

From The President... Take a Stand Before It's Too Late



It has been a long fought battle, but we have recently made some progress with grievance settlements and Article 12 issues within our local. Specific details will be discussed at this month's Union meeting, but in

summary, we have received settlement agreements through the efforts of our National Business Agent Liz Swigert for which a PTF was converted to full-time in Lancaster and Lockport, and monetary settlements were dispersed to members in Medina, Niagara Falls, and Lancaster. And although the Article 12 issues continue to plague our area, through the combined efforts of our Regional Coordinator, Mike Gallagher and National Business Agent, Pete Coradi, our fellow sisters excessed from Lancaster are being afforded their retreat rights as three new duty assignments are being posted in that office. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Mike, Pete, Liz and your Vice-President Lori for all their hard work and commitment to these issues.

Post Convention – More Challenges Lie Ahead

Lori and I recently returned from the Clerk Craft Conference and National Convention. Without questions, the message in the Clerk Craft Conference was the need to protect our work in the small offices. The Postal Service has shifted their focus from Function 1 (the large plants) to Function 4 (the small AO's). There are several issues still pending at the

National Level, a large portion of these will have a direct impact on the small offices we represent. Some of these issues include casual usage with respect to time, type and overtime usage and the work measuring standards implemented by the service. The measuring system implemented by the Service continues to adversely affect us at the local level each and every day. This is the measuring system used in the Function 4 reviews which is decimating the staffing in numerous offices throughout our local. For those offices who have already gone through this process, you know the numerous issues resulting from the cuts as the work shifts to postmasters/supervisors, increased split shifts among PTF's, 8 within 10 workdays for FTR's, constant denial of requests for annual leave, more pressure to complete the tasks quicker with fewer people which leads to mistakes that ultimately ends with the issuance of discipline. The rise in discipline is significant as ten of our members have been issued disciplinary action within the last three months.

(cont'd page 4)



Senator Obama addresses delegates at the National Convention

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Notes From The VP

This summer was a hectic one to say the least! Thank you to all members who gave their support and assistance to Tim and I with the endless issues we represent. With the National Convention behind us, we are well aware of the work that lies ahead. Again, I ask for your support for both Tim and I and I reach out to members in those offices without a steward onsite. Please don't get me wrong, I appreciate ALL of the contact that you all have with us and we **DO NOT**; nor have we ever considered it "inconvenient" to drive to your office and represent you. But any office with a steward onsite will tell you that having that Union presence in your office daily has a distinct impact on the actions that management makes. I just ask that anyone out there who has thought about becoming a steward, there is no time like the present!

Michelle Kwoka, thank you for all of your help planning, preparing and enjoying the summer picnic in August. It was a beautiful day and the members who attended had a great time! Thanks again Michelle and we hope to see **ALL OF YOU** at our holiday party in January which will also serve as our Officers Installation Dinner.

Because of the whirlwind this summer, our September meeting will be chock full of information. Please try to attend if you can. We have information on arbitrations, settlements, Function 4 team visits, Article 12 issues, National Convention, FSS impact on this area.....I could go on. This is a meeting that you will come away from with a ton of information to take back to your office. Other benefits of attending our monthly meetings....the food is fantastic, we have two raffles; one \$50 gift Card raffle which everyone in attendance is eligible for and a 50/50 raffle which benefits COPA.

Speaking of COPA, THANK YOU to all of our Local COPA contributors – let's see this list grow! For information on how to give to COPA, visit our National Website or call me at (716) 807-5633. Our current contributors are:

Lori Ennis

Colleen Giordano

Jean Hoefler

Lynn Karp

Brian Lewis

Mark Linderman

Judy Murtha

Tim Northem

Cindy Orlando

Angelo Otero

Donna Rausch

Bob Romanowski

Rodney Rowles

Mike Rudz

Jim Snyder

Mark Weidner

Thank you all! As always I remain yours in solidarity, Lori Ennis



What I Did On My Summer Vacation

By: Karen Williams

Clerk and Maintenance Craft Steward - Tonawanda

I had the opportunity to attend the APWU's National Convention in Las Vegas last month as a delegate of the WNY Area Local with Tim, Lori, and Angelo. The convention was exciting, aggravating, informative, and intimidating.

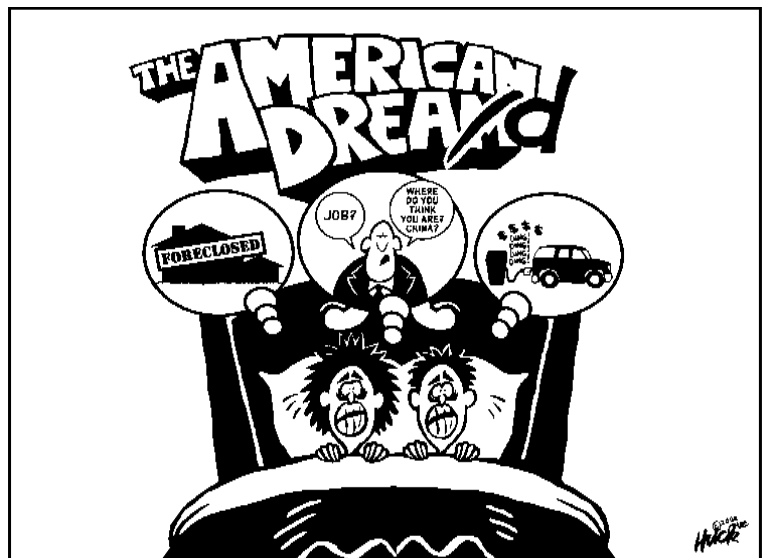
The exciting aspect was of course to see all the delegates, be in Las Vegas, hear all the guest speakers, and to have a voice in the workings of the National Union. Bill Young, President of the NALC, was one speaker whose message really hit home. His energetic speech was well received by the delegates as indicated by the several standing ovations. The one point, he made, that is an indication of the decline of the American workers is our government's description of a good paying job in this country today. There are 3 criteria. They are that you make \$35,000; the employer has to offer some sort of health care, even if the employee pays 99% of the cost, and that the employer offers some type of annuity plan. The fact that only 23% of American workers meet these minimum criteria is pathetic. How can anyone raise a family in these economic times on that salary, let alone send a child to college? Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to hear another exciting speaker, Barack Obama, as I had to leave Las Vegas as part of another commitment on my vacation. Another aspect of the convention that I found "exciting" is to see the delegates not just "sit there", but to take an active and at times passionate bordering on belligerent, role. The democratic process at work is not necessarily a smooth one. The delegates did not hold back on any point that they found unfair or unjust, at times drowning out the voice of President Burris, or any of the other National Committee members.

The aggravating aspect I found was the time spent "discussing" on the convention floor, what seemed to me, small unimportant points. Many points being belabored to where at one time, I felt my time was being wasted, and I almost got up to leave. President Burris' aggravation was apparent also, he at times seemed unwilling to listen further, and cut off several of those delegates at the microphones to voice their opinions. Those microphones are where the intimidating aspect comes in. You damn well better know which of the 4 lights to flip on when you go to speak, and you damn well better know what you are talking about. This was especially true when the "discussions" were becoming heated. Many of those

delegates called upon to speak were unceremoniously cut off. My advice to the newcomers; listen, observe, vote, but stay clear of those "microphones"!

Information at the convention was everywhere; information not just on the proposals being brought forth to be voted on, but of all concerns as a union worker. Information of COPA, the Voluntary Benefit Plan, the APWU's Health Care Plan to name a few. One point of information that I took advantage of was the drive to sign up 500 new Marrow Donors at the convention. The National Marrow Donor Program has helped countless individuals in need of marrow and blood cell donations. The blood cell donation is process where the donor takes medication for 5 days prior to the collection. Blood is then removed through a sterile needle in one arm, passed through a machine that separates out the blood-forming cells, and the remaining blood returned to your system through the other arm. Any one of us, or any of our families and friends, may in the future be, or have already been, in need of such a gift. If anyone who reads this has an interest, please call 1-800-MARROW-2, or visit marrow.org.

I can honestly say I made the right decision to spend part of my vacation and the money to attend the National Convention. Again, not only did I participate in the workings of the union on the National Level, but also, I witnessed all in the union having a voice in it. This is something that is not apparent anymore in other aspects of our lives. More and more in today's world, we feel that we have lost our voice, our opinions do not matter, and that no one listens anyway. We all need to be "revitalized" so that apathy does not take over; we all seem to be just "a little more tired" than we use to be. Looking around the work place, reading the newspaper, and watching the events around the world it is no surprise as to why.



President's Report (cont'd. from page 1)

Most all of these issues were a result of mistakes made by members because of the added pressure placed on them by management. Take the extra second to ensure you are performing your tasks completely and in accordance with current policy. I must point out that this includes the mystery shopper questions. As many of you may already know, upper management is now holding your supervisors and postmasters accountable for a failed mystery shopper. This has resulted in threats, intimidation, and/or the issuance of discipline without merit. In many cases, management does not care if they are within their contractual right to issue said discipline. I would again recommend every window clerk to complete their required "retail transactions" regardless of how long it may take. Direct all complaints from your customers to the appropriate supervisor/postmaster.

I Couldn't Do My Job Without You

I have extended my sincere appreciation to several of my colleagues for their support; this appreciation must also extend to many of you as well. We cover such a large area and without your support and constant communication, we would be unable to provide the level of representation you have come to expect and all deserve. A special thank you to those of you who continue to record and document issues in your office, this support is critical in the successful resolution of these issues. I will be the first to tell you that there are times when I feel stretched to the limit, and I'm sure there are times when Lori feels the same. Your support and involvement carries more weight than you may ever know. So again, thank you! With that said, I must now appeal to many of our offices with issues unresolved due simply to the fact that we are unaware of them. I know there are many offices that suffer from a reduction in hours as their postmaster/supervisor increases and/or shift their work. Or where our members are being required to work beyond 6 hours before being given a lunch. Or being required to use their own vehicle to perform work, or in cases where the use of their own vehicle is voluntary, they are not being reimbursed for mileage. Or my favorite, supervisors/postmasters performing certain bargaining unit tasks they have

absolutely no right performing. These are but a few of many issues I see in offices on a regular basis. There is absolutely no acceptable reason we should be accepting this behavior by any management personnel. But, until someone stands up to speak against these issues, they will continue unchallenged as our work disappears. In some cases, it will eventually become too late to successfully get it back. I am once again including a copy of work your postmaster/supervisor CANNOT perform in your office. If you are aware that this work is being done by management, contact Lori or me as soon as possible.

Historical Speeches Lead Us Closer To Solidarity

This year's National Convention was historical as the President of the NALC, Bill Young, addressed the delegates. This marked the beginning of a long journey that could lead to improved relationship as both leaders recognizing the need to work together. As Bill Young stated, "Whatever divided us in the past doesn't mean diddly-squat." As for the business before the delegates, in past conventions, the focus has been on improving conditions for the employees we represent. However, this year, it was not the quality of our jobs that were at stake, but their very existence. You have all seen the recent intervention by the government with Fanny Mae and Freddy Mac. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that this country is in the worst financial position it has been in since the great depression of 1929. The current state of our country's economy is taking its toll, including a profound effect on the Postal Service. None of us can deny the significant decreases in mail volume seen over the summer. I can tell you that this drop in volume is not localized as Lori and I have heard it from our brother and sisters throughout the country. Recent Postal reform prevents the Service from being able to recoup losses through postage increases and the current deficit the Postal Service faces this year will run into the billions of dollars. Even as you read this, Congress is reviewing the very foundation of the Postal Service, including universal service and six-day delivery. There is absolutely no doubt that the battle we face on Capitol Hill is just as important, if not more so, than the daily battle we fight with management for contractual violations. Whether you have issues in your office or not, we all have to recognize that the Postal Service is the goose that laid the golden egg.

We are all members of the largest Postal Union in the world, a fact that not only should we be very proud of, but one we should also be extremely thankful for. But as the Postal Service faces these challenges, what does that mean to you? How confident are you that changes to the Service will be for the benefit of all? Do you think they have your best interests in mind? What about the best interest of the American people? What we are fighting for is not just the preservation of our work, but the preservation of mail service for all Americans.

Roadwork Ahead

The economic condition of this country did not occur overnight. It has been brought on by 7 ½ years of poor administrative policy and decisions. Whether you are a Republican or Democrat, it is not hard to look back and see the road we have thus traveled. Is it a road you want to continue down? Or is it time to turn off and start heading in another direction? We are only two months from the presidential election. Take a look at the platform from which the candidates stand.

McCain's platform is the same one we have dealt with for the past 8 years. In his acceptance speech, he referenced tax breaks that would create jobs. That's the trickle-down economics we have seen over the past 8 years. He also referenced fighting "Union Bosses" during his career. Again, it's not much different than the anti-union sentiment of the current administration. The Steel Workers Union has lost over 600,000 of its members. These members didn't quit the union, the work and jobs no longer exist, at least not in this country. Most have moved just over the border.

Take a look at Obama's platform. He is in complete support of universal healthcare for every American. There is no "downside" to universal healthcare. In fact, the United States is the only major industrialized country in the world that does not have universal healthcare. The only reason we haven't made this progress sooner is because the lobbyists for the insurance and drug companies have prevented it from happening. Obama will not be influenced by such principles as he has refused to accept ANY campaign funds from lobbyist. Just ask your national president who had a check returned to him by Senator Obama based solely on the fact that

President Burris is a registered lobbyist as our President. Show me any other politician who would return money! The Senator addressed the delegates at our National Convention via a live video feed and expressed his commitment to working families adding that it's time to elect an administration "that doesn't choke on the word Union." Being a firm supporter of "Unions", he has promised to sign the "Employee Free Choice Act". This will allow workers throughout the country to form a Union without the ensuing hardships created by anti-union techniques used by many companies during the lengthy process it currently takes to form a Union. This Act will simplify the process and force the company to the table to negotiate a contract. As we are all fully aware, Unions increase wages and benefits and improve working conditions for its workers. This Act will raise the bar for middle class workers and strengthen our economy. Aside from what issues you might have with Senator Obama, think closely about which road you want to proceed down. What road will benefit your kids and grandkids? The choice is clear, and the time to act is now.

We Must Act – Not React

As proud dues paying member of the AFL-CIO, I would like to extend an invitation to any member who would like to get involved in this year's race, not only for President, but for many of the representative and assembly positions. The AFL-CIO is also involved with "Labor Walks" for some of these individuals. If you might be interested in participating and/or being involved with this election, just give me or Lori a call.


PROTECT YOUR JOBS

Postmasters in your office may only perform bargaining unit work if it "falls within the scope of "window transactions" and "distribution tasks". There are many duties which have nothing to do with window transactions and distribution tasks which clearly belong to the bargaining unit. Postmasters should not be performing these tasks. Some examples are:


- Servicing vending machines
- Clearing and assigning carrier accountable mail
- Second notice filing, hold mail duties and related tasks
- Disposing of UBBM mail
- Custodial work, if there are no custodians in the office, clerks should perform the work before the postmaster
- Loading and unloading trucks
- Collections
- Bulk mail acceptance
- Dispatch duties
- Spreading mail to carriers

Additionally, if your Postmaster shifts their work, it may constitute

Take a Look at What's Coming for 2009



Open Season is right around the corner. Here's a preview of new services and savings you'll find with APWU Health Plan Consumer Driven Option and High Option in 2009:



- ✓ **Increased benefit for hearing services in 2009**
 - Diagnostic hearing test
 - Hearing aids covered every three years up to \$1,500
- ✓ **Prescription drug savings in 2009**
 - When network retail pharmacies are used, copayments are capped at \$200 per prescription for a 30-day supply

Consumer Driven Option 2009

- It's a true bargain—the Postal Service pays 95 percent of the premium cost for 2009 instead of 89 percent as in past years for postal employees who are members of APWU
- You receive high quality healthcare, more control and flexibility, and pay less too

High Option 2009

- You'll receive value and savings with benefits that include a prescription program with low copayments, and 100 percent coverage for your children's preventive check-ups, immunizations and lab work
- It's a top-rated plan with service that puts members first

Open Season is November 10 – December 8, 2008

**APWU Health Plan
Live Life Well**

APWU Health Plan - 799 Cromwell Drive, Suites K-Z - Glen Burnie, MD 21061 - 1-800/222-APWU - www.apwu.org

The Fall Season (cont'd. from page 6)

Something to think about:

“Someone Else Has Died”

The Union was saddened to learn this week of one of our most valuable members—

Someone Else.

Someone's passing created vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Else has been with us for many years and for every one of those years, Someone did far more than a normal person's share of work. Whenever leadership was mentioned, this wonderful person was looked to for inspiration as well as results. Whenever there was a job to do or a meeting to attend, one name was on everyone's list—

“Let Someone Else do it” It was common knowledge that Someone Else was a wonderful person, sometimes appearing super-human; but one person can only do so much. Were the truth known, everybody expected too much of Someone Else.

Now, Someone Else is gone.

We wonder what we are going to do. Someone Else left a wonderful example, but who is going to follow? Who is going to do all the things Someone Else did?

So if you have a chance to participate in the union, join a committee or lend a hand, remember—We can't depend on Someone Else anymore.

Author Unknown

MY request to all of our union brothers and sisters is get involved. Our local union meetings could use some more someone else's to help out. If you have been made regular due to grievances, received settlement money, or retreat rights saved you and you're returning to your home office, show some appreciation by attending the Union meetings and help out. Postal management fought tooth and nail to prevent these actions, don't you think for one second you would have been made regular, or allowed to come back to your home office, or received justice, if it were not for the hard work of our local Union President and Vice President.

The excuse of not having enough time is irrelevant, because if one of our APWU members made the meetings, sat on committees and acted on the union board, on top of being a care giver for his father with Parkinson's for two years, who just recently died in February, to be followed by his mother dying in August, of Pancreatic Cancer, don't even say that your life is too busy. Let's agree on one thing here, if something is important enough to you, on your priority list, it gets done because it's too important not to. To say, I'm too busy, is a poor choice of priority. Our APWU Union should be one of our Top Priorities. That is where we need you to think, to act, and to be. It's the only way to keep our rights.

Losing both parents five months apart is difficult for anyone, and I would like to thank my Union brothers and sisters who sent cards, flowers and prayers. As always be professional and think about getting involved because the 15 dedicated union ELSE's need some support and help to continue the good work of protecting all your contractual rights. Remember, “Work the Rule”

Yours in solidarity. Jim Snyder

Upcoming Membership Meetings

September 20, 2008

October 18, 2008

November 15, 2008

General Membership Meetings begin at 7pm

CHECK OUT...

Our Newest Full Time Regular!



Congratulations Jeff Fyda in our Lancaster office!

Jeff was converted to FTR thanks to a maximization grievance settlement. What does this mean to Jeff?

A very important 40 hour guarantee, 2 days off each week and paid holidays!

Other Big Wins and Settlements

- PTF Conversion in Lockport
- Improperly Reverted Job To Be Posted – Lockport
- PTF Conversion / Monetary Settlement – Depew
- Monetary Settlement resulting from PTF Conversion– Medina
- Retreat Rights Activated - Lancaster

Get Out And VOTE!!

By: Ken Heavern

Proud APWU member - Tonawanda

Dear Union Brothers and Sisters,

As everyone knows, the Presidential election is coming up on November 4th. It is important that we VOTE! Vote for the candidates of your choice. In the last eight years a lot of civil liberties have been taken away by the Bush Administration. But we still have one precious right that we can exercise and that is the right to Vote.

In the last eight years, we have had the most worker UN-friendly administration in American history. They have weakened safety requirements by companies for their workers, made it harder to organize Unions, allowed companies to relocate jobs overseas and then resell the goods back to us. Our jobs disappear and companies make record profits at the same time.

In the past two years, and even more so in the past year, we have all seen how much more difficult and stressful our jobs have become. And management says we have it good. Try finding a job on the outside that pays like ours. Compared to our friends on the outside, we do have it good. If you call what we have is good, I shudder to think what our friends on the outside are going through. These changes have definitely changed the way I vote.

As a 25 year member of the APWU, I recognize the importance of Union membership. Without our Union, we would be making \$8 - \$10 per hour with no healthcare or retirement benefits..

Elections do matter. We need to elect candidates who will support the American worker, Union and non-Union workers of the middle class included. We need to vote for a President who will support American workers in both word and deed. We need to Vote for Senators and Congressmen who will support the American working class.

Please remember to exercise the freedom we all have. Vote this November 4th for the candidates of your choice, whoever they may be.

**ADRIAN
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From The National Website.....

House Passes FERS Sick-Leave Bill

APWU Web News Article #74-08, Aug. 1, 2008

The House of Representatives passed a bill July 30 that would grant postal workers and other federal employees covered by FERS (Federal Employees Retirement System) credit for unused sick leave when calculating their retirement annuities. Employees covered by CSRS (Civil Service Retirement System) already receive credit for unused sick leave.

The measure, introduced by House Government Reform Committee Chairman Henry Waxman (D-CA), was included in a larger bill, the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, which Waxman also authored. The bill is similar to a bill (H.R. 5573), which was introduced earlier this year by Rep. James Moran (D-VA).

Under the provision (Title IV, Sec. 407), federal employees who retire within three years from the date of enactment would receive credit for 75 percent of unused sick leave; employees who retire more than three years after enactment of the legislation would get full credit, similar to CSRS employees. Federal employees hired after 1983 are covered by FERS; most of those hired in 1983 and before are covered by CSRS.

"This is an important bill, which we enthusiastically support," said APWU President William Burrus. "It will finally give FERS-covered employees a benefit they have earned."

The bill, which President Bush has threatened to veto, passed 326-102, giving it a veto-proof margin in the House. To see how your legislator voted.

The tobacco bill now moves to the Senate, where it may be considered in September, after Congress returns from its summer recess. However, the Senate bill (S. 625) does not include the FERS sick-leave provisions. The fate of the FERS language may ultimately be decided in a House-Senate conference committee, if the Senate passes S. 625.

Title IV of H.R. 1108 also includes provisions of the Thrift Savings Plan Enhancement Act (H.R. 6500), which would automatically enroll new employees in the Thrift Savings Plan; allow the TSP Board to designate a fund other than the G Fund as the default investment fund; establish a Roth IRA option, and give the TSP Board authority to add additional, self-directed investment options.

The FERS and TSP language are linked for budgetary purposes. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that H.R. 6500 would increase federal revenue by approximately \$1.3 billion over the next 10 years, and this money could be used to offset the increased costs associated with FERS sick leave.

\$1,477 Raise on Aug. 30

COLA Increase Will Be Highest in History

APWU Web News Article #76-08, Aug. 14, 2008

Thanks to a cost-of-living adjustment that will be the highest in APWU-bargaining history, postal workers represented by the union will be receiving an annual raise of \$1,477 at the end of the month.

The increase is the result of the Consumer Price Index rise during July, the last month of the most recent six-month Cost-of-Living measuring period under the 2006 National Agreement.

"This is not only the largest COLA increase under the current contract," said APWU President William Burrus, "but the largest such raise we've ever achieved."

The Cost-Of-Living Adjustment will be effective Aug. 30, and will be reflected in Sept. 19 paychecks (Pay Period 19-08). The adjustment will amount to a 71-cent per hour increase, or \$56.80 per pay period. The July index represents the completion of the fourth (of eight) six-month COLA measuring periods in the 2006-2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

"Cost-of-living adjustments continue to make important contributions to our members' wages," Burrus said. "APWU members who began 2008 at Level 5 Step O will realize an increase of nearly \$3,200 per year as a result of the February upgrade and the March and August COLAs."

There will be four more COLA adjustments under the 2006 National Agreement. After receiving no increase during the first measuring period in 2007, employees received a \$686 raise last Sept. 1 and a \$479 raise on March 15. With the latest adjustment, the COLA increases in the current contract will total \$2,642.

