

Happy Thanksgiving

SALEM UPDATE

Vol. 31 No. 8

November 2010

Janeil Payne/ President
STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES

As I sit here to write this article for the November issue of the *Salem Update*, I have just received word that my good friend and former co-worker, Sharon Boswell, has completed her battle against cancer. She will always be remembered for her wonderful smile, her laughter, her love of her family, and the beauty she brought into the world for those who were lucky enough to know her. She will also be remembered for her hard work as an automation clerk at the Salem P&DF, outstanding work ethics, and the fierce territorial pride she had for DBCS #2. I personally will think back on the many happy hours we spent scrapbooking together over the past several years.

I have learned a lesson that life is short, sometimes shorter than we expect. We need to live it to the fullest

extent possible each day; enjoy our family and loved ones, let them know we love them, and enjoy as much beauty in the world as we can. Sometimes we place too many other things in the way of enjoying life. There is a good point to the old cliché – take time to stop and smell the roses.

I have also been reminded that I need to get a physical, eat right, exercise, and take good care of myself. One other important thing I have started to do but have not completed is getting all my personal information put together and in order so that if something should happen to me, my family will know my wishes, where to go, who to contact, and what needs to be taken care of. This includes, but is not limited to: my will, my wishes for whether or not I have life support, my burial plans with the important

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documentation they would need, my disability and long term care policies, my home owner information, insurance, credit card information, my employer and the important contact numbers, and my banking information. I need to have my children's names added to my bank accounts so that if need be, they would have access to my accounts without a lot of hassle. There is a very helpful book available to members of the local for a modest donation to COPA of \$20.00 which is a great guide. It is only one of many that are available. While this seems like it should be a really easy thing to complete, I find it hard. I know that it would be a huge help to my family though if they ever needed the information. I strongly encourage everyone to take the time to complete something to have all of this ready if your family should need it. You have to let them know where to find it, and keep the information in the packet current.

On a different note- Vista Station is something that one must experience or have experienced to understand. I have completed my scheme training and should be undertaking the window line training when you receive your *Salem Update* and read this article. I will hopefully have passed the course and officially be awarded the job by the next union meeting.

Grievance activity is running high. It does not help me much that I am struggling to just get by one day at a time right now. My goal is to get caught up, even if just for a short period of time, by the time I leave for my training on November 15, 2010. I am always open for ques-

tions and to hear your concerns. I am working on grievances for Salem, Albany, and Lyons at the moment. We have also been visited by the National Reassessment Process concerning our Limited Duty Clerks. For those of you who have been impacted, I am working on grievances for your specific situations as well.

Contract negotiations continue. With the announcement of the retirement of Postmaster General Jack Potter it is almost a given that the negotiations will head to arbitration. There really is nothing being said about what is going on that I can determine. I did not get much information sent to me by those presidents who attended the last Presidents Conference either. From the results of the elections, we, as postal employees may have an even tougher road to hoe. It will be interesting to see how this all plays out.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at 06:00 hours (18:00) at the Union Office on the corner of Mission ST and Commercial. We hope to see all of you there. It is my hope that by that time we may have some news on the contract negotiations or have learned if there are any other changes on the horizon that might affect us. For those of you who are unable to attend, we wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season.

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New year.

Remember to thank a Vet for your freedom on November 11.

Janeil Payne/President

Bob Patterson/ Vice-President

BOB'S PONDERINGS & OTHER THINGS

Politickin' Ain't for Sissies: Ain't it the truth? Either for those who engage in the "art of politics," or for the potential voters who must endure the seemingly unending insufferable onslaught of campaign rhetoric that bombards the electorate each and every election cycle. During these past mid-term elections the campaign pandering by the opposing candidates seemed to be the worst I can recall. Or, perhaps, my memory is just failing me.

At any rate, the political ads were akin to a non-stop avalanche of vitriolic rhetoric involving every medium, including TV, radio, newspaper, our doorsteps and phones, and of course, the mail. There was simply no escaping it, short of inducing a self-imposed coma for the past 6-months. Good luck on that! Perhaps after Novem-

ber 2nd we might get some kind of brief respite before the parties gear up for 2012 --- perhaps.

But I doubt it. Sarah Palin is already on the trail for 2012 and you know that President Obama and others cannot be far behind shifting into high gear for the next round. It just never stops. And, as ever the case, there are always those legislators and/or "concerned" Oregon citizens who are going to dream up yet another superfluous law that just has to be enacted to protect Oregonians from ourselves or somehow make life better here in Oregon. People will vote for it simply because they don't read the voter's pamphlet or, in the alternative because a significant number of vot-

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ers simply choose not to vote. Oh, wait, those ads will tell us the truth!

That having been said, did you vote? I wonder. Based upon the extremely poor showing in the recently concluded national APWU officer elections (about 25%), I'm rather curious what the turnout will have been for the mid-term elections. Will the character of the negative campaigning, which included just about every candidate involved regardless of party affiliation, turn the voters off to such extent that many voters will have simply bagged their ballots? I know I thought about it. But I voted like a good citizen nonetheless. How about you?

I suppose there was at least an *upside* to the huge amount of political advertising that occurred during the past lead-up to the elections. According to a report I read, more than \$4-Billion was spent nationally by candidates and sponsors of various measures towards this election! Whoa! Now that's some serious coin! At least somebody was getting paid and some jobs were being produced during this time frame, including an increase in our mail volume.

Politickin' 101 in America = Jobs. More than a just cottage industry, you might say.

"The drama of politics....is only the people running around trying to change one gang of bandits for another gang of bandits." --- Carl Sandburg

"An honest politician is one who when he/she is bought will stay bought." ---Simon Cameron

"A politician's words reveal less about what he thinks about his subject than what he thinks about his audience." --- George F. Will

"Reasons why members of Congress deserve a pay raise; many big corporations are cutting back on bribes; and nearly half the members of Congress have never been indicted." --- David Letterman

"Ultimately, the considerations of a politician are not based upon truth or fact; they are based upon what the public will conceive to be truth or fact." --- Raymond Moley

"With Congress---every time they make a joke it's a law. And every time they make a law it's a joke." --- Will Rogers

"The more you read about this Politics thing, you got to admit that each party is worse than the other. The one's that out always looks the best." --- Will Rogers

"The greatest difference between the two parties lies in the fact that they back different people, not different ideas, for office." --- William F. Buckley Jr.

"Democrats are the party that says government will make you smarter, taller, richer, and remove the crabgrass from your lawn. The Republicans are the party that says government doesn't work and then they get elected and prove it." --- P. J. O'Rourke

"Politicians and diapers have one thing in common. They both should be changed regularly and for the same reason!" --- Unknown

2010 --- Here we come!

ARE YOU GETTING PAID CORRECTLY?

Over the course of the last year I have submitted several complaints to the USPS Office-of-Inspector-General (OIG) as it relates to the Turner, Albany, and Salem Installations, specifically as it pertains to numerous APWU employees not being compensated properly. More specifically, not being properly compensated for **Overtime, Out-of-Scheduled Premium pay and Guarantee pay**, as required by the terms of the National Agreement and USPS regulations and policies.

I have repeatedly addressed these on-going, regular and routine problems with local management officials, including Postmaster Brad Bender, and it is my understanding that the problem remains unabated. On May 25, 2010, I met for over 5-hours with two OIG agents and one ranking USPS official, who came out from Illinois. Combined with my complaints, the investigation has now taken on "national" implications and developed into a long-ranging national audit; or so I am told. I also submitted a complaint to Congressman Kurt Schrader and have met with his staff on several occasions, including as late as October 28th. The purpose of which was to spur the OIG's investigation, which I believe is taking too long and not producing the desired results.

The bottom line is this, PM Brad Bender is not holding his subordinate managers and supervisors accountable for accurately scheduling and recording local APWU employee's times in TACS with the results that many em-

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ployees have and are continuing to be deprived of hundreds and thousands of dollars in the aforementioned premium work hours. A lot of it has to do with a clear failure to adhere to the scheduling requirements and time recording policies contained in USPS handbooks and manuals combined with the terms of the APWU National Agreement. The situation is further exacerbated by general

ignorance of employees of how the system is supposed to be applied and the simple fact that your rights are being advantaged by the Postal Service.

If you are one of the many employees who are being required to work copious amounts of overtime and/or out-of-schedule, there is a significant likelihood your work hours are being recorded *improperly!* Check your premium work hours religiously. Don't be a victim! Bp...

“BY THE NUMBERS”

By Debra J. Patterson

COPA: “Committee on Political Action”--- As do all the other postal unions, as well as each of the labor representative bodies that represent management such as NAPS and NAPUS, the APWU has its own PAC or *political action committee*, which is funded and vested for the purpose of serving the political interests and aims of the Union. There is hardly any organization of any kind, company, corporation, fraternal, union, or otherwise that isn't affiliated with some kind of PAC one way or the other. By political necessity, our union is no different.

However, despite having addressed this issue repeatedly over and over again, there are a good number of members and Non-members who continue to believe the myth that union dues funds go to support COPA operations. Let me say once again – **emphatically** – *no such members dues goes to COPA!* The funds that constitute COPA are strictly voluntary, as required by law and must be separate from those union funds collected by dues. Anyone who tells you differently is sadly in error or completely out of their mind.

It is true that the majority of COPA funds that are distributed by the APWU Legislative Department are allocated toward labor-friendly Democratic politicians and candidates; but not entirely. APWU COPA also has historically contributed to Republican and Independent politicians, who by and large support those issues and measures that our labor friendly, promote the Postal Service, and tend to support the aims and interests of the American Postal Workers Union. COPA *does not* blindly contribute to one party simply because of party affiliation.

Regardless of whatever you may think of PACs, good or evil, necessary or not, the APWU has a PAC and makes excellent use of its COPA despite the very limited funds it receives. But none of those funds are derived from union dues. So, for the naysayers out there who keep saying that

your union dues are being used for political purposes through COPA and contributed to various candidates and measures that you don't support – you couldn't be more wrong. It just doesn't work that way!

RETIREMENT: Are You Prepared? Is OPM Up to Snuff? Do Your Homework!

According to the latest stats, more than 40% of the federal workforce is over 50 years old. Those figures could be greater for the Postal Service given the fact that some 300,000 of us are eligible to retire within the next ten (10) years. To make matters worse, it is speculated that the mid-term election outcome could spur a “run on retirement” if the Republicans resume control of the Congress, which it is presumed they might.

So what's the big problem, you ask? At present, the agency responsible for processing retirements, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), is horribly bogged down in delays due to both understaffing (where have we heard that before) combined with using an antiquated retirement processing system that dates back to the 1980's. In many cases retirees retirement checks are being delayed 6-months or more!

According to Tammy Flanagan of the National Institute of Transition Planning, OPM's Retirement and Benefits Office “characterized by lengthy delays in processing claims, might not get much better any time soon,” and “still processes retirement claims in 2010 much the same way it did in 1920.” With USPS *downsizing* the workforce in the immediate future it is only going to make matters worse especially if USPS invokes yet another VERA.

On top of that, OPM is not responsible for “guiding the employee through the retirement process.” That falls entirely upon the employing agency to supply the em-

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ployee with all that information. In that regard USPS has fallen woefully inadequate. In fact, USPS' newly rolled out eRetire not only has software glitches in it, but does not meet the contractual guarantees forged with the unions that require one-on-one retirement counseling. Consequently, many potential retirees are making poor, ill-informed choices prior to retirement.

With another potential VERA looming on the horizon – or at the very least – a large number of eligible retirees considering optional retirement, OPM will once again be overwhelmed by the number of retirees, thereby undoubtedly inducing innumerable delays of retirement checks and benefits. Will you be one of them?

What to do?

First, Make sure that you have enough money (funds) on hand to see you and your family through while your retirement is being processed by OPM and any delays are

incurred. One way to do this is to save up as much of your annual leave as you can to “cash out” just before retirement. You should plan on having no less than six months pay to tide you over. It may be that long.

Secondly, **plan ahead!** Review your eOPF thoroughly on LiteBlue.gov. Buy back any military time far in advance. Secure the retirement counseling through the Postal Service and the Union and make sure that you have reviewed all your options before you actually submit your final paperwork. Remember, once you have submitted your final retirement paperwork to OPM, any mistakes you may later uncover after you have retired you will likely be unable to repair. So make sure that you have crossed all your T's and dotted all your I's before you submit your final documents to OPM.

The situation currently being what it is with OPM, that agency is going to assume that you and your employer have worked out **all** the final points prior to submitting your final retirement papers to OPM. Don't you bet your retirement on it! Dj....

BE SAFE OUT THERE
Chuck Hentz/ Clerk Craft Director

To our fellow members. As you all know, contract negotiations are still on going. We will share details when we know something.

Grievance activity is steady. Management continues to mis-manage, or tries to manage from the confines of the supervisor's office.

For those of you being sent to the pallet area when there are already five fellow employees there, please notify Management that there are too many employees in the pallet area by writing it up as a safety violation. The same action applies to safety on the automation machines. Write up safety violations if you are told to run the AFSM100 flat sorter with less than three

clerks. On the DBCS's if your run should have two clerks and you are being short staffed, write up the safety violation. Ensure you are taking your breaks and lunches. Remind Management that you need your relief if they want the machines kept running. Ask to speak to your Steward if Management is having problems letting you have lunch or breaks.

As most know by now, we mourn the loss of our fellow member and friend, Sharon Boswell. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family and friends.

This is our last issue of the newsletter before the holidays. Wishing everyone a safe and Happy Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday Season.

TSP Watch

The G, F, C, S, and I, Fund returns for the last 12 months assume unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month, and assume that earnings are compounded on a monthly basis. The changes in share prices reflect net earnings after accrued TSP administrative, trading costs, and investment fees.

	G	F	C	S	I
October	0.18%	0.36%	3.80%	4.48%	3.63%
Last 12 Months	2.94%	8.16%	16.53%	29.17%	9.78%

OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

The October 23rd, 2010, General Meeting of the Salem Area Local #604 was called to order at 4:30 PM by President Janeil Payne. A motion was M/S/P to accept the September meeting minutes as written. Janeil asked to have special guest speaker Linda Voldengen with Identity Theft Shield Pre-paid Legal Services to address the membership as the first order of business. There were no objections. Ms. Voldengen address the members and left extra information for anyone interested.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Secretary-Treasurer Debra Patterson: No new members to report this month. Debra reported on the cost of sending Janeil to the National Reassessment Program training held in Cle Elum, WA was \$437.95 and \$30 to send 6 delegates to the OPWU fall training. COPA drawing tickets were sold at the meeting for the 50/50 drawing.

Maintenance Craft Director Bob Budlong: Bob reported that Janeil and he met with Doug Peters on contracting out the lock changes on the Neighbor Box Units. Mr. Peters says the arrow keys are not allowed to be given out to any one outside the Postal Service.

Clerk Craft Director Chuck Hentz: Chuck reported on local clerk grievance activity. Overtime issues are the hot issues right now. All but three Tour-3 jobs are being abolished and reposted next bid cycle.

Vice-president Bob Patterson Report: Bob reported on the National APWU election and dismal participation. The local has 182 members but only 45 voted for a participation rate of only 24.7%.

Stewards: Fred reported on the clerks at the DCU working over 12-hours and excessive out-of- schedule scheduling. Grievance has been file on Shelly Eggleston not working in her new bid job.

Tracy reported on Plant grievances; most of them being on overtime issues.

Karl reported on the grievances at the Vista are on pay issues and overtime issues at the plant.

Linda reported on discipline dealing with a 7-Day Suspension going to Step 2.

Geo reported that Patrick Fortune will be the new General Editor of the **Salem Update**.

President Payne's Report: Janeil reported who the new officers are for the national APWU. She spoke on the two trainings she attended last weekend. There are 61 jobs being excessed within the Portland GMF, which put Salem under Article 12 withholding yet again. A job in Albany has been abolished dealing with bulk mail clerk. Janeil is working with the rural carrier steward on a hostile work environment at the Lyons post office. Janeil spoke on the problem some members had on the political discussions at the last union meeting.

Old Business: Tracy Brown made a statement that the Union has the responsible to let the members know which Congressmen and Senators are supporting our jobs and who is trying to hurt our jobs.

Karl reported some members believe their dues go to COPA. That is truly wrong! All COPA funds are *voluntary* donations from members and are never mixed with union dues monies.

New Business: OPWU 2011 State training convention is next April at the Benson Hotel in Portland.

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Good of the Union: Pot-of-Glock = \$58: Bryan Clancy's name was drawn but he was not present to win. The next meeting the pot will rise to \$60. Patrick Fortune's ticket was drawn for the COPA 50/50. There was \$48 in the pot. \$24 will be sent to COPA.

Door Prize Winners: Sue Hudson, Bob Patterson, Nicole Rodgers and Debra Patterson.

NEXT MEETING: November 30th, 2010 at 6:00PM.

Members: Patrick Fortune, Edyne Leavenworth, Donna Hadley, Douglas Wilkins, Lura Morris, Cliff Jeldness, Michael Ellenberger, Rick Laursen, Shawna Casey, Nicole Rodgers, and Sue Hudson

Officers & Stewards: Janeil Payne, Bob Patterson, Debra Patterson, Chuck Hentz, Bob Budlong, Geo Beck, Fred Deleon, Linda Klostermann, Tracy Brown, Karl Hegney.

Guests: MacKenzie Laursen, (Rick Laursen's daughter)

Respectfully submitted: Debra J. Patterson / Secretary-Treasurer





The workroom floor is all a buzz with the talk of changes coming our way. While many have reached deep within their souls to best describe this situation, one man has risen above all others to most perfectly describe our future:

“Total Suckfest”

Okay yes, we are all extremely fortunate to be employed in today’s economy. With that said I shall call it as I see it.

The Postmaster General has given speech after speech talking of teamwork and how we can do it. What a bunch of Bullshit. There is no teamwork involved here. Upper management collects undeserved bonuses with 100% of their health care paid for without actually even working mail. I believe incentives should be given to the employees that actually work the mail.

Does the USPS truly need seventeen vice presidents...? As our Maintenance Craft Director says; “Purge the top baby”.

I believe upper management is driving the USPS into the ground. Their solution is to cut from the bottom up. I imagine they think their high paying, bonus rich and cushy positions are safe at the top.

NEWSFLASH: Once they accomplish destroying the USPS their jobs will vanish also.

It is hard for me to understand how upper management has been able to collect such high wages and bonuses while screaming how broke the USPS is.

Teamwork huh...? How about restructuring upper management, the employees at the bottom are totally willing to share in the suckfest. Sounds like fantabulous teamwork to me.

You want some cheese with that whine...? That is what upper management would say to me if they even took the time to read this. I have to ask, how much would they stomp and holler if it were their jobs and lives that were about to be screwed with. I am thinking those lazy silk underwear types would be screaming a whole lot more than we could ever imagine.

This is probably the last article I will write as your editor as I am resigning my position. I shall apologize to all for being so negative in my writing today. My job was one that was just yanked from under me and I guess it got me a little fired up. In all honesty I do believe the USPS would operate more smoothly, efficiently, be much more productive, and be more cost effective with less upper management and if incentives were placed in the proper work areas.

MAINTENANCE? MUSINGS
Robert Budlong/ Maintenance Craft Director

Hello, again, APWU Brothers and Sisters!

In light of some of the Maintenance members getting more than a little upset this election season (and by this I mean the desire to exit the APWU) first let me be clear that I am a registered INDEPENDENT! This was a choice made by me because I personally have been disgusted by the left and right wings of the political spectrum at various times in my life. So if you are the person that thinks the Democrats or the Republicans are entirely to blame, or that either side is always right, you are either too young or you cannot be reasoned with. I'm not trying to make people mad, so now that the lefties and righties have been told where to go with their demagoguery lets get to the facts.

The APWU CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS in ARTICLE 2 "Objectives"

"SEC. 7. To educate our membership and the general public in the history of the Labor Movement and to develop and maintain an intelligent and dignified membership to vote and work for the election of candidates who favor the passage of improved legislation in the interest of all labor. To work for the repeal of laws which are unjust to labor and to the postal workers such as the denial of the right to strike and the denial of the right to support political candidates of their choice; and to educate all members in the area of economic, political and social justice."

"Work for the election of candidates" vs "denial of the right to support political candidates of their choice". This being in the Constitution must mean that there IS a law, which we must obey, which denies us a right. This also tells me that if "we" as a union of workers have a right denied, the union must also have this restriction. But the APWU endorsed Obama way back. On 04/09/08 "The National Executive Board of the American Postal Workers Union has voted unanimously to endorse Sen. Barack Obama for president." It seems there is no dissenting voice on our Executive Board.

Personally, I was not happy with the Obama sign in the union meeting room. It is now gone. I didn't say anything about it, I don't know who took it down or why. But I do now think it was not appropriate. It might have been a local decision. I was not the craft director at that point in time. So if you are one of the people that may be considering leaving the APWU over this, as the Maintenance Craft Director I ask that you re-consider your decision. And in the future I will object to any and all partisan political gestures which may give the appearance that "we" the body (at least locally) endorse any particular candidate. That is what COPA should be for.



USPS Wage, Benefit Proposal:

An Insult to Postal Workers

Burrus Update #19-2010, Nov. 1, 2010

Contract negotiations took a dramatic turn today as postal management presented its economic proposal, which would establish employees' wages and benefits for the next Collective Bargaining Agreement. Notwithstanding my expectation that management would seek to restrain costs, I was surprised to receive a USPS proposal that would destroy 20 years of progress.

Postmaster General Potter has said he intends to protect current employees by "grandfathering" their wages, and imposing lower pay and benefits on future employees. Management's wage proposal reflects that objective: It would severely reduce the pay and benefits of employees hired after the signing of a new agreement, and would make postal jobs substantially less desirable.

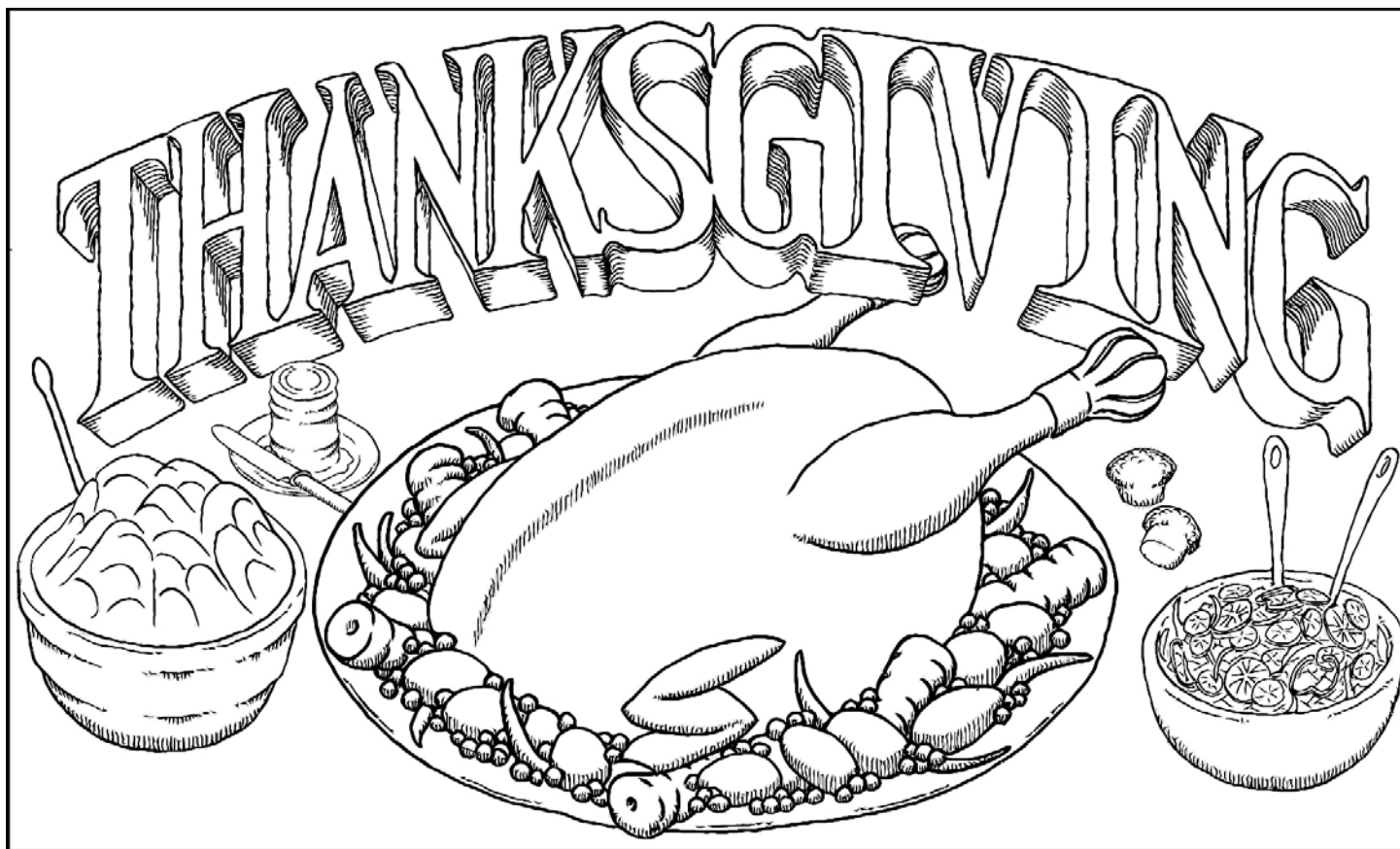
Management's proposal is just one step in the bargaining process, which requires additional intense negotiations — but it is not a good starting point.

Upon receipt of the proposal, I informed USPS negotiators that it is an insult to all postal employees who have dedicated their working lives to maintaining the best postal system in the world. There is zero possibility that the union will agree to wage cuts.

We hope that as bargaining proceeds, management will join us and engage in serious dialogue about the terms and conditions of a new contract. We have come too far to consider revisiting the past.

William Burrus

HAPPY



Clerk Craft Director*
Chuck Hentz

Editor/Salem Update
Patrick Fortune
E-mail: ...?

Local Data Administrator
(Vacant)

Associate Office Director
(Vacant)

Director of Organization
(Vacant)

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Health Plan Director
(Vacant)

Legislative Director
(Vacant)

*Indicates Executive Board Members

Tour 1 Manual: Karl Hegney
Tour 2 Automation: Janeil Payne
Tour 2 (Exec): Linda Klosterman
West Salem: (Vacant)
Hollywood/Oak Park: (Vacant)
Maintenance: Vacant

Salem Main Office Stewards

Tour 1 Automation: Tracy Brown
Tour 3 Manual: Chuck Hentz
BMEU: Linda Klosterman
Vista: Vacant

(R) Indicates Retired Officer

Tour 2 Manual: Janeil Payne
Tour 3 Automation: Chuck Hentz
Tour 2 (MO): Linda Klosterman
Pringle: (Vacant)
Keizer/Brooks: (Vacant)
MVS: (Vacant)
DCU: Fred Deleon

Representing: Salem, Albany, Stayton, Dallas, Willamina, Sweet Home, Lyons, Independence, Aumsville, Lebanon ,Turner & Monmouth.

Alternates:

Tour 1: Janeil Payne
Tour 2 Mail Processing: Linda Klosterman
Tour 3: Tracy Brown/Karl Hegney



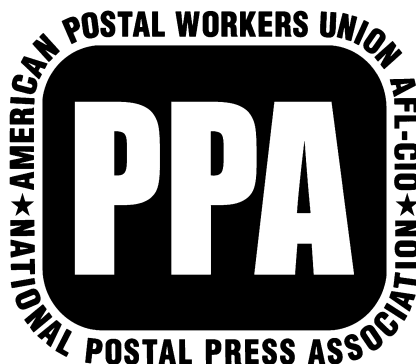
Associate Office Stewards:

Albany Steward: (Vacant)
Dallas Steward: (Vacant)
Sweet Home Steward: (Vacant)

Editorial Policy:

The *Salem Update* is published 8 times a year. Contributed articles will be welcome and will express the opinions of the writer, and not necessarily the opinions or policies of the Union or Editor. The Executive Board reserves the right to refuse to publish any item which in their opinion may be detrimental to the Union. All articles are due five days after the general membership meeting.

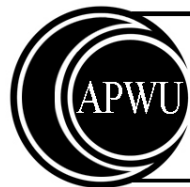
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www.Salem604.org

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In Memory of
Sharon Kay Boswell

It is with deep sadness that we have to report the loss of our friend and co-worker. Sharon completed her battle against cancer on the early morning of November 3rd surrounded by her family. Sharon worked for just over twenty-five years at the Salem Mail Processing and Distribution Facility. Sharon was well known for her smile, enjoyment of life and protection of all things related to USPS #2. Sharon was a friend to so many of us and will be greatly missed. Our condolences go to her family.

08/10/1960 To 11/03/2010