



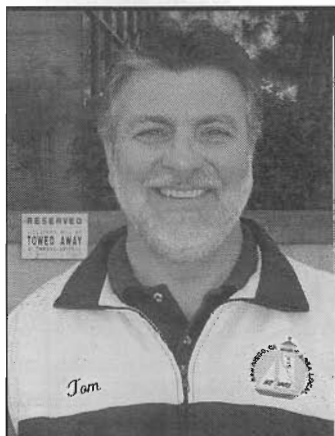
the Potpourri

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.

TWO OFFICES MERGED, OTHERS SPARED CLOSURE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Tom Wood, President



Dear Sisters and Brothers- It looks like all of our hard work has paid off for the Postal Service and all Postal employees to survive another year. A combined panel from the House of Representative and Senate included all of the provisions of **H.R. 22** in a stopgap funding bill that will keep the federal government in business for a month after the new fiscal year begins in October. The provisions of H.R. 22 were voted

up by the House on September 25th into the combined spending legislation (**H. Con. Res.191**). By the time you read this article, the Senate will have passed it also. The provisions of this bill will allow the USPS to reduce its payment to the retiree healthcare fund by \$4 billion for 2009, which was required under the 2006 Postal Reorganization Act. All Postal employees, their friends and relatives that contacted their Congressional Representatives and their Senators can be proud of the effort they made to get this bill passed. We still have a lot more work to do to make sure that it becomes law. You can follow this issue by reading the information that is on our national website (apwu.org).

MERGER WITH LA MESA LOCAL

Our Local has agreed to a merger with the La Mesa Local in a vote taken at the General Membership meeting that took place on August 20th. The La Mesa Local had previously voted to merge with us. Both Locals have provided the necessary documents to APWU headquarters to facilitate the merge. It is expected that the La Mesa Post Office and the Spring Valley Post Office will be merging sometime in October. After the merger, the Local Memos for both offices will be negotiated into one memo to cover all clerk craft and maintenance craft employees. I want to welcome our La Mesa brothers and sisters into the San Diego CA Local.

APWU PICNIC

Our Local's Annual Picnic was held Sunday September 13th at the Admiral Baker Military facility. Everyone had a great time. There were over 300 people that enjoyed the refreshments and food. I thought the ribs were outstanding. I want to thank **Will Tagart, Jim Roland, Millie Reece, Linda Mabin, Joanne Holiday, Vito Scurto, Sonia Moreno, Gwen Wills, and Sandra Shoultz** for all their help. Thanks also goes out to both **Dave Watier** and **Tom Crosby** for all of the photographs in this issue. This picnic had the largest turnout of any picnic we've had. It was good to see old friends and to meet new friends too. This is an event that is almost free for you and your families. Every member won a prize (as is the custom at our picnics) with the grand prize of a Vizio 32" Flat Screen going to **Pat Guevarra**, a clerk at Rancho Penasquitos. It was very ironic in that Pat's television went out just the night before. Both Pat and his wife were very excited and thankful to the APWU. Hope to see all of you again next year!

POST OFFICE CLOSURES & CONSOLIDATIONS

Throughout the country we are faced with stations and branches of Post Offices either being closed or consolidated. We have already seen the La Mesa Post Office consolidated with Spring Valley because the lease with the city of La Mesa lapsed and the city wanted to use the property. You have probably read in the newspapers and heard on the news about the offices here in the San Diego area that may close down as a result of the bad economic conditions at the Postal Service. We were notified the stations slated for closure would be: University City (92122), George Washington (92102), Naval Amphibious Base (92155), Anti-Sub Base (92147), Rancho Del Rey (91911), North Park (92104) and San Luis Rey (92068). Because of the hard work of a few activists in those areas, we were successful in keeping open both University City and San Luis Rey. The activists in these areas worked hard by creating flyers and petitions so that other postal customers were made aware of possible closures. They set up tables in shopping centers where closures of post offices were planned and got people to sign petitions. They did a remarkable job. We anticipate another group of offices closing in the future, and we will keep the employees at each office informed if your office is on the list.

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

(**President** - Continued from page 1)

Although there are some success stories in keeping some offices open, we know that the Postal Service will be successful in closing some down. If you want to help us keep an office open or know somebody who wants to help us, call our office and we will point them in the right direction.

STAFFING AND SCHEDULING SURVEYS (SSR's)

The Postal Service is at it again- visiting stations, branches and associate offices to reduce staffing as a result of lower volume and reduced number of customers/transactions. They have a computer program that when they insert volumes, truck arrival profiles, cutoff times and the number of transactions, it can spit out the number of hours clerks in each unit should be working daily, when clerks should be working (BT and ET), whether they should be full time or part time, what days off clerks should have, etc. etc.

Although it is extremely difficult to challenge the volumes or number of transactions, we can and will be involved in the final staffing. We will be giving our input on how the unit should be staffed. Most of you know that in some of our customer service units, there is not as much mail as there has been in past years and sometimes clerks must look around for something to do. The Postal Service sees this happening too!

In some units there may be excessing. If there is excessing in your unit, that will trigger in-section bidding. The rules regarding in-section bidding are difficult to explain in writing, but are contained in the National Agreement for you to read. If there is excessing in your unit, our representatives will be able to fully explain the in-section bidding procedures when they come to your unit. We may also see some full time jobs abolished and part time jobs created. Before bidding on a part time regular job, talk to a union representative. It may be very hard for you to return to a full time bid as long as we have people who have been excessed.

I have assigned Clerk Craft Director **Leonard Alexander**, Recording Secretary **Eddie Cooper** and Chief Shop Steward **Merle Sprankles** to be the key people in working with the staffing and scheduling surveys. All three of these Union reps have extensive knowledge and experience about how customer service units should be run. These reps will be assisted by other union reps as needed and will always have me to help them too. Most of my experience in the Post Office was as a city station clerk. I feel very comfortable in knowing how to staff a Post Office correctly. If there are going to be changes in your office, you will probably see one of us there to ask your advice too! There will be changes, but rest assured your union will be there to make sure the Postal Service does things according to the contract. If you are a Union member, we welcome any and all questions concerning your jobs and your stations.

Elected Officers of San Diego Area Local General Officers

President Tom Wood
Executive Vice-President James Roland
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 Knipe
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 Millie Reece
Health Plan Rep Gwen Wills
Pot Pourri Editor.. Judy Curtis- jcurtis1@san.rr.com

THE POTPOURRI is published bi-monthly by the

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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.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHTS MONEY PROBLEMS

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By James Roland, Executive Vice-President



IMPORTANT THINGS ONE SHOULD CONSIDER BEFORE BIDDING TO A PART-TIME REGULAR POSITION

Things are getting more and more hectic in the Post Office than I can ever remember, and it's not just happening here in the Pacific Area. All over America, Postal Employees are being excessed from sections, installations and crafts.

Stations and plants are being consolidated and/or eliminated adding to the turmoil that postal employees are facing on a day to day basis. Employees have been hit hard by the economic recession and so has the Postal Service. I don't believe that the current Retirement Incentive Program will put the skids on any of the Postal Service Programs aimed at materially reducing their budget deficit.

You should be aware that one of the programs they have created and are readily expanding is the abolishment of full-time regular bid positions and the creation of part-time regular bid positions in Plants, City Stations and Associate Offices. We are doing everything we can do to prevent the wholesaling of our full-time regular bids by meeting with management at each station and plant staffing audit. We have been able to provide management with Union recommendations on staffing that they accept which minimizes the impact on the bargaining unit employees that we represent. Our tasks are becoming more and more difficult as the mail volume and revenue decreases. We expect many more Part-Time Regular Bids to be created in the coming months while Full-Time Regular Bids will experience a significant decrease.

If you are a Full-Time Regular Clerk and are faced with a situation where you lose your bid, before bidding to a Part-Time Regular Bid you should consider the following:

1. The salary that you will lose by working less hours. Many employees who have bid to a part-time bid realize after a period of time that making ends meet with less money coming in becomes harder and harder as time goes by.

2. Because of the previous Excessing Outside the Installation that we experienced in April of this year, Part-Time Regular employees desiring to bid back to a Full-Time Regular

position are prevented from doing so until all excessed employees with retreat rights back to their installation have returned.

Once all excessed employees with retreat rights have been returned to their installation, Part-Time Regular employees can bid only on newly established Full-Time Regular bids that they are currently qualified for.

3. Part-Time Regular employees are also prevented from working overtime and must work only the hours of their schedule except in emergencies. (Staffing shortfalls created by employees calling in sick or who may be on annual leave, along with heavy mail volume during Christmas, etc., are not considered emergencies.)

4. Part-Time Regular Employees, along with a salary decrease, will also see their annual leave, sick leave, life insurance, and retirement reduced commensurately. For example if you currently earn 6 hours of annual leave per pay period and bid to a PTR assignment of 20 hours you will only earn 3 hours of annual leave per pay period. The same holds true for sick leave. Using the above example the employee would earn only 2 hours of sick leave per pay period instead of 4.

Your life insurance would be reduced by approximately 50% and, depending on the number of years you have worked for the postal service the same would be true for your retirement.

5. One of your benefits that may be affected by bidding to a Part-Time Regular position would be your ability to take leave under the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act. Currently the Act requires that an employee qualifying for leave must have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours in the year prior to taking FMLA. For part-time employees who work only 20 hours a week, the maximum hours they can work is 1,040 hours per year leaving them unable to qualify for FMLA.

6. For those employees who believe that bidding to a Part-Time Regular position will prevent them from being excessed outside a section, within the installation into another craft or outside the installation, please re-think your strategy. It simply isn't so. Article 12 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement requires employees to be excessed by level and by category. Category of employees are defined in the CBA as Full-Time Regular, Part-Time Flexible and Part-Time Regular. There are installations around the country who have excessed Part-Time Regular employees outside their installation. Could it happen here in San Diego? No one knows the answer to that question at this time.

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

Executive Vice-President report (Continued from page 3)

Happy New Fiscal Year???

One thing that we do know is that excessing appears to have been put on hold here in San Diego and in other parts of the Pacific Area. Even when management puts together excessing packages and sends them to the Union's Western Regional Coordinator they are put on hold because there are currently no installations to move employees to. Currently there are excessing packages in most Pacific Area Installations for Letter Carriers who are supposed to be excessed by next March. But the Postal Service has no clue where to excess them. It appears that the best laid plans of the Postal Service for excessing employees in all crafts is a dismal failure at this time, but don't think for one minute that will stop them. Management will continue to create chaos in your life by dreaming up Staffing and/or Excessing Plans that don't stand a chance in hell of working but adversely impacts employees lives.

The struggle continues. Have patience and faith. We have experienced teams of knowledgeable Stewards and Officers filing contractual grievances for all violations pertaining to improper staffing and excessing procedures throughout San Diego County. I have the utmost confidence that we will prevail in most of the grievances that have been, or will be, filed by those outstanding individuals.



Remember, your Locals's Stewards and Officers are here to support with any questions that you may have about your station or your job.

By Joann Holiday, Trustee

Fiscal Year 2010 began on October 1st, with more changes in store for our craft. By the time this goes to print, the postal service will have modified their staffing and excessing plans based upon the number of employees who took the early retirement/voluntary separation package. We can still expect changes due to carrier route adjustments, station closings/consolidations, low mail volume and ongoing Function 1 and 4 evaluations.

We continue to receive complaints about management personnel performing bargaining unit work. Those of you that work in our city stations and county offices know first hand that no matter how many carrier routes are down due to vacations, sick calls, etc..., no supervisor or manager will case mail, pull a route down, or take mail to the street for delivery. Why? Because that work belongs to the letter carrier craft and violates their contract. If not enough carriers are available, the Overtime Desired List is used to get the job done.

Likewise, clerk functions are to be done by members of our craft, and if management does our work, it too is a contract violation. Rule of thumb, if the task is listed under a Clerk Labor Distribution Code, it is our work. If not enough clerks are available, then the Overtime Desired List is to be used to get the job done. If there are not enough clerks assigned to the section, then the staffing model needs to be reevaluated. If this is a problem at your station/pay location, jot down the particulars. Who performed our work? When did they do it? Where did they do it? What did they do? How long did they perform our work? And, if you know the reason, why were they performing our work? Get witnesses and contact a shop steward.

ARRIVAL - AT - UNIT SCANS

Effective July 13, 2009, Deputy Postmaster General Donahoe directed that all Arrival at Unit Scans made at the delivery unit be performed by clerk craft personnel. 100% of Priority Mail (parcels and flats) and package products with: Delivery and Signature Confirmation, Registered, Certified, Insured, Return Receipt for Merchandise and Collect on Delivery (COD) will receive an Arrival at Unit Scan. This scan is to be done by clerks during the morning distribution process. If this is not happening, let me know. This is our work, and we need it.

SCHEME TRAINING

If your bid requires scheme knowledge, you should be working in productive distribution no less than 30 hours each (four week) accounting period. This is a contract requirement. This is more important than ever now, do to the new Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process (MIARAP). Numerous changes to the delivery scheme are, and will continue to be, the norm. Remember, management is required to provide you a copy of the scheme, and schedule you for one hour of training, **on the clock**, for each sixteen memory items you must learn.

Donovan's Brief

News From Labor's Perspective

By John Donovan, AFL-CIO Street Heat Coordinator

If the USPS didn't have to pre-pay retiree health benefits (which no other company pays), they would have had a profit of \$400 million in the FIRST HALF of Fiscal year 2009. And would have made a profit of \$2.7 Billion in 2008. By the way, UPS and FEDEX had financial losses of 11% and 21% respectively.

According to the House Republican Conference one-page briefing paper, stamp prices have gone up 33% in the past 10 years. What they don't say is that FedEx and UPS have increased prices by 94%.

From the Democrat Party, a review of George Bush's performance:

2001:

Backs out of Kyoto Treaty on global warming
 Passes \$1.3 Trillion tax cut for the wealthy, wiping out federal surplus
 Passes Patriot Act in wake of 9/11
 Allows Osama Bin Laden to escape Tora Bora

2002:

Issues "torture memos" lifting limits on prisoner abuse
 Removes restrictions on domestic spying by FBI
 Claims there is "no doubt" Iraq has WMD's
 Names Michael Brown head of FEMA despite no disaster experience

2003:

Claims falsely in State of Union speech that Iraq sought yellow cake uranium
 Invades Iraq over false WMD charges
 Slashes Army Corps of Engineers budget for New Orleans levees
 Gives \$7 Billion "no-bid" contract to Halliburton for reconstruction of Iraq

2004:

Slashes Army Corp of Engineers levee budget even more
 Opens Alaska's North Slope to oil drilling
 Admits Medicare Bill will cost \$130 Billion more than promised
 Federal deficit reaches \$395 Billion

2005:

Presses for legislation to intervene in Terry Schiavo case
 Refuses to come clean with American people on worsening situation in Iraq
 Incompetent federal response compounds Hurricane Katrina disaster
 Packs federal courts with right-wing judges

According to the *Sunday Parade*, the USA spent \$5,600 per person in 2003, or 15% of our Gross Domestic Product on health care. Germany, France, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland all spend over 10% of their GDP on healthcare. The difference? Theirs is government paid out of taxes.

CNN reports 92% of Canadians are happy with their "Government Run" Health care

From the "Postal Record" Jan 09, Michigan State item:

Ford, Chrysler and GM each gave \$10 million to the American Red Cross and other charities after 9/11. Plus they gave cars, vans and trucks for police and fire departments. Only Volkswagen (\$2 million) and Hyundai (\$300,000) of foreign companies donated. There was nothing from Toyota, Honda, Daewoo, Fiat, Nissan, Subaru, Suzuki, Isuzu, BMW or Audi.

Think Union!

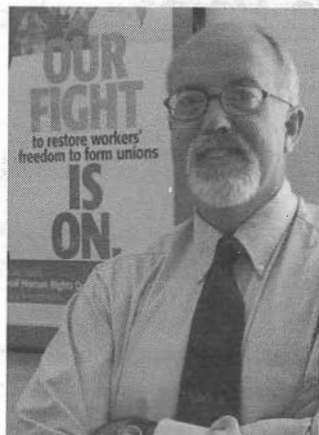


America Needs Us to Stand Up for Justice

By Stewart Acuff, Organizing Director of AFL-CIO, CLC

It is beyond doubt that we are living in a period of potentially great historical change in the United States.

Just a year ago we trade unionists, progressives, and Americans of good will made history with the election of an African-American President—something many of us never thought possible—and large majorities of pro-working family Democrats in both Houses of Congress.



With the implosion of our financial services sector and the consequent economic crisis and recession, it has become abundantly clear that unregulated, unfettered free market capitalism doesn't work for anyone. We now have irrefutable proof that greed is not good, that the markets don't by themselves work for the common good in the nation's interest, that if all the money and resources go to the top, the middle and the bottom are starved. And speaking of the middle, we now know that the middle class is in peril—endangered by the policies of free market economics—unfettered corporate-driven globalization, illegal and immoral union busting, contracting out, working rat, privatization, benefit busting, wage thievery—all the policies that have made up the 30 year assault on working families and unions. While some may have doubted these truths two or four or more years ago, these truths are beyond doubt today.

Those who once held themselves up to be leaders of our society and government are now scorned—Wall St, Bush, Cheney, AIG. The recipients of the governments bailouts continue to shovel obscene amounts of our money to executives without a clue while we suffer 10 percent unemployment, continued loss of health care, and declining wages and a consequent declining standard of living, and a potentially frightening future for our kids and grandkids and beyond.

Most importantly, our people are ready for and even demanding change. By significant majorities, Americans want a public healthcare plan included in the larger health care reform package, and Americans want the Employee Free Choice Act to be passed to once again allow American workers to freely form unions and bargain collectively.

America is ready for change. Why then is change so hard to achieve?

Those who've prosecuted and benefited from the 30 year financial assault on America's working families refuse to let go, to give up what they've come to see as theirs—the insurance companies, the union busters, the ABC, the Comcasts, the Walmarts, Wall St and manipulators of our finances, the Radical Rightwing including Cheney and Rush Limbaugh and Karl Rove and Dick Arme and the Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute.

It is clear that if we are to win the change we voted for last fall and many of us have worked for for years, we are gonna have to fight, fight hard, and fight outside the normal Washington lobbying box. Washington politics and lobbying does not work for workers and working families.

We cannot forget that we've gotten to the verge of passing the Employee Free Choice Act by running the largest national grassroots legislative campaign in the history of the American labor movement. Over the six year course of this campaign we've put literally hundreds of thousands of people on the street and more than a million workers in motion. We delivered one and a half million signatures to the Congress, sent half a million emails, wrote 300,000 handwritten letters and made 200,000 phone calls to Senators. That's a ton of good work. But it is more than clear that we have to do more of it.

While the Employee Free Choice Act has not yet passed, we have realized many benefits—more than a dozen states have passed new public employee collective bargaining laws including majority authorization. Public officials from town and county commissions to city councils to state assemblies to governors and mayors to the Congress to the President of the United States now realize what hell workers go through when they try to organize and bargain for a better life. More public officials than ever have weighed in to support workers trying to organize.

But just as importantly, we have to ramp up our effort to engage and organize workers who don't have a union, to make use of the progress and allies we've made and enlist unorganized workers in the struggle to organize their workplaces and to fight and struggle in the public policy fight to pass the Employee Free Choice Act. Every organizing campaign is a direct and clear reason to pass the Employee Free Choice Act.

It is not enough to wait for the Employee Free Choice Act to pass. We have to demonstrate its necessity with struggle—old fashioned struggle right now, today not tomorrow. And by their actions, unorganized workers have to demonstrate the necessity for the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. It is not enough to wait on the law to change.

History is not made and humanity is not advanced by those who accept the status quo. History is made and the human condition is advanced by warriors willing to struggle for a better life for their kids and grandkids, warriors who understand what they have won by the blood and tears and sacrifice of our forebears.

America today needs people to stand up and organize to fight for change, to fight corporate domination, to organize and struggle, to dare the rat bastards to stop us, to refuse to lose, to challenge the status quo, to tell those who've run our country and too many lives into the ditch that change is now, that we will fight in Washington but that we will also fight all across America.

The future is ours. Let's take it.

Reprint of Organizing Director Stewart Acuff of the AFL-CIO, CLC

ANNUAL APWU HOLIDAY PARTY

December 16, 2009

8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

APWU Union office

3737 Camino del Rio South, Suite 200

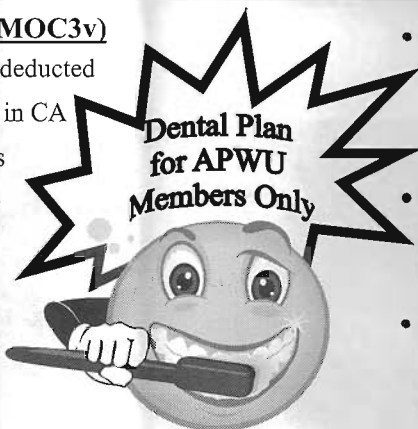
Join us to celebrate the beginning of the Holiday Season!

Lots of refreshments! It's a great way to relax and enjoy the holiday spirit with your Union Brothers and Sisters.

New Dental Plan For APWU Members

Plan Highlights:(DHMO C3v)

- ✓ Premiums are payroll deducted
- ✓ 2,900 general dentists in CA
- ✓ Very low co-payments
- ✓ No lifetime maximum
- ✓ No yearly maximum
- ✓ No waiting periods
- ✓ Guaranteed issue
- ✓ No claim forms
- ✓ No deductibles



• **Preventive Services:**

Cleaning, X-Rays, Exams

• **Routine Service**

Restorative (fillings)

Oral Surgery (extractions)

Endodontics (root canals)

Periodontics (gum)

• **Major Services:**

Crowns, Bridges and Dentures

• **Orthodontics:**

Adult and Child Orthodontia

- Dependents are covered until age 19, or age 23 if they are full-time students (minimum 12 credits).
- Date of eligibility is about 60 days after payroll deduction is processed.
- Contract duration is a minimum of one year, Rates guaranteed through 12/31/2011.
- Plan for California residents

(DHMO C3v)

Employee only
\$13.00 bi-weekly

Employee & 1 dependent
\$23.00 bi-weekly

Employee & Family of 2+
\$31.00 bi-weekly

- ❖ 3310 Root canal treatment—(1 canal) anterior APWU member pay: **\$20.00**
- ❖ 3320 Root canal treatment—(1-4 canal) molar APWU member pay: **\$20.00**
- ❖ 2740 Porcelain/ceramic substrate anterior/bicuspid.APWU member pay: **\$50.00**

Example: ADA Code

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RETIREE'S CORNER

Vito Scurto, President

Retirees Plan Several Tips

August's Retiree meeting was held on Wednesday, August 19, 2009. Some of our retirees, including the president, handed out flyers to over 200 customers concerning the tentative closure at Rancho Del Rey in Chula Vista.

The constitutional changes for the San Diego Retiree Chapter were voted on and were unanimously passed. The changes were as follows:

1. Election of officers to be held in April rather than in May.
2. Officers to be elected for a term of three years, rather than two year-term.
3. Present officers' terms to be extended to May 1, 2011.

Proposed Motion passed: Retiree Chapter president to be authorized as second signatory for the withdrawal of retiree funds for authorized expenditures.

The above changes were made to coincide with the Local's elections, etc.

Motion was made and passed for a bus tour trip to the Palm Springs Follies on Saturday, January 30, 2010. The headliner will be the Four Aces. This bus tour also includes lunch at the Rock Garden Cafe before the show. Total cost is \$98.00 per person. The Retiree Chapter will pay \$49.00 for each APWU member going.

Motion was made and passed for a bus tour trip to Laughlin, Nevada on Monday-Wednesday, March 8-10, 2010. Full cost is \$94 for a double per person, and \$114 for a single, including 2 meals. Union APWU members only will cost \$47 for a double and \$57 for a single.

Finally, a motion was made and passed to go to the Santa Anita Race Track on Thursday, March 18, 2010. Seating will be in the Club Court near the finish line. Admission, lunch, Club seating, program and handicapper are included. Total cost for the trip is \$63.00. The Union will pay half the cost for APWU members only of \$31.50.

Keep in mind that these bus tours fill up fast, so select the tour or tours you want and get us a check made out to APWU Retiree Chapter. Remember, first come-first served. Call Vito or Millie at the APWU Office (619 283 5600).

With this new retiree incentive package there will probably be a lot of employees retiring. Make sure you fill out a retiree membership form. Call Vito at the APWU office if you didn't get one. Membership fees are only \$3.00 per month. This membership provides you the Potpourri, picnic, meetings with pizza, and half-paid tours as noted above, plus yearly free dinners and lunches, etc. Also, you will get information about important issues concerning retirees. So please join us. We need you and you need us!

Vito's Window and Organizing Department

Help Us Help You!

By Vito Scurto, Trustee and Organization

BREAKS:

Take your breaks, you have earned them. Sometimes window clerks skip their breaks because of the pressure they feel when faced with long customer lines. It can be very difficult to close your window and walk away when the eyes of a dozen or more customers are looking at you. Unfortunately, bypassing your breaks encourages understaffing. Make sure you take your breaks when scheduled. Keep in mind that with more window clerks at larger offices, taking your breaks when scheduled is important and fair for all.

LUNCH:

FSLA rules state employees shall take at least a 30-minute lunch before working more than six hours. The 30-minute lunch period is not compensable. In some of the offices, the clerks leave after working eight hours without taking a lunch break. If one chooses to work without taking their lunch and management agrees to it, I would suggest the employee fill out a PS Form 3971 and write "no lunch" in the remarks section.

QUESTIONS: (We have questions.)

Please ask the questions at the window that you are directed to ask. I know some of you are going to say that we are on management's side, because asking the questions seem unimportant or time wasting, especially when the lines are long. Management is paying your salary, so if they want questions asked, please ask them. Management is now using other Postal Supervisors to mystery shop the windows and will issue discipline if questions are not asked. Remember, work as a team, remind your co-workers to ask the questions.

UNION:

There is no excuse for anyone not to support our Union at this critical juncture. There is a high stakes game being played in Washington and our jobs are in play. Whatever the imagined shortcomings of your steward or local officers, they mean very little compared to the future of the Postal Service and our jobs. Let's all look at the big picture. While Postmaster Potter's announcement regarding the five-day delivery of the mail was probably meant to shock Congress into a certain kind of action, it should also shock our membership into a new kind of activism to fight for our future, and for the future of all working people in the midst of our country's financial crisis

UNION SOLIDARITY

"If you have a friend who is a non-member, that person is not your friend because he/she is letting you pay their share of the bills. So sign up that non-member, earn your \$100, and they can be considered a true friend who helps share the load."

Back to the Bad Old Days

By Tammy Yorysh, Chief Steward, T-3

The USPS likes to brag that they have come a long way in how they treat their employees. They boast that the workplace is a place where employees experience dignity and respect. They cite their VOE surveys as proof that things are kinder and gentler than they were back in the days when "Going Postal" became part of the American lexicon. Up until a year ago, I might have tended to agree that things were getting better, compared to the 1980s, when I first became a member of this quirky but enduring Postal family.

I remember my first days as a new PTF LSM clerk at our former main office on Midway Drive. The first 18 months remains in my memories as a blur of work, worry, and fitful broken up sleep. PTFs worked 6 days a week, and four of those 6 days required an hour and 50 minutes of overtime as well. Schemes were repeatedly assigned, one after another in some cases. The turnover rate among PTFs was high, due to the large number of people failing either the manual scheme training, or the LSM scheme training. In those pre-FMLA days, a bout of pneumonia would get you a Restricted sick leave and a Letter of Warning.

The sleep deprivation, the constant change of work assignments, and the stress of wondering who would fall victim to Management's next "great plan" created an atmosphere that would look comical if one were watching the drama unfold in Truman Show fashion. But for those of us actually trying to endure the constant stress of the workplace, it was not funny at all. We all looked forward to the day where we would become a full time regular employee and be able to bid on our very own bid positions. Like the shining Emerald City in the distance, we carried on each day, knowing we were one day closer to the end of the nightmare.

We knew that once we became a FTR, we could enjoy a regular work schedule, with regular days off. We could once again give our families some attention, get a dental checkup, go to a baseball game, and enjoy a holiday away from work. Getting that first bid job was liberating. We had a set schedule now, where the holiday pecking order ensured that we would not be automatically forced in like the PTFs, and where we could sign up for overtime if we wanted it. I'll never forget my first night as a regular, when the supervisor unlocked the card rack and my time card was finally white instead of PTF yellow. And at the end of 8 hours, it felt weird to just clock out and go home.

Now decades later, I realize how we have taken our Union Contract, both National and Local, for granted. Because

now, Management has decided, on a national scale, to take this Contract and spit on it. Using the excuse that they are looking for ways to save money in this economic downturn, management at the highest levels are putting their heads together and planning new and creative ways of circumventing the agreements they are legally bound to follow. Some of their in-your-face actions that have become a regular occurrence include:

*Supervisors performing clerk work or using mail handlers to perform clerk work when the clerks are at lunch or on break.

*Supervisors forcing mail processing clerks to work by themselves on the DBCSs.

*Entire pay locations of Full time Regular jobs are being obliterated and replaced with Part Time Regular bid jobs, and these part time regulars are now being forced to work beyond their schedules.

*Holiday pecking orders are quickly becoming a thing of the past. Management's newest creative idea of circumventing the holiday scheduling rules involve the use of the PS form 1723. Once used solely as a higher level orders form, it is now being used to forcibly change people's schedules on holiday weeks in order to avoid the payment of overtime. Columbus Day Holiday finds tour 2 plant employees being forced to work on tour 1, just so Management can avoid paying overtime to T-1 employees to work up their own tour's mail.

Management is spending the majority of their time in meetings, where they plan their next "great" idea. They create bids, post them, award them, then abolish them, all within a 4 week period of time. In many instances, the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. Consequently, there doesn't appear to be a well-planned strategy to manage; on the contrary, the plan seems to be an ever-changing monstrosity that has resulted in everyone, no matter how senior, feeling very insecure.

It appears that Management is regretting their decision to convert Part time Flexibles to Full time status in 200 work year offices and they have now decided to treat both full time and part time regulars as if they were still PTFs. It would also appear that Management would like to revert back to pre 1970, when everyone was treated more or less like a casual employee. They are leveling an willful assault on our contract on a daily basis, daring us to file grievances with each offensive move. And we are.

(Continued on page 15 - See **Back to the Bad Old Days**)

Back To Work.....Finally!!!

Leonard Alexander, Clerk Craft Director

After a three month absence caused by several medical problems, I was cleared to return to work on July 6th. I wish to thank all the Union Officers and Stewards who covered for me during my long illness. I owe you all, big time!!!

Our Craft continues to suffer the pains of downsizing and excessing. Morale is low, stress levels are high, and not knowing what the future holds just adds to the turmoil. Is my job safe? Will I be excessed, again? Will I be forced out of the Clerk Craft? Will I have to pack up my family and move to another city? Will I be OK if I accept a Part Time Regular bid? There are so many questions, but until the Postal Service implements a valid, sustainable business plan, currently there are very few positive answers. The job stability we enjoyed in the past will never return unless our executives figure out how to consistently make more money than we spend. I say....Thrill Our Customers! Thrill Our Customers! Thrill Our Customers!

This nation has some of the top business schools in the world. If our current USPS executives can't bring us out of this financial quagmire, surely there are a few MBAs available to guide this great organization back to solid financial ground. **Now that's a task that should be contracted out!**

So what do we have going for us during these times of gloom and doom? We just happen to have one of the best Collective Bargaining Agreements on the planet!!! One just has to pick up a newspaper or watch the news to appreciate how our APWU negotiated contract insulates us from the financial hardships faced by many of our fellow citizens. Just think, each year, a senior full time regular clerk enjoys:

Base Salary: \$52,520

Five Weeks Paid Vacation

10 Paid Holidays

13 Sick Days

TSP matching contributions (FERS)

Layoff Protection

Low Cost Health Care

Weekly Work Hour Guarantees

Overtime

Retreat Rights

Seniority Consideration for Bids, Annual Leave, Excessing
& PAA Assignments

This contract expires on November 20, 2010 or prior to the effective date of the new agreement. To save money, the Postal Service will try to eliminate many of these benefits, so this will no doubt be one of the toughest contracts ever negotiated. Brothers and Sisters, our APWU negotiators need our help to win this battle. Now is the time for **all** craft employees to stand together in solidarity.

Stay Union! Let our non-members know what is at stake, and sign them up. Contribute what you can to COPA.

These are good jobs. Let's all work together to keep them.

(Continued from page 14) - **Back to the Bad Old Day**

by Tammy Yoysch

We have come a long way from those stressful days 25 years ago. Unfortunately, management, in their zeal to think outside the box, is dragging their bargaining unit employees to a place right back to where we all started, with rampant abuses and morale-crushing stress. This is not creative management. It is destructive management.

The stewards and officers are working around the clock dealing with a myriad of contractual violations that are occurring regularly. If you are experiencing an issue in your office or pay location, call the Union and let them know. We must remind management that even though they choose to ignore it, we do have a Contract that must be followed. We all worked hard to get to where we are. We deserve respect, and we are not getting it. There is no dignity and respect when Management deliberately ignores the Contract. And although the struggle will be difficult, we must defend what is ours.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Membership Meetings
 November 19 Thurs...6 PM
 December 17 Thurs..10 AM

Steward Meetings
 November 21 Sat 9 AM
 December 19 Sat 9 AM

Executive Board Meetings
 November 5 Thurs...10 AM
 December 10 Thurs..10 AM

Retiree Meetings (3rd Wednesday)
 November 18 Wed .Noon
 December 16 Wed ..Noon

P.O.W.E.R. Meetings
 November 19 5 PM
 December 17 After membership meeting

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SAVE the DATE

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see details on page 7

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