



# ***The Transition of Healing Our Union***

***From Omar M. Gonzalez, Western Region Coordinator***

A consequence of a spirited election (for lack of a better term) is the real need of a process to transition into the cohesive band of brothers and sisters we must be. It is not easy but possible. It will take time, but time is not something we can let escape us.

The real wolves are at our heels snapping, barking, scratching. They want to rip away our benefits. They want to drag us back to darken dens. They want to privatize us and strip us of our dignity. We don't have the luxury of festering animosity amongst ourselves. We don't have time to let wounds heal - ***We Must Heal Now and Move On!***

But what is the process when bitterness enters the politics? What steps can we take to heal the divide that democracy sometimes helps create? What action must we take to get back on track and face the wolves together? The fact is there is no magic wand, no Merlin to cast spells that will automatically let bygones be bygones. No brothers and sisters, the answer to all the above is found in our own APWU National Constitution. Yes, that guide developed over years of internal and external struggle.

## **In Order to Form A Better Union**

Since our early beginnings in 1906 our APWU Constitution has evolved through the school of hard knocks to serve as a beacon of union principles by which we can regain trust, bury heartfelt emotions, support one another and yes perhaps even forgive.

Let me review some pertinent provisions of our constitution and you tell me if they can help:

- **We believe** all men and women are created equal with the right to determine their own destiny and to participate in the forces and events that affect them.
- **We believe** every member has the right to support the candidate of his/her choice and to participate in that right with others.
- **We believe** all members have the right to economic, political and social justice.
- **We believe** every member of the APWU has the right to be respected as a human being and as a brother and sister of our Union
- **We believe** every member has the right to see their children have the best education, since it is their lifeblood in giving service which gives them that right.
- **We believe** every member has the right to freedom of speech, the right to be heard, and the freedom to listen.
- **We believe** every member has the right, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, nationality, handicap, political affiliation, age or religion to **hold their head up high and to have respect for themselves as individuals.**
- **We believe** every member has the right to be secure in his or her basic rights without fear of political, economic, physical or psychological intimidation.

If we truly believe in these principles then we can move on and work on reaching the objectives of the APWU which is to secure through collective bargaining [ We have a tremendous contract fight on our hands] and legislative effort [ the fight against privatization is real ] a safe and healthy work environment, better working conditions and a better standard of living for the members of APWU and their families. **The Question Then Becomes- DO YOU BELIEVE?**

## **What Happened to 100,000+ members?**

Apathy is usually defined as a lack of interest or concern. I truly do not believe our members lack concern. They worry about daily work floor issues sure enough. And they want to know about the things that affect them. So why then did more than 80% of our members fail to use their power?

Why did they forgo the one thing that truly separates a member from a non-member-Their vote??

I believe it has to do with engagement. I don't mean the hokey kind of engagement management tries to portray. I mean we have to educate our members as to their role in our union. We like to say that the employees are the union- but do we truly make them feel that way? We have to re-organize and render exceptional service and representation so that our members feel unionized.

I believe this is possible. In fact, I know it is possible. What we have to work on is not so much getting employees satisfied with their job, it is a matter of getting postal workers satisfied with themselves- *the American Postal Workers Union*. But again, we **MUST BELIEVE** we can and will form a better Union.

## **On A Personal Note**

Thank you for your years of support and for being a part of this great labor union of ours. For those of you who believe in the union and cast your ballot in time to be counted thank you and God bless you. *Our Union is not perfect but in order to form a more perfect union we must all work at making it stronger and united!* **NOW LET'S GET TO WORK!**