

RAZOR**BACK** **S**CHEME

American Postal Workers Union • Fayetteville Arkansas Local

June 18, 2010

The Union Ain't Done Nuthin For Me!

By Andrew Heyd

Many people ask "why should I join the union?" "What have they ever done for me?" Instead of listing the details and benefits Unions have historically achieved for the working class, let's just look where we'd be without the Union. It's easy to do... A simple comparison.....you compared to a casual employee.

You make almost twice what a casual does.

You have guaranteed time.

You have cost of living adjustments.

You have annual leave.

You earn sick leave.

You have the grievance procedure.

And if you're a Full Time Regular...You have holidays off.

You have a set schedule (and if changed for management's convenience you get premium pay).

You have an assigned work area.

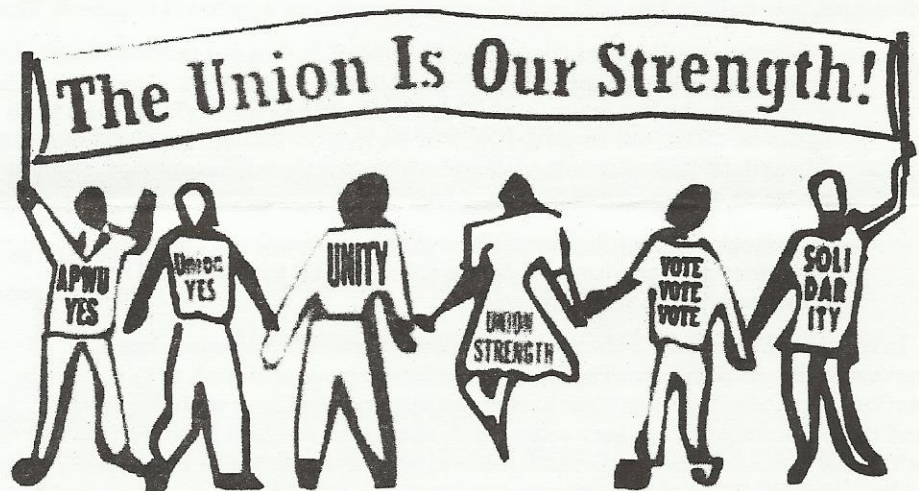
You have guaranteed overtime before a casual.

And lets not forget about health insurance and thrift savings....and so much more that Unions have achieved for You. Without the Union, you would be much like (if not) a casual employee.

You would be forced to rely solely on management for any benefits. Just one example of management taking care of it's casual employees – recently, upon being re-hired, casuals received approximately \$1.50 less than what they were getting paid before.

What it comes down to is not only choice – but character. Are you someone who receives benefits or services without any moral obligation to contribute your fair share...or...do you believe we're in this together and only by combined strength can we hope to continue to enjoy the benefits we currently have?

Support your local Union. Be part of the team. Join American Postal Workers Union.



If it is to be, it is up to me!

APWU FAYETTEVILLE LOCAL 667

Affiliated with the Arkansas Postal Workers Union, the Arkansas AFL-CIO, the Accident Benefit Association, and the APWU Postal Press Association. Established May 1, 1920 as Local 667 of the National Association Of Post Office Clerks

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Know Your Contract...

In this case, know your LMOU. LMOU stands for Local Memorandum of Understanding. It covers certain items which the contract leaves open for local negotiations. It is negotiated locally between the union and management and is just as binding as the contract.

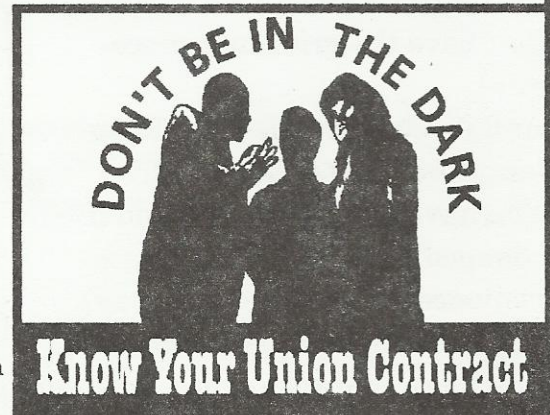
You have probably heard of the 72-hour rule for approval or disapproval of annual leave requests. Unfortunately, we are often unable to enforce this rule because employees do not do what is required. The LMOU reads as follows:

"Written applications for annual leave shall be handed to the employee's immediate supervisor, and shall be signed by the supervisor showing the time and date of submission. Approval or disapproval of these requests shall be made within seventy-two hours, *excluding the employee's days off* and shall be in writing. The failure to respond by management within the seventy-two hour period will be considered automatic leave approval. If the employee does not follow these procedures the leave shall be considered disapproved, annotated on the 3971 and returned to the employee as soon as possible.

Any employee desiring proof of submission may submit application in triplicate. Supervisor will sign line for 'signature of supervisor and date notified' on the triplicate and return it immediately to the employee."

In order to invoke the 72-hour rule, it is imperative that employees hand leave requests to their supervisor in person; do not leave on a desk or in a mailbox. Wait for the supervisor to sign the appropriate blank with the date and time of submission. If they refuse to do this, point out that they are violating the LMOU. This also ensures that requests are handled in the proper order.

If you have filled out your request in triplicate, the supervisor should return to you the signed copy with the date and time. From this time, the supervisor has 72 hours to approve or disapprove your request. When this procedure is followed, there is seldom any problem getting a leave slip back in 72 hours. It is when employees feel they can "trust" their supervisor and leave a request on the desk that we have problems. Requests left in this manner tend to get lost or forgotten. Without a signed copy, there is no way to prove that you turned in a 3971.



Meeting Highlights:

- Pam Beck nominated and elected as editor.
- Three local members attending National Convention in August: Loren Adams, Greg Albright, and Pam Beck.
- Retirement Seminar scheduled for September.
- LMOU committee appointed to prepare for upcoming negotiations.

Finding Our Way Forward

Everyone realizes the storm is fast approaching, but many simply ignore the obvious – perhaps as a means of survival. I remember how my grandmother (“Mom Emmer”) used to herd us kids down to the storm cellar every time she heard thunder. She remembered the day a tornado swooped up her two aunts at Belleville, Arkansas around 1908, and she didn’t want a repeat.

The APWU is fast approaching a storm – a decision day – negotiations during the time of the greatest economic strain on the Postal Service in 80 years as well as the entire United States since the Great Depression of the 30s.

Yes, escaping by avoiding or ignoring seems to be a temporary fix. But the day of reckoning eventually catches up to those that choose retreat. There are good reasons the ostrich buries its head in the sand and turtle withdraws into its shell. But eventually the predator gets the best of them.

The sense of false security goes like this, “If I just ignore the problem, it’ll go away.” (Somewhat like, “If we build it, they will come,” but in reverse.) “Out of sight, out of mind.” “No news is good news.” No war has ever been won by soldiers on retreat. By the same token, no union movement has succeeded by being led by the meek, the weak, or the passive. The Union needs an optimistic, proactive, positive, solutions-based leadership that’ll meet this challenge with unwavering determination.

Yes, we’re facing crisis of Apocalyptic proportions. Yes, national leaders are dropping out like flies as they apparently watch the same storm approaching that we are. (Were officers of the Titanic first to abandon ship?) The question remains, “What can we as individuals (despite national officers jumping ship) do to prepare?”

Almost every day I’m confronted by members inquir-

From the....

President

Loren Adams

ing as to what’s happening on the national level, whether management is preparing to force five-day delivery down America’s throat, etc. I tell them I don’t have all the answers, and management seldom communicates with me – even for that which they’re contractually obligated. It’s as if we’re peering through a tinted glass trying to ascertain the future.

I sure don’t have all the answers, but I have a few suggestions for the near term. The first suggestion would be to **SAVE MONEY**. I realize most postal employees think “This too will pass, so we can carry on as usual.” But I wouldn’t count on it this time. Cut expenses to bare-bones and delay big-purchase items. Get your credit card debt down to **ZERO**. Pay off your car and home, if possible. The hard fact is we don’t know how much we’ll be earning this time next year. So, keep that primary thought in mind.

My second suggestion is to pick new national officers with some **SPINE**. And some **BRAINS**. Negotiations are not a walk in the park. We need a Mother Jones in these tough times to steer APWU back on course, and there are some great national leaders from which to choose. How can you discover the best? Pay attention; read online and via publications, and talk to local and state leaders in-the-know.

My third suggestion is probably the most important. Get **INVOLVED** in your local union. Go to meetings. Visit your co-workers when they’re in the hospital. Recognize special days and dates in their lives. Back them up with witness statements when requested. Become a shoulder to cry on, or become that morale booster so desperately needed in times like these. Make your workplace a vibrant community instead of a miserable compound. There’s strength in numbers; that rule never changes. The stronger the locals are, the stronger the national organization. And the only

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LOCAL 667

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way to build strength is to show genuine concern for one another. UNION is not simply about the Contract or work issues. "UNION" is about UNITY, and the only way to build this invaluable solidarity is to care for those around you. Be sincere about it too.

I'm reminded of the "Prayer of St. Francis" written around 900 years ago. It goes like this:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where
there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt,
faith; where there is despair, hope; where there
is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy;
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much
seek to be consoled as to console; to be under-
stood as to understand; to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive; it is in par-
doning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying
that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis' prayer has meant so much to me all my life.

We can make it through this dark night if we just stick together. For, as Benjamin Franklin so aptly put it, "Either we hang together or we hang separately." United we stand; divided we fall.

**American
Postal
Workers** **ABA**
**ACCIDENT BENEFIT
ASSOCIATION**

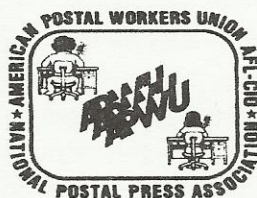
**PROUD
MEMBER**

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Our PTFs may be converted by the time this publication is circulated. Congratulations (if they go through) and be patient (if delayed). The Arkansas District is attempting to settle a dispute about maintaining an excessing order for one Rogers clerk -- which may be moot since they have a casual in contradiction to the Contract.

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Heartfelt sympathy is expressed to DOROTHY SALLEY on the loss of her father.

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Hope to see all of you at the meeting July 18th!

PROUD MEMBER!



Attend Your

UNION

Meetings!