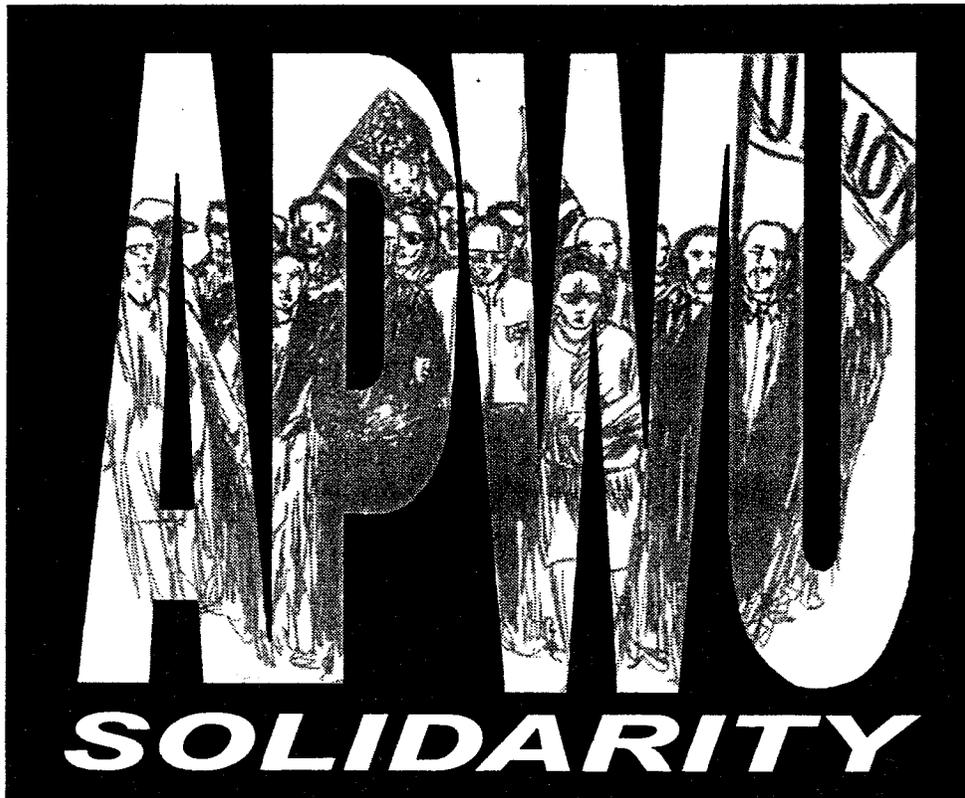




**NORTH DAKOTA**  
**The Fargo Tour Guide**

Volume 24, No. 1                      Fargo , ND                      April 2005



**Fargo Area Local APWU**

Serving members in Fargo, West Fargo and Wahpeton

**Editor** **Sheila Cogdill**

**Officers:**

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Vice President	Mike Wavra
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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 April 25, 2005 7:00 p.m.**  
**Saturday May 28, 2005 10:30 p.m.**  
**Monday June 27, 2005 7:00 p.m.**  
**Saturday July 23, 2005 10:30 a.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.



**"Your profile shows a code yellow -- dissenter for peace, with environmental and union tendencies."**

**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

Happy Summer! We all made it successfully through the winter, and now it's on to summertime, with vacations and warm weather ahead.

I am writing this column with mixed feelings, as it will be my last column as your local President. I am leaving the APWU and the main office and heading to the NALC to hang out with the carriers. This has been a very difficult decision for me to make, but in the end it came down to what was best for me and my family. I struggled with the fact that I had an obligation to our Local, but when I thought about it I have more than fulfilled my obligation.

I have been your Treasurer, Editor, President and Steward, over the past eight years. I actually kind of fell into the President's position, with the promise from the past administration that they would be back; they just needed a break. Well, that break turned permanent, and I had to put on more hats than I cared to. Thank goodness for Patty Carriere and everyone else on the executive board, along with your stewards. I couldn't have asked for a better group of people to work with. I must say it has been a challenge, because once you take on the title of President, or Steward for that matter, time is not your own anymore. But now it is time to turn things over to someone else. Mike Wavra, as Vice President, will have to take over temporarily, until a new President is elected. Mike will do an excellent job as your leader; he is level headed and has plenty of experience. I can't think of anyone

better to take over as President of your local.

After some recent developments, I know that a few of you are glad to see me step down. I may not have done the best job, according to some of you, but at least I had the guts to try and make a difference. For those of you that have expressed your appreciation, *I thank you so much!* Many times it crossed my mind that I was not paid nearly enough for all that was expected of me. But in the end, the experience I have gained, and the friends I have made have been invaluable. I hope that some of you will consider taking a more active role in your local. Your help is needed now more than ever.

And last, a word on the **scabs**. They all have their reasons for not being a dues paying member. Not a single one of them is valid. Okay, so they don't like the local or a certain officer or steward. Are these people that dense that they don't see the benefits they receive **NATIONALLY**? They accept all of the benefits and the COLA's that the Union negotiated for them; I haven't once heard a scab say "I don't want my raise because I didn't pay my dues". They actually believe that the Postal Service would just give them a raise because they are a decent employer. **Pull your heads out of the sand!!!! Wake up!!** Whatever it takes! Whether we all want to believe it or not, our jobs are in jeopardy! George Bush is coming after us, and we need to fight! But the scabs will simply sit back and let the rest of us pay for the fight. And not a single scab has ever rolled up their sleeves to help in the fight for their jobs.

Every APWU member needs to remember that it is **your** job on the line, whether you like to admit it or not. This Union is in for one of the toughest fights of it's life, and everyone needs to do their part.



## A word from the vice president

By Mike Wavra

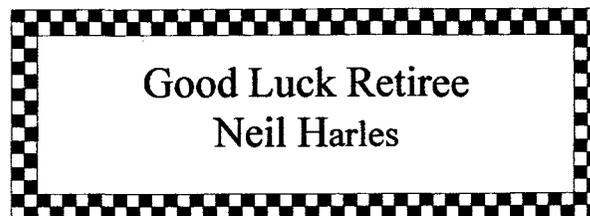
Thank you for electing me to the office of vice president of our local APWU. I look forward to learning more about our Union and keeping abreast of the changes taking place in our workplace and contract and their impact on each other. I'd also like to thank Patty Carriere for the great job she's done during her tenure as vice president. I welcome any advice she can give me so I am more effective in this office.

I'd also like to extend a great big thank you to everyone who recently donated to COPA. It would be nice if we didn't have to spend money to have our voices heard, but like it or not, the old adage "Money talks, B.S. walks" has some truth to it, perhaps more so when it comes to politics. This is a new contract year. With an administration in the White House that is eager for privatization things could get interesting. Our central regional coordinator Sharyn Stone said at the spring seminar held in Fargo, April 8-9, the postal reform was near the top of Bush's agenda items. With everything going on in the world today, why would this be near the top? Do you think maybe somebody wants to make even more money at our expense? But I disgress...

I'd also like to take this opportunity to make everyone aware of the Weingarten rule, which is a "Federal labor law (that) gives each employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview which the employee reasonably believes may lead to discipline". If you are being given a "day in court" you have a right to a steward's assistance. A good manager

will inform you of this right, but since they are not required to inform you of this right, a less than good manager might not. Hopefully you will never need this information, but who knows?

Thanks again, and have a wonderful summer!



## Know your rights

By Sue Carnahan

ALL Employees have the right to request assistance from union representatives during investigatory interviews. This was declared by the Supreme Court in 1975 and has become known as Weingarten rights.

Investigatory interviews are when:

1. Management *questions an employee* to obtain information and
2. The employee *has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result.*

**EMPLOYEE RIGHTS:** Under the Supreme Court's Weingarten decision, the following rules apply to investigatory interviews:

\*The employee can request union representation before or at any time during the interview.

\*When an employee asks for representation, the employer must choose

from among three options:

1. Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives;

2. Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or

3. Give the employee a choice of:

A) having the interview without representation or

B) ending the interview

\* If the employer denies the request for union representation and continues the meeting, the employee can refuse to answer questions.

**STEWARD RIGHTS:** The steward is not a silent witness. The steward must be allowed to advise and assist the employee in presenting the facts. When the steward arrives at the meeting:

\* The supervisor or manager must inform the steward of the subject matter of the interview; in other words, the type of misconduct being investigated.

\* The steward must be allowed to have a private meeting with the employee before questioning begins.

\* The steward can speak during the interview, but cannot insist that the interview be ended.

\* The steward can object to a confusing question and can request that the question be clarified so that the employee understands what is being asked.

\* The steward can advise the employee not to answer questions that are abusive, misleading, badgering, or harassing.

\* When the questioning ends, the steward can provide information to justify the employee's conduct.

There are several advantages of having union representation at an investigatory interview which include the ability of a steward to:

\*serve as a witness to prevent a supervisor from giving a false account of the conversations;

\*object to intimidation tactics or confusing questions;

\*help an employee to avoid making fatal admissions;

\*advise an employee, when appropriate, against denying everything, thereby giving the appearance of dishonesty and guilt;

\*warn an employee against losing his or her temper;

\*discourage an employee from informing on other; and

\*raise extenuating factors.

Weingarten rights are sometimes confused with Miranda rights. Under the Supreme Court's Miranda decision, police who question criminal suspects in custody must notify them of their rights to have a lawyer present. Unfortunately, a similar requirement was not imposed by the

Supreme Court in Weingarten. An employer does not have to inform an employee that he or she has a right to union representation.

In an interview with a couple different supervisors during a grievance investigation I did happen across two supervisors who say they ALWAYS OFFER union representation whereas another supervisor is not consistent in the courtesy of an offer.

If in doubt, ask for union representation. If the employer fails to comply with a request for union representation, or violates any other Weingarten right, it is an UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE.

## Large EAS Turnover

By Dana Klassen

Due to the large turnover in the EAS ranks here in Fargo, I thought it would be nice to list the names and address's of our new crew. A large number of employees have probably never met our new supervisors, so here they are.

Names	Address
Ben D. Over	My Way Ave.
Hara S. Ment	Suspension St.
Tell A. Lie	Pinochio Parkway
Don O. Squat	Contract Violation Ct.
Ida Idiot	Goofy Gateway
Ms. Inga Balls	Spineless St.
Iggy Norant	Assumption Ave.
Don T. Getit	Clueless Ct.
Bo Nhed	Huh Hwy.
Sue Cup	Loudmouth Lane
Ino L. Itahl	Heartless Hwy.

## Scholarship Winner Essay

By Kylee Ferris, daughter of Jeff Ferris

### The union way of life

I believe that labor unions are a very positive component of the work force. I am thankful for the benefits that unions provide. I feel that union members in America's labor force should be proud and grateful for the advantages of unions.

I am assured to know that unions help improve working conditions. Individuals work hard for their income and they should be able to feel safe at work. I think it is good that unions monitor health and safety conditions of the job. Americans are very fortunate to live in a country where there are rules and regulations about an employment facility's surrounding and equipment.

Unions provide a more stable and protected environment. They provide rules for discrimination for men and women but also different ethnic groups. Employers would be more willing to bide by these rules when there is a formed group to enforce them. Employers following the rules allow for protection against abuse or harassment of the employees.

Unions offer their members many great benefits. They provide more retirement and health care benefits. They negotiate with the employer to receive better life insurance plans and disability benefits. Another important item for workers is paid time off. Unions help to provide all of those circumstances to their members.

Unions also help to increase wages. Increased wages helps to provide more

productivity. By increasing the benefits and job securities, also makes productivity rise. More people are willing to work for higher pay and better conditions.

I feel that the most important benefit of being a union member is the idea of power comes with size. One individual worker would have a difficult time accomplishing only one of the many items that they receive from the union. The formation of a union gives the employees power to stand up for their rights and concerns. Unions meet with the employers to negotiate contracts that fulfill some or all of these concerns.

Unions are very helpful organizations for individuals in the work force. They provide job security and appropriate wage for the corresponding work. Unions have improved working condition and benefits for the average American. These are the reasons I believe unions are an important part of employment.

## Look Cool!

If anyone is interested in a local union t-shirt, sweatshirt or polo, get in touch with any of the union officers or stewards.



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

## COPA Drawing Winners

### Portable DVD Player:

Jim Rundlett-Doom

### West Acres Gift Certificates:

Diane Stark

Pam Hansen

Nancy Neuheisel

Diane Fitterer

### Movie Tickets:

Jan Owings

Donna Krier

Karen Vosburg

Tim Haaland

### T-shirts:

Barry Barr

Rachel Corcoran

Mike Wavra

Dave Seibel

Cleo Delzer

Ginger Hutchinson

## CLOSE TO THE END?

By NBA Willie Mellen

As many of you know I frequently write about attempting to purchase only Union made and made in the USA products. It has become harder and harder as the USA becomes "Wal-Martized" in its approach to buying. So, how bad has it become?

It has become so bad that I wonder if I will be able to purchase any made in the USA clothing in a short time. I have been trying to replace my athletic shoes recently only to discover that even the companies I knew made USA products have exported the majority (if not all) of their operations overseas.

I went to buy a suit only to discover my previously reliable brands have exported their operations (mostly to Canada) overseas. After literally months of hunting I did find one in my size made in the USA. Then, trying to purchase a shirt proved almost as troublesome.

On a recent news show I listened to the President of "*Unite Here*" state that 95% of clothing purchased is foreign made. My goodness, 95%! No wonder it takes me months to find made in the USA clothing; there is almost none.

So, where do we go from here? First, continue to buy made in the USA products instead of the hot brand. Second, tell the companies selling these foreign products you want made in the USA products instead. A phone to a company's toll free number costs nothing but your time. An email, just your time again. A letter, not only costs pennies, it could help save your job as a postal worker by increasing first class mail volume. Historically, letter writing campaigns have been effective as they are viewed as something personal from a customer.

The not so slow whittling away of good paying jobs is occurring by this outsourcing of previously made in the USA products. We virtually lost the battle with electronic goods, it's almost the end for clothing. What's next? Automobiles, appliances and other "big ticket" items are now made in Mexico or Canada thanks to NAFTA. Telemarketing is now mostly conducted from a foreign land. It won't be long before the work we do as postal workers is outsourced too. Welcome to the Wal-Mart way of life - poor paying service jobs without benefits. Take a stand. Keep buying USA. A very easy way to do this is by visiting the Union Label & Service Trader Department's website: [www.ShopUnionMade.org](http://www.ShopUnionMade.org).

## A BUSINESS AGENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Donald L. Foley  
National Business Agent

*"What does labor want? We want more schoolhouses and less jails, more books and less arsenals, more learning and less vice, more constant work and less crime, more leisure and less greed, more justice and less revenge. In fact more of the opportunities to cultivate our better natures, to make manhood more noble, womanhood more beautiful and childhood more happy and bright." . . . Samuel Gompers*

*"Solidarity forever . . ."* Ah, the chords of our anthem ring in memory. Too bad the sentiment fails so often to ring true within the circle of brothers and sisters that make up the labor movement.

Within our own Union, the Crafts compete – as we should – for jurisdiction over tasks and jobs, and between postal unions there is competition as well – again, as there should be. However, there is something different from competition and the rejection of fundamental principles the labor movement holds dear. Solidarity among workers is one of those fundamental principles. It is characterized well in the old motto of the Knights of Labor of the late 1800's – *"An injury to one is the concern of all."* – which remains today as a slogan of the International Workers of the World and is often referred to as an old adage of the labor movement – *"An injury to one is an injury to all."* And, when the APWU first took on the battle with George W. Bush's presidential commission on the deconstruction of the Postal Service, we were rightly indignant with the NALC national leadership's failure to stand in solidarity with us. It was their parochial smugness about the sanctity of "the last mile" that amounted to a total failure to recognize the single fundamental principle that unites us.

It is always somewhat perplexing and sometimes shocking to hear, from respected unionists a lack of concern for the struggle of brothers and sisters outside their own backyards. Such failure to bear faith and allegiance to real solidarity is what lies at the heart of labor's inability to coalesce into the force that some of our greatest leaders have envisioned. We must come to the realization that we are all coworkers, brothers and sisters in the struggle with owners.

When workers become owners we should anticipate these owners would be model employers. But the present struggle between the APWU national leadership and the employees of the APWU represented by the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) once again causes one to wonder how we sometimes manage to forget where we come from. When a union is also an employer, its leaders must not abrogate their responsibility to remain true to fundamental, democratic principles of unionism. Nor can the members of the APWU act as if the contract struggle of OPEIU is of no concern to us. Yet, respected APWU local leaders have said exactly that.

Our brothers and sisters of the OPEIU have been continuing to work without a contract since October of last year. Our APWU leadership has refused to extend the OPEIU contract. Reminds one of that old rallying cry we have shouted at so many rallies over the years – *No contract, no work! No contract, no work!* OPEIU fought to continue health benefits clauses of its contract in its previous round of collective bargaining with

APWU, coming away with a promise then from APWU leadership that this Union would not again seek to undermine what OPEIU had in health benefits protection. Yet, once again, APWU seeks to reduce this benefit of the OPEIU contract. Let's all chime in – *No givebacks! No givebacks!*

There are those who have said, *These OPEIU employees of the APWU should not have anything better than what APWU members have in our National Agreement. There should be parity.* There it is again. It is a failure to recognize that, at each turn where we hold back a brother or sister from achieving, we fail as unionists. Why would we want to deny our brothers and sisters contractual benefits simply on the grounds that we have not yet succeeded in wresting similar benefits from the grasp of postal management? Why would we want to emulate postal management? Sometimes it is painfully obvious that some of our national leaders have learned all their managerial skills from Postal Service managers. Some of our national leaders seem to relish the role of boss more than the role of worker, failing to recognize that the members *own* the APWU while its officers and the secretaries of those officers are coworkers – employed by the members. As I have said before, what this Union needs is more union workers and fewer union bosses.

But the fundamental point here is simply that we cannot ignore the contract struggle of our sisters and brothers of the OPEIU, claiming that it does not concern us. Especially because we, as members of APWU, own this organization and these sisters and brothers work for us. Each contract struggle of every union is a matter of concern to the movement as a whole. We cannot continue to partition the labor movement into mere factional struggles of "ours" and "theirs". Solidarity demands more. We cannot tolerate merely hollow slogans. They have grown from the struggles of our forebears. So, it must remain true that, *An injury to one is the concern of all.*

As a side note to all this, for those of our Clerk Craft members who have complained for so many years now about the Postal Service's "Secret Shopper" program, the APWU 'boys in Washington' actually seem to like the program. If they did not like it, why would they impose it on the APWU secretarial workers? And, Clerks, have you ever been "secret shopped" by the Postmaster General himself, or one of his headquarters VP's? It seems former Southern Region Coordinator, current Secretary-Treasurer Terry Stapleton is a real fan of the "Secret Shopper" program. By his own directive our secretaries were instructed how to answer the telephone! Yes, including what to say to callers! And this directive has been followed up with warnings that corrective action could be taken for failure to follow the prescribed answering protocol. Brother Stapleton, himself, has "secret called" numerous secretaries to check for compliance. No discipline known . . . yet.

*Solidarity, brothers and sisters!*

RESULTS OF 9 PIN POSTAL TOURNAMENT  
Sunset Lanes, Moorhead MN, February 20, 2005

MEN	HIGH GAME	Chad Olson - 300
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Chad Olson	903
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Brock Engstrom	829
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Lynn Strand	828
4 <sup>th</sup> Place	Curt Bailey	823
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	Truman Johnson	819
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	Gary Tollefsrud	775
7 <sup>th</sup> Place	Tim Haaland	775

WOMEN	HIGH GAME	Lori Dejong - 226
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Jenell Braseth	806
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Lori Dejong	802
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Deb Olson	739
4 <sup>th</sup> Place	Tammi Roush	712
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	Carmen Bush	698
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	Rachel Roush	689

Special thanks to Amy Tuscherer, Terry Strand, James and Patty Carriere, Dave Stark, and Audrey Farol for their help with the tournament.

Hope to see you all - same time same place - next year!

Burdean Berseth, Tournament Manager

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P.O. BOX 1874  
FARGO, ND 58107-1874

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