

Razorback Scheme

American Postal Workers Union • Northwest Arkansas Area Local

November 2022

From the President

The Right to Vote

by Ike Mills

Hello, Brothers and Sisters: My subject for this newsletter is concerning a right that we all have and some rarely use. You may ask what right is that? Well, it is your right to vote.

Ask yourself, and be honest with your answers. **Did you vote for the last Collective Bargaining Agreement? Did you vote for the recent APWU National Officers? Are you voting for who our Local's next Vice-President is going to be? Are you going to vote in the 2022 Mid-Term elections?**

And the final question is –

“Are you even registered to vote?”

The records sent to me say we have around 20 registered to vote. We had only 20 percent of our members vote for our current contract, just barely over 10 percent of our members voted in the APWU National election of officers, and we will see how the Local's elections and the 2022 Midterms turn out.

We all need to be more involved in the elections and exercise our right to vote. Many people throughout our country's history have sacrificed a lot to give us a right to vote; some have even given their lives so we can have that right. If you don't get out and vote, then I guess you really don't have any right to complain or gripe about who is in office.

Please get involved and commit to voting, it doesn't take long to do and then our collective voice can be heard. In numbers there is strength so get out and vote. Thanks for listening and remember you can also give to COPA to help make a difference.



Photo Left: NWAAL Delegates to Tri-State APWU Convention, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, May 12-14, 2022

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NEXT UNION MEETING:

Sunday, January 8, 2023 – 1:00 pm
 Foghorn’s, 1100 48th Place, Springdale AR
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NEWSLETTER CHECKLIST


If you want your newsletter to help you jump-start the Local, here are some basic suggestions:

- Show members respect by treating them as partners.
- Inspire them with examples of what their fellow members are doing.
- Provide realistic ways for them to get more engaged.

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself:

- What information is really useful to members? What can they use in their own workplace to help them gain confidence, skills, and information and serve fellow members’ interests?
- Are you providing specific enough detail for members to understand and identify with the situations you’re describing?
- Can you offer concrete examples of member action that will encourage and inspire?
- Are you inviting members to reflect on their own situation, to think more deeply about the values the union stands for, and to consider what they can do if they share those values?
- Are you asking questions, as well as offering information?
- Does the newsletter offer ways for members to do something (talk to a steward, talk to co-workers, come to a meeting, send feedback or ideas)?
- Are you soliciting, and then promoting, brilliant ideas that members generate themselves?

– David Friedman, Vermont NEA
 (National Education Association)



UNION MEETING!

Sun., Jan. 8th, 2023, 1 p.m.

Foghorn’s Restaurant
1100 48th Place, Springdale
 (Take Exit 72 off I-49, turn east 1 block to 48th St signal light, turn L to Foghorn’s.)

You could win \$50+ door prize!

“We Don’t Know What We’ve Got ‘til It’s Gone!”

by Loren Adams, Editor

We ASSUME the Union will survive & thrive to defend our rights, provide opportunities to make decent livings, and offer benefits into the foreseeable future. We ASSUME the Union will have stable leadership during our working years and won’t become embroiled in some sort of conflict to where it can’t function properly — or we ASSUME that officers will always be there and won’t get sick and have to quit; that stewards will be in the workplace to represent us when needed. But let’s be honest — **We don’t know what we’ve got ‘til it’s gone.**

The key word here is “ASSUME”. We have the habit of taking for granted privileges found in few other industries. We ASSUME others will step up to the plate, get thoroughly enmeshed in the Contract cover to cover, represent us, defend us, take care of our needs, etc., if something happens, God forbid, to our current leadership.

Our Local has had stable leadership for over 40 years – unlike many other locals who’ve suffered schism, destructive dissention, and subsequent harmful litigation. Our last 3 Local Presidents have had terms of 13 years apiece. Wow! That’s an amazing accomplishment! It means a lot, and it’s formally called “continuity of leadership”.

Back when I first came to the Post Office, Frank Fickle was leading the Local. He’d been serving for years; almost everybody loved him. But we also took him for granted – he’d always be there. So, when he retired from office in 1997 after a heart attack, we were in shock. He sacrificed his health for this Local, and we knew it – but only after-the-fact. **We took him for granted and didn’t know what we had ‘til he was gone.**

Of course, Gini Hickman was another we took for granted. (OMG! How we loved her!) She served the Local as Financial Secretary for almost 20 years. So, it came as a shock when we lost her in 2013. There were several other great leaders worth remembering through the years – Randall Woodlee & Jim Warford, to name a few.

The point I’m trying to make is — Let’s not take our Local’s leadership for granted. **Serving the Local is a labor of love.** If that ingredient is missing, what purpose does it serve? Most work for the Local is volunteer. We do it from our hearts; not our pocketbooks. What binds the Local together is not just the work or the workplace or struggling with management over issues both great and small; it’s caring for one another. We are a community foremost. Without this solidarity, we are nothing.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” – John 13:35

Abraham Lincoln:

“The strongest bond of human sympathy outside the family relation should be one uniting working people of all nations and tongues and kindreds.”

Thank You – to the Election Committee which labeled, stamped & stuffed envelopes and mailed packets to all eligible members this month. They are: Pam Beck, Cheryl Wing, Barney Barnes and Loren Adams. (Ike assisted at the stuffing party at Village Inn too.)



*United we bargain...
Divided we beg.*

Beware The Holidays!

by Pam Beck, Local Vice-President

I feel the need to make everyone aware of an item in the contract which is definitely not to our advantage. I have been with USPS for almost 24 years and was unaware of this until recently. Now I am flabbergasted that any union representative ever agreed to this.

So here it is: Article 11.6.C states “An employee scheduled to work on a holiday who does not work shall not receive holiday pay, unless such absence is based on an extreme emergency situation and is excused by the employer.” So, if you volunteer to work a holiday, or even if you are mandatoried, and then for any reason you call in and don’t work the holiday, not only will you lose the extra day’s pay you would have gotten, but **YOU LOSE YOUR HOLIDAY PAY**, that is, *the pay you would have gotten for sitting at home on the holiday had you not been scheduled*. Unbelievable, right?

Well, believe it. It’s right there in the contract. I recently got a rude awakening when confronted with this situation. I volunteered to work my holiday but when the day came, I was truly extremely sick. I remember thinking that I couldn’t afford to call in because I was completely out of leave and would not get paid. Then I remembered that it was my holiday. I was relieved because I thought ‘well at least I will get my holiday pay.’ Then when I got my pay stub, I was horrified to see that I did not get paid for that day.

So, I’m not telling anyone what to do, but for myself, personally, I will never sign up to work another holiday. You never know when you will get sick and if it doesn’t happen to be what the USPS considers “an extreme emergency situation” then you are just out of luck. You may as well go gambling. “I’ll wager my holiday pay, double or nothing, that I won’t get sick.” No, thank you!

