

SMOKE SIGNALS

FEBRUARY 20, 1993

"INCREDIBLE TIMES"

The word "incredible" accurately describes the events which have occurred at FCI El Reno recently. Webster's dictionary defines the word as "hard to believe, not credible, unimaginable, and seeming to be not possible". Unfortunately, numerous events have occurred which fit this definition. When these types of events occur, we must be very cautious in dealing with them because the times are ripe for manipulation as well as inadvertent and unintentional mistakes.

A very wise consultant friend of mine and yours reminded me there are two ways to catch the horse that has gotten out of the barn, one smart and one not so smart. You can run after the horse which only makes the horse run away faster or you can take your time and slowly walk up to the horse. Both methods may have the same results in the end but the latter approach is much smarter and will require much less effort and avoids mistakes along the way. I think this is very good advise for us in these incredible times.

As you are aware, two of our union officers have been placed on "home duty" while an investigation is conducted by OI related to alleged misconduct involving intimidation and coercion of arbitration witnesses. During the same time frame as the investigation, other events have occurred which are very serious and criminal in nature, which may or may not be related, which are truly "incredible".

The entire Executive Board of this Local, including those on "home duty", have called for and demanded a complete and thorough investigation by the FBI into these events. I have been advised this will now occur and it is possible the Office of Inspector General will also become involved. We cheer this development and encourage the OIG to become involved. We want the full sunlight of day to shine on these events, the facts to be known, and to let the chips fall where they may with those who committed or perpetrated these events to be held fully accountable.

We are also faced with difficult on the job problems related to cost containment, budget cuts, staffing levels, and departmental relief plans, all of which ultimately result in concerns for staff and inmate safety and the overall security of the institution. These issues and their effect on our relationship with management was the reason I called for a Special Meeting of our Local last Friday evening at the Cow Palace.

The "incredible" events of the last week and the advise from our consultant friend led me to believe there was more risk than reward involved with having that meeting on site last Friday evening. I simply felt the risk was too high that further incredible events may have been manipulated. I was advised of the FBI involvement after reaching my decision to postpone the meeting.

"GAIN STRENGTH THROUGH UNITY"

Now that the FBI has entered the investigation and the OIG may become involved, I feel more confident that the truth will come out and hopefully, that further manipulation will cease. Therefore, I have rescheduled the Special Meeting for Friday, February 26TH, 4:30 PM, at the Farm Bureau Building, 2005 W. Foreman in El Reno. The agenda items remain the cost containment issues and labor/management relations. Please plan to attend this very important meeting.

Again, I would remind all members that those on home duty and those who have been interviewed have been instructed not to discuss the case with anyone except their duly appointed representative or it may be construed as interference with an official investigation. This may also put the union representative at some risk if we discuss the case openly. We all want to protect the integrity of the investigations so let's be careful not to let them become the topic of idle discussions. We all want a successful investigation!

Our members need to understand one other important point. Sometimes your union officials are aware of facts before they become common knowledge on the compound. We must sometimes make decisions based on our current knowledge and best judgement which may not be understood by our members. This occurs because the membership simply does not have the opportunity to know everything the union leadership may know.

So please give us the benefit of the doubt when we have to cancel a meeting at the last moment or make some other decision that seems to be without merit on the surface. Hold us fully accountable in the long run but don't be too critical in the short term when all the facts aren't fully known or understood. We are simply doing the best job we can in dealing with difficult situations during "incredible" times.



SPECIAL MEETING

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 26TH 4:30 PM

AT THE FARM BUREAU BUILDING

2005 W. FOREMAN IN EL RENO

AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDE -

COST CONTAINMENT ISSUES &

LABOR/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

PLAN TO ATTEND—MEMBERS ONLY

"GAIN STRENGTH THROUGH UNITY"