



Razorback Scheme

American Postal Workers Union • Northwest Arkansas Area Local

May 2017

From the President

Ike Mills

Trying to remember everything I want to write about is always a challenge whenever I sit down and write an article. I have several good ideas throughout the time between articles but can't ever remember them when it comes time to do the articles. Well, one of the most important ones for this article deals with one of the grievances I had to do recently. For all of our members that are on the electronic or automated bidding system through HRSSC, it is a requirement in the 2012 JCIM on page 200 Article 37, page 2 question 5 that we use the electronic process on the lite blue website or the telephone bidding through HRSSC to place our job bids. If you are having any difficulties with either system, then contact your supervisor and let them know immediately. If you can't get the problem solved prior to the bid closing and are left with no choice other than a manual bid, then communicate with management and the Union so we know that you had to submit a manual bid and you won't jeopardize your bidding rights under the CBA.

Another issue that has come up several times is medical documentation and what your local management is entitled to request from an employee. All your local management is entitled to is a doctor's note saying that you were incapacitated for work or unable to work from this date to this date. Generic statements like "This individual is under my care or was seen in my office" are not acceptable proof that you were "incapacitated for duty".

There shouldn't be any medical information or statements concerning a prognosis or diagnosis in this note. All of that information should be sent to the FMLA office at HRSSC for them to make a determination concerning your FMLA condition and qualifications. After that determination is made, your supervisor will receive an email outlining your approval and the frequency and duration of your condition. That is a short summary of the law, and if you have further questions feel free to contact me.

For future articles if you have a specific issue that you would like me to write or answer questions about, please feel free to text or email me about it and I will do my best to answer them.

In Solidarity, Ike

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

To ALL NEW EMPLOYEES and also those of us who have forgotten....

In 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court made it your right under Federal law to be represented by your Union when you are questioned by a Postal Inspector or an agent of the OIG. You simply tell them: "**I am requesting Union Representation.**"

- I will cooperate, but not without a Union Representative. I will not sign any forms or documents.
- I will not write a statement.
- If this is a possible criminal matter or if you do not disclose the purpose of the investigation, I will be silent until I consult with an attorney.
- Also when questioned by a supervisor / manager, tell them:
- "If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated or will affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my Union Representative, Officer, or Steward be present at the meeting. I will cooperate in your investigation, but not without Union Representation."

These are your legal rights under Supreme Court verified Federal law, and they cannot threaten you and/or actually harass you, because you stand on your rights.

Please feel free to copy these Weingarten Rights and post them on Union Bulletin Boards at your offices.

Good luck & thanks,
"Barney" Barnes, Siloam Springs Steward

The *RAZORBACK SCHEME* is the official voice of the Northwest Arkansas Area Local of the APWU – AFL-CIO. However, opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writers and not necessarily those of the APWU, Local, officials or Editor. Articles, artwork, cartoons and/or other material are solicited from member readers who wish to share their views. Although freedom of the press is recognized, contributors are exhorted not to submit derogatory material about any fellow union member or to submit any false or unsubstantiated allegation concerning management or any other individual inside or outside this organization. All letters must be signed (if hard-copied) or emailed via an identifiable, recognized screen name and are requested to have been received by the Editor ten (2) days prior to the announced publication date. Names will be withheld upon request. Send submissions to *RAZORBACK SCHEME*, P.O. Box 654, Fayetteville AR 72702; or email to Editor's screen name listed below or on website. Submissions may be returned upon request.

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 Siloam Springs Steward...Darrell Barnes
 Maintenance.....Vacant
 Maintenance Alternate.... Vacant

Safety Representative.....Nancy Sramek
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NEXT UNION MEETINGS:

Sunday, May 7, 2017 – 2:00 pm
 Denny's, 4861 W. Sunset, Springdale AR

APWU Fayetteville Local – 2300 S City Lake Rd
 P.O. Box 654 – Fayetteville AR 72702
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Websites:

<http://FayettevilleAPWU.tripod.com/>

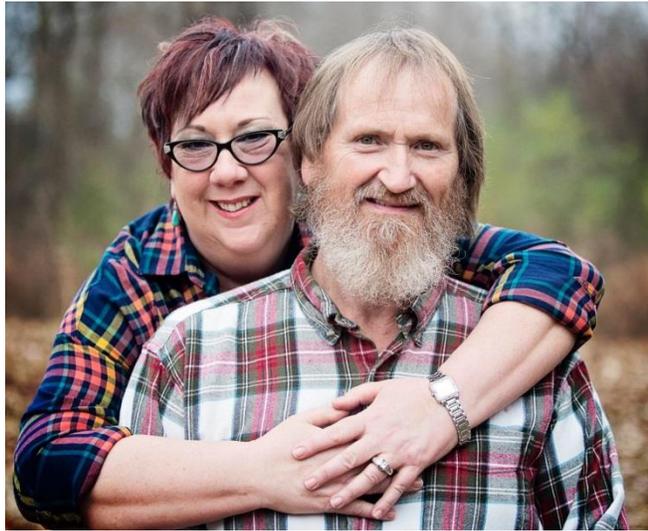
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Forever we will remember Randy Cope

Randy Cope was a union steward and officer for decades. He served as our Secretary-Treasurer for the Arkansas Postal Workers for several years and was the Maintenance Director for the state for a few years – besides being an officer with the Western Arkansas Area Local (Fort Smith) for most of his postal career. But most of all – Randy was a friend to all of us. We lost Brother Randy to cancer March 20th and held a special celebration ceremony in his honor April 22nd. His wife, Karen, was also a state officer with the Auxiliary for several years. Randy & Karen and family were very close. Plus they made us all feel part of their family. God bless Brenda, the entire Cope family and all of his many, many friends.

You're Invited!



Union Meeting

Sun., 2:00 pm

May 7th, 2017

Denny's Restaurant

Sunset Ave. – just off Exit 72 (I-49)

4861 W. Sunset Ave.

Springdale, Arkansas

You could win \$50 Door Prize or More!

We Need to Make Our Opinions Known

by Sonya Kirsch, Recording Secretary

Much of the country was caught off-guard by the most recent presidential election. While some mourned the election's outcome, others rejoiced. Regardless of how citizens cast their votes, many people have been re-evaluating the direction our government has taken since President Trump's inauguration.

Many people who have had minimum exposure or participation in the political process in the past have become galvanized in recent months. Citizens from all walks of life are taking to the streets in an effort to have their voices heard. They are joining marches, attending town halls held by our members of Congress, and contacting senators and representatives in record numbers to make their opinions known about numerous issues. I've become one of those people.

On January 21st of this year my daughter and I joined over seven thousand people in Little Rock, Arkansas for the Women's March. Millions more participated globally, with more people showing up in Washington D.C. for the Women's March than those who attended our new president's inauguration. What I discovered while there was that people are mobilizing and not going to be as silent and passive as they have been in the past. Our country's future is far too important to leave to chance.

I have attended several town halls and appearances by Senator Tom Cotton and Representative Steve Womack in the past few months. I have confirmed what I already suspected. They are no friends to organized labor or the working class. Their constituency has been complacent for far too long and they have taken that silence as a mandate to only serve their campaign donors and the people who voted for them. Womack even went so far as to discount people who questioned his voting record as being against him and not voting for him. That's a pretty bold assumption considering he had never met some of these people before.

Sadly, since Womack garnered 77% of the vote in his 2016 election, he erroneously holds to the idea that his beliefs are in line with the beliefs of his constituents. Yet, all voters only account for roughly 42% of the population of the third district if the population from the 2000 census is used (the population of the third district in 2000 was 672,756. The number of people who voted for Womack versus the entire 3rd district population only amount to 32% of the populace. Many didn't vote, that's an entirely different issue, and many couldn't vote. His views will not change unless we confront him.

Tom Cotton's senatorial election, while won by a 56.5% of the vote, is even less representative of the population. The state population in 2014 was 2.966 million people. Those that voted for Cotton, all 478,819 of them only account for 16% of the overall population. Unless we become more aware and politically active Senator Cotton will continue to make decisions for our state that may not be representative of what Arkansans truly believe.

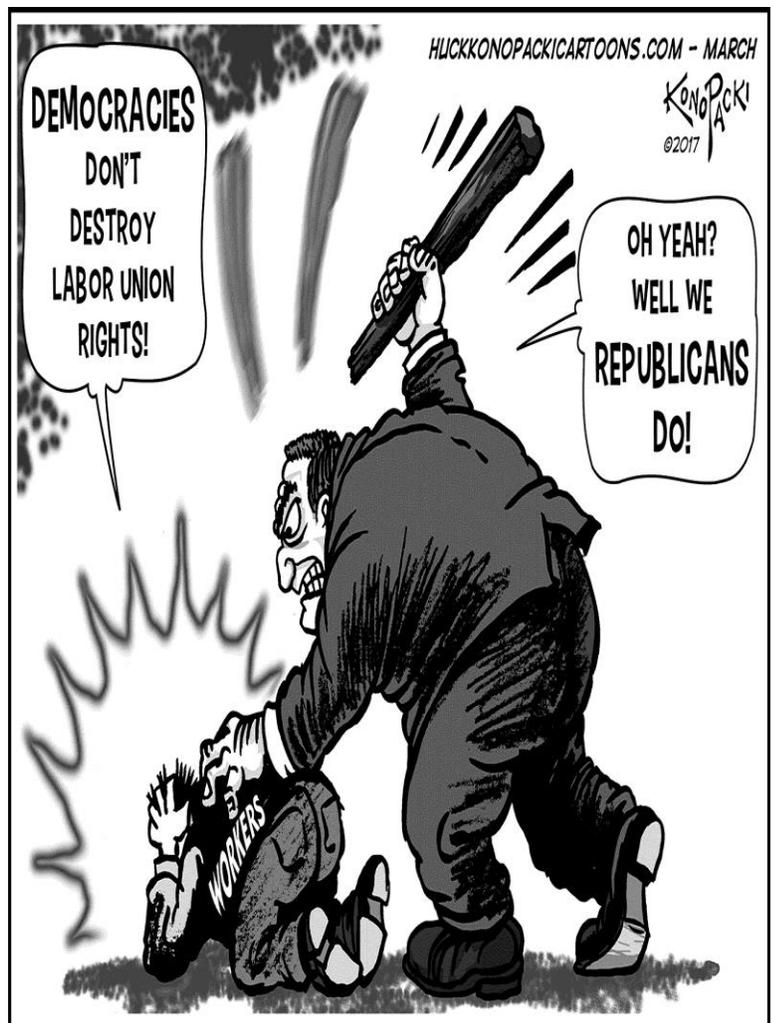
What our elected officials have forgotten is that they are representatives, meaning they represent all people in their districts or states regardless of whether or not each individual voted for them. So, my union brothers and sisters, it's time to make some noise. Let's remind them that we pay their salaries.

Steve Womack's info

Washington D.C.	phone: (202)225-4301	fax: (202)225-5713
Rogers Office	phone: (479)464-0446	fax: (479)464-0063
Harrison Office	phone: (870)741-6900	fax: (870)741-7741
Fort Smith Office	phone: (479)424-1146	fax: (479)424-2737

Tom Cotton's info

Washington D.C.	phone: (202)224-2353	
Springdale Office	phone: (479)751-0879	fax: (479)927-1092



A Perfect Contract?

By “Barney” Barnes, Siloam Springs Steward

“No way.... But.....”

Hello, APWU! I’m “Barney” from Siloam Springs. My full legal name is “Darrell Wayne Barnes”, but almost no one knows me as anything except “Barney”. I’ve been “Barney” since 9th Grade, and that was a loony time ago.

First, I’d like to thank the folks at Siloam’s Post Office for making me their Union Steward (or maybe “cuss” them – depending on what is driving me crazy at the moment?).

On the good side, I’ve met a lot of people who actually want to help others have a better life and not just improve things for themselves.

On the not-so-good side, I’m having to study the Contract and spend a lot more time learning how to defend us all from management: blatant violations of the same Contract they agreed to.

Of course, there are Union people who only think of themselves, but not even a small fraction of the number who are in the USPS management.

Being a new steward, it kind of surprised me when I was asked to go to the APWU National Convention. I’m not much on politics and fighting management (or anyone else for that matter) just to be fighting. That is pure dumb to me.

But I agreed to go so I could learn more about how to defend us all. (Hey! That is my job as a steward.)

At first I was kind of overwhelmed by the (to me) overboard focus on politics, but after meeting some of the folks, I realize they are sort of tied together. No matter which candidate, party, or platform you support, our very jobs depend on our politicians and leaders who need to put America first, its workers next, and themselves last. And when they do not, we ALL need to know how to defend ourselves, our friends, our families, and our country from their greed, mismanagement, and intentional attempts to take over and put us under the rule of the few instead of the rule of the People.

No, I don’t agree with most of the politics, but that didn’t stop any of the people I met from giving me advice or various ways to defend the Union Contract.

And that fact alone gives me hope that Republicans or Democrat or Independent – we can all stand together and make the USPS not only a better place to work, but the great place it can be.

Now, on to Maintenance....

People, please understand just how important our new Contract is. The upper levels (and a lot of the lower levels) of management seriously want Maintenance to go away – especially the custodians – because we get paid good wages but don’t actually move the mail. And they really are crazy enough to believe that they can get our work done cheaper and better by lower-paid outside contractors. The truth is – only the outside workers will be lower-paid. The outside management people will get the lion’s share of the “saved” monies, and our offices will not be taken care of like they should be.

Our Contract specifies cleaning and repair standards for all buildings and equipment, and I know those standards aren’t always met. (Usually, thanks to MIS-management)

But do you really believe things would improve without the Union Contract negotiated standards that are in use now? No!

While at the convention, I heard about a USPS facility (which I believe was in Davenport, Iowa?) where the USPS management did away with all BEM (Building Equipment Mechanics) positions. And during the hot parts of the summer, every air conditioning unit went out. The building got so hot inside that many people got sick and the building was actually closed by the P.O.

This was not only wrong, but also STUPID. However, it does prove our importance as Maintenance. The point I’m trying to make is – No, the Contract is not perfect, but thank the Good Lord and all those people who worked so hard to get it. Thanks to them, we still have job protection, we’re getting a small raise (not the cut in pay the USPS wanted), we’re keeping our COLA, and we have the right to defend ourselves against management – not just to take whatever they shovel on us.

So, to end this ramble... Keep doing your job to the best of your ability and don’t let them get to you. Enjoy your life. (It will really mess with your minds.) Thanks, Barney.



L to R:
Cris Martinez
(Springdale
Steward) and
Richard Trusty
(Tour 1 Steward,
P&DC)

They, along with several others from NWAAL, were attending the Arkansas Postal Workers Union Spring Meeting, March 17, 2017 in Pine Bluff