

# MICHIGAN MESSENGER

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# President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten President





As I left Lansing after the Executive Board Meeting, I had a real good feeling about the success we had at the Convention. I would like to begin by thanking the delegates for their trust in me to continue to be your State President for the next two years. Local President, Harold Juhl, as well as the State's Executive Secretary and his members should be commended for the excellent weekend they planned for us. I have been the Executive Secretary before, but I never had to hold the two hats that Harold did and he came out with flying colors. A HUGE "KUDOS" to you Harold. I wish to welcome the new members of the Executive Board and also want to thank those outgoing board members for the great job they did in representing the membership. Getting back to the Convention. As we all know, we learn from our mistakes. One of my goals coming out of this Convention is to learn from my mistakes and try to correct them for the next Convention. If there are any delegates out there that wish to send me any complaints or suggestions, please do. I would rather hear from you if I did something wrong or offended anyone then hear it second handed.

The Convention was a success as far as COPA goes. I believe we collected a little over \$2,500,00 for the weekend. As we all know as Officers of the Union that we are hit at every meeting we go to; but what about the members back on the workroom floor? I know it is in all the papers and we try as officers to get those involved in this fight. We are in a critical time right now. With the elections coming in November, our political leaders need help. Just what do you think we could do by every member giving 50 cents or a dollar a week. How much is a cup of coffee or a can of pop? Don't you think it is worth our jobs in the future. So even if you and not a Union Official, I know you read your paper. Take that next step and give to COPA. It may be your job that is saved over this.

I plan on attending the next President's Conference in Montana. This will be June 12-14. With the Presidential elections coming and also our National Union elections, I feel it is necessary to attend to see what's going on. The next meeting we have in our State is the District Meeting to be held in Traverse City. The dates are the weekend of November 5,6,7 and will be held at the Waterfront Resort. We have had conventions and meetings there before and they have taken care of our needs. Steve Duede and his board have made all the plans, and with the experience they have with a State Convention at Crystal Mountain, I am sure this will be a productive meeting. Mike Long, your State editor, has the information posted on the website for you to look at. He also has the 2005 State Educational Convention to be held in Kalamazoo next year.

In closing, I know that we are all looking for the weather to break soon. I know when I was traveling to Lansing for the Convention I ran into a terrible 15 minutes of snow around the Flint area. I am hoping that it was just a passing of the bad weather and we all look forward to a beautiful summer. Enjoy yourself, and don't forget " COPA COPA COPA

In Union Solidarity,

Youthen stort

President

Gary Van Hoogstraten



# Secretary's Writings

Harold Juhl Executive Secretary

Well, I made it through my first Convention as the Executive Secretary and I want to say it was an experience that I will not forget any time soon. From setting everything up at the hotel to guaranteeing our President that everything would turn out alright was a big job, not to mention my Local in Lansing was the host local. That kind of doubled the work that I had to do. I did however have help on both sides of the coin. From my local we put together a committee who planned out the hospitality room food and entertainment. I want to give them a big thank you for all of their time that they put into this convention (ie; hospitality room, registration). On the other side of the coin I had to make sure everything ran smoothly during the Convention to keep our President from having any kind of stroke or something of that nature. I want to take this time to thank the Officers of the Executive Board who pitched in and gave me their help and support during the Convention. A special thanks to Lynn Pallas - Barber for assisting me by helping me record the minutes at the head table. Without her help I would have had to put in a lot more hours to get everything done that I had to do each day. Thank You Lynn! Last but not least I have to congratulate our President Gary VanHoogstraten for making this Convention run smooth and without any hitches. Good Job Mr. President!

By the time everyone get this issue, you should have received the last days minutes of the Convention, the minutes from both Executive Board meetings, and the new mailing list of the State Officers. If any of the State Officers need anything do not hesitate to call me. Speaking of the Executive Board, I would like to welcome all of the new Officers aboard and hope they enjoy the next two years. Congratulations to all of the returning board members for another two years. I would like to say thank you to all who voted for me and have the trust in me to perform the duties of Executive Secretary for another two years. I really appreciate the opportunity to serve the MPWU in this capacity, and I will perform my duties to the best of my abilities.

For all of the new Officers if you have any concerns or questions about anything feel free to call me. Good luck in your new positions in the MPWU!

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# Education at Work

Lynn Pallas-Barber Director of Research & Education

### MPWU CONVENTION

After returning from the convention, I can't help but think and say nothing but positive things. The CMAL and Harold Juhl did an excellent job in hosting the convention. The 
participation of the state and local delegates was refreshing. It is always good to hear some good debate on the microphones. I am always pleased to hear and see the work 
that the Michigan delegation puts forth. There were of 
course, a couple of glitches. It is hoped that we remember 
for next time and learn by our mistakes. Over all, the 
Michigan delegates at our state convention should be 
proud of a job well done!!

### DRAFTING OF POSTAL REFORM BILLS

As I write this article Postal Reform bills are being drafted in both the House and Senate. Lobbyists for the large private mailers are hard at work, trying to shape the legislations. The changes which are being contemplated could have a negative effect on rural areas, like most of the State of Michigan. These changes could include closing small post offices, discontinuing six-day delivery and ending universal service and rates as we know them.

The sanctity of the mail could also be in real jeopardy. Mail boxes could be jeopardized if this legislation recommends privatizing the Postal Service by out sourcing the processing of mail. Mail could even be abandoned if a private mail company goes out of business. The threat of terrorism in the mail would most likely be increased.

We could be reduced to collective begging instead of bargaining. The Presidential Commission recommended that we keep collective bargaining, but not as we know it. They also recommended pay for performance. We would lose our rights to collective bargaining and would suffer a loss of wages and benefits. It is extremely important that we contact our legislators and let them know our position. It is an important task for each and every one of us.

The Presidential election this fall is the MOST important election for postal workers. In the past we have had our differences between the members who are of different po-

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# The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long Editor

Thank You to the delegates at the Biennial Convention for voting to allow me to serve as your Editor for the next two years. As always, if I can be of any help to any member, please ask.

While the 19th Biennial Convention is now just a memory, I would like to thank the outgoing members of the Executive Board for the tireless efforts in the support of this union. Cynthia, Gary, Tony, Harold, and Patricia you are all owed a big Thank You for all you did and will do. While we say goodbye to old friends, we also say hello to new ones. Welcome Regina, Scott, Chris, Dan, and Aloha.

At the Executive Board on Sunday following the Convention, a discussion arose about offering a statewide Dental Plan for the members of the MPWU. I would like to make this offer officially to each and every member of the Michigan Postal Workers Union. As the Dental Administrator for the Western Michigan Area Local, I have the ability to offer dental coverage throughout the entire state of Michigan. If you would like more information on this plan, go to http://www.wmal.org and click on the Dental Information link. Open Season will take place in October for the upcoming year.

I would like to take this opportunity to apologize for not including photographs of the convention in this edition of the Messenger. My laptop computer broke down (and was sent in for repair) and all the photos were on the hard drive. Rest assure that the next edition will contain the photos. So consider yourself warned.

In case you didn't read the information from TSP. You might want to go to their website and read it. Effective July 1, 2004, if you get a loan from your TSP account, there will be a \$50.00 fee deducted from your disbursement. (I.e. You asked for \$2,000, you will only receive \$1,950 in your check, but you will still have to pay back the entire \$2,000).

Until Next Time,

Yours in Solidarity,

Mike



# Legislative Report

Regina Favors Legislative Director

Let me begin by saying thank you for electing and allowing me to be your State Legislative Director. It is an honor and a privilege to be able serve you and I will do my best to live up to the task.

By the time you read this article the day declared as "STICK IT UP THEIR BEHIND" day will have passed and hopefully it will have been a great success, and if it was not then as stated we will do it again and again until they get the message. For those of you who did not get a heads up May 19th was the date that was set for EVERY-ONE in the United States to not purchase gas. It had been calculated that if everyone in the U.S. did not purchase a drop of gasoline for one day and all at the same time, the oil companies would choke on their stockpiles, and at that same time the entire industry would be hit with a net loss of over 4.6 billion dollars which affects the bottom lines of the oil companies. There were letters and fliers being sent e-mail, regular mail, handed out and posted all over the place. I sent e-mails to all of the addresses that I have and asked all of them to send to all the addresses they had and so on, and to those friends and relatives who do not have computers or e-mail addresses I sent letters through the mail and/or hand delivered the message. As I said, I hope it was an overwhelming success.

I have just completed my first time as a COPA delegate and what a wonderful experience it was. We screened over 30 candidates seeking endorsement from the AFL-CIO for election or re-election on one evening and over 40 candidates the next night. It is something just talking and listening to them and seeing what they are about on issues that deeply affect you. We then vote on candidates and send our recommendations to the Exec. Board and they make the final determination for endorsement in June. I just can not say it enough but everything is at stake. We are trying to put the right people in place but if we do not get out there and vote it will all be for naught.

At every town hall meeting I have attended, all the talk is about the loss of jobs and businesses going under. For instance, did you know that job growth under Bush is set to be the worst in about 70 years? Also since Bush "stole" office, America has lost 3.1 million private-sector jobs.

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# Clerk Craft Report

### Bob Maloney Clerk Craft Director

I can't believe what President Bush has now done. In his attempt to do away with overtime, so big oil will not have to pay it to their employees, he has made it that if you learned a skill in the Military, you can't use that skill to earn overtime. I guess if you learned to read and write in the Navy, you can't read or write in your job for overtime pay. How absurd is this law. If I am a cop and I learn to shoot in the Army, does this mean if I am working overtime, I don't get paid? He tried to take overtime away from all working people, but was not able to do that but what he did get passed is a joke to working Americans.

And what about "No Child Left Behind." This program has been under-funded from the beginning of the Act. What about the jobs that have been shipped overseas, such as computer programmers and service people? Then there is the manufacturing jobs that have gone to Mexico. The thing that burns me is that Bush and his cronies have the gall to tell us that is good for the economy because it lowers the price of goods made overseas. What? What it does is increase the profit margin. You have never seen anything that is made overseas fro less wages come back into this country at a lower price. It come in, and sells for the same price it did when it was made here. The rich just put more money in their pockets, period. Bush says this is good for the county. Tell that to the guy who's job went overseas and now he can't find a job. But Bush tells us that is good for the economy.

Now we have the President's Postal Commission. There he tell us Postal Workers we are overpaid by some 20 percent. Our benefits need to be cut by at least 28 percent. Our Union Contract negotiated is bad for America, so that has to go. He also want to close Post Offices in the US that doesn't make a profit. That would mean that every Post Office in North Dakota would be closed. I bet they would love that in Bismarck. This summer, this will be coming up in Congress for a vote. This tell you three things: 1. Bush MUST go come the elections in the fall; 2. We all need to give to COPA more than ever to save our jobs; and 3. We need to write our letters to our Senators and Congressmen to tell them not to vote for the President's plan. If you never gave a penny to COPA or never wrote your congressmen or never really cared who your

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# Injury Comp Report

Ron Krumrie Human Relations/Injury Comp. Dir

### WHO'S TO BLAME?

- ⇒ Why is it hard to find a Doctor who will treat patients that are Federal Employee's suffering from a work related injury or illness?
- ⇒ Why is COP improperly denied and/or delayed?
- ⇒ Why do we have delays in getting paid compensation?
- ⇒ Why do we have delays in our medical bills getting paid?
- ⇒ Why are some medical bills being denied, when in fact they should have been paid?
- ⇒ Why doesn't our employer provide us with all the proper forms, as required by law, when we report a work related injury?
- ⇒ Why did our claim get denied?

These are all very good questions. When we experience failure and/or denial we tend to place blame on someone or something. So who's to blame when we have problems with our claims? The answer is simple, everyone. The USPS, The Department of Labor, our Doctors, and yes, even you and I.

Let us start with the USPS, they fail to inform us of our rights and responsibilities, they delay our pay, they fail to provide required information to the Department of Labor, and they make false statements. I could continue but I'm sure you see the picture here. These blatant violations of Federal Law and our collecting barging agreement cause the majority of our problems such as, delay in pay, medical bills not being paid, and claims being denied that should have been approved. Why? To save the almighty dollar. That's right, our rights are being denied so our employer can make more money.

The Department of Labor also needs to accept blame. Our claims examiners fail to return our phone calls. Our claims examiners fail to update our accepted conditions. Our claims examiners fail to update our statement of accepted facts. The Department of Labor is contracting out work, such as bill paying. These also cause many problems, such as compensation being denied, medical bills not being properly paid, and our claim being denied or closed.

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# Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan Maintenance Director

I want to thank the maintenance members present at the MPWU State Convention in Lansing for selecting me to serve as the state Maintenance Craft Director. I will work hard to live up to your expectations.

### CONVENTION NEWS

We had two maintenance breakouts in Lansing. I found them very stimulating. Our first gathering was on Thursday night. One of the members suggested this might be helpful so we got a room. Fifteen maintenance members gathered representing 11 or 12 installations. We had a good mix including custodians, a group leader, maintenance support clerks, an MM5, an MPE and several Ets. We covered a lot of ground regarding local issues.

We then switched gears somewhat and had a lengthy discussion on whether to narrow or widen the wage differential between level 3 and level 11. Two guests, William LaSalle and Joe Frega, participated in this discussion. These men announced they are running for Maintenance Division Director and Assistant Maintenance Division Director "B" respectively. The broader conversation let us hear some of their views.

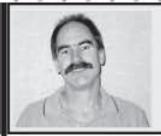
The following morning, Division Director Steve Raymer arrived. As many maintenance folks as possible had lunch with Steve on Friday. Again we had a lively exchange about wage differentials in addition to Steve updating us on national level issues. These two opportunities to meet with other maintenance members seemed very useful.

### SENIORITY ISSUES

In the weeks since the state convention, I have been dealing with quite a few seniority issues. I must say I have had a lot of input from our Central Region and National officers. This has been very helpful and informative. Here are some of the salient points:

INSERVICE REGISTERS are for one and only one installation. The question arose when Detroit went to offer some details and thought they had to contact everyone under the Detroit District, This is wrong. Only employees in

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# MVS Report

Scott Larabel Motor Vehicle Director

I would like to begin by thanking the MVS Membership that attended the State Convention in Lansing for their unanimous support. Special thanks to Ray Novakoski, WMAL President, for nominating me for this position. I look forward to working with the MPWU Executive Board in the years to come.

While in Lansing, I had an opportunity to discuss the many issues our craft faces with National Assistant Director of Motor Vehicle, Mike Foster, and MVS National Business Agent, Merlie Bell. There are aware of our concerns and assured me that we are not alone and will continue to assist us in our struggle.

As many of you are aware, the MVS Craft is under constant scrutiny by the Post Office. Management, from Washington, on down to the local level, are constantly looking at each and every operation and ways to cut costs. Instead of trimming the fat at their own level, they look at contracting out VMF and MVS work first.

Another very important and alarming trend by management is the use of non-MVS Postal Employees to transport the mail. Whether it be a handful or a tub full, it is MVS work. It isn't a Clerk, custodian, or even a supervisor's job. We must continue to file grievances each and every time we see and hear of this happening. We must do everything possible to not only protect our craft but to increase it also.

One way that has been successful is to check if these non-MVS employees have a valid postal driving familiarization and authorization to drive while in performance of postal operations. Any postal employee that drives on the clock must have one, including supervision, and it doesn't matter if they use their own vehicle. You can find out by simply requesting that info from the D.I.E. and file a grievance which ceases non-qualified non-MVS employees and ceases the issuance of authorization to employees that do not have driving duties in their job description. We need to stick together and fight collectively to be successful.

In Solidarity,

Scott



# Area 8 Report

Dan McCloskey Area 8 Director

To all members and future members. My name is Dan McCloskey and I was voted as your Area Eight Director at the May conference in Lansing. I have been with the post office for eleven years. First as a Letter Sorting Machine (LSM) Clerk in Detroit, then a mail handler at the BMC in Allen Park and now as a maintenance custodian at Jackson.

I have talked with the former director, Harold Smith, Clerk Craft director, Bob Maloney, and both have offered me their guidance in any help I might need.

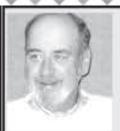
My first task to accomplish this week is to sign up a new member. I couldn't ask for a better task.

In Solidarity,

Dan



Make your voice
heard on Capitol Hill.
Write your
congressional
representatives!



# Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque MPWU Retiree's Chapter Dir.

The 2nd Biennial MPWU State Retiree Chapter Convention is history! The one-day convention bracketed by two E-Board meetings, took care of Chapter business efficiently and effectively. What we may have lacked in delegate quantity was more than made up in quality. Participation was lively and thoughtful. Thanks to Flint Retiree Chapter delegate Maxine Hale who agreed to record convention proceedings, and the computer skills of Trustee Patty Miller, both on their own time, delegates had the printed minutes in hand at convention's end.

Three resolutions to amend the State Chapter Constitution were adopted. Article 1 added the president's home address as the official mailing address of the Chapter. Article 7 was amended to provide that the State Chapter president is an automatic delegate to National pre-convention Retirees Dept. Conferences, Retirees Dept. Conferences and/or Legislative Rallies called by the APWU Retirees Dept. Director, the MPWU State Education Convention, and District Meetings when authorized by the MPWU State President, finances permitting. Article 10. Representation. The delegate voting strength of member Local Retiree Chapters was amended from one vote for every 25 members to one vote for every 20 members, or fraction thereof.

State Chapter officers elected to the 2004-2006 term of office: President, Al LaBrecque. Vice-President, George Hendricks. Secretary-Treasurer, Jerrold Clairmont. Trustees; Charles Kolhoff, Patricia Miller and Lynn C. Walker.

Considerable discussion was held on retiree's role in supporting APWU active members' battle for survival by actively opposing harmful legislation resulting from the Bush Commission's proposals for postal reform. Our convention recessed to join our parent MPWU Convention to hear an address by APWU Legislative Dir. Roy Braunstein on the latest information regarding the Congressional postal reform threat.

Two retiree resolutions were unanimously adopted by the MPWU State Convention delegates to be submitted to the APWU National Convention at Los Angeles in August; both proposing to amend the APWU Constitution: Establish The Position Of Director, APWU Retirees Depart-

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# **NBA** Report

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

In February there was a Congressional Postal Reform Hearing in Chicago that I attended. Although not invited by our APWU Headquarters' people, there were many APWU members in attendance including IPWU President Linda Turney and Chicago Local President, Deborah Redd.

There were only 3 Congressmen present. Chairman McHugh, Danny Davis from Chicago and Congressman Ed Schrock from Virginia who wasn't on the committee but wanted to learn more of the issues.

Each Union and Association President read a scripted testimony and there were few questions for each President. Reform is a sure thing is all I can say. None of the President's opposed reform and each of them only appeared to placate the Congressmen in their testimony. President Burrus only concern was the large discounts the pre-sort companies receive to take our work.

Reform will go through Congress, be assured. Our only hope is to hang on to what we have with certain friendly Congressmen amending this legislation to eliminate the poison pills that the Bush administration desires. The NALC, only cares about the first and last mile, collections and delivery. They could care less about the distribution in between. The Rural Carriers are the same. The Mailhandlers Union is strangely silent since the consolidations will hit them as bad as APWU. President Vince Palladino from the National Association of Postal Supervisor's (NAP's) really had his nose up Congressman McHugh's rear. To quote, "We agree with the postal commission that the current network of post offices and plants requires streamlining - leading to the closure of unneeded facilities......" How bad is this guy?

The APWU's best bet is to get enough money to buy enough votes to hold our position. Don't kid yourself, money talks. The APWU membership gave over \$1 million last year. Wow! \$4.00 per member. Everyone should give \$2.00 - \$10.00 a pay period to save your jobs. Will it happen, I doubt it, but we have to try.

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### TSP Open Season

Open season dates: April 15 through June 30 and October 15 through December 31

IRS elective deferral limit for 2003: \$12,000 IRS elective deferral limit for 2004: \$13,000

TSP contribution limit for FERS employees for 2004: 14% (up to the IRS limit)

TSP contribution limit for CSRS employees for 2004: 9% (up to the IRS limit)

TSP contribution limit for members of the uniformed services for 2004: 9% (up to the IRS limit)

An updated version of the Fact Sheet, Annual Limit on Elective Deferrals, is now available in Forms & Publications on this Web site. Participant statements are on-line in Account Access on this Web site. Click on Your TSP Participant Statement for more information. If you are age 50 or older and you are already contributing the maximum amount of regular TSP contributions for which you are eligible, you may elect to make up to \$3,000 in catch-up contributions for 2004. You must make a new election each calendar year. (This limit changes annually.)

Civilians should use Form TSP-1-C, Catch-Up Contribution Election; members of the uniformed services should use Form TSP-U-1-C. For more information, see the Fact Sheet, "Catch-Up Contributions."

Loan interest rate for new loans is 4.500%.

Annuity interest rate index: 4.125% for annuities purchased in June 2004 and 4.000% for annuities purchased in May 2004.

Your account balance is updated each business day. To access your account, you will need your Social Security number and Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you do not know your PIN, you can request a new one from the Account Access section of this site or from the Thrift Line (504) 255-8777.

Civilian TSP participants who are members of the Ready Reserve — If you are a civilian TSP participant with an outstanding TSP loan and are placed in non-pay status to perform military service, make sure your agency provides the TSP with documentation to certify your status and suspend loan payments. The Internal Revenue Code allows the TSP to suspend loan payments for all participants placed in non-pay status for up to one year of non-pay. However, participants placed in non-pay status to perform military service for more than one year are authorized suspension of loan payments for the entire period of military service. For more information, see the Fact Sheet Effect of Non-pay Status on TSP Participation.

### (Continued from page 2) Secretary's Writings Continued

In closing, I hope that everyone who was in attendance at the Michigan Postal Workers Union Convention enjoyed themselves and accomplished what we set out to do. I had a great time organizing and hosting the convention and look forward to the next two years as your Executive Secretary.

In Solidarity,

### Harold

(Continued from page 2)
Education at Work Continued

litical parties. Brothers and sisters we need to support the political candidate who supports our very bread, butter and life. Our vote in this election this fall could be our very existence as postal workers.

### COPA

COPA contributions become more important every single day. The buck is what speaks on Capitol Hill. It is imperative that each and every member contribute. Some tough goals and expectations have been set for us. We increased our contributions greatly last year. We need to do what we can to meet our goals for this year.

### MEMORIAL DAY – REMEMBER OUR VETERANS

### WHAT IS A VETERAN?

A person who looks the world in the eye... and feels an extra heartbeat when the flag goes by.

He steps a little faster when he hears a military band. She comes from every race and creed. A Veteran can be big, small, short or tall. He's the Doughboy of World War I, the G.I. of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, A Sailor, Soldier, Flyer or Marine.

From Artillery, Infantry, Medic, Engineering, Armored, Ordnance or Corpsman. A Republican, Democrat and Independent. He or she may be a plumber, doctor, salesman, mechanic or clerk. A rich person, poor or in-between. A Veteran is a person who knows that vigilance and preparedness are necessary if freedom is to be preserved. Veterans are proud of the American heritage, alert to the present and confident of America's future.

A Veteran likes the legends of America's great — like Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower all the proud patriots who have marched through American history. He has bivouacked at Valley Forge, charged the Hills of Gettysburg, faced fire at San Juan Hill, stormed the sands of Guadalcanal, swarmed ashore at Omaha Beach, waded the cold mud of Korea and the steamy jungles of Vietnam.

In the veteran's secret heart there is always a tinge of sorrow, a souvenir of sadness for lost and departed comrades. The veteran is more than a first-class fighter and member of history's great exclusive fraternity. Our veterans today no longer wear their colors, but they are more than patriotic citizens.

They still deserve our eternal thanks for their sacrifices to keep our land free.

(Author Unknown)

Especially during this time that our country is at war, let us remember our veterans past and current who have made tremendous sacrifices to keep us proud Americans.

Until next time,

In Solidarity

### (Continued from page 3) Legislative Update Continued

And what with outsourcing and contracting out of as many jobs as possible no one is safe. For example, remember when postal employees repaired anything broken in the post office? We all should know by now that our jobs are in serious ieopardy especially if G.W.Bush remains in office. At the State Constitutional Convention in Lansing, our National Legislative Director Roy Braunstein gave us a report on the Presidential Commission on USPS. I tell you brothers and sisters what GW is doing is not good for us at all. Roy also said that he is pretty sure that we won't be able to take back the House or Senate this November but we can put people in office to help minimize the effects and also get leverage to get people in position for 2008. It is going to take all of us so please, please make sure your voice and the voice of everyone you know is heard loud and clear.

Until Next Time,

Regina



### (Continued from page 4) Clerk Craft Report Continued

President was, it is time to join the good fight. If not, was a Postal workers will be made second-class citizens by President Bush.



### (Continued from page 4) Injury Comp Report Continued

Our doctors need to step forward and accept some blame also. They are expected to provide medical care to help us recover from our injuries which includes providing written reports. It can be difficult at times to find a doctor who is willing to take you on as a patient once you tell them that you are a Federal Employee suffering from a work related injury. Lack of medical information is one of the biggest reasons for denial in our claims. Why? Many don't want to deal with all the paperwork that is required. Many have had bills that where not paid, and many of the ones that did get paid, did so after great delay.

Finally we need to accept some of this blame as well. That's right, I said we must also accept blame when we have problems with our claim. We fail to learn what our rights and responsibilities are. We rely on others to provide us with all the right information, most of the time this is Mgmt. BIG MISTAKE, remember they are in it for the MONEY. We also fail to follow-up when the Department of Labor requests additional information, from us and/or our doctor (remember it is our responsibility to ensure all our medical information is provided to the Department of Labor). At times we fail to keep the Department of Labor updated with our current medical conditions, and almost all of us fail to maintain complete and accurate files.

We have identified who we can blame when things go bad. Now we can fix it, and we start with ourselves. We rely on others to tell us what our rights and responsibilities are instead of researching it for ourselves. Don't simply believe it because your boss said so. If you can't find it, contact your union official for help.

Most of all take responsibility for your claim. Ensure that all information needed to support your claim such as medical reports, witness statements, and grievance and/or EEO settlements, are sent to the Department of Labor. Keep accurate files. The most important thing is that you need to learn what is required of you, and what your rights are. It will still be a fight, however if we learn the rules it will become easier to survive.

Once we learn the rules, then we can fight to ensure that our employer plays by the rules. How? Our union and if needed our congressional representatives. These battles will not go away. If we stop fighting then our rights will go away, only we can ensure that doesn't happen, and only if we continue to fight the fight.

### THE BATTLE CONTINUES:

### APWU Decries 'Cost Driven' Changes Proposed For Improving OWCP.

Protesting the potential for adding insult to injury, APWU testimony before the House Workforce Protection Subcommittee cautioned that studies of the injury compensation should focus more on workers than on costs.

"Any analysis which is based on the assumption that federal employees are somehow better off because they have become partially or totally disabled due to a workplace injury or illness is, at best, misguided." said APWU Human Relations Director Sue Carney. "Any analysis that focuses on the reduction of benefits runs counter to the spirit of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act, and risks the creation of fundamental inequities for the injured worker."

It sure is good to know we have someone in Washington fighting to save our benefits. Great job Sue and keep fighting the fight.

Also testifying before this subcommittee where Shelby Hallmark - Director, OWCP, U.S. Department of Labor, and Elliot Lewis - Assistant Inspector General for Audit Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor.

All three testimonies are available at <a href="https://www.luviewnews.com">www.luviewnews.com</a>. Check them out if you get a chance and see if you can figure out who's looking out for our best interest.

May all your grievances be winners, and you claims approved.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, USE IT, AND SHARE IT!!!

Ron



# (Continued from page 5) Maintenance Memo Continued

the installation where the promotion/detail exists must be considered.

INSERVICE CANDIDATES are ranked in score order. Maintenance craft employees on an inservice register will be given priority over all others regardless of score.

SENIOR QUALIFED positions are filled by the person with the most occupational group seniority. This differs from PARs where maintenance installation seniority prevails. Senior qualified positions are spelled out in Article 38. Maintenance Support, although a non-MSS position, follows these directives. That means the SC5 with the most occupational group seniority fills a SC6 vacancy.

I had a call this week to discuss the mandate to fill vacancies until a level 5 vacancy occurs. This means that IF a level 5 vacancy occurs, that vacancy will be posted on the next posting. It does not mean that level 5s have priority over other levels in filling vacancies at level 6 and above.

In the case in question, an LC3 filled a Letter Box vacancy. The LC3 had the highest score and therefore was at the top of the PER for Letter Box Mechanic. This was done correctly. The employee with the highest score regardless of current level gets the promotion except in those cases where SENIOR QUALIFIED is spelled out in Article 38.

### KEEP IN TOUCH

Please feel free to write, call or email me anytime. I will try and respond in a timely manner. Researching and answering your questions is keeping me on my toes.

I hope to see some of you at National Convention in August or perhaps sooner at the District Meeting in Traverse City.

Work safely and make SOLIDARITY a practice not just a word.

Solidarity,

Jane

(Continued from page 6) Retiree Involvement Continued

ment As An Elected Position, and Retirees Department Members Eligibility To Vote For APWU National Resident Officers. We are grateful for our active Brothers and Sisters enthusiastic support for these two critical resolutions to give retired members a voice and a vote in the Union we helped build. This, however, is just a first step in the process to achieve APWU leadership accountability to our 40,000 \$24, per year dues-paying members of the Retirees Dept. These are our two paramount issues going into the National Convention, and it isn't going to be easy having been rejected in previous national conventions. We are optimistic that due to enlightenment of retired members' quest for accountability by APWU leadership, revised constitutional language written into the resolutions, and continued support of MPWU State and Local delegates at the National Convention in L.A., will bring about the long-awaited inclusion of retired members into the APWU house.

Contrary to perceptions that conventions are "fun-time junkets at the membership's expense"; the officers and delegates to this convention in Lansing put in long days, working hard to accomplish the business we were there to do, taking time out of their personal lives to represent the best interests of our retired members. I am grateful to each and every one for their contributions making this second biennial convention of the MPWU State Retiree Chapter a success.

If every State and APWU Local provided the support and encouragement to their retiree state and local chapters that we enjoy in Michigan, retiree inclusion in this Union would already have been an accomplished fact! I couldn't ask for greater cooperation or accommodation than we receive from the MPWU State E-Board officers and

member Locals. After nearly 12 years of retiree involvement, it's that unqualified support that keeps me in the arena. And, now that our Sister 480-481 Area Local (Royal Oak) has decided to rejoin the MPWU, thus unifying Michigan again, I look forward to working in this renewed atmosphere of cooperation and brotherhood.

While I'm at it. I have to hand it to MPWU Exec.-Sec. Harold Juhl and his home Central MI Area Local for being a perfect host for this convention. Having been in their position in past years, I know about the hard work, worry, brush-firing the inevitable glitches which occur behind the scenes. From a delegate's view, things couldn't have gone smoother. And, the hospitality room in the evenings was nothing short of a food lover's delight night after night! Thank You!

Now, to a very difficult subject for me; COPA. Some readers may recall that following the beating up retirees took at the 2002 Minneapolis National Convention, and after three conventions of rejection of retiree inclusion; I declared a personal moratorium for contributing to COPA until and unless members of the Retirees Dept, were afforded a voice and a vote in the APWU we helped build.

I responded to a COPA appeal letter in writing to President Burrus declaring; "Not One Damned Dime To COPA", and that we retirees'

(Continued on page 11)

### (Continued from page 10) Retiree Involvement Continued

only value to APWU leadership is as their COPA "cash cows". That elicited a not unexpected harsh response from Burrus. The history of retiree members' COPA "cash cow" value goes back to the '96 National Convention when the late APWU President Moe Biller told the delegates that the reason there are five National Retiree Delegates to the National Convention was so that the APWU could take our COPA money. and that retirees were the biggest contributors to COPA. Thus, the stark realization that retirees were no more than the Union's "cash cows" which moved some hefty retiree contributors to withhold their generous COPA dollars, and prompted APWU Retirees Dept. Dir., John R. Smith, to declare to the delegates from a floor mike that we are not 'your COPA whores'.

Repeated Constitution Committee and convention rejection of resolutions to give Retirees Dept. members a voice and a vote in the selection of our own Dept. and APWU leadership, culminating in the especially nasty slamming of the door of the APWU House in retired member's faces in Minneapolis was the last straw which led to my "Not One. Damned Dime To COPA" stance. Neither my "cash cow" position nor the APWU leadership's attitude toward retiree inclusion has changed one iota since the 2002 convention bashing.

What has changed is the critical attack on the USPS, APWU postal workers in particular, by the hateful proposals for postal reform by the Bush Commission now being pushed in the form of legislation in the U.S. Congress. Our APWU leadership has made a concerted effort to ratchet up COPA contributions in this battle for survival to preserve jobs, collective bargaining rights (which many of us retirees laid it on the line for in 1970), and the postal service itself. This State Retiree Chapter and member Local Chapters in

Michigan have answered the call to fight back by writing thousands of letters and postcards to our Members of Congress opposing the Commission's drastic proposals for "reform".

The national APWU leadership, Loand State Unions (not "organizations" as so many APWU papers refer to the APWU...we're a UNION...AARP is an "organization") across the country have stressed and concentrated on raising COPA money to influence legislators to support our positions. Frankly, I don't believe that by simply throwing money at Members of Congress is the sole answer to winning this war. I remain of the belief that the written, verbal, phone and e-mail personal contact with Members of Congress is our most effective weapon and approach in this battle for survival.

I informed delegates at our State Chapter Convention that after much soul-searching, I have arrived at the conclusion that this fight for the very survival of our Union, APWU jobs and the Postal Service itself, demands putting aside internal differences for the duration of this very real threat to our existence. I am therefore withdrawing my boycott of COPA and will be so advising Pres. Burrus in writing and my personal check to COPA to be applied toward the MPWU's (unrealistic) goal set by the national Union. This is not an easy decision to make and I risk being viewed as capitulating on my COPA "cash cow" position by our retiree membership, many of whom supported my position on retiree COPA contributions, and by the APWU leadership to be viewed as a sign of weakness....which would be a serious mistake on their part! The only reason for this difficult decision is that it's my view that if we fail to prevail in stopping this assault by the Bush Administration, our internal issues

won't much matter if this Union and the USPS are put out of business. It's critical that we employ every APWU resource; Congressional contacts and COPA if we are to survive!

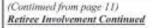
Taking a page from my home Flint Local's past strategies for combating management's leaning on our members under Leo Persails and the late Clyde Hartshorn's strong leaderships. when they declared "war", A council of war would be called directing officers and stewards to file grievances on anything and everything. No class actions, all individual grievances, until management called off their dogs. We would run grievances off on a copier with only dates and names to be filled in and bury them in paper. It was gut hard work, but when management realized that after several such "wars", the Local could turn the grievance "faucet" on and off, labor relations would improve dramatically. Well, at least for the time it takes to preserve APWU jobs and the Postal Service, I'm turning my COPA "faucet" on. It may not be a lot, but what I can afford. Depending on the outcome of reform legislation and treatment of retiree paramount resolution issues at the 2004 National Convention will determine whether or not my COPA faucet will remain on, or be turned off.

At the same time, I want to make it crystal clear that my positions on COPA; the retiree "cash cow" national Union leadership's treatment, problems with how COPA funds are distributed, failure to call a national Legislative Rally on Capitol Hill because Pres. Burrus is not a "disciple" of legislative rallies, and lack of APWU Locals concerted efforts to write or otherwise contact their Members of Congress by solely relying on COPA to buy legislator's votes remain as strong as ever.

(Continued on page 12)







This is my personal position, just as my withholding my COPA contributions were, and not meant to ask anyone else to follow my lead. In some ways I feel like the guy who throws himself on a grenade for the greater good. The eventual outcome in Congress and the 2004 APWU Convention will determine if sacrificing my principles was worth it.

Be Strong!

Al

(Continued from page 7) NBA Report Continued

### **Excessing Continues**

The Chicago withholding area has now shrunk from 350 miles to 50 miles. There are still several other withholdings in Illinois and Michigan that extend 100 miles. Although the National moratorium of not being excessed over 50 miles is still currently in effect. These 100 mile withholdings prevent PTF's from being converted. Greater Michigan excessing has been on hold but may be kicking off again as this article comes out. Withholdings are a drag, excessings are a drag, but they are better than the other alternative - layoffs!

### Media Crackdown

Janet Jackson may have started it all, but Bush is ending it. The F.C.C. is raising fines for naughty things. Howard Stern was pulled by Clear Channel broadcasting. ABC is now censoring NYPD Blue for language and sex scenes. Hey, here is an deal, change the channel or radio station or read a book and listen to an 8-track.

### **Bush and Unions**

The current administration is the most anti-union administration in history. His Secretary of Education recently stated that the National Education Association with 2.8 million members is a terrorist organization. He later said he was only joking. Bush now want to support a constitutional amendment to ban gay unions!

### Window Clerks Beware

Again, I urge all window sales associates to remember your training. We have too many that "forget" to scan purchases creating an overages in their receipts. But, their overages mysteriously appear in their pockets or purses when they leave for the day and the Postal Inspectors nab them in the parking lot. We also have those that void many transactions sometimes 15-20-30 times a day. Lots of errors! The Postal Inspectors have access to individual P.O.S. sales. Many voids seem to gain their attention, as well. Then the P.I.S. mystery shops the "suspect." Guess what? Another one bites the dust. We cannot win this type of removal in arbitration unless we have a really good "due process" argument. Don't put your career on the line for a few bucks and possible prosecution. Just don't do it.

### Bits & Pieces

A.P.P.S. withholding. I received the first notice of withholds for the new Parcel Sorting Machine. The placement of 1 APPS in Indianapolis, Indiana will result in excessing of 30 clerks and 10 mailhandlers since two SPBS will be replaced. So get ready. I have already sent out the deployment schedule to all Illinois and While some Michigan presidents. offices with SPBS are not on the schedule to receive the APPS, get ready since the Postal Service will be consolidating these operations once deployed. So more APWU jobs are leaving. The Mailhandlers Union has a real good shot at gaining positions on the APPS, but the APWU will challenge any change of jurisdictions since the SPBS keyers were involved in distributing mail, our work. So get

ready for a several-year battle.

### No Alaskan Crab Please

Six (6) people were recently indicted for mailing alcohol to dry and damp villages in Alaska. Hey, the USPS comes through again. Those six (6) involved packages of alcohol being mailed into villages that elected to be damp or dry, twenty Postal Inspectors were involved in this screening of thousands of packages. The maximum penalty for illegally mailing alcohol is one year in prison and a fine of \$100,000.

So, remember if you know anyone in Alaska, don't mail any booze to them or you could be eating blubber along with bubba!

### Arbitration Advocates

President Burrus recently released a list of National Arbitration Advocates. The good, bad and the ugly. No, that was a good movie! The Advocates are in a real tough situation. We want Advocates to assist in handling our overwhelming arbitration workload in Illinois and Michigan. The Advocates have been losing money on this deal, Authorized hours have been cut (16 to 12). Yet, they all have to prepare the primary cases and back up cases, which all take time with each case. President Burrus has stated that if more time is needed, all an Advocate has to do is contact their Coordinator for additional "paid hours." So many of our former Advocates that have done a great job of representation for the membership can't afford to take LWOP from the post office to prepare cases for 2 - 3 days and only get compensated for 1/2 day. "Unless they're in the K.M.A. Club." Anyway, I congratulate those Advocates

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### (Continued from page 12) NBA Report Continued

that have hung on or jumped on board and I thank those former Advocates that have done such a good job without proper compensation for years. I, further, thank those Advocates that have "hung in there!" Thanks to you all for assisting the APWU.

### United Kingdom Signs Away Royal Mail

Bush must have really enjoyed this news item. Royal Mail opened itself up for competitors to use the British deliver network to the "final mile:" Royal Mail and British Post have agreed to deliver letters for almost 1/3 less than regular postage rates in Great Britain. The first and final mile is all our letter carrier friends care about in the U.S.

### American Jobs Lost to NAFTA

These are just a few of American jobs recently lost to NAFTA:

> Stroh Brewery - 2,222 Sarah Lee - 2,124 Eaton Corp. - 2,052 Haggar Clothing - 1,717 Freightliner - 1,595 Lockheed Martin 1,584 Motorola - 7,347 Fruit of the Loom - 5,351

Think about it, Bush loves NAFTA!

### NALC Officers Party With The Enemy

Three top three NALC officers met with key officials of the Direct Marketing Association in Boca Raton, Florida to develop initiatives to increase postal service revenue.

NALC President, Bill Young and Direct Marketing Association President, H. Robert Wientzen discussed new initiatives to increase the use of mail to

increase postal revenue. Apparently, the NALC and Mailers got along really good, since now President Young has invited Wientzen and other DMA representatives to the NALC Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii, July 19 - 23, 2004. Obviously their discussions went very well.

I only wonder who is sleeping with the enemy?

### Teamsters and Engineers Together

James Hoffa recently announced the merger of the Teamsters Union with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engi-This brings 36,000 union members into the Teamster fold. The Engineers will be part of a new Locomotive Engineers and Trainman Division of the Teamsters.

Think about it, who fought more over "work," trainmen or truckers? Unless it would be clerks and mailhandlers.

### Ford Layoffs in Missouri

1,000 Ford workers, 37% of the workforce will be eliminated April 26. Originally, the Hazelwood, Missouri plant was going to be shut down completely, but reversed its decision in agreement with the UAW.

Verizon Communications took a \$3 billion write off when they bought out 21,000 employees.

### Bush Budget - Bio-defense Bust

Apparently, the only citizens President Bush want to protect from future anthrax attacks are the Senators and Congressmen. The USPS requested \$779 million for bio-defense. President Bush's budget proposes only So the Republican \$37 million. dominated Congress has their mail irradiated, screw the public!

### **Good Eating Time**

With everyone on low carb diets, here are several that can keep you healthy and lookin' good.

### Sirloin with Mushroom Sauce

1 boneless beef sirloin steak (1 pound and 3/4 inch thick)

1 teaspoon coarse ground pepper

2 teaspoons canola or vegetable oil 1-1/2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms

1/2 cup beef broth

1/2 cup dry red wine or additional beef

Rub steak with pepper. In a heavy ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat, brown steak in oil for about 4 minutes on each side. Bake, uncovered, at 450 degrees for 4 minutes or until meat reaches desired doneness (for rare, a meat thermometer should read 140 degrees; medium, 160 degrees; well-done, 170 degrees). Transfer steak to a warm serving platter. Let stand for 10 minutes. In same skillet, cook mushrooms over medium heat until golden brown. Add broth and wine or additional broth. Bring to a boil; cook until the liquid is reduced by about half. Thinly slice the steak; top with mushroom sauce...

### Italian Beef

3 lb. rump roast Garlic salt

1 cup water

1 can of beer

4 bay leaves

2 Tablespoons vinegar

4 beef bouillon cubes

3 packs Italian seasoning

Put roast in pan. Pour remaining ingredients over meat. Cover and bake for several hours at 350 degrees. Shred with fork and serve on buns.

gerry

### What's Ahead for Postal Reform

As previously reported, the House Government Reform Committee has approved a postal reform bill. The next step would be a vote by the full House of Representatives. The timing of that vote is uncertain, but it is expected to take place sometime during the month of July.

The Senate Governmental Affairs Reform Committee is expected to consider a postal reform bill on June 2. The bill, jointly introduced by Chairperson Susan Collins (R-ME) and Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), differs from the House bill in ways that are of major concern.

In the area of worksharing discounts, the Senate version would permit the Postal Service and major mailers to reach agreement on postage rates that violate the standard of "uniform rates." The language in the Senate bill would permit excessive postage discounts that are currently in place to continue - and even expand.

This is unacceptable to the APWU and we will fight for the adoption of the House version.

The Senate bill also includes significant changes to the rights of postal workers when they are injured on the job. It would reduce an injured worker's compensation when the employee reached retirement eligibility to 50 percent of monthly pay. This is in comparison to the current rate, which is 66 percent of pay, or 75 percent if the worker has dependents.

In addition, the Senate bill would eliminate continuation of pay" for the first three days of temporary disability. Employees injured in the performance of their duties would be forced to pay for their injuries themselves by using leave or LWOP.

These changes would legalize the application of different standards for postal employees - they would be the only federal employees penalized in this manner for suffering on-the-job injuries. The concern we felt over double standards during the anthrax attack of 2001 would become engrained in the law. In the future, one standard would apply to postal employees, while another would cover all other federal employees, including members of Congress and their staffs.

A coalition of 156 business, non-profit organizations and several postal unions and postal management associations have endorsed the efforts of Senators Collins and Carper that have led to these proposals. APWU vigorously opposes these provisions and we will make our voices heard in the debate.

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W.'s Second Term: If You Think the First is Bad., Continued

tion still protecting the environment and the safety of American workers will be eliminated.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor will surely step down from the Supreme Court, possibly joined by at least one other jurist, opening the way for the White House to nominate a series of right-wing justices, a list that could easily include Charles Pickering Sr. and William Pryor Jr. After Chief Justice William Rehnquist resigns, Bush may well nominate Antonin Scalia for the top slot -opening the way for Scalia and Clarence Thomas to dominate the Court. Such a court will curtail abortion rights, whittle down the Fourth and Fifth amendments, end all affirmative action, and eliminate much of what's left of the barrier between church and state.

Karl Rove and Tom DeLay, meanwhile, will have four more years to fulfill their goal of transforming American democracy into a one-party state.

Congressional redistricting across the nation will make Texas' recent Antics seem a model of democratic deliberation. Automated voting machines will be easily rigged, with no paper trails to document abuses. Changes in campaign-finance laws will permit larger "hard money" donations by corporate executives and federal contractors who have benefited by Republican policies.

Finally, the Federal Communications Commission will allow three or four giant media empires — all tightly connected to the Republican Party — to consolidate their ownership over all television and radio broadcasting.

Nothing is more dangerous to a republic than fanatics unconstrained by democratic politics. Yet in a second term of this administration, that's exactly what we'll have.

Robert B. Reich, secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration, is a professor of social and economic policy at Brandeis University

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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 in others.



## **Upcoming Events to Plan For:**



July 19, 2004 - Polka Cruise for COPA, Bay City, MI August 19 - 27, 2004 - APWU Biennial Convention, Los Angeles, CA November 5-6 2004 - District Meeting, Waterfront Inn, Traverse City, MI June 2005 - MPWU Educational Convention, Radisson Hotel, Kalamazoo, MI April/May 2006 - MPWU Biennial Convention, Detroit, MI



### G.W.'s Second Term: If You Think the First is Bad ...

by Robert B. Reich (former Clinton Sec. of Labor)

Musings about a second Bush term typically assume another four years of the same right-wing policies we've had to date. But it is likely to be worse.

So far, the Bush administration has had to govern with the expectation of facing American voters again in 2004. But suppose George W. Bush wins a second term. The constraint of a re-election contest will be gone. Knowing that voters can no longer turn them out, and that this will be their last shot at remaking America, the radical conservatives will be unleashed.

A friend who specializes in foreign policy and hobnobs with sub-cabinet officials in the Defense and State departments told me that the only thing that's stopped the Bushies from storming into Iran and North Korea is the upcoming election. If Bush is re-elected, "[Dick] Cheney and [Donald] Rumsfeld are out of the box," he said. "They'll take Bush's re-election as a mandate to wage the 'war on terror' everywhere and anywhere."

The second term's defense team will be even harder line than the current one. Colin Powell will go. Condoleezza Rice will take over at the State Department. Rumsfeld will consolidate power as the president's nationalsecurity adviser. Paul Wolfowitz will run the Defense Department.

Domestic policy will swing further right. A re-election would strengthen the White House's hand on issues that even many congressional Republicans have a hard time accepting, such as the assault on civil liberties. Bush will seek to push "Patriot II" through Congress, giving the Justice Department and the FBI powers to inspect mail, eavesdrop on phone conversations and e-mail, and examine personal medical records, insurance claims, and bank accounts.

Right-wing evangelicals will solidify their control over the departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services -- curtailing abortions, putting federal funds into the hands of private religious groups, pushing prayer in the public schools, and promoting creationism.

Economic policy, meanwhile, will be tilted even more brazenly toward the rich. Republican strategist Grover Norquist smugly predicts larger tax benefits for high earners in a second Bush administration. The goal will be to eliminate all taxes on capital gains, dividends, and other forms of unearned income and move toward a "flat tax." The plan will be for deficits to continue to balloon until Wall Street demands large spending cuts as a condition for holding down long-term interest rates. Homeowners, facing potential losses on their major nest eggs as mortgage rates move upward, might be persuaded to join the chorus.

In consequence, Bush will slash all domestic spending outside of defense. He will also argue that Social Security cannot be maintained in its present form, and will push for legislation to transform it into private accounts.

Meanwhile, the few shards of regula-(Continued on page 14)

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