

APWU NEWS

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO



WILLIAM BURRUS, President MYKE REID, Editor

Delegates Protest Consolidation

Nationwide Deterioration in Service Spurs Rally at Post Office

Nearly 3,000 blue T-shirt-clad APWU union members sent a strong and unified message to the Postal Service Thursday, as they surrounded what used to be the Philadelphia Processing & Distribution Center at a rally protesting failing service and mismanaged network realignment programs.

“APWU representatives from every section of the United States of America stand with us,” President William Burrus told the wall of blue lined up along busy Market Street. “And our mission is to ‘Save Our Service!’ We must save the service we provide to the American public.”

Delegates filed out of the convention hall for a 10-minute bus ride to the once-bustling Processing and Distribution Center, which now is mostly empty – except for limited services and the offices of postal managers.

The USPS began moving the city’s main mail-processing operation late last year. The new facility, six miles from



APWU delegates stand strong Thursday during a boisterous hour-long rally at a Philadelphia postal facility.

Center City Philadelphia, became fully operational on Memorial Day and has become symbolic of the Postal Service’s troubled network-realignment plan.

“The service clearly has deteriorated here,” said Harmon Elliott, president of the Philadelphia Area Local. He noted that it is not unusual for intra-city mail to take 7 to 10 days to arrive. “The reason they gave us for excessing our jobs was because we didn’t have any work. Then, when service falls apart, they add insult to injury by bringing in casuals.”

Other speakers included John Dukes, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council 2, which represents postal police. “We know what you’re going through with consolidation,” Dukes said. Because of widespread cut-backs in law enforcement, Dukes said, “We have difficulty protecting your right

to go to work. Management isn’t thinking about security – not for its workers or its patrons.”

Other labor leaders who showed support were: Patrick Eiding, president of the Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO; Thomas Paine Cronin of AFSCME District Council 47; Mickey Robinson, of the Laborers International Union, Michael Daniels, a local Laborers official, and a contingent of international visitors from communications unions.

Also addressing the rally was Rep. Chaka Fattah (D),

a six-term congressman who represents part of Philadelphia and some northern suburbs. “All of labor needs to stand united,” Fattah said. “We have to work together to save the jobs of working people in this country. And you have friends in Congress who are going to stand with you in solidarity.”



Harmon Elliott



Rep. Chaka Fattah addresses the rally.

Convention Approves National Day Of Protest Against Consolidation

Following Thursday's spirited rally at a Philadelphia post office, delegates to the union's 18th Biennial Convention transposed the regular order of business to approve a measure calling for a nationwide demonstration against consolidation.

Delegates approved an amendment to Resolution #225, "that the National Executive Board support and direct the membership to participate in a national day of informational picketing at post offices nationwide."

The coordinated rallies are to be held on a date no later than mid-October 2006.

The resolution also urges the union and its allies to demand, well in advance of any final decision, that the Postal Service make public all information underlying consolidation, including the effect on service to the public and on jobs. The USPS will be urged to provide alleged cost savings, along with details on how the data was obtained.

The motion also demands that affected communities, citizens, businesses, and employees be given a full opportunity to provide testimony, ask relevant questions, and receive detailed information before any consolidation decision is made.

The resolution says that the APWU will continue to oppose the outsourcing and privatization of postal work that is accomplished through excessive discounts for presorting mail.

Resolution #225 was the first Formal Resolution to be considered by the national convention. Other Formal Resolutions will go before the assembly on the 2006 convention's final day.

Among other issues, these resolutions call for stepped-up participation in the "Killer Coke" campaign, a boycott of Wal-Mart, and "that all U.S. forces be withdrawn and all U.S. military presence in Iraq be ended."



"The Postal Service says consolidation is a question of dollars and cents. ... But it's very clear: Consolidation is costing dollars and it's a no-sense issue."

– Cliff Guffey



"Standing here in front of the Postal Service, we are on familiar ground. And when we think about the Postal Service as an institution that connects and unites our great country, we are standing on common ground. And in the fight to preserve mail service, we're standing on a battleground."

– Greg Bell



"Gathering here today we have sent the Postal Service a message: This is what unionism is about! This is what solidarity is about! This is what brotherhood and sisterhood is about! We're going to send a message to the Postal Service and members of Congress. Are American postal workers behind Bill Burrus? You bet we are!"

– Terry Stapleton

Constitution Committee Wraps Up Work

The Constitution Committee finished up its business Thursday, with all of its recommendations on the convention's fourth day ratified by the delegates.

A resolution seeking automatic dues increases on cost-of-living raises, which the committee opposed, was vigorously debated; the resolution was withdrawn without a vote.

Linda Turney, the committee chair, said that among the 22 resolutions presented, she was most gratified by the delegates' decision on Wednesday to enact an amendment that requires locals to belong to their state organizations.

"This issue has been placed before the convention in the past and was rejected," she said. "This time the assembly realized they cannot sit at the table if they don't pay their dues.



The Constitution Committee, chaired by Linda Turney, presented 22 resolutions.

"Requiring locals to be members of the state organizations is a symbol of 'all for one and one for all.' It requires that large locals assist MALs [Members-at-Large] and the smaller locals that otherwise would not have representation or a voice in the organization," she said.

Turney also praised the decision to give state retiree chapters 20 percent of the national dues once half or more of the state retiree members have been organized into local chapters. "This will assist the retirees in their efforts to organize," she said.

In a follow-up to one of the more contentious issues from the previous day's deliberations, the National Executive Board ratified a motion by union President William Burrus that the national union pay 50 percent of the costs for APWU locals to affiliate with their local AFL-CIO federations. On Wednesday, delegates rejected a proposal that would have required the national union to pay for full affiliation of APWU members in their state AFL-CIO organizations, in addition to continuing to pay national dues.

Auxiliary Puts Spotlight on Community Service

In a ceremony this morning, the Auxiliary to the American Postal Workers Union will present a check and generous quantities of useful donated items to Philadelphia-based Women Against Abuse, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides assistance to victims of domestic violence and their children.

"Since early this year, we've been collecting clothing, shoes, school supplies, and personal hygiene items," said Auxiliary Human Relations Committee coordinator Mary Lois Clayson. Along with bushels of hotel soaps and

shampoos, "We've collected \$3,000 for the victims' center during convention week," she said. That amount will be supplemented by as much as \$2,000 earmarked for the center before the gathering in Philadelphia.

The Auxiliary, a grassroots organization of union members' families and friends, is holding its own national convention this week. The contribution to Women Against Abuse is part of the Auxiliary/APWU Human Relations Department "Two-Can-Do" project.

The project was co-coordinated by Auxiliary members Chris Benton,



Doris Poland, president of the APWU Auxiliary, addresses a session of the affiliate's national convention.

Marilyn Braunstein, Barbara Kinter, Valerie Price, and Diane Reyna.



Exhibit Row

Union goods and services have been on display in the exhibit area off the main convention hall. Delegates cruise the displays, stopping to ponder the value-added benefits of membership, to shop, or to check up on their basic health and welfare.

Tradition: Delegates Love a Parade



Managing to show pride in their states without taking the state of their appearances too seriously, APWU delegates wound down last night by walking the candy-bedecked line during the Parade of States. Per custom, conventioners' costumes were plentiful and fanciful.



ABA's Top Officers Installed

Recently elected officers of the Accident Benefit Association were sworn in Wednesday by President William Burrus, who called the ABA "one of the most important arms of the American Postal Workers Union."

Michael B. Ganino Jr. is the ABA's new president; John E. Durben was re-elected vice president; James McCarthy is the new national director; and Clarence LaFargue Jr., is the new assistant national director.

Area directors are Moe Lepore, Wayne Maurer, Larry D. Young, Gene Nichols, Lynn Pallas-Barber, Terry A. Grant, Richard Makarewicz, Gary Neuharth, and Edward J. Brennan. At-Large directors are



ABA directors were sworn in at the convention on Wednesday, including, from left, James McCarthy, Moe Lepore, Michael Ganino, and Thomas Hartos.

Samuel Anderson, Jenny L., Gust, Thomas Hartos, and Eugene C. Johnson.

The "APW-ABA" is a members-only disability insurance benefit.

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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 Thursday, Aug. 17, is as follows:

The 18th Biennial Convention's 2,888 delegates represent 419 locals, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Also in attendance are 84 national officers and four Retirees Department delegates.