



Aurora News

Official Newsletter of the
Aurora Colorado Local, APWU

November 2006

Volume 7 Number 3

91% ORGANIZED CONGRATULATIONS !

President's Report

by Shelly Alvarado

Congratulations go out to the members of the APWU AFL-CIO Aurora, CO Local. Our local is one of the top organized locals in the nation and received an award at the National Convention. We should be proud. Now maybe we can get some non-members to get on the bus. Please check with your steward for the non-members in your station and maybe you can convince them to join. I just mailed a letter with a personal request that asked each of them to join. Hopefully we can gain a few new members.

Contract Negotiations Are Under Way

It has been 6 years since the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement. We have done quite well over those 6 years with raises in excess of \$6,000.00 including the \$812.00

COLA we received in September. We are very fortunate in this economy. On August 29, 2006 negotiations commenced, your local will keep you updated or you can go to www.apwu.org for updates. I'm sure you've heard that the USPS is in dire straights financially. At least that is what they have been trying to tell us prior to the commencement of the negotiations. The USPS will not be able to hide their financial situation from the APWU during the negotiation and the truth shall set you free. **Your Union is Your Voice!** Please remember that the APWU is firm in opposition to filling out VOE surveys. The USPS in the past has misrepresented the surveys during the negotiations of your contract in the past for their benefit. You have an opportunity to talk to your supervisor and manager everyday, so take that opportunity but don't support the VOE surveys it does not benefit you. Remember, that a VOE survey is first class mail and it is unlawful for management not to deliver your

first class mail to you whether you fill it out or not is really none of management's business. Remember that management receives kudos for the number of VOE surveys they turn in whether they are filled out or not in the name of participation. We need to send a united message to management that it doesn't matter whether you feed us, try to intimidate us, reward us etc. we will not participate in VOE surveys. If anybody has a problem with management singling them out, intimidating them or management refuses to give you your VOE survey because you've notified them that you will not participate then request a steward immediately.

Your Right to Vote

In the history of our great nation there was a time when workers were respected and honored as the backbone of this country. What happened? We live in a day where jobs are

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Dan's Tool Box

by Dan Van Minnen

I would like to express my thanks to the membership for giving me the opportunity to represent you in Philadelphia. I was proud to be a delegate and represent our local at the 2006 National Convention. I received the plaque given to our Local for recognition of being a **91% Organized Local** from Organizing Director Frank Romero. Only 10 locals are given this recognition nationwide and we were one of them. **Way to go Aurora, CO Local 6315!** It was an honor and I was humbled to represent our Local in this light.

The business at the Convention was primarily about the upcoming negotiations and the resolutions that we addressed, over 280 of them. These are not resolutions that will impact the negotiations that we are currently involved with

***Our struggle continues
with the upcoming
election, so please get out
and do your part by voting.***

but future negotiations. The delegates were told expect a fight and with everything that is at stake the National needs our help. The USPS has a plan and their vision of the future does not include us in the picture as the APWU. Our struggle continues with the upcoming election

so please get out and do your part by voting. Find out about the issues and get out the vote. For up to date status on what is going on with negotiations check out the website at www.apwu.org and click on **More Contract News**. We have also been updating the bulletin boards with information from the AFL-CIO about the candidates and some of the news wire flyers that we receive from National so just keep checking your union bulletin board and website.

Hopefully, by now everyone is aware that we are in a transition of Leadership in Aurora. Management has decided to award the Post Master position to someone else. We will see how he leads and hopefully it will be with

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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

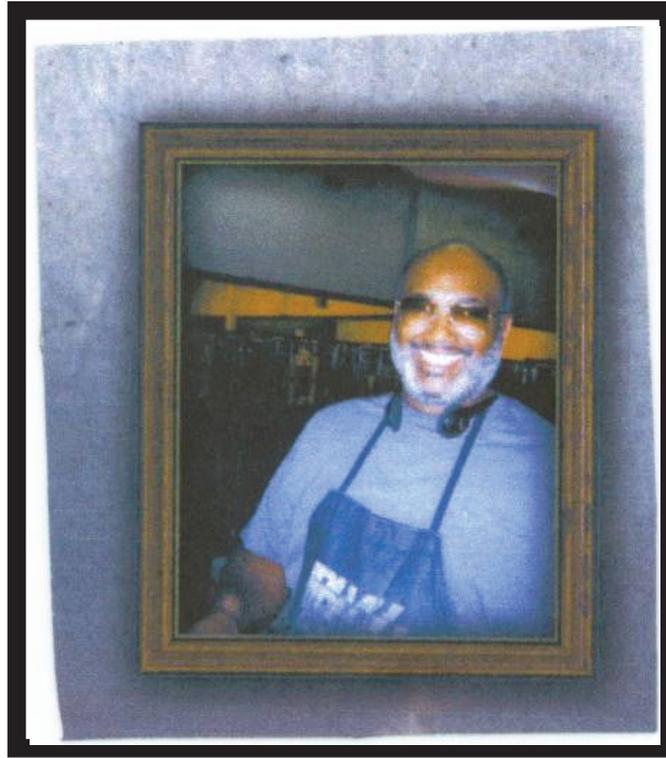
STEWARDS Altura - Tom Sullivan Gateway - Tower Dan Van Minnen Main Office - Bob Burton
Buckingham - Fletcher - Hoffman Heights - Maintenance Dept. - Shelly Alvarado

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of 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!

In Memory Of Our Union Brother Terry Oliver A True Hero 1953-2006



Our Condolences Go Out To The Following Families

The Oliver Family The Golz Family The Burton Family

The Labay Family The Lucido Family The Gallegos Family

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

Dan's Tool Box from page 1

mutual dignity and respect. If he comes to the table to bargain in good faith we will accomplish many things for our plight. It will be sad to see Greg Christ leave - he got around the city at least to meet the workers and find out the problems more in six months than the past PM Victor Benevides did in five years. To me that says a lot. To bad he could not clean house on some the front line supervisors that nobody wants to take a chance on hiring so they stay stuck here for us to train in Aurora. I don't have to mention names to you - I know you have someone in mind. Maybe it is your Station Manager that oversupervises the station and all employees. Hell we have Station Managers that try to supervise your Union Officials as well but always fail because of either their arrogance or plain inability to supervise and

manage. Wouldn't it be nice just to negotiate locally in good faith with management? I mean the step 2 process would be minimal and we could all hold hands and sing Com-by-ya.

A recent change that I have noticed has been the oversupervising citywide when it concerns employee attendance and tardiness. The Postal Attendance Terrorist (PAT), Andy Weaver and his sidekick Little Joe Gutierrez are up to their old tricks of trying to issue frivolous discipline routinely. Then they want to walk around like they are looking out for the business. HA, HA! If they were indeed looking out for the business then Joe would have a better sick leave balance than most employees citywide and Andy could provide customer service not only to our customers but us as employees as well as his job title describes. I don't mean to single out anyone so I choose two particular individuals in

my station where I work, I am sure that you have someone in mind at your station, but that is what keeps our days interesting.

In closing, I would like to thank the APWU Clerk and Maintenance Craft employees at both the Tower and Gateway stations for your requests and updates of contractual violations throughout your station. Remember that management violates the contract constantly. We just need to challenge that. I know that we are doing the best with what we have and that we are all trying to work smarter. Management has reaped the benefits of that over this past contract and is looking to cut deeper so pay attention, request your steward and keep on your toes because Function Four and Management are NOT our FRIENDS! Just ask for the one of your APWU representatives, because they are the Good Guys.

APC Work Belongs to the Clerk Craft

All over the country, machines known as Automated Postal Centers (APC's) are popping up. Yes, it's another way to service the customer. Remember that all of the work associated with this machine is clerk craft work. The repairing, restocking, emptying, scanning and customer familiarization should all be done by a window clerk and/or lobby director (a qualified clerk). Numerous grievances have been filed about managers, carriers and mail handlers performing the work. Make no mistake about it this is clerk work. The machine is nothing more than an extension of the sales and service clerks. Have no fear this machine is not going to take your job away. If anything, you might be a little busier because of it. After all, they haven't figured out how to get the machine to talk to you, listen to your concerns, and smile! And don't worry they won't.

So in this respect, I believe it only aggravates the customer rather than servicing them. How many times have you been with your computer? How many times do telephone prompts leave you without the option you're looking for? Well the same is true about the APC. Granted it gives you step-by-step instructions but does everyone you know have computer knowledge?

Don't you prefer a human being at the grocery checkout rather than the automated check and whenever there is some kind of glitch doesn't it require a human to be paged to provide service anyway?

The Postal Service has also been using Lobby Director's to assist customers with the APC's. There are units installed at the Main, at Gateway and at Tower Stations. The Lobby Director Program is described in the Postal Operations Manual (POM) and it clearly states that a lobby director is a knowledgeable clerk. **That means that it is clerk work!** What has been happening is something that should not surprise you at all. Rather than the having clerks performing the work, management, at least at Tower Station has utilized supervisors, carriers that are light duty personnel and everybody but a clerk perform this work. **Attention Tower Clerks, Management wants to cut positions so don't let any one but another clerk do clerk work!** Well this has been challenged and currently there are two grievances at Step 2 in the grievance procedure. If you have an APC in your station make sure that the Clerks are doing the work associated with the machine and nobody but a clerk. If this is not the case than request a steward!

The Postal Operations Manual 125.41 refers to the lobby director as a knowledgeable clerk. Well now I shall ask an obvious question, who is more knowledgeable on retail operations than our qualified clerks? Let's all get with the program shall we and protect the work. Did the Postal Service really think that the APWU and our members would sit back and do nothing? NO! The issue has been challenged and the work will come back. After all, it's the work of the bargaining unit, not the work of the non bargaining-unit or work that belongs to the other bargaining units.

Putting a lobby director in the lobby was a smart thing to do. Revenue has actually gone up. The customers are talking and learning a bit about postal procedures from our lobby director (clerk)! They will always have a smile for you, they are polite, and of course, knowledgeable! Even if the APC aggravates the postal customer our lobby director will not because they are a knowledgeable clerk as per the POM.

If an APC shows up at your office, it's okay. Change is inevitable, embrace it and by all means, capture the work!!!

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being outsourced to other countries, where the price of benefits, homes, cars, groceries, gas etc. is going up and wages are going down. Where the working class has to have two incomes to survive; where the rich receive the tax breaks and workers do not, where the worker has worked all their lives to retire just to have their pensions taken from them and are forced to seek a job at Starbucks. Where the richer are getting richer at the expense of workers. What happen? We continually elect representatives that could care less about the working class. Do the research yourself; if you are a member of the APWU you are also a member of AFL-CIO. Try going to their website, they have information concerning the issues and the candidates for the upcoming election. On every bulletin board in Aurora an endorsements of the candidates that the AFL-CIO say are for working family candidates. The candidates are endorsed by the AFL-CIO because they support us workers. Exercise your right on November 7th and remember to vote in behalf of yourself the worker.

Still Overstaffed in Aurora

Management insists that we are overstaffed in Aurora. At present we have an equal number of

positions versus full time regulars so I hope you are happy with the current position you have. In the near future we will be frozen in time until either someone retires, transfers or management decides to make staffing changes because there will be no movement.

The USPS continues to implement changes to replace the work we do. Recently it was PARS. We no longer have to endorse every piece of return to sender mail so it takes less time to process. We have new APC's at Tower and previously APC's were installed at Gateway & the AMPO to the replace the one-on-one service our Sale Service Associates offer everyday to our customers. We have the implementation of flat sorting machines that are supposed to DPS the flats. USPS's position is that this relieves some work from our craft. This is the way of the world - replace workers with machines.

So the reality is we need to hold on to the work we can hold on to and not stand by and let **Supervisors** and **Carriers** perform APWU bargaining unit work. Are supervisors doing lobby sweeps in your office? If they are and your office has over 100 bargaining unit employees it is a violation of Art. 1.6A of the contract. Since stations and branches are considered a part of the main facility, and

Aurora does have over 100 employees, Art. 1.6A applies. Lobby sweeps includes retrieving hold mail, certified, registered parcel post etc. APC's host duties are also clerk work. The only time management can host the APC's is in the first 90 days of implementation. So if you see management performing bargaining unit work or carriers crossing crafts by performing APWU bargaining unit work write what they did on what day and how much time they performed these duties and request a steward. We need to protect the work we have and stop giving it away.

In closing and with the Holidays approaching we have so much to be thankful for. We have so much more then others in the private sector with layoffs, reduced benefits, reduction in pay & no job security. The sacrifices that past APWU labor activists have given us are what we enjoy today - pay, benefits, retirement, job security, a collective bargaining agreement, etc. The current APWU activists continue to fight the fight in order to keep what we have.

I wish all of you a safe and blessed holiday season.

In Unity & Solidarity,
Shelly

The 2006 VOTE

by **Bob Burton**

The 2006 mid term congressional elections are fast approaching and the APWU is in high gear working in concert with the AFL-CIO Labor 2006 program. President Burrus has authorized the release of APWU activists to work with the AFL-CIO as they begin worker registration and Get out the Vote activities across the country. The latest polling shows that there exists a real possibility that the majority party may change in both the House and the Senate. Right now Republicans are the majority party in both chambers but a switch of 15 seats in the House and 6 seats in the Senate could change that.

With the rising cost of health care and education alone it is imperative that we elect representatives that will look after the interest of working families. Our current legislators have been beholden to big business interests while working families get squeezed. All in all the APWU is playing a role in every competitive race in the country. The stakes are just too high for any of us to sit on the sidelines. If we do not change the current agenda on Capitol Hill everything important to us is at risk. Our pensions, our health benefits, our collective bargaining rights, our pay, our benefits and our job security can all be reduced

or reduced or even eliminated if opponents get their way. Every session they try and every session they get closer. Now is our chance to stem that tide but you need to do your part. If you have not registered to vote please do so and see that your family and friends register as well. Get as much information as you can on the candidates and don't be distracted by divisive issues and negative campaigning. The APWU will provide as much information as we can to assist you in this important decision. How you vote is a personal choice but it is essential that you get involved and vote.

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 (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

Settlements

Job Posted

2 hrs of OT paid to OTDL

\$150.00

\$300.00

\$240.00

\$360.00

\$400.00

Reduced to dscussion/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

August 21, 2006

Cherry Creek Schools
Eric Kophs
Principal

Sunrise Elementary School
4050 South Genoa Way
Aurora, Colorado 80013
720.886.2900
720.886.2988 FAX

To the members of Aurora Local American Postal Workers Union:

I am honored to accept on behalf of the Rosales family your generous donation of \$200. I have forwarded the check to the family, who intend to use it to pay for medical expenses related to the catastrophic illnesses of the members of this family. Your generosity is heartwarming and will most certainly be appreciated and well used by the Rosales family.

In these times, when we are bombarded by the media with all the pain and strife in our world, it is a welcome reminder that people

are willing to help others in need and who wish to make our world a better place. Our community has opened up its hearts to the needs of this family, and gives hope to those who may feel beaten down by circumstances beyond their control. The good in people will always prevail. Your gift to the Rosales family is a fine example of that.

As a fellow union member and area representative at my school, I appreciate and acknowledge the contributions of the unions in our country, both as advocates of employees and those in the communities in which they serve. Thank you again for your generosity and spirit of giving.

Very truly yours,

Jolie Hendricks
Second Grade Teacher
Sunrise Elementary

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The logo is circular with a double-line border. The text "My Union" is at the top, "My Voice" is at the bottom, and "Aurora Local APWU" is in the center.