



the Potpourri

Newsletter of the American Postal Workers Union, San Diego Area Local - Serving the offices of San Diego, Alpine, Bonita, Bonsall, Borrego Springs, Boulevard, Cardiff, Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Campo, Dulzura, Del Mar, Descanso, Encinitas, Escondido, Fallbrook, Imperial Beach, Jacumba, Jamul, Julian, La Jolla, Lakeside, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, Pauma Valley, Pine Valley, Poway, Ramona, Rancho Santa Fe, San Marcos, Santa Ysabel, Santee, Solana Beach, Spring Valley, Tecate, Valley Center, and Vista.

LABOR FINALLY HAS A FRIEND IN THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Tom Wood, President



Dear Brothers and Sisters
Since you received the last issue of our newsletter, President **Barack Obama** has been elected and the inauguration of the 44th President of the United States has taken place. It was certainly a historic day in our history for a person of color to be elected President of the United States of America. How many of you thought we would see this happen in our lifetime? I took some time off to watch the inauguration ceremonies on January 20th and was thoroughly

moved by the many Americans that attended the ceremonies and other festivities that were held that day and night. All over the world, people watched what America was doing.

Now, we are truly a nation of diversity. One can now believe that regardless of a person's color, religion, or culture they are equal in all Americans' eyes and can be whatever they want to be. I hope that the few people that don't believe this, over time, will come to understand the importance of what this election has done for our country.

President Obama sure has a tough road ahead of him, with having to deal with the war in Iraq, fighting terrorism around the world, and dealing with the economic chaos that has enveloped the U.S. and the rest of the world. It is very important for all of us to give him the help and support he will need to make our country sound again. For those of you who did not support him in the election, now is the time for all of us to heal together and support our new President. It is imperative that we all come together for our welfare and the generations of Americans to follow.

We truly have a friend in the White House. It was important to all APWU members and other USPS employees for this man to get elected. He has said on more than one occasion he will continue to support the Postal Service and its union membership's right to negotiate for wages and benefits, the way we have been doing for more than 35 years. He will overhaul the National Labor Relations Board with appointees who will deal with us in a more reasonable

fashion, compared to the previous Board who were extremely anti-union. He will be able to appoint people to the Postal Board of Governors that will work for us and the American public instead of big business. He will work to stop the trend of privatizing the Postal Service and the outsourcing of our work. He has shown his support to make it easier for workers to become unionized. We can hope that he will look at the problem of Postal and other government employees who do not belong to the union, to pay their fair share of dues/fees to defray the costs of representing them. I do know that we now have a President that won't choke on the word UNION, and I look forward to supporting him in his decision making ability to make the lives of all Americans better.

EXCESSING OF CLERKS CONTINUES - Excessing continues in the city of San Diego and several Associate Offices. We are seeing management continue to do their staffing reviews as the mail volumes continue to be low. In addition to some excessing out from sections in the Plant and City Stations, we are now going to see several clerks excessed from the Clerk Craft altogether, into other crafts or even from their installation. Management has indicated that San Diego will be excessing 60 full time regular clerks from the craft and/or the installation and other associate offices will do the same. We are monitoring these offices to make sure that if the Postal Service moves anyone from their installation, all remaining employees doing clerk work are career clerks only, not carriers nor casuals. These clerks who receive excessing notices should contact their stewards or our APWU offices for guidance on what to do. There are many decisions that will have to be made that will impact individuals and their families. Since there are not a lot of withheld clerk craft vacancies available, most employees excessed will go to the carrier craft, either here in San Diego, an associate office, or to another office outside of our local commuting area. Some may have to relocate to another city more than 50 miles away. For those who are relocated more than 50 miles, relocation expenses will be given to them.

A list of withheld vacancies will be furnished to clerks identified to be excessed. They will be given about a week to make a decision on which vacancies they would like to be considered for filling. Employees will be instructed to make as many choices as they can, so they will not be forced into a position by Postal management. Management is not your friend. You are a piece of meat to them. They need to shed some labor costs and will do it without regard for your welfare.

(Continued on page 2 - see **President**)

President - Continued from page 1)

For those of you being excessed, you do have an option, although it is not much of one. Instead of you being excessed to another craft or to someplace you do not wish to move to, an option to change to part time regular (PTR) is available. There is no guarantee how many hours you will be worked and there is no guarantee that as a PTR you won't be excessed from your PTR job. Although you would stay in your installation, you would be prohibited on bidding to full time regular until all excessed FTR's who exercise their retreat rights are returned to their respective offices.

What are retreat rights? It allows an excessed employee to return to the clerk craft and/or the installation from which they were excessed to the first available vacancy/residual clerk position becoming available. An excessed employee will be asked to fill out a retreat rights form at the same time as they select withheld vacancies to other installations. Make sure you get one of these forms. If you don't fill one out, you will not be entitled to retreat rights and will be required to stay at your new installation.

The Postal Service is hoping some excessed employees will quit. Don't quit! This is too good a paying job just to give it up. Before anyone thinks about doing this, they should talk to a steward or call our office for information. Jobs are hard to come by these days. Don't get caught up in being so depressed that you make a hasty decision. I believe the Postal Service is being too aggressive in the amount of clerks to be excessed. We will just have to wait and see how the mail gets out everyday!

If you are interested in seeing how other clerks in the Pacific Area are being excessed, you can log onto computers at home, at the Midway P&DF APWU office, the MLS P&DC APWU office or at our offices in Mission Valley. Just log onto APWU.ORG. Click onto "Departments and Divisions" and scroll down to "Regional Coordinators" and over to "Western". The Western Region's site will pop up and you can click on "Impact Statements" on the left hand side. In the middle of the page you will see there are many impact statements available for you to look at. Please take the time to review some of these and you will see that excessing is not just happening in our area but all over California and the rest of the country. If you count the number of proposed excessed clerks in Southern California (approx. 800) and the number of withheld vacancies (approx. 400), you'll see that there are not enough jobs to go around. Los Angeles has over 300 excess clerks they have to find jobs for, but Postal officials have no strategy on what to do. When I posed this problem to USPS management, they said they hadn't looked that far ahead. What happens next? Postal management will not admit it at this time, but I believe that they will offer the VERA (voluntary early retirement) and/or lay people off. APWU represented employees hired

(Continued on page 4- See **President**)

Elected Officers of San Diego Area Local

General Officers

- President** Tom Wood
- Executive Vice-President** Will Tagart
- Recording Secretary** Eddie B. Cooper Jr.
- Secretary Treasurer** Millie Reece
- Trustees (4)** Mary Joanne Holiday
..... Vito Scurto
..... Joy Abarabar
..... Ismael "Pepe" Gomez

Craft Officers

Motor Vehicle Craft

- Director** Ed Kripe
- Asst Director** Dave Watier

Maintenance Craft

- Director** Hector Baez
- Asst Director** Clark Moody

Clerk Craft

- Director** Leonard Alexander
- Asst Director** Sandi Shoultz

- APWU Office Manager** Donna Donohue
- Health Plan Rep.** Donna Donohue
- Pot Pourri Editor...** Judy Curtis- jcurtis1@san.rr.com

THE POTPOURRI is published bi-monthly by the

SAN DIEGO AREA LOCAL
American Postal Workers Union
 3737 Camino del Rio South Ste 200
 San Diego CA 92108-4009

Phone: (619) 283-5600 Fax: (619) 283-5900

North County Office

800 Grand Avenue, Suite AG-12
 Carlsbad, CA 92008
 Phone: (760)720-1833

APWU, MLS Plant Office

11251 Rancho Carmel Dr
 San Diego, CA 92199
 Phone: (858) 674-0230 Fax (858) 613-1026

www.sandiegoapwu197.org

Opinions expressed in *THE POTPOURRI* are those of the author and not necessarily of the San Diego Area Local, its officers, the APWU, or the Editor. Submissions are welcomed and may be sent to the address above or e-mailed to the editor.



THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Will Tagart, Executive Vice-President



Good news, we're making progress! Last July, I spoke with **Steve Zamanakos**, our Regional RI-399 National Business Agent and he told me that I could request an earlier hearing for the cases our Local had submitted by sending him the USPS GATs Numbers (GATs is a tracking system used by the Postal Service). I requested the GATs from Labor Relations last July and finally received them on 12

January 2009. I sent that info to Mr. Zamanakos and he's now informed me he will put them on the agenda for the next Regional Dispute Resolution Committee (RDRC) meeting, scheduled for February 25th and 26th.

Three cases should be scheduled at that meeting. The first concerns staffing on FSM 881's (USPS F06C-1F-C 07389736 - APWU RI-39901). When the MLS plant first opened in September 1993, clerks were prepping the mail at the keying stations of the FSM 881's. The clerks were also distributing the 775 tubs in Operations 124 and 126, by Zipcodes, placing the tubs into containers for dispatch to City Stations and Associate Offices (AO's). The FSM 881's and Operations 124 and 126 were all Distribution Operations = clerk work.

The second case on that agenda is for the Sack Sorter (USPS F06C-1F-C 07389735 - APWU RI-39902) The mail being worked was originally distributed on the Spider by the Clerk Craft as Operation 200. Management made a decision that the larger preferential mail (too large for the SPBS) would be worked on the Sack Sorter, then giving the distribution of preferential mail to the Mail Handlers. The sort plan utilized on the Sack Sorter was set up by 5 digit ZIP Codes for each slide on the Sack Sorter, each slide representing a distribution destination. This was a distribution operation with a sort plan programmed pretty much the same way as the Primary Sort Plans of FSM 881's and the SPBS.

The third item concerns the Small Parcel Bundle Sorter (SPBS) (USPS F06C-1F-C 08406631 - APWU RI-39903) In September 1993 the MLS P&DC was opened, establishing a new Facility. The type of mail distributed on the Small Parcel Bundle Sorter had previously been worked at the Midway Facility in Operation 180, Manual Distribution Operations. The Operation 180 initial sort was done from a belt to a hamper which contained seven to ten zones. The Mail Handlers would dump the mail onto the belt and the clerks would distribute

the mail to their designated hamper based on the 5-digit Zip Code located on the mail piece. Once a hamper was full, a clerk would take the hamper into the tent. In the tent, hampers were set up in a shape of a horseshoe. A clerk would stage the hampers in the vicinity of the horseshoe that corresponded with ZIP Codes labeled on the hamper and a clerk would then distribute the mail to a container for dispatch to the City Stations and AO's.

When bids for the new APPS machine went up, they were for Mail Handlers, no Clerk bids. Just because there was no inventory, the work was given to the Mail Handlers. It's our position this is our work, based at least these two sources:

Article 4.3 of the National Agreement states in part, "*Any new job or jobs created by technological or mechanization changes shall be offered to present employees capable of being trained to perform the new or changed job and the Employer will provide such training*".

The USPS-APWU Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) states in part. "*Any new jobs created by technological or mechanization changes shall be offered to present employees capable of being trained to perform the new or changed job...*".

What does this mean? The APPS, new technology, was designated by the Postal Service to replace the SPBS. Under the RI-399 the clerk craft is listed as the Primary Craft in all distribution operations. The clerks working on the SPBS should have been moved to the APPS.

NATIONAL REASSESSMENT PROGRAM (NRP)

This update has to be that it depends on who you talk to in Labor Relations, you will get different answers. The Union had been told several times that injured employees who did not have a bid would be processed as "No Work Available".

At a meeting on proposed excessing of employees, our President asked the question twice and Labor Relations confirmed that these people would be processed to Worker's Comp as "No Work Available" prior to the excessing of any employee from an installation.

In a different context, I asked what was going on with the NRP, which seems to have been placed on hold as far "No Work Available". The response I received referenced the Rehab Act of 1973, OWCP and the *new* Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act of 2008 (ADA-AA) went into effect on 1 January 2009. This new law serves two main purposes: 1) to repudiate existing Supreme Court precedent which had placed a high burden of proof on complainants attempting to prove that they suffer from a disability covered under

(Continued on page 4- See **Vice President**)

President (Continued from page 2)

after our last contract was signed (November 20, 2006) have no layoff protection. I hope it doesn't get to that. The USPS has never laid employees off, but they are talking about it, I'm sure of it! We will continue to keep you informed about anything that will keep you working at the Postal Service. Please continue to support your Union and we will continue to support you!

UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR POSTAL WORKERS

All Postal workers can thank the hard working Unions and their representatives for continuing to raise the standard of living for them. Without the Unions fighting for us, our wages and benefits would keep us in poverty. Did I ever think that a Postal worker would ever make \$20 per hour? Never! Brothers and sisters, we do have good jobs that pay well and benefits second to none. I did not think that we would ever have a problem like the one that is before us now. Our company is in serious trouble and we all need to try and work together and keep our company afloat. Our biggest source of revenue is at the window. More than ever now, we need to upsell our products. It is very important for us to work as hard as we can to improve our company.

Over the last several months Postal officials and Union officers have alerted us about the financial crisis that the Postal Service is in now, and the impact that it will have on us. It is not just Postal employees who are being affected, but an entire nation/world whose citizens are losing their jobs. Every day we read in the newspapers about more companies, either going under or slashing jobs. It is painful for me to see.

I have been in the labor movement with the APWU and the AFL-CIO, and always looked up to our brothers and sisters at the United Auto Workers Union whose salaries and benefits were second to none. I thought that if Postal workers ever could achieve even something similar to their contracts, that we would be doing well for ourselves. And then I see what has happened to the auto workers over the last year and it makes me worry a lot about our wages and benefits. Something is going to happen!

By the time that you read my article, change will be here! Our National President has informed us that the Postal Service will implement some changes that are "unprecedented in our 230-year history". Word has it that there will be changes for us that will include work-hour reductions as part of a plan to keep us afloat. He goes on to say that if there are plans to reduce hours, then that slashing should start at the top of the company and not the bottom, as has been the case this past year. Postal management must look in the mirror to see the problems they have created. Over the last 4 years, over a million hours have been cut from the ranks of craft employees. Sacrifices must be made by all segments of the Postal Service, not just craft employees. More will come concerning this hot issue.

Vice President (Continued from page 3)

the ADA; and 2) to expand the definition of disability under the ADA to significantly broaden its coverage.

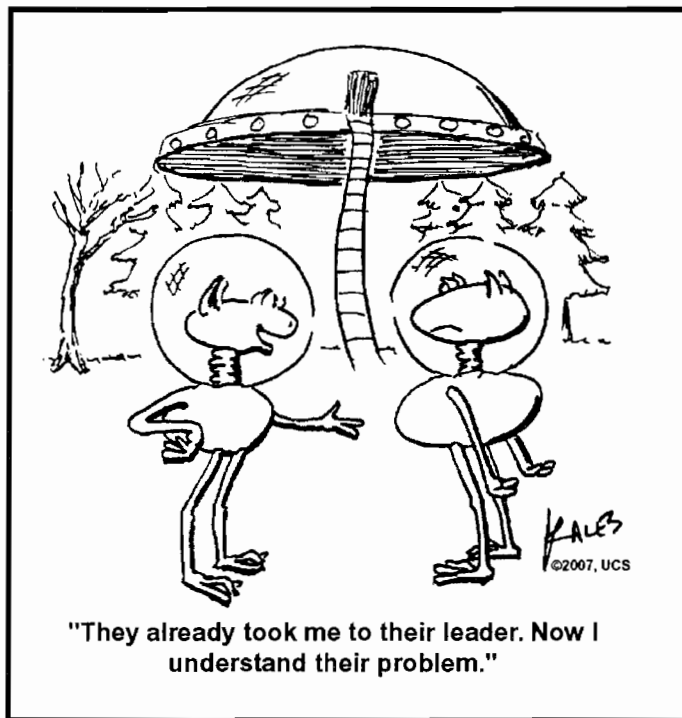
Congress passed the ADA-AA with the purpose of shifting the debate in ADA cases from "Is the complainant disabled under the ADA?" to "Did discrimination occur because of complainant's disability?"

In grievances I have filed, I've argued that the people who have reached Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI) and were placed into a "No Work Available" status were covered by the ADA. Management has disagreed with me. Now they seem to have changed their way of doing business and have informed me that they will suggest that the employees go through the District Reasonable Accommodation Committee (DRAC), for management to accommodate them for their disabilities as result of an On The Job Injury.

The problem with this is that management claims they will accommodate the employee if they hold a bid and the employee is able to perform the core functions of the job. Or, if there is a vacant funded position, which is a bid that has gone residual or has been placed into a Withholding Package, the injured employee may be moved into these positions with accommodations.

Back Up Clerks, Absence Relief Clerks & Vacation Relief Clerks

Weekly schedules for these positions are to be posted by Wednesday of the preceding week. City Stations weekly schedules start on Monday. If you are a Back Up Clerk, Absence Relief or Vacation Relief and you are assuming another position, it must be clearly posted on the weekly schedule what position you will be assuming. If it is not posted correctly or timely, you may be owed out of schedule pay. If you feel there is a problem call your Union Representative and discuss it with them.



Clerk Craft

NEW YEAR, NEW LEADERSHIP... TIME FOR NEW DIRECTION?!

By Leonard Alexander, Director- Clerk Craft

2009 has started off with a bang. We have a new president, who supports labor and believes that good paying jobs, on American soil, are essential for the nation's economic recovery. The APWU endorsed President Obama, and we wish him and his staff success in dealing with the many challenges that lay ahead.

Closer to home:

- Area Vice President Daly and his staff have moved into their new San Diego offices at MLS and Midway.
- Tim Padden is the new Officer In Charge for the city of San Diego.
- The deadline for the first round of Clerk Craft excessing from the San Diego cluster has been moved to mid-March 2009.
- Excessing from the plants continue as directed by the USPS Tour 2 Compression Initiative. An Unfair Labor Practice Charge and two grievances have been filed by APWU Headquarters. Results are pending.
- The ERRP Steering Committee met on Jan 12, 2009. District Manager Kleck fully supports the program, and will fund the purchase of needed labor saving equipment (power jacks, pallet lifters and portable container tilters).

So where do we go from here? PMG Potter and his staff will have to come up with a better business plan for 2009. Only 7,734 of the 139,000 eligible postal employees (a mere 5.6%) opted to leave the service via the Voluntary Early Retirement program. Without some type of financial incentive, most agree that it is not a good deal.

Additionally, the USPS plan to cut costs by reducing the number of craft employees has its limitations. Fewer clerks means: fewer people to process the mail and meet established cut-off times at the plants, city stations and associate offices; fewer people to sell our products and services – **and generate much needed revenue**; longer wait in line times for our customers; and finally substantial delays in completing our ancillary services (business reply/postage due accounts, P.O. box maintenance, CFS, directory, distribution of/reply to station correspondence and sorting UBBM prior to dispatch).

Increasing revenue has to become our number one priority. Simply cutting costs will not sustain this organization.

TIPS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Gwen Wills, Midway Steward

This is a new year with a lot of changes. I won't go into those changes as you have heard them from many sources, but sometimes they force us to go through changes also. Sometimes we bring our anxieties to work. If you find you need someone to talk to, give EAP a call. The visit is confidential.

During these times we need to control our emotions. Having a bad day at work and keeping your cool is good. Having a bad day at work and yelling, screaming, swearing, kicking and hitting anything is not a good idea. The Postal Service has a zero tolerance policy. If you perform any of the previous activities you will need to contact your union steward.

By the time you get this article we will be in the second quarter of the year. If you did not get your 3972 for this year, get it. A 3972 is your attendance chart for the entire year. Track your attendance. When you call in, track it on your sheet. If you are late or have an appointment track it. Remember 3 unscheduled absences in a floating 3-month calendar could cause you to have a conversation with your supervisor. If you request leave in advance for an appointment, it should not be marked as unscheduled.

The mail volume is down. There is discussion on a 5 day delivery, 4 day 10 hour workweek, excessing to different craft and installations, moving people from one plant to another. All this to keep the Postal Service afloat. This is happening nationwide.

There are all sorts of rumors on the floor such as Midway closing, Jack Potter resigning and early out with incentives. We will have to wait to see if the rumors are true. By the time you read this, what happened?

Many of us are completing our jobs much faster. Once you finish your job move to the next job or do work that you have not had a chance to get to, so play catch up. In other words stay gainfully employed. We need to stop saying "not my bid". We need to perform 8 hours work for 8 hours pay.

Can you afford to work part-time? The agency is posting more part-time jobs. When you bid make sure you are bidding on full time or part-time. If you bid on a part-time job and you are fully qualified, you get that job. You cannot change your mind after the bid is awarded.

There is a cap on part-time jobs nationwide. We are keeping track of this cap. There will be more work areas that will be combined to save hours. The backroom clerks could possibly have window added to their bids for break and lunch relief. The window clerks will have additional duties added to their day also. These changes may not be happening now but it could happen shortly.

If you are not a supervisor or an acting 204B do not give instructions to another employee. Do not get upset with another employee if they are not doing their job, just do your job. The supervisor sees what you see. It's their job to keep employees on task.

Clerk Craft

NEW YEAR, NEW LEADERSHIP... TIME FOR NEW DIRECTION?!

By Leonard Alexander, Director- Clerk Craft

2009 has started off with a bang. We have a new president, who supports labor and believes that good paying jobs, on American soil, are essential for the nation's economic recovery. The APWU endorsed President Obama, and we wish him and his staff success in dealing with the many challenges that lay ahead.

Closer to home:

- Area Vice President Daly and his staff have moved into their new San Diego offices at MLS and Midway.
- Tim Padden is the new Officer In Charge for the city of San Diego.
- The deadline for the first round of Clerk Craft excessing from the San Diego cluster has been moved to mid-March 2009.
- Excessing from the plants continue as directed by the USPS Tour 2 Compression Initiative. An Unfair Labor Practice Charge and two grievances have been filed by APWU Headquarters. Results are pending.
- The ERRP Steering Committee met on Jan 12, 2009. District Manager Kleck fully supports the program, and will fund the purchase of needed labor saving equipment (power jacks, pallet lifters and portable container tilters).

So where do we go from here? PMG Potter and his staff will have to come up with a better business plan for 2009. Only 7,734 of the 139,000 eligible postal employees (a mere 5.6%) opted to leave the service via the Voluntary Early Retirement program. Without some type of financial incentive, most agree that it is not a good deal.

Additionally, the USPS plan to cut costs by reducing the number of craft employees has its limitations. Fewer clerks means: fewer people to process the mail and meet established cut-off times at the plants, city stations and associate offices; fewer people to sell our products and services – **and generate much needed revenue**; longer wait in line times for our customers; and finally substantial delays in completing our ancillary services (business reply/postage due accounts, P.O. box maintenance, CFS, directory, distribution of/reply to station correspondence and sorting UBBM prior to dispatch).

Increasing revenue has to become our number one priority. Simply cutting costs will not sustain this organization.

TIPS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Gwen Wills, Midway Steward

This is a new year with a lot of changes. I won't go into those changes as you have heard them from many sources, but sometimes they force us to go through changes also. Sometimes we bring our anxieties to work. If you find you need someone to talk to, give EAP a call. The visit is confidential.

During these times we need to control our emotions. Having a bad day at work and keeping your cool is good. Having a bad day at work and yelling, screaming, swearing, kicking and hitting anything is not a good idea. The Postal Service has a zero tolerance policy. If you perform any of the previous activities you will need to contact your union steward.

By the time you get this article we will be in the second quarter of the year. If you did not get your 3972 for this year, get it. A 3972 is your attendance chart for the entire year. Track your attendance. When you call in, track it on your sheet. If you are late or have an appointment track it. Remember 3 unscheduled absences in a floating 3-month calendar could cause you to have a conversation with your supervisor. If you request leave in advance for an appointment, it should not be marked as unscheduled.

The mail volume is down. There is discussion on a 5 day delivery, 4 day 10 hour workweek, excessing to different craft and installations, moving people from one plant to another. All this to keep the Postal Service afloat. This is happening nationwide.

There are all sorts of rumors on the floor such as Midway closing, Jack Potter resigning and early out with incentives. We will have to wait to see if the rumors are true. By the time you read this, what happened?

Many of us are completing our jobs much faster. Once you finish your job move to the next job or do work that you have not had a chance to get to, so play catch up. In other words stay gainfully employed. We need to stop saying "not my bid". We need to perform 8 hours work for 8 hours pay.

Can you afford to work part-time? The agency is posting more part-time jobs. When you bid make sure you are bidding on full time or part-time. If you bid on a part-time job and you are fully qualified, you get that job. You cannot change your mind after the bid is awarded.

There is a cap on part-time jobs nationwide. We are keeping track of this cap. There will be more work areas that will be combined to save hours. The backroom clerks could possibly have window added to their bids for break and lunch relief. The window clerks will have additional duties added to their day also. These changes may not be happening now but it could happen shortly.

If you are not a supervisor or an acting 204B do not give instructions to another employee. Do not get upset with another employee if they are not doing their job, just do your job. The supervisor sees what you see. It's their job to keep employees on task.

In January 2009 the San Diego Area Local was notified by the office of Terry Stapleton, APWU Secretary-Treasurer, that the 2008 election for the position of Executive Vice-President of our area local must be rerun. This follows a determination reached by the National Election Appeals Committee. The Election Notice, mailed to all members and posted at worksites along with Election Rules, is reproduced here.

RE-RUN ELECTION NOTICE FOR VICE PRESIDENT ONLY APWU SAN DIEGO AREA LOCAL 0197

A secret ballot election for the office of Vice President will be conducted by mail. Ballots for this election are being mailed to members on February 27, 2009. Any eligible member who has not received a ballot in the mail at home by March 6, 2009 or any member who spoils a ballot may request a new ballot by contacting the Election Chairperson Judy Curtis at (619) 905-2126. A duplicate ballot will be mailed by the following business day. If you request and return two (2) ballots, only the replacement ballot will be counted.

Ballots will be picked up on **March 20, 2009 at 11:00 a.m.** from the following location:

**PO Box 2355
El Cajon CA 92021**

Ballots will be counted directly after they are picked up on **March 20, 2009** at the following location:

**APWU San Diego Area Local 0197
Union Hall
3737 Camino Del Rio, South Suite 200
San Diego CA 92108**

****Important Facts to Remember****

Nominations will not be re-opened.

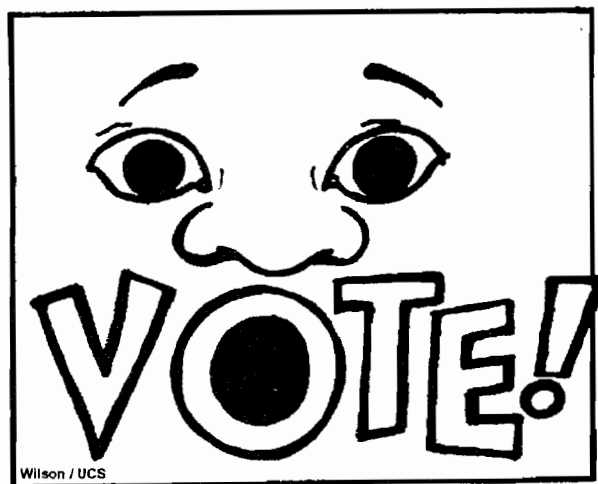
The election includes only the office of the Vice President.

The candidates on the ballot will be the only ones running for Vice President.

Write-in votes shall not be valid, counted or considered.

IMPORTANT: Mail your ballot in sufficient time for it to be received at the following address no later than **11:00 a.m. on March 20, 2009:**

**PO Box 2355
El Cajon CA 92021**





SIGN UP FOR TRIP TO GETTY MUSEUM

I don't remember wishing all a Happy and Prosperous New Year. If I didn't, I just did! This Potpourri will not be out in time to mention our yearly Retiree Dinner. It took place on Saturday, January 31, 2009 at the Butcher Shop restaurant in Kearny Mesa. We have a total of 32 retirees and guests that signed up for our dinner. I believe this is our 4th annual Retiree Dinner.

Our January meeting took place at the union hall at 12 noon on Wednesday, January 21, 2009. The pizza was great, as usual. The upcoming trip to the Getty Museum on February 21st was discussed. We talked about using the Labor Council's van to transport the nine people who have signed up for this trip. The van holds a total of 14 so if you are interested it's on a first come, first serve basis.

A trip to the Del Mar Racetrack was proposed and passed. The retiree chapter will pay for the full price of admission and a reserved Clubhouse seat. The specific date will be voted on at a future meeting.



Vito's Window and Organizing Department

RULES ABOUT SCHEME STUDY

By Vito Scurto, Trustee and Organization

Well, here we are already deep into the first month of 2009. From time to time, we get inquiries regarding the rules for learning schemes. Handbook 401T is the Scheme Training and Rules Manual. Here are the more important sections you may need to know.

Section 293.1 Minor Scheme Changes: In general, minor scheme changes should be learned through productive distribution. Employees who have 32 or fewer scheme items within a postal service quarter are not scheduled for formal scheme training.

294.1 Formal Study Of Scheme Changes Manual Clerks: When there are more than 32 scheme changes these employees must be scheduled for formal training.

294.3 Study Time: Scheme item study time is provided at the rate of 1 hour for each 16 items or 4 minutes for any increment of less than 16 items. This applies to manual scheme training and cast system.

294.4 Qualification Test: No qualification test is required for formal scheme change training. Formal scheme training ends when either: (1) the maximum allotted training time is exhausted, or (2) the employee elects to take a qualification test and passes the test correctly sorting 99 percent or more of the cards in a test deck.

Take the time that you need to study everyday and don't miss your scheduled study time. It is very important that you study everyday so you don't forget what you have memorized the weeks before. Try to associate the street name with items that will help you remember. Also drive through the area of the scheme you are leaning and look for landmarks that will help you remember certain streets.

On another subject, talk to the non-member in your area. Talk about all the benefits of being an APWU member. Call the APWU office if you need 1187 forms to sign up anyone. And on a final note, you get to pocket \$100 for each new member you sign up!



Our New Years Challenge: Surviving The Perfect Storm

By Tammy Yorysh, Chief Steward

I recently read the book *The Children's Blizzard*, by David Laskin, which chronicles the Great Blizzard of January 1888. Although there have been many recorded snow storms in our country, that one was different. The forecasters of that time had been tracking the developing storm, but had failed to anticipate its absolute viciousness. They had no idea that atmospheric conditions were perfect for the creation of a blizzard far more serious than any storm warning could prepare them for. No one realized that a toxic mixture of high pressure coming from the north, low pressure from the midwest, and tropical air from the south had formed into a giant powder keg just waiting for a lit match. When a strong jet stream combined with the other factors, a perfect blizzard was created.

The victims in Nebraska, The Dakotas, and Minnesota were caught completely off guard, because the weather monitors did not anticipate the suddenness or the severity of the storm. Typical storm warnings had been relayed, but in the morning hours before the blizzard hit, the skies were clear, the weather uncommonly calm and warm for a day in January. As a result of the seemingly placid conditions, people paid no heed to the weather report, and did not prepare for what was about to hit them. They left for work and school completely unprepared for what was just beyond the horizon. When the storm suddenly hit, hundreds of people, mostly children leaving school, were frozen to death.

In the case of this treacherous blizzard, warning signs were there, but the potential enormity of the problem was not realized. And the benign forecasts of "snow, followed by fair weather, fresh northerly winds" hardly sounded ominous. The disaster that came seemingly from out of the blue instantly and adversely changed the peoples' lives. Fortunately, inclement weather warnings are much more effective these days.

Today, we Postal Workers are in the midst of our own perfect storm, which formed gradually from a toxic mixture of events. It started years ago with the loss of the monopoly on parcel handling. Then came the advent of the address bar codes, which led to the demise of the majority of our manual and mechanized distribution jobs. By the early nineties we were introduced to the internet, which seduced society with instant electronic correspondence and on-line shopping and bill-paying. We heard warnings here and there of consolidations and downsizing, but for the majority of us, the skies around us seemed clear, with no clouds in sight.

In the new century came the anthrax attacks, which scared many people away from the US mails and led to the added expense in the millions for Bio-detection equipment. Skyrocketing fuel costs contributed greatly to the USPS deficit. Then there was the subprime mortgage fiasco, and when people started losing their homes, everything which is financially driven began to unravel. Companies began filing for bankruptcy. And retail businesses began closing their doors. Big retailers like Sharper Image, Linens

and Things, and Mervyns, just to name a few, no longer have any advertising to be processed through the USPS. As more businesses fail, more advertising goes by the wayside. As more people lose their jobs, the drop in magazine subscription mail follows. Over the past 30 years, this perfect storm has been slowly forming. Some postal employees may have recognized the developing danger, but too many others merely enjoyed the steady paycheck, the step increases, the COLAs, the overtime, night and Sunday premium pay. Many took for granted these endless sunny days, not realizing the storm forming all around us.

But now, it is evident to all that we are in trouble. The continuing drop in mail volume was damaging the USPS little by little over the years, but the recent economic meltdown was the final ingredient needed to create our own perfect storm.

National APWU president **Bill Burrus** gave a telecom in December about the issue of Management's Tour -2 Compression initiative. He made it perfectly clear that our employer is in serious trouble. With a deficit in the Billions, and growing bigger every year, Mr. Burrus admitted that we have never encountered adversity of this magnitude before. He stated that even when the economy improves in three to four years, there is no anticipated volume and revenue growth for the USPS. We will not be getting bailed out, as Wall Street was. As our deficit continues to grow, management will desperately continue to find ways to cut costs, and that includes looking at their major expense—the employees.

Our National Officers, Business Agents, and Local Officers will soon be fighting the most important fight they've ever waged—the fight for our very survival. It's not just about being excessed from a section anymore. The stakes are much greater than that. This perfect storm will manifest itself in the form of excessing from installations very soon, and could profoundly affect negotiations at the bargaining table in 2010. As layoffs, job reductions, and plant closures abounded in other industries over the recent months, we may have felt sorry for the people involved, but we also felt insulated and complacent in our own jobs. No one, not even at the National Level, thought the problems of the private sector would eventually affect us. But the Storm has indeed reached us.

In *The Children's Blizzard*, a number of heroic people attempted to lead the children to safety. Groups that held themselves together during the worst of the storm were more likely to come out alive at the end. We too must stay together as a Union, and do the best that we can to weather this thing together. We have never before seen the likes of what is affecting the USPS, and ultimately, us. Our focus must be on the survival of the USPS as a viable business. We must also support our Local and National officers in their fight to save our jobs, and our financial futures. The Storm is here. The APWU will do its best to help navigate its membership through to the other side. Stay tuned...

Donovan's Brief**WHERE WILL BAILOUTS GO? AND WHY?**

By John Donovan, AFL-CIO Street Heat Coordinator

When the Major U.S. Auto Makers asked for Loans to get them through this tough time a number of southern and western congressmen wanted the Auto Makers to restructure their businesses and slap down their unions. This is after they gave \$700 Billion to the bankers who caused this crisis. and never asked a question, no specifics, no promise of results even.

The total bailout counting government loans, stock purchases, debt guarantees and backdoor handouts totals nearly \$8 trillion. It hasn't worked, because Congress and the White House attached no requirement that they use the money to make loans. So Wall Street has used it instead to buy out some competitors, and raise the bank fees we pay. Billions have gone to bank investors, executive pay, or simply hoarded. Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson (formerly head of Goldman Sachs) secretly, illegally, nullified a law that blocked his plan to help big banks take over smaller ones. His decree allows banks to use off-shore tax dodges that Congress banned 23 years ago. This provides an under the table tax subsidy for predatory banks to absorb their rivals. Cost to the treasury? \$140 Billion.

Back to the Auto Makers. Sen. Bob Corker Real Estate Millionaire from Tenn. Demanded the automakers close plants, cut jobs and slash union worker pay. Sen Jim DeMint of South Carolina. Sen John Kyl of Ariz, claimed the auto workers were costing \$73.00 per hour. Just like the P.O. pays us \$40 plus per hour every time a contract is due. The base wage for a veteran UAW member is about \$29 an hour while the Non-union Toyota plant pays \$26 per hour. The cost of labor is actually less than 10% of the price of a car. Health Care costs are burdening the Automakers.

Japanese, Korean, European and other carmakers don't pay this cost because their countries have national health care financed by the taxpayers. In this country they have assembly plants that have not been here long enough to create a retiree group drawing health care like the U.S. builders. None of the Senators who are outraged by American labor costs have stepped up to support universal health care.

So you think the Senators are trying to protect the American taxpayer-subsidized non-union plants in the South? The Los Angeles Times acquired an internal Republican memo that described a second motive: "This is the Democrats' first opportunity to payoff organized labor after the election. This is the precursor to card check and other items. Republicans should stand firm and take their first blow against organized labor, instead of taking their first blow from it... Again, the hardest thing for the Democrats to do is get 60 votes. If we can hold the Republicans, we can beat this."

President Tom Wood asked me to mention in this Potpourri the fact that there have been two important rulings from the Veterans Administration recently. One is the recognition that there really is Gulf War Syndrome. I don't know if they truly understand it yet, but it is compensable. The other one of interest is Lou Gehrig's disease, (ALS- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). If you are diagnosed with ALS and you have been in the military, it is assumed there is a causal relationship between those two things. I don't understand why, but you are eligible for VA benefits. Thanks to Brother Jim Andersen for this info.

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE APPROACHES- APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 16, 2009

The deadline is fast approaching to apply for one of the scholarships offered each year by the American Postal Workers Union, the **E. C. Hallbeck Scholarship** or the **Vocational Scholarship**.

Applications must be received by March 16, 2009 and must be submitted on an official application form or a photocopy of the form, dated "2009" at the top. Applications and additional information are available from the APWU website, www.apwu.org or by telephoning the APWU Secretary-Treasurer's office at 202-842-4215.

The **Hallbeck Scholarship** awards \$1000 for four consecutive years of college to at least one recipient from each of the five postal regions. The **Vocational Scholarship** helps students interested in programs of study leading to trade, technical, industrial or vocational occupations that can include: Culinary, Medical or

Dental Assistant, Electrician, Real Estate, Auto Mechanic, Certified I/T-Computer Education, Massage Therapy, or Cosmetology. At least one recipient from each of the five postal regions will receive \$1000 for nine months, each year, up to three consecutive years of school.

Applicants must be a senior attending high school or other secondary school. They must be a child or grandchild, including stepchild or legally adopted child, of an active APWU member, or a deceased member of the union. The APWU active or retired member must have been in good standing for at least one year immediately preceding the application deadline or preceding death. It's a great program and you may really have a chance. Just last year, **Anne Beeman**, daughter of **Robert Kenneth Beeman**, a member of our local, was awarded the Hallbeck scholarship for the Western Region. It could happen in your family too! (But only if you apply.)

OVERCOMING USPS OBSTACLES

By James Roland

Changes within the USPS have been happening at a rapid pace for the last year or two, affecting employees in many ways. As we have seen in the past, many of management's bright ideas are not thought out well enough to actually work. One of management's worst ideas was in centralizing Personnel into "Shared Services" in 2007.

Prior to 2007, our Local had no problem accessing and obtaining reports pertaining to staffing and bid positions. We could meet locally with management to correct problems on bid positions and to inquire about the status of a job. Now, things have changed. Postal Headquarters gave control of the information to a mysterious group of people in North Carolina. You all have seen the results of Shared Services' new way of handling our bidding structure. The vacancy notices are not easy to read and understand anymore. Bid positions have fallen into the dreaded "black hole," and with local management unable to access the database, it has become very difficult to keep track of our bid positions as they drop from senior bidder into residual status.

Shortly after taking office, President **Tom Wood** recognized this problem and asked me to work with him and his officers on a part-time basis to try to solve this problem. I have been working to obtain bid position data. What was so easily obtained prior to 2007 is now painstakingly slow, tedious, and entirely frustrating. The USPS was never eager to share information with the Unions, and they can now blame Shared Services for the delays. Nevertheless, I will continue to push on until I have succeeded in gathering all the information on staffing levels and bid positions. I have had great success already in collecting bid position data for Midway and MLS facilities. I am in the process now of procuring data on the City stations. I am working with the local Human Resource manager to establish a continuing updated electronic copy of our bid positions, and if all continues to go well, we will soon have a full knowledge of the status of all of our bid positions in the clerk craft.

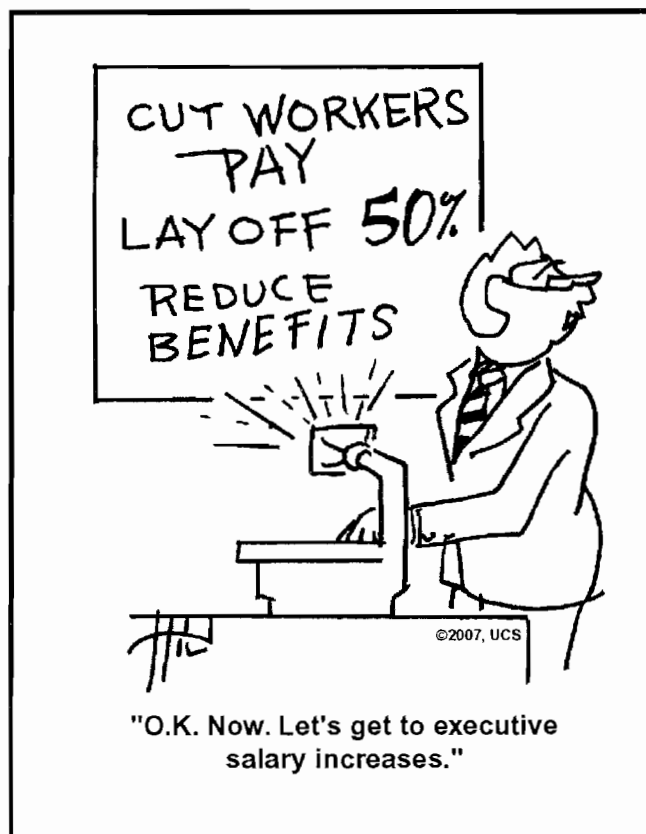
I am working closely with President Wood and Clerk Craft Director **Leonard Alexander** in identifying City Station bid positions that are being targeted for reversion. Currently I have filed grievances to restore jobs that were reverted or abolished in Express Mail, and City Stations. I am also looking closely at the full time jobs that management has decided to change to part time. There is a place for Part Time jobs, but there are some that should remain full time, and for those, I am filing grievances.

My other big project is of utmost importance. We have a large number of Unassigned Regular employees at the Plants and at the City stations. Many have been without a bid position for months, some for over a year. We have all noticed the vacancy notices for MLS, Midway, and City station bid structure have been shrinking.

There are more bids being reverted, fewer being posted, and still we have our unassigned regular employees who need to have a bid position of their own. There are not enough bids for everyone.

The new contract remedies this situation with language that mandates newly established duty assignments be posted if there are fewer bids than there are full time clerks in certain circumstances. I have filed a grievance in this regard, and although it is expected that management will balk at creating new jobs, the contract clearly requires it.

In these troubled times, it seems we have problems coming at us from all directions. There's excessing from sections and from the Installation, the continuing National Reassessment Program for Injured employees, the constant threat of consolidations and downsizing, just to name a few of our biggest challenges. Our local is facing each of them head-on, and we have representatives fighting on each front. My assigned mission is to save as many of our bid positions as possible, and to force management to comply with the contract by creating new positions. I will keep you all informed of my progress in these very important issues in the coming months.



UPCOMING MEETINGS

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION
 SAN DIEGO AREA LOCAL
 3737 CAMINO DEL RIO S STE 200
 SAN DIEGO CA 92108-4008

PRSR STD
 US POSTAGE PAID
 SAN DIEGO CA
 PERMIT NO 768

Membership Meetings

February 19 Thurs .. 6 PM
 March 19 Thurs 10 AM
 April 16 Thurs Noon

Steward Meetings

February 21 Sat 9 AM
 March 21 Sat 9 AM
 April 18 Sat 9 AM

Executive Board Meetings

February 12 Thurs 10 AM
 March 12 Thurs 10 AM
 April 9 Thurs 10 AM

Retiree Meetings (3rd Wednesday)

February 18 Wed Noon
 March 18 Wed Noon
 April 15 Wed Noon

P.O.W.E.R. Meetings

February 19- 5 PM (Before member meeting)
 March 19- After membership meeting
 April 16- After membership meeting

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

||



The protection your family needs...at the price you deserve.

SAVE \$

COMPARE rates and save your family money...

POSTAL RATE (monthly)		POLASKY RATE (monthly)		
Same Rate	Male & Female	Save Money	Male	Female
35 under	16.25	35 under	11.09	10.66
40	32.50	40	13.50	12.63
45	48.75	45	18.35	16.56
50	75.75	50	25.97	21.81
55	151.75	55	42.81	31.88
60	325.00	60	66.22	45.66
65	390.00	65	113.03	71.03

Only guaranteed for 5 years

POLASKY rate guaranteed 10-15 yrs or 20-30 yrs or lifetime

Example is based on a \$250,000 life insurance policy

SAVE \$

POLASKY Insurance Service is a family owned business that has insured Postal families and San Diegans for over 42 years. **NO obligation NO lapse of coverage**
 Our proven track record saves you \$ dollars \$.

Bruce Lane and Gary Polasky can offer you real savings on life insurance.
Simply call us at (619) 639-3010. Get a FREE Life Insurance Evaluation.

POLASKY Insurance Service • 4579 Maple Avenue #3, • La Mesa, CA 91941 • (619) 639-3010 • Fax (619) 639-3012