

COLORADO MAIL HANDLER NEWS LOCAL 321

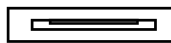
“SERVING THE STATE OF COLORADO”



**NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS
UNION—A DIVISION OF THE LABORERS’
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF
NORTH AMERICA, AFL-CIO**

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**In memory of those who
lost their lives because of
the terrorist attacks Sep-
tember 11, 2001. Our sym-
pathy and prayers are with
the families.**

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 3 AUTUMN 2001
DON GONZALES—*EDITOR*

From the President Desk

At such a difficult time in our country, and more specifically within the Postal Service, it is hard to find or decide what to write about, as it seems moderately insignificant in comparison. For this reason I will attempt to cover a variety issues relevant to your Local Union.

Finances of Local 321 continue to be quite good. I assume Jeff Morgan, Treasurer Local 321 would be writing an article covering finances but as I write this article he is at the hospital awaiting the delivery of his first child, and we should all wish him well. Anyway back to finances, it would appear by year’s end we will be under budget by approximately \$80,000.00. Many factors affect the finances of our Local both good and bad. Factors which affect our Local income are by far the most significant and discussed further are:

1. **Membership** – The percentage of membership for our Local continues to run slightly over 90% and is excellent in comparison to other Locals around the country, and we continue to work towards improving this number. Our membership across the state rose from about 850 in 1993 to a high of 1265 members in 1998. We currently has fallen back to 1050 members. The decline is related to reductions in overall staffing nation-wide and more directly

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HOW MUCH DOES THE PO CARE?

Anthrax deaths and infestations are now a reality in our workplace. Please be cautious. Report any suspicious packages or letters immediately. We all know that in the past, suspicious packages were mainly confined to vibrating boxes, which usually meant that you called your boss who then said it was safe and demonstrated how safe it was by handling the package. Luckily no one was hurt by this blatant disregard for possible danger. But before September 11, acts of violence were few and far between and terrorist actions against Americans were virtually unheard of, especially here in the States.

Now those days are long gone, and the media is constantly reminding us of this fact. There are endless hours of television, and news shows devoted to anthrax. The newspapers and magazines are full of stories about anthrax and remind us to be “chemically aware”.

Is it really that bad out there? Or in this age of telecommunications and instant access, is the media “sensationalizing” the anthrax issue? Remember, they are in the ratings business and the more people who watch their shows, the more they can charge advertisers. I know from first hand experience of two occasions where the media turned the facts around to get a juicier story. **I certainly believe the anthrax is real, but I also believe the media is playing into the terrorists hands. How? The term terrorism means to install fear and disrupt**

normal everyday life. Is this happening? Sure it is and if we let it happen the idiots win. I believe the media plays this one to the hilt and more than likely they sensationalize when the story isn’t as juicy as it should be. As I said before, the media has been known to exaggerate.

The first time I saw this happen was when I was PTA President at an elementary school a couple years ago. I was at the school one day when a little girl came into the school office about an hour after school let out. She said a stranger had asked her to get in his van. She did the right thing and came into the school. The school called the police to report the incident.

When the police came, so did one of the local TV channels. (I assume they were scanning the police frequencies.) Anyway, when the news report aired the story was that a man had exposed himself and attempted to assault the child. They -the media-took big liberties with the truth.

Another time I was interviewed regarding the cruising in my neighborhood. In the interview I slammed the police for not letting me into my own neighborhood when the cruisers were out. When the story aired, they reduced my comments to make it sound like the cruisers were my big problem and that was not the intent of the interview.

Remember, don’t believe everything you hear or read and its probably a good idea to not dwell on the negativity surrounding the terrorist acts, as life should, and will, go on. **BUT**

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...”Or in this age of telecommunications and instant access, is the media “sensationalizing” the anthrax issue?...”

Time & Attendance Collection System

The postal service is in the process of shifting to a new Time & Attendance Collection System. You may have heard it referred to as TACS. During a recent labor management meeting, the postal service touted TACS as flawless – further asserting the system would be inconspicuous and not discernable. In fact, management questioned why the union would even bother wasting time discussing something so inconsequential.

Well the proof is in the pudding. TACS is far from flawless. It is highly prone to human error and accounting inconsistencies. Many mail handlers have had problems, errors and shortages since TACS was implemented. In the GMF, during routine system maintenance several clocks were inadvertently shifted to Eastern Standard Time. This resulted in four days of clock ring errors for every single employee that used one of the four effected clocks. Many employees were shorted two or four hours per shift while others were equally overpaid.

Management aggressively pursued the overpayments while the shortages received a cursory review at best. A grievance with extensive clock ring reviews determined 14 mail handlers were underpaid 50 hours. Management claimed the shortages were undetectable yet the union was able to easily identify the errors. Had the shoe been on the other foot, your employer would have called this stealing.

The point of the article: Keep your own written records. Take the time to record your work hours, your overtime hours, what operation you worked and who you worked for and scrutinize every paycheck for errors. Some managers have taken the position that an underpayment does not exist until you bring it to

their attention (even if they know it occurred). This mentality is morally sickening, but then again with a predicted deficit of 1.65 billion dollars, your supervisors are still getting their bonuses.

In Unity,

Michael J Hora
VP 321



*Just another case of the inmates
running the asylum!*

COLORADO MAIL HANDLER NEWS IS PUBLISHED FOR THE DUES PAYING MEMBERSHIP OF LOCAL 321 OF THE NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION.

ANY MEMBER MAY SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF LOCAL 321 RETAINS THE RIGHT TO FINAL APPROVAL OF ALL SUBMISSIONS. SOME ARTICLES CONTAIN EDITORIAL COMMENT WHICH IS THE OPINION OF THE AUTHOR AND NOT NECESSARILY LOCAL 321.

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DO BE CAREFUL. REPORT SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND TAKE WHATEVER PRECAUTIONS MAKE YOU FEEL SAFE AT WORK AND HOME.

I don't think that life in America will ever be quite the same. I had to fly to the Mail Handler Benefit Plan Seminar on October 3. The security at the airports was overwhelming. All of the parking close to the terminal has been barricaded so no one can drive up close. Cars entering the close-in parking lot were thoroughly searched by police. Upon entering the terminal, I watched as suitcase contents were randomly taken apart and scrutinized. After walking through the metal detector, some travelers were double checked with a hand held metal detector. Random people were also hand frisked.

After finally getting through the security checkpoints, it was eerie being on the trains and concourses as they were relatively empty. There were certainly travelers, but because of the heightened security, only ticketed passengers are allowed on the trains and concourses. This certainly has to be a financial nightmare for those businesses which are located on the concourses.

Finally, when getting on the plane, the stewardess was randomly checking passengers with a hand held metal detector. Remember, this is only one way, I still had the return trip to get through.

Personally, I refuse to live my life in fear of what may or may not happen to me. If I were in the buildings at this point in time, I am not sure I would want to wear a mask, but that is

my choice and probably stems from claustrophobia more than disregard for personal safety. I encourage those of you who want the masks and gloves to use them freely and properly. It is our employers obligation to provide a safe working place and right now, they have a new enemy to fight to meet this goal. Hopefully, things will get better. I sincerely hope not a single person is harmed in the future.

On a different note, "Harassment techniques have now permeated the BMC in the form of attendance control." This was the subject of an article by Brother John Meding a

... "Tell them if the absence meets the criteria, then they have the right to mark the absence as FMLA..."

couple of newsletters ago and I'd like to reiterate a couple of points. We are officially numbers and have lost one of the last aspects of humanitarianism left at the workplace. Why do we have supervisors anyway? If you explain to your supervisor why you were unable to attend work, you're wasting your breath. Attendance control has taken over that function and

believe me, the people they put in charge of your attendance are there to do one thing, CONTROL YOUR ATTENDANCE--which basically means if you need time off, no matter how legitimate, expect maximum harassment. We have printed in this newsletter before your obligations when calling in to work. You do not need to subject yourself to the third degree interrogation techniques of Attendance Control.

Tell them your name, pay location, how long you're going to be off and tell them you're sick or that it is an emergency situation.. They're going to ask for documentation

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INSTALLATION OVERTIME

Many questions have surfaced regarding your overtime rights. As you may recall over the past two Christmas-quarters, casuals were able to work all the overtime they desired while GMF OTDL volunteers were proportionately held to very little. The union demanded a fix to this problem by initiating several grievances. The issue was set for arbitration, the case was heard and the union prevailed, but problems never go away forever. In the 4TH quarter of 2000, this issue returned and again was challenged through the grievance process. This time the postal service agreed to resolve and settle the case without the formality of a hearing.

Frankly, the postal service had very little choice but to bail on the hearing, you see – they

have already lost this case once and it would prove difficult to explain to an arbitrator why his or her last decision was ignored. Jeff Morgan was the advocate for our case in which the arbitrator ruled that installation-wide (MPA) overtime must be made available to those on the quarterly (GMF installation) OTDL. In two independent cases over the past two years, the postal service paid out nearly \$200,000.00 in casual OT bypass money to Denver P&DC mail handlers. We are not wrong to demand a fix – even if it does not come quickly.

That moves us to where we are today: installation overtime. Frankly, I am not convinced the postal service and local managers are making a sincere effort to make the OTDL work. I believe they do not support it and will do whatever it takes to make it miserable on everyone. This includes posting the overtime notification list after you have left the building. Secondly, I understand that not all mail

handlers want to participate in such (non-facility) overtime calls. Given the current unlimited levels of sustained overtime, it is easy to forget past years OTDL by-pass complaints. Now that our overtime has returned to levels of excess, previous years complaints and problems seem insignificant.

We have a quandary. Some mail handlers are very pleased with the possibility of an overtime opportunity in another facility. Some look at it as an opportunity to put it some time with old friends and break up the monotony of in-section overtime and as I said, others want nothing to do with it. This non-facility overtime “opportunity” has proven to be the exception rather the rule. In fact, a recent analysis of seven days of overtime throughout all

three tours demonstrated that only about 10% of the full-tour overtime calls were for another facility.

Here is the point;

Article 8 of our National Agreement addresses overtime procedures. Additional provisions for local memorandum of understanding (LMOU) discussions and local overtime methods are provided for in article 30. Rest assured, this issue of installation/ facility, and section overtime will be significant during the upcoming LMOU talks. If you have suggestions addressing the procedures for overtime calls, please take the time to become involved. Submit your recommendations to your installation representative or myself. Read article VIII of the LMOU, draft your change and recommendation(s) and support your opinion with a brief narrative. As a member of the LMOU negotiating committee, I would be happy to receive your input.

In Unity,
Michael J Hora
Vice President

...”Frankly, the postal service had very little choice but to bail on the hearing”...

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anyway, so be prepared to go to the doctor, or provide documentation for the emergency.

Don't tell them it is FMLA. It is up to them to determine the if the absence qualifies for FMLA. Tell them if the absence meets the criteria, then they have the right to mark the absence as FMLA. Tell them they are free to send a packet if they feel the absence qualifies, but that you are under no obligation as an employee to fill out the packet.

On the flip side, expect the Attendance Control to now issue your due process and subsequent discipline. Once again, supervisors have been removed from the process. Attendance Control has a pre-determined set of questions they ask each employee. There is no consideration of the answers given, so in reality, it becomes a kangaroo court. This issue has been appealed to the National level for an answer to the question if these Attendance Control personnel have the authority to do what they are doing. Until we get a hearing on the issue, expect maximum harassment.

Don Gonzales
 Technical Asst
 Local 321

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the reduction in Mail Handlers staffing within our Local. With little exception the decline has resulted within the P&DC and the BMC. This is partially contributed to the antics of Mr. Sam Ruden during his miserable tenure at the P&DC and in part tied to losses in revenue of the Postal Service. But probably the largest contributing factor has been the multitude of hiring freezes and withholdings over our Area. In recent months the local managers have been to moving to rectify this problem

(primarily focusing on resolution around the first of the year when the unlimited casual cap expires), indicating that the hiring freeze is not being lifted but that there are a considerable amount of extra clerks in the area and that they would be excessing them over to the Mail Handler craft. Notice was provided to the APWU several months ago over this anticipated movement as is required. Unfortunately where things ultimately end up is yet to be seen, especially with the recent events in our country.

2. Health Plan Membership – In 1996, 1997, 1998 & 1999 we lost almost 800 associate members in total, mostly because of substantial increases in premiums. In 2000 things turned around a little. We saw open season increases in membership of a little more than 200 associates. It is anticipated that this open season should be good with Aetna pulling out of Colorado and Pacific Care almost doubling their premium, possibly signally their eventual demise as well. Obviously concerns exist that Federal employees may not make a very good showing during open season with all that is going on.

Resolving issues within the facilities before they get very far is beginning to occur with more frequency. Don Gonzales (focusing more on smaller offices) and myself (focusing more on the larger offices) have been making considerable headway with issues before they result in major problems and substantial grievances. It would be impossible to review all of the items dealt with but in just the last couple of weeks we have been instrumental in resolving (barring follow-ups where compliance/commitments are not kept) the following issues, which are of significance:

- Stopping management from inappropriate

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- ately handling bids following the excessing in Boulder.
- Returning PTF's at the BMC to an 8-hour schedule from the harassing 7.5 hours schedule previously being provided them by management.
- Returning Mail Handlers to sweeping duties on the SPBS's within the BMC.
- Keeping management from interfering with employees enjoying the balance of their vacation if they happen to work on a given day of that vacation within the P&DC.
- Ensuring that management will honor employee's requests for vacant weeks during the bid annual period as long as they are requested at least 7 days in advance and it does not exceed the negotiated percentage of employees to be allowed off (i.e.: 15%) within the P&DC.
- Returning to the employees the right to use sick leave saver passes during holiday weeks (excluding the three-day posting period of a given holiday).
- Ensured that a couple of select supervisors who chose not to take a report of possible anthrax serious were dealt with by their superiors (still not sure of action taken yet).
- Resolution of a couple removal actions, returning the employees to work.
- Ensuring that the recent collection of phone numbers and addresses will not be utilized by attendance control or immediate supervisors hopefully eliminate a fur-

- ther means of harassing employees.
- Ensuring that an abusive 204-B at the AMC is either controlled or dealt with and hopefully eliminating future abuse on employees.
- Not to mention the fielding of dozens of calls from the various offices and members. I have never really thought about it but the average call (including making specific manual references, recommendations, ensuring the concerns have been covered thoroughly and a quick follow-up with the related office probably takes between 5 to 15 minutes each at a minimum. Obviously with more complex issues such as injury compensation questions, calls sometimes

take in excess of an hour and sometimes considerably longer.

It should be noted that these issues and the ultimate results would not be possible without the assistance and involvement of the Union representatives and

...”In that case the court supported that a Postal employee had a right to personally sue his individual supervisor for abuse of his FMLA

officers within the respective facilities. With some exception we (Mail Handler Union Representatives) have begun to function much more as a team and with a more constant level of communication. Rather than feeling as though we are all going in our own direction we now seem to be getting more on the same page with issues.

Additionally research is being conducted on several issues falling under the jurisdiction of Merit System Protection Board and/or the Department of Labor.

- Under the Department of Labor, with most of the original FMLA problem areas re-

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solved (at least in principle but not fully in practice and unfortunately not all in our favor) we are now following up on a case decided in the US District Court in northern Kentucky. In that case the court supported that a Postal employee had a right to personally sue his individual supervisor for abuse of his FMLA rights. The Postal Services right to seek appeal of that decision is nearing its end and no appeal has been filed. Once their time expires and no appeal is processed our Local will be soliciting employees who have legitimate

FMLA problems with one of the FMLA coordinators. The intent is to select the best case or two per coordinator and move to sue the individual coordinators or possibly attendance control personnel (understanding if the employee prevails and

legal fees are reimbursed they will be repaid to the Local as well some cap per case will have to be established). It is believed that with the winning of a couple of these cases filed directly against the coordinators much of the harassing tactics will be eliminated and employees will be able to use the benefits afforded them under the act.

- Under the Merit System Protection Board (an avenue available to veterans preference employees) several issues are being researched to allow us to better provide guidance to employees and hopefully ensure the right issues are taken into the right form for maximum representation for resolution on the employee's behalf. Current issue include denial of light duty, reduction in force/ downgrade of an em-

ployee from Level 5 work to level 4 work as well as a couple of discipline issues (i.e. attendance and performance).

Our National Agreement status continues to be quite important to all of us and movement has been pathetically slow. The AWPU arbitration hearings are current set to conclude on November 17, 2001. It is anticipated that the decision from that case will be released sometime during December. Hopefully arbitration hearing for the Mail Handler agreement will begin sometime within the next two months. Depending on how the schedule for

...”Anthrax has become a Postal Nightmare, leaving several workers dead numerous others hospitalized and thousands taking various antibiotics...”

those hearings is established it will probably take another 3 to 4 months to ultimately get a decision.

Clearly I believe that strong direction and inference will come from APWU decision. I assume it is even possible,

provided the APWU decision is a good one, that the parties could still reach agreement prior to the conclusion of the arbitration hearing

Anthrax has become a Postal Nightmare, leaving several workers dead numerous others hospitalized and thousands taking various antibiotics. I can really share no new information on the subject as management is distributing this information as fast as they receive it. Even though we have our selective local management idiots failing to follow the directions given to them, I must admit that for the most part, management is trying to keep everyone informed and to respond appropriately to incidences that occur. Numerous meetings are being held almost daily with the Union's both

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nationally as well as Locally. Obviously there remain a lot of unanswered questions but even those who are supposed to know about anthrax really don't.

A couple of days ago several local union officials from Postal Unions met with Congressman Mark Udall to address our concerns. Don Gonzales and I were present on behalf of the Mail Handlers Union. He was encouraged to support further funding from Washington's government coffers to assist the Postal Service in it considerable need for security measures for it employees and customers. He was encouraged to make an issue of the fact that our service is hurting in part because our elected politicians choose not to receive and open their own mail, sending a very negative message to our customers. He was also encouraged to make efforts develop a specific protocol to be followed when positive results from anthrax testing are found (closure for decontamination, alternative work locations and other things of this nature).

In recent days the Postal Service has decided to run random tests around the country with the Denver P&DC being part of that list. A date for testing has not been set, but it is hoped when tested the results are something that can set all of us at ease just a little. Unfortunately these tests are conducted by people in full dress moon suits (bio-hazardous material suits) and just their presence will bring unease.

In the meantime the Postal Service is attempting - at their expense - to ensure all employees have flu shot, thus basically eliminating flu symptoms so employees can better asses the issue if one becomes sick. They will provide either shots or reimburse co-pays to each and every employee. Masks (allegedly

filtering over 95 percent of possible particles in the air) and rubber gloves are available to all employees who desire to use them.

Don't let management or your fellow workers play down the importance which you may personally place on these items; they are yours to use and may ultimately protect you. The Postal Service is also in the process of obtaining filter cartridge respirators (allegedly reducing 99.7 percent of the dust particles from the air). It is intended to only provide these to employees such as machine operators who are running machines that can cause germs to become jarred from envelopes.

The Union, with management's cooperation, is reviewing incident logs and how those incidents were handled, on a very frequent basis, thus attempting to ensure a safe work place.

...”In recent days the Postal Service has decided to run random tests around the country with the Denver P&DC being part of that list”...

I have no good answers on the issue of anthrax other than to say, we appreciate everyone's calmness and cooperation in such troubled times. I would not even begin to try and tell everyone to relax or to not over react when our

fellow workers in New York and DC continue to fall ill or worse. I would encourage that we all report suspicious mail. I also would encourage all members who are confronted with management mishandling of these incidents to bring them to the Union's attention immediately.

The grievance process is working well and has resulted in substantial remedies being paid out over the last year . Our local modified Step 3 process provides us with the right to meet locally on all Colorado case and continues to result in a sustained rate of about 50%

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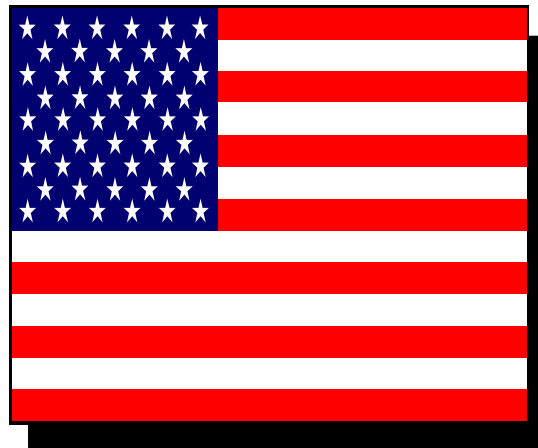
(generally much higher than other step 3 meetings held regionally. We also have the added benefit (in most cases) of having our cases met on and decided at step 3 within a month or two while other Locals still struggle with getting decisions sometime 6 months or more after they were appealed.

Our arbitration docket remains fairly clean with only a little over a dozen cases currently pending arbitrations. More and more frequently we are getting management to settle cases once appealed to arbitration. This is a refreshing change from the past. This comes from management's somewhat renewed willingness to settle and the improvement in the quality of grievances we generate.

Christmas, what is my Local doing for us for Christmas you ask. After various discussions among the Executive Board and with feedback from some of the members we have decided not to give away gift certificates (sorry). However, we have decided that for Christmas we will be issuing pocket calendars, hats with our Logo and the American flag displayed as well as a retractable badge holder to our members. We would appreciate feedback on this issue over the next year to better help us decided what we could do for you in the future.

David E Ross

I pledge allegiance
to the Flag of the
United States of
America and to the
Republic for which
it stands, one nation
under God, indivisi-
ble, with liberty and
justice for all.



**OCTOBER 2001 SAMLU
SANTA MONICA CALIFORNIA**

The second semi-annual meetings of the local unions (SAMLU) for 2001 began under an umbrella of solemn remembrance with silent prayer for the postal employees affected by the recent anthrax mailings. As I am sure you know, several employees have died; others are at various stages of exposure and are now undergoing treatment for anthrax. President Billy Quinn and Brother William Flynn updated the local union representatives on this matter.

The postmaster general has offered to the unions his commitment to workplace safety with an ongoing and fortified defense to recent terrorism mailings. As of October 25, 2001 some 11,000 postal employees are taking the antibiotic Cipro. This drug is a strong antibiotic that is initially prescribed (upon suspected anthrax exposure) for ten days. Follow-up treatment plans of 60 additional days are an option with additional medical checks as needed.

Currently, two east-coast postal facilities are locked-down and considered crime scenes under the control of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Twenty-four other buildings are now being examined with an aggressive plan to check every major processing plant in the country – working from east to west.

Several union presidents raised concerns about the lack of aggressive intervention from the USPS when anthrax first surfaced. It seems that everyone involved can agree; early mistakes were made. It appears that the postal service requested early involvement from the Center for Disease Control, but these efforts were initially dis-

suaed. President Quinn advised the SAMLU attendees that the postal service then sought out and secured an independent analysis of the facilities in question. The initially testing proved negative, however subsequent testing confirmed anthrax exposure. We can debate the postal services' handling of the anthrax exposures until we are blue in the face, but it is now time to take affirmative preventive measures.

In response to union's concerns, our employer is making several changes to improve workplace safety. As you probably know by now, the postal service has updated the glove policy. The postal service has purchased thousands of rubber gloves for (optional) employee use. These rubber

...”Currently, two east-coast postal facilities are locked-down and considered crime scenes under the control of the Federal Bureau of Investigation...”

gloves are better and safer than the previously issued latex gloves. The rubber gloves are also less likely to trigger an allergic reaction to many users. If they are not immediately available, please fol-

low-up with your supervisor, safety representative and union representatives to ensure they are ordered and accessible as soon as possible.

Another safety measure being implemented addresses protection from anthrax inhalation contamination; both M-95 (cloth-like) masks and P-100 cartridge masks will be made available to those on the floor soon. The postal service will make the P-100 cartridge type masks available to operators of advanced facer canceller machines (AFCS) and other similar machinery. It may take some time for these P-100 masks to reach the floor.

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In additional to personal safety measures, the union has learned of certain mail-flow sanitation measures under consideration. The postal service has halted the use of pressured air for cleaning automated machinery. Vacuums will now be used for this preventative maintenance measure. The agency is also looking into other safeguards. Some method of sanitizing the “mail-flow” must be on hand. The agency is attempting to irradiate the mail at induction before the 010 operation. We are told this irradiation process will kill the anthrax bacteria, in essence sanitizing the mail flow from that point forward. Other safety precautions are being scrutinized, modified and enacted on a daily basis. We will make every effort to ensure that you are kept informed.

Mark Gardner spoke on behalf of the Contract Administration Department (CAD) regarding changes to the union’s MAILES (online arbitration)

database. Brother Gardner and the CAD – through a third party contractor have overhauled our national on-line arbitration database system. Brother Gardner demonstrated highlights and received questions about the new MAILES database. The new system will become available by mid-November and comes with several changes and advances, one of which being a new and detailed search tool. The new program will allow for a more comprehensive search –allowing the user to research cases with very narrow or broad case stipulation, based on their needs.

The current MAILES database required the use of an acrobat reader program and the conversion of all stored documents had to be viewed in a pdf format. This can make such reviews cumbersome and demanding on older computers. The new MAILES database will display all arbitration cases in an HTML format.

This will make the vast amount of cases much easier to work with. Other changes to MAILES include the issuance new passwords via online registration. Current passwords will continue to work for a short time, but users will need to re-register soon.

Union council Bruce Lerner briefed the attendees on legal matters and suits faced against the NPMHU. The most pressing with direct impact on the Colorado mail handlers would be the USPS decision to challenge and successfully remove the recent Florida Air Mail Center/ cross-craft decision. The parties agreed to a reduced settlement amount making the case settlement language worthless. The local executive board must determine the impact this case may or will have on our pending AMC case.

President Quinn briefly discussed the status of our collective bargaining agreement. It is a difficult time, but until the APWU/

USPS decision is rendered — we can only wait. The final hearing date is November 17, 2001 and a decision for the APWU is expected by years end. One thing is clear; the timing of the world-events of September 11, 2001 and following biochemical scares within the mail could not have been worse. Mail volume is down, subsequently – revenue is down and such a climate is hardly conducive to favorable contract negotiations. The union would be naïve to believe the postal service will not present these concerns during the arbitration hearings. While the picture appears bleak, we would be amiss to delude the facts with artificial optimism. As additional information becomes available it will be promptly disseminated to the floor.

Michael Hora
Vice President

...”The agency is also looking into other safeguards...”

MEMORIES OF A CONVENTION

The days that preceded September 11th were busy ones as the five delegates to the upcoming LIUNA National convention were preparing for their trip to Las Vegas. The convention was scheduled to run from September 17th through the 20th. It was to be the first such convention for the five of us. All but my wife and myself were to fly out there. I had driven to the 2000 Mail Handlers convention in San Francisco so I knew I could handle the 740-mile drive to Vegas.

Almost 4400 union brothers and sisters from every state and Canada were all busy preparing as well. A busy four-day agenda and the hope of squeezing some pleasure in with the business made the waiting very difficult. Enter Tuesday, September 11th, the day freedom was attacked! To wake up and see New York and Washington D.C. on fire obviously stunned us all. By Thursday the shock began to turn to anger and the American spirit has always defied danger and the decision was made to go on with the convention.

However, our Canadian brothers and sisters could no longer land in the U.S. and many others either could not or would not fly. Last minute plans had to be made quickly. Groups began to rent cars and vans and some drove from as far away as Vermont, Massachusetts and Florida. A three hour flight instantly turned into a three day drive! LIUNA is a diverse union that represents hod carriers, cement finishers, tunnel rats, the health care industry and of course, mail handlers. Well one way or another approx. 2500 of the over 4000 members made it to the desert and were in attendance when the convention was called to order on Monday September 17th. With all that transpired the convention convened within hours of its original schedule which was truly amazing. Conventions are conventions com-

plete with Roberts Rules of Order, resolutions, motions, seconds and voting.

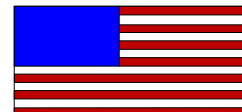
The scheduled speakers that included Secretary of Labor Linda Chou and Senators Richard Gebhardt and Hillary Clinton all addressed the convention via video satellite. LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan was an intelligent, magnanimous and energetic leader who impressed me greatly. Equally impressive was Mail Handler National President Billy Quinn who’s speech on the convention’s second day was accompanied by a video of him testifying before the Senate on Postal affairs.

Throughout the four day event I couldn’t help but think about how difficult it must have been for so many people to be so far from home in a time of so much uncertainty not knowing what lied ahead. Despite still being in shock and being so far from home, once President O’Sullivan banged the first gavel, this vast diverse group became one body with one purpose! I was proud to be one of them and proud to be part of the process.

While driving back to Denver thru the canyon lands of Utah I was among many fellow union members who were driving back home as well. There were plates from Michigan, Illinois, Maryland and Virginia who all had many more miles than myself to reach home. I silently wished each of them a safe trip home. It was a beautiful trip and a wonderful experience and I left Las Vegas with a renewed spirit of unionism, patriotism and a bond of brotherhood with the union brothers and sisters that I had the pleasure to meet.

In Brotherhood;

John M. Meding
State Representative



**STRONG - PROUD
UNITED
WOW!**

What a theme – And who was to know that this most powerful Convention would be put to the test at such a painful memory of time for all Americans, and the world!

This convention had been in plans for years. With great apprehension and worry – 2500 elected delegates were planned to converge on Las Vegas for the 22nd convention of Laborer’s, better known as Laborers International Union of North America – LIUNA.

On, 09-12-01, LIUNA put out a fax, which first and foremost expressed the sympathy and support for victims of the terrorists attacks. Secondly, it addressed our role in the upcoming convention. They stated the convention would be held without exception! They further stated that NO threat, no outside forces can be allowed to keep us from our sworn duty, to serve the hard working men and women of this great International Union.

As we all know, these days have been trying and painful in memory. Yet, we went, and we stood, United in solidarity with all our brothers and sisters who have suffered or lost loved ones as a result to stand, and join hands, and sing “God Bless America” like I have never heard or felt it sung before.

Alternative travel seemed to be an immediate concern for many. Two of our own delegates had planned to drive, and they did. That was John Meding and Phil Armendarez.

Kudo’s to Mike Hora and Claude Ridley for their bravery and fearlessness for taking their flights as scheduled from DIA on Sunday the 16th of September. They were some of the first flights to leave DIA after the terrible tragedy in New York City. I applaud them.

As for myself? Well, I think God wanted me to slow down and smell the roses. He cancelled my flight and I chose to drive so as to be on time for the convention. So..... ROAD TRIP!!!

I saw some of the most wonderful things on that trip. The Vail Valley and Glenwood Springs Canyon were absolutely spectacular. The leaves were at their finest with various shades of color. I needed to break in the new car anyway.

Proud, Strong, United they came from Hawaii, Alaska, and Canada. They drove, they flew, they went to great lengths to make it. There were 2,453 delegates for possible attendance. There were 2,156 in attendance on Tues. Sept. 18th, and by Wed. the 19th, that figure had changed to 2,270.

...”We heard several powerful speeches throughout the week”...

Some members of the Mason Tender’s District of New York, and Long Island rode a bus for 51 hours just to make the convention. They stated that

they were missing 13 Laborers in the recent disaster.

All proved we can not be stopped. No matter from where. Out hero for the week was a Laborer named “Vinney” who escaped the World Trade Center elevator shaft, took that 51 hour bus ride, but yet, nothing could stop him from attending. The stories were many, the trials all tiring.

We heard several powerful speeches throughout the week. House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt spoke via sattelite and told the crowd, “You give us faith, and strength” He praised us for our dedication, our courage, our humanity

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and our caring.

U.S. Sec. of Labor also spoke. She spoke of our safety being of highest priority. We were told that the Union had secured the contract for 100% Union Labor for the clean up at ground zero.

Mike D'Antuono from the Parson's Construction Inc, explained to us the clean up of Viscesque Island in the Phillipines.

Tom Carlisle reminded us that Laborer's built the Diabetes Research Institute.

We heard from Ed Sullivan, of the Building and Construction Trade. He spoke about our Legislative victory with winning compensation for the workers of the cold war for their chemical exposure.

We heard from Rep. Shelly Berkley, who is a democrat of Las Vegas. We heard from Luiz Guterrez and Pamela Reed.

Gov. Davis of California told us about the all of the power plants were built by 100% Union, and made reference to the 65,000 Laborers who reside in California.

We heard from several others. But the one who sticks out in my mind as being the most inspirational of all was Bob Love. An ex-Chicago Bull who struggled all his life with a disability.

He said to dream, and never let those dreams disappear. He had a dream as a youngster to speak to an audience. He grew up with a stuttering problem. It haunted him his entire life. He spoke of his first basketball hoop made out of a coat hanger, which was bent out of shape to make the hoop and attached it to the side of the house. His first basketball was a wad of squashed up newspaper. He dreamed! He reached for his dream! And most importantly, he would not let his dream go! He spoke to us without interruption of his

disability and received a standing ovation for the powerful speech he gave. He told us, we have two choices in life, the first is to succeed, and the second would be to succeed again. He said, "Find a dream, - hold on to it, and never forget it. If it is to be. It is up to me!"

Let me say this again..... WOW!

No candidate was challenged, therefore, no elections took place at this convention. We were content to listen to all the acceptance speeches.

It was awe-striking to fathom how diverse our Laborer's are. From highway workers – pavers – flaggers, to thousands of other titles to the common Laborer who fixes everything from an elevator to a toilet. From airline baggage personnel to iron and steel workers. We are out there. We are here. We are United.

WOW! I must say that again, WOW!

We voted, - we argued – we re-

solved all our business and we completed through all issues brought before this governing body. We saw our National President William Quinn in action in Wash. DC defending us against privatization on the hill.

We had a welcome dinner and got the pleasure of seeing a few impersonators, or were they?.....

We saw, Tina Turner, Marilyn Monroe, Arnold Schwarzeneger, Danny Devito, and Janet Jackson just to name a few. And I swear Elvis has not left the house. Oohhh Baby!

I hope this explains to you about the goings on of the convention. It was powerful and uplifting. It was real.

In Unity,

Cindy Hoehl-Rinker
GMF

...”He said to dream, and never let those dreams disappear”...

EDITOR'S NOTE

The following e-mail was sent to me at my house. I figured we could all use a little humor in our lives during these serious times both at home and in the workplace. But I don't doubt that some manager somewhere would certainly love to implement the following policy.

Employee Restroom Policy

To: All Employees

Subj: Restroom Policy

In the past, employees have been permitted to make trips to the restroom under informal guidelines. Effective December 1, 2001, a Restroom Trip Policy will be established to provide a more consistent method of accounting for each employee's restroom time and ensuring equal treatment of employees.

Under the policy, a "Restroom Trip Bank" will be established for each employee. The first day of each month, employees will be given a Restroom Trip credit of twenty-five (25) trips. Restroom Trip credits can be accumulated from month to month.

Within two weeks, the entrances to all restrooms will be equipped with personnel identification stations and computer linked voice print recognition devices. Before the end of December, each employee must provide two copies of voice prints (one normal and one under stress) to the Material Department. The voice print recognition stations will be operational but not restrictive for the month of January. Employees should acquaint themselves with the station during that period.

If the employee's Restroom Bank balance reaches zero, the doors to the restroom will not unlock for that employee's voice until the first of the next month. In addition, all restroom stalls are being equipped with timed paper roll retractors. If the stall is occupied for more than three (3) minutes, an alarm will sound. Thirty (30) seconds after the alarm sounds the roll of paper will retract into the wall, the toilet will flush, and the stall door will open. If the stall remains occupied, your picture will be taken.

The picture will then be posted on the Postal Facility's Bulletin Boards. Anyone's picture showing up three (3) times will be immediately terminated. If you have any questions about this policy, please ask your immediate supervisor. They have all received advance instruction.

Thank you and have a nice day,

Postmaster

**OPEN SEASON FOR
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
NOVEMBER 12, 2001
THROUGH
DECEMBER 10, 2001**

This is the only time of year we are allowed to change Health Benefits providers. This is an important a decision to you and your family. I strongly suggest that you took a good hard look at all of the plans offered under the Federal Employees Health Benefits. Compare the plans. How much bang do you get for your buck? What are deductibles? Prescriptions? Co-pays? Do you need a referral to see a specialist?

There are lots of questions to be answered and the answers should come based on the situation of yourself and your family.

Postal unions have negotiated a great percentage that we pay for these premiums. If you look at any of the benefit books, you would see that Postal employees pay a minimal amount of premiums compared to other employees in the Federal sector. When I'm out selling the Mail Handler Benefit Plan at Federal agencies, I get a lot of questions as to why Postal employees pay less. The answer is always the same. The unions, period. So this open season, shop wisely—and be sure to take a good look at the Mail Handler Benefit Plan. I think it is one of the better plans available. If you have friends or relatives who are federal employees, be sure and tell them to check out the plan.

Don Gonzales
Tech Asst

**The Mail Handlers
Benefit Plan**



QUESTIONS?

1-800-410-7778

Or visit us online at

www.mhbp.com

IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning there was the plan.
 And then came the assumptions.
 And the assumptions were without form.
 And the plan had no meaning.
 And darkness was on the face of the employees.
 And they spoke of the plan amongst themselves, saying,
 "This plan is a crock, and it stinks!"
 And the employees went unto their supervisors, saying,
 "The plan is a pile of dung and none may abide by its odor."
 And the Supervisors went unto the MDO's saying,
 "The plan is a container of excrement, and it is very strong, and the employees cannot abide by it."
 And the MDOs went unto the senior MDOs and said,
 "It is a vessel of fertilizer, and none may abide its strength."
 And the Senior MDOs went unto the plant managers and said,
 "It contains that which aids plant growth and it is very strong."
 And the Plant Managers went unto the Area Vice Presidents and said,
 "It promotes growth and is very strong."
 And the Area Vice Presidents went unto the Postmaster General and said,
 " This new plan will actively promote growth and efficiency of this organization."
 And the Postmaster General looked upon the plan and because of the recommendations saw that it was good and the plan became policy.

THE LIFE OF A UNION REP

If he talks on a subject, he is trying to run things.
 If he is silent, he has lost interest in the organization.
 If he is seen at the union hall, why doesn't he get out more?
 If he can't be found, why doesn't he come around more often?
 If he is not at home at night, he must be out partying.
 If he is at home, he is ducking his duties.
 If he does not agree the boss is a jerk, he is a company man.
 If he calls the boss a skunk, he is ignorant.
 If he doesn't raise his voice and holler, he is conservative.
 If he rants and raves, he is a radical.
 If he doesn't stop to talk, the job has gone to his head.
 If he tries to explain something, he's playing politics.
 If he works out a good agreement, why didn't he get more?
 If the agreement is not so good, he sold us out.
 If he takes a vacation, he's been on one all year.
 If he's only been a representative a short time, he's too inexperienced.
 If he's been a representative a long time, its time for change.



A union rep must be adept at juggling and handling all of the issues presented to him. Be kind to your reps, they're on your side.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

AND

*BEST WISHES FOR A
JOYFUL AND PROSPEROUS*

NEW YEAR

*TO ALL OUR MEMBERS
AND THEIR FAMILIES*

LOCAL 321

*WILL BE DISTRIBUTING A
RETRACTABLE BADGE
HOLDER, HAT, AND 2002
POCKET CALENDAR TO EACH
MEMBER SOON, AS OUR
THANKS FOR YOUR
CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP*

HAVE YOU MOVED LATELY OR IS A MOVE IN YOUR FUTURE?
IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR UNION WITH YOUR ADDRESS
SO WE CAN KEEP IN TOUCH.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Facility where you work: _____

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