

# LOCAL 88 NIXIES

November 1974

STATE OF OUR UNION

By: F.F. Fehrenbach, President

Since the last newsletter, we have had National Convention as well as several major changes in the city. Hopefully things will settle down for the long winter months. I shall try to touch on several important matters in this newsletter.

It is difficult to set down here just what takes place at a National Convention. Basically through the passage of resolutions the National Executive Board is mandated in what course it is to take for the next two years. The national negotiating team also receives the items it should put on the table at its next negotiating session, which will begin about next April. This convention considered something like 1000 resolutions, which is about the same number submitted to each convention. Past conventions usually have not acted on most of the resolutions because it gets bogged down with constitutional changes. After considerable debate this convention decided to have a special constitutional convention next year, after a special committee has time to study the matter and make its recommendations. This convention is scheduled in Kansas City June 2 to 5th. Fargo should plan to send a full delegation to this important convention. We, the members must make sure our constitution does not take control of our organization away from the members.

The forty cent temporary increase in per capita tax was made permanent. Another forty cents per month increase is scheduled to go into effect January 1, 1975. This all took place after much debate and after a national dues structure of \$6.50 per month was defeated by a very narrow margin. This will of course necessitate a review of our own dues structure at the local level. We can hardly absorb an eighty cent a month national dues increase and also a ten cent a month increase in the state AFL-CIO dues.

I should like to point out the increases in salary each of you have received or will receive under our present contract: \$70.00 across the board July 20, 1973; 7cent cost of living, November 1973; another 13cent cost of living, May 1974; and on November 9th a 22cent cost of living. This amounts to \$999.00 total cost of living. You also received \$400.00 across the board July 1974. The post office also pays a larger percent on your health insurance now 55%. They also pay the entire cost of your life insurance. I should like to challenge anyone to show where any other organization has done as well for its membership.

I wonder how many of the membership know that if any member is unfortunate and becomes ill after exhausting his or her sick leave, that he has several options or courses of action he can take. First of all if he expects to be ill for some time he may apply for advance sick leave, up to thirty days. He needs to write a letter to the postmaster requesting the advance leave and also needs a letter from his doctor stating the estimated length of time it will take you to recover. I want to make this very clear, YOU DO NOT NEED TO USE YOUR ANNUAL LEAVE BEFORE APPLYING FOR ADVANCE SICK LEAVE. You also do not need to use your annual leave for sick leave before asking for leave without pay. I guess your financial picture would dictate what you can do in this line. However, if your time card is marked "sick leave" and you do not have any, or enough, the computer will automatically deduct the time from your annual leave. You must let your supervisor know if you do not want to use your annual leave for sick leave. Your card must be marked as "leave without pay" to prevent the computer to take your annual leave. The choice is rightfully yours. I also want to emphasize that the responsibility is

YOURS ALONE to notify the supervisor that you do not wish to use annual leave for sick leave and mark your card "LWOP".

I just wish to advise that the postmaster is now taking the position that if you use your annual leave knowingly for sick leave, or if you just fritter it away a day or hour at a time before your scheduled annual, he will not allow LWOP if you do not have annual on your card when your scheduled annual time arrives. It therefore behooves each employee to keep a close account of your annual leave balances. When you apply for two weeks annual in August, or whenever it is, your responsibility to have the time on your card when the time arrives.

Enclosed you will find a ballot to increase your local dues by \$1.50 per month. Remember you have received about \$2,000.00 increase in your wages the past two years. These increases do not come automatically, it is necessary to have a national organization working for us. In order to have a national organization, a local unit is also a must. The increase will be used to offset the increase in national dues and the remainder to begin paying for those doing union business. We feel that with this raise we could pay for about half the time the members need to take off for union conventions and seminars. So, to insure that you have someone who will consent to do the work that you may not wish to do personally, lets vote favorably on the increase. Do you expect that the union officials should use their annual to do the work necessary for your welfare?

Everyone, I imagine is well aware of the sharp rise in the APWU hospital plan high option insurance premiums. You must get new brochures from the post office, they will not be mailed out as they have been before. Just one word of caution, be sure you compare carefully all the plans before deciding to jump from one to another. Each employee must decide which is best for his own purpose. Remember, some plans do have a deductible clause in their plan.

President Ford has just signed into law Public Law 93-416 which completely revamps rules and regulations which govern on-the-job injuries. The biggest change is that this law has a continuance of pay provision in the act which guarantees an employee continuous pay for forty-five days, if you have what is defined as a "traumatic injury" (on-the-job injury or accident). This will be covered in the "The American Postal Worker", so be sure you read it and study it when the article appears. It also has some other important changes.

REPORT ON THE AFL CIO STATE CONVENTION  
by Francis Fehrenbach

Mel Johnson, Don Oster and I attended as delegates. Maggie Reimann, the President of the Auxillary to the APWU was also in attendance as a member of the National Executive Board of the National AFL-CIO. Pat Detwiller and John Fornes along with their wives also attended some of the functions. Space here will not permit a complete report on all resolutions, but I will try to make a complete report on the resolution considered most important to the people of North Dakota.

The convention endorsed the concept of single member legislative districts. This concept is not new nor is it unique to the persons favoring it in N. D. It is used in our neighboring state Of Minn. as well as about 30 other states. It is based on the very basic principles of democracy, "ONE MAN OR WOMAN---ONE VOTE"

The basic problem with multi-representative districts is that none of the people elected is really responsive to the will of the people. They are responsive to the individuals, within their own group, with whom they can and wish to be identified with in order to insure their election. It is usual that there is one or more in the group who is well known and will more or less carry the remainder into office with him. These group leaders then influence how the remainder will vote, instead of the people who they should be representing.

The twenty-first district now elects 5 Senators and 10 Representatives. All are elected at large. How many live in north Fargo? I beleive it is only one. How many live in West Fargo? I think none. They collectively represent about 60,000 people in the district. Are these elected representatives responsive to the voters in the entire district? If each of the 10 were elected from an area of about 6000 residents and was required to reside within that area, would his responsiveness to the people who elected him increase or decrease?

An editorial in the Forum some time ago indicated that to break up the twenty-first district for representatives would create 10 principalities fighting amongst themselves. Why not have the entire legislature live within one district, if that concept is valid? The representatives we send to Washington don't necessarily always agree, but to say we have 435 principalities would hardly be accurate. Why should the representatives we send to Bismarck be different? Isn't their basic responsibility to the people they represent? The wishes of one small district may or may not be the same as the one next to it. When it is different then the person elected from that district should vote according to the wishes of the voters. Isn't this what democracy is all about?

Any person now running for office has little or no chance of meeting or campaigning before 60,000 persons. Break that down to 6,000 and you have opened a whole new field of candidates. The qualifications of this new group will compare favorably with the people now running for office. It seems that now the only people running are either Professional or Business men. The small Business man or the teacher or the laborer or the housewife have qualifications to shape just as good laws, if not better than have been shaped in the past. Anyone not believing this should take a good look at a few of them. Are they really fair to everyone? Do they treat everyone the same? For example----look at the income tax laws. Is all income taxed the same regardless of the method of earning? Is it completely fair and unbissed?

We need more people in all legislatures listening to the people they represent. We also need more people letting our elected officials know what we want and where we stand. How long has it been since you let an elected official know where you stood on an issue? Of Course a good state would be to bring our legislatures closer to home. That is the aim of the constitutional change. I intend to vote in fovor of the amendment and hope you will also.

I know this will also go to some people who live in Minnesota. You have friends or relatives who live in N. D. -----PLEASE----- encourage them to be sure and get out and vote. We still have, with whatever faults it might have, the best political system in the world. We only need every one to get involved to make the system even better.

SEE YOU AT THE POLLS

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES  
by Francis Fehrenbach

I hope for you people who know the exact procedure for filing a grievance that this will not be too repetitious. However it is very important and indications are that there are many members who are unaware of the proper procedures in filing a grievance.

We will start at the very beginning. You are at work and the supervisor proceeds to do some act that you believe he should not perform as a supervisor, or he asks you to do something that you think he has no right to ask. In the latter case you may protest doing what was asked but if you are given a direct order you must carry it out. In either case you should then immediately afterward inform the supervisor that you wish to file a grievance and you wish to speak to your Union Steward. Your supervisor will most probably ask what your grievance is about. You should only give him the broad subject such as; annual, sick leave, schedules, refusal of a request or whatever the subject might be. You need not and you should not go into any detail with him at this time. Your entire purpose at present is to get into contact with your tour steward and it would be well to ask for him by name. Tour one Ed Mayer or Don Bach; Tour two Mel Johnson; Tour three Don Oster or Leigh Scott. I act as alternate steward whenever present. You should go to the tour steward whenever possible.

After you have notified your supervisor that you have a grievance and wish to see your steward, you wait until the steward comes to talk to you. This should always be the same day you asked to see him, unless you asked shortly before your day ends. Contact should normally be made no later than noon of the next day. At this time get down all the facts on paper. Record when the incident occurred, (Oct. 10, 1973 LPM) where it occurred, (Fargo Post Office, outgoing letter case) Who was involved, names of the supervisor and grievant as well as names of any witnesses. Exactly what occurred or what was said. Decide what article or articles and sections in the contract were violated, handbooks and manuals included, Include in your notes what remedy the grievant wishes the supervisor to take or to do to satisfy the grievance.

Now, before going to the supervisor and discussing the matter, it would be wise for the steward to go to any witnesses and get the story from them. They may or may not support the exact position of the grievant. If everything checks you are ready to discuss the matter with the grievant's immediate supervisor. Remember this must be done before 14 days have elapsed from the time the grievant became aware of the alleged violation. Procedures and time limits are all important. There is just no room for deviation in these areas.

The National has developed a film on presenting and processing a grievance. It is very good and we shall send for it as soon as it is available in the field. We will also develop a grievance form from it. I urge everyone to see this film when it becomes available. Remember, there has been many grievances lost because of improper presentation.