



# Aurora News

Official Newsletter of the  
Aurora Colorado Local, APWU

February 2007

Volume 7 Number 4

## A New Year, A New Four Year Contract And The New Challenges That Lie Ahead

### President's Report

by Shelly Alvarado

In 2006 a lot was accomplished by the Local; the biggest of which was the conversion of part time flexible employees to full time regulars to make a full time work force in the city; 91% union membership; and over \$1,500 given to COPA. We gave more per capita to COPA than any other local in the state, 4th year running! Wasn't it nice to finally see a significant cash settlement before the holidays? It was also very sad for us to all experience the loss of one of our members with the passing of our APWU brother Terry Oliver. Please remember Terry's family with your thoughts and prayers. We all truly miss him.

2007 has started out with the ratification of a new negotiated contract. We are awaiting notification that the new contract has been officially signed and the announcement of how and when employees are to receive the 1.2 % pay increase effective November 21, 2006. In addition, once the new contract is official a date will be announced to enter into Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) negotiations in which we have 30 days to negotiate for any changes that we may want to consider of our LMOU. If you have any suggestions (Art. 30 of the collective bargaining agreement lists the issues that are open for negotiations.) please submit them in writing to **APWU Aurora, CO, Local PO Box 471234 Aurora, CO 80047-1234**. Your officers and stewards are also available to answer any questions about the negotiations of our LMOU. Remember just because you make suggestions or we choose to negotiate a particu-

lar item does not guarantee its adoption or change to the LMOU until both the union and management sign off on it.

There are three major issues from 2006 that carried into 2007, they are (1) supervisors performing bargaining unit work, (2) crossing crafts and (3) staffing. The staffing issue is not a problem that is going to be resolved at the local level. There are two committees that are composed of a district complement committee & the area complement committee. They make staffing decisions that effect the local, and the local is making inquiries with our national and other locals that are fighting this same battle. Thank you to the many who have stepped up to protect their jobs by requesting stewards, providing information and statements in the struggle to keep

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## Legislative Alley

by Bob Burton

Vice-President/Legislative Director

Hello Brothers and Sisters,  
A new year is well underway and already we are seeing the fruit of all our hard work. Thanks to those of you who participated in the fall election by either supporting or voting for candidates who won that are supportive of working families. Because of your effort to vote our legislators in the Colorado House, the State Senate as well as the Governors mansion are holding a Democratic majority. You have helped change the political landscape in Colorado from a "Red" state to one that now has a decidedly purple color and heading toward a bright blue. Governor Ritter has put affordable health care at the top of his list for the many currently uninsured residents of Colorado. Education and jobs is also a top priority in which he intends to work with the state legislature.

In the November election a strong signal for change was also sent to Washington D.C. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate came under Democratic control. Hopefully the family friendly people that were sent to Washington will listen to the will of the people and take care of the peoples business instead of big business. With the Democrats in control of the House for the first time in twelve years, they put forth a 100-hour agenda. New Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi listed 8 goals the Democrats wanted to accomplish in the first 100 hours of the 110th Congress. They were all passed in the House in 87 hours. The 8 pieces of legislation are as follows:

1. **Adopt new ethics rules...**
2. **Raise the minimum wage.....**
3. **Expand taxpayer-financed research on embryonic stem cells...**
4. **Force more homeland security measures....**

5. **To negotiate for cheaper Medicare prescription drugs...**
6. **Lower interest rates on subsidized student loans...**
7. **Reimpose rules that require tax cuts or new spending to benefits programs to be accompanied by revenue increases elsewhere in the budget...**
8. **Recover royalties from oil and gas companies and roll back industry tax cuts.**

These are the results of sending people to congress who put the interest of working families first over big business. One of the next orders of business will include the Employee Free Choice Act which will help workers organize unions so please pay attention, ask questions and get involved! May God bless you all and God Bless America.

**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 - Editor - Dan Van Minnen  
Trustees - Bob Burton, Dan Van Minnen, Ted Seidler

**STEWARDS** Altura - Tom Sullivan Gateway - Tower Dan Van Minnen Main Office - Bob Burton  
Buckingham - Fletcher - Hoffman Heights - Maintenance Dept. - Shelly Alvarado

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of January, March, May, 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!**

**President's Report** *continued from page 1*

management and other crafts off of our windows, out of our lobbies, away from spreading mail or doing other APWU bargaining unit work. We continue to keep up the fight and hopefully more will join this battle to protect our work instead of allowing it to go away.

Recently management reverted the Nixie level 6 job at the Main Office. That mail is now being

sent back to the stations or sent out with PARS without being properly worked or endorsed. The Union needs to know how much mail, when it was received, when it was worked, who worked it and how long it took. We also need to know if the mail was delayed in the process. We need the all facts so we can process that information in a timely manner. Remember we have 14 days from the day of incident or the violation to file a grievance. The burden of

proof falls on that of the union with the exception being discipline cases. We must have facts, specifics to be successful in the grievance procedure. Therefore that burden falls on the APWU represented employees to get this information to the stewards or officers.

Get ready to rumble in 2007. It is in unity and solidarity that we will accomplish the most.

## American Postal Workers Union Retirees' Department

Thinking of retirement? Make sure you don't leave your union benefits behind!!!

Become a member of the APWU Retirees and continue to enjoy the protection, support and other privileges you experience as an active worker. For just \$2.00 a month, you can sign up for:

**Free accidental death and dismemberment insurance**  
**Supplemental dental, health and hospital coverage**  
**Entertainment, retail and travel discounts**  
**Home mortgage financing**  
**Legal insurance**  
**APWU-member MasterCard**  
**and more.....**

Do you know...

***What your monthly social security payment will be?***

***If your health insurance is portable?***

***If you can work without losing retirement benefits?***

***How to enroll in Medicare?***

***What Medigap covers?***

***What the new prescription drug insurance covers?***

***Who to contact with question or problems?***

***How to start the retirement process?***

Members also receive timely information on Medicare, Social Security, prescription drugs and end of life decision making.

As a member, you'll stay informed about critical legislative issues, policy decision, social and educational opportunities that can enrich your life as a retiree.

Your APWU Retiree membership is more than a ticket to a better retirement. It's a way to protect your interests and those of your fellow workers - now and in the future.

**To enroll,  
Please call 1-877-APWU-NOW.**

Join the Retirees and find out!

## FAQ's about the APWU Auxiliary

### **1. What is the APWU Auxiliary?**

The APWU Auxiliary is a grassroots organization of volunteers who help promote and assist the APWU and its members. The APWU Auxiliary assists the APWU both locally and nationally through philanthropic endeavors and politically, helping get the message of the APWU across to politicians and the local community.

### **2. How does my being a member make a difference?**

The APWU Auxiliary helps carry out many of the time consuming nuts and bolts activities essential to the success of the APWU.

### **3. Can a union member also be a member of the APWU Auxiliary?**

Yes. You can be your own sponsor. You and any family members or friends can join.

### **4. How much will it cost to become a member?**

When you become a member you pay \$5.00 for membership to the National APWU Auxiliary, \$4.00 to the State of Colorado APWU Auxiliary and \$5.00 to your local APWU Auxiliary. The dues to the APWU Auxiliary are only paid once a year.

### **5. What has the State Of Colorado APWU Auxiliary accomplish since the last state convention?**

At the state convention we held a child labor class. There were 15 children that attended this class. They learned about some of the different types of people who were involved in the organization of the labor movement. The Auxiliary raised clothing donations for the national convention in Philly. We were able to send 19 boxes of women and children's clothes and personal hygiene products. We also helped a local family suffering with severe medical problems.

The mother is suffering from breast cancer, the youngest child needs a heart valve transplant and the nine year old daughter has been diagnosed with Type II diabetes. We were able to help this family through our joint efforts with the Local to provide \$200.00 to help offset medical expenses. During this year we have had several family members die. We were able to help these families with information and meals. Now, we are presently working on raising money to help defer the costs for Girl Scouts to ship cookies to the troops in the hospital and serving overseas.

### **6. How can I join the APWU Auxiliary?**

All you need to do is contact:

Mary Van Minnen  
 PO Box 471234  
 Aurora, CO 80047  
 720-226-4760

*Our Condolences Go Out To The Following Families*

**The Sanderson Family**

*During this time of sorrow you are in our thoughts and prayers*

## Dan's Tool Box

by Dan Van Minnen

Over the past several months there have been continual violations of Article 1.6 "Supervisors performing bargaining Unit work" and Article 7 "the Crossing of Crafts or Occupational Codes". As a result management has accepted responsibility and voluntarily admitted that the violations are occurring on a continual basis. It may be daily or even hourly in some instances as it has all come down to inadequate staffing. With a career full time work force, the new PTF's of the city are now the Aurora Supervisors. Just pay attention and you can see those supervisors and station managers performing lobby sweeps, spreading DPS, answering phones, unloading trucks and even doing breakdowns - and that is just a start. They are so busy doing Clerk work that they can't even do their own work in a timely fashion. Too bad that they are not protected as you and I with a 12 hour a day

work / 60 a week work rule. Too bad that they are in a position that leaves them working the mail long after we have gone home. Sometimes I think that we should call our facilities Flop Houses because our supervisors are at work before we arrive and there long after we go home. It leaves me with the impression that they are sleeping at their desks with too little time to attend to their lives at home. Maybe they should get a life? Maybe they need a Union? Too much work to do, too many tasks to perform, oh so many questions to answer and so many complaints from the customers. Not to mention all of those grievances to answer. What can they do? **ADD MORE CLERKS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

This inadequate staffing has directly resulted from Management's Transformation Plan! I know many of you want to work as many hours as you can, even exceeding the explicit work

rules that are outlined in Article 8 of the contract. The bottom line is that it is not only unproductive and our bodies can't take it over long periods of time but it is also against the law. Remember, it was unions that brought us the 40 hour week and that thing called weekends. Our workforce is aging but Management doesn't care. Our mail is getting delayed but Management doesn't care. Our workers are getting less respect, less dignity and even less appreciation day after day but Management doesn't care. Even though they give you a burrito and a chance to fill out your VOE Survey to tell them nothing that they will ever use in making a business decision that is good for the workers. This, by the way, is why we boycott those VOE Surveys.

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## Local Stewards Are at Work for You!

### *A Few Highlights*

#### GRIEVANCE

Improper Reversion  
Crossing Crafts

**Supervisors Performing Craft Work**

**\*Distribution**

\*Window

\*APC's

**8 hr. Guaranteed full tour OT**

**LOW's (Letter of Warning) (Attendance)**

LOW Accident

7 Day Suspension

**LOW (failure to perform duties in safe manner-accident)**

**Out of Schedule**

12 hour Rule

Overtime Bypasses

**7 day suspension (failure to perform duties in a safe manner accident)**

**Denial of Leave**

Denial of Convention Leave for Delegate

Working Outside Principle Assigned Area

**Denial of Steward's Time**

**Crossing Crafts**

Request for Medical Documentation

Overtime Skip

**Casuals In Lieu of**

**G Machine**

Maintenance Staffing Enforcement

Article 1.6 Violations (multitude)

**Article 8 overtime skips - Gateway**

**Back Pay Issue resolved for improper removal**

#### SETTLEMENTS

Job Posted

2 hrs of OT paid to OTDL

**\$150.00**

**\$300.00**

\$240.00

\$360.00

**\$400.00**

**Reduced to discussion / 6 month retention**

Reduced to 3 month retention

Reduced to LOW 1 year retention

**Reduced to official discussion**

**\$590.00**

50% Premium

30 hours make up overtime

**Reduced to LOW 3 month retention.**

**Free Day of Choice within a year**

Reversed

50% Premium for hours worked, 35.5 total

**\$200.00**

**\$420.00**

IAW the ELM under Restrictive Sick Leave conditions only

\$140.00

**\$225,000.00**

**\$14,500.00**

\$3,600.00

\$1,800.00

**60 hrs makeup**

**\$2,400.00**

These are a few of the highlights of the Local Grievance Activity going on in Aurora.

Over 300 grievances were filed by the end of the year citywide. During the 2000-2006 Collective Bargaining Agreement our members and non-members alike earned over \$500,000.00 in settlement payouts.

***When will Management learn to follow the contract?***

***How much will it cost them?***

***When will the free-riders pay their fair share?***

**You Are the Union,**

**You Can Enforce the Contract,**

**and in Doing so**

**You Protect Our Work!**

**Dan's Tool Box** from page 3

You can ask the District but they will only change the subject to inquire about overtime usage. Since management has gone on a pay for performance system they have become the underpaid worker in the workplace based on an hourly rate. If you look at your last pay stub and compare it to what an EAS -17 and even EAS-20's & 21's make then you can begin to connect the dots. Just remember - *they never, ever gave any of that to us.* **Our union negotiated it!** No matter what you think about the contract, by the time 2010 gets here it's all about **those guarantees:** eight hours of work for eight hours of pay; forty hours a week with a weekend; the protection of a no layoff clause; just cause protections and many other benefits that lead to over \$70,000 a year before all that overtime and all those grievance settlements that are down the road even begin to kick in. Just in 2006 alone, before our newly negotiated contract was ratified, some of our clerks were well over 70K in wages. Don't worry, they are only catching up to some of those custodians from their 2004 payouts that have all resulted from our right to collectively bargain. Do you

remember that \$101,000 settlement of 2004? It wasn't quite as large as the recent Casual in Lieu of settlement but we should never forget our good fortune that resulted from our ability to collectively bargain.

So where do we go from here? They want us replaced by cheaper labor. They know that there are unorganized workers that will do what we do for less. They continually break the rules because they are too busy doing your work instead of supervising. They want you to make a mistake in order to initiate discipline or even possibly remove you from the floor. The future will be driven by our relationships not only with one another but with those supervisors and managers that can not think outside the box or inside the flop house. Remember it is not their fault; they are too busy doing our work because of the short staffing problem that exists in Aurora. And this problem exists nationwide.

Who knows - maybe Jack Potter is exploring a career after the Postal Service as a retail clerk in a contract station. So if you happen to see the

Post Master Les Caruthers or possibly the District Manager Dean Granholm, (I think he was seen delivering express mail at the Main during the Holidays), or even Jack himself on his Postal Reform Tour please ask them nicely to give us back our 204B's that they refuse to certify. Paying them as bargaining unit employees in an EAS role is not cost effective anyways. This will allow us to fill the vacancies that exist, and then the overtime and penalty pay being paid to them - for the bargaining unit work that they are performing as a supervisor - is something that the union will not have to file on in the future. Management can then hire some more people who will help us better serve the community that we live in and are a part of. Just maybe we can get those complaining customers back out there removing all of that snow that the City can't afford to remove. This might also allow management to send some detailed employees back to their jobs so we can finally get back to the business of delivering the mail without delay and then we can concentrate on trying to get along and have a safe day.

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*Our Congratulations Go Out To The Following Families*

Queela Berry & Baby Josephine

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