



Aurora News

Official Newsletter of the
Aurora Colorado Local, APWU

May 2006

Volume 7 Number 1

President's Report

GREETINGS AND HAPPY SALUTATIONS

by Shelly Alvarado

I hope that your 2006 is filled with happiness, joy and blessings throughout the entire year. This year will be a year of transformation and transition for our Local.

For all of you that were able to attend the Installation Dinner on January 28th as well as for those that could not attend it was a time to thank Rick Borsick for the past fourteen years of his service, dedication and commitment to the Aurora, CO APWU Local. Rick, you truly have been an advocate for the Postal workers in this city and committed to fighting in the

struggle of rights, wages and working conditions. For that I would like to sincerely thank you.

I wish to call to arms all of you because our postal world is dramatically changing. We can no longer remain in our protective bubbles because they will burst! The fight is escalating each and every day. Just watch the news; workers are losing their rights and benefits in every industry across the board. This is our year to negotiate our contract after six years. What benefits do you think the Postal Service would like to take from us? Our health benefits? Retirement package? Holiday pay, overtime pay, guaranteed time, raises? COLA's? Or maybe even *our jobs*? What is going to be *your* contribution to this year's negotiation - or to the future of your job?

Don't blame the Union if you're not happy, the union is only as strong as its membership - so this is my challenge to all of you!

If you know a non-member, try to sign them up. If you do not donate to COPA (Committee on Political Action) you need to. It only takes \$1 a payday. Your local needs volunteers to organize for special projects, we need stewards and alternate stewards at every station. Try coming to a meeting - they are held only four times each year in March, June, September and November, on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm at 1010 Joliet Street in Aurora, near the Buckingham Station. So be a part of your future, commit to serve and we - as a union - can make it happen together.



Aurora Local APWU members and guests at the January 28th Installation Dinner

Aurora News PO Box 471234 Aurora, CO 80047 is the official newsletter of the Aurora, Colorado Local APWU . We welcome original articles, stories and artwork from our local union members and their families. All opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the editor, local officers of the Aurora Colorado Local APWU or the publisher. The editor reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for this publication shall be printed and will edit if needed for space. Libelous statements or personal attacks will not be printed. All material must be signed, however, anonymity may be requested.

OFFICERS President - Shelly Alvarado Vice-President - Bob Burton Secretary-Treasurer - Tom Sullivan
Editor - Dan Van Minnen Trustees - Dan Van Minnen, Blessie Tagle, Penny Taylor
STEWARDS Altura - Tom Sullivan Buckingham - Vacant Fletcher - Shelly Alvarado Gateway - Vacant
Hoffman Heights - Vacant Main Office - Rick Borsick Tower - Vacant Maintenance Dept. - Vacant

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of March, June, September and November at the Local office located at 1010 South Joliet Street Aurora, CO 80012.

Do your part and attend a meeting convenient for you.

Get involved Brothers and Sisters -- Separated we will Fail but In Unity we will Prevail!

Dan's Tool Box

by *Dan Van Minnen*

I greatly appreciate the opportunity of serving as the Maintenance steward for the local. It was a job that has been both challenging and never ending as management always gave me contractual violations to argue. I have decided to take a break indefinitely as the Maintenance Union steward, I will still represent and respect the Collective bargaining agreement and be active in the Local as Editor of the Newsletter and help out the Local as its membership determines. That opens a vacancy for all the craft employees in maintenance that might be interested in policing the contract. Now is the time to get involved and make a difference. There are still many issues that need to be resolved such as the two open vacancies, a FTR and PTR position in the custodial occupational code, the use of subcontracting labor and the many overtime and higher level issues.

Recently, we have witnessed a change in Management at the Postmaster and Station Manager levels at the Main. Welcome aboard and hopefully your respect and dignity for the hard working employees of Aurora and their respective contracts will be shown in your actions and managerial style. Since the Maintenance Manager never bothered to let his employees know about the change I can't

address you since I don't even know your names. However a few sincere words of advice to pass along; treat all of your employees fairly and with dignity and respect and you will succeed. Leadership by example brings true *e'spirit de corps* and gets the job done. It does

How is it that non-members will accept \$3,000 to \$5,000 and even \$10,000 in grievance settlements just the same as a member - but refuse to pay monthly union dues?

matter how we do the job at the end of the day. Just ask our last Post Master because nobody really wanted to hire him but in the end they had to, it was a PCES sort of thing. Will he be back? Possibly. In Aurora the Union's door is always open and we mean that, because we leave the light on so collective bargaining may continue to take shape.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude on behalf of the entire Local to Custodian **Craig Hill** at the Tower station. Craig recently donated a HP desk top computer to the Union for union use. **Way to go Craig!**

It's members like you that make your Union representatives feel appreciated. Also congratulations to all of the new members in the Local we are now at 106 members in strength. Remember to talk to a non-member today and ask them to sign up. Why should they get a free ride just because they are cheap and let the rest of us pay for the representation that they are receiving. It is the same representation that you and I receive - *only we pay dues*. It's funny how they have their hand out come settlement time and want to read our literature and tell the union about the CBA but yet they refuse to pay their fair share. How is it that non-members will accept \$3,000 to \$5,000 and even \$10,000 in grievance settlements just the same as a member but refuse to pay monthly union dues? We have non-members that will not fill out that Form 1187 to join but they are willing to accept thousands and thousands of dollars in APWU grievance settlements, negotiated raises, Cost of living adjustments and work place improvements. There is no other explanation that I can conclude other than to say that they are JUST CHEAP! Brother and Sisters there is strength in unity and there's Solidarity amongst us all even when we disagree because we are a part of a great union. Don't take my word for it. Just compare your pay stub with anyone that does similar type work as you.

Members of Congress Ask GAO To Address Consolidation Concerns

APWU Web News Article #25-06, April 11, 2006

Echoing union criticisms of the USPS network consolidation plan, four key members of Congress expressed "concerns about the way the USPS is carrying out" the program, in a letter to the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

The March 27 letter to U.S. Comptroller General David M. Walker was signed by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Joe Lieberman (D-CT), and Representatives Tom Davis (R-VA) and Henry Waxman (D-CA). "While we recognize the USPS may need to consolidate its facilities..." the letter said, "... we are not convinced that USPS is following the recommendations made" in GAO's 2005 report on consolidation. The 2005 study concluded that the USPS "strategy for realigning its mail-processing infrastructure lacks clarity, criteria, and accountability."

The legislators' letter noted that, "The GAO report recommended that the Service establish criteria, inform stakeholders as decisions are

made, and evaluate and measure the outcomes of realigning these plants, including the costs and savings that result.

"Although GAO recommended that USPS increase its efforts to keep stakeholders informed," the letter continued, members of the House and Senate have informed the legislators that "they and the communities they represent have not been adequately informed about the Postal Service's plans, how the Postal Service proposed to analyze plant performance and make realignment decisions, and what are the potential effects on these communities. "Therefore, we are asking that GAO follow up on its report and determine:

- What criteria is USPS using to analyze and evaluate these plants?
- How does it plan to communicate these criteria to affected parties?
- How does USPS's overall communications strategy target the appropriate affected parties and does it provide sufficient information throughout the process?

and
How does USPS plan to measure the effects of realignment including costs incurred and savings realized?"

APWU President William Burrus praised the legislators' letter. "I am pleased that the legislators have expressed their concerns," he said. "The USPS has heard only one voice in preparing its consolidation plan — the voice of major corporate mailers. It is imperative that citizens and their representatives be provided with information as well as the opportunity to provide input when consolidation plans are made.

"The U.S. Postal Service belongs to the American people. Their voices must be heard." Collins chairs the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, of which Lieberman is the ranking minority member. Davis is chairman and Waxman ranking minority member of the House Committee on Government Reform.

Postal Tidal Wave Hits San Diego

by Shelly Alvarado

After attending the President's Conference in March Local President's were told that a Postal Tidal wave has hit San Diego and is moving inland. There were 27 injured clerk craft employees escorted out by management. This was the first time ever that management has used this practice in a plant wide sweep. The postal tidal wave is called the **National Reassessment Process (NRP)**, formally known as the Outplacement Pilot Program. The goal of this program is for the company to get you onto the OWCP payroll so that the USPS does not have to pay you any benefits. If you're an employee that was injured on the job and your injury prevents you from being productive in

the Postal Service they want to get you onto the OWCP payroll. The reasoning for this is in order to retrain the employee in the program so that you may enter a private sector job without the benefits that the APWU has negotiated for you. The USPS can save millions and millions of dollars by doing this and they feel that it is right for the business! **WRONG!** To find out more about the 27 craft employees who had their rehab jobs withdrawn, badges confiscated and walked out in San Diego go to apwu.org San Diego.

So what does this mean for our injured APWU craft employees? It means prepare for the storm. If the Postal Service is capable of implementing this program correctly it would be contractual and legal, these laws have been

around for quite awhile but never have been enforced by the postal service. Now it seems that their policy has changed.

Protect yourselves; plan and make sure your restrictions are current and accurate. Bid jobs that are within your restrictions. Cooperate when job offers are made and inform your stewards of limited duty cross crafting issues. Contact me or Dan Van Minnen in Maintenance with any questions or concerns. Inform us of any limited duty job offers you have to keep us in the loop. Your local is here to make sure you're OWCP and contractual rights are protected. Help us to help you.

A Day in the Life Of Joe Middle-Class Republican

by John Gray, Engineers Local 20

Joe gets up at 6:00 am to prepare his morning coffee. He fills his pot full of good clean drinking water because some liberal fought for minimum water quality standards. He takes his daily medication with his first swallow of coffee. His medications are safe because some liberal fought to insure the safety and work as advertised.

All but \$10 of his medications are paid for by his employer's medical plan because some liberal union workers fought the employers for paid medical insurance, now Joe gets it too. He prepared his morning breakfast, bacon and eggs this day. Joe's bacon is safe to eat because some liberal fought for laws to regulate the meat packing industry.

Joe takes his morning shower reaching for his shampoo: his bottle is properly labeled with every ingredient and the amount of its contents because some liberal fought for his right to know what he was putting on his body and how much it contained. Joe dresses, walks outside and takes a deep breath. The air he breathes is clean because some tree hugging liberal fought for laws to stop industries from polluting our air. He walks to the subway station for his government subsidized ride to work; it saves him considerable money in parking and transportation fees. You see, some liberal fought for affordable public transportation which gives everyone the opportunity to be a contributor.

Joe begins his work day, he has a good job with excellent pay, medical benefits, retirement, paid holidays, and vacation because some liberal union members fought and died for these working standards because Joe's employer doesn't want his employees to call the union. If Joe is hurt on the job or becomes unemployed, he'll get a workers' compensation or unemployment check because some liberal didn't think he should lose his home because of his temporary misfortune.

“We don't need those big government liberals running our lives; after all I'm a self made man who believes everyone should take care of themselves, just like I have.”

Its noon time, Joe needs to make a bank deposit so he can pay some bills. Joe's deposit is federally insured by the FSLIC because some liberal wanted to protect Joe's money from unscrupulous bankers who ruined the banking system before the depression. Joe has to pay his Fannie Mae underwritten mortgage and his below

market federal student loan because some stupid liberal decided that Joe and the government would be better off if he was educated and earned more money over his lifetime.

Joe is home from work, he plans to visit his father this evening at his farm home in the country. He gets in his car for the drive to dad's; his car is among the safest in the world because some liberal fought for car safety standards. He arrives at this boyhood home. He was the third generation to live in the house financed by Farmers Home Administration because bankers didn't want to make rural loans. The house didn't have electricity until some big government liberal stuck his nose where it didn't belong and demanded rural electrification. (Those rural Republicans would still be sitting in the dark).

He is happy to see his dad who is now retired. His dad lives on Social Security and his union pension because some liberal made sure he could take care of himself so Joe wouldn't have to. After his visit with dad, he gets back in his car for the ride home. He turns on a radio talk show, the host keeps saying that liberals are bad and conservatives are good. (He doesn't tell Joe that his beloved Republicans have fought against every protection and benefit Joe enjoys throughout his day). Joe agrees, “We don't need those big government liberals running our lives; after all I'm a self made man who believes everyone should take care of themselves, just like I have.”

A PTF's Statement.

The Aurora News welcomes the questions, comments and viewpoints of its members.

The following is a statement that the author has allowed the Local to reprint for our fellow members to read but wishes to remain anonymous. In showing our respect to that person we print the following.

April 21, 2006

This is a PTF's statement.

I have never been called a liar before, mainly because I am strongly opposed to lying. If my supervisor feels that I have an attitude because I tell the supervisor that I am on a break and do not want to work off the clock, then I am guilty of having an attitude. I have given up many breaks because of unrealistic time lines the supervisor's have created. I have tried to the

best of my abilities, including forfeiting breaks, to meet these time lines.

If my supervisor feels that I have an attitude because I tell the supervisor that I am on a break and do not want to work off the clock, then I am guilty of having an attitude.

I have put up with being pulled into multiple positions because we are short staffed; I have put up with considerable amounts of stress because of the lack of communications between supervisors; and I have put up with having a

male supervisor inappropriately touch me and make remarks that were unwarranted. All because I was afraid of retaliation from Management.

It is hard for a person to condone the abuse supervisors put on PTF's because we are PTF's. I do not appreciate having my character lowered because of a supervisor. I get along with many of my co-workers and joke around about many things. Anyone can ask the carriers or window clerks of how they feel about my "attitude". I do not get offended easily, but I am offended of these accusations. I do not believe a person of any craft should have to put up with verbal or sexual harassment of any kind. I feel frustrated as an employee and as a person. I only ask that both sides are reviewed before conclusions are made about either person.

My dog ate my homework ...

and other negotiating tactics

by Rick Borsick

"You don't negotiate with someone you don't trust," was a statement I recently heard from fellow APWU members. It sounds a little extreme and negative but in this case it was true.

It truly was a negative negotiating experience for the local when Aurora Postal Management walked out on the negotiations of the Local Memorandum of Understanding on November 10, 2005. After at least a dozen gross errors by management in several aspects of the local negotiations process, management finally committed their biggest mistake when they threw up their hands and walked out. Management was not very convincing that they really wanted to negotiate throughout the process even though they had requested to have these negotiations in writing. Representatives from the Aurora Local were not interested in participating because of the labor/management relationship being so poor up until this point in time. The contract extension that was approved by the membership earlier in the year 2005 had provided a 60 day opportunity for local negotiations to take place and, much to our surprise, Aurora Postal Management requested to open the negotiations process. Personally, I know of no other APWU Locals that participated in the negotiations

process. Many Locals viewed the negotiation provision in the extension as pretend negotiations because if you disagreed with the USPS you could not take your disagreement to an arbitrator.

Personally, I know of no other APWU Locals that participated in the negotiations process.

The acting Supervisor of Customer Service Support, Andy Weaver was appointed as the spokesperson for Postal Management with Maintenance Manager Ken Walzyck by his side. For the Local the negotiating team comprised of Shelly Alvarado and myself. Labor/Management relations in the fall of 2005 were at a low point. Two officers had experienced physical altercations with the local supervisors and a station manager and one officer had even received a veiled threat. In addition, the Post Master had exhibited offensive behaviors and extreme unprofessionalism toward a union officer when he spat, screamed and exhibited his little temper tantrum. Oral communications were kept to a minimum and communications were mostly conducted in writing. Furthermore, the Local had discovered that members of Aurora Man-

agement had falsified: PS Forms 3971 (if you read the bottom line of a leave form it clearly states that this is against Federal Law); forged a steward's initials on up to 10 different grievance settlements; and there were various discrepancies involving improper recording of employee's clock rings. Management was exhibiting great disrespect towards APWU members and your Local's leaders. Due to management's behaviors described above, and several other reasons, Tom Sullivan and Dan VanMinnen voiced their opinions that local negotiations would be a waste of time. They were right! Tom and Dan had no obligation to attend and I clearly understood their point of view. However, as Local President at that time, I was required to attend Local Negotiations as the Union spokesman. President Pro-tem Shelly Alvarado attended all negotiations with the exception of the first meeting. Bob Burton also participated in the process. Items that we wanted to put on the table were also discussed with Secretary-Treasurer Tom Sullivan and Maintenance Steward Dan VanMinnen.

We entered into negotiations in October. One meeting after another Andy Weaver talked about the clerk craft leave bidding units and wash-up time. The Union presented different ideas at each meeting. Mr. Weaver told us that his leave proposal would gain one slot in one period of bidding annual leave and loose a slot in the other and therefore be a wash. This was a strange idea to say in the least. Mr. Weaver

Continued on page 6

Local Stewards Are at Work for You!

A Few Highlights

| <u>Grievance</u> | <u>Settlements</u> | <u>Grievance</u> | <u>Settlements</u> |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Improper scheme assignment | \$ 2,000 | LOW (failure to perform duties in safe manner-accident) | reduced to official discussion |
| Crossing crafts | 13 ½ hrs of OT paid to OTDL | Outside of duty hours | \$ 1,684.34 |
| Improper excising | \$ 700.00 | Improper change of start time | \$ 652.00 |
| Improper excising | \$ 1,200.00 | 7 day suspension (failure to perform duties in a safe manner accident) | reduced to LOW, 3 month retention |
| Improper notification of change in start times | \$ 2,122.00 | Subcontracting custodial work | 64 hrs makeup OT work & 8 hrs straight pay |
| Failure to provide a steward | \$ 150.00 | Improper higher level assignment, maintenance craft | \$350 |
| 8 hr. Guaranteed full tour OT | \$ 400.00 | | |
| Letter of Warning (LOW) (failure to follow instructions) | reduced to official discus- sion | | |
| Displacement | \$ 20.00 | | |
| FTR over 60 hrs in workweek | \$ 98.00 | | |

My dog ate my homework from page 5

dressed up his idea as being good for the clerk craft, although we would not gain more people allowed off at one time. If that was what he wanted to accomplish he could have offered an increase in the percentages. Our stated position is that management proposed the annual leave bidding sections that we currently have. Management then eliminated the pool-relief positions. Are we supposed to renegotiate our local agreement to fit each Postmaster's desires? What if the next Postmaster wants pool-relief employees? Management has created a problem because they've eliminated duty assignments and have deliberately understaffed the Clerk Craft with, currently, twelve jobs still in withholding. Mr. Weaver responded to the issues we presented for the LMOU and there were about four that had promise for being written in to our agreement.

The deadline for proposals arrived and the APWU submitted 14 written proposals. Our next scheduled meeting was after the deadline. At that meeting Mr. Weaver wanted to discuss management's "proposals". I informed Mr. Weaver that the proposal submission time had passed and the APWU's position is that management had no proposals on the table. Mr. Weaver stated that he had given me the proposals the previous week. I asked when last week? Mr. Weaver did not specify a day but repeated that he had submitted them last week. Mr. Weaver then said that he had taped the

proposals on the Union's laptop in the Union cubicle. I asked when he had put the proposals in the Union cubicle and he did not specify a day. I then tried to give Mr. Weaver a way out and asked him if he had the proposals with him and pointed to the file folder in front of him. Mr. Weaver opened the folder and went through the papers within but could not find the proposals.

I don't know if Mr. Weaver told any of these employees that he failed to negotiate anything and walked out of negotiations.

At this point it was getting difficult to keep a straight face because the next question on my mind was, "Did the dog eat your home work"? Mr. Weaver brought a laptop to each meeting and he began searching the files and finally said that the proposals must be on the computer in his office. Things disintegrated from there with Mr. Weaver finally stating, "That's it and then it's over." Mr. Weaver and his lone team member Ken Walzyck left the Aurora Main Office conference room. However, it was not over for Mr. Weaver. When management walked out of the negotiations that they had requested, it was November, which is when our annual leave bidding period begins. Local officers and stewards were getting feedback

from members that Mr. Weaver was telling APWU represented employees that the APWU had screwed the membership by not taking his fantastic offer at local negotiations for leave bidding sections. Mr. Weaver carried on to the point that one employee wrote a note concerning the issue stating more than one time "Stupid APWU". Not surprisingly Mr. Weaver did not mention during his Union bashing episodes neither that in his own words "it was a wash" nor did he mention that he failed to ever submit a proposal. I don't know if Mr. Weaver told any of these employees that he failed to negotiate anything and walked out of negotiations. I am still wondering how all of the time Mr. Weaver wasted is "right for the business" as he likes to say. I could go on and list the dozen or more horrible mistakes made by Mr. Weaver and Aurora Management in negotiations but it would only serve to educate the management individuals involved, if that is possible. All things in life worth doing are worth doing well and there is an etiquette that applies. There is etiquette for: bowling, playing craps, riding in an elevator, eating and negotiating. There is an art to negotiating. Bashing the Union about Local negotiations is just something that management should not engage in. Ask around, Mr. Weaver, and find out who else uses this "tactic". Tom Sullivan and Dan VanMinnen were right - local negotiations were a waste of time.

*“We Value
Your Opinion ...”*

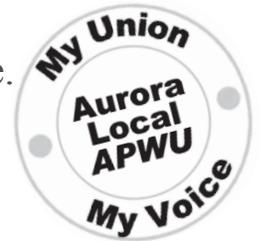
*... on how to eliminate your jobs, reduce your benefits
and minimize your wages.*

No matter how pretty the picture, the ugly truth remains -
Management has a history of misusing employee surveys
towards ends that hurt employees and diminish
their importance to the success of the Postal Service.



Don't be fooled.

Just Say No on VOE!



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