



**NORTH DAKOTA**

**The Fargo Tour Guide**

Volume 27, No. 3

Fargo, ND

September 2008

**\$1,477 Raise**  
**due to the**  
**Largest COLA in History**

*See article on page 4*

### Fargo Area Local APWU

Serving members in Fargo, West Fargo and Wahpeton

**Editor Pam Stephenson**

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The "Fargo Tour Guide" is published four to six times 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:

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You Are Invited.....See You There!



### Upcoming Union Meetings

**Saturday, Sept 27th, 9:00 am**  
**Monday, Oct 27th, 7:00 pm**  
**Saturday, Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00 am**

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.

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.



Contact your  
Union President  
at  
dianefargoapwu  
@msn.com



# Topics of Interest From the President

By Diane Fitterer

I recently attended the APWU National Convention in Las Vegas. Dave Hassebrock also attended. Thank you very much for the privilege. This was my second convention and it is an experience to watch our union's democratic process in action. Most of the time is spent on resolutions for changing our current constitution or things to negotiate for in our next contract. There were some exciting speakers. The Vice-President of the AFL-CIO talked about all unions needing to work together. The President of the NALC spoke on the importance of our unions working together to get our country headed in the right direction for working men and women. All of the speakers voiced how important this year's political elections are to protect workers with labor friendly candidates. Make your voice heard by voting. This lead up to the delegates unanimously voting to endorse Sen. Barack Obama for President. Obama held a live video speech with us where he stated that we need a President that doesn't choke on the word UNION.

I am busy with grievances and investigations as I try to keep management from violating our contract, handbooks and manuals. We are having issues with out of schedule pay procedures and TACS entries. Also, please remember that if management comes to you to ask if you would like a different (better) shift for a day to cover an absence, you are either entitled to out of schedule pay or overtime. If you agree to the better shift and they suggest for you to fill out a change of

schedule form, know that a steward will not sign it. They are soliciting you to break the contract and give up extra pay. Management is watching attendance and doing some discipline. Remember that if you are brought into the office for a day in court or pre-disciplinary interview, you are entitled to have a union representative. They cannot hold the meeting until one is provided. It is strongly recommended to have a representative as a witness and to enforce your rights. Also, there have been some recent instances of management saying they may send an employee home or they do send them home. Ask for a steward immediately before punching out. You should have a witness to verify the reason you are being sent home. An insufficient Doctors note is normally not enough of a reason.

An arbitration hearing was held here at the end of July about changing the back up on best-qualified positions to "ad hoc." The main difference in this was that management would then not pay out of schedule pay if your shift moved when you filled in. The arbitrator made his decision quickly in our favor. The clerk craft has no "ad hoc" positions. If management changes your work hours for a day or 2 weeks, you are to be paid out of schedule premium. That is if proper notice was given the Wednesday prior and if not, then you are to be paid at the overtime rates.

As always, stewards do not see or hear everything. If you think something wrong happened, like overtime, pay issues, scheduling, etc..., **ASK FOR STEWARD TIME!** We only have 14 days from the incident to file a grievance so you need to report it right away.

## Why Join The Union!!

By Mary Gillespie

The flip side to that statement is why not join the Union to help fight the never ending fight with the Postal Service. They want to cut jobs and put the work on the other employees that are there saying that it is no big deal that they have to do more work, even if they do not have the time or maybe even the skills to get the work done the way it should be. We all just got a level increase this past year, which is more money in our pockets. The National Officers got us a good contract with our benefits, which, if we were in the private sector, we would not have anywhere near the benefits that we have here.

It is amazing how easy it is to complain that the Union is not doing enough for their members. However, most of these complaining people either do not belong to the APWU or don't want to take the time to get involved with their local Union. Every member has a voice in how their Local is run and what decisions are being made, if they would only take the time to go to the meetings.

Management is trying to split the Union by having member against member, for whatever reason. Their theory is that if we are not united, then we will fall apart and that we will just sit back and watch this happen. Are we going to sit back and let this happen?? The answer to that should be HELL no!! So, what are you willing to do to help keep the fight going? Step up and run for office or try to be a Steward. Go to the training sessions when they are being held. Go to the APWU web site and see what is happening at the National

level. These are just a few things you could do to keep the fight going. The bottom line is- Do you want to be a strong member or a member missing in action? You have to remember that this battle is only going to get harder to win if we do not band together and fight the fight the right way and that way is to make sure WE are the Victors!!!

## Value Your Contract

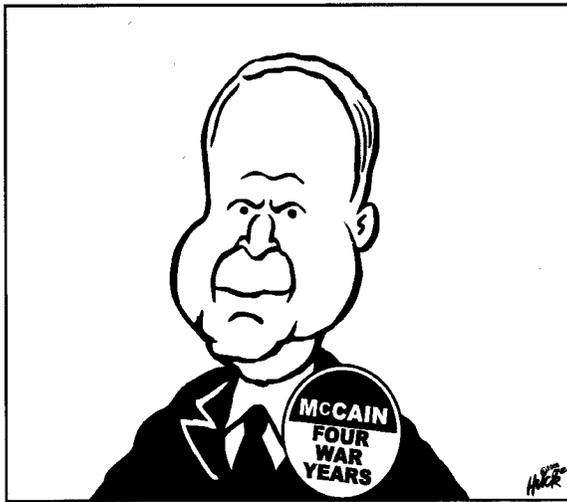
By Terry Hovde

We are all aware of the current strain on all our budgets due to increased energy costs that have ballooned out of sight and probably will go even higher. It impacts all of our lives with the cost of the things we have come to enjoy in our lives rising each and every day.

This brings me to our current contract. What the leaders of our Union have done for us in our contract is to keep and uncapped "COLA." This means the COLA we will receive in September will be one of the largest ever. I'm sure all of us can put it to good use. This offers us protection during our current economic "hard times"-through our contract.

Our Union has protected us, and will continue to protect us, with negotiated salary increases, COLA adjustments, and all the other benefits we have come to enjoy. During these trying times, an uncapped "COLA" is "wage protection," for all our families.

**YOUR VOTE, YOUR VOICE  
TUESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 4, 2008**



## **\$1,477 Raise on Aug. 30 COLA Increase Will Be Highest in History**

APWU Web News Article #76-08, Aug. 14, 2008

Thanks to a cost-of-living adjustment that will be the highest in APWU-bargaining history, postal workers represented by the union will be receiving an annual raise of \$1,477 at the end of the month.

The increase is the result of the Consumer Price Index rise during July, the last month of the most recent six-month Cost-of-Living measuring period under the 2006 National Agreement.

"This is not only the largest COLA increase under the current contract," said APWU President William Burrus, "but the largest such raise we've ever achieved."

The Cost-Of-Living Adjustment will be effective Aug. 30, and will be reflected in Sept. 19 paychecks (Pay Period 19-08).

The adjustment will amount to a 71-cent per hour increase, or \$56.80 per pay period. The July index represents the completion of the fourth (of eight) six-month COLA measuring periods in the 2006-2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

"Cost-of-living adjustments continue to make important contributions to our members' wages," Burrus said. "APWU members who began 2008 at Level 5 Step O will realize an increase of nearly \$3,200 per year as a result of the February upgrade and the March and August COLAs."

There will be four more COLA adjustments under the 2006 National Agreement. After receiving no increase during the first measuring period in 2007, employees received a \$686 raise last Sept. 1 and a \$479 raise on March 15. With the latest adjustment, the COLA increases in the current contract will total \$2,642.

## **TSP RETURNS**

AS OF August 1, 2008

	G	F	C	S	I
<b>July 2008</b>	0.40%	-0.01%	-0.80%	-0.79%	-3.72%
<b>12 Month</b>	4.15%	6.42%	-10.99%	-7.61%	-11.64%
<b>L L</b>					
	INCOME	2010	2020	2030	2040
<b>July 2008</b>	0.00%	-0.23%	-0.82%	-1.07%	-1.31%
<b>12 Month</b>	1.52%	-0.43%	-4.36%	-5.95%	-7.41%

Rates are based on past performance. Rates reflect net earnings after accrued TSP administrative, trading costs, and investment fees.

# CFS Steward Reporting ....

By Sue Carnahan

I recently filed three different grievances on issues that we have long standing practices already in place, so basically I gave management a break by not filing unfair labor practices. Of course these could not be settled at step one and had to go to step two.

**1767 Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice ....** There was a "Safety News" bulletin put out in 2004 stating that "There are a number of programs that facilitate communications about safety issues. Direct communication between employees and their supervisor should be the most effective manner of identifying and correcting safety hazards. (NOT!)

Of course, to report a hazard in writing, there is the use of the PS Form 1767, Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice." Sounds simple and easy to manage, right? CFS had an overloaded APC and there were no 1767s in the folder where they are normally kept for easy clerk access, so a note was left on the supervisor's desk reporting the APC and informing of no forms available. Then one of the doorways in CFS was partially blocked with APCs in the hallway. It was verbally pointed out to the supervisor and a reminder given that there were no 1767s. The doorway remained blocked. During a conversation with the postmaster it was verbally brought up that the doorway was blocked and there were no 1767s. The doorway remained blocked but a supply of 1767s appeared in the folder. A 1767 was

filled out reporting the doorway was blocked. The doorway still remained blocked and to this day the employee copy of the 1767 has not been returned. Another clerk in the department then called the floor supervisor and within three minutes there was a Mailhandler in the basement cleaning out all of the empty equipment in the hallway.

In 2000, this went through the grievance procedure and the remedy was that supervisors and managers on each tour will, on a daily basis, verify that nothing is blocking the hallway, exits from the rooms in the basement, or fire extinguishers. Verification is to take place at a minimum of two times on each tour. The remedy I received was that this 2000 agreement would be sent to each tour as a reminder and that the postmaster and plant manager will review the proper handling of safety issues with the supervisors and managers on a yearly basis with written notification to the Union of completion.

**Return of 3971's ....** 3971's are to be completed when an employee wants leave whether it be annual leave, sick leave, or leave without pay. There was a step 1 settlement on this in 2003 that states "Leave requests shall be done daily. This shall include weekends and holidays."

My grievance on this was because, as one of the trustees for the Fargo Area Local, I had submitted a 3971 to meet with the other two trustees and Financial Secretary to do the yearly audit of the books and I did not receive my 3971 back until three and a half hours before my leave was to begin and the supervisor had this slip for 28 days. There was conversation on this request during that time but the actual copy was not signed or returned until that day. The remedy I received for this is that the postmaster and

plant manager will review the proper procedure for handling of 3971's with the supervisors and managers. .

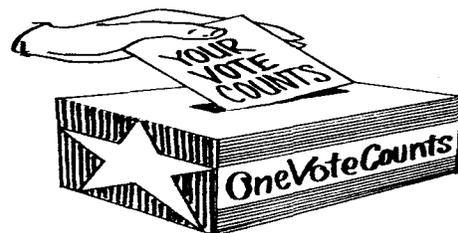
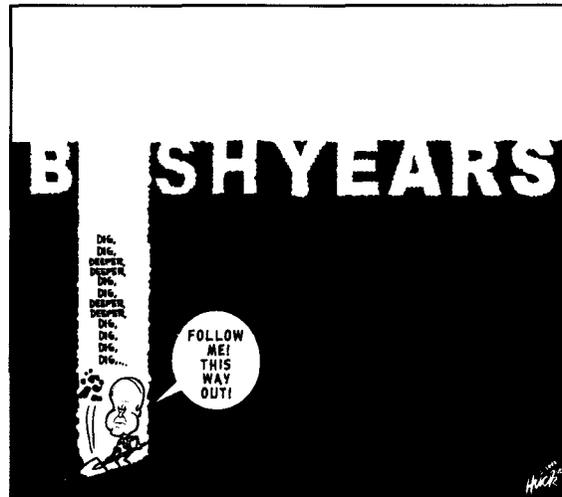
**Granting of Steward time** ..... our National contract clearly states that requests for steward time shall not be unreasonably denied. Again, there was a local grievance settlement on this in 1999 which defined "reasonable" as being without delay and normally the delay should not extend beyond the tour of duty in which the request was made. If a steward was unable to complete grievance investigation and filing within the tour of duty, supervisors will try to make available the first hours of the next duty day for completion. It also states that "reasonable" for a grievant and steward to meet should be without delay but 95% of the time with no more than a two hour delay. 12 days was not reasonable and there was conversation on this between the time the written request was given to the supervisor and the time it was actually granted.

I don't know about the other stewards, but my supervisor likes to manipulate my time. If I ask for 2-4 hours, I will get two hours one day and then maybe an hour two days later, etc. And the remedy I received on this is that the postmaster and plant manager will review proper procedure for handling of steward request time with the supervisors and managers.

Like I said in the beginning, these should have been filed as unfair labor practices with the Department of Labor, and that was shared with the step two designee. If anyone has any problems with these issues, take it directly to your steward and/or postmaster or plant manager. These should have all been gone over in staff meetings by now so there is

absolutely no excuse for management not taking care of safety violations, returning leave requests or granting steward time. We have a nice paper trail if any of these things need to go out of office for corrections.

Whether or not the hallways in the basement are lined with equipment or completely empty, the floors are magic but I think you do have to have somewhat magic shoes too. I've heard them referred to "sounding" shoes. Most of the clerks in CFS can hear a certain person as she leaves the area. She can be heard going all the way down the hallway to the elevators or bathroom BUT when she returns the magic doesn't start again until she's entered back into the work area. At lunchtime the magic is that there is no sound either coming or going. She must think we are really stupid.



# APWU NATIONAL CONVENTION

The APWU 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial National Convention was held in Las Vegas, NV on Aug 18-22, 2008. The following are two articles reprinted from the APWU website on convention speeches.

## ***State of the Union Address 'The Very Existence of Our Jobs Is at Stake'***

APWU 19th Biennial Convention News Bulletin #1

In the face of difficult challenges, APWU President William Burrus told to the union's convention, "We are armed with two invaluable weapons: The members of the American Postal Workers Union and the millions of Americans who will fight for the national treasure that is the United States Postal Service."

"In past conventions, we focused our attention on improving conditions for the employees we represent," Burrus said in his State of the Union address in Las Vegas. "This year, it is not the quality of our jobs that is at stake, but their very existence. In 2008, the future of the Postal Service hangs in the balance."

The APWU continues to represent the workforce well, he said. "The 2006 contract negotiations led to the most comprehensive improvements in our history, and the membership ratified the agreement at the highest rate ever," the union president said.

"The grievance backlog is down. The legislative success and community outreach have been unparalleled. Our finances are in the best shape in the history of the union, and even though our

bargaining unit has declined substantially, the membership percentage has reached new heights."

But the nation's severe economic difficulties and the resultant drop in mail volume are taking their toll. "The economy is in trouble, and the threat to the future of the Postal Service and to our jobs is real."

### **The Challenge to Preserve**

In Fiscal Year 2008, the USPS is expected to suffer a deficit of approximately \$1.5 billion, Burrus said, adding that current law prohibits management from recovering losses by raising rates beyond that of the pace of inflation. "This has serious implications not only for our 2010 contract negotiations, but for the future of the Postal Service: No enterprise can continue to exist while bleeding cash in this amount."

Making matters worse, he said, postal reform legislation that was enacted in late 2006 requires Congress to review the foundation of the Postal Service, including universal service, the mailbox monopoly, six-day delivery, and the postal network.

Burrus pointed out how these reviews are being conducted while postal management continues the disastrous policies of granting excessive workshare discounts and pursues a misguided policy of contracting out postal work.

"Together, we must wage a campaign to preserve mail service for all America's citizens," Burrus said. "It will have to be a political campaign, with members reaching out to their communities and their elected officials. We will need every union activist to join in this battle."

"Considering the threats that we face, can there be any doubt that winning support on Capitol Hill for the future of

the Postal Service is as important as filing a grievance protesting discipline or the improper assignment of overtime?

"And is there any confusion," he said, about the importance of gaining more co-sponsors for the Mail Network Protection Act, which would force the Postal Service to bargain with the union before it engages in significant subcontracting?"

### **A Chance for Real Change**

The challenges of tomorrow, Burrus said, are upon us now. "In November, the citizens of our country will have the opportunity to reverse the slide of workers into economic uncertainty. The Bush administration has eroded every aspect of our existence." The downward spiral can be stopped, Burrus said, by electing "a friend of ordinary people, a friend of labor. ... We can elect the Democratic Party nominee, Barack Obama."

## **APWU Endorses Barack Obama Unanimous Convention Vote Follows Live Address**

Convention News Bulletin #03-08, Aug. 21, 2008

More than 3,200 APWU delegates unanimously endorsed Sen. Barack Obama after the presidential candidate delivered an inspiring message to the union's convention over a live satellite video feed.

"It's time to bring about the real change that working families need," Obama said, adding that it's time to elect an administration "that doesn't choke on the word 'union.'"

Obama's live address was introduced by APWU President William Burrus, whose comment that the convention was about to hear from "the candidate for

change" received raucous applause punctuated by several refrains of "Yes We Can!"

Obama thanked the APWU membership for its "commitment to help us win in the fall."

"You and I share a vision for this country," said the senator from Illinois. "We believe that Americans should have a fair shot at life. That after a lifetime of hard work, you should be able to retire with dignity, and security."

"We all have mutual obligations to one another. We rise and fall in this country together," he said.

"But we know that for the last eight years we've had a whole different concept in the White House. They called it the ownership society, but what they really meant was, 'you're on your own.'

"If you're a worker and you've been laid off from your job, tough luck: You're on your own.

"If you're a single mom trying to find healthcare for your kids, tough luck: You're on your own.

"If you're a senior whose pension got dumped, tough luck: You're on your own."

Obama told APWU members that they are currently living with "the most anti-labor administration in our memory. It's not just that this administration hasn't been fighting for you; they've actually tried to stop you from fighting for yourself."

"It's time for something new," Obama said. "It's time to turn the page. It's time to bring about the real change that America's working families need. That change is building an economy that rewards not just wealth, but work — and the workers who create it."

# A Day in Court?

By Mary Gillespie

This seems to be the flavor of the month out of Sioux Falls when it comes to your attendance record. If you go into the ELM 511.43, it reads as follows: Employees are expected to maintain their assigned schedule and must make every effort to avoid unscheduled absences and in addition, employees must provide acceptable evidence for absences when required. Then you go to the ELM 665.41, which states: Employees are required to be regular in attendance. Failure to be regular in attendance may result in disciplinary action including removal from the Postal Service. Then you go to the ELM under 513.39, it states the following: Medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work or need to care for a family member may be required when the supervisor deems documentation is desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service.

Now that I have all that stated, what does it really mean to the average employee? Management is looking at if you are using your sick leave faster than you are earning it and the magic three instances in any given 90 day period will flag either an official discussion or a day in court. One of the best ways to help yourself is to get FMLA coverage if you have a medical condition. The next thing is to keep a log of every time you are gone, the date, and why. Last, but not least, is to keep all your 3971's in case they count one that was pre-approved.

I really have issue with the acceptable medical documentation and what they consider acceptable. When you bring in a

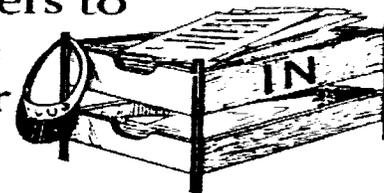
note from the doctor that says you need to be off for however many days, they really do not need to know what is wrong with you since medical information is considered confidential and that is the end of that story.

Now, when they are asking for documentation to protect the interest of the Postal Service, I really would like to know what they are basing that on. The other side of the coin on this one, is that it will depend on which supervisor you have to deal with. They really need an SOP for how to deal with certain things and it should be followed by every supervisor so that it is fair to every employee, not just the few they like to single out. They would have you believe otherwise that they do treat everybody the same, but we all know that this is not true.

The bottom line is to watch your attendance. If you need FMLA paperwork, see your local Officers or Stewards as they will give you the one page form instead of the long form that management will try to give you.

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Letters to  
the  
Editor



**apwunews@q.com**

The Fargo Tour Guide Editor's email address has changed. Please send your suggestions or submissions to [apwunews@q.com](mailto:apwunews@q.com). Looking forward to hearing from you.

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## House Passes FERS Sick-Leave Bill

APWU Web News Article #74-08, Aug. 1, 2008

The House of Representatives passed a bill July 30 that would grant postal workers and other federal employees covered by FERS (Federal Employees Retirement System) credit for unused sick leave when calculating their retirement annuities. Employees covered by CSRS (Civil Service Retirement System) already receive credit for unused sick leave.

The measure, introduced by House Government Reform Committee Chairman Henry Waxman (D-CA), was included in a larger bill, the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (H.R. 1108 - PDF), which Waxman also authored. The bill is similar to a bill (H.R. 5573), which was introduced earlier this year by Rep. James Moran (D-VA).

Under the provision (Title IV, Sec. 407), federal employees who retire within

three years from the date of enactment would receive credit for 75 percent of unused sick leave; employees who retire more than three years after enactment of the legislation would get full credit, similar to CSRS employees. Federal employees hired after 1983 are covered by FERS; most of those hired in 1983 and before are covered by CSRS.

"This is an important bill, which we enthusiastically support," said APWU President William Burrus. "It will finally give FERS-covered employees a benefit they have earned."

The bill, which President Bush has threatened to veto, passed 326-102, giving it a veto-proof margin in the House.

The tobacco bill now moves to the Senate, where it may be considered in September, after Congress returns from its summer recess. However, the Senate bill (S. 625) does not include the FERS sick-leave provisions. The fate of the FERS language may ultimately be decided in a House-Senate conference committee, if the Senate passes S. 625.

Title IV of H.R. 1108 also includes provisions of the Thrift Savings Plan Enhancement Act (H.R. 6500), which would automatically enroll new employees in the Thrift Savings Plan; allow the TSP Board to designate a fund other than the G Fund as the default investment fund; establish a Roth IRA option, and give the TSP Board authority to add additional, self-directed investment options.

The FERS and TSP language are linked for budgetary purposes. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that H.R. 6500 would increase federal revenue by approximately \$1.3 billion over the next 10 years, and this money could be used to offset the increased costs associated with FERS sick leave.

**KNOWLEDGE  
IS POWER.  
IT'S YOUR TIME  
TO MAKE HISTORY.  
VOTE!**

**ND and MN Voting  
Information**  
[www.nd.gov/sos/](http://www.nd.gov/sos/)  
[www.sos.state.mn.us/](http://www.sos.state.mn.us/)

## **VOE MANIPULATION**

By Bill Martin

Excerpt reprinted from the APWU Poker, July 2008,  
Portland Area Local

I hope that you are all aware of the APWU's opinion of the Voice of the Employee Survey. If, for some reason, you are unclear about the stance of the Union, let me make it perfectly clear-Do not participate in the survey! ....

I'm going to share some information with you that recently has been released to the APWU concerning the Voice of the Employee (VOE) Survey. This information comes from a memorandum to district managers and area executives from

the Eastern Area vice president. In this document the VP stresses the necessity of reducing the number of "neutral" responses to the survey's questions. The administrative guidelines state:

**"Focus on the "Neutral" response numbers.** These numbers represent middle of the road approach- unsure about response. *Since the survey only scores favorable responses, a neutral response is viewed as a negative response when the scores are published.*"

The memo also contains a "business talk" to be given to participants. This page details what management should be saying to the employees prior to taking the survey. Here is a sample of what your supervisor or manager is supposed to read to you:

"Please read the entire statement before making a selection. As you read the questions, *we encourage you to take a strong position.* If we're doing well on something, tell us. And, if we're not doing well on something else, please tell us that too. If you feel you must absolutely make neutral, please go ahead. Again, *choosing a firm position helps improve the work climate the most!*

If for some reason you prefer not to participate, check the box "refused" on the survey and seal the survey in the envelope provided."

Ok, do you understand what is happening here? They do not really want your answers, except if they are positive. No neutrality, thank you very much, because that is viewed as a negative. Remember, the survey only scores favorable responses. So, are we all happy now?

Please don't waste the energy it takes to write with a #2 pencil on their bogus survey. They don't really want to hear

what you have to say-they only want to put money in their own pockets by having good participation and positive responses. If you are handed a survey, put it in your pocket and leave the room. The survey is first class mail addressed to you, not the post office. It is yours, period. You do not have to return it to your supervisor.

Here's the icing on the cake. Say you decide not to participate in this sham, and you mark "refused" as you have been instructed, your survey still counts! That's right, returning the survey to management "refused" means you participated. And don't even consider returning your unopened survey to your supervisor. Who knows what would happen to it then? Maybe someone else will fill it out for you.

The point of this is that the VOE survey is a joke, and management wants the joke to be on us. Despite all of management's claims, there is nothing good that has come from the use of this survey. They even stoop to manipulation to try to get you to give the responses they want. What positive changes have occurred in your work area lately (or ever) because of VOE? The survey has been used as a weapon against the employees in the past and only lines the pockets of management with dollars.



## Congratulations

Congratulations to the following winners of a T-shirt and \$10 in the APWU VOE Survey Drawing:

June- Todd Freden

July- Pam Palmer

August- Sue Carnahan

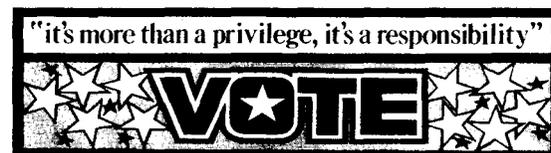
APWU Members-Turn your VOE survey in to your Union for Your Chance to Win.

## Open Season Approaching

By Diane Fitterer

A note from your APWU Health Plan representative. Fall is fast approaching and that means open seasons on benefit options. Start thinking about your health insurance now to see if you need to make changes. The 2006 to 2010 contract provided for a much reduced premium for the APWU consumer driven option. Check whether that option meets your health care needs and save \$20 to \$50 dollars a pay period.

If you would like know more about APWU health insurance or if you currently have this insurance, talk to me, Diane Fitterer, for questions and information.



## \$24.00 for Your Future?

By Isaac Yost, excerpt reprinted from The Eagle's Eye, July 2008, Fort Myers FL

Why in the world should I shell out \$24.00 a pay period to the union?

I could free ride. That would work. Hey, I use an electric razor so I don't have to look at myself in the mirror when I shave. As those who know me are aware, I surely don't need a mirror when I do my hair.

The state has decreed that the union must use its (your) money to defend me and to look out for my welfare, to negotiate my pay and benefits, and to get me my due. Oh yeah, and there was that grievance that did not come out exactly as I wanted it to.

You see I have reasons. I could give a silent laugh every time I come to work and see you suckers who are carrying me. I could well become one of those who says that if it is my union, it must be interested in only me, not everyone. Well, why should I?

In less than two years the union, your union, is going to be negotiating our next contract. The post office is going to negotiate from a position of strength, which is ironically a weakness that they have placed themselves in through their own inactivity over the years. The post office is losing money. Of course it is not their fault, it's yours. You and that pesky union....

What is going to happen at contract negotiations? They will bring up the sky high price of fuel, even though as the largest fleet in the nation they are paying less for fuel than you and me. They will probably forget that the competition

(FedEx, UPS, DHL, etc) are still buying fuel.

We will be asked to give back all or part of what we have gained over the years. They are going to demand more casuals and/or TEs. I have little doubt that they will be looking at contracting out for custodial services, vehicle maintenance, building maintenance, and general maintenance work.

They are going to try and take a hit at leave, sick leave in particular. They will make a try at changing the rules for light and limited duty employees, and with the DBCS being an ergonomic nightmare, language to decrease their workers compensation liability.

While they are making demands for you to give back, they will be holding fast in their belief that THEY have been doing the best job that can be done and that it is you and your pesky UNION that is pulling the whole thing down.

What is really nice is that the USPS company has the lawyers, the negotiators, everything they need as part of the company, paid for by our customers, while we the UNION must hire, pay for our own lawyers, business agents, and negotiators.

We have to use your money to protect your money, and lest we forget, the money of those free riders who can see no point in belonging to the UNION. The UNIONS, that's the locals bound together into the national, bound together for a common goal.

National will be fighting for you, your job, your standard of living. But remember dear heart it takes MONEY to field an army fighting for me....so they can have my \$24.00, yours?



It's that time of year again, golfing is nearing an end, and with the change of seasons comes a change in pass-times. LET'S GET READY TO RRRUMBLE!!!!...at Sunset lanes in Moorhead. The event time and date is not going to change, we will still be bowling Monday mornings at 9:15. The first day is to be Sept. 15. I hope to have a 26 week season, with the last week, the roll-off, as April 6. If you are having trouble finding enough Postal Employees to fill out your team, then ask a freind, neighbor, relative, anyone you feel good about having on our league, and bring them along! We had 4 teams last year, I hope to see more this year (what else do you have to do Mon. mornings?...sleep?...do that at work!) If you have any questions see me, Bob Dahlquist, or leave me a note in my mail box. We hope to see you all, the more the merrier! Use the space below to sign up your teams.



1 _____	2 _____
_____	_____
3 _____	4 _____
_____	_____
5 _____	6 _____
_____	_____



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## VER Eligible? 'Make USPS Pay'

APWU 19th Biennial Convention News Bulletin

The Postal Service offer of Voluntary Early Retirements is a response to the significant decline in mail volume and the resultant cash-flow emergency, President Burrus told delegates. The opportunity to retire early may be tempting, he added, but it is not being offered for the employee's benefit.

"Our advice is: Don't Go. ... Early-outs are not new, having been offered in many industries," he said. "But they are called 'buyouts,' and employees have been offered healthy cash incentives. Every APWU-represented employee who leaves early will save the USPS hundreds of thousands of dollars."

"And with the economy nearing a recession," he noted, "the opportunity to replace postal employment with another job after retirement has diminished. The APWU demands that employees eligible for the early-out be offered a cash incentive to cushion the shock.

"Postal management refuses to discuss our proposal," Burrus said, "so I have asked eligible employees to reject early retirement. Make them pay."

