

RAZORBACK SCHEME

American Postal Workers Union • Fayetteville Arkansas Local

March 2011

Going For The Jugular

By Loren Adams, Local President

1 March 2011

Basic morality. That's the issue. Human rights and democracy are the manifestations of that common ethic. The good of America is being assaulted by the bad – the greedy and pompous self-serving which pose as fiscal conservatives and guardians of traditional values (which they are neither).

Nothing less than our existence as a collective body of workers whose purpose it is to negotiate a living wage and decent working conditions is at stake – as is democracy as we know it. Like never before in recent memory, unions are under attack.

It's a divide-and-conquer strategy. They attempt to separate public sector from private sector unions / union members from non in a deliberate attempt to inflame hostility between working Americans. Their aim is to further concentrate wealth at the top while more and more Americans are plunged into poverty.

Facility closings aren't for the good of the Service; they're for motivating career employees to quit after being left with the option of leaving their homes and families for a job miles down the road performing the same work but with added transportation costs. As in Wisconsin, the budget is just a ruse. Hurting workers is the real target.

Governor Scott Walker (WI) was handed a \$120 million budget surplus when coming into office in January. Immediately he granted \$120 million tax breaks to his corporate buddies, which left a budget deficit. So, now he turns around and wants teachers and state workers to bear the brunt – as if nobody sees how he juggled the money. What's worse – he wants to decertify all unions, deny collective bargaining, and strip labor of the right to negotiate working conditions – which have nothing to do with the budget shortfall which he just caused.

APWU is also a public sector union. If politicians like Walker in Wisconsin can get away with union-busting, who's next?

NEGOTIATIONS ONGOING

We just learned that contract negotiations have been extended through part of March, date uncertain. President Guffey seems to believe an agreement is soon to be reached. Then it must be ratified by the rank & file – which means us. It's been the most difficult period of contract negotiations since 1971, leaders report. We'll have to review the contract proposal before making judgment, but we realize there probably will be costlier benefits and personnel disruptions on a large scale, etc.

STATE MEETING

Five Fayetteville members attended the State Meeting in February and were asked to submit reports for this newsletter. Therefore, I will

keep my letter short.

Keep the faith. You're invited to your Union Meeting March 13th. There's much information shared at these meetings, and you are more than welcome to attend. Thank you.



From the....

President

Loren Adams

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

The RAZORBACK SCHEME is the official publication of Fayetteville Local 667. All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Union. Articles submitted for publication must be signed; however, names will be withheld upon request. The Editor reserves the right to edit, publish and reject submissions. Submit by mail to P.O. Box 654, Fayetteville, AR 72702, or leave in the Editor's box in the Union Room.

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Notes from Hot Springs Convention

by Andrew Heyd

February 18

The first speaker was Alan Hughes from Arkansas AFL-CIO. He said that what's going on in Wisconsin is happening everywhere. A possible benefit is that it will bring unions together. The public is our strength. We need to get them involved. Calling and e-mailing your state representatives does make a difference. They do look at the number of calls and e-mails received on any given issue.

Jay Davidson with Postal Benefits Group out of Little Rock spoke to us briefly on understanding our benefits, early outs, the TSP and pension. He informed us that the TSP C-fund has not made a dime in 10 years. It may show an increase but that is due to your own contribution. To estimate your retirement pension, count 1% for every year you have worked, based on your high three years' salary. If you work 30 years and your high three was \$50,000, then you can look at a retirement of around \$15,000 per year (hardly enough to live on.) Add to that your Social Security and TSP.

We were then visited by Lamont Brooks, Assistant Clerk Craft Director, National APWU. He stated that the current contract negotiations are the most difficult ever. Mr. Brooks was reluctant to disclose too much detail on what was currently being discussed behind closed doors until the contract is completely agreed to by both parties. However, the union is trying to continue the no-layoff clause, wants a ban on excessing, and to eliminate 204-B's. The union is also looking to create non-traditional full time assignments (i.e. 4 10-hour days, 6 6-hour days, etc.) They are also trying to maintain and keep all benefits.

Training:

DUR/DUO, or Delivery Unit Optimization is management's scheme to move carriers from a small facility to a larger one, also causing excessing of clerks. The small office is then downsized, leading to the postmaster or OIC performing clerk work. This is

already happening in some offices near St. Louis. Expected local targets are Lowell (into Rogers) and Farmington (into Fayetteville/Dickson St.)

LMOU Negotiations training may be premature if the new contract further limits what we can bargain for locally. The union's current CBR guide to local negotiations will be updated when this contract is settled.

Accountable Mail guidelines state that carriers are required to sign out and in accountable pieces of mail, including certified. In some offices clerks have been directed to sort certified with the regular mail, bypassing the accountable cage. This is wrong and should be grieved. In-office scanning is clerk work. Carriers should scan only when delivering or attempting to deliver the mail.

February 19

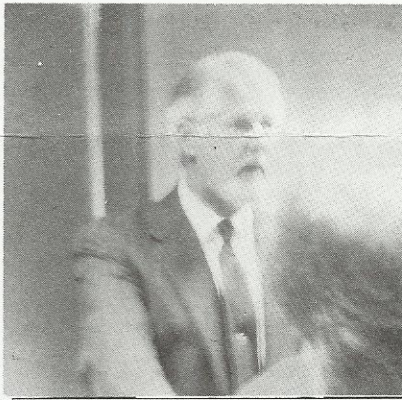
National Business Agents leave early.

Delegates to Tri-State Convention in Iowa are accepted.

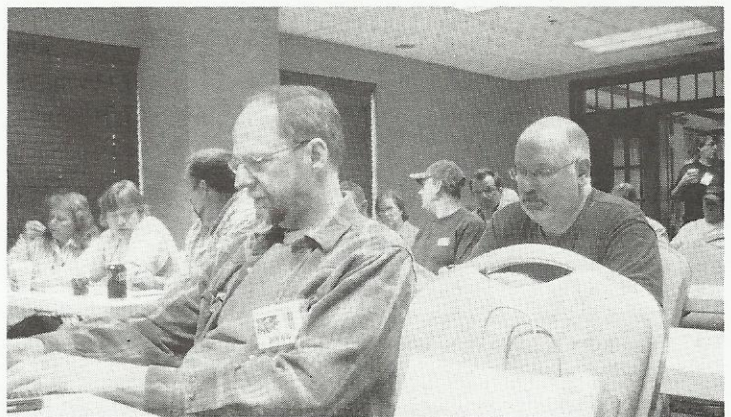
Fall convention in Bentonville was discussed. Convention is set for 6/7/8 of October, hosted by Fayetteville/Rogers locals. Possible problem is Clerk Craft Convention in Las Vegas Oct. 10-13. State Convention may need to be moved up a day.

Arkansas AFL-CIO 3-day event June 21-23.

June Convention is in Fort Smith, state business meeting.



Arkansas AFL-CIO President Alan Hughes speaking to delegates at APWU convention.



Drew Heyd and Ike Mills at Hot Springs Convention

New kid on the block

By Ike Mills

Well hello to all members of the Fayetteville local. This is my first event that I have attended as a member of this Local. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to attend this event. It gave me an opportunity to meet the new people of your State organization and the National officers that were in Hot Springs for this event. It was informative to sit in the classes concerning the new plans management is implementing concerning the consolidation of the carriers from small delivery offices into larger offices (DUO) and the training on LMOU procedures and negotiations.

Both scenarios could impact our Crafts in the APWU in the immediate future. I want to thank all of you that I have been able to meet so far for making the transition during this transfer a good experience. For those that I haven't had the opportunity to meet



yet, I am looking forward to getting to know each of you. For those that don't know anything about me yet, I will tell you a few of the facts so we aren't complete strangers when we do meet. I transferred here on January 15th from Washington State. I have worked for the Postal Service since November of 1993 and have been a Clerk the whole time. Prior to that I spent almost 14 years in the US Marines Corps working in Aviation Electronics. I have been married for a little over 20 years and my wife's name is Tonya. We have one child and her name is Kaylynn and she is 19 years old. The rest will have to come later so I don't bore you to death. Well again, thank you and I wish you all the best.

Unions in the spotlight

The main question on everyone's mind right now is how the contract negotiations are going. We don't have any definite answers yet, but it is clear that in the current political climate we would be doing well just to keep what we have and what many of us have taken for granted. At the very least, we should probably expect to pay more for our healthcare benefits.

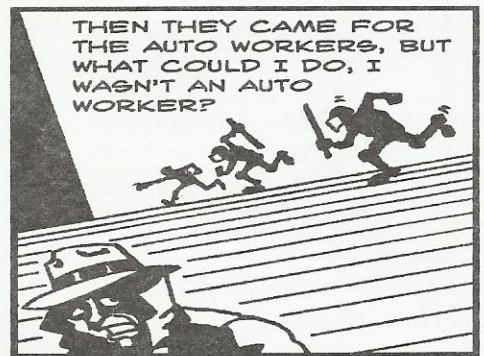
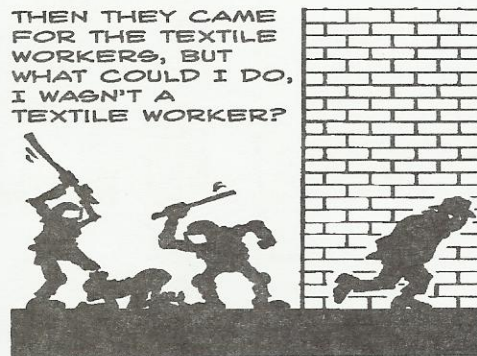
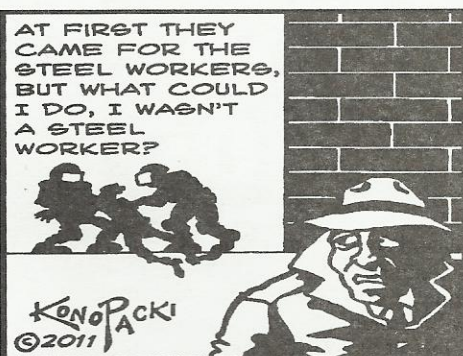
Anyone who thinks that the events in Wisconsin and the anti-union legislation being passed in other states have nothing to do with us is not facing reality. If laws can be passed to take away well-established bargaining rights, we are clearly vulnerable to this also. It is time for some people to wake up and realize that they need this union if they want to maintain their current lifestyle. Conversely, the union needs every member it can get. Solidarity only works when people are involved.

Much of the legislation being voted on in state legislatures has to do with cutting union funding for political campaigns. They

By Pam Beck

make it sound like union dues go directly to supporting candidates. That just isn't true. Your APWU dues are used for training people to represent you, paying the union's employees, and covering expenses involved in the grievance process. APWU has a committee on political action, called COPA, to which **all contributions are voluntary**. It is not funded by union dues.

On the bright side, the union-busting tactics of the republicans may backfire on them. The republicans think that by weakening unions they will be better situated in the next elections, but regardless of where the money is, it still comes down to public opinion. Governor Walker's refusal to work with the unions is not making republicans look good, rather it is exposing them as the pawns of the rich and greedy. One poll that I saw said that 2 out of 3 American adults side with the unions in Wisconsin. Although only 11 to 12 percent of American workers are union members, there is support for us out there. This could be the beginning of a new labor movement in America.



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LOCAL 667

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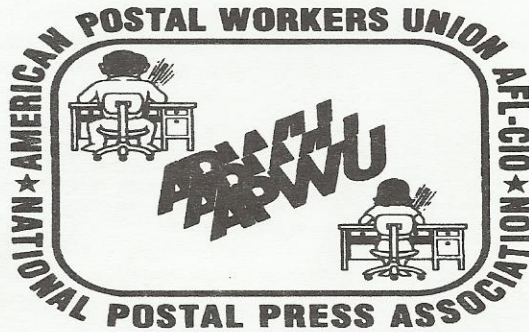
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NWA P
MON 14

PROUD MEMBER!



Get Involved!! The world is run by those who show up.



Next Union meeting is Sunday
 March 13, at 1:00 pm, at Jim's
 Razorback Pizza. Plan to be there.
 There may be more information
 available on contract negotiations.

