



NORTH DAKOTA

The Fargo Tour Guide

Volume 23, No. 3 Fargo , ND December 2004

Happy Holidays



Fargo Area Local APWU

Serving members in Fargo, West Fargo and Wahpeton

Editor **Sheila Cogdill**

Officers:

President	Amy Tuscherer
Vice President	Patty Carriere
Financial Secretary	Jeff Knutson
Recording Secretary	Sue Carnahan
Trustee	Dave Stark
Trustee	Kelli Muchow
Trustee	Beth Parrow

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Chief Steward	Amy Tuscherer
Tour I	Diane Fitterer
Tour I	Patty Carriere
Tour II	Terry Hovde
Tour II	Mike Wavra
Prairiewood	Dana Klassen
Tour III	Mary Gillespie
Tour III	Amy Tuscherer
Maintenance	Vacant
CFS	Sue Carnahan
Wahpeton	Amy Tuscherer
West Fargo	Patty Carriere

Committees:

Safety & Health	Mary Gillespie & Cleo Delzer
Housekeeping	Jeff Knutson
Social & Rec.	Vicki Nordman & Karen Palloch
RI-399 LDRC	Jeff Knutson and John Durham
Parking	Mike Wavra
Automation	Pam Hansen, Jim Schwartz, Dave Stark & Ginger Hutchison

The "Fargo Tour Guide" is published four to six time a year by the Fargo Area Local APWU. The view and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor, local officers or the American Postal Workers Union. Mistakes are intentional for the express purpose of finding out if anyone is reading this paper and to keep those happy who are not happy unless they can find something wrong with everything.

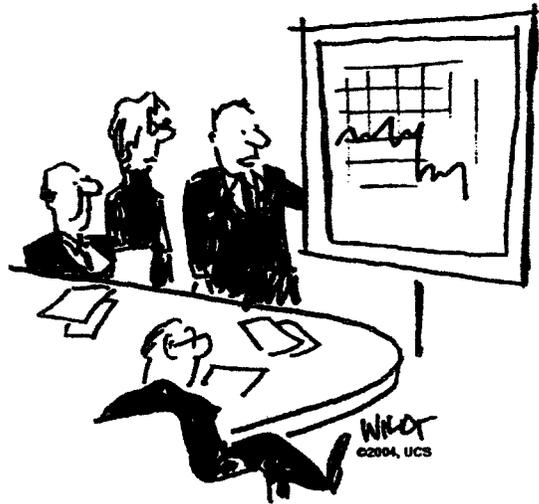
Letters to the editor may be sent to:

Fargo Area Local APWU
 P.O. Box 1874
 Fargo, ND 58107-1874
 Union Office: (701) 241-6163

Upcoming union meetings

Monday February 28, 2005 7:00p.m.
Saturday March 26, 2005 10:30 a.m.
Monday April 25, 2005 7:00 p.m.
Saturday May 28, 2005 10:30 p.m.

All meetings are normally held at the F-M Labor Hall, 3002 1st Ave N, Fargo, but may be moved to Wahpeton, West Fargo or other locations if decided by the membership. Meetings usually don't run over two hours in length, and are required to conduct the business of the local. If you have any financial interest as to how your dues are spent, or how decisions are made at work, you must attend these general membership meetings.



"Management greed and incompetence' sounds so harsh. Let's blame this on the union."

Editorial Policy:

The "Fargo Tour Guide" encourages letters to the editor from the membership. We ask, however, that they be legible. The writer's name, address and telephone number for verification must be included, and must be signed. Names will be withheld upon request. The editor reserves the right to edit letters and articles for length, style, grammar and spelling. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor, union officers, or most important the membership of the American Postal Workers Union.

A note from your president

By Amy Tuscherer

Seasons Greetings! I hope this finds you all safe and happy for the holiday season. As this newsletter goes to press, the Christmas chaos should be well under way here at the Fargo plant. We will again be filled wall to wall, with everyone tripping over each other. The space (or lack of it) makes it difficult to have holiday cheer, but I hope everyone will keep it all in perspective. The most important things are your family and your health, so please take care of them both!

We now have an official MDO on Tour III; Rachel Buttenhoff. It will be nice to finally have a little consistency on that Tour. We have been playing ring around the supervisors for over a year, with no one really taking charge for any length of time. Now Tour I will be next. Through the grapevine I have heard Rocky, the Tour I MDO, is going back to Lincoln. Do you suppose that they will hear "Back in Fargo...?" I doubt it! Best of luck to Rocky. But his departure leaves Tour I without any supervisors! At the moment that tour is being run by 204-B's and Rocky. Two of the 204-B's are going to ASP training in January; that leaves one 204-B to run the show! I sure wouldn't want to be in those shoes! We also are short one plant manager. I have not heard when that position will be filled, but if we go by past experience, it may be quite some time. The people that make these decisions must have an awful lot to do, as it seems to take a long time to fill positions here.

In October I was invited by District

Manager Laree Martin, along with Brian Blatchford with the Mailhandlers Union, to attend the Dakotas District Operations Conference in Sioux Falls. Brian and I were to attend as coaches/trainers for the postmasters and supervisors in attendance at the conference. We were to help them with role playing in how to have a difficult conversation. I accepted the invitation, because as we all know, most of our supervisors have no idea how to hold a regular conversation, let alone a difficult one! The reception that we, as union representatives received, was chilly at best. Those there that knew us treated us well, but many of the rest made it clear that we were not welcome. It was obvious that many there viewed the unions, as well as craft employees, as someone to be dealt with, not cooperated with. I would hope that if any of the management that attended that conference were in attendance at a Union function, for whatever reason, they would be treated with more respect than we were.

We have our local elections coming up in 2005. Nomination will be accepted until January 22, the day of the local meeting. The positions on the ballot are President, Vice President (both 2 year terms), Trustee (3 year term), and Delegate to the Central Labor Council (3-1 year terms). Please consider getting involved and running for one of these positions. This is your union.

I want to say a special thank you to Jeff Knutson, who has been our Financial Secretary for the past several years. Jeff is stepping down, and Connie Payne will be taking his place. Our local could not have asked for a better "money man". Jeff took great care in watching your money, and making sure it was spent wisely and carefully. I held the Financial Secretary

position for a little over two years, and it is not an easy task. I know Connie will do a great job. Jeff, thank you for all of your hard work.

Remember, this is your Union.....get involved!

Welcome New Members!

Kelley Lehfeltdt, Prairiewood

Bert Sullivan, Prairiewood

A word from the vice president

By Patty Carriere

Sitting here trying to remember the last article I wrote, I realize that since I missed the last newsletter, I have some catching up to do. I wasn't able to get an article in the last one because I was one handed and it was too hard to type. Other than my broken elbow, the five days I spent at the national convention was a good

experience. The first two days were classes. The most interesting class I took was on labor law. They taught when to file unfair labor practice charges against management and what to expect. After talking to others in the class, I realized that our local management is basically doing things correctly. It's amazing how many hoops other stewards have to jump through just to get information that they are entitled to. Our biggest problem is management telling us how to assign stewards. This has been an ongoing problem since Mary Overvold took the detail in Labor Relations. Personally I think they're making a mountain out of a mole hill. I spent some time talking to Lorrie Papka, our temporary plant manager, this week. I think it went well and hopefully we can come to some sort of agreement soon.

Also at the convention many resolutions were passed, including a couple that I authored and were passed at our state convention in Devil's Lake last spring. One resolution was to upgrade register clerks to level 6, another to increase the amount of annual leave we are allowed to carry over from year to year, and another one to increase the amount of annual leave we can sell back. This last one sparked a lot of debate in committee at our state convention and resulted in the creation of yet another resolution, not annual leave expected to earn in the next year--which is the current policy. All these resolutions passed at the national convention.

One issue I've been hounding management for the past year is getting some sort of heat source for the dock. They don't seem to understand why we need it After all, it's perfectly warm on the dock

during the day shift when no dock doors need to be opened and the outside temperature is above zero. With the new dock pads that they have installed, the gap between the semi trailers and the wall have increased significantly. A minimal north wind should have the building significantly colder this year than last year. Management's position is federal regulations only require a 45 degree maximum for a loading dock. There is no minimum set. I believe OSHA has set that for us. It's very frustrating to me. Especially when I think I may have come up with a feasible solution. There are wall mounted heaters behind the vending machines. There is also a plywood panel for a wall. How hard would it be to drill some holes in the plywood and run lines and install wall mounted heaters on the dock side of the wall?! They would be located behind the metal bars so equipment wouldn't even damage it. Management seems to think that the renovations GSA is doing will solve the problem. (The latest correspondence states that the ceiling will be raised and the current lack-luster heating element will be placed in the middle of the ceiling. Doesn't heat rise??) Time will tell on that one. It's projected to be done next summer. Management has also stated that they could push for a heated dock but "our rent would skyrocket." Sorry, but I think \$1.6 million per year should include heat. I have written to Senator Dorgan but I'm skeptical if he can do anything. I suspect the reason we don't just build our own building is because our federal agency needs to fund the GSA agency. It's all politics and we just have to suffer. Bundle up while the struggle continues.

The Postal Service has implemented

Interactive Voice Recognition System (IVR) and the national union has filed a step 4 dispute. This is the system (new to Fargo) that requires employees to respond to a series of automated questions when reporting an unscheduled absence. Additionally, national has filed a dispute against the Resource Management Database (RMD). This same system tracks employee absences and sends "red flags" to supervisors advising them that corrective action *may* be appropriate. APWU claims this violates the collective bargaining agreement, local agreements, past practices or law. The latter dispute has been settled in pre-arbitration, resolving many of the issues related to RMD, including Privacy Act issues, multiple call in requirements, medical documentation and fixed numbers for triggering discipline. There are still some issues that need resolving in this case, including management's right to request the nature of the illness, 2nd/3rd opinion procedures and substitution of paid leave for unpaid intermittent FMLA leave.

Summer 2005 the Postal Service is planning on installing a BioDetection System (BDS) on the AFCS. This gadget is supposed to take an air quality sample every 30-45 seconds and test it for biological hazards such as anthrax and ricin. If it tests positive, the entire building is immediately evacuated. Should this occur in the winter, the meeting place is in the underground garage, which has a separate ventilation system. Additional precautions in place are 175 winter clothing, which are kept at the fire hall 2 blocks away. There should be sufficient clothing for 2 shifts, should the alert happen between shifts.

Also to be installed in summer 2005

is a Ventilation Filtration System (VFS) on the AFCS. This is designed to collect and contain these and other potentially hazardous airborne particulates. Management also promised it would reduce the amount of paper dust both on the automation equipment and in the air by 90%.

Christmas Overtime

Just a reminder to everyone, there is a daily overtime sign up sheet located on the main bulletin board. Anyone NOT on the overtime list may sign up daily for overtime if they wish to pad their paycheck for the holidays. These employees will be utilized after forcing the entire overtime list.

Local elections are upon us. Dave Stark has volunteered to chair the election committee. Anyone wishing to run for office, please let him, or one of his designees know. Offices up for election are President, Vice President, Trustee and 3 spots with the Central Labor Council. Please step up and volunteer. Your union is only as good as you make it!

The House on November 19 approved a proposal that gives federal employees more access to the federal retirement savings program, Thrift Savings Plan. The House legislation, HR 4324 is based on original legislation that was approved by the Senate in July (S.2479). The House bill must now be considered in

the Senate. Under current law, newly hired federal workers can sign up to contribute to the TSP during the first 60 days of their employment. If employees choose not to join the plan at that time, they then have to wait for an "open season," during which they are allowed to join. Employees who are already enrolled in the TSP can only make changes to their contribution plan during these open seasons. The new bill would eliminate open seasons and allow employees to initiate, modify, or terminate contributions to the TSP at any time.

The Senate on November 20 approved legislation that gives federal employees, retirees and their families more access to comprehensive dental and vision insurance coverage. If passed into law, the new bill would establish a voluntary program under which federal employees and annuitants could purchase dental and vision coverage. They would be responsible for 100% of the premium cost but would benefit from group rates. Note: The APWU already provides a supplemental dental plan which includes no waiting period for exams, x-rays, and cleaning. For more information, please contact your local steward or officer.

I have also submitted for inclusion a copy of the year-at-a-glance calendar. This comes in our national magazine and it's very helpful. You can use it to track your annual leave, LWOP, sick leave usage, and your overtime.

Have a very happy, relaxed, and fun holiday season! And remember, don't take life too seriously, stress causes wrinkles.



Stay current on local happenings by visiting the Fargo Area Local APWU Website! Go to APWU.org and enter the "local sites" section. From there click on our great State of North Dakota on the USA map.

Thanks...

By Sue Carnahan

I would like to thank everyone for the cards, well wishes, and the plant that I received after my heart attack the end of September.

I was just minding my own business, doing some yard work and laundry on a Sunday, stopped to have some lunch and all of a sudden I broke out in a sweat and didn't know if I was hot or cold. It felt more like indigestion and I thought if I laid down it would go away and I could continue with my projects. After half an hour to 45 minutes of not being able to get comfortable I realized something was wrong and looked out of my kitchen window and saw my neighbors. I asked them if they would take me to the ER and within three hours I was recuperating in Intensive Care... a blockage that required a

stent.

A life altering situation and I thank everyone for their support and concern.

I was able to attend the APWU Health Plan Seminar in Orlando the end of October. Sunny and mid 80's. The first day was a general session with many of the vendors giving presentations. The second day was spent in classroom settings. Those classes included overviews of both the High Option and Consumer Driven Option, marketing resources, and brochure review and patient safety. The seminar concluded on the morning of the third day with a general session with questions and answers. I encourage everyone to pick up all of the health plan brochures and compare and seriously consider on the these two options.



Fargo Area Local Financial Secretary Says Goodbye

By Jeff Knutson

As many of you know, and some who do not, the past couple of months I have been spending some time on Tour 2. Not on the workroom floor, but rather in the office of Network Specialist, Brian Larson. I have been training with Brian to be a backup to his position. As a backup I will help Brian with network and transportation issues, as well as perhaps fill in on occasion if he has time off.

In any case, in order to fill this backup position, which is an EAS position, a form 991 must be submitted and on file. By doing so, I am unable to hold a position as an Officer for the APWU. I informed our Local President before this began and we agreed together on a time frame to find a replacement until there is an election for the position. Connie Payne, graciously accepted the appointment, and we have been doing some training to get Connie familiar with the duties. Connie should be taking over by the first of the year, and I have no doubt that she will do a great job.

I first served as Financial Secretary in 1996 with Jeremy Cahill as President. And I have held the office almost 7 of the last 9 years. Since Jeremy, I have also served with former President, John Durham, and our current President, Amy Tuscherer. I must say, each one of them was a pleasure to work with! As well were all the other

officers I have had the pleasure to work with.

Having to resign from Treasurer was not an easy decision to make. It is a huge part of me and has been for most of the time I have been a member of the Fargo Area Local. I felt that the job of handling each and everyone of your dues money was a huge responsibility. I sincerely appreciated the fact that you as members trusted me with it, and I feel confident that I did everything I could to earn that trust.

There is only so much I can say in written words. So I will end by saying that I am looking forward to a future of new challenges for myself, but will miss the togetherness of our Local Officers, and active members. I am still a proud APWU member, and believe in the fight for good jobs. I believe in a strong membership in the Union, and hope that members continue to support their Union.

Thank you again, and I wish all well!!

Retirements!

**Good Luck
Marj Meester**

HELP WANTED

The following vacancies are available within the Fargo Area Local APWU, effective April 1, 2005. Nominations will be accepted through the nomination committee, next local monthly meeting, or contacting your local union official. The deadline for all nomination is the regular monthly union meeting at 10:30 a.m. on January 22, 2005.

President

Term: 2 years, Salary: \$600 a year, Duties: Preside at all meetings of the local, duties outlined by the National and Local Agreements, and those of APWU bylaws and constitutions.

Vice President

Term: 2 years, Salary: \$200 a year, Duties: Shall assume duties of President resulting from absence. Assist President in carrying out the business of the Local, including those tasks related to organization, education, and legislation. Other duties as outlined in the constitutions and bylaws.

Trustee

Term: 3 years, Salary: \$0 a year, Duties: Shall audit books of the Financial Sec. at least once a year. Shall audit the annual report of the Financial Sec. and report their findings to the membership at a regularly scheduled membership meeting. Shall be provided training appropriate to the performance of their duties.

Local Central Labor Council Delegate

Term: 1 year Duties: Attend monthly CLC meetings and North Dakota AFL-CIO Convention on behalf of the Fargo Area Local APWU.

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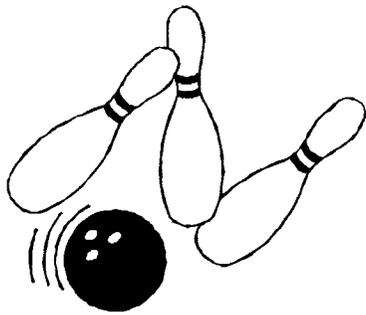
Term: 1 year Duties: Attend monthly CLC meetings and North Dakota AFL-CIO Convention on behalf of the Fargo Area Local APWU.

Support your APWU and volunteer for a position. This is your union, so get involved and help make your union a stronger organization. We can not be as effective with the help of a small handful of individuals. Your efforts will be greatly appreciated!

Union members elected to office are expected to serve the entire term of the position

REMINDER:

Postal Bowling Tournament



9 Pin No Tap Tournament

Sunday, February 20

11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

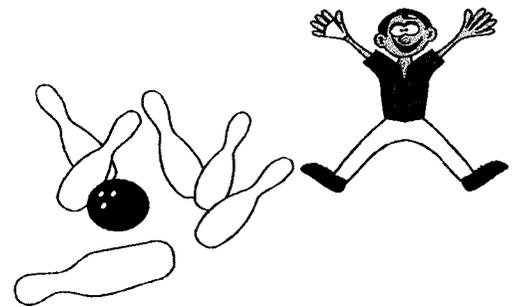
Open to all Postal Workers and Family Members

Sunset Lanes, N. Hwy. 75, Moorhead, MN

Entry fee is \$19 for best 3 of 4 games plus

\$1 (optional) for high game.

For more info contact
Burdean Berseth on Tour I
or Amy Tuscherer on Tour III.



APWU 2005 LEAVE CHART

BROUGHT FORWARD		PAY PERIOD BEGINS								EARNED THIS PERIOD		USED THIS PERIOD		BALANCE								
ANNUAL	SICK		SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	SICK
		Dec. 25, 2004								JAN. 1 New Year's Day												
		Jan. 8, 2005										JAN. 17 MLK Day										
		Jan. 22																				
		Feb. 5																				
		Feb. 19			FEB. 21 President's Day																	
		March 5																				
		March 19																				
		April 2																				
		April 16																				
		April 30																				
		May 14																				
		May 28			MAY 30 Memorial Day																	
		June 11																				
		June 25										JULY 4 Independence Day										
		July 9																				
		July 23																				
		Aug. 6																				
		Aug. 20																				
		Sept. 3			SEPT. 5 Labor Day																	
		Sept. 17																				
		Oct. 1																				
		Oct. 15			OCT. 17 Columbus Day																	
		Oct. 29																				
		Nov. 12																				
		Nov. 26																				
		Dec. 10																				
		Dec. 24			DEC. 25 Christmas Day																	
												JAN. 1 New Year's Day										

Leave Year - Begins PP 02-2005 Jan. 8, 2005 Ends - PP 01-2006 Jan. 6, 2006

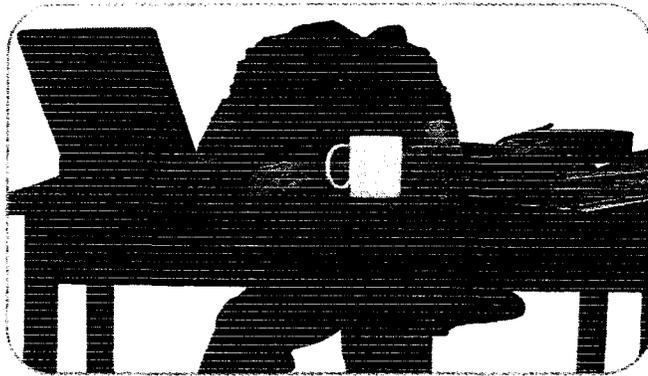
We need you to fight the flu!

Flu vaccine shortage makes public cooperation critical

The battle against influenza this season may boil down to three simple steps:

- ☞ Cover your cough.
- ☞ Wash your hands.
- ☞ Stay home.

Fargo Cass Public Health hopes you will take these actions to help protect your community from influenza. A shortage of flu shots makes it critical that Fargo residents find other ways to prevent the



If you don't feel well, please stay home from work—it's one of the best things you can do to help prevent the spread of the flu in our community. You should also cover your cough with a tissue or your sleeve and wash your hands frequently with soap and water.

spread of the flu.

"As simple as it sounds, washing your hands with soap and water is a really effective way to stop the spread of germs," said Dr. John Baird, health officer for Fargo Cass Public Health. "It's also important to cover your cough with a tissue or your sleeve; covering your cough with your hand causes you to spread germs onto every surface you touch."

To protect yourself and others at home, work and school, use a disinfectant to clean surfaces that are touched frequently, such as doorknobs, water faucets, telephones and refrigerator handles.

Doctor Baird advises people who think they have the flu to contact their physician and to stay home from work or school as long as they have flu symptoms. Signs that you may have the flu include:

- ✓ a fever (usually high).
- ✓ sore throat.
- ✓ headache.
- ✓ runny or stuffy nose.
- ✓ being extremely tired.
- ✓ muscle aches.
- ✓ dry cough.

For more information about preventing the flu, visit www.cityoffargo.com/health or call our flu hotline at 877-889-3381. You can also use the Web site and phone number to obtain a flu education kit for your business, church or civic group.

Reprinted from the City Snapshot December 2004 issue

FARGO TOUR GUIDE
APWU AREA LOCAL APWU
P.O. BOX 1874
FARGO, ND 58107-1874

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