

MICHIGAN MESSENGER



AFFILIATED WITH: AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO, APWU POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION, MICHIGAN STATE AFL-CIO

Volume 30, Issue 111

January/February 2004 Issue



President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten
President



Much has happened during the course of 2003, not only in Michigan but throughout the entire Postal Service nationwide. From the Labor standpoint, we have not fared so well. Our jobs as postal workers have never been in greater jeopardy. We are under attack from all sides and within. Daily, we lose a little more of the Postal Service to big businesses and to automation. We all have to realize that everything taking place revolves around the almighty dollar. The one with the "Big Buck" wins.

What is happening to not only the Postal Service, but to all Americans is profit driven. Big business is bigger and more integrated into the Postal Service than you might think. Private industry is growing each and every day and they are doing it by processing mail that traditionally was processed by postal workers. Management have already contracted out maintenance, clerical jobs and some motor vehicle positions. This has been accomplished with the help and blessing of the federal government (from Congress to the President of the United States); and we all know where he stands on this subject. This is why we have to do something and

do it now. They do not want us to make any contact with Congress and the American public. What we have to ask ourselves is what percentage of the postal workforce will be retained in order to keep up this charade of a non-profit Postal Service?

We all know that the Postmaster General's so called transformation plan is just another name for downsizing, elimination of jobs, the closing of plants, and being able to contract out our work. I would like to commend President Mark Hart and the entire Flint Michigan Area Local on their legislative drive that they have undertaken. I would like to see more locals duplicate these efforts. It is not too late to start yours. If you need any information, you can call the Flint Michigan Area Local's Union office. I am assured that someone will be glad to assist you in any way they can. You can also contact Cynthia Hardison, Legislative Director. She has all the materials you will need also. What we must realize is that this is one of the biggest fights we have ever been in; however, Michigan has never backed away from a fight and we aren't going to start now.

The District Meeting in Grand Rapids is the next function for the Michigan Postal Workers Union. I know that George (Area 7) and Jennifer (Area 9) are planning on a great weekend that will be full of information and training for all of you to be able to take back to your respective locals. (Information is included in this edition of the Messenger).

The State Convention is also committed to the Lansing Holiday Inn. More information will be made available in the Michigan Messenger and on the website. The Convention Call letter will be sent out to all Local Presidents shortly, as in accordance with the constitution. Additionally, when I spoke with Executive Secretary Harold Juhl recently, he stated that he has the credentials ready to be sent out also. Remember to start working on those resolutions.

I look forward on seeing all of you in Grand Rapids and also in Lansing.

Until Next Time,



Secretary's Writings

Harold Juhl
Executive Secretary

A new year has arrived and along with the new year will be new challenges that our union will have to face. Some of these issues will include: plant closings, excessing, elimination of jobs, etc. However, the biggest issue in my opinion is the declining membership in our Union. Due to the VERA, job reversions, and members dropping out for one reason or another, (which there is NO good reason) our union's membership has declined. This could be a very big issue if the membership drops below 70%. I would stress to all of you members that we need to increase our numbers. Not only would increasing our membership help save our Union, but also make us stronger. Talk to those non-members and get them to join our union family.

The State and National Conventions are this year. Central Michigan Area Local will play host to this year's State Convention at the Holiday Inn South. As per the constitution, the Convention will convene at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 29th and run through May 1st. The Convention Call Letter will be sent soon. Remember to start working on your resolutions now. These resolutions can change our constitution and also dictate to our National officers what we would like to see in future negotiations of our National Agreement. Please see your local steward or officer, or if you are Member at Large, contact your Area Director or myself to submit your ideas/suggestions. We welcome all ideas and encourage our members to step forward and get involved.

This is also a year of elections and we need to support our democratic friends in Washington. We all need to think real hard about giving to COPA. This is a great way to help support our friends and get their support back on the issues that are important to us. Just one dollar a per pay period from each member is all it would take to accomplish this. That one dollar could help Representatives or Senators in Washington be swayed to our side. Think about your job and whether or not you will have one in the future.

Finally, I want to wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year. Be safe and enjoy your families.

In Solidarity,

Harold



Education at Work

Lynn Pallas-Barber
Director of Research & Education

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

For the first time in more than 60 years, Congressional leaders have joined together with unions to champion legislation to enable U.S. workers to join unions and negotiate first contracts without employer harassment.

On November 21, Senator E. Kennedy (D-MA) and Representative G. Miller (D-CA) introduced the Employee Free Choice Act (S.1925 and H.R. 3619). The act will give employees the right to form a union by signing cards authorizing union representation, provide mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes and establish penalties for violations of employee contractual rights.

The Employee Free Choice Act, also backed in the house by three Republicans, "is a real bill of rights for workers," says Senator Kennedy. There are still many workers in this country who want to be union members and cannot. There are many employers who do everything they can to discourage union organization.

For example at the University of PA, a majority of graduate employees signed union authorization cards two (2) years ago. Because administrators refused to honor the choice of the workers and allow them a voice on the job and they ran an anti-union campaign. Votes for the union election still have NOT been counted.

It is extremely important that we attend our union meetings and voice our opinions through our union!!!

WHO IS THE PREZ REALLY AT WAR WITH???

George W. Bush has forgotten who the enemy really is. He seems to have declared war on the working families of America. He has threatened a veto that would shut down much of the federal government unless Congress strips overtime pay protection. He has manipulated House approval of a Medicare prescription drug bill that won't meet the needs of seniors and will bar the negotiation of lower drug prices.

(Continued on page 7)



The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long
Editor

The last two months have been extremely busy. With the upcoming District Meeting in Grand Rapids, preparations for the Biennial Constitutional Convention, and shoveling out from the snow we have been receiving on the west side of the state, I don't know where the time has gone.

In this edition of the Messenger, you will find an itinerary for the upcoming District Meeting. I would like to stress that this is only a tentative itinerary. As those who have attended meetings in the past, nothing is solid until about five minutes before it is scheduled to happen.

With the Biennial Convention just a few months away, now is the time to begin writing your resolutions. Remember, you are the one that directs where we go from here. Your input does make the difference. Your input is what makes this union the democracy it is. If you want to see something changed in the contract, or feel something needs to change with either the state or national constitutions, now is the time to make your voice heard. Write a Resolution!

To the fellow editors who read this column, with the upcoming elections, please be careful in what you put in your paper. Remember the Six-Month and "Fairness" rules (i.e. If you put something in your paper for one, you need to give the same opportunity to all candidates) when putting your paper out to your membership. Remember to scrutinize everything!

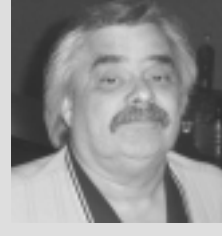
In closing, I would like to welcome Dennis Barber back on board as the Area 12 Director. Dennis, you can never get away. To Dan Watts, thank you for the job you did representing the membership.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming District Meeting and the Biennial Convention.

Until then,

Yours in Solidarity,

Mike



Clerk Craft Report

Bob Maloney
Clerk Craft Director

I wrote my two US Senators and my Republican congressman about my concerns of the recommendations from President's Postal commission. Well, I have yet to hear back from my Republican Congressman. No big surprise, but I did get answers from our two Senators. The one that bothered me was the one from Senator Carl Levin. In it, he or his designee who answered the letter talked about the Postal Service since the 1970 Reorganization Act and how much money they are in the hole and how much the mail volume is down. If I didn't know better, I would think that the Postmaster General wrote this response. In fact, this letter gave me nothing more than five paragraphs of cold facts; however not all of these so called facts are true. In fact, one of the paragraphs tells me about the Presidential Commission convened in 2002 and how the Postal Service needed to adapt to pressures from customers, competitors and technology. In short, they had told me everything I had written to them to complain about in my letter. Now this was from my Democratic Senator.

Don't get me wrong, I have a ton of respect for Senator Levin. Over the years, I have watched him fight for working people in Michigan, especially the United Auto Workers (UAW) and since he sits on the Armed Services Committees, he has over the years watch the wild spending of the military and check them whenever possible. So, I guess his people are being fed the same manure the Postal Service expects us to swallow. Thus, I wrote another letter to Senator Levin informing him that a lot of what he has been told from the Postal Service and President Bush was not totally true. How they both are good at twisting the truth or telling half-truths and hoping no one would question their facts or figures.

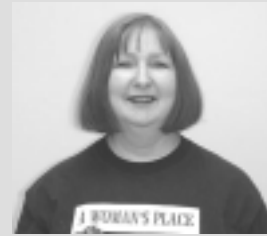
What does this mean to you? That writing just one letter to your either your Representative or Senator may require additional ones to set the record straight. You may even have to write them a third or more to make it clear to them that you will not accept a pat answer of facts that the President's office is spewing out. So write and write often! Remember, these people work for you, even if you didn't vote for them.

(Continued on page 9)



Injury Comp Report

Ron Krumrie
Human Relations/Injury Comp. Dir



Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan
Maintenance Director

CHANGES

During the last three years, we have seen the Department of Labor make some significant changes in regards to OWCP. The Federal Employee's Compensation Act can be complicated and confusing at times, and when you throw in some changes it can be even more complex. The following is an article written by our National Human Relations Director Sue Carney, explaining these changes:

OWCP: TRYING TO IMPROVE

The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) has been making technological improvements in an effort to process claims more efficiently. Since July 2001, OWCP District Offices have been maintaining all new claims only as imaged records. This provides claims examiners with immediate access to claimants' files, which cuts down on delays in processing. Technological improvements, however, have not helped to overcome an inadequate number of claims examiners. Lack of regular training and heavy turnover continue to hinder progress, while delays and denials are compounded by hasty submissions. Claimants can help by making sure they understand all Compensation Act (CA) form instructions prior to filing their claim and by ensuring that their claim forms are complete, accurate, and legible. All claimants should communicate with their physicians regarding FECA requirements.

In January 2002, OWCP created a central mailroom in Kentucky that services all district offices and is responsible for the image scanning of all mail received there. The central mailroom is intended to reduce routing time to the responsible claims staff in the district offices, and to cut down on record-misplacement occurrences. The centralized mailing address is: P.O. Box 8300, London, KY 40742-8300. Because documents still can be ---and are--- misplaced, claimants should keep copies of everything they submit. Submissions should be sent by certified mail with the claimant's name, claim number and page number (e.g., "1 of 24") atop every page. Claimants should periodically follow up on the status of their claim and verify submissions with their claims examiner.

(Continued on page 13)

Well our new year is starting with some good change for maintenance. On December 19, 2003, an agreement was signed including maintenance in the VER (voluntary early retirement). This should delight many members.

Anyone who was interested had to submit their names to the national office by January 7 for inclusion. Lists were posted on the national's website of many members who applied earlier and were denied based on craft.

The VER which must be complete for maintenance not later than July 1, 2005, will impact some offices more than others. In every case, we need to remember the contractual provisions for promotions in article 38. Thirteen positions must be filled on the basis of seniority – that is senior qualified within occupational group and level. (38.5.B.2)

A BIT OF HISTORY

I was thrilled to learn that Paul Robeson will be honored with this year's BLACK HERITAGE stamp. Paul Robeson was a famous African-American athlete, singer, actor and advocate for the civil rights of people around the world.

I want to speak of him because he was also a great friend of labor. It happens that sometimes our leaders come from outside our own ranks. Paul Robeson was Phi Beta Kappa from Rutgers University. He was twice named to the All-American Football Team and finally 19 years after his death was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

Robeson worked as a lawyer and was best known by most for his singing and acting skills. But for me and many, he will long be remembered for his contributions to and participation in the struggles of workers around the world. He went to Spain to sing to the troops during the Spanish Civil War and traveled widely throughout Europe and the Soviet Union building international solidarity with his great voice.

“MINE MILL” CONVENTION

In the early 50s he was a victim of McCarthyism and his

(Continued on page 14)



Area 1 Report

Larry Moyer
Area 1 Director



Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque
MPWU Retiree's Chapter Dir.

WATCH YOUR BACK: The Postal Inspectors are watching! We have had two incidents in which the Postal Inspectors were involved in Troy. Use your brains and think of the possible ramifications if you do something illegal or take something in the post office that does not belong to you. The postal inspectors purportedly have a conviction rate of 95%. There is a very good reason for this. Unlike the FBI, ATF, and other law enforcement agents who deal with high profile crimes; there is little political pressure on the postal inspectors to solve a crime. Most Americans probably do not know who the postal inspectors are, or what they do. If it takes the postal inspectors months or years to conduct an investigation, so be it. When the investigation is complete in many cases the only action the charged party can do is **resign from the Postal Service and hope they are not charged with a crime.** I believe that the inspectors are in the inspection galleries overhead are watching us, or videotaping us at anytime. Inspectors have been known to sit in vehicles and to follow employees and videotape their actions with a telephoto lens on the camera. I just read an arbitration award from Joplin Missouri in which a custodial laborer was caught stealing CD's from Columbia House and selling them at re-sale shops in order to save money to fly to his child's wedding. The end result? This individual was caught by the postal inspectors and brought into Federal court and charged by the US Attorney for stealing from the US Mail. I am told that employees take items from the UBBM Mail. Do not take these items! Not even coupons for the local pizza place; is saving a few bucks on a pizza worth your job? Why are the postal inspectors more aggressive now than in the past? Read on below:

EARLY OUT RETIREMENT: During the October early out retirements only 61 APWU represent employees in the Royal Oak District took early out retirement. Not all of these employees were allowed to leave in October, and will either leave in January or February 2004. I have read that only 3,000 employees took the early out retirement nationally with the USPS now having approximately 16,000 excess clerks now due to lower mail volume and automation. Back during the arbitration for the current 2000 to 2003 National Agreement, then Postal Operations Manager Jesse

(Continued on page 7)

MEDICARE 2006: Following are excerpts from Senator Carl Levin's response to our e-mail opposing the Prescription Drug and Medicare Improvement Act of 2003 (S.1). If you are, or will be a Medicare eligible senior, this information is for you:

"While I strongly favor and have worked for years to provide a prescription drug benefit under Medicare, I could not support this legislation. First, the drug benefit, which includes a \$250 deductible and an average premium of \$35 that could double in the next 10 years, is inadequate. The benefit also has a large gap in the prescription drug coverage, sometimes referred to as a "donut hole". This means that once a senior's total drug spending reaches about \$2,250 for the year, he or she will have to pay 100 percent of the cost of their prescriptions until their total drug spending reaches \$3,600. This coverage gap will leave many seniors to pay the full cost of prescriptions at a time when they most need assistance. The senior would still be required to pay their premium while getting no government assistance in return."

"Another concern I have with this new plan is that the Congressional Budget Office estimates that up to 25% of retirees with existing drug coverage through a former employer, almost 2.7 million senior citizens, could lose that coverage under the plan in this bill. The tax subsidies going to these employers just to keep their current retirees covered are not enough to entice employers to keep their drug coverage for those 2.7 million retirees."

"Another fundamental flaw with the prescription drug benefit in this legislation is the lack of a guaranteed Medicare prescription drug plan. In each region of the country, Medicare will have the ability to contract out at least one Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) or Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) plan and one stand alone prescription drug plan (PDP). Regardless of how unattractive the premiums and co-pays offered by these private companies are to seniors, as long as there are at least two plans available, they will not be offered a fallback prescription drug benefit run by traditional Medicare. Further, there is a \$12 billion so-called "stabilization fund", which is really

(Continued on page 9)



NBA Report

Jerome "Jerry" Martin
NBA - Clerk Div. - Chicago

VER RESOLVED?

Well at last, the Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) has once again been resolved. After months of expensive litigation, President Burrus and Anthony Vegliante signed a number of memorandums concerning the VER on December 19, 2003. Much of what was agreed to this time is similar to the contract extension agreed to in 2002. The O.P.M. still controls the VER regulations and we could have another stalemate. Isn't it amazing that our Union would spend so much time and effort to lose members. One thing I must urge is that all VER employees maintain their APWU membership either as a full dues paying member or as a retiree member. With the USPS downsizing we most certainly need all of the members we can muster to fight congressional reform legislation.

The memorandum regarding excessing beyond 50 miles to fill in for VER employees is really a doosie. I trust our crack Article 12 headquarters committee will be tracking all of these individuals withholdings and excessings. This will be all of the current withholdings we have in the Great Lakes Area and elsewhere.

Does this mean if we have a PS-5 Window Clerk in Mattoon, Illinois that we could excess the only FTR from Herrin, Illinois into that position? Does this mean if we have a MPE Maintenance employee from Kalamazoo that takes the VER that the junior MPE from Lansing, Michigan can be excessed into that position? I don't know, but the memo says what it says.

Excessing under Article 12 isn't popular, but it sure beats getting laid off which is happening in plants, shops and jobs everywhere else. Remember under President Bush the USA lost 2 million jobs in 2003 (none from the USPS - APWU).

Senior Mail Processor Memo Worthless!

May 5, 2003 the APWU was jobbed again by USPS, on that day Director McCarthy and Peter Sgro signed off a memo which upgraded Mail Processors to Senior Mail

(Continued on page 11)

Area 7 & 9 District Meeting and Editor's Meeting

When: March 5 - 6, 2004

Where: Best Western Midway Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI
(Make Reservations by calling 1-888-280-0081)

Cost: \$64.00 + tax per night (single); \$74.00 + tax per night (double)

Tentative Itinerary:

Friday - March 5th

- 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. - Registration
- 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Article 12 Training
- 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Editor's/PPA Training
- 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - O.W.C.P. (Limited/Light Duty)
- 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Basic Steward's Class
- 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Discipline (Article 16)
- 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m. - Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Article 12 Training (continued)
- 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Editor's/PPA Training
- 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - O.W.C.P.
- 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Basic Steward's Class
- 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Discipline (Article 16)

Saturday - March 6th

- 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Article 12 Training
- 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Advanced Stewards Class
- 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Discipline or Maintenance Issues
- 9 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Transitional Employees Issues
- 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m. - Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Article 12 Training (continued)
- 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Advanced Stewards Class
- 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Discipline or Maintenance Issues
- 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Associate Office Issues
- 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. - Dinner and Speakers

Registration: \$50.00

Check the Website at <http://www.mpwu.com> for any changes.

2004 Biennial Constitutional Convention

April 29 - May 1, 2004

Holiday Inn South/Conference Center
Lansing, Michigan

	<i>Standard Room Rates</i>	<i>American Package (2 nights)</i>	<i>American Package (3 Nights)</i>
Single	\$83.25	\$293.73	\$415.47
Double	\$94.35	\$443.16	\$614.49
Triple	\$105.45	\$592.59	\$813.51
Quad	\$116.55	\$742.02	\$1012.53

(Continued from page 2)
Education at Work Continued

He has weakened the workplace safety and health protections. He has turned basic government responsibilities over to profit-mined contractors. He has done nothing to provide insurance for the families and children who cannot afford it. He is trying to take away the rights of union workers. We are in the worst period of job loss since the Depression. He now has proposed to give rights and jobs to illegal aliens. His Postal Commission has threatened our very existence and way of life. This next presidential election will be crucial to our way of life as middle class working Americans.

COPA...COPA...COPA

Now that the Holidays are behind us for this year and we begin a New Year and we probably spent too much over the Holidays we cannot forget the possible impact of the Presidential Commission on the Postal Service. We saw in our national tabloid that we achieved the highest contributions into our COPA fund. The threat of this Commission still hangs heavy over our heads. Please continue to contribute; the job you save will be your own!

EDUCATION FOR THE MPWU

Hope to see many members at the district meetings of the MPWU. This year is the year of our State constitutional convention and our National convention. Our district meetings will be our forum for education. Through education and communication we will remain strong.

Until next time,
In Solidarity,

Lynn

(Continued from page 5)
Area 1 Report Continued

Polk and I had a conversation in which he stated the USPS had plans in the works to lay off those clerks not yet covered under the **NO LAY-OFF clause** (those employees without five full years of service). My response to Mr. Polk was he should wait and see what the arbitration panel awards us. When the arbitration panel rendered their decision, they kept the Memo of Understanding that our **UNION negotiated in prior contracts**. This Memo of Understanding provides that you are protected from layoff for the life of the contract even though you do not have the full five years. Had this not been agreed to, all the clerks hired after 1997 could have been **LAI D OFF**. When Postmaster General Potter approached APWU President William Burrus to extend the current agreement from 2003 to 2005 he did not even consider changing the no layoff memo because he knew the union would not agree to this. Potter was just interested in the early out retirements and to control labor costs until November 2005. To play devil's advocate if you can not layoff any current employees (because you have not been hiring lately) and only **3,000 of the 16,000 excess employees have opted for the Early out retirement**, leaving you with approximately 13,00 excess employees, what do you do? Send out the Postal Inspectors to aggressive attempt to catch employees in wrongdoing. I am of the opinion we are **open targets** by management. Get into a heated argument with a co-worker? (As happened recently in Troy). Management will blow this out of proportion and place you on emergency placement pending removal until and unless your **UNION can step in and save your job**. The job you save may be your own. Don't do anything stupid to jeopardize it.

EXCESSING, PTF CONVERSION? In a recent conversion with National Business Agent John Clark, he advised me that management is excessing approximately 400 clerks due in part to more automation being installed in the Chicago District. I don't know if the Detroit District is still under withholding (purportedly 95 clerks took the early out retirement and management was planning on excessing 74 clerks, so potential the Detroit District should be "down" 21 clerks. Management is refusing to settle the PTF Conversion grievances. Until our District comes out from withholding or until these cases are heard in arbitration, don't expect any PTF conversions.

POSTAL COMMISSION: The Presidential Commission on the Postal Service delivered its report to President Bush on July 1, 2003. Much has been written about it in the *Michigan Messenger* and *The American Postal Worker*. In August 2003 shortly after the report came out I had a meeting with the members at large of Area 1 that I represent as Area Director. I was honored to have Michigan Postal Workers Union President Gary VanHoogstraten attend this meeting. Gary and I explained to the members of the importance of writing to your Congressperson and US Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow. Among the proposals of the commission; closing rural post offices, having health benefits as a negotiated item at contract time. A take it or leave it proposal from management to the unions. This commission also feels you and I are overpaid but the postal managers are not! If you have not contacted your Congressperson and US Senators Levin and Stabenow yet do so now. I question whether Congress will even deal with the Postal Commission Report now

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)
Area 1 Report Continued

because 2004 is an election year. It will be too much of a political hot potato for members of the House and Senate to deal with angry constituents whose post office may close in the rural areas, which is even more the reason we need to have our views made clear to Congress.

TIME CARD FALSIFICATION: Recently in Troy, the Postal Service put a Delivery Supervisor on an Emergency Placement pending removal for **TIME CARD FALSIFICATION for allowing a letter carrier to remain on the clock that purported was not doing any work.** Yet, **nothing is done** to the manager who is the "Time and Attendance officer" for **taking away time from employees who worked the time.** We have been waiting for the adjustments to be done as promised by our OIC. Apparently; it is **immoral** for managers to **steal from the postal service to benefit an employee**, but it is **moral** for a manger to **steal time away from employees who worked the time.** This same manager I'm told receives approximately 20 hours "T-time" per pay period, despite the fact that one of the requirements is to be actually supervising employees not inputting data into TACS. If this is happening to us in Troy, I am sure it is more widespread in other offices. I don't know what our National officers were thinking of when they decided not to pursue grievances on the transfer of timekeeping from clerks to managers with the introduction of TACS. I recommend to all employees to look at your pay stub carefully. Consider requesting from management through your union steward your work hour report to see if you're being paid properly. **You have the right to know if management is ripping you off.**

SAFETY AND HEALTH: In one of the offices I represent as Area Director, the building is "shared" with a private company. The prior business moved out and a company uses solvents that have an "oily" smell. In part due to the pressure the rural carrier steward and I put on management at the district level, the owner of the building added a barrier and insulation between the postal and non-postal sections of the building. Also an air exchanger was added to improve air quality. In addition the Safety Manager ordered 3 air quality tests done in the office by outside testing companies. There is no hazard to the employee's health just a faint smell problem. When I was out there last in November the smell was very faint. We will continue to monitor the air quality. Ron Krumie, the Injury Compensation Director for the Michigan Postal Workers Union gave the following advice to the employees:

"All employee's who become sick need to see their Doctor and if their Doctor say's it's because of the fumes in the building then they should file a claim. They should file either a CA-1 or a CA-2 depending on the exposure time. If they become sick due to exposure during one work shift then they should file a CA-1. If it is due to more than one work shift then they need to file a CA-2. Remember with a CA-1, the employee should also be given a CA-16 (authorization for treatment), and they are eligible for COP. A CA-1 is the best way to go if the problem is because of exposure from a single work shift."

If you have problems with air quality, loss of heat in the winter, air conditioning in the summer, other building problems such as a leaking roof during rain, etc contact your Area director or union steward at once. **It is bad enough that we have to deal with the lack of dignity and respect of many managers it is quite another to deal with a prob-**

lem that can effect your safety and heath.

MANAGERS WHO WANT TO BECOME CLERKS: On the last 2 Mondays before Christmas Royal Oak District Retail Manager Dianne Sewell and Marketing Manager Linda Palazzolo Respectively treated us to a visit. These two managers apparent miss the days of being Bargaining Unit Employees and intended to act as lobby director. Numerous arbitrations have ruled in favor of the union that this is **Clerk Craft work.** Ms. Sewell lasted from approximately 7:30 am until 9:45 am when I advised our Window Supervisor that I was willing to take **INDIVIDUAL GRIEVANCES from each window clerk** then and now. The next Monday Ms. Palazzolo attempted lobby directing from 8 am until 8:20 am when it became clear to her we would not assist her in her doing our work. I don't know if she thought she would get a better reception from us being a former Troy letter carrier. Needless to say, **I was very proud of how my co-workers stood in solidarity to stop this injustice!** It does not matter to me, I will not allow a Manager to do our work especially in light of the environment in which our clerks get exccessed out due to lack of work, the windows generally are short staffed by management, and the **lack of dignity and respect shown by management** to our members. If managers in your office feel they can lobby direct contact your Area Director or steward at once.

MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR: I have visited jointly with Royal Oak District Labor Relations Manager Ed Novak to offices that I represent as Area Director for the Michigan Postal Workers Union, Armada and Memphis, MI. I coined the visits as the "Magical Mystery Tour" in that these

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)
Area 1 Report Continued

small offices are in a world of their own and the postmaster run these offices like their own fiefdom. I wanted to Mr. Novak to see first hand the excessive amount of bargaining unit work being performed by these postmasters. (More so than the job description of a postmaster in an EAS 15 or 18 office allows). Grievances have been filed and are progressing through the procedure. Consider contacting your Area Director or steward if your postmaster is acting in a "Super Clerk" mode then sending you home due to lack of work.

IN CLOSING: Work Safe, Report for work and either file a grievance or let me know if you have a problem and I will file the your individual grievance or a Class Action on behalf of all of us.

Until Next Time,

Yours In Solidarity,

Larry

(Continued from page 3)
Clerk Craft Report Continued

The other way to fight for our job is to give to the Committee on Political Action (COPA). I know you hear this all the time, but it is a painless way to help in this battle we are in. In the December edition of the National Tabloid, there was a very good article concerning COPA. I would encourage each of you to read this article. It gives you insight on how your money is spent to ensure that we win this fight. This battle is one we have to win. The problem is there will be another battle in the fall we will need to win also. The battle will also take money from us as well. No matter how small of an office you work in, you are the foot soldiers in this battle. To keep what we have fought for, it is going to take money to fight and win. It is that simple.

Until next time,

Yours in Solidarity,

Bob

(Continued from page 5)
Retiree Involvement Continued

a slush fund for insurance companies to subsidize their policies. The \$12 billion in slush money is not available to help traditional Medicare, it is available only to private companies."

"Perhaps the most troubling part of this bill is the six so-called premium support demonstration projects. These demonstrations are simply an opening act to the privatization of Medicare. This bill does not promote competition. It creates government subsidies for insurance companies while allowing them to "cherry pick" the most profitable segment in the business, the healthiest beneficiaries, while leaving seniors with the greatest need as the responsibility of the federal government. In reality, this is a gift to private companies at the expense of the U.S. Treasury."

"Because this bill does not address the high cost of prescription drugs, needed medicines will still be inaccessible for millions of our citizens. Both the House and Senate versions of this bill included a provision, usually referred to as reimportation, which would allow seniors to buy drugs in other countries at lower prices. This bill also prohibits Medicare from using its purchasing power to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to buy prescription drugs at lower prices. This is a tool that the Veteran's Administration has used for years to buy drugs at as little as half of the price available to the public."

"Our nation's seniors deserve better than this legislation, and I will continue to work in the years ahead to improve this program...."

Time will tell if our FEHBP health insurers will drop prescription drug benefits coverage for Medicare eligible seniors, but I wouldn't bet against it! Remember this disastrous Medicare legislation which has been signed into law by President George Dubyah to the delight of insurance companies and the drug industry when you go to the polls in November!

REP. STUPAK IN OUR CORNER: 1st District Congressman Bart Stupak (D) supports APWU opposition to the President's Commission on the U.S. Postal Service! Stupak is a consistent 100 per center on APWU legislative issues who has a real grasp on issues presented by the Commission's recommendations. In part, is his reply to my letter:

"I have serious concerns about the Commission report and believe that the method for overhauling the USPS could cause great harm to postal delivery in rural areas such as Northern Michigan."

"I am concerned that the authority the commission has recommended for the politically-appointed Postal Regulatory Board is too broad. The report proposes giving the Board authority to

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

Retiree Involvement Continued

close so-called "low activity" post offices, which could result in a major disruption in the delivery of mail to our communities."

"This report seems to contain many proposals that are decidedly not worker friendly. The recommendations on collective bargaining are of great concern - the rights of postal workers to collectively bargain are the result of years of struggle and should not be undercut."

"I will continue to monitor this situation closely and you can be assured that I will not support legislation that reflects the recommendations of the President's Commission report."

Again, remember who are our friends when you go to the polls in November. And, remember who are our enemies! But, first of all, MAKE SURE YOU ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE!!

CONVENTION CALL; The MPWU State Retiree Chapter Constitutional Convention will be held in conjunction with our parent MPWU State Constitutional Convention in Lansing, April 29 - May 1, 2004. Local Retiree Chapters and retiree Members-At-Large should begin now to prepare to attend our 2nd Biennial State Retiree Chapter Convention. State Chapter officer elections for the offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and three (3) Trustees will be conducted. Amendments to the State Chapter constitution will be considered, along with any resolutions to be submitted to our parent MPWU. The official Convention Call will be published in the "Messenger" and furnished State Retiree Chapter officers and Local Retiree Chapters.

2004!! A defining year for postal workers and retirees. Each one of us has the opportunity to take an active part in making a difference...and collectively, A BIG DIFFERENCE! Congress is developing and will be debating postal "reform". 2004 is an election year. All 435 seats in the U.S. House are up for grabs. One-third of the U.S. Senate will be elected (except Michigan Senators Levin & Stabenow). Keep this in mind as you continue to write your Members of Congress to oppose any legislation reflecting the drastic recommendations of the Bush Commission to reform the USPS.

There's more....The MPWU State and APWU National Conventions. APWU national officer elections (except for we disenfranchised retired members), and the 2004 Presidential election in November. Each of these defining events require that we become politically aware and active. P-O-L-I-T-I-C-S!! Yes, Sisters and Brothers...POLITICS!! It's **not** a dirty word, and it's not to be shunned. Be thankful you have the right and opportunity to vote. Or, are you one of those people who fails to vote, whether it's a Union or local, state or federal government election and then justify shirking your obligation as a Union member or citizen with every excuse in the book? WAKE UP! Like it or not, it's politics at all levels of our lives that governs our economic and social well being. As my wife, Michelle, past editor of the "Flint Facts", coined the phrase; "If you don't vote for who (or what) you want; don't bitch about who (or what) you get!" Or as Pericles said back in 430 B.C.; "Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you".

ANSWERS; I've posed some hard questions in this column regarding

APWU strategies in the face of the Bush Commission's assault on the future of the USPS and APWU job security, as well as internal issues affecting the retired membership of our Union. I had the opportunity to pose those questions to residents of APWU Hq. Here are some of the "answers" I got:

Questioning why there hasn't been an APWU legislative rally in Washington on Capitol Hill, I'm told "Bill" (a.k.a. Pres. Burrus) is holding off until actual postal reform legislation is developed in Congress. The APWU source believes a Retiree Dept. Conference can be held at that time; "...since retirees have a very serious interest in the President's Commission Report which directly affects retirees". Humph! I still maintain a legislative rally should have happened BEFORE reform legislation is developed! So we hold TWO rallies. What is more important to the futures of APWU members and retirees than the end result of this attack by the Bush Administration?! We're already a day late and a dollar short!

On the question of why retiree CSRS/FERS COLA's no longer appear in the APWU News Service Bulletin; my source's lame response was that the N.S.B. is for posting on APWU bulletin boards for active member's consumption. While another APWU Hq. source expressed concern some National Retiree Delegates and Local Retiree Chapters still do not receive the N.S.B., it's obvious our Legislative Dept. has no input as to N.S.B. content or who receives it. As far as I can ascertain, certain APWU "employees" control those decisions, not elected officers. So much for accountability to the membership!

And, on the question WHY hasn't the amendment to the APWU Constitution; Art. 16 Sec. 2(h), duly adopted by the 2000 National Convention delegates,

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)
Retiree Involvement Continued

appeared in our governing document, my source stated; "...I have expressed my opinion to Secretary (Treas.) Tunstall that this resolution should have been in the constitution at the first print and there is no reason for it not to be there. The membership voted and passed this resolution and regardless of who doesn't like it the membership has spoken." In spite of that Hq. level admission, that retiree option language continues to be omitted and blatantly suppressed. Tunstall absolutely has refused to respond to repeated inquiries. Scuttlebutt had it that Tunstall was retiring due to ill health with Southern Region Coordinator Terry Stapleton appointed to the office of Sec.-Treas. But, the 1-13-04 News Service Bulletin indicates Tunstall still active as of January 9th.

The results of my questions always seem to lead to more questions! Just goes to show there's no accountability by APWU leadership to the vote less, voiceless retirees! All the more reason to redouble our efforts to gain a voice and vote for APWU Retirees Dept. members at the 2004 APWU National Convention!

Be Strong!

Al LaBrecque

(Continued from page 6)
NBA Report Continued

Processors in non-maintenance capable offices (no ET's or MPE's). In those offices the Clerk Craft was to gain a PS-6, SMP's in a number of installations and we still have a few. The problem was while the Union and USPS made a good agreement on paper, the USPS obviously was already planning to capture this mail at the plants. Which is just what they have done throughout Illinois and Michigan, No mail to run on the CSBCS machines no SMP's. So the SMP memo going hand in hand with the Mail Processor upgrade to PS-5 has resulted in a really small number of SMP's and no back pay for the other mail processors. The USPS memo signers are about 3 chess moves ahead of the APWU signers.

Hub Clerk Memo (M.G.B.)!

The memorandum signed February 19, 2003 by Director McCarthy and Doug Tulino, Manager USPS is just another example of Memo's Gone Bad (M.G.B.). The premise is for short-houred PTF's to be able to increase their hours in neighbor Associate Offices (A.O.). The bottom line is that with the increasing A.O. hour cuts these PTF's are going to have to work in more than one office to make a living or pay for their health insurance. We have had A.O. loaners for years where our A.O. clerks voluntarily went to other A.O.'s to supplement their hours. Now, with this M.G.B. our A.O. PTF's may be assigned to other A.O.'s. There is a real nice Q and A for this M.G.B., but the bottom line is the PTF's gotta go. We have already had incidents of forced details in Northern Michigan and Southern Illinois. Now, if the postal reform legislation goes through against us we may have thousands of A.O.'s being closed. This M.G.B. will make it easier for

the USPS to avoid PTF excessing because the PTF can be forced into another office. Example, we have three A.O.'s, number one is 10 miles from number 2, the third is 15 miles from number 2. The PTF in number one wants more hours, the PTF in number 3 doesn't need the money. The USPS assigns the PTF in number three to A.O. number 2. Does the PTF in the number one or number three have a grievance? NO! Go figure.

Article 6 and Article 12!

While our current and future excessing may not be pleasant and can be disruptive it sure beats lay-offs. Years ago a lay-off meant that an employee may be laid off for several weeks or months, and then called back after business picks up. Now a lay-off means bye-bye forever.

Everyday there are lay-offs and shut downs. Chicago has been hit by recent candy lay-offs. Fannie Mae closed its factory January 23rd. There are 650 factory and 400 store workers losing their union jobs in Chicago and the metro area. The factory was Teamsters and the shops were Service Employees Union. Brach's in Chicago moved and over 4,000 workers lost their jobs. Bank One is merging with J. P. Morgan Chase. 10,000 employees will be chasing new jobs. Dominick's food stores are closing 12 out of 113 stores in Chicago land, 800 employees will be affected, all union members. Tyco In

***THE DEADLINE
FOR SUBMITTING
ARTICLES
for the March/April
2004 Edition
of the MICHIGAN
MESSENGER
is March 15, 2004***

(Continued from page 11)
NBA Report Continued

tions in its Shelbyville, Tennessee plant which I would bet is non-union. The beat goes on. But, notice not one postal worker was laid off, but we can be excessed unlike those other workers who must envy us.

Bits & Pieces!

Congratulations to Hank Greenberg, National Director of the APWU - ABA who is retired. I first met Hank at the U.F.P.C. Convention in Louisville, Kentucky in 1966. That is when the Postal Press Association was formed. Hank was President of the A.B.A. for years and then moved over to the A.B.A when another old friend Bill Tullos went to prison. Hank and former Union Flash Editor, Dan Sullivan were sparing partners for years with Hank coming out on top, some of the time. Have a happy retirement Hank.

World War I Vet Dies - Alford Pugh the last known wounded combat veteran of World War I passed away on January 7th in St. Petersburg, Florida. He was the only wounded veteran out of less than 1,000 World War I Vets. He played the organ into his 100's. He returned to Maine after the war and worked as a railroad telegraph clerk for years. He then worked as a Letter Carrier for 26 years. He retired in 1971 so he had a 33 year retirement. Not bad either.

American's Oldest Man - Former Road Clerk - Fred Hale, Sr. was 113 in December. He shot a deer at age 100 and still drove until he was 107. He said he takes a spoonful of bee pollen each day. His first real job was as an Railway Post Office (RPO) clerk between Boston, Massachusetts and Bangor, Maine where he retired. He obviously has gotten his fair share of his civil service retirement.

2003 Was a Good Year - The USPS announced that in 2003, there was a \$3.9 billion surplus. Revenues for '03 was \$68.5 billion. The work force was reduced by 24,000 workers. Volume declined by only 600,000 pieces, however, advertising mail increased. Obviously, first class declined. What I want to know is out of the 24,000, how many were bosses?

Sports!

Wow, my Michigan State Big Ten prediction was a little off. Wisconsin is looking good at this writing. The Bears and Lions will both be 9 - 7 next season with their coaching changes. The Cubs should be 10 games better and the White Sox 10 games worse. The Detroit Tigers can win 19 more and still lose 100, go figure!

Picks & Flicks 2004!

First Fifty Dates - No, this isn't Cliff Guffey's autobiography. This stars Adam Sandler in Hawaii with Drew Barrymore. I'm not sure if he got a lai tho'.

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind - Starring Kate Winslet and Jim Carrey with a memory loss problem. Once you see this mindless film, you will want to forget it, too.

Hell Boy - No, this isn't a comedy starring Jerry Lewis. This is with John Hurt (always good) in a Nazi experiment which unleashes the child of Satan as a U. S. Secret Agent. After you see it you will say Hell No!

The Alamo - No, this isn't a film about Terry Stapleton and Frankie Sanders taking over the APWU. This is a remake of the real deal starring Billy Bob Thornton and Dennis Quaid.

Laws of Attraction - No, this isn't about Clerk Craft Director, Jim McCarthy and Doug Tulino getting friendly. This is a Pierce Bronson, Julianne Moore, divorce lawyer epic a real chick flick.

New York Minute - No, this isn't a story about Roger Clemens' retirement from the New York Yankees, this stars the Olson twins as the Olson twins.

Troy - No, this isn't a classical epic starring Troy Rorman as Brad Pitt. This is Brad Pitt starring as Achilles. No, he isn't a heal in this film.

There will be lots of other good and bad ones to spend your buck on. Some of these will be out on DVD and video before you get a chance to eat the popcorn. Enjoy!

Good Eating!

Meat loaf! Don't be scared of mad cows. This has chuck, veal and pork. I've never heard of mad calves or mad pigs. You'll be mad if you don't enjoy this loaf. Beside Atkins will be proud:

Meat Loaf

2 ½ lbs. ground chuck
1 lb. ground veal
½ pound ground lean pork
2 cups soft bread crumbs
1 cup chopped onions
4 eggs, slightly beaten
1 can bean soup
1 can tomato soup
4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper

Press into a greased loaf pan and bake at 350 degrees for 1 ¼ hours. GARNISH WITH PLENTY OF ICE-COLD MILLER HIGH LIFE, BUD LIGHT OR WHATEVER.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)
NBA Report Continued

Breakfast Time!

Blueberry "Ricotta" Pancakes! Hey early risers this will fill you up until it's time for your Big Mac luncheon:

Blueberry Ricotta Pancakes

4 egg yolks
1 cup (4 ounces) Wisconsin Ricotta Cheese
3/4 cup flour
1 tablespoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
4 egg whites
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries, thawed and drained.

Beat egg yolks. Add cheese, flour, sugar and salt. Beat until smooth, then set aside. Beat egg whites until stiff, but not dry. Gently fold cheese mixture and blueberries into egg whites. Lightly oil a heated griddle or frying pan. For each pancake, put about 1/4 cup batter onto hot griddle. Turn pancakes when they are puffed and full of bubbles. Cook other side until golden brown. Serve with butter and maple syrup, or whipped Ricotta cheese and blueberries.

Jerry



(Continued from page 4)
Injury Comp Report Continued

Misrouted mail compounds delays. Not all information should be sent to the Kentucky office. CA-1's, CA-2's, CA-5's, and CA-6's (along with attachments), should be mailed to the claimant's OWCP District Office, the only offices where new cases can be created. For tracking performance measures, all CA-2A's, CA-7's, CA-7A's, CA-7B's and CA-16's also should be routed directly to the district office. USPS designees misinforming claimants creates additional delays. Only those CA forms that require agency completion need to be submitted through the employing agency. All other CA forms and attachments, including medical information, should be submitted directly to the Central Mailroom in London, KY or to the claimant's OWCP Office, whichever is appropriate. The USPS Injury Compensation Offices and Shared Services are not part of any OWCP Office. Effective Sept. 2, 2003, OWCP contracted with a singly company, ACS, to approve all medical services requiring prior authorizations and to handle its bill-payment processes. By relieving claims examiners of this responsibility OWCP anticipates expedited services.

Anyone with a question regarding bill payment, reimbursement or treatment authorization should visit <http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com> or call 866-335-8319 (toll free). A dedicated fax number 800-215-4901, accepts medical authorization request around-the-clock.

Contracting out, however, has created some new problems. Claims examiners are no longer available to discuss medical bills, reimbursements, and authorizations. Claimants are reporting that ACS customer service repre-

sentatives are not accessible and are not returning messages. Claimants are reporting unpleasant experiences rather than resolutions. OWCP's failure to supply ACS with the claimant's most current medical diagnosis of record is resulting in delays or denials for payments of medical bills, reimbursements and medical authorizations. Claimants are encouraged to submit a copy of any accepted change in diagnosis along with their request to ACS. Improvements are evident with these changes at OWCP, but they are not a cure-all. The question remains whether these changes were made to meet the needs of our injured workers or whether pressures from employing agencies and financial and governmental constraints caused OWCP to pass the buck. APWU members who suffer an injury at work are encouraged to seek guidance from their local union representatives.

NOW RON'S OPINION

I would now like to share with you my thoughts and experience's concerning these changes:

- a. The maintaining of all new claims only as imaged records has improved service. All claims staff along with their supervisors have immediate access to our files. This is very helpful when we call them.
- b. The central mailroom in Kentucky was intended to reduce routing time to the responsible claims staff in the district offices and to cut down on record-misplacement occurrences. I've been told that it takes 4-6 days for documents to be scanned and become available to the claims staff at the district office. I would hope that it didn't take 4-6 days for the claim staff to receive their mail and open it under the old way. This to me is not

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

Injury Comp Report Continued

reducing the routing time, so we must continue to address this problem with the Department of Labor.

- c. The contracting out of the bill-payment process, and approval of all medical services requiring prior authorization has been in effect for a very short time with lots and lots of problems as you can see, bills not being paid, delay's in medical authorizations, and correcting any billing problem's prior to September 02, 2003 to just name a few.

We must continue to identify these problems and try to fix them. The only way the union knows of when a problem exists is when our members tell us. The problem may be with the Department of Labor, or it may be with the Post Office. We don't know until you tell us.

Follow Sue's advice and seek guidance from your local union representative when you suffer and injury at work, it's your right!!!

I will continue to keep Sue informed of the problems we have due to these changes and of any other problem's we have. She has the opportunity to periodically meet with officials from the Department of Labor, and Postal Officials to discuss the problems we are having. This is why it is important for you to inform your local union official when you have problems, so they can inform me, and then I can share this information with Sue.

Knowledge is Power, Use It, and Share It

In Union Solidarity,

Ron Krumrie

(Continued from page 4)

Maintenance Memo Continued

passport was revoked. He was not allowed to leave the US. In February 1952, he was invited to sing at the Fourth Canadian Convention of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. These were among the most militant North American workers who had battled long and hard with the mine owners.

Robeson could not get permission to leave the US and travel to Canada to sing for the meeting so he sang over the telephone and promised the "Mine Mill" workers as they were known that he would organize a concert on the US-Canada border.

He did it! On May 18, 1952, Robeson stood on the back of a flat bed truck and with speakers to aid his powerful voice, sang songs of defiance and solidarity to 40,000 people who gathered on the border. This concert known as the Peace Arch Concert was a great moment for working class internationalism. It was commemorated on the 50th anniversary two years ago.

Our history is rich and Paul Robeson is one of its great chapters. As he is saluted with a stamp this year, be sure to tell your family and friends that this great artist was an honorary member of at least a half dozen unions based on his time on the picket line and untiring work in support of labor both organized and unorganized.

Jane

(Continued from page 16)

Black History Month Continued

From there Woodson traveled to Asia and Europe, where he spent a semester at the Sorbonne in Paris. He mastered several languages, which enabled him to teach in the Philippines.

In 1915, he founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Woodson realized the need for special research into the black American's life and history. The association began pressing for a "Negro History Week" as a way to explore the contributions of African Americans.

This dream became reality in 1926. In 1976, the renamed Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History expanded Black History Week into Black History Month.

In the book "Mis-Education of the Negro," Woodson wrote: "When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. "When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary."

Reprinted from various media.



MPWU OFFICERS/EXECUTIVE BOARD

President, Gary VanHoogstraten

H: 989-894-2656; e-Mail: MIPREZ1@Chartermi.net

Executive Secretary, Harold Juhl

W: 517-337-8753; H: 517-651-7115; FAX: 517-332-4391; e-Mail: Juhl1Gems@hotmail.com

Secretary-Treasurer, Darren Joyce

W: 810-257-1530; U: 810-239-0931; H: 810-732-7459; FAX: 810-239-6879

Director of Education & Research, Lynn Pallas-Barber

W: 906-774-6804; U: 906-774-6303; H: 906-774-2083; FAX: 906-774-7353; e-Mail: APWU@uplogon.com

Editor, Michael Long

W: 616-776-1485; H: 616-225-0846; U: 616-776-1489; Cell: 616-302-1409; Fax: 419-781-7160; e-Mail: MPWUEditor@yahoo.com

Legislative Dir., Cynthia Hardison

W: 313-226-8375

Clerk Craft Director, Bob Maloney

W: 248-454-2423; H: 248-373-8433

HR/Injury Comp Dir., Ron Krumrie

W: 231-933-1020; U: 231-933-4525; FAX: 231-933-4821; H: 231-946-7796

Motor Vehicle Service Craft Dir., Gary K. Myrick

W: 313-961-4834; U: 313-532-9305; H: 313-342-8699; e-mail: APWU7@bignet.net

Maintenance Craft Director, Jane Duggan

W: (313) 234-8839; H: (313) 566-2262 e-Mail: mpwumaint@yahoo.com

Area 1 Director, Larry Moyer

W: 248-619-1590; H: 810-793-1872; e-Mail: APWU6723@bignet.net

Area 2 Director, Tony Friday

H: 313-835-7413; W: 313-937-2145; e-Mail: LA3079@aol.com

Area 3 Director, Richard Blake

H: 734-433-5461; U: 313-532-9305; W: 734-665-1107; e-Mail: Rwb139@aol.com

Area 4 Director, Jim Beauchamp

W: 810-257-1567; U: 810-239-0931; H: 810-235-7297

Area 5 Director, Joan Norton

W: 989-771-5718; H: 989-686-6257; e-Mail: JMNorton14@aol.com

Area 6 Director, Mary Stephenson

W: 517-337-8767; U: 517-337-8753; H: 517-627-2608

Area 7 Director, George Corneail

W: 269-353-5067; U: 269-353-1888

Area 8 Director, Harold Smith

W: 517-789-2400; H: 517-782-8036; e-Mail: Harold@modempool.com

Area 9 Director, Jennifer Gilbert

W: 616-977-1046; U: 616-977-1050 e-Mail: Jenilee6@aol.com

Area 10 Director, Terry Nelson

W: 231-933-1020; H: 231-883-1014; e-Mail: Area10Dir@hotmail.com

Area 11 Director, Mike Wekwert

W: 989-354-2520; H: 989-356-2302; e-Mail: Wekwertm@chartermi.net

Area 12 Director, Dennis Barber

U: 906-774-6303; H: 906-774-2083; FAX: 906-774-7353; e-Mail: APWU@uplogon.com

P.O.W.E.R. Rep, Patricia Johnson

W: 313-964-1100; FAX: 313-964-5629

State Retiree Chapter President, Al LaBrecque

H: 989-736-8173; e-Mail: allab@deepnet.com

MPWU Auxiliary Liaison,

Position is Currently Vacant

MPWU Historian, Debbie Brand

H: 269-729-9374

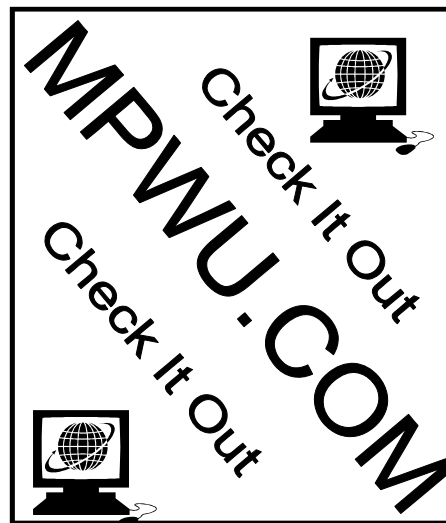


The MICHIGAN MESSENGER is published six times yearly, and is the official publication of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, also affiliated with the APWU Postal Press Association.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, or anyone in particular. Any correspondence to the Editor may be sent to: Michael Long, Editor, PO Box 280, Sheridan, MI 48884-0280; fax to: 419-781-7160; or e-Mail to: MPWUEditor@yahoo.com.

Your articles are welcome! They must be signed to be printed, but your name will be withheld upon request. Articles sent via electronic media will be treated as being signed. Be aware that articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

In addition, this paper is designed with everyone in mind, please be aware that all mistakes are intentional for the express purpose of keeping those happy that are most happy when finding errors



Upcoming Events to Plan For:

- March 5 - 6 - Area 7 & 9 District and Editors' Meeting, Best Western Midway Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI
- April 29 - May 1, 2004 - Constitutional Convention, Holiday Inn South & Convention Center, Lansing, MI
- August 19 - 27, 2004 - APWU Biennial Convention, Los Angeles, CA
- November 2004 - District Meeting, Traverse City, MI
- May 2005 - MPWU Educational Convention, Radisson Hotel, Kalamazoo, MI



Resolutions Writing 101

1. Keep it to the point. State either why the current language doesn't work, or something should be added. Present an short (usually one or two sentences) argument as to this reasoning. This will be your "Whereas"
2. Express the result/resolve that you would like to see. This will be your "Let it be resolved" section.

(For example only: **Whereas:** The union can not operate without enough members, and; **Whereas:** by law, non-members must be represented in the same regard as members in the grievance process; **Let it be resolved:** That the National Union will work with Congress and the Senate to write a law to)

Once you have written a resolution, please send it to: if you are a member of a local to your President, or a Member at Large to Harold Juhl. If you have any questions, or have an idea and need help in writing up resolutions, please contact either your local or one of the state officers.

Honoring The Father of Black History Month

As children, we joked that the only reason February was chosen was because it is the shortest month . The truth is, February was chosen because of the tremendous number of African-American pioneers and institutions born in this month -- from W.E.B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes to the NAACP and the first Pan African Congress.

And the answer to the question "Who is the father of black history?" is Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Woodson didn't graduate from high school until he was almost 22 years old. But in 1912, he received his Ph.D. from Harvard, becoming the second African-American to do so.

Woodson's journey began in New Canton, Va., on Dec. 19, 1875. The son of former Virginia slaves, Woodson was born into a large, poor family whose education was sporadic at best. But he was able to teach himself, mastering the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic. Looking to further his education, Woodson moved to Huntington, W. Va., where he was forced to earn his living as a coal miner.

In 1895, Woodson entered a Huntington high school, where it took him less than two years to receive his high school diploma. Two years later, he had earned a degree from Berea College in Kentucky.

Woodson became an educator, teaching high school and later serving as the dean of liberal arts at Howard University and West Virginia State College. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in 1908 from the University of Chicago, and a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1912.

(Continued on page 14)

- INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF THE MICHIGAN MESSENGER -

President's Report – Gary VanHooqstraten	Page 1
Secretary's Writings - Harold Juhl	Page 2
Education at Work – Lynn Pallas-Barber	Page 2
Long and Short of It – Michael Long	Page 3
Clerk Craft Report - Bob Maloney	Page 3
Injury Comp Report - Ron Krumrie	Page 4
Maintenance Memo - Jane Duggan	Page 4
Area 1 Report - Larry Moyer	Page 5
Retiree Involvement – Al LaBrecque	Page 5
NBA Report - Jerry Martin	Page 6
Area 7 & 9 District Meeting w/Editor's Conference Info	Page 6
Biennial Constitutional Convention Info	Page 6
Deadline for Next Edition	Page 11
Officers and Executive Board Members	Page 15
Upcoming Events	Page 15
Resolutions Writing 101	Page 16
Honoring the Father of Black History Month	Page 16
Inside the Michigan Messenger / Index	Page 16

Return to APWU/MPWU
c/o Michael Long, Editor
P.O. Box 280
Sheridan, MI 48884-0280
Address Service Requested

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Grand Rapids, MI
Permit No. 1