

# LOCAL 88 NIXIES

## THE PRESIDENTS REPORT

by Francis Fehrenbach

We are again at that time of year to look back and see what was accomplished the past twelve months. It is also a time to look ahead and decide what should be accomplished in the coming months. I'm sure none of us are completely satisfied with everything in 1975. We will probably not be satisfied with 1976 when it too comes to an inevitable close.

We might just take a look at the probably why of some of our disappointments. Why were things not done in a different manner or perhaps why are some things done at all.

I'm sure all of us have wondered why some dumb laws (in our opinion) have been passed. Or why certain very uncompetent individuals have been elected to an office. This being an election year is a good time for reflection and perhaps some change, hopefully for the better. Just where were you when those individuals were elected? Did you attend any meetings when issues, platforms, or candidates were discussed or interviewed? Were we all there to let everybody know where we stand and what we would like to see accomplished? The stock answer to all these questions is usually, well, it doesn't do any good anyway. While it might be true that one individual by himself cannot accomplish too much, however there are hundreds of other individuals just like you and by all getting together you can change anything you might want to change. But, of course here is where the rub comes in, in order to effect any change you'll have to stir yourselves and expend some energy by getting involved. It is so much easier to just sit back and criticize those who are trying to do something. Even if what they are doing is wrong, at least they are trying, and if you have some good ideas it is your duty to get in and try to help.

If you belong to a political party, get involved, let your ideas be known, maybe there are a lot more people that think the same way and are just waiting for somebody to voice them. If you do not belong to a political party you should join one.

Now, all of you do belong to the APWU or you wouldn't be getting the newsletter. You just might start by getting involved in it and coming to union meetings. It is also election time in the local. Anyone wishing to run for office should contact the nominating committee, Kermit Jensen, John Fornes or Mel Johnson. We are this year electing a Recording Secretary, a Financial Secretary, a Sergeant at Arms all for two year terms and one Trustee for a 3 year term. Also delegates to

the Trades & Labor Assembly and AFL-CIO convention as well as delegates to Grand Forks for the APWU State convention and delegates to the National convention the second week of August at Los Vegas, Nevada. Remember you must have a minimum of three meetings to have expenses paid by the local.

After already negotiating our local agreement twice, on local leave planning, management would like some further changes. They asked for a meeting with the local and proposed that we agree to having less than the 14% off during June, July and August on Sat. and Sun. We made it abundantly clear that we were in no way making any definite concessions. Also that it would be up to the membership to decide on any issues at the next local meeting. We did give management a passable counter proposal that might be accepted by the local. At this time we have not received any reply from management on our proposals.

There are some members who are unhappy over the way the contract is written. Well, they can change it if they wish next time it comes up for negotiation, providing of course, that management agrees to the change. The place to come to find out just what is in the contract is at a union meeting. Asking or listening to a supervisor will get you their version or interpretation, which may or may not be exactly what was negotiated.

I have also had reports that the local isn't representing everybody. This is not true unless you mean that the local doesn't do everything just the way you would like it done. Individual members may and can pursue any road they choose however local officers are bound to follow either the dictates of a local union meeting or the by laws of the local or national union. Every action must be governed by what is most beneficial for the greater number of members. Now, if you disagree with our point of view, just come to a meeting and pass resolutions for the officers to follow. You need not bring all that many members along to out vote the so called old fogies who I hear are running things now and with whom you disagree. Of course this does require some effort on your part. Remember generally speaking you get out of an organization no more than you put in. Have you put anything into your organization lately?

I also urge all members to file a consent order to become a party in the lawsuit in Washington D.C. regarding overtime pay since May 1, 1974. It also includes getting paid overtime for each quarter hour overtime instead of each half hour. There is a two year statute of limitations and should the Postal Service renege those employees not having signed would have no claim after May 1, 1976. That date is coming up fast.

Feb. meeting the first Monday evening at 7:30PM  
March meeting will be the first Saturday at 9 AM.  
April meeting will again be at 7:30 PM on the first Monday.

We usually have one meeting during the summer months which is set up at the April meeting.

"ATTENTION ALL POSTAL UNION WIVES."

You are all welcome to our Feb. 17th auxiliary meeting at the home of Fran Scott's 2818 12th St So. Fargo. Come have coffee with us and get acquainted. We will be happy to meet you and show you our plans for the Bicentennial year. Come join in the fun. If you want more information please call 232-0739. See you there.

Hope Paulson Pres.

It seems that every now and then there arises to the surface from among union members, the element of "why am I paying union dues," or why am I a member of the union? Usually these questions come from members who never or rarely come to a meeting, they would rather give their opinion to some individual on the workroom floor whom they think will be convinced that they are right and not the union, as a body, which has to seek the best way for the majority of the membership.

It isn't only a dues question, sometimes, maybe it is annual leave or holidays that are a particular problem to the individual. Granted these are important to each individual, because each employee plans how to use his annual or a holiday so he will get the most out of them. For the majority of times things generally work out pretty well for everyone, but sometimes it is not in the cards so to speak. Someone has to mind the store because the store isn't closed. There must be some kind of rules to go by so the majority will best be served by these rules. When such rules have been spelled out in writing they have to be followed. Sure some individual may be inconvenienced but some one had to be because you cannot please everyone. It is impossible. Some individuals have said they are going to quit the union. Why, they really don't know. They are not going to help themselves or the employee they work alongside. They are going to hurt everyone including themselves. These persons never come to a meeting to discuss their problem but do the talking on the workroom floor. It is a fact that the union has been successful in getting full time positions for some individuals who are talking around they are going to quit. Maybe these persons really didn't want the job they now hold. They were given the choice to work, they were not forced. Maybe it isn't the greatest job but it does put food on the table and provide for a little extra besides. Really they can't complain too much about salary either, because the salary schedules have gone up a heap the last few years. There's one thing for certain though, the UNION has through it's members all over this country, been successful in getting salary better and better and there isn't any where, where they say they are going to quit, trying to make it still better. One thing is for sure, the young employees need the union more than those who have twenty five or thirty years of service, so lets hope some inactive employees really take ahold.

Thanks to those faithful union members who had the backbone to say "no" when asked to perform 204 b status when a supervisor wanted annual leave but when bargaining unit employees had been turned down because of operational conditions or quota off.

Mel Johnson

## STATE OF THE UNION

F.F. FEHRENBACH, PRESIDENT

I do want to first thank everyone who came out to the union meeting July 20, 1975. Fortunately and thankfully there was no need to make a decision regarding any job action necessary to exert pressure to secure a new tentative working agreement.

I believe economically the agreement is very good. I've heard complaints that the overall raise was only 4% a year over the three years. This is true but, you should remember that for the past four years we have enjoyed raises under the cost of living every six months. We shall again have an evaluation every six months under this contract, I sincerely hope that the COLA raises taper off under this contract.

I shall vote for ratification and sincerely hope the Fargo membership will do the same. I also hope that the voter turnout is much better than it was two years ago when less than 50% of the ballots sent to Fargo were returned. And do not forget to sign the outer envelope where it calls for your signature. Failure to sign in the proper place will invalidate your ballot.

Having been active in this local for quite a number of years, there is one thing that really surprises me. Those individuals who do not belong to the union and therefore do not contribute one red cent toward the expence of having an organization in Washington to represent us are treated as bosom friends in the swing room. These leeches do not contribute one thing, but do enjoy every benefit dues paying members get. Whatever you are paying for the service is incresed because you have to make up the amount the non member should be contributing. There are always some who refuse to carry their share of the load, however we do not have to include them in our leisure or recreational activities. Of course if you enjoy having their hand in your pocket every month\_\_\_\_\_. I wouldn't be surprised to hear each has made a will requesting six good union members to be pall bearers at their funerals. If asked by his wife why? When he never belonged to the union, his answer would be " Well they carried me all of my life so they might as well finish the job".

Included in this news letter is a ballot to increase your union dues. Last month just before our check came from the National, our bank balance was \$189.00. We now have about five or six hundred dollars. We have a seminar in Grand Forks in Sept. on our new contract. The AFL-CIO convention is also in Sept. in Bismarck. These events will pretty well use up the bank account as well as the saving account which was being held in reserve. I would estimate that by Oct. 1 we'll in fact be broke.

Negotiations for a new local contract will more than likely be in Sept. or Oct. Should the treasury be depleted, who do you suggest should take his or her own time or annual leave to do the necessary work? Union members on the bargaining team are not on the clock.

If you have Proposals to change anything in the old contract, better write it up now and we will turn it over to the negotiating team as soon as one is actually formed. Better also consider serving on it too. I have heard some dissatisfaction over Holiday schedules as well as annual leave. Be sure your proposals are workable as well as to the benefit of the membership as a whole. Also they must not conflict with national agreement. Now is the time to get busy. Should no local negotiations take place the 19 73 contract is carried forward. I would suggest that everybody take a good look at the leave program in that contract and decide if it should in fact be carried forward or should an attempt be made to change it. It is not the same as this years leave program. Of course just because the union should want to change an item does not necessarily mean that management will agree. Their changes or proposals will probably not be to the best interest of our members.

Just one word of caution in dealing with supervisors. I'm not saying they are right or that I approve of their methods, its just that in so many cases there just is not one thing we can do about their actions, In most cases in order to do something they must have violated some part of the contract or postal regulations. Its best not to argue unless the disagreement regards the interpretation of the contract. Never under any circumstances let personalities or social behavior affect or enter your arguments. you will not gain anything by using them. The Postmaster will almost always back his supervisors(remember most decisions come from his office in the first place). Statements such as "I'll get even with him or I know lots of unfavorable information about him", will get you nothing but more trouble. No matter how many contracts we write, the supervisor is always going to evaluate the employee. If you have a difference of opinion and its not covered in the contract, I suggest you write a proposal and see if we might get in the next contract. That will get you more than trying to get even.

Lets get the vote out this time and lets have some opinions on what should be changed in the old contract. No suggestions mean everybody is satisfied. It will do no good to say this should be changed, come up with what it should be changed to. If the last negotiators could have thought of better ideas they might have written them different. So its up to you.