

APWU NEWS

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO



WILLIAM BURRUS, President MYKE REID, Editor

Delegates Address Frustration Over Craft Jurisdictional Issues

After fervent debate on the 18th Biennial Convention's third day, APWU delegates adopted a resolution to study "efforts and procedures and processes" that would help bring the National Postal Mail Handlers Union into the APWU as a new department.

Eastern Region Clerk Craft NBA Mike Gallagher, who was in favor of the resolution, said that although it had "taken on a life of its own," the resolution was "fairly innocuous." This may not be the right time to bring the Mail Handlers into the APWU, he said. "But we will always have jurisdictional disputes if the Postal Service has a convenient workforce to work for less."

Opponents warned that the resolution would prove harmful. "I believe in the concept of one union," said Paul Felton, a member of the 480-481 Area Local. "But if Resolution #5 passes, it will set back the prospects of one union. The Mail Handlers will not consider this a study: They will consider it an act of war."

APWU President William Burrus left the convention podium to speak in favor of the resolution from a floor microphone.

"We must find a way to end the separation [of unions] in the mail-processing



Mike Gallagher



Paul Felton

environment," he said. "The Mail Handlers Union is an integral part of the Laborers International Union," and therefore cannot merge voluntarily.

But Bobby Donelson, Southwest Coastal (CA) Area Local president, said that there is already too much division in organized labor. "We should never go in and attack another union ... The APWU should not be a leader in raiding other unions."

The movement to bring Mail Handlers into the APWU did not start internally, Donelson said. "We shouldn't throw it down their throats: It should come from them."

The resolution required a simple majority, which it received in a standing vote of delegates. Consideration of the resolution had been postponed from the second day of the convention, along with action on Resolution #89, which called for the APWU to withdraw from RI-399, the "Regional Instruction" procedure in-

volving the Postal Service, the APWU, and the Mail Handlers, which was intended to expedite resolution of disputes over which craft would have jurisdiction in the workplace.

Frustration over the clear failure of the RI-399 procedures to accelerate settlement of these issues was evident at an informal meeting attended by more than 300 delegates after the conclusion of business on Tuesday.

A substitute resolution, which instructed the national APWU to "pursue all options available, to include but not limited to, the filing of a lawsuit to compel arbitration," was adopted by a wide margin. The substitute for Resolution #89, offered by Martha Foote of the Indianapolis Area Local, also urged national officers to "bring this matter to fruition."

Speaking in favor of her motion, Foote explained, "We are not locking in the National Executive Board or president" to a single course of action.



Martha Foote



APWU President William Burrus speaks from the convention floor on Wednesday.

CPI Rise Will Yield \$812 Annual Increase

The final Cost-Of-Living Adjustment under the National Agreement will give APWU-craft employees an annual raise of \$812.

The Consumer Price Index rose slightly in July, the last month of the latest six-month Cost-Of-Living Adjustment measuring period in the extended 2000-2003 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The 10th COLA (the second under

the 2005-2006 extension) will be effective Sept. 2, and will be reflected in Sept. 22 paychecks (Pay Period 19-06).

The adjustment will amount to a 39 cents per hour increase, or \$31.20 per pay period.

“The second paycheck in September will reflect the largest COLA increase under the current National Agreement,” said President William Burrus.

“COLA raises have made important contributions to our members’ wages,” he said. “This further shows the value of a union contract and strengthens our resolve to negotiate a strong new agreement.”

The current collective bargaining agreement expires Nov. 20. Bargaining with the Postal Service is set to begin Aug. 29.



POWER In Full Force

During its national caucus on Monday night, APWU POWER (Post Office Women for Equal Rights) heard from union President William Burrus and AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

Seating Hard to Find At ‘Search’ Seminar

On the Saturday before the convention began, the Industrial Relations Department held a workshop on the union’s online database, APWU Search. Containing nearly 40,000 regional and national arbitration awards, Step 4 decisions and settlements, USPS handbooks and manuals, and Collective Bargaining Reports (CBRs) going back to 1967, APWU Search is an invaluable source for stewards and officers researching grievance issues.



Constitution Committee Takes Center Stage

Delegates Debate Affiliations and More

Overturing the recommendation of the Constitution Committee, delegates to the APWU convention rejected an amendment that would have required the national union to pay dues on the union's full membership not only to the national AFL-CIO, but to the organization's state federations as well.



Linda Turney chairs the Constitution Committee.

There was universal support for affiliation with the labor federation, but delegates disagreed over whether the national union should bear the cost of affiliation at both the national and state level.

Pat McCann, of the St. Paul Area Local, favored the resolution. "What are we really saying if we defeat this resolution? 'We like the concept of belonging to the AFL-CIO, but we really can't afford it?' Sounds like a scab to me."

National Business Agent Steve Zamanakos responded: "I am really opposed to this representation that somehow we're scabs," he said. "Our national union pays per capita on every single

member of the American Postal Workers Union. ...We pay our fair share."

"What this resolution is all about," he said, "is who is going to pick up the tab for those locals that want to be part of the state federation."

The resolution, which would have required a two-thirds vote for adoption,

was defeated in a teller count, 963 to 953.

Although the resolution was rejected, APWU President William Burrus assured conventioners that he is committed to full membership in the AFL-CIO, and would submit a proposal to the union's National Executive Board to assist locals by paying half the cost of affiliation at the local level.



Pat McCann

In other constitutional action, delegates adopted a resolution requiring APWU locals to become members of their state organizations. They also approved a measure to give state retiree chapters 20 percent of the national per capita dues once 50 percent or more of the state retiree membership has been organized and chartered into local chapters.

The Constitution Committee's recommendation was rejected on another thorny issue: After lengthy discussion, the convention overwhelmingly approved a measure that will raise the salaries of APWU Assistant Directors in the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Crafts, in order to give them parity with Assistant Directors in the Clerk Craft.



Steve Zamanakos

Bobby Donelson, Southwest Coastal (CA) Area Local president and a former assistant director in the Maintenance Craft, talked in favor of the measure, saying that it was necessary to correct a problem of "unequal pay for equal work."

"There truly is equal work for all the crafts," Donelson said. "We have 43 articles in the contract, and you have Maintenance and Motor Vehicle tied into 29 of them."

Delegates also adopted an amendment that requires approval by a two-thirds vote of delegates at a national convention to make changes to the wages and benefits of national officers.

The assembly approved an amendment that will give full dues-paying retirees the right to vote on contract ratification.

Delegates rejected a resolution to extend the term of national officers from three years to four.



Bobby Donelson

Secretary-Treasurer Training Conference

The next training conference for secretary-treasurers and other local officers with fiduciary responsibilities is scheduled for Sept. 18-20, in Pittsburgh.

A variety of workshops on handling union finances will be offered to APWU's local and state organization officials. "An important part of the training is the Department of Labor's requirements for LM-2 filing," said Secretary-Treasurer Terry Stapleton.

The registration fee is \$110; \$85 for those who register by Sept. 1.

For details, call 202-842-4215, or visit the "On the Calendar" section of www.apwu.org.

NOT Made in U.S.A. – ‘Eagles’ Returned to Vendor

The engraved statues given out to APWU locals being honored for their work on behalf of the union’s Committee on Political Action are going back to their point of origin: China.

The vendor, K&R Industries, provides other “insignia items,” such as T-shirts, jackets, cups, etc. to the APWU.

Mark Eagen, president of K&R Industries, said that he was “deeply sorry” about the error.

“I take full responsibility for this mistake,” Eagen said in a letter to APWU President William Burrus. “Your instructions were clear – and your staff was diligent in following your directive – the COPA Awards, like all products provided to the APWU, MUST BE UNION MADE IN THE U.S.A.!”

Eagen noted that two initial choices among manufacturers were rejected because they did not meet these requirements. “The Eagle Award eventually selected was only chosen by your staff because I was assured” that it met the requirements.

“Our shop and its engravers are all members of IUPAT [International Union of Painters and Allied Trades],” Eagen said, “and were unaware that the actual item was made overseas.”

“I am sorry for the embarrassing result and will replace each and every



The genuine articles: On COPA Night, an all-American delegate meets an American icon, Benjamin Franklin.

award presented to your locals and members at absolutely no cost to you or the APWU.”

Top Per Capita COPA Contributors

40-99 Members

Owensboro (KY) Local
Schaumburg (IL) Area Local
Springfield (OH) Area Local
Waterloo (IA) Local
Windward (HI) Local

20-39 Members

Dodge City (KS) Local
Jeffersonville (IN) Local
Lake Havasu City (AZ) Area Local
Manhattan (KS) Local
North Attleboro (MA) Local

Head Host Hard at Work



The Pennsylvania Postal Workers Union’s Fran Friel, chairman of the 18th Biennial Convention Committee, takes a quick break at his desk in the Host Locals office. The trio of hosts includes the Philadelphia Area Local and the Philadelphia BMC Local.

Unconventional Theater

The late Cesar Chavez, the United Farm Workers Union leader, appeared to have grown even beyond his legendary reputation, as he handed out hundreds of “high fives” to delegates reporting for Wednesday’s proceedings.

Chavez (below) appeared on behalf of the St. Paul Area Local, which is hosting an APWU National Organizing Conference Jan. 18-21.

For information, call 952-854-0093. Details also will be appearing on the Support Services Division pages at www.apwu.org.



A delegate gives an extra-high high five to “Cesar Chavez.”

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Credentials Committee

As presented by Chairperson Geneva Greenlee of the Muncie (IN) Area Local, the preliminary report of the APWU Credentials Committee for Wednesday, Aug. 16, is as follows:

The 18th Biennial Convention’s 2,803 delegates represent 407 locals, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Also in attendance are 84 national officers and four Retirees Department delegates.