

# APWU NEWS

Bulletin

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO

WILLIAM BURRUS, President MYKE REID, Editor

## Delegates Focus on Bargaining Priorities

APWU delegates identified negotiating priorities Aug. 19, when they considered resolutions submitted to the union's Labor-Management Committee. "The biggest threat to the members of APWU is the erosion of jobs," Resolution 171-C declared, and the APWU must "develop and negotiate clear and concise contractual language to eliminate and reverse" the trend.

"All our hard-fought benefits become useless if our members no longer have their jobs," the resolution noted. "We cannot allow postal management to commit blunder after blunder and attempt to balance its budget on the backs and through the wallets of our



The "FOR's" carried this vote.

members." Protecting work in the Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle, and Support Services crafts must be the union's No. 1 goal.

Delegates also pinpointed the elimination of casuals and the conversion of part-time flexibles as issues of major importance. Other priorities, outlined in Resolution 172, include negotiating "a national hardship detail," winning greater management accountability for grievance settlements, and negotiating rest breaks for all employees.



In favor of the Article 11 resolution was Karen See, left; Amy Sentell spoke in opposition. Tony McKinnon chairs the Labor-Management Committee.

"We felt it was important to think strategically," said Tony D. McKinnon Sr., chairman of the Labor-Management Committee. "So we focused on resolutions that identify the major issues of concern."

The most extensive debate occurred when delegates rejected Resolution 11 on Aug. 18, contrary to the recommendation of the Labor-Management Committee. The resolution sought to eliminate casuals by replacing them with Transitional Employees (TEs).

Karen See, of the Mansfield Ohio Area Local, favored the resolution. She noted that her office employs 11 percent casuals. "They should be union members," she said. "I can't organize a casual, but I can at least talk to a TE about belonging to the American Postal Workers Union.

But Amy Sentell of the Chattanooga Area Local, which includes a Remote Encoding Center with hundreds of TEs, called the resolution "a step in the wrong direction. TEs are hard to organize; they are hard to maintain as members. They have few rights, although they have some.

"We need to move forward towards

getting rid of TEs, towards having all full-time employees," she said.

President William Burrus reminded delegates that defeating the resolution would not establish an all-career workforce; it would simply maintain the status quo. He also noted that the National Association of Letter Carriers negotiated the elimination of casuals in favor of TEs, and he expressed confidence that the APWU could do the same if delegates supported the concept.

In other action on the second day of the 19th Biennial Convention, the



The "AGAINST's" carried this vote.

delegates began consideration of Clerk Craft Committee resolutions and heard a report by the APWU Health Plan Committee.

# Pro-Worker U.S. Reps to APWU: 'Yes We Can! Yes We Can! Yes We Can!'

On convention eve, three pro-labor U.S. Representatives assured APWU members that postal workers have a historic opportunity to help elect a president who will end the years of economic decline that have devastated the nation's working families.

Congresswoman Shelley Berkley (D-NV) said she was proud to come from a union family and represent "a union town," Las Vegas, on Capitol Hill. She reminded delegates of the many challenges the nation faces – from a faltering economy to healthcare, housing, energy, and international crises – and said that George W. Bush has been the "worst president ever" as far as those working families are concerned.

The Bush Administration, she said, has engaged in a "systematic undermining of the labor movement in this country. With enough effort, however, we will emerge stronger than ever." She delivered a rousing call for APWU members to help put Barack Obama in the White House, prompting the first of several "Yes We Can!" chants Sunday night.

Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL) fondly recalled his days working as a clerk in the Chicago Post Office and added that as chairman of the House panel that oversees the Postal Service, "I'm right where I ought to be."

"But we've got to watch out for the operation of the Postal Service," he cautioned. "They're always trying to

**In an address during Monday's convention proceedings, Rep. William Lacy Clay (D-MO) echoed Sunday's speakers in calling for "a vote for Obama and a vote for change." Clay also expressed his support for vote-by-mail legislation, noting that it is less expensive and reduces voter intimidation.**



Shelley Berkley



Danny Davis



Neil Abercrombie

downsize, privatize, and outsource, so we've got lots of problems to solve."

"We have an administration that believes that unions have gotten too powerful," he added, saying that he hopes for a new administration with the vision and ability to "look at big problems and seek real solutions."

"We need leadership that knows you can't keep giving great big tax breaks to the wealthiest one percent of the population and believe that it's going to jumpstart the economy." Union members, he said, can't just sit back and watch. "We must fight ... for a new vision, a new hope, a new opportunity for America: Barack Obama for President!"

"Yes we can!" chanted the delegates.

Last – but certainly not least – was a real barn-burner of a speech from Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-HI), who delivered a message (in his usual fiery fashion) about how important it is for working people across the country to wrest control of the government.

He laid down a challenge for the APWU: "Stand up for your rights," he said, "and for the rights of every single working family in the country that needs your help.

"This is about working

people all across this country," he said. "I want you to go back to your locals; I want you to leave here with a vow that you're going to speak to every single working man and woman in every local across this country, and that you're going to get to every retiree, and their

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**"We're going to put working people back in charge of this country when we elect Barack Obama in November."**

**– Rep. Neil Abercrombie**

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families all across this country, and you tell them you're going to register, and you're going to vote, and you're going to do the right thing, and we're going to put working people back in charge of this country, when we elect Barack Obama in November.

"If you love your families, if you love your country," he said, "then let's go out of here tonight determined that when the first Tuesday in November comes, that we're going to have the first president of the 21st century to lead us to prosperity, justice and opportunity for all: Barack Obama, Aloha!

"Yes we can!" chanted the delegates.

# A Salute to Olympian Fund-Raising Feats



COPA Night took on a sporting flavor this convention, with delegates competing to see who could have the most fun. Delegates who contributed at least \$100 in 2008 (or in 2007) received two tickets to the always-popular event. APWU President William Burrus recognized San Francisco Region Clerk Division NBA Shirley Taylor and Miami Area Local President Wilhelmina Ford as the union's top contributors to COPA since the last convention.

## COPA NIGHT



### Raffle Winners

Two COPA raffle drawings are being held each day of the convention. Only APWU members who have given at least \$25 to COPA this year, or who are making recurring contributions are eligible to win.

The four winners on Monday and Tuesday were: Robert A. Hall (Montgomery Alabama Area Local), Dwight Slaikeu (Waterloo Iowa Local), Frederic White (Cleveland Area Local Retiree Chapter), and William S. Williams (Terre Haute Area Local). Each winner was awarded 100,000 American Express points.



# APWU an 'Affiliation-Rate' Success Story

The APWU is an AFL-CIO success story, said Secretary-Treasurer Terry Stapleton in a report to convention delegates on the APWU effort to boost local and state organizations' participation in the labor federation's state, local, and central labor councils (CLCs).

"We have increased our affiliation numbers far and above any international union," Stapleton said. "In the United States, we have been the biggest success story."

Only 29 percent of the union's 1,200 locals were members of AFL-CIO state federations in 2006, Stapleton said, when the APWU issued a call to support the AFL-CIO political action efforts,

Not only has that number risen to 41 percent in 2008, but the affiliation rate has climbed to 81 percent for locals with



**More than 100 delegates stayed late Monday to hear the report on AFL-CIO affiliation.**

more than 1,000 members; 92 percent for locals with 500 to 999 members; 81 percent for locals with 100 to 499 members; and 83 percent for locals with more than 100 members.

"That my, friends, is having an impact on the labor movement." The APWU, Stapleton said, is being recognized

throughout the country as a leader among unions fighting for change.

Stapleton gave special recognition to the Arizona and Wisconsin APWU locals, because all of their locals are now affiliated. He also commended APWU leadership in Florida and Texas, where increased participation has meant automatic membership on state-federation executive boards.

"We can make sure that this next election is another success story through our stronger participation in Labor 2008," Stapleton said, referring to the AFL-CIO's political grassroots action program. "We have an opportunity to help elect Barack Obama, as well as more legislators who will put working families ahead of Wall Street."

## Panelists Agree: Privatization a Worldwide Threat

Corporate power, the driving force behind globalization, is leading governments to privatize postal and other public services, a panel of union experts warned several hundred delegates Tuesday at an International Labor Forum.

"Globalization hurts workers everywhere," said Denis Lemelin, National President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. "It drives down wages, along with benefits. It's the race to the bottom, and the only way to stop it is to unite to fight for decent jobs everywhere in the world."

Dave Ward, Deputy General Secretary of U.K.'s Communications Workers Union, recounted the disastrous shift to a privatized postal system there. Universal mail service for British consumers has been undermined, while 50 private-mail companies are "cherry picking" the most profitable Royal Mail services.

Union officials from Spain and Union Network International also joined in the wide-ranging discussion about the best strategies for combatting corporate efforts to enter into trade agreements that hurt workers.



**Denis Lemelin, Dave Ward, and Nicole Lee, Executive Director of the TransAfrica Forum, were among panelists at the International Labor Forum on Tuesday.**

## Retirees Reunion

APWU conventions offer long-time union activists a chance to reunite and reminisce. Cleveland Area Local retiree Alfred Parker, right, greets Phoenix Metro Area Local retiree Jay Arrieta at the APWU Retirees Conference.



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### Credentials Committee

As presented by Chairperson Geneva Greenlee of the Indiana APWU, the preliminary report of the APWU Credentials Committee for Tuesday, Aug. 19, is as follows:

The 19th Biennial Convention's 3,213 delegates represent 415 locals, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Also in attendance are 85 national officers and five Retirees Department delegates.