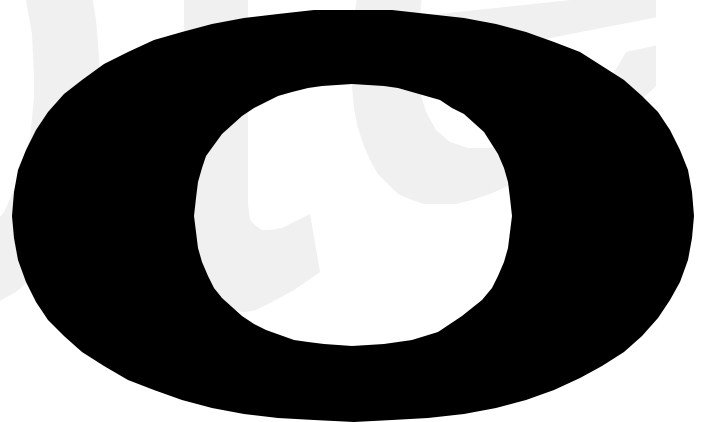
In the 1960 presidential election, ONE additional vote per precinct in Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey and Texas would have denied John F. Kennedy the presidency and put Richard M. Nixon in office eight years earlier.

In recent years, the outcomes of many state and congressional races have been reversed as recounts have shifted a handful of votes from one candidate to another.

Each and every vote is the voice of a citizen of the United States of America. One voice speaking out can change the course of history.

**THERE IS STILL TIME TO REGISTER.
YOUR VOTE CAN, AND WILL, MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!**

INSURE your future: VOTE.



Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program



FEGLI 2004 Open Season
September 1 to September 30, 2004

**No Health Questions to Answer!
Learn More at
www.fegli2004.opm.gov**