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Western Arkansas Area Local

The Paper

February 24, 2004

No Tolerance

By Dennis

Greetings,

First of all I want to thank the members of this local who helped with the preparations for the six-state meeting in Hot Springs, You know who you are. The meeting was a great success with 400 in attendance.

We recently received two arbitration decisions concerning a couple of issues that have been ongoing for a long, long time in two of our sister offices. The issues involved an injured rural carrier working in the clerk craft in the Van Buren office and the issue of the postmaster performing bargaining work in the Charleston office. Both arbitrators in these cases ruled in favor of the Union and I am in the process of working on the settlements. I hope to have the payment schedule accomplished in a week or so. These are two very big wins for the union and its members. Congratulations to all the employees involved.

As discussed at our last union meeting the Postal Service has issued letters of warning to several long time employees. The Postal Service is alleging that these employees failed to scan a piece of Express Mail and failed to secure the back doors. The union contends these letters of warning were unjustified. Since this is still being in the grievance procedure, I will not go into the specifics of cases but the incidents seem to be directly related management's short staffing at the branches and also possibly faulty scanning equipment. Sadly the Postal Service has taken the position that there is "no tolerance" concerning these two issues. They do not care what these employees had to say or the circumstances surrounding these issues. Their only response to the employee is there is "no tolerance" So, in order to protect your self from being the next victim of unjust discipline you should also take the "no tolerance" approach.

Do not get in hurry and try to do two jobs at once. There is "no tolerance" in this matter. It does not matter if management has failed to properly staff. It does not matter if management failed to schedule. Trying to do two jobs at once usually causes "honest

mistakes," or commonly refereed to as "speed errors." Do not fool yourself into thinking that you will be rewarded for doing two jobs at once. Your only reward will be unjust discipline if an honest mistake is made.

It is management's responsibility to staff properly. Article 3 "management rights" specifically states.

The employer shall have the exclusive right, subject to the provisions of this agreement and consistent with applicable laws and regulations: to hire, to maintain the efficiency of the operations entrusted to it and to
(Dennis Continued on page 3)

Security, Scanners, Settlements and Safety

By Chris

I'd like to reiterate what Dennis said about how fast management is handing out letters of warnings for failing to scan express mail properly and by not challenging visitors when you see them wandering around the building. For those of us at the GMF when you hear the doorbell ring, let the supervisor answer it. If, for any reason, a visitor happens to get in, if their ID is not visible ask to see an ID. But before you do, make sure you have yours. In any case make sure you notify to your supervisor immediately, don't dally around.

Please, if you do any scanning, take the time to get it right. If your equipment isn't working, report it immediately. Do not get caught with faulty equipment and nothing being scanned.

Does it seem like the paperwork got lost for your settlement? Yeah, right! . It's a shame we didn't make them pay interest. A copy has been faxed back to them.

I'm still trying, without luck, to stop the machines from being run with one operator, and it's not happening. It seems like Management does not care if you hurt yourself or worse, if you have a heart attack, they just want some numbers on a piece of paper to show how
(Chris Continued on page 2)



Summary of the February Meeting

February 8, 2004
Meeting called to order at 1:40

All officers present
Dennis gave his report and turned in a copy
Chris and Thomas gave

a report on the cases they were working on.
Minutes from last meeting read and accepted
Financial report read and accepted
No committee reports this past month

Next Union Meeting

March 21, 2004

1:30 p.m.

Cavanaugh Pizza

OLD BUSINESS

The information has been turned in so on the casuals in lieu Fort Smith clerks should receive settlement on next check

Dennis talked to the PM about the jobs being withheld/abolished and the future retirement of other employees. PM said LR would not allow him to hire or fill jobs.

Van Buren grievance is back the Arbitrator awarded all the hours that were worked by the rural carrier. Dennis will get with Ron Ramsey and get the names of all the clerks this involved so he can get this settlement turned in.

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The six state meeting in Hot Springs is over and was a great meeting with over 400 members and numerous National officers in attendance. Thomas Henry is the new State Maintenance Craft Director he is fulfilling the term of Robert Linton who stepped down for personal reasons.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion by Thomas Henry to hold another picnic this year, 2nd by Sheryl Breedlove motion passed. Thomas will be the chairman and is asking for volunteers to help. Volunteers will get head of line privileges for the track. Date to be announced at a later meeting.

Tri-State in Kansas City will be March 5-7 motion by Sheryl Breedlove 2nd by Chuck Neuman to send Ron Davis and Thomas Henry motion passed
Ginger Ballard won the \$50.00 drawing
Motion to adjourned

(Chris Continued from page 1)

good they are. We are the ones running the machines, working the cases, and putting mail in the boxes for our customers. These are not their customers, but ours. This is why many of you run the machine by yourself, because you have a conscience, you want to do a good job for your customers. When it looks like you will be running by yourself notify your supervisor and ask if they intended for you to operate alone and if they think it is safe to do so. I'm asking you now to make management make the decision each time to have you "run by yourself". Don't give them the satisfaction of not having to say anything to you, make them tell you that's what they intended to do.

Chris

APWU Scholarship Deadline

APWU members are reminded that scholarships are available to children and grandchildren, including stepchildren, of active or deceased members of the union.

Two types of scholarships are available to high school seniors. The E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship provides \$1,000 for each of four consecutive years of college. The APWU Vocational Scholarship is for students attending accredited vocational schools or taking part in community college vocational programs as full-time students. The vocational scholarship is for up to \$1,000 for each of three consecutive years.

Applications must be postmarked by March 1, 2004, and received no later than March 15, 2004. Complete rules and applications can be obtained from your local union or APWU headquarters (202-842-4215). Guidelines and forms also can be found at www.apwu.org.

Donating Blood

Blood donation leave is covered in the ELM 519.252. It is a type of administrative leave paid for by the Postal Service. You are paid your regular pay for the time to travel to and from the donation site and the time to donate and rest after donating the blood. The blood must be donated on a scheduled workday during your normal hours of work. Submit a PS 3971 noting "Blood Leave" and the time and date you would like to donate.



(Dennis Continued from page 1)
 determine the methods and, means and personnel by
 which such operations are to be conducted.

Also do not allow strangers in the building. "No Tolerance.". Just because a person has a Postal ID it does not make them a Postal employee and just because someone has a Postal ID does not make them a friend. It might be a Postal Manager on a mission to write you up because you failed to "challenge " them regarding their business in your office. Even though you have known them for 20 years and they have been in your building numerous times there is No Tolerance. So, unless you are giving a direct order to do so, it is management responsibility to allow access into the building. Remember, our new motto is: "No Tolerance." It is unfortunate that the Postal Service wants to discipline dedicated long time employees who are trying to do their best.

The ones that should be receiving "letters of warning" are management. They are the ones solely responsibly for delaying mail and causing our customers to stand in long lines at the stamp window by not properly staffing.

Do not interpret this article as a call or sanction for a "slow down." You have an obligation to give an honest days work for honest days pay Nothing more, nothing less. We are just simply informing you as members to take the time to do your job properly. You can not do your job properly by running here and there attempting to plug the gaps in management's leaking bucket. Doing so may cause honest mistakes, which may in turn cause unwarranted discipline.

Dennis Taff

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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The Conference

This was my first time attending the Six State Conference. I knew it was going to be informative and useful to me as a new editor. The Postal Press Association hosted a class for editors. I believe 8 of those who attended the class were either the local editor or stated editor. Prior to this class everything that I knew about editing and publishing was what I had seen in other newsletters. I never considered the legal implications of publishing a union newsletter so I guess I will be doing some of the "editor stuff" that I learned at this conference.

One area of controversy and concern is libel. Union publications tend to be critical by there very nature. Articles are written by, and newsletters are edited by, people who are ... well ... active in the union. Activists some might say. I realize there is ample opportunity to criticize management, but we have to be careful not to make personal attacks. Even though such an attack could be 100% factual, it can still be libelous. "Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writer and not necessarily those of the union." Nearly all publications have a disclaimer such as this, and ours is no different. This statement merely informs the readers that the union may not agree with the opinions expressed by the writer, but it provides no legal protection.

Editor

Western Arkansas Area Local Officers

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

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Maintenance T1 T2	
Thomas Henry	484-6384
Maintenance T3	
Kerry Botteicher	484-6344
CFS	
Bob Harp	484-6425
Window/Customer Svc.	

Grease Monkeys

By Corky

Job vacancies in maintenance don't seem to come around very often. Recently two positions were offered in-craft with no takers. I don't remember that ever happening before. Then they were offered in-service and that process is still ongoing. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the right column was printed in your Contract Extension booklet. As you can see, it indicates that the Postal Service and Union both recognize the approaching need for more "skilled" maintenance personnel. Some of you may already know how extensive the testing is and that's just the beginning. There are KSA's, CSA's, and 3 member review panels to deal with and then there's the schooling

Training Building



in Norman OK. Depending on the "occupational group" there are from 2 to 60 weeks of resident training at the 62-acre campus, one of the finest training facilities in the country. Students at the 290,000 sq. ft. training center stay at the adjacent 1000 room Housing Facility.

I said all that to say this: If you have an interest in maintenance as a career, don't wait for a job to come open to prepare. Start your career development plan now! If you don't have the all the necessary Knowledge, Skills, or Abilities (KSA's) start now to get them! Many of us started here in maintenance 16 or 17 years ago and most of us were in our early to mid 30's without any gray. That's not the case anymore. In the next 10 to 12 years many of us will be like TG (*The Gorilla*), old and ready to retire. So If your not sure where to begin your plan, ask some of the maintenance folks for advice. We have all been there before AND you know how much we like to give advice!

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE AND THE AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO RE: EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

The parties recognize that internal recruitment and development of current bargaining unit career employees for skilled positions is in the best interest of postal employees and the Postal Service. The parties agree to the establishment of a process and program to allow for development opportunities for placement of current APWU bargaining unit career employees in the Maintenance department.

In order to improve the opportunity for career APWU bargaining unit employees to qualify for and establish themselves on the appropriate in-craft and/or in-service register(s), the Postal Service will develop and implement a program in those locations where a need is identified. The program will include a process whereby APWU career employees will have an opportunity to express interest in entering a developmental program for future opportunities in the Maintenance Craft.

Once created and implemented, APWU bargaining unit career employees who express an interest will be given an opportunity to qualify for placement in the program and subsequent placement in a position in the Maintenance Craft. Placement into the Maintenance Craft will follow the provisions of Article 38 of the current APWU-USPS collective bargaining agreement.

If the initial placement resulting from successful completion of the training program is to an Electronic Technician (ET) duty assignment, upon placement into the craft duty assignment, employees will commit to a three year lock-in for that craft from the date placed in the assignment. The employees will not be able to request transfer, in-craft downgrade or bid to a nonskilled position during the lock-in period, but same position designation transfers and incraft promotions in the installation are permitted. If an employee leaves before the end of the lock-in period, the employee will be responsible for reimbursing the Postal Service for all training costs.

As skilled Maintenance and Motor Vehicle craft positions are identified, developmental programs will be established where needed. Non-skilled employees already assigned to the craft for which the developmental training opportunity assignment is intended will have first priority to qualify for the available training.