



Razorback Scheme

American Postal Workers Union • Fayetteville Arkansas Local 667

August 2012

From the President

Well, it is time for another article for the paper. It seems like we were just putting together the last newsletter.

One of the subjects I have chosen for this month is one that may seem trivial or unimportant to many of you, but I want to try to explain the importance of clocking from one operation to another every time you move between operations.

I hear many excuses from the employees as to why they do not do it. They say it is not important for an employee to comply. I have even heard management use that phrase. This is far from the truth.

For example, I have heard from management several times in the last couple of months that they are considering abolishing the Tour 1 full-time SCF Flats and SCF Letters bid positions because we do not have enough hours to justify them.

Let me ask each of you that go to those operations on a regular or even an occasional basis, do you clock over to that operation each time you work it? If not, then you are helping management prove there is not

enough work to justify full-time positions in those operations.

Another example is the recent change in the PARS operations within the facility. Management has told me they are going to look at the clock rings of those employees to see how many hours they have worked in PARS to determine how many positions we will be losing. In addition, they will look at the clock rings to see if the employees in question worked in PARS more than 50% of the time to determine if their jobs have to be reposted due to a sufficient change of duties to those bid positions.

Therefore, if those PARS employees were not clocking in and out of that operation correctly, it could adversely affect management's decisions to abolish or repost those positions.

Those are just two examples of the many that I know or have heard about. So, as you can see, there is importance in moving on the clock from operation to operation. So, please make sure you are moving from operation to operation and remind your coworkers of the

importance of clocking over also. I realize we all forget occasionally.

**There is no "Me"
in Union . . .
Just "U" and "I"
and only
"U" and "I"
can make a
difference.**

Union Membership

The second issue I would like to discuss is the Hot Topic of Union Membership. I recently had a conversation with my twin brother who is not a supporter of a Union workforce. During the conversation, he informed me that Unions are worthless and all they do is look out for and protect worthless employees.

Shortly after that conversation a fellow coworker told me the same thing; and even more recently (the last couple of days) I had another say that it makes no sense to pay Union dues when we are required to protect the employees whether they are members or not.

It makes no sense to me that we still have several non-members that we work with on a daily basis. These individuals have a choice whether they join the Union or not. I personally do not understand how someone can even ask, "Why, should I join the Union?"

We have jobs that pay very well, give us great benefits and a good retirement – just to touch the tip of the iceberg.

However, some have chosen to take all the benefits but pay none of the costs. These same individuals will be the first to demand that the Union looks out for them and takes care of all their needs, and usually without even a thank you. Some of them will make excuse after excuse as to why they will not join the Union. It does not matter how much the Union does for them. They will either 1) not acknowledge what the Union has done for them, or 2) the Union will never do enough to earn their respect so they never join the cause, or 3) they always have some reason or excuse from the past as to why "they will never join the stinking union."

Bottom line is they want the free lunch and do not want to pull their fair share of the load. The sad thing is, that many of those are good people that could and would make a great contribution to the efforts of the Union, but for whatever reason, they refuse to be part of the effort.

Believe me, if it were not for the efforts of this great Union, our pay, our benefits, our retirement, our protection (and the list goes on and on) wouldn't be anything close to what it is now.

I would hope that the ongoing attacks and those of the past against the working class and postal workers has shown us all that management and Congress would make sure that our jobs and benefits would be drastically different if they had their choice. If it were not for the efforts of the several employees, Union members, and the concerned public our lives would have been drastically altered this year.

Until we all realize that the battles that our current Union leadership and the Unionist before us have fought for us have given us the lives and benefits we now enjoy and until we become willing to defend those benefits, we cannot truly appreciate the things we have.

When we all understand that truth, then maybe those non-members would understand the importance of a Union and maybe we would all understand, support and appreciate our Union a little more.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

(32nd President of the United States 1933-1945)

"The rights of employees freely to organize for the purpose of collective bargaining should be fully protected." Franklin D. Roosevelt

"If I were a worker in a factory, the first thing I would do would be to join a union."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

So join the union. You would be in good company!

ATTENTION TOUR 2 EMPLOYEES

There seems to be a lot of misunderstanding among the Tour 2 employees about the language in the LMOU concerning the Tour 2 leave complement and how many can be off at each station or facility. I will try to explain the intent of the language that was negotiated during the LMOU negotiations with management and hopefully clear up the confusion.

In the next LMOU, we will clean up the language and make it a little clearer.

On page 9 Item 9 A & B the language establishes the complement at 14% of the employees that are on the tour (with the 5% exception when only one employee can be off for the three weeks in December) as of November 1st of each year.

So, for the current leave year, Tour 2's complement was a total of four employees off at any given time. Management's proposal was to have no more than two employees off from any one facility at any given time, but the Union's concern was that if two employees at Craft and two employees at Dickson were off, then that would mean that no employee at the Plant could be off.

So, our counter-proposal was that they would have to ensure that at least one person at each facility could have off regardless of the complement determined by the 14% figure.

As you can see, the number of employees off for Tour 2 has some exceptions built into it because the

complement is split between three different facilities unlike the other tours complements. The language does not mean that the Tour 2 complement is six employees off during the 14 % period (2 at each facility). The Tour 2 complement is figured the same way as other tours.

Here are the options of how it could work out: A) if one facility has two off then the other two facilities could have one off each and the complement would be full. At that time, management could disapprove any additional leave requests.

B) If the timing of the submissions worked out correctly, you could have two employees off at two facilities (the complement of four) and then one more at the other facility could ask for time off and it would have to be approved and there would be a total of five off. *(One above complement)* But five is the maximum off at a time. However, remember that it is always management's discretion if they want to approve above the negotiated complement due to the circumstances involved.

Delegate Report for the 2012 Arkansas APWU State Convention

I attended the State Convention in Fort Smith Arkansas from May 31, 2012 through June 2, 2012. The Fort Smith Local, as usual, hosted a very good convention, and I would like to thank them for their hospitality.

I was assigned to the Constitution Committee, which reviewed and presented several resolutions to the body for consideration.

One resolution was to reduce the number of State meetings from three a year to one a year. After several amendments were offered, [some approved and some disapproved and several hours of discussions on Friday and Saturday], the final change to the constitution resulted in a reduction from three meetings a year to two. The format is to be a Spring Convention/Meeting in March each year (with the exception being the month of February on the years we host the Tri-State Conventions) and a fall meeting to be held in September.

There were two resolutions to increase the amount of reimbursement from \$500.00 to \$1000.00 to Locals who incurred a loss in conjunction with hosting the State Conventions and the Spring/Fall Meetings. Another submitted resolution dealt with increasing the price of pre-registration from \$50.00 to \$60.00 and registration at the door from \$55.00 to \$65.00 that a Local could charge in regards with those events. This resolution also changed the period of pre-registration from five (5) days to seven (7) days. All but one of those resolutions passed. The resolution concerning increasing the reimbursement for the loss of holding the State Conventions failed.

There was a resolution to reimburse the Locals that conduct the PSE orientations (currently Little Rock and Fort Smith) for the cost of Union products given to those new members that the Host Local signs

up for membership during orientation, that will not be a New Member of that Host Local. I supported this resolution but it failed to get enough votes to pass.

There were some other resolutions that did not pass, but they escape my memory right now.

The Scholarship Committee met and I am proud to announce that Derek Wilson, son of Pat and Sharon Wilson from our Local, was selected as the recipient of this year's scholarship. Congratulations to Derek on his graduation and best of luck with his future education.

The attendance at this Convention was much lower than in the past, I believe that there were only 22 or 23 delegates present. This low attendance shows how the Locals have been impacted by the changes within the Postal Service and our Union and only emphasized the importance of the necessity of changing the way we do business, not only within our Local but at the State and National levels also. So, at the next State Convention I will once again seek the support of our Local in submitting another resolution to reduce the number of meetings at the State level to one per year.

The last day of the Convention, the Locals present were asked if they would like to Host the Fall Meeting in 2013, we were the only Local to volunteer to host this event. So, since our Local will be hosting the Fall Meeting of 2013, any member interested in being on the planning committee, please feel free to jump aboard and help. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

GET BUSY LIVING

By Loren Adams, Local Vice-President
June 2012

Six months ago, I thought our goose was cooked. I honestly had lost all hope the Fayetteville Plant would survive. For the long-haul, I imagined the Post Office nation-wide wouldn't be around for long – given the drastic downsizing, consolidations and downgrading service that would lead to the point customers would flee into the arms of waiting competitors. I saw no hope either on the political side – where the government is essentially in gridlock and worthless coupled with the fact we are helpless to do anything about it.

To put it mildly, I was depressed. But, I was not supposed to show it in a leadership capacity. I was supposed to hold my head up high so others could more readily brave the storm [whatever that meant].

Of course, I had an exit strategy, whereas younger workers didn't. I could retire and move on. But I was still depressed knowing my fellow employees would be left out in the cold – despite union contract assurances. I was depressed realizing all the years I had invested into the Post Office would be for naught.

What made the turn-about; sickness.

The depression literally made me sick physically. I felt trapped. High blood pressure set in. I suspected tumors and growths from pain in my chest and stomach. I could hardly breathe or walk.

Then one day I watched *SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION* on DVD again. (Love that movie!) The

part where Andy Dufresne articulates to Red the purpose of life, "Either get busy living or get busy dying," hit a chord. I asked myself, "What am I doing to myself?"

I had gone through several medical tests (expensive) to find what the problems were (Thankfully, nothing life threatening). Then it hit me: "Get busy living!"

Yes, I decided to lose the weight and gain a positive attitude. I determined to be happy despite come-what-may and to share that joy with others around me so they, too, could recapture that spark of life. I decided to get back into health.

Of course, I realize we're not through the woods yet. The Postal Service is still falling apart, and politicians are still deaf to our petitions to save the USPS. The ship's still sinking, but the question is – are we physically and mentally able to swim?

We will be more likely to survive by having a healthy body & mind than a sick & depressed one. Walking, eating right, cutting out sodas & candy, and maintaining an optimistic attitude are essential ingredients. Laugh a lot. Share good thoughts with one another. Avoid vicious gossip and derogatory remarks about others. Look for the best in co-workers, and (BTW) never put yourself down either.

At the Arkansas Postal Workers Convention (May 31-June 2), delegates voted to eliminate one out of three meetings per year in order to cut expenses. Ike proposed that meetings be limited to one per year

(which would have saved the state organization as much as \$20,000 annually and several more thousand for each local), but delegates compromised with two. I agreed with Ike – that the imminent closings and job losses are real and that the state body needs to comply with the famous axiom "desperate times, call for desperate measures." Besides, other states (Missouri, Oklahoma, Washington, etc.) have had only one state convention per year for decades and do fine: so why should Arkansas be saddled with unnecessary expenses that hinder our capacity for broader representation?

Fayetteville will host the state meeting September 2013. Fayetteville and Little Rock may be the only "large" locals left by that time, and other locals that have hosted state conventions in the past will no longer be able to do so.

Meanwhile, we are admonished to keep contacting Congress (House & Senate). National APWU insists – our future depends on it.

Contact info is in this newsletter.

Keep on smiling and GET BUSY LIVING!

In Solidarity, L.A.

From the Editor's Desk Sonya Kirsch

Newsletter Developments

In April of this year, the previous editor of the Razorback Scheme resigned. After being vacant for several months and the confident urging of my daughter, I agreed to take up the pen and give it a go.

According to the APWU National Postal Press Association, all member locals must publish a minimum of four issues a year. Because our local publishes the minimum number of issues required, it is imperative that this publication serves the needs of our members. In addition to keeping you informed with what your local officers feel is important the Razorback Scheme staff wishes to include additional issues that are important to you.

During a recent union meeting, it was decided that a new ASK IKE column would be added. If there are any questions you may have about the contract, LMOU, or work issues in general, chances are there are other members who are wondering too. We want your questions.

I invite any interested member to submit items for publication. Please submit any articles, letters to the editor or questions for the ASK IKE column in the Editor-Publisher box located in the union office. For those members in outlying offices please use the address contained in the newsletter for submissions.

Since we have so few issues each year I would like to make each issue count.

Thank You Loren

This newsletter would not have been possible if not for the efforts of Loren Adams. After much complaining and whining on my part about my inability to compile the newsletter on the union computer dubbed "the dinosaur", he finally broke down and made a master copy as a Word document. Talk about relief! The dinosaur and its DOS based programs had me seriously

questioning my decision to take on the mantle as editor.

And Now an Apology

I would like to apologize profusely for my lack of timeliness with the newsletter. This has been a learning experience. I haven't used my computer this much since I was working on my master's degree. In addition, history majors don't get to play with fun graphics and varying font sizes while writing those stuffy history papers.

I have had to learn how to add graphics and experiment with different styles all while working the night shift and looking after two kiddos. Once we get past my initial learning period you can all expect a more regular newsletter.

In Solidarity, Sonya Kirsch

Safety is Up to You and Me!

Nancy Sramek Safety Rep

As your safety representative, it is my duty to recognize and correct safety issues. However, safety in the workplace is everyone's responsibility.

For the most part, our facility is pretty good at adhering to safety rules. There are a few lax areas I would like to address. Our biggest problem is blocking access to fire extinguishers and electrical boxes. The main problem is the electrical box north of the DPS mail cut area. Any placard saying, "DO NOT BLOCK" means just that. Labels and strapping on the floor are potential hazards. It only takes a few seconds to pick up debris and find a trash can.

Last, remember that headphones are only to be worn in your work area. Do not be so distracted by your music that you do not know that your machine partner is trying to communicate with you.

Please keep these few items in mind and we will all be working in a much safer environment. Let me know of any safety violations you find and I will get them corrected.

Have a great summer and keep safe!



Fights in Congress Still Rage On

Sonya Kirsch

Politics and elections in our country are strange indeed. It is common for politicians to rage on and debate about moral and/or ideological issues that voters feel strongly about, this is a clever tactic embraced by many who seek elected office to deflect from other issues that affect the working class on a daily basis.

Often, as voters, we make our decisions about our political leaders and policy based upon ideological and philosophical beliefs without regard to the impact these choices have on our everyday lives. Put your elected officials to the test. Demand they address issues upon which the wellbeing of yourself and family depend.



We all need to contact our senators and representatives persistently and loudly about postal and labor issues. H.R.2309 is a threat to the livelihood of postal workers nationwide. It would lead the way to hundreds of plant closures, the termination of Sunday delivery, and the shuttering of many rural post offices across the country. Postal workers must make our voices heard and urge our legislators to reject H.R. 2309 and any similar bill.

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, signed into law in 2006, has been a huge contributing factor to the demise of the USPS. We must repeatedly contact our elected officials, and urge them to repeal it.

Scrutinize the people who are running for positions in congress. Is that person a friend of labor? Ask hard questions. Do your best to pin them down.

In other words, vote your job and livelihood first!

Here is contact information

Rep. Steve Womack

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US House of Representatives
1508 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Phone:
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Fax:
202.225.5713

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Address:
3333 Pinnacle Hills, Suite 120
Rogers, Arkansas 72758

Phone:
479.464.0446
Fax:
479.464.0063

Senator John Boozman

Washington, D.C. Office

320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Phone: (202) 224-4843
Fax: (202) 228-1371

Lowell Office

213 West Monroe
Suite N
Lowell, AR 72745

Phone: (479) 725-0400
Fax: (479) 725-0408

Senator Mark Pryor

Arkansas Office

The River Market
500 Clinton Ave Ste 401
Little Rock, AR 72201

Phone: (501) 324-6336

Fax: (501) 324-5320

Washington, D.C. Office

255 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg

Washington, D.C. 20510

Phone: (202) 224-2353

Fax: (202) 228-0908

Toll Free from AR

Phone: (877) 259-9602

Keeping Up With Our Changing Times

It seems as if things are in a constant state of flux in the Postal Service. With those changes, we must also make changes and adapt. Our local's constitution and by-laws have not been updated since 2008. The executive board of the local is looking to bring our constitution up to date.

The input of all members is valued and requested during this process. For those of who are not familiar with our local's constitution, come have a look at one in the union office. See what you think. Can you think of anything that needs to be

changed? If you can think of something that needs to be changed, we want to hear what you have to say.

The constitution committee will meet on August 12, 2012 immediately following our union meeting. Bring your suggestions to us then, leave a message in the editor's box in the union office, or mail us your suggestions.



Speaking of Change

Our local is in the process of forming a new mailing list. We need your current address. If your contact information has not changed, please provide us with your address anyway. It is important that we have your correct address on file so we can mail ballots for union elections and future newsletters to you. Please ask an officer for an employee contact form or mail your information to the local.

Sad Farewells

These have been sad times for the local indeed. This summer has seen the passing of Paul Bermon, Teri Mitchell, and Joe Cempura. While all had already retired or transferred to other locals, they still will be missed. Our hearts go out to their families.

The local would also like to offer our condolences to both Gini Hickman and Loren Adams who both lost their mother's recently.

Please remember that your union is like an extended family. We all feel your loss.

Congratulations

Congratulations are in order for Derek Wilson, son of Pat and Sharon Wilson. Derek was awarded the State APWU Scholarship for graduating seniors. Good luck as you head off to college Derek!

Congratulations to Lindsey Pharis, daughter of Laura and Keith Pharis. Lindsey graduated from OSU with a pharmacy degree in June and recently passed her state boards. She is now a licensed pharmacist working in Northwest Arkansas. Way to go Lindsey!

Drum roll please. Wait for it. Wait for it! David Kirsch, husband of Sonya Kirsch, successfully defended his dissertation in May. With his defense, he obtained his PhD in History from the UofA at Fayetteville. For those of you in the know, this has been a long time in the making. Congratulations, and happy hunting for a professorship. May the odds be ever in your favor.

Now For Something Completely Different

From time to time, I will need a little something extra to fill out the layout in the newsletter. This will range from recipes, to household hints, to helpful tips. The website Pinterest is my muse, what can I say. Let's start with a meaningful saying.

"Don't make a permanent decision for your temporary emotion."

Not bad advice when you think about it.

Recipes for the busy worker

Make Ahead Quiche

This is made to be frozen and used later.

- 1 ½ cups shredded Swiss cheese
- 4 teaspoons all purpose all-purpose flour
- ½ cups cooked ham, or bacon diced
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground dry mustard a tablespoon of spicy mustard will also do
- 1 (9 inch) unbaked pie crust

1. In medium bowl, toss 4 teaspoons flour with the grated cheese. Sprinkle mixture into the pie shell. On top of the cheese, sprinkle ½ cup of ham.

2. In medium bowl beat eggs and milk. Add salt and mustard and beat until smooth. Pour over cheese and ham.

3. Put piece of plastic wrap large enough to overlap sides over top of quiche, then a piece of foil and seal around the edges. The plastic will keep the foil from sticking to the quiche. Place in the freezer.

4. When ready to prepare, preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Remove foil and plastic wrap. Put foil around edge of crust to keep it from burning.

5. Bake in the preheated oven for 60 minutes, or until filling is set (check with a butter knife) and crust is golden.

This recipe is versatile. Change cheeses or add whatever vegetables or meats you wish. Just be sure not to over fill the pie shell. I actually use this and have three quiches waiting on standby in my freezer.

Fayetteville Local #667

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Return Service Requested

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The **RAZORBACK SCHEME** is the official voice of Fayetteville APWU Local 667. However, opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the APWU, union officials, or the Editor. Articles, artwork, cartoons, and other material are solicited from those readers who wish to share their views with others. Although freedom of the press is recognized, contributors are exhorted not to write derogatorily about any fellow union member or to submit any false allegation concerning management or any other individual inside or out of this union. All letters must be signed and in the hands of the editor ten days prior to the next scheduled business meeting. Names will be withheld upon request. Send contributions to P.O. Box 654, Fayetteville, AR 72702, or submit to union officials. Submissions may be returned upon request.

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APWU!

Next Union Meeting

**Sunday, September 16,
2012**

**Jim's Razorback Pizza
1:00 p.m.**

