

April – May 2016

## From the President

### Ike Mills

I realize all of you have one nagging question: “What did they say about the contract?”

Well, they are being pretty tight-lipped about the specifics, but I felt the negotiating team and everyone that has testified at the presentations have done very well for us. They are expecting to have a new contract by June or July. As soon as we get a new contract, we will be starting our LMOU negotiations; so get your suggestions down on paper and turned into your stewards or officers so we can address your concerns.

Convention went very well and the attendance was good. We had nine members from our Local attend all or parts of the events or classes. It was good for our Local since the only cost we incurred was the registration fees. It is rare that we get such an opportunity to hear from so many off our National Officers in person at the same time. I'm sorry for those of you that were unable to take advantage of such a great opportunity. I would like to personally thank all of the people that worked so hard to make the event such a success.

Our 10 State Officers were re-elected unopposed to their positions, and the State convention went very well. We were able to conduct all the business in the one day we had planned and with very little debate. Our finances are in good order and all is going well.

Well, keep up the good fight, and remember that Thursdays are Union T-shirt and gear day. So dress up and show management that we are combined and united in this struggle and that we will “Stand up and Fight back”. We will be electing delegates to the National Convention at the May 15th Union meeting; so if you are interested in going, then show up and let us know your intentions. The convention is the week of the 22 - 25 of August and the Craft conferences start on the 20th so our travel days will be the 19th and 26th of August. Hope to see you there.



**April 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting at Denny's (new local banner in background)**  
L to R: Cheryl Wing, Chris Mantia, Pat Wilson, Sharon Wilson, Nancy Sramek, Ike Mills, Sonya Kirsch, Tina Delay, Sheila Kwiatkowski, Drew Heyd, Phil Morgan. (taking picture: Loren Adams)

**If you come only to help me, you can go back home. But if you consider my struggle as part of your struggle for survival, then maybe we can work together.** —Aboriginal wise woman

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 Webmaster.....Jake Lamkins

**NEXT UNION MEETINGS:**

Sunday, May 15 – 2:00 pm  
 Denny's, 4861 W. Sunset, Springdale  
 APWU Fayetteville Local – 2300 S City Lake Rd  
 P.O. Box 654 – Fayetteville AR 72702  
 Phone: (479) 571-1006 – fax: (479) 442-7131

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# You're Invited!

## UNION MEETING



Sunday, May 15, 2016 – 2:00 p.m.  
**Denny's Restaurant**, 4861 W. Sunset, Springdale  
 Just off Exit 72 of I-49

**You could win \$50 or \$100 Door Prize! Soft Drinks & Snacks on-the-house**

**Delegates to National Convention in Orlando  
 will be selected at May's Meeting!**



# BUILDING A BETTER UNION

The union is an integral part of our jobs as postal workers. It negotiates contracts, wages, and working conditions. While the first two are mostly dealt with in the national level, working conditions are something we have more control over at the local level.

What does that have to do with building a better union? It's important to remember that there can be no union without our individual members. It's necessary for us to keep in mind that our unity makes us stronger and a greater force to be reckoned with in the workplace. Despite our individual frustrations we need to keep in mind that our fellow union members are in the fight with us.

There are three things that would strengthen our union. These apply to all members but even more so to those of us who have been around a long time. We have a responsibility to mentor the younger workers and PSEs that are just entering our ranks.

First and foremost, be helpful. Share the knowledge you have of our union and workplace practices with those who may not know. Make sure the new folks understand their rights. By lending them a hand and answering their questions we'll all help to make sure the contract is followed and all workers aren't being taken advantage of.

Second, be supportive and view incoming PSEs as equals. Yes they may have a lot to learn, they may not be equal in knowledge, but they are still deserving of our respect. Those old time union members who went to hell and back in our journey to become career employees know how hard it can be. Let us remember that just because we may have worked horrible hours and been mistreated never made the practice right. Rather than sitting back and thinking our dues have been paid on the road to career status, that we can sit back and let our new workers bust their rears like we did, we need to break the cycle and treat them better than we were treated. We understand their struggles so we shouldn't make things harder. Treat junior employees with the respect you would want.

Last, by mentoring new workers we can encourage them and ourselves to be more active. An active union is a strong union. If we actively stand together in upholding the contract management will have fewer opportunities to abuse workers.

So get to know your fellow workers, union members, and show them the ropes, show them what we're all about. Together we can build a better union.

– Sonya Kirsch, Recording Secretary



# A RUSH TO JUDGMENT

A co-worker walking down the hall yelled at me with her back turned, “You had it coming!” I asked what she meant by that, and she turned around and replied, “Because you’ve been so damned active in the union and stood up for people that don’t deserve it.”

Well, that was her take on the situation. But when it came her turn to be called on the carpet, there was no doubt in her mind that she was innocent and that she deserved representation unconditionally. How things change when it involves oneself!

I was under fire for made-up charges that were easily dismissed in minutes. But what lasted in my memory was the loud opinion of a fellow employee who was only expressing what many believed at the time.

Guilty until proven innocent, a union leader / activist carries a target on his or her back whether they recognize it or not. I call it “caught between a rock and a hard place.” One cannot be an advocate or defense lawyer without being silently or openly associated with the client along with all his/her baggage. Over the years, I’ve had to file some of the toughest grievances that, on the outside, looked questionable, but, upon closer inspection, were totally with merit and which, in the long run, prevailed.

Being “union” means being loyal to one another; the two words – *loyal* and *union* – are inseparable. You’re not at work to only do your job, clock out, and go home. You’re at your place of employment to work WITH co-workers. And if you’re unwilling to work with people, pretty soon others will work against you; it’s that simple. Karma’s a bitch.

**Probably most of us have been at the receiving end of a “rush to judgment.”**

If on occasion a union rep automatically assumes a member is guilty and, as a result, vocally reprimands that person to his/her face in an embarrassing fashion, plus dismisses circumstances and the member’s account, the rep is guilty of a rush to judgment. The consequence is alienation from the Union and what is called “disillusionment” – a fancy term meaning: “A feeling of disappointment resulting from the discovery that something is not as good as one believed it to be”. Pretty soon, the member becomes inactive, or worse – asks for his/her anniversary date.

Probably most of us have been at the receiving end of a “rush to judgment”. On my 28<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1978 as I was bicycling to classes at the U of A, I suffered a massive stroke. I didn’t understand, at first, the reasons – either medically or spiritually – why something so horrible would happen to me. Doctors informed my family I was not expected to survive.

After a few weeks at WRMC, I finally recovered enough to where family and friends could visit – although I was still unable to speak clearly and my right side was paralyzed.

One “friend” whispered in my ear, “What did you do wrong, Loren? God must not be pleased with you.”

Talk about adding insult to injury! There I was – unable to move and barely talk, and, to compound the horror, I was looked upon as guilty until proven innocent. A rush to judgment. I felt the “friend” was not speaking as a representative of Christ, but as a critic. With friends like that, who needs enemies?

There was a man in antiquity who faced judgment from so-called “friends” because he was going through hard times. His narrative went something like this:

Job was a wealthy man who had many children. One day the devil accused God of protecting and spoiling Job. “If that protection is lifted,” Satan hypothesized, “Job will turn his back on you and curse you.”

So, God allowed the test to begin. Job’s wealth and health were taken away – as were Job’s wife and children. He was left homeless in abject poverty, but still Job refused to blame God.

**His “friends” only added fuel to the fire and were thus the worst kind of “advocates.”**

Soon his so-called “friends” came by to visit and bring “comfort” to their impoverished, sick buddy. A few hours later they counseled Job that he must have done something wrong to deserve such shocking disasters. One “friend” called Job a liar for defending himself; another blamed Job’s children for bringing evil on the family. All of them had nothing but negative to say – trying to explain Job’s circumstances. They were the ultimate fault-finders, which left Job isolated and alone in his misery. His “friends” only added fuel to the fire and were thus the worst kind of “advocates.” Yet they put their derogatory words in the most logical forms – like sharp knives in the back.

The story contains such a lasting principle; it’s been assigned a universal definition: **Job’s Comforter** – “A person who aggravates distress under the guise of giving comfort.”

Loyalty to one another is the glue that holds a union together, not just paperwork or some obscure contract that changes from time-to-time. “Solidarity” is the term unions use to put its purpose in a nutshell, and “*Semper Fidelis*” or “*Semper Fi*” is the Marine Corps slogan of a similar vein. Translated from Latin, the slogan means “*Always Faithful*” – which is defined as being always loyal to one another with an eternal commitment to fellow Marine comrades-in-arms.

Finally, to build up the Union – whatever is true, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is positive, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or worthy – focus on such things. Never rush to judgment, especially on one’s own. Stick together. Be a friend to win a friend; that’s *union*.

– Loren Adams, Editor