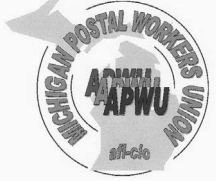


# MICHIGAN MESSENGER



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

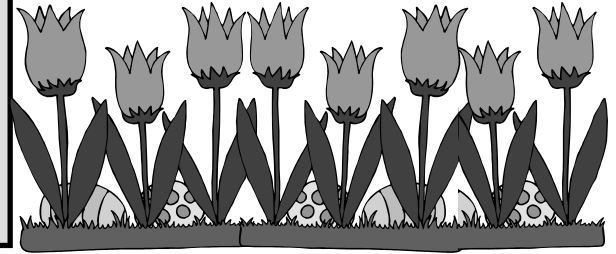
Volume 31, Issue 117

March / April 2005 Issue



## President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten  
President



As I write this article, I have just returned home from the Michigan State AFL-CIO Convention, as well as our own District Meeting in Southfield, a few days prior. While Dennis Barber and I were traveling to attend the State AFL-CIO Convention, I received a phone call and it wasn't a good one to say the least. I was informed that past State Officer of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, and former President of the Pontiac Area Local, Jeff Fors passed away on Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>. Feeling heartbroken over this telephone call was compounded by the fact that I couldn't get to the showing or funeral because of this convention. My, as well as the entire MPWU Executive Board, thoughts and prayers go out to his family and the Pontiac Area Local. We had just made the arrangements to dedicate this year's convention book to Jeff and he had told us he planned on attending. I know he will be looking down at all of us in spirit at the convention as we will continue to have this year's Education/Convention book dedicated to his life and memory.

The Michigan AFL-CIO Convention was opening and the welcome speech

came from Governor Jennifer Granholm. She spoke of the loss of jobs in Michigan and future prospects for the future of the economy and struggles we are facing this year and how she plans to attack these. She was going to Washington D.C on Thursday to fight for the closing of military plants throughout the state. There are three of them and this was her major purpose in going to Washington. She welcomed the support the Unions have given her and she knows that we will be there to fight the battles with her. Some of the other political leaders that addressed the delegates were State Representative Michael Murphy, Michigan State House Minority Leader Dianne Byrum, and Michigan Senator Bob Emerson. There was a luncheon that afternoon and many of our legislative leaders were there to join us and we were able to talk with some of them. The keynote speaker for the afternoon session was the very intelligent President of the United Mine Workers of America, Cecil Roberts. Many may remember him when he addressed us at a recent National Convention. His speech was one that I would call breathtaking. As he struggled with his loss of voice that day, he still managed to get

a great message to all of us. Throughout the day, most of the speakers mentioned a company that is increasing almost daily in the United States which needs to be unionized, not only for its employees, but for the public as well. This company is of course Wal-Mart. A brother from the Detroit area spoke with us and his topic was organizing. He said they have not given up hopes and will not until we get them Unionized. In a survey, Wal-Mart was one of the worst 10 corporations listed because of poor wages and benefits shift costs to taxpayers, who pay for public assistance that many Wal-Mart workers are forced to rely on. The study indicates that the Wal-Mart workers in California rely on the state for about \$32 million annually in health-related services, and \$54 million a year in other assistance such as subsidized school lunches, food stamps and subsidized housing. So for those that think it is great to have a Wal-Mart coming to your area or already have one, you had better think again.

While at this convention, a few of the resolutions dealt with raising the Minimum Wage, increasing unemployment benefits, restoration of overtime rights

*(Continued on page 5)*



## The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long  
Editor



## Legislative Report

Regina Favors  
Legislative Director

Brothers and Sisters,

First and foremost, I would like to take this time to let the families of Brother Fors and Sister MacDonald know how sorry I (and the entire Executive Board for the MPWU) am for their loss. They were both strong advocates for the working and the union way. While they will be missed, their work with continue to live on through all of us.

With the upcoming Educational Convention, I am going to keep my article short this month. I do want to tell each of you to check out the website for any changes, updates, etc., to the Convention and anything else that is pertinent between editions of the Messenger.

This year at the Educational Convention, the editors in attendance will have a roundtable discussion. It is my goal to have one of these "discussions" at each gathering. This gives us a chance to exchange ideas, get feedback, and to improve our job of keeping you, the member, informed.

In the last edition of the Messenger, I told you I would try to include discounts, and ways to save money as a Union member and USPS employee. In keeping with this, here are a few more:

1. Automotive Repair discounts though Goodyear. Show your Postal ID and get 10% off. This might not sound like a lot, but when you have to get a new engine or a new tires, 10% can help out.
2. Magazine Subscriptions up to 80% off. There are a lot of different magazines that you can get. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, call 888-255-6247.
3. For the last one this month, the most important one I can tell you about (and one I have spoke of previously) is your Postal ID badge. You can use this badge at hotels, and other locations to get, sometimes, up to 50% off your room. Don't leave home without it.

In closing I look forward to seeing you all in June at the Educational Convention. Until then,

*Mike*

Look Out! Pay Attention! Look Out!

Wake up and pay attention to Bush's Social Security "Reform" plan. Please do not let the Bush administration fool you on this one like they did in the election! Don't fall for the rhetoric. Look at the whole picture and please do the math !!!!! I mean math was far from my best subject in school (years and years ago); in fact it was next to the worse but even I can do this one and when you do the figures you can clearly see how much more you stand to lose instead of "the gain" Bush says you will get. The average retiree would lose \$152,000 in benefits in the 20 years after retirement (check out the century foundation, the center on budget and policy priorities and the center for economic and policy research). Social security is not "broke" as Bush puts it and there is still plenty of time to strengthen it. Before you let Bush privatize it, make congress pay back the money they borrowed from it. Don't saddle our children and grandchildren with trillions of dollars of debt because of G.W. Bush. Also, keep in mind Enron and what happened to all of those employees. If Bush gets his way with this social security issue then none of our wages, pension plans or anything else will be assured or "safe". There are a series of town hall meetings being scheduled right now. You can call the AFL-CIO at (517) 487-5966 or by e-mail at [www.miaflcio.org/rapid](http://www.miaflcio.org/rapid) response. You can also contact me at (313) 532-9305 and I will send you (either by mail or fax) any info that I have. Right now these meetings are scheduled through May 1st. You can also see about having a town hall meeting in your area if one has not been scheduled there. If you would like to see how much you will lose under Bush's plan, check out our website and click the link. Also, if you have not signed the petition that is on Senator Stabenow's website, please do so right away (<http://stabenow.senate.gov/socialsecurity>).

On another note, I have mentioned before the AFL-CIO'S rapid response committees. The goals of these committees are to have ongoing communications with the legislators and to have a rapid response to lobby on specific bills. We still are looking for individuals to serve on these committees. Some of the areas needed are District 73 (Rep. Tom Pearce (the northern half of Kent county)), District 77

*(Continued on page 6)*





(Continued from page 1)

President's Report Continued

in Michigan, ban the use of Mandatory overtime for health care workers, establish minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in hospitals, allow for no-reason absentee voting, and restore collective bargaining rights for school employees. There was a lot of discussion on all of these issues and they were all passed and will be discussed with our political leaders in the near future. Anyone wishing additional information concerning these issues should go to the AFL-CIO state website. It is miaffcio.org.

Mark, Darren, Harold and I continue to work on the final stages of the Educational convention. This issue of the Michigan Messenger will be the last one before the Convention, since it falls on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>. The MPWU.com website is updated often and any current information will be listed there when it become available. We will try and keep the membership informed as many times as we get changes. We are still waiting for some of the National Officers to respond to our invitation. I will be sending Local Presidents a letter sometime April or May with more information.

As I close, I wish all of you will remember Jeff and Flossie in your prayers along with any Union sister or brother that has passed away since the last convention. When we open this year's convention, I know that if we look to the sky, they are looking down at us with total support and are there for us.

Until Next Time,



Gary Van Hoogstraten  
President

(Continued from page 4)

NBA Report Continued

tion. In this role she emphasized the importance of gaining the support of organized labor.

In 1852 Susan B. Anthony attended her first women's rights convention. Her work in the temperance movement and labor convinced her that women also needed the right to vote. She spent a number of years organizing in support of this right. She even went to jail, was tired and found guilty by a jury who was instructed by the judge to do so without any discussion. This same judge would not imprison her when she refused to pay the imposed fines, and therefore denied her the opportunity for appeal.

She gathered petitions from 26 states on the right to vote for women. She appeared before every congress from 1869 to 1906 to request a suffrage amendment. She continued her efforts until she died in 1906. American women finally got the vote with the Nineteenth Amendment, also known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, in 1920.

It is women like Susan B. Anthony that makes me proud to be a women involved in the labor movement today. Research for this article was taken from [www.susanbanthonyhouse.org/biography.html](http://www.susanbanthonyhouse.org/biography.html)

**PRIVATIZE SOCIAL SECURITY**

As working men and women, we need to fight the Bush Administration once again. The privatization of Social Security would replace guaranteed benefits with risky private accounts that would fatally undermine Social Security. It would raise the retirement age and saddle our children and grandchildren with \$2 trillion in debt.

This administration continues to attack the working families of this

country. It has attempted to attack us as postal workers and is now attacking us with this attempt to privatize Social Security. This privatization would especially hurt women. Women make up sixty percent of all Social Security recipients. Social Security keeps older unmarried women out of poverty.

Our contributions to COPA grow more critical every day. Every member has a stake in this struggle. It is imperative that we all do our part.

Until next time,

Lynn

(Continued from page 3)

Maintenance Memo Continued

ticular classes will appear on the website, I'm sure, as we formalize our agenda.

PS FORM 4776

I got a call this week from a clerk craft officer who represents maintenance employees. Management was asking his custodians to write down everything they did each day on a sheet of paper. I was able to send him information on the PS FORM 4776 (custodial route sheet) and the directions from the MS-47 on management's obligations in this area. His office is only one of many where management does not follow its own rules.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Educational Seminar in June. It's always a great opportunity to learn from one another and strengthen our position relative to the bosses.

In Solidarity,

Jane

(Continued from page 2)  
Legislative Update Continued

(Rep. Kevin Green (Wyoming and Byron twp. in Kent county)), District 85 (Rep. Richard Ball (Shiawassee county)), and District 29 (Sen. Bill Hardiman (Grand Rapids)), there are a few more and you can contact me if you want to know of any specific one for your district. I listed these because we do have strong APWU presence in these areas and for issues relating to us (e.g. pensions, privatization, jobs etc.) We need to be able to have communications and quick lobbying efforts. If you are interested and willing to be part of this effort, please contact the AFL-CIO (number above) or get a hold of me. It's not just for us; it's for our families coming along. Let's not leave them in poverty. Just like the saying goes: "if you don't stand for something you will fall for anything." Do not let Bush win on this one!!!!!!

One last note, give generously to COPA, please, please, please.

Until next time,  
*Regina*



(Continued from page 4)  
Area 3 Report Continued

National Business Agents Troy Rorman, Bill Manley, John Clark, and especially Lynn Pallas-Barber, who hung in there despite a technical problem during her class (her digital projector burned out). I was also happy to see the participation of the 480-481 Area Local in their first MPWU District Meeting in a long time.

*Richard*

## 2005 Educational Convention

Where: Radisson Hotel; Kalamazoo, MI

When: June 2, 2005 - June 4, 2005

Costs:

Registration: \$50.00

Hotel: (includes lodging, parking, meals and taxes (Per Person))

Single Room: \$527.73

Double Occupancy: \$374.33

Triple Occupancy: \$323.50

Quad Occupancy: \$297.96

NOTE: If you are planning on bringing anyone with you and they will be dining with you, please inform Gary Van or Darren Joyce NLT May 10, 2005 to ensure we have an accurate headcount.

The following class have been scheduled:

Basic Stewards Class	Advanced Stewards
Fiduciary Responsibility	Trustee Training
Parliamentary Training	MVS Issues
Maintenance Issues	O.W.C.P.
Legislative Class	Arbitration Class
APWU Search	Editor's Roundtable Discussions

**Throughout the Convention, the following will be taking place downtown (by the hotel).**

**June 2 - 4**—Dionysos Greek Festival, a celebration of Greek Heritage & culture with a variety of Greek food & spirits. Arcadia Creek Festival Site, times vary. (269) 345-1830

**June 3 - 4**—Art on the Mall; downtown walking mall. Water to Lovell, times vary. (269) 388-2830

**June 4**—WKFR/DKI Do-Dah Parade, an annual salute to silliness, A fun, unusual & entertaining family event, starting 11 am; (269) 388-2830

**June 4**—54th Annual Juried Art Fair, come enjoy all the different art, Bronson Park, 9-5 pm. (269) 349-7775

In addition, the following attractions are in the Kalamazoo area for you to enjoy:

Air Zoo	Kalamazoo Nature Center
Kalamazoo Valley Museum	Kalamazoo Institute of Arts
Gilmore Car Museum	Four wineries and three breweries
Renovated, vibrant Art Deco downtown with nightlife	
Broadway productions, concerts and 10 live performing theatres	
22 golf courses	83 lakes with public access

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Position is Currently Vacant

### MPWU Historian, Debbie

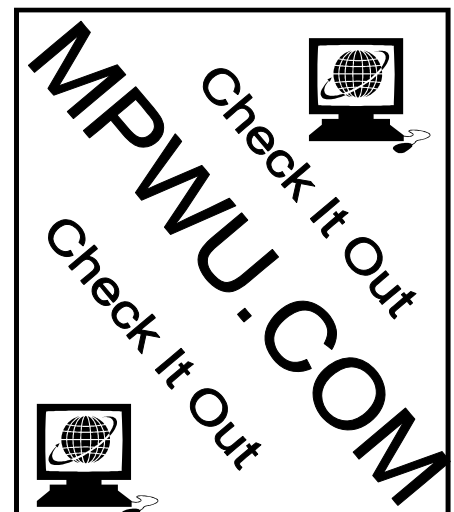
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Your articles are welcome! They must be signed to be printed, but your name will be withheld upon request. Articles sent via electronic media will be treated as being signed. Be aware that articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

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:

June 2-4, 2005 - MPWU Educational Convention, Radisson Hotel, Kalamazoo

August 8 - 10, 2005 - National Multi-Craft Conference, Las Vegas, NV

August 10 - 13, 2005 - National Postal Press Convention, Reno, NV

January - February 2006 - Area 4, 5, 6 District Meeting

April/May 2006 - MPWU Biennial Convention, Detroit, MI



## Area 1, 2, & 3 District Meeting

This meeting started off by having an open general session, where the attendees heard from Assistant Legislative Director Steve Albaneese, NBAs John Clark and Lynn Pallas-Barber, and MPWU President Gary VanHooogstraten. Many items were discussed and the attendees walked away with information about the fight in Congress, and what we can do locally to help our members. From there, the Attendees went to different classes. On Friday, the classes offered were: RI-399, and Family Medical Leave Act. The classes on Saturday included a first for Michigan. Bill Manley, NBA Support Services taught an RCI class for those stewards and members of our Organized Facility in the Detroit area. Other classes that were taught on Saturday included: Maintenance Issues, JCIM, along with another open forum in the afternoon. Overall, the feeling from the attendees to this District Meeting was that it was and went great, even with some of the technical problems we faced.. Thanks to DDAL, 480-481, and the Troy Local for putting on a great meeting.



## Notice of Passing of Jeff Fors and Flossie MacDonald

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of two past officers of the Michigan Postal Workers Union since the last edition of the Messenger.

On March 12, 2005, we lost our brother, Former MPWU Area 1 Director and Pontiac Area Local President, Jeff Fors. His legacy with the Michigan Postal Workers Union as the Area 1 Director and in the field of Time-keeping (Data Site) was instrumental during the transition to what we have now. He was called upon by not only those within the state for his expertise, but from the National office too.

On March 17, 2005, we also lost our sister, Former MPWU Officer and Farmington Local President, Flossie B. MacDonald.

While we are all saddened with the loss of our union brothers and sisters, we take strength in knowing that when we reach the here-after, it will be unionized.

**Return to APWU/MPWU**  
**c/o Michael Long, Editor**  
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**Sheridan, MI 48884-0280**  
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