

Razorback Scheme

American Postal Workers Union • Northwest Arkansas Area Local

June 2024

From the President — Ike Mills

PRIORITY LEGISLATION

Hello Brothers and Sisters: Well, the subject I have decided to write about this time is on some of the legislation that the APWU has made a priority during this session of Congress. You can find the whole list on the APWU website at APWU.org under the Legislative Department.

The two top priorities are #1 **HR 82, S 597 Social Security Fairness Act**. These two bills repeal the **Government Pension Offset (GPO)** and the **Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)** to end earned benefit reductions for **Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)** retirees who have qualified for Social Security, and their spouses.

These unjust laws need to be stopped, and we all need to contact our representatives and get them onboard with these bills, so we can give the many retired postal workers the justice they deserve and have earned.

#2 is the (HR 5995) **Federal Retirement Fairness Act**. This bill allows temporary postal and federal employees who are promoted to career positions the option of “buying back” their time as a non-career employee to use toward their retirement. We have several of our coworkers that were casuals, TEs, or PSEs for extended periods of time that deserve this opportunity.

Please do whatever you can to help pass this legislation and do what is right for our brothers and sisters that laid the groundwork for what we have today and for those that stand with us today. There are several other important issues that we are supporting; so, please go to the APWU website and educate yourselves on the issues that are there.

See you at the next meeting!

In Solidarity, Ike



30 YEARS OF SERVICE!

Arkansas APWU State Presidents since 1994:

Left to Right: Dennis Taff (1994), Ike Mills (elected 2024), and Kerry Hinton (2004)

Ike is the first state president from Northwest Arkansas since Dennis Kilcoyne in the 1980s.

The *RAZORBACK SCHEME* is the official voice of the Northwest Arkansas Area Local of the APWU – AFL-CIO. However, opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writers and not necessarily those of the APWU, Local, officials or Editor. Articles, artwork, cartoons and/or other material are solicited from member readers who wish to share their views. Although freedom of the press is recognized, contributors are exhorted not to submit derogatory material about any fellow union member or to submit any false or unsubstantiated allegation concerning management or any other individual inside or outside this organization. All letters must be signed (if hard-copied) or emailed via an identifiable, recognized screen name and are requested to have been received by the Editor ten (2) days prior to the announced publication date. Names will be withheld upon request. Send submissions to *RAZORBACK SCHEME*, P.O. Box 654, Fayetteville AR 72702; or email to Editor's screen name listed below or on website. Submissions may be returned upon request.

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NEXT UNION MEETING:

Sunday, June 9, 2024 – 1:00 pm

Foghorn's, 1100 48th Place, Springdale AR

NW Arkansas Area Local – 2300 S City Lake Rd

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NEW LOCAL WEBSITE! <https://nwaal667apwu.org>

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Do You Have a Voice in the Union?

By Pam Beck, NWAAL Webmaster

Do you ever wonder about the Union's bargaining process? How do they know what YOU need in YOUR contract?

Everything starts with your local. The local sends delegates to the state convention held in the spring. Each local has a number of delegates based on the number of members.

The body of delegates is broken down into committees to work on different agenda items. One of these is a resolution committee which takes suggestions from members of items for consideration in negotiations. The committee drafts resolution proposals to present to the body of delegates at the meeting. The delegates then vote on the resolution proposals. Those that pass at the state meeting are then sent to the National convention, held in summer, where the process is much the same.

Each local is given a number of national delegates based on membership numbers. Resolution proposals are presented before the body of delegates and voted on. The ones that pass at National convention are then presented to the actual bargaining committee consisting of National officers that will bring them to the bargaining table when the contract is up for renewal.

This is a democratic process. It is run by active union members for union members. If you want a voice, get involved in your local. That is where it begins.

Do you feel the Union doesn't work for you? Get involved. Don't like your leadership? Get involved. Your union officers and stewards at all levels work very hard for the membership with minimal compensation for what they do. Do you have any right to complain if you are not willing to get involved, volunteer, do the work?

Not yet a member? What is holding you back? You need the Union. The Union needs YOU! A higher percentage of membership gives us a greater advantage at the bargaining table. New contract negotiations start June 25, this year. Step up, get involved!



UNION MEETING!

Sun., June 9th, 2024, 1 p.m.

Foghorn's Restaurant
1100 48th Place, Springdale
 (Take Exit 72 off I-49, turn east 1 block to 48th St signal light, turn L to Foghorn's.)

You could win \$50+ door prizes!

Cartoon vs. Reality

By Barney Barnes, *Siloam Springs Steward*

I saw a Peanuts cartoon awhile back with Lucy holding the football for Charlie Brown to kick. She was telling him “C’mon! You don’t need a Union. If you keep working hard and put the company’s interest before your own, then the company will share its prosperity with you.”

Now, the truth is, we all know that Lucy will pull that football away just as Charlie Brown tried to kick it — sending him head over heels, as always. And her promise that the company will “share its prosperity with you,” is just as bogus.

The 5 News online article that I saw on September 7, 2023 just proves my point. “**Walmart cuts starting wages for some hourly workers.**”

The largest private employer in the nation – with more millionaires in management than they would ever admit – is cutting starting wages for the lowest paid employees. If that is “sharing its prosperity”, **GIVE ME THE UNION. NOW!**

Check the record, folks. Walmart has been one of the biggest ANTI-UNION companies since it was founded. They have even closed stores the voted to go union. The reason is simple: No Union – no wage and job protection. Period.

Now, I have to admit that keeping the UNION out of Walmart has worked for the Walton Family. According to Google, they are THE richest family in the world, with a net worth of \$248.5 BILLION (with a B). (By the way, 1 Billion = 1,000 Million or 248.5 X 1,000 million dollars.) So, it’s easy to see why they would need to cut starting wages for the lowest paid employees.

But don’t make the mistake of believing that the great United States Postal Service is any different than Walmart. Just ask the 200,000 Post Office workers that stood up to be counted in the Great Postal Strike in 1970. Working conditions and pay were so bad, employees were leaving for other jobs in incredible numbers.

But the real trigger for the strike was when Congress (they were in charge then) limited postal workers’ raises to 4% and at the same time raised their own pay by 41%.

Our UNION has gotten us the pay we enjoy, cost of living adjustments, job protection, the ability to bid on a job that we might like or that fits our life better.

I was fortunate enough to get to go to the State Union Convention in March and got to meet some new (at least to me) people there. We voted in some new state officers and congratulations to everyone elected. These people are standing up for you all across Arkansas. But the real truth is – we need you too!

Get involved in the UNION. Come to the meetings. Read the Contract and learn the ways to protect yourself, your job, and your pay. Join the UNION for selfish reasons – For YOU and YOUR FAMILY.

Or, you can go to work for Walmart and “share the prosperity.”

P.S. – If you don’t like the current Contract, get involved and help change it. Now’s the time, people. Our Contract expires soon, and the UNION is fighting to get us better terms.



**The Local is now 104 years old!
The Local has had a website
for 25 of those years!**

The Local first created a website 25 years ago – initiated and maintained by **Jake Lamkins** for ¼ century. Our appreciation to Jake for his enduring service.

Now the Local has a new webmaster, **Pam Beck**. She’s designed & set up a new website for the Local. Congratulations, Pam! Excellent!

The Local’s Constitution, LMOUs for Fayetteville & Springdale, newsletters, contact info, announcements, and other documents are posted.

You may visit our new website at:

<https://nwaal667apwu.org>

Why Join the Union?

By Pam Beck, Northwest Arkansas Area Local Webmaster

God gave you **ONE day off** per week (traditionally). UNIONS gave you **TWO**. Presenting... (drumroll)...THE WEEKEND!

Also brought to you by unions:

- ❖ the 40-hour work week,
- ❖ the 8-hour day,
- ❖ overtime pay,
- ❖ child labor laws,
- ❖ OSHA standards,
- ❖ minimum wages... the list goes on.

So many of the protections that have become national labor law have been brought about by unions. And now that they are law, people take them for granted, but corporate America did not give you these things. Unions did. The history of unions and labor law is much neglected in our schools. It is very interesting, though not pretty, and I encourage you to educate yourself.

Just consider, if our union, APWU, were to fold up tomorrow, how would that affect you? How long do you think the Postal Service would continue to follow the contract? Would you still have 2 days off per week? Would you be forced to work overtime? Suppose you want the overtime but the supervisor always gives it to their favorites. There is no rotation and seniority doesn't count. The same goes for holidays. People who want the hours may not get it while those who don't want it may be forced to work. Ok, so sometimes these things happen even WITH the union, but you do have the option to file a grievance and receive compensation. Without the union there would be no grievance process.

Consider the proposed changes to operations that we have been told are coming. Many of you have layoff protection under the contract. You can be forced to bid another position, even change crafts or relocate, but you would still have a job and retain all of your benefits. Without the union, where would you be?

Many people are willing to sit back and enjoy the benefits provided by the union without becoming a member and paying dues. Perhaps they feel these things are owed to them. However, those with a conscience will realize that they should be contributing to the organization that secures their future and many of the comforts of their job. The union needs members in order to do its work. In fact, the union has a much better bargaining position with a 95% membership than with 60% or 75%. The union needs our dues to stay in operation. The work of grievances and contract negotiations costs money. There are many full-time union employees at the national level who must be paid.

Material benefits to YOU of joining the union are:

- ❖ Availability of the APWU health insurance plan
- ❖ Availability of supplemental insurance plans through the union's Voluntary Benefits program
- ❖ National and local level scholarship programs for member's children
- ❖ Union Plus Discounts and Services including Mortgage program
- ❖ Automatic membership in the Accident Benefit Association
- ❖ Access to AFL-CIO Credit Union
- ❖ An Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy from American Income Life brought to you by your Local #667

If you are not already a member, please consider joining APWU today. Ask any local officer for a membership form.



SCAN THIS CODE TO GO TO
ONLINE MEMBERSHIP
FORM.