

WELCOME SPRING

SALEM UPDATE

Vol. 32 No. 3

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Change, Change, Change Janeil Payne, President

How does that song go again --- Change, change, change happening all around you; change, change, change, change all a round you Well maybe the correct words say chains of love but the theme music sure does fit what is happening in the Postal Service these days. There is Change and it is coming our way and fast. If you are at the plant you can not but help having noticed all the changes taking place. There is movement going on every which way you look. This is a good thing as it means the Postal Service is putting some big money into the Salem Plant so we should be staying put for awhile. For those of you not privy to all that is or has been happening to the plant – here are just a few of the items. We have new lighting installed (it seems really weird to walk into a room and the light comes on, plus there are no light switches), new dock doors have

been installed, there is supposed to be a new roof either being installed or to be installed, they are supposed to be re-surfacing the dock with slip resistant material, and a new Small Parcel Bundle Sorter (SPBS) should have arrived by the time you read this article. To make room for this machine both the tray sorter and the canceller machines have to be moved. Along with this machine, Salem is getting the Priority Mail sortation back which we lost to Portland almost two years ago. This is good. What is not so good is the re-arranging of the personnel. It has been interesting to go through the process of establishing new jobs and creating a new section. It has been especially challenging as management and the union do not always agree on how things

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should be accomplished and the process to get there. I hope that by the time this article goes to press we will have a group of jobs available for people to bid on for working the new machine. These jobs will require training so we need to get moving so that we have people in place when it is time to fire it up. One of my goals while doing this is to try to have the least amount of disruption to the employees as possible. I hope we can achieve this. It will be interesting to see how this all plays out in the end.

Even in the smaller associate offices there is change happening. Most of it is not to the liking of the employees as the Post Masters are being "required" to take on more work and cut hours. If you are one of the many PTF Clerks that are having their hours cut, please ask to see a union steward. While it most likely will be me who you talk to we need to be grieving the post masters taking your work. It is vital to your job security. Please contact me.

I was hoping to be able to tell you that we have a new contract but unfortunately I have only heard rumors. As of the writing of this article there is no official word other than they are still in negotiations. What that will mean to us is any ones guess. I just hope that they can maintain our current wages, keep the COLA, keep the 'no lay off clause' intact and not have major changes to our insurance benefits. Unfortunately I think the Postal Service might have the upper hand. I think they are using the

poor economy and the large payments they have to make to pay the future retiree health benefits to full advantage. I also now understand why Congress is in no hurry to refund the overpayment that Post Office has paid to both the Civil Service Retirement Fund and the Federal Employees Retirement System – that money is part of the Federal General Fund and would affect the Federal Deficit. By repaying this money that the Postal Service is owed it would cause the deficit to be even larger than it all ready is, now what Congressman/woman would want that attached to their good name. I am beginning to think term limits sounds better and better.

Anyway, I am going to stop here so that our wonderful Editor can get it to print. I hope all of you have been checking out the web site at www.Salem604.org. Richard Brown has officially taken over and is adding his own touches. So far they are very nice. We will miss Geo, but I think we have another quality editor on board.

See all of you at our next meeting which will be held March 29, 2011 at 6:00pm at the Union office on the corner of Commercial and Mission. Hopefully we will have some good news about the contract and an update on all the changes.

In solidarity:

Janeil Payne
President

Former NW Region NBA Ron Rasmussen – GET WELL SOON!

Former Clerk NBA Ron Rasmussen apparently elected to "spare" a good number of local fish by checking himself into a local Portland hospital with what can best be described "Fish Stress Traumatic Disorder." Seriously though, Ron was taken quite ill recently and is currently convalescing while he rehabilitates at a care center in Portland. We wish both Ron and his wife Gail, who served as Administrative Assistant to the NBAs for many years, the very best and a speedy recovery.

For those of you who do not recall Brother Ron, he was one of the more outstanding National Business Agents this Union has ever produced, certainly for this region. As a new steward and officer, I cut my teeth on the likes of Ron, his partner Margaret Leaf, and Bob Tunstall. Ron has always been the kind to "tell it like it is or was;" blunt and to the point, no BS aside. From time-to-time I run across an old Rasmussen arbitration or instructional piece and am still awed by the product.

Anyone wishing to send cards, letters, flowers or well-wishes to Ron please do so to:

**Ron Rasmussen c/o Marquis Care Centennial
725 SE 202nd Ave**

Bob's Corner Perspective

Bob Patterson, Vice President

WORKING MEN AND WOMEN – When did it become a crime to be a working-class citizen in this country, or anywhere for that matter? Why is it so unreasonable to expect reasonable wages, decent work hours, and safe working conditions for American workers? What civilized government controlled largely by the ultra-wealthy would expect any of its citizens to go without affordable health care?

And, perhaps most importantly, why is it a freaking sin and so outrageously beyond the scope of reason for any classification of employees - whether they be airline pilots, football players, public sector employees or lettuce pickers - to belong to a democratic union and engage in *good faith* collective bargaining so as to achieve better wages, better working conditions, and reasonable work hours?

Why is it so damned unreasonable to want to earn enough money so a man and a woman (or a domestic couple) can put a roof over their heads, enough to eat on the stove, a decent car to drive, and provide their kids with a decent education and maybe afford health care, a vacation from time-to-time and not worry whether they will be able to retire or not? Is that greed? Is that what these greedy unions are all about? Is that what is really sending this country onto economic ruination, a bunch of greedy over-paid, over-benefitted union workers and union bosses?

Do ya really think it's that simple? Then read Bob Bruno of the **Chicago Sun-Times** and let me know if you still think that way. And for all you non-union scabs out there, feel free to give back any "over-payment" you're feeling guilty about the Union achieving for you. We apologize

Unions do more than fight for pay, pensions

BY ROBERT BRUNO

The intense debate unfolding in Midwestern state legislatures and, more loudly, outside of their marble chambers is not about fiscal sanity. As real as soaring state budget deficits are, the central issue bringing thousands of spirited Americans to Wisconsin is an assault on collective bargaining.

If Gov. Scott Walker had simply accepted the state workers' union concessions on health care and pension contributions, the once proud heartland of progressive politics would not today be the site of a working-class upsurge. Who could have imagined a few weeks ago such a grass-roots uproar over something of which most Americans know very little and have too little appreciation?

Collective bargaining in the private sector has been the law of the land since it was enshrined in the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. The law protects the collective rights of most private-sector workers to act as a group to negotiate in good faith and secure decent wages, benefits, and working conditions. Since the 1950s all but 10 states have adopted some form of collective bargaining rights for public-sector works.

The right to have a legitimate say in how your labor is treated is not a union right, but rather, a human right that belongs to all workers.

Wages and benefits are unquestionably the core issues that animate the collective bargaining process, and un-

ion workers — whether from the private or public sector — are better rewarded for their work than unorganized employees. But what is rarely addressed in nearly all of the popular stories and rhetoric about collective bargaining is that it is a very dynamic and flexible tool for problem solving. We hear about the rancor over health care and pension payments for union workers, but never a word is uttered about the way that collective bargaining can be used to restructure work, increase efficiency or design productivity enhancements.

For example, in the early 1980s New York City and the Sanitation Workers Union negotiated a productivity bargaining agreement that reduced truck crew size from three to two and included a shift bonus for crew workers. Reducing the crew size created the incentive to adopt cost-saving equipment improvements (such as automated side-loading trash containers and the standardization of trash bins) and rules for how work would get done (such as the requirement that bins be placed at curbside). The agreement introduced measures that substantially reduced the amount of labor that was required to do sanitation pickup and disposal.

Nor is there any mention of how collective bargaining can identify training needs, integrate socio-

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technical systems, reduce turnover, lower workplace tensions or create a mechanism for joint problem-solving. Collective bargaining serves both employees and employers by providing a means to raise shared interests, lower production and service costs, reach out to consumers and taxpayers, improve product quality and services, and when necessary, reduce labor costs. Collective bargaining can work so effectively that it can even keep public bodies from financial insolvency.

Despite Walker's misguided call to withdraw bargaining rights from state employees on the grounds that it somehow shares responsibility for the state's fiscal crisis, the truth is that the citizens of Wisconsin have already "benefitted" from the process. It was through collective bargaining that the state employee unions

agreed to pony up more for health care and pension benefits. They did so without strikes, service disruptions, public rallies or sit-ins.

In Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and in thousands of municipalities across this country, the collective bargaining process has worked creatively to address not just well-funded but underfunded pensions, not just teacher retention but teacher evaluations, and not just job security but job retrenchment.

Collective bargaining is not always easy, pretty, logical, or without abuse, but neither employers nor workers have ever found a more effective and democratic way to promote the interests of multiple constituencies.

Robert Bruno is a professor of labor and employment relations at the University of Illinois



-- GENERAL MEETING MINUTES --
February 23rd, 2011

The February 23rd, 2011, General Meeting of the Salem Area Local #604 was called to order at 6:00 PM by President Janeil Payne. A motion was M/S/P to accept the January meeting minutes as written.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Secretary-Treasurer Debra Patterson: No new members this last month. No COPA report this month. The federal taxes are set up to be EFT to IRS with Dave Meyers help from the NALC.

Maintenance Craft Director Bob Budlong: Bob reported that he withdrawn the grievance with maintenance employees crossing crafts and performing clerk work. Tom Ryan has returned to Portland to help close the Sunset DDC unit. Mike Sweet is the Acting Maintenance Manager

Clerk Craft Director Chuck Hentz: Chuck reported on local clerk grievance activity.

Vice-president Bob Patterson: Bob reported some news about Ron Rasmussen, former National Business Agent and long time Union activist suffering a major stroke and hospitalized in Portland. Ron's wife Gail, retired last year from the NBA's office as their secretary. Bob reported on what news or lack of news on the contract negotiation. APWU President Guffey's "Business as usual isn't good enough; we need to apply our skills to the legislative arena and other areas of union activity." There is a report that came out today about the Postal Service has made a smart business decision by continuing to negotiate with the APWU. Bob gave some insight to a report from the Office of Inspector General from last September about cutting area offices and number of district offices and cutting 7,500 jobs in administrative and line management. Announcements are expected around March 25th 2011.

President Payne's Report: Janeil reported on Senator Susan Collins introducing Postal Reform Legislation, the "U.S. Postal Service Improvements Act of 2011." Senator Collins has also introduced a bill to terminate OWCP payments to injured federal injured workers who would then face reduced benefits. This Bill is (S. 261) The Federal Workers Compensation Reform Act of 2011. This only affects federal employees, not private sector workers. Janeil gave a summary of the President's budget proposal concerning the post office in the 2012 federal budget.

Old Business: None

New Business: Debra reported we have some union older T-shirts for sale @ \$12.00 each. We have large, extra large and 2X sizes left. Just let an officer or steward know if you would like to buy one.

Good of the Union: Pot-of-Glock = \$64: Jackie Hansen's name was drawn but she was not present to win. The next meeting the pot will increase to \$66.

Door Prize Winners: Janeil Payne, Rick Laursen, Doug Wilken, and Susan Hudson.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 29th, 2011 at 6:00 PM.

Members: Patrick Fortune, Edyne Leavenworth, Douglas Wilken, Peter McKee, Alissa Prant, Rick Laursen and Sue Hudson

Officers & Stewards: Janeil Payne, Bob Patterson, Debra Patterson, Chuck Hentz, Bob Budlong, Fred Deleon, and Karl Hegney.

Respectfully submitted:

Debra J. Patterson / Secretary-Treasurer
Salem Area Local #604
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

“BY THE NUMBERS”

By Debra Patterson

RETIRING? As some of you may know, but many of you may not, I hold a national appointment as a retirement counselor and instructor for the APWU where from time-to-time I'm called upon to teach or assist in teaching retirement classes at various conventions, conferences, and training seminars. I've had the honor of filling this position for several years now thanks to the recommendation and endorsement of National APWU Retirement Director Judy Beard.

However, of late, neither the skills or knowledge I've acquired have been much called upon, which somewhat mystifies me, considering the ever increasing number of retirements our union membership are taking. More disturbing is the fact that many of these retirees and potential retirees could have and likely are making some serious mistakes in judgment that could well cost them significantly in retirement.

There's an old axiom in the school of retirement planning. *An employee should begin planning for retirement the first day on the job.* For postal and federal employees, those words of advice couldn't be more true.

But, if you're like the vast majority of employees, you did not start planning for retirement on your first day of employment with the Postal Service. And if you run true to form and are planning to retire in the very near future, you're like most and haven't put a great deal of real thought and planning into your retirement strategy beyond the *conceptual process* even now. In other words, you've reached that point where you are eligible to retire, or close to being eligible, but you really haven't laid out a precise retirement road map that details what you are going to need in retirement. Bad idea, Folks!

RETIREMENT-101: Time and space do not permit me to cover all one needs to know about retirement planning. To do so requires an hours-long class. So I want to convey a couple of essential points here and now of importance.

Towards the end of this month – March 2011 – the USPS reportedly will be offering yet again a *selective* Voluntary Early Retirement or VERA. To how many employees and with or without incentive is not yet known. In addition, APWU President Cliff Guffey recently announced that the Union anticipates the *regular* retirement of some 12,000 APWU members by the end of 2011. Clearly there will be a

significant number of USPS employees retiring this year in all employee categories.

Will you be one of them? And will you retire under VERA or “optional” retirement? What difference will it make?

If you are one of the employees – “the Lucky Few” – offered retirement under VERA, you will have but a very short time to elect your decision with the consequence you will have a similar short time to get your retirement house in order. If your eOPF and the documents therein are not in proper order; if you have not made the proper “buy backs” necessary to boost your retirement; if you fail to take the time to ensure that all of your eligible work years are properly credited, you could easily find yourself suffering a significant and negative impact on any annuity calculations.

Perhaps worse, having not scrutinized the accuracy of your eOPF and SF-50's, you might well find that OPM (Office of Personnel Management) declares you *ineligible* for retirement even though you know that you have worked sufficient creditable years to qualify. It's a matter of record keeping.

For those of us looking to retire under the optional process (normal retirement), the same is true. ***Do not rely upon the accuracy or dependability of the USPS HRSSC record keeping system!*** They make mistakes all the time. Huge mistakes!

When you retire OPM calculates your retirement eligibility AND your total years of creditable service based upon the information on the data entered on the cumulative information on the SF-50's contained in your eOPF. If any of the SF-50s are missing or otherwise incorrect or contain “typos,” your retirement could be delayed, denied, or your annuity could be reduced. The SF-50s are the governing documents. And, if you're like most employees you have not kept copies of all your SF-50s since your first day of employment.

So, when contemplating retirement, months before so doing you need to thoroughly review your eOPF, which is in Greensboro, NC, but available to you on-line, and carefully review every SF-50 for accuracy. If any are missing, have them replaced immediately. If any contain errors or mis-

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takes, have them corrected immediately *before* you submit your retirement paperwork.

Unfortunately, the Postal Service has largely reneged on its agreement with the APWU and other postal unions to provide comprehensive one-on-one retirement counseling, which would help employees' navigate these types of issues. What you must know and remember is that once USPS hands your retirement off to OPM, retirees become OPM's problem and USPS could care less about any mistakes or personnel action errors. In addition, once your annuity has been set by OPM, if you later discover that your annuity was incorrectly calculated because of such errors, getting it properly adjusted after the fact is time consuming, expensive, and in many cases virtually impossible to rectify. So get it right the first time!
I would highly recommend visiting the web site

FedSmith.com, which can provide both current retirees and potential retirees with a bounty of retirement information. Pay particular attention to articles written by Micah Shilanski, Certified Financial Planner, whose most recent article (2/28/2011) **How a Typo Could Delay Your Retirement from Federal Service** goes into great detail in how to prepare for your retirement, along with a couple a horror stories for those that did not plan well. Make FedSmith.com one of your favorites, as I did.

We as postal employees, both CSRS and FERS, have pretty good retirement plans with a number of options available to us. But to optimize your retirement takes forethought and pre-planning. I've known too many employees who failed to plan well, some of them former co-workers and very good friends, who are now struggling to make ends meet. If only they had made better decisions. Remember, retirement is somewhat like the Genie and the Bottle. Make your decisions carefully. Once made, there's no getting the Genie back into the bottle. Dj....

FOR SALE
Salem Area Local 604 T-shirts
\$12.00 Each
Available in L, XL, and XXL
Limited Quantities
First come, first served
When they're gone, they're gone!
See your officers or stewards

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
February	0.22%	0.26%	3.42%	4.52%	3.33%
Last 12 Months	2.74%	5.09%	22.55%	33.43%	20.37%

Maintenance Musings

Bob Budlong

Hello again to all APWU brothers and sisters!

This month I thought I would talk about the new machine Salem is getting installed. Its called a "Small Parcel and Bundle Sorter", SPBS, or "Spibs" for short. The purpose of the SPBS is to provide the United States Postal Service (USPS) with a means for sorting small parcel and bundle type mail based on its ZIP Code. The SPBS will also handle thin parcels, flats, and letter mail which are often contained in the mail stream along with the small parcels and bundled mail.

There is a Normal Mode of 11,128 pieces per hour, and the Priority Mode of 8,093 pieces per hour. Although with just four induction stations this will not be achievable, this is just how fast the cells pass the bins. The actual rate will be how fast the keyers are, and how many keyers are assigned.

When a package is keyed either first 3 for outgoing or the last 3 for incoming, it gets weighed and checked for height, put on a belt and shot onto the main transport which consists of many cells (about 200) which are a miracle of technology. These cells can throw the package either left or right which will slide down into a wire or a

sack! The bags are usually set in software to not exceed a certain weight limit. The computer keeps track of this and will light up the sack needing to be pulled.

Eugene installed one of these while I worked there and it does seem to me that we are going to be in for a shock as to how much room this thing takes up. It is BIG boys and girls! It arrived in three semi-trailers. Eugene did have the feeder system (LMS) which we are not getting.

I was told just today we are only getting the 80 something bin version. That means 40 bins per side. and 20 of those bins can be wires. So how long is 20 wires side by side Well its from here to...oh oh. Hey, wanna buy some PIE-CART's and GPC's, cause we don't have any room to store these things anymore!

1.5.8 Operating Safety Precautions

- Do not wear loose-fitting clothing, jewelry, ties, or other articles that could become caught in the machine.
- Keep hair away from the equipment to avoid its becoming entangled in the machine.
- Keep fingers, hands, and arms clear of feed belts, screws, chains, gears, and pulleys

Traversing the Slippery Slope

Rick Laursen

While we wait in limbo for a new contract, it's time to heed some words previously spoken in these newsletters. The thing to remember is WE can control our attitudes when we come to work even though there has been a decline in certain aspects of this business. Other offices have experienced more hardships than the Salem P & DF, yet there seems to be this underlying current of a lack of thankfulness for what we have here.

I speak of the attitude of the 'I DON'T CARES'. Now, I realize this is just a phrase, until you watch the person who speaks it and the effort put forth on the workroom floor. Since

our national president, Mr. Guffey, refuses to divulge what the Union's bargaining position so as to 'not disturb the nature of the negotiations', let's take a look at what could be a proposal by management to this Union.

No more Sunday premium, no more night differential and loss of COLA. In addition, let's throw in the removal of the no layoff clause. Now, the I DON'T CARES will not be bothered by this. Yet, stop and consider that our nation and our state are currently saddled with 10% unemployment with no end in sight. And, a large portion of them would be very grateful just to

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some downsizing or a reduction in force, I fully expect to hear the I DON'T CARES repeat their pet phrase...on their way out the door.

To those who continue to value this organization and business and want to be a part of solution, not a part of the problem

Thank you. I understand this particular office has grown older in the time I've been here and many people have issues concerning their health or some form of pain they may be experiencing. Some have gone through a lifetime of raising families and are peeking ahead to retirement. And while this is simplistic in nature, the success of our jobs on many occasions comes down a few moments of effort to turn runs around or sweeping machines in order to make dispatches. Not really all that strenuous for the pay and benefits we receive.

Now while this sounds condemning in nature, we need to look no farther than Wisconsin for proof of a direction in which our lives could go. We could be out in the uncertainty of this current

economic climate. Take the time to head north on 25th one day after work and realize the significance of the words on the outside of this brick building. It doesn't belong to anyone; IT BELONGS TO ALL OF US. And while we hear the phrase 'taking ownership' of a machine or an area, forgive me for saying that ownership brings back a bad connotation to me; one of slavery. I prefer being responsible for my work area and for the partner I'm assigned to. I don't want to wake up in the middle of my sleep wondering if my machine 'X' is doing all right.

I actually believe we can weather this storm and that good things are heading our way. I can thank my parents and many co-workers in my lifetime for the positive reinforcement. But, it's going to take a collective effort by a number of individuals who actually care about the health of this business.



Get Screened

Being healthy doesn't mean you only go to the doctor when you are sick or when something ails you. Getting routine preventive screenings helps to protect you from those health surprises that everyone dreads. Living a healthy lifestyle can go a long way to ensure your vitality, but it doesn't take into account your family history, which can have a large impact on your overall health. Preventive screenings can help to monitor your livelihood and puts you in a favorable position to catch something if it were to come up early. Experts all agree that early detection gives an individual the best chance for a full recovery.

Members in either the High Option or the Consumer Driven Option have 100 percent coverage for certain in-network screenings. This means you will not have to pay for routine screenings such as mammograms, osteoporosis testing, total blood cholesterol, and pap tests (refer to our federal brochure R1 71-004 for a full listing). Living healthy is also about staying healthy. With the APWU Health Plan you know you are covered.

The Benefits of Preventive Screenings

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. A simple total blood cholesterol test can help an individual make simple changes and reduce their cholesterol. A ten percent reduction of cholesterol in the blood can reduce the occurrence of heart disease by 30 percent.

When breast cancer is confined to just the breast, the survival rate is close to 100 percent. Getting a mammogram can lead to early detection of breast cancer.

Over the last 30 years routine pap tests have decreased the incidents of cervical cancer 74 percent.

APWU Health Plan is always striving to bring our members the very best in healthcare options. We pride ourselves in offering our exceptionally rated High Option and our versatile and affordable Consumer Driven Option; both plans are comprehensive health plans with unique benefits to fit any lifestyle. As a non-profit organization all our efforts are for one purpose, to ensure our members get the highest quality healthcare at an affordable and reasonable premium. for more

www.apwuhp.com

Live Life Well

Get Screened

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Chuck Hentz

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Local Data Administrator
(Vacant)

Associate Office Director
(Vacant)

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Health Plan Director
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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 Stew-

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



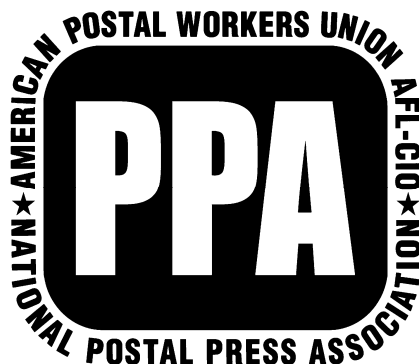
Associate Office Stewards:

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.

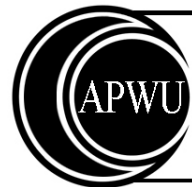
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www.Salem604.org

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Salem Update
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Next Meeting
March 29, 2011
1800 Hours(6:00 PM)
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