



# FARGO TOUR GUIDE



Local 88 Box 1874  
Fargo, N. Dak. 58107

Vol. 16 No. 1

FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

MAY-JUNE 1998

## LET'S GET ORGANIZED!!!

By John Durham

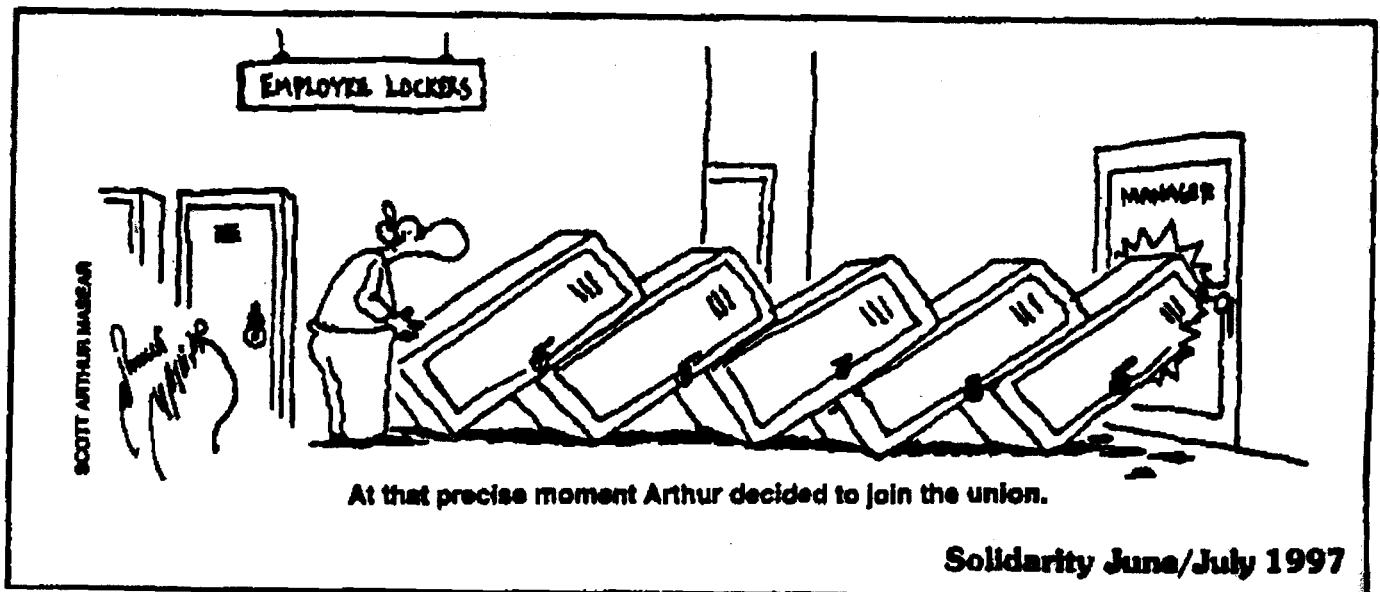
We have 41 non-members in the APWU here in Fargo. To me, that is totally unacceptable. If all 41 non-members signed up with the APWU, that would be an extra \$6,000 yearly to our local. What could we do with an extra \$6,000 a year?

- Have a union pizza day every month
- Buy subscriptions to newspapers and magazines for all break areas at work
- Send more delegates to state and national conventions
- Hold more training sessions for new and current stewards
- Decrease the dues amount for all members
- Rent parking spaces for APWU members
- Send cards and/or gifts for birthdays, anniversaries...

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Brian Dilbeck - Tour III  
 Jennifer Parrow - Tour I  
 Amy Hibbard - Tour I  
 Keith Johnson - Tour I  
 Lori DeJong - Tour I  
 Nancy Carlsrud - CFS  
 Arlene Thompson - Tour I

The list goes on. The point is, you only get out of your union what you put into it. If the list of non-members continues to grow, we will be limited on a lot of current functions.



## FOUR STATE CAUCUS

By Cheryl Schaeffe

The Four State Caucus was held in Sioux Falls, SD on February 28 and March 1. There were approximately 65 delegates attending from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The meeting was conducted by the National Business Agents representing the four states. These include John Akey and Lyle Kreuth - Clerk Craft, Gary Kloepfer and Don Foley - Maintenance Craft, John Herman - Motor Vehicles and Greg Proferl - Support Services. Also attending the meeting was Leo Persails our Regional Coordinator.

The purpose of the Four State Caucus is to draw up resolutions to be submitted to the National Convention being held in Detroit this July. The delegates from the four states bring up issues their members would like to see addressed, they are voted on by priority and the National Business Agents then put them in resolution form. Once in resolution form, the NBA's send them out to the four states to be reviewed and voted on at their state conventions. When a resolution has been passed at the state level, it is then submitted for consideration at the National Convention.

The four states have been collectively submitting resolutions to the National Convention for approximately 20 years. This is the only collaboration of its kind within the APWU, no other states have a caucus like it. The resolutions that come out of this joint venture historically have a very high passage rate at the National level.

This year the caucus was attended by Leo Persails. He addressed the caucus on several on-going issues, such as, the grievance backlog; starting Labor/Management meetings once again at the regional level; the zero tolerance double standard; accelerated arbitration; procedures not being followed in withholding of jobs and excessing of letter carriers into our craft.

This year the delegates ranked 94 items in order of priority. The top twenty issues will be listed for your information. Number one on the list was wage increases. Next were: Eliminate Subcontracting; Technological and Mechanization Changes (Article 4); Suspensions and Removals not Served until Resolution of Grievance; Streamline the Grievance Procedure; Compensation for Unused Sick Leave; 10/4 Work Week; Eliminate 204B's; One Industrial Postal Union Committee; Funeral Leave; Management Accountability; Justification for Abolishments and Reversions; Removing Reference to "Currently Qualified" in FTR and PTR Bidding; Transfers in Lieu of New Hires; Eliminate Casuals; Include Sick Leave in Leave Sharing Program; Holiday Pay; Grievance Procedure Returned to Labor Relations; Nation-Wide Bidding; and Pay for All Overtime Violations.

## CITIZEN CAHILL (SOUNDS NICE)

By Jeremy Cahill

My mom was christened Maye Louise, but her friends always called her "Ginny". I don't know why and she couldn't seem to remember when it started. It was just a nickname. Lots of people have nicknames, lots of people at the old PO have or had nicknames, too.

Nicknames are given for varied reasons; appearance, or habit, or work ethic, or personality. Who knows how some of these names are arrived at. For example, everyone knows who "Doc" is, it's Steve Dockter. I think we can guess that his nickname was derived from an abbreviation of his last name. Some others aren't so easy.

We have quite a few new delegates that should be attending this year's ND State Convention. At conventions, they'll find out there are a lot of "Jacks" running around. Big Jack, Little Jack, Jack Jr., Super Jack, Mrs. Jack, etc. Also, some people have more than one "handle". How about Bull or The Milkman? Whitey or Ken? Mikey or Porkchop? Keith or Ace?

With the help of some of the more senior members and the others tours, I ended up with quite a list. Some of these nicknames go back quite a spell, former coworkers; and some are more recent. Good luck trying to match up all of them.

Let's see how we all do. Remember Lignite? Blackie? Snuffy? Gar? Or Hothead? Spike? Sarge? Shifty? Lemonhead? Lars? Leif? Ole? Some easier ones might be Sparky, Doorboy, Big Guy. Then they get to be more descriptive, like Little Rock, Roadrunner, Bullet, Olive, or Frenchie. And how can we forget Bullwinkle, Cobweb, Cuber and Nyuk Nyuk?

Now it should be obvious by now that we can't mention ALL nicknames that have been "awarded" to their supervisors or coworkers. We're not here to insult anyone, in fact, almost all of these pet names are known by their holders. Some of us even like our nickname, like it was an award, or maybe a sign of acceptance into the "club". Just remember what Woody Allen said in the movie Annie Hall (I think), "I wouldn't want to belong to any club that would have me as a member."

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All members are invited to submit articles for the paper. All articles to be printed must be signed. Opinions expressed are not necessarily the opinion of the Editor, the Local, or the APWU.

Articles and address changes may be sent to:  
 Fargo Area Local APWU  
 P.O. Box 1874  
 Fargo, ND 58107-1874

# VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Cheryl Schaeffle, Vice President

"The time has come the walrus said to speak of many things" and so I must.

First of all, I need to address the recent local elections. According to the election committee only about 50% of the eligible membership voted. Then approximately 25% of the ballots received were invalid.

If there are any members out there who are unhappy with the results (not that I've heard of any), this is an issue that can be corrected only by the individual. It is possible the election results of many posts could have had a different outcome if only the invalid ballots could of been counted. Let alone if the abstaining membership would have made their choices known.

The instructions sent with the ballots need to be carefully read and followed. When you are asked to sign the back of the returning envelope it is not so the election committee will know who voted for whom, but so they know it is an eligible member who is voting. Once the returning envelope is opened, the ballots envelopes are taken out so no one can possibly tell who voted for which person.

In future elections make your vote count; read the instructions, fill out your ballot and return it in the proper envelopes. You have not only a right, but a responsibility to pick your leaders.

Next, I need to say "good-bye", "thank you" and many more things to Jeremy Cahill.

Jeremy was the person who got me into this in the first place. I didn't even know who Jeremy was, but I talked to him on the phone and then met him, because I had a problem. I attended a general membership meeting, even though I had never been to one before. At that meeting he asked for volunteers to do some data entry on the computer. Since I work in CFS, that was right up my alley. He never did have me do the data entry, but came to me later and said he had another job in mind. That was being editor of the newsletter. I had to think about it, but later agreed. In time, the problem I originally had with the USPS didn't go away, but in taking some action, I realized I felt better. Taking some action and responsibility within the Union gave me a positive outlet for the negative energy I had been expending moaning and groaning about the things I didn't like.

What I learned from Jeremy about the Union were some pretty basic things. Like, the greatest good for he greatest number was the goal of the Union. The Union is here for the collective, not the individual. Then I learned about our contract. Not necessarily all the fine print, but the principle behind it. The contract is negotiated (or in our case arbitrated) and is an agreement between us and management. That means I don't have to like everything written in it, but I have to abide by it and so must management. When they don't we follow the grievance system, which is also set up in the contract.

These were elementary principles for most, but I had never worked in a unionized organization before. This system may not be perfect, but it's all I have and it's much better than when I didn't have it at all.

But I disgress, I will miss you Jeremy. Oh, I know you'll be right up there on the workroom floor where you've always been, but no one can raise an eyebrow in a meeting the way you can. So for the many lessons and laughs....play a happy tune once in a while, not the blues, Keith!

## STEWARDS REPORT TOUR III

By John Durham

The following is a list of all the grievances I have filed in 1998 and their end result as of March 5, 1998.

63 Hours higher level pay	Sustained at Step 1
2 OT Paid (make-up over 90 days)	Sustained at Step 1
Use of non-volunteer on 8 OT	Denied at Step 2
Automation Scheduling	Sustained at Step 1
2 OT + 2 V Make-up	Sustained at Step 1
Failure to schedule holiday volunteer	Pending Step 3
2 OT Make-up	Sustained at Step 1
Improper make-up OT	Pending Step 3
2 V Make-up	Sustained at Step 1
1.75 hrs paid to PTF	Sustained at Step 1
2 OT Paid - Art. 1.6 violation	Sustained at Step 1
2 OT Make-up	Sustained at Step 1
2 V Make-up	Sustained at Step 1
50 Hours higher level pay	Sustained at Step 1
2 V Make-up for 6 employees	Sustained at Step 1
8 OT Make-up for 10 employees	Sustained at Step 1
2 OT Make-up early	Pending Step 2
8 OT Paid (non-vol improperly used)	Sustained at Step 1

As you can see, overtime continues to be the major problem with Tour III. Although I think management has made a few small steps to try and correct the problems, they still have one or two supervisors that don't really care if the list is followed correctly. And why should they? They aren't held accountable by their superiors, and giving make-up overtime is hardly a penalty for their mistakes (especially the way they've administered the make-up OT lately). So unless a higher manager decides that this is way too much time being spent by everyone processing grievances (stewards, supervisors, accounting personnel, etc.), I anticipate this unfortunate trend to continue.

# GLOBAL TRADE IMPACT ON POST OFFICE

By Don Markay

The increased globalization of trade has had an adverse impact on postal workers over the past two decades. The impact has been indirect, unlike the direct impact on steel, auto, machine tool, textile and the consumer electronics industries.

Postmaster Runyon has continually tried to cut wages and contract out postal work. The contract with Emery to staff Priority Mail centers and the fight over remote bar coding staffing are the most recent examples.

But it wasn't always this way. Prior to 1971, postal unions did not bargain for wages. Congress set wages. Wages were not being cut. When I first worked in the Post Office in 1968, all postal employees with the exception of Christmas casuals received the same wages and benefits. A 90-day clerk casual started at Level 5, the same pay as regulars and substitutes and also received annual and sick leave. I have copies of local newspapers from 1965 through 1967 which ran articles about the Post Office needing help. A help wanted sign usually hung outside SCF North Suburban IL until it moved in 1970. What's happened since that time? The global economy has depressed the wages of manufacturing and service sector jobs. That is why wide disparities now exist in postal salaries and benefits which were forced on the workforce through arbitra-

tion when negotiations between the unions and management failed beginning in the mid 1970's.

Several critical factors converged to cause a rapid impact and major dislocations in many U.S. industries. Containerized shipping, a transistor-computer telecommunications revolution and the attendant mobility of finance capital came together to make it feasible to create industries in less technologically developed, lower wage nations to produce goods for export to the USA. Until the early 1960's, most textiles, footwear, consumer electronics, machine tools, hardware, auto and auto parts were manufactured in the USA. Because of the rapid dislocation and sometimes elimination of these domestic industries beginning in the 1970's, there was less demand for the workforce that the Post Office drew its employees from.

The two-tier wage structure implemented through arbitration in the 1970's was perhaps the most detrimental change for the workforce. An arbitration decision in the last contract settlement drove home globalized trade's depressing effect on wages for the general workforce. The arbitrator eliminated the 10% night differential which was put into effect for federal employees by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Coolidge in 1928.

Elmwood Park Times

Times Home Newspapers  
7235 W. Irving Park, Chicago, Ill. 60634

761-7200

per copy

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1967

**THE HERALD**  
Vol. 106, No. 1966

**Need Clerk At Suburban Post Office**

Operations Manager Stanley S. Rakowski says that applications for civil service career appointments are being accepted at the U.S. Post Office's North Suburban Facility, located at 3412 N. River Rd., in Franklin Park.

Many vacancies exist for the position of post office distribution clerk. These career positions will be filled by applicants who qualify by passing the civil service examination.

By the Federal Employees Act of 1966 the starting salary for postal distribution clerks is now \$2.64 per hour. Automatic yearly increases can raise the clerk's top salary to \$3.60 per hour.

An additional 10 per cent is paid for all working hours after six p.m. Other benefits include 2 1/2 to 5 weeks paid vacation, paid sick leave, cash incentive awards, low cost life insurance, hospitalization and re-

## Franklin Park post office jobs now available

**JOBS ARE** available at the U.S. post office north suburban facility, 3412 N. River, Franklin Park.

Stanley S. Rakowski, operations manager, said the facility is expanding rapidly and many career vacancies are open.

Anyone interested should come to north suburban facility personnel office to complete an application to take the civil service examination to qualify for a career appointment as a distribution clerk.

Starting salary for postal distribution clerks is \$2.64 per hour. An additional 10 per cent is paid for all work between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Automatic yearly increases raise the clerk's salary to \$3.60 per hour. Merit increases and promotions take an employee into higher pay brackets also.

Other postal benefits include a two and-a-half week vacation the first year of employment, increasing to five weeks eventually, paid sick leave, cash incentive awards, low cost life insurance, hospitalization partly paid by the government, and retirement plan.

**Post Office takes job applications**

(Lerner Paper)  
AUGUST 10, 1966

**APPLICATIONS** for Civil Service career appointments are now being accepted at the U.S. Post Office's North Suburban Facility, 3412 N. River road, Franklin Park.

Existing vacancies for the position of Post Office Distribution Clerk will be filled by applicants who pass the Civil Service examination.

Starting salary for clerks is now \$2.64 per hour, and automatic yearly increases can raise the salary to \$3.60 per hour. An additional 10 per cent is paid for all working hours after 6 p.m. Other benefits include 2 1/2 to 5 weeks paid vacation, paid sick leave, cash incentive awards, low cost life insurance, hospitalization and retirement plans.

While the application examination results are being qualified applicants may apply for temporary appointments at the North Suburban Facility. Qualified applicants will be notified by mail.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By John Durham

# MANUFACTURING IN MEXICO...

## UNDER THE NEW ERA OF THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(A Briefing on the Maquiladora Program)

Since 1965, over 2,000 U.S.-owned manufacturing companies have reduced manufacturing costs by as much as 50%—without sacrificing quality—through Mexico's Maquiladora Program.

In just four hours, you can learn how your company can increase profitability by taking advantage of the benefits that the Maquiladora Program provides.

This briefing will explain:

- How Mexico's production sharing industry works.
- How the shelter plan program can help your company establish a Maquiladora without a large capital investment or long-term commitments in Mexico.
- The preferential tariff treatment that NAFTA affords Maquiladora importations into the United States.
- The NAFTA rules of origin.
- The rules and regulations administered by the United States Customs Service that impact on Maquiladora importations into the U.S.

For information, contact BeeBee Sainz:



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OF ARIZONA, INC.

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### Briefing Dates and Locations:

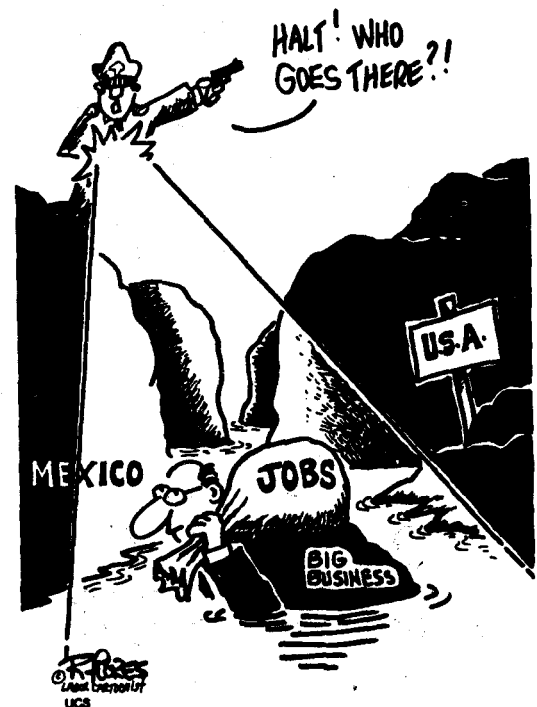
August 22, 1995 Ritz-Carlton Dearborn, Michigan	August 23, 1995 Nordic Hills Resort Itasca, Illinois	August 24, 1995 Hyatt Regency Milwaukee, Wisconsin
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Vice President, Cheryl Schaeffe, and I attended the Four State Caucus held in Sioux Falls, SD on February 28 and March 1, 1998. APWU representatives from North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin were there to exchange and propose ideas and suggestions for change in our National Contract. Over 90 ideas were discussed. All of these ideas will now be written in the proper form (resolution), and will be submitted for consideration and voted on by the delegates at our State Convention. If passed, these resolutions will then be put in front of the National Convention and then forwarded to the National Negotiation team.

I am sad to report that our long-time Tour II Steward and Fargo APWU professional, Jeremy Cahill, has decided to retire from his official Shop Steward duties. Jeremy has served our APWU with more dedication and professionalism than I have ever seen. He has personally devoted more personal time and energy for the benefit of the Union than all of us here in Fargo combined. We should all feel very grateful and fortunate that one individual consistently stood up for our benefits and rights for so many years.

Many of us do not even realize the true impact Jeremy has had here in Fargo. Some of us take for granted the rights and benefits that we have received and continued to enjoy here. The many years of Labor/Management meetings, the countless grievances, and endless talks with higher USPS and APWU officials have all resulted in numerous policies and benefits that are still in place

Continued to Page 7



# WHY MORE MISSENT MAIL?

By Don Markay

This is written to exonerate clerks nationwide for most of the delayed mail. For various reasons, clerk skills have been downgraded and the accuracy rate has dropped. Missent mail is delayed mail.

In August 1997, Fargo Local newsletter, someone asked, "Don't you feel a twinge when friends and strangers tell you stories of...packages inexplicably delayed?" I feel more than a twinge. It makes me angry, but its a different time with different goals, so I console myself with memories of better postal times and service.

Truth is, delayed mail is more explicable, than inexplicable, and its usually not your co-workers responsible for it. I state unequivocally, that percentage wise, we sent mail more accurately when I first worked for the Post Office Department in 1968 than now.

Why is that? One must understand the concept that we can train postal clerks to more accurately sort the mail than the postal customers. With most mail having zipcodes applied by the customers and mail being sorted at the Post Office only by Zipcode, the customer is effectively sorting the mail. Also crucial to understanding this concept is understanding that people more often use the wrong Zipcode than the wrong city or state.

Prior to 1980, clerks had the necessary training. Most clerks working outgoing mail learned state schemes. A clerk learned to which sectional centers all of the cities in a state were sorted to. For example, a clerk memorized to which one of 18 sectional centers more than 1,200 Illinois cities went to. Dave Oster, retired Fargo clerk who had worked on the Railway Post Office (RPO) told me how clerks learned as many as five or six state schemes. The RPO was a system whereby clerks on board a train sorted the mail en route as they traveled several hundred miles. The RPO was largely discontinued in the mid 1960's.

The Civil Service-Post Office general and specific tests were eliminated for clerks and supervisors. Before becoming a work floor supervisor there was enforced a minimum amount of time you had to work for the Post Office. That was eliminated as early as in the late 1970's, people were "substituting" as supervisors, full time after working less than a month. You literally had people telling people what to do who didn't know they didn't know what they were doing.

The automation mentality has resulted in much more missent mail. In the past year, I've seen ADC Omaha NE 680 mail missent here in large amounts. The worst, a whole BMC, another whole APC, and several partially filled APC's. Also, dozens of bags of ADC Billings MT 590 and ADC Sioux Falls SD 570 mail, and dozens of other bags and trays in lesser amounts from places as disparate as Charlotte NC, Indianapolis IN, Wichita KS, and

Boise ID. Whether working manual letters, flats or racks, the amount of missent mail, bundles and trays and tubs is astonishing in comparison to the days of the Post Office Department. I literally dumped thousands of bags in the years 1968-1970 and a missent bag was a rarity. Yes, the work ethic was quite good in the rest of the country, thank you.

The automation mentality has infiltrated our premium Express Mail to a frightening degree. It's amazing the number of triple crown errors--that is mail missent to Fargo although it has the correct ACT Tags, correct bag label and correct address on the package. Many more are missent with the correct address. And still more are missent with the wrong Zipcode. With Express being a premium service, the customer putting a 581 Zipcode on a piece for Milwaukee WI is not an excuse for it to be sent to Fargo. In 1968 this didn't happen with Special Delivery Mail, the predecessor to Express Mail because the clerks had state scheme training. Management made a decision to eliminate the complete state schemes. Yes, it cost more, but quality always does.

Once I complained to a fellow employee that certain mail was inappropriate for the flatsorter and could be sorted faster manually, and that other mail sent through the FSM could fall in the wrong tubs and be missent. The co-worker said "But isn't the goal to send more mail through automation and less through the manual units." I replied, "Yes, and that is the problem. The goal should be to sort the mail efficiently."

In the early 1980's at the North Suburban IL facility, discipline was threatened if you didn't throw by zipcode. Well, I wasn't the only one who covertly sent the mail correctly to the next town rather than follow their rules and send it incorrectly out of state hundreds of miles away. Some of us didn't adapt well to the insanity which explains why we are warped today.

Leo Persails, APWU regional coordinator has written some perceptive articles on Marvin Runyon's destructive impact on the Postal Service which has included downgrading of clerk skills and denigrating employees.

Another thought. In this much trumpeted "service economy" with the number of jobs growing faster in the service sector than in the manufacturing sector, it's sad to see service decline in the Post Office terms of an increase in missent mail over the past quarter century.

Marvin Runyon was quoted in the August 1997 National APWU paper as saying, "We can't pay employees based on the quality of their performance, the rules say no."

I've seen management's idea of quality, from the downgrading of clerk skills to the misapplication of technology. Runyon, your idea of quality is not mine.

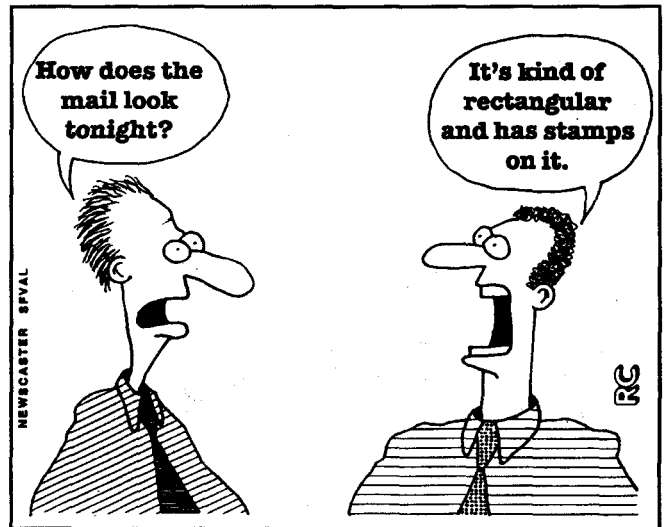
**BUY UNION**

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Continued from Page 5

today. Add all of this to the endless questions from members he has answered or tried to explain, and it becomes quite evident that Jeremy has been the greatest asset the Fargo Area Local APWU has enjoyed. From answering questions on annual leave, to filing national-level grievances for higher level pay for mail processors, Jeremy has always worked for the craft. And who can forget the +\$400,000 grievance settlement just a few years ago? Not only did most employees receive a huge cash payment during the month of December, but more importantly it sent an undeniably strong message to management about the excessive use of casual employees.

Thank you Jeremy Cahill for everything you have done!!!



APWU hard at work for 





**WHEN  
AN  
INSPECTOR  
COMES TO  
CALL ...**

It COULD happen to you! Would you know what to do if you were suddenly called into the supervisor's office and confronted with a Postal Inspector? This critical information which was compiled by Carolyn Pierce, President of the Hollywood, FL Local (originally appearing in the "Lantern & Quill") should be read and learned VERY CAREFULLY!

- 1) Read Article 17, Section 3 of your National Agreement.
- 2) As soon as an individual identifies himself to you as a Postal Inspector, you should request a Union Representative. If you do not ask for this representation, it will not be given to you.
- 3) Tell the Inspector that you will cooperate with them fully but you will not waive any of your rights, including your right to remain silent.
- 4) Advise the Inspector that you intend to seek legal counsel and when you have engaged the services of an attorney you will cooperate with their investigation.
- 5) DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING including PS1087, U.S. Postal Inspection Service warning and waiver of rights, until you have engaged legal counsel (Miranda Warning).
- 6) Polygraph tests are voluntary and it is NOT a good idea to volunteer for an exam until you obtain legal counsel.
- 7) You must be informed of your Constitutional rights against self-incrimination. You are entitled to remain silent thereafter, or to refuse to answer questions except in the presence of your attorney.
- 8) There is no requirement, legal or contractual, to submit a written statement to the Inspection Service before consulting an attorney.
- 9) As Postal Employees, we are subject to investigation by the Postal Inspection Service for off-duty, as well as on-duty, activities.

**FARGO AREA LOCAL**  
P. O. Box 1874  
Fargo, ND 58107

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Sergeant-at-Arms.....	Beth Parrow
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Tour 1 Alt.....	Barry Barr
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Tour 2 Alt.....	Beth Parrow
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