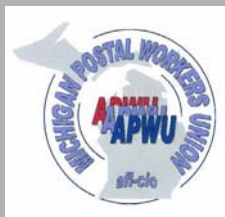


MICHIGAN MESSENGER



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President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten
President



← This was the cover of Time Magazine on March 30, 1970. While we have come a long way, we still have far to go. That is why the conventions coming up are so important to attend!

I guess there is an interesting question that some of us would like an answer to. Is the White House clueless on Postal Reform? As of last week, the current administration was threatening to veto the Postal Reform Bill, but resolving issues dealing with the White House's looming veto threat is another matter. The administration opposes language to transfer the agency's 27 billion dollar military pension obligation from the Postal Service to the Treasury and give the agency access to the money slated for an escrow account. President Bush is waiting for the particulars of the Postal Reform Bill. Why in the hell did he not look at them before now? As the Washington Post has noted when President Bush spoke before the National Newspaper Association, he was questioned from the audience. Question: Postal Reform, which has been going on in Congress for about 10 years, and was pushed forward by a commission that you appointed. It was passed overwhelmingly by both houses and we have a new compromise bill going to Congress in April or May. There has been some concern that your administration may want to oppose this bill or veto it, because it has been re-

ported not to be favorable to the federal budget. However, there are things in that bill that are very important to the newspaper industry, and a part of that is the funding that keeps rates fair. We do believe that because of some overpayment of military pensions, we don't think this should be put on to the taxpayers. So we ask your support of our behalf, and support the bill from Congress when it comes to your desk. President Bush's response was: As you know, we did support postal reform, and as you accurately noted, we got the process started. We look forward to working with Congress on an acceptable bill. But, frankly, this issue hasn't made it to my desk prior to me arriving at this meeting. While I am mindful of the bill, I need to know more about the particulars before I make a commitment one way or the other.

I guess I still have a question, did the administration know of Postal Reform prior to the appointment of the commission which was appointed? The new compromise bill should soon be coming to the floor and I would hope that the White House can find some time to look at

the particulars.

In the last APWU News Bulletin, the headline read: "National Executive Board Acts to Fight Network Consolidations." Well, I would hope that they would fight it tooth and nail and not just sit back and say that's OK. We all know that this is suppose to be contract negotiations year, but the network realignment is important to every APWU member. I feel that the Postal Service was not upfront with the National Union as far as the number of facilities, the timing, and locations that would be affected. It was said that there were some 40 facilities that have been identified since last October for consolidations of some operations. Maybe the reason that they were not fair is this way the Union would have less time to fight it. What about the employees and customers it is going to affect. Oh that's right, we are only a number to the Postal Service. Let's just hope it is not too late.

In closing, I want to say that the seminar that was in Bay City March 1,2,3 was one to remember. I believe that the session on Wednesday morning with Sue Carney and Nancy James was

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Secretary's Writings

Harold Juhl
Executive Secretary

The State Convention in April is fast approaching and I believe we will have a good one. The Detroit District Area Local is the host Local and they will do things up right to make this a huge success. I will be bringing supplies along to have available for officers who need them (envelopes, letterhead, etc.). By the time this comes out I should have received all of the officers reports and any resolutions that the Locals submitted to be put in the convention books. I hope that we will have a good turn out for this Convention and that it will run smoothly.

I did attend the H.R. Conference in Bay City, and with Darren Joyce, we ran the registration table and made sure that the conference ran smooth and handled any issues that may have came up. The hospitality room was another one of our projects during that week. The instructors that came in from National did an excellent job in presenting the materials in both classes. I would like to thank each of them for taking the time to come to Michigan, so that our members will be more informed on OWCP and Retirement issues. Good job Mark Hart in putting this conference together and making it a huge success.

In closing, I would like to say that we as state officers should be getting out to all of the MAL's and signing up new members. There are a lot of them out there that hasn't even been approached by the union to see if they would be interested in becoming a member. Let's get out there and do it!

In Solidarity,

Harold

The Detroit Skyline - Location for the
2006 MPWU Constitutional Convention



The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long
Editor

Whew! What a fast, busy, and energetic two months we have just seen. February saw us preparing for the Human Relations/OWCP & Retirement Seminar on the first of March, which turned out superbly. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Nancy James from the Shared Service Center in North Carolina who spoke to us about the phase-out of the local personnel offices. While each district will still have a "local" office, the Personnel offices that we have all come to know will be gone by year's end. One point of information that she kept saying to us, that can't be repeated enough, is to make sure your information is updated and complete in Postal Ease.

Before I forget, I wanted to add my two cents on one subject that is very close to my heart....Early Outs! I have been noticing in my own local, and from when I talk to others from around the state and nation, that with the declining mail at this time of the year, that members are taking early outs whenever they can, sometimes for only 30 minutes. I would ask each of you to stop doing it. While it may seem nice of management to allow this to happen, what is really happening is that Management is going to use these numbers to justify the revision of positions in the section. If 8 people take an early out of 1 hour, or 16 taking an 1/2 hour early out, that is one job/position.

On a closer note, the MPWU Constitutional Convention is fast approaching. This year, Detroit will be playing host to over 150 delegates who business at hand is where to take this union into the future. I would like to publicly say thank you to those board members who have not chosen to seek reelection for one reason or another. Your sacrifice to the union has not going unnoticed. Beyond that, the National Convention in Philadelphia is right around the corner. Keep logging on to the state and national website for more information.

In closing, the weather has finally changed for the better (or at least we can hope). I hope each of you can get out there and enjoy it, especially with the winter we just had.

Until next time,
Yours in Solidarity,

Mike



Legislative Report

Regina Favors
Legislative Director

Will we be next in the line of fire when it comes to our benefits? As we watch it happen to our other union brothers and sisters I can't help but wonder what is in store for the rest of us. As more and more companies scream about the union workers demanding too much and then crying to the courts for relief from their negotiated contracts, or crying bankruptcy it really makes me angry. I wonder how some of those big execs can sleep at night. None of them seem to say that "we will take concessions first". I do not see any of them saying that before we 'attack' our workers we will see what can be done about the "big business" of the insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, and all of those other things that drives up the cost of the benefit's the workers fight so hard for and are so well deserving of. I mean after all it is the workers sweat and pain that gives them (bosses) their lavish lifestyle. They want to discontinue or have us pay more for health insurance while we receive less in benefits. They want us to take pay cuts while the cost of living increases. Why don't they (upper mgmt.) take cuts and give up some benefits? Why don't they take higher deductibles and receive less or better yet pay for their medicines out of pocket before they take from the workers? I know I have said this before but being the 'dinosaur' (I guess that what I am called) I can remember when it was much cheaper and simpler to live. I can not seem to understand why I (or we) should have to pay for a hospital, or drug company to advertise, or make themselves "**more competitive**" against others. I would think that if they did the best job in taking care of patients that in itself would make them the best. Don't get me wrong, I know that everything costs more these days but we as consumers and workers should not have to pay the exorbitant rates that we do for their overly administrative and extravagant advertising costs. One night during one of my insomniac stages, I watched one of the capitol news channels (I don't remember which one) but the discussion was on the lobbyists and how the "big business" pharmaceutical industry who (because we have to pay it, I say) has the money to pay these lobbyists who puts so much pressure on our Senators and Representatives to get all the bills they want passed and in the end, we the workers, are the ones who get screwed. They get more money and we get less and cheaper (generic) medicines. We are the richest country in the world but we have the worst healthcare

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Clerk Craft Report

Bob Maloney
Clerk Craft Director

Postmaster Relief – I had a member in a small office call me the other day about Postmaster Relief (PMR) in her office doing clerk work. I told her that a PMR is like a casual for Postmasters and is to be used ONLY when the Postmaster is on annual or sick leave, or if it is the Postmaster's day off. Additionally, a PMR can work at several Post Offices in the area, but that is only when a PMR can work in your office and are limited to doing the work that the Postmaster would have performed in their normal day activities. There should never be a time when both the Postmaster and the PMR would be working together. Again, the PMR is only a relief for your Postmaster. If they are both working at the same time, then that would be a violation of Article 1.6b of the National Agreement. The language that covers the rules for Postmaster Relief's can be found in the ELM.

Supplemental Income --- I was working with a member that had hurt his back at home and had been off work for a year. Well, he had used up all his sick and annual leave, and had no money to pay his bills. He wanted to know what the Union could do to get him some money. Well, the first thing I told him was to ask his Postmaster about borrowing sick leave or annual leave. He had already done that and now they would not advance him any more leave. I asked him if he had filed an ABA claim, which he said no. I got him a claim form and helped him fill it out. Well, the ABA denied his claim because it was not an accident. We have since appealed his claim, but he is still without any money coming in. Now I know that none of us think that anything is going to happen to us. Trust me, I never thought I would have had a stroke, but the thing that saved me was that I had over a year of sick leave on the book. I was off of work for 10 months and without the sick leave, I would have been in financial trouble. Now, most of the newer people have not had the chance to bank that large amount of sick leave, so they need to find some things to protect them in the meantime. The Union offers several programs under the Voluntary Benefits Plan, such as short-term disability as well as long-term disability income protection. There are several insurance companies such as AFLAC (with the duck) that offers supplemental pay if hurt and you can't work. But if you need to contact the Union benefit plan people, you can reach them at 800-422-4492. Take my word for it; you should have some kind of back up if something traumatic was to happen to you.

In closing, this will be my last article for this paper as your

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Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan
Maintenance Director



MVS Report

Scott Larabel
Motor Vehicle Craft Director

Open Season is a contractually mandated opportunity for maintenance craft employees. In March, every three years, any maintenance employee who has not previously applied for any and all maintenance exams has an opportunity to do so. This is really important since many of us were so overwhelmed when we came into the craft that we bypassed our “new to craft” right to apply. Here is a rare time when you get a second chance.

By the time you get this issue, maintenance Open Season will be well under way. I hope this article and the accompanying flow chart will help you understand the process and the timeline involved. If you did apply during March, you cleared the first hurdle. One very important aspect of the Maintenance Selection System (MSS) is that any time you are not on time you will be abandoned. That means going back to square one and waiting another three years.

As in any maintenance application, there are three components involved in your scores:

1. Review Panel
2. Exam
3. Supervisor Evaluation

Before any of these elements can take place, you must complete your CSA booklet and turn it in on time to personnel. You are given 21 days for this process. If you’ve started, or if you’re already done, you know it is more than a notion.

TIPS FOR YOU CSA BOOK & INTERVIEW

Complete all the KSAs no matter what position(s) you are applying for. You only get one interview in a year under most circumstances. Complete every page. Never mark “I do not have education, training, or experience for this KSA. Better to just leave the page blank. Sometimes a review panel member will ask you some questions that make it clear you have relevant experience but did not realize it was a suitable answer.

Be on time. Even though candidates have waited an hour or more for their turn, it is important that you be on time.

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As the winter season passes, we anxiously await the coming of the spring season and hopefully a long hot summer. In Michigan the weather is so unpredictable and can change so quickly it is often difficult to make vacation plans in advance. A back up plan is usually not made and seldom works out to everyone’s satisfaction anyway. This may sound familiar to you as you start making plans for the summer but it is also seems very similar to the way many Postal installations operate.

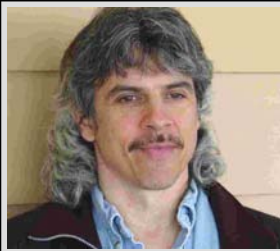
Like the seasons, managers are always coming and going, and with each one making unpredictable changes, usually for the worse and no back up plan to salvage their failed changes. Satisfying no one, they move on. The cycle begins again.

Just as we hope for better weather, we must never give up hope that our members and their families will have better days ahead. The dedicated stewards, craft directors and officers of this great union took an oath to protect the rights and benefits of each and every member and will continue to fight tirelessly to not only safeguard those rights, but strive for future gains.

The most important tools a steward has to fight management is their knowledge of the contract and continued training on issues affecting their craft. With so many changes taking place, and new issues coming about, grievances are much more involved and complicated, requiring much more time investigating and case building. Management even appears at times to be getting a little smarter in their attempts to deny grievances. That should never be allowed to happen. What our parents told us, and what we have been telling our kids, that education is the key to success in life, holds so very true in thwarting management’s attempts to destroy all we struggled for.

In Solidarity,

Scott



Area 3 Report

Richard Blake
Area 3 Director

"Withholding" follies - in late December 2005, management at the Great Lakes Area issued a withholding notice due to the likely excessing of 50-some Clerks out of the Cleveland, Ohio P& DC, to affect offices within a 100-mile radius. Unfortunately, management also initially took the position that both the Detroit and Royal Oak (Southeast Michigan) Districts would be affected by this withholding. Those of us who've been through many of these "withholdings" are painfully aware of the serious effects of such actions - hiring freezes are instituted, transfers become almost impossible, individual offices become grossly understaffed, management refuses to convert PTF's to full-time even when it's clearly warranted, etc. Withholdings can affect thousands of people, and often drag on for many months or even years. As it turns out, though, the people who made the determination that both the Detroit and Royal Oak Districts would be affected by the Cleveland withholding didn't read the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual, because the JCIM defines a "100-mile radius" as "the shortest actual driving distance between installations". Unless someone recently built a bridge all the way across Lake Erie and I wasn't aware of it, the actual driving distance between Cleveland and Detroit is around 175 miles, and around 200 miles to the installations in the Royal Oak District. Well, thanks to the efforts of our own MPWU sister and National Business Agent Lynn Pallas-Barber, and our Central Region Coordinator Sharyn Stone, management issued a letter on March 6 stating that neither the Detroit nor the Royal Oak Districts would be affected by the Cleveland withholding, due to not being within the agreed-upon definition of "100-mile radius." If any member or Steward in any office within either District is still being told that "sorry, we can't convert that PTF to regular because we're under a withholding out of Cleveland", or whatever, they're wrong. If you need a copy of the March 6 letter to that effect, please let me know and I'll be happy to send one to you. Many thanks to Lynn and Sharon for this significant accomplishment!

Fighting "time theft" - the deliberate theft of work hours from our members continues to be a major problem. This usually happens, for instance, when a section or an office is told "no overtime today", and an employee (usually by

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NBA Report

Lynn Pallas-Barber
NBA - Clerk Div. - Chicago

WOMEN IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT - Jane Addams

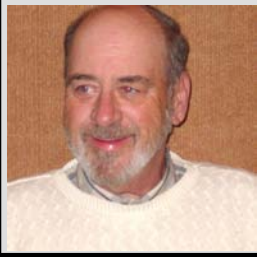
Jane was born in Cedarville, IL on Sep, 6, 1860. She graduated from Rockford College in 1882. She was an American social reformer and pacifist. She was a co winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 with Nicholas Murray Butler. She is probably best known as the founder of Hull House in Chicago, one of the first social settlements in North America. If you have been following my articles, I have mentioned Hull House in my articles.

Hull House provided services to immigrants in the Chicago area. Italians, Russian and Polish Jews, Irish, Germans, Greeks and Bohemians predominated. Jane Addams along with other women provided services for the neighborhood. She and the other women provided kindergarten and day-care facilities for the children of working mothers. They assisted immigrants in obtaining jobs. They also provided an art gallery, libraries and music and art classes.

Jane Addams worked with labor and other reform groups. She assisted in the first juvenile-court law, tenement-house regulation, and eight-hour working day for women, factory inspection, and workers' compensation. In addition she strove for justice for immigrants and blacks. She advocated research aimed at determining the causes of poverty and crime and she supported woman suffrage. In 1910 she became the first women president of the national Conference of Social Work, and in 1912 she played an active part in the presidential campaign of Theodore Roosevelt. In 1915 she served as chairman of the International Congress for Women. She was also involved in the founding of the American Civil Liberties Union in 1920 and in 1931 she was a co winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Hull House Association was forced to relocate its headquarters in 1963. The original Hull residence was preserved as a monument to Jane Addams. Jane Addams died in Chicago, IL on May 21, 1935. Research for this article was taken from http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/ja_bio.html

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Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque
Retirees Chapter President

Oops! Failing to think ahead; the MPWU State Retiree Chapter 'Convention Call' was not published in the Michigan Messenger 30 days prior to the convention as required by our Chapter constitution. The state paper is published bi-monthly, so I have to think two months ahead, and I didn't!

Local Retiree Chapters and State Chapter officers received their Convention Call by mail in a timely manner. But, State Retiree Chapter members-at-large were overlooked by my failure to give timely notice in this paper. Mea Culpa! Hopefully, this issue will reach members-at-large who may wish to attend the State Retiree Chapter Convention in time.

The MPWU State Retiree Chapter Convention is being held on April 28, 2006, convening at 10:00 in conjunction with the MPWU State Union Convention at the Detroit Marriott-Downtown Renaissance Center. Registration; Thursday, April 27th, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Friday, April 28th, 8 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Registration Fee: \$80. for retiree delegates attending Saturday night Installation Dinner. No registration fee will be charged for one-day commuter retiree delegates. All delegates will be on their own for meals, except for Sat. night dinner.

Nominations & Election of State Retiree Chapter Officers will be conducted. Resolutions and regular order of business are on the agenda. It is anticipated that APWU Retirees Department Director, Douglas C. Holbrook, will be attending and addressing the State Chapter convention delegates.

Retiree members-at-large (Retirees Dept. members not belonging to a Local Retiree Chapter) interested in attending are invited to contact me for credentials and details. Otherwise, everything seems to be in order for our 3rd Biennial State Retiree Chapter Convention.

Resolutions: In addition to officer elections and other necessary business, resolutions are the heart and soul of a constitutional convention. Delegates to the MPWU State Convention will consider resolutions on a variety of subjects; internal and issues aimed at being forwarded to the APWU National Convention for consideration by our Un-

ion's highest governing body. So far, these resolutions on retiree issues have been submitted:

1. To amend the APWU Constitution to change the dues rebate formula for State Retiree Chapters. Instead of 40% dues rebates of only those members in a state who do not belong to a Local Retiree Chapter, this amendment proposes to rebate 20% of ALL Retirees Dept. members in a state to State Chapters.

2. To (once again) amend the APWU Constitution to give Retirees Dept. members the right to vote for the top APWU National General Officers and certain resident department officers.

3. To amend the APWU Constitution to provide fair compensation for the five (5) National Retiree Delegates to APWU National Conventions and official APWU Retirees Dept. duties as they may be assigned. Previously, National Retiree Delegates were paid Level 5, Step O for the days they are required to attend the Retirees Dept. Conference and 5-day National Convention. Because it's not specifically provided in the constitution, it has been unilaterally determined that the delegates will only receive \$55. per diem.

4. To amend the APWU Constitution to allow proportionate representation for Area Local/Local Retiree Chapters and State Retiree Chapters at APWU National Conventions. One delegate and one vote for each twenty-five (25) members, or fraction thereof.

Another resolution possibly affecting retired members is to direct the APWU Clerk Division to authorize a second sweep of 1.6.B small member-at-large post offices missed in the first round of 1.6.B surveys/organizing conducted in 2005. Included is a recommendation that retired past APWU officers and members be utilized to conduct the surveys as far as possible.

It is my sincere hope that MPWU delegates will give full, fair and careful consideration to these resolutions.

The State Chapter Convention will consider at least one resolution. Amending the State Chapter Constitution to declare each MPWU State Retiree Chapter officer holding an elective office shall be a delegate to the State Chapter Convention with a voice and one (1) vote.

New Retiree Form 1187 Members nearing retirement contemplating on joining the Retirees Department, or any retired APWU member planning on joining (and I sincerely hope you do), you should know what you are authorizing for deductions from your monthly annuity.

This revised Retiree Form 1187 gives authorization for vol-

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2006 MPWU Human Relations, OWCP, Retirement Seminar March 1 - 3, 2006 - Bay City, Michigan In Pictures



Yogi, Sue, Nancy, and attendees from NY talk shop



Harold & Darren register a few attendees



Attendees during the opening session of the seminar



Gary and Mark welcoming Attendees on 1st day.



Attendees listening intently during the HR portion



11 inches of snow fell on Thursday.



Yogi discussing with Charles Kohloff (486-487)



Some attendees in the Retirement Class



Sue, Yogi, and Nancy takes time to pose for a pic



Cynthia Glaydness (EAP), Sue and Richard



Some Retiree Class "Graduates" give their presentation



Some of the attendees in the OWCP Class

Thank you to the attendees for making Bay City received more snow in one day (11".) than it has in 10 years (see above photo), those in attendance will attest that this seminar was one of the best. A special thank you to Nancy James (Human Resources - USPS), Sue Carney, Richard Boutwell, Yogi Riley, & Jay Riley for giving us the information needed to continue the fight and educate our members on how to file for OWCP and Retirement. We look forward to being able to offer this type of seminar once again sometime in the future.

(Continued from page 3)

Legislative Update Continued

system. How can that be allowed to continue? Furthermore why should we as citizens of this GREAT country demand more of our elected officials so that it does not continue to happen? I am urging each and everyone of you (us) to get in the know, read and research all info possible on the universal healthcare bill presented by Congressman John Conyers. (H.R. 676). Please urge your elected Senators and Representatives to get on board with Congressman Conyers bill. I know that most will automatically want to reject anything that might add an additional tax or increase, but the minimal cost will be well worth it in the long run. Make every effort to attend the forums and/or town hall meetings. The biggest bulk of the cost will come from the administrative and other venues associated with billing etc. Before it is all said and done, we must get together in a partisan or otherwise to get our nation back on track. It begins with us when we go to the polls. It begins with us caring for others as well as ourselves. It begins with us and the realization of what elected officials who have forgotten what they were elected for and who elected them have done (or not done) for us. If we are not careful and we continue to let the lies and deceit of our current administration go on flourishing, we will be worse off than those countries we are trying to save and give democracy and/or freedom to. BELIEVE THAT FOLKS!! Let us begin now to make sure and insure that we re-elect our Governor and re-elect, or elect the right Senators and representatives, or other officials who will do the right thing, who will fight for us and not against us and now even more than ever before, people who support labor and who are not going to dismantle our unions. LET'S GET IT RIGHT!!! I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE CONVENTION NEXT MONTH. UNTIL THEN, OR NEXT ISSUE, STAY STRONG, STAY INFORMED AND BY ALL MEANS CONTACT ME WITH ANY INFO YOU MAY HAVE ON ANY CANDIDATE OR ELECTION OR ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SHARE.

In Solidarity,
Regina

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Area 3 Report Continued

accident) works 8 hours and 10 units, as an example. What happens all too often is that the employee's supervisor then goes into the TACS system and "disallows" (i.e., deletes) those 10 units, so that the employee does not show any overtime for that day. Thanks to the excellent class taught by National Business Agent Lyle Kreuth at the Multi-Craft Conference in Las Vegas last summer, we now have the tools at our disposal to stop such theft. Most of us already know that when a clock ring is altered or deleted, the TACS system requires that the person taking that action enter their Social Security number to provide a record of their actions; while that's all well and good, few stewards have the time to review every single employee's "ETC Everything" report every week to look for such actions. As it turns out, there's a much simpler way to search for such deletions - it's called the "Time Disallowance Report", and it only lists those instances where an employee's time has been "disallowed"; that's a whole heck of a lot easier and quicker than poring over hundreds of pages of "ETC Everything" reports every week. It can be requested by pay location and by week. It will show, for example, that on March 3 employee R. Blake had 10 units of his time "disallowed" by supervisor I. M. Stupid. The next step in researching whether or not this represented a theft of work hours, or a legitimate action, is to request the Form 1017-A ("Time Disallowance Record") for R. Blake. On that form, the supervisor is required to explain why they "disallowed" the employee's time on March 3, and there is only one valid answer - because the

employee was not working at the time. In Chapter 4 of the ELM it states "when employees continue to work contrary to instructions from a supervisor to clock out, the corrective action *must be a procedure other than not compensating the employee for work performed*" (by "a procedure other than not compensating the employee", management means disciplining the employee for excessive instances of "unauthorized overtime"), and it goes on to say that supervisors are only to "disallow" time on the clock *when the employee was not working*, and it requires that the supervisor specify their basis for "knowing" that the employee was not working during the period of time that was disallowed. Obviously, this language completely contradicts the notion that supervisors may "round off" your time by "disallowing" those 10 "unauthorized" units, provided that you were working during those 10 units. Obviously there are plenty of circumstances where "disallowing" an employee's time is perfectly legitimate, such as (1) someone else accidentally swiped their card; this has happened to me twice over the years where another employee punched in using my time card (by accident) when I wasn't in the building, or (2) the employee forgot to punch out at the end of their shift, left the building, got into their car, and just before they drove off they remembered that they hadn't punched out, so they went back into the building to hit their "ET" - several minutes after they had stopped working. In the USPS TACS Training Manual for Supervisors, it states that it is both "illegal" and "fraud" to "disallow" employees' time if

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Area 3 Report Continued

they were actually working, whether the time was "authorized" or not. I hope that this basic outline gives our Stewards the tools they need to successfully stop the common practice of "time theft"; if any of you would like to see copies of Time Disallowance Reports or Forms 1017-A, please let me know. Good hunting, and thanks to Lyle Kreuth for the great class!

In Solidarity,

Richard

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NBA Report Continued

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

In the early 19th century, women were considered second class citizens. Women were considered subservient to their husbands. After marriage women did not have the right to own property, maintain wages, sign a contract, much less vote. Women were expected to be obedient wives, never to have a thought or opinion different of their husbands. It was improper for women to travel alone or to speak in public.

The Women's suffrage movement was formally set into motion in 1848 with the first Women's Right Convention in Seneca Falls, NY. The catalyst for this convention was the World Anti-Slavery Convention held in London in 1840. An American delegation of women was in attendance. These delegates were forced to sit in the galleries as observers because they were women. This poor treatment of these women brought about the convention in Seneca Falls, NY.

During the Civil War, women's suffrage was shadowed by the war and the abolition of slavery. Women's activists Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth

Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony petitioned the government for the emancipation of slaves with the belief that, once the war was over, women and slaves would be granted the same rights as the white men. At the end of the war, the suffrage of women and the abolishment of slavery were two separate issues. The government decided that the Negro male vote would produce the immediate political gain in the South that the women's vote could not.

Susan B. Anthony was arrested in 1872 for attempting to vote in the presidential election. Six years later, in 1878, a Woman's Suffrage Amendment was introduced to Congress. With the formation of various women's groups in the 1890's and early 1900's, the women's movement gained a full head of steam. During World War I women pitched in for the war effort. In 1919, after years of petitioning, picketing and protest parades, the Nineteenth Amendment was passed and in 1920 was ratified with the signature of President Woodrow Wilson.

Women fought for years for a voice and a vote. It is certainly sad that often times our brothers and sisters fail to exercise that right. It is extremely important that we vote no matter what type of election. It's your voice.

**EQUAL PAY DAY – TUESDAY,
APRIL 25, 2006**

We as postal workers have the good fortune to have our wages negotiated by our Union. Many women in the private sector must work until April 25, 2006 to earn as much as a man earned in the previous year. The Equal Pay Act has been in effect since 1963, yet most women and minorities make 40% less than most white men.

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

Each April 28, since 1989, unions of the AFL-CIO observe Workers Memorial Day. This is a day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job. April 28 was chosen because it is the anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the day of similar remembrance in Canada. Every year, employees in hundreds of communities and worksites recognize workers who have been killed or injured on the job. Trade unionists around the world now recognize April 28 as an International Day of Mourning. As we remember those who have died in the workplace because of violence, suffered disease and death because of exposure to toxic substances or have been injured because of dangerous conditions, we should rededicate ourselves to the fight for a safe workplace.

As postal workers, we have seen violence take the lives of our co-workers. We have seen the death of fellow workers because of anthrax in the mail. We have seen hundreds of our members injured because of ergonomic strain on the workroom floor. The struggle continues for each and every one of us to be involved in safety on the workroom floor. Our membership is often reluctant to use a PS Form 1767. We all have an obligation to be safety conscious!!

Yours in Union Solidarity

Until next time,

Lynn



(Continued from page 6)

Retiree Involvement Continued

untary allotment for dues and for COPA.. This explanation is to fully inform joining Retirees Dept. members of their options and the effects of your choices resulting in deductions from your monthly annuity.

Option #1. APWU Retiree Dept. Dues. \$2. per month. \$24. per year.

This \$24 per year Retirees Dept. membership grants members the right to be candidates for, and/or vote for APWU Retiree Delegate to the National Convention and for Director, Retirees Dept. each 3 years. \$24. per year members are eligible to be candidates for, and/or vote for Local and State Retiree Chapter officers. You will receive the bi-monthly APWU American Postal Worker magazine, and a \$5,000. Accidental Death & Dismemberment policy.

Option #2. Full National Per Capita & Retiree Dues.

This option is a result of a resolution authored by FL State which amended the APWU Constitution & By-Laws; Art. 3. Sec. 4. (d); giving retirees the 'option' to maintain full National membership by paying full National per capita taxes to the APWU plus \$24. per annum to the Retirees Dept. National per capita on a monthly rate comes to \$16.87 for a total of \$202.44 per, plus \$2. making the monthly deduction \$18.67 or, \$226.44 per year, times 3 years for the right to be a candidate for, and/or vote for national officers, and the same rights as \$24. per year Retirees Dept. members.

You should be aware that 'Option #2' does not include full Local or State Union membership! Unless you pay the retired member dues amount required by your Local, plus national per capita tax, you will not be eligible to be a candidate for and/or vote for Lo-

cal or State officers, or be a candidate for, or vote for delegate to State or National Conventions. Some Local constitutions provide for a reduced dues rate for retired members as nominal as \$1. per month. If you wish to remain a full member of your Local Union, you can remain as a "Cash Pay" full dues-paying member and retain your Local and State membership rights. Then, you have the 'option' of also becoming a \$24. member of the Retirees Dept. by checking just that box on Retiree Form 1187.

Option #3. COPA Contribution.

This addition to Retiree Form 1187 provides for voluntary authorization to deduct a monthly contribution amount to the APWU Committee on Political Action - COPA fund. This is an individual choice, and not a requirement for membership.

I just don't want anyone to get a "surprise" when deductions show up on your annuity check! More on this and the paramount retiree resolutions next time!

Stay Strong!

Al

(Continued from page 1)

President's Report Continued

more than helpful to all those in attendance. We needed to have some major questions answered about the future of our Human Relations going to North Carolina, and at least we got some honest answers from those running it. Thanks to Sue Carney, Nancy James, Richard Boutwell, Yogi Riley, and Jay who taught the classes. I appreciate all those that attended the meeting and again I take my hat off to Director of Education, Mark Hart on a well-planned event.

In Union Solidarity,



Lifecare

Do you have aging parents? A spouse who is advancing in years? Concerns about your own future health and finances? LifeCare – an employer-paid benefit for EAS employees and APWU represented employees – Can Help!

This month you can order an InfoPack loaded with particular elder care tips and strategies, including information on:

- What you need to know about becoming a caregiver.
- Home care
- Encouraging Healthy Habits in Adult Loved Ones
- Senior Services
- Adult Day Care Centers
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Long-Term Care Facilities
- Day-to-Day Care giving
- Avoiding Caregiver Burn-out
- Caring for a Loved One from Afar
- Professional Geriatric Care Management
- Home Safety for Older Adults
- And more...

Order your InfoPack today! To order, please call 800-873-4636 (For TDD/TTY service, call 800-873-1322) to order your free InfoPack or to speak with a highly trained specialist who can provide personalized referrals to adult care resources nationwide.

NOTE—this service is only available to EAS employees and APWU represented employees of the US Postal Services.

Editor's NOTE: You can access online at www.lifecare.com

(Continued from page 4)

Maintenance Memo Continued

If you are wondering what to wear, you have some options. Because you are most likely coming from the workroom floor, work clothes are appropriate. I usually bring an extra shirt on the day I interview so that if I'm extremely dirty I can put on a clean work shirt. If you feel more confident in street/dress clothes, wear them. The main thing is you are asking for a promotion, more responsibility and more money. Dress the part!

MSS EXAMS 931/932/933

There are three MSS exams: 931, 932 and 933.

The 931 is often considered the "general maintenance" exam because it covers 15 positions from level four through level eight. Regardless of what job you want, you will be scored for all 15. That is to your advantage since you can later update any and all of these scores.

The 932 exam is strictly for electronic technician level 11.

The 933 is for the Mail Processing Equipment (MPE) 8 position. This exam was used in Detroit as the criteria for entry into our Pilot Program.

Just as with your book and interview, it is critical to be on time for the exams. Once they begin, the door is locked. There is no way for the test administrator to let someone come in once the process begins.

Sit up front. The first part of all MSS exams is called "following oral instructions". You have to pass this section. If you are at the back, you may not be able to hear the instructions that are generally taped and played on a boom box.

SUPERVISOR EVALUATION

The third and final element is the supervisor evaluation. Personnel will solicit an evaluation for all employees who complete the interview and test process. Your immediate supervisor will complete the form and return it to personnel. It is an evaluation related to the KSAs. Generally, you will not know when this is being done.

TIMELINE

NTAC, the National Test Administration Center, issues a timeline before this process begins. The whole country has to abide by this process. In general, it will proceed like this:

- ⇒ March = applications
- ⇒ April = all CSA books must be completed no later than April 21st
- ⇒ May = review panel interviews will be scheduled and conducted
- ⇒ June & July = MSS exams will be scheduled and conducted
- ⇒ August 28 = results are due back to employees with a copy to personnel

At the end of this process, approximately September 1st, all successful applicants will be placed on Promotion Eligibility Registers (PERs).

Just so you know: you will get written results. They are titled INCRAFT RATING. If you are not successful, you will get a result simply stating "INELIGIBLE". Because these are Incraft ratings, you will be able to see which KSA(s) you failed. Any failed KSAs can be addressed by the update process which we can discuss later.

Non-MSS EXAMS

Open Season also guarantees your right to apply for Non-MSS exams. There are three positions in this category:

Laborer-Custodian PS-3
Group Leader PS-4
Maintenance Support Clerk PS -5/6

The relatively new 916 exam is now required for all applicants for custodial maintenance – even those who are postal employees changing craft.

The maintenance support clerk process has two exams – the 710 & 714. Maintenance Support also requires written KSAs and an interview process.

KEEP YOUR OPTIONS OPEN

One form has been issued to apply for all MSS and Non-MSS exams. It's good to keep your options open. I suggest higher-level maintenance employees apply for and take the exams for lower-level positions just as I suggest lower level employees go after higher-level jobs.

The reason for this is that in order to transfer to another installation or to be considered for a different level in your own installation, you must have a score on record. If you don't take advantage of open season, you might take yourself out of the running for a position down the road. If you have to call for special procedures, to be scored, you may be bypassed by someone who has a score already.

GOOD LUCK!

Good luck to each of you. I've never met anyone who regretted a promotion in the maintenance craft. I've never met anyone who regretted coming into our craft from another craft. As we witness downsizing among the other crafts, we are still holding our own and in some instances growing. Prepare for the future. Complete the Open Season process.

Jane

Letters to the Editor or MPWU Executive Board

This letter is long overdue.

Ten years ago when I retired from the Pontiac (Waterford Annex) Post Office my till was immediately audited by James Schlink a supervisor at the annex.

There was a shortage of \$157.80, which was an error caused by the incompetent superintendent of windows. During my prior audit there was an overage of \$150.00, which was placed in suspense and absorbed into the general funds

About a month after I retired I received a letter of demand from the OBM for the \$157.80.

I did not know at the time the officers of Pontiac APWU Jeff Fors, Robert Maloney, Rick Slicker had filed a grievance on my behalf.

The officers stated that:

1. The letter of demand wasn't issued immediately.
2. My till wasn't secured immediately.
3. The key to my till wasn't sealed and registered.
4. My till hadn't been audited for 11 months.

The incompetent superintendent signed the grievance almost immediately and I received another letter from the OBM absolving me of the debt.

This article should prove that the Union is there for its members.

David R Machin, Clerk Retired
dmmachin1@comcast.net

Editor's Note. Both of these letters have been printed with the express consent of both parties. The letter from David Machin above was received via eMail on March 6th. I thought this was very timely. With the passing of Jeff last year, and the retirement of Bob from the MPWU E-Board, it is nice to see that your legacy remains. If you have any letters which you would like to be printed, please send them to the address on Page 15.



Letter to the Editor

Dear Gary VanHoogstraten:

Thank you so much for the invitation to attend the Human Relations Seminar March 1-3, 2006 in Bay City. In February of 2003 I attended my first union training outside my local perimeter of CNY in Midland, Michigan. That OWCP seminar launched my career as a local union officer. I remember that first step in my union career quite fondly.

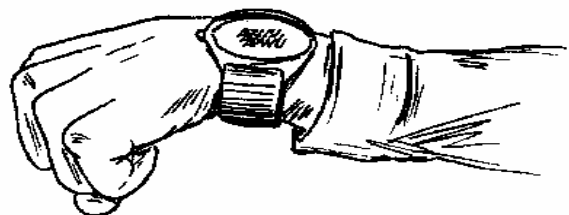
This time I traveled specifically to Michigan to get information on Shared Services and the impact it will create on our members locally. The session with Nancy James was very informative and answered all current questions I had regarding this issue. Nicole Virginia (another Steward from my local) and I also attended the OCWP training which was offered. As always, Sue Carney and Richard Boutwell were knowledgeable and informative in all aspects of OWCP. This was Nicole's first training session outside of basic steward's training on a local level.

I would like to extend a special thank you for the hospitality we were shown. I couldn't have asked for Nicole to be a part of a more positive union experience. I see her as the future of our local. To those seasoned Michigan officers, thank you for your guidance and sharing your "APWU war stories" with her.

We look forward to traveling to your great state again in the future.

Yours In Union Solidarity,
Mary Helen Rizzuto
Clerk Division Director
CNYAL #257

**Now is the time to sign up
that non-member!**



Information Shorts / Postal News

Top Ten USPS Suppliers in FY 2005 – Released in January 2006

Below are the Top Ten Suppliers to the US Postal Service based on reported payments made during USPS Fiscal Year 2005, which ran from October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005. Keep in mind who our competition is and who our number one supplier is.

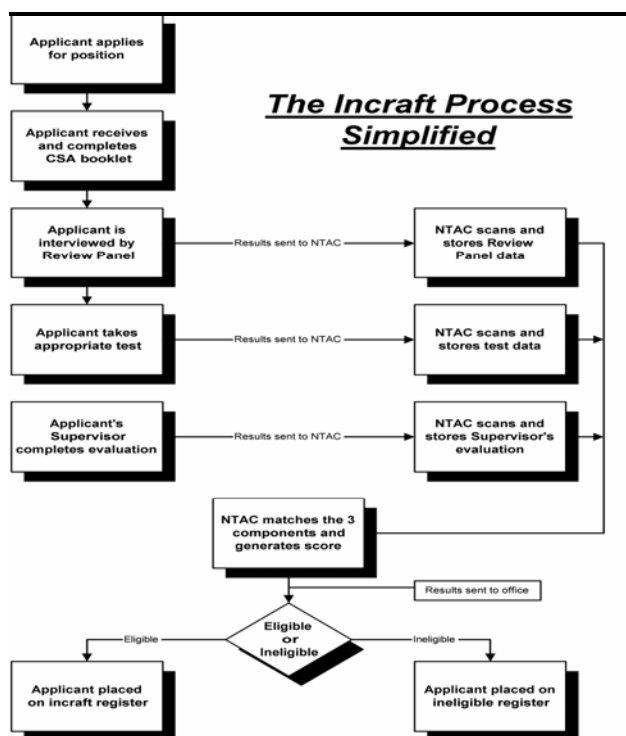
1. Federal Express	\$1,361,311,847.37	2. Northrop Grumman	\$450,544,814.88
3. Siemens AG	\$258,918,357.84	4. Lockheed Martin Corp.	\$232,263,302.81
5. IBM Corporation	\$190,303,095.15	6. Kalitta Air LLC	\$160,781,285.73
7. MCI Telecommunication	\$141,382,991.31	8. Delta Airlines, Inc.	\$129,314,199.38
9. Cambell-Ewald	\$122,447,150.45	10. American Airline	\$119,240,481.28

The list is assembled from information obtained from the US Postal Service in response to request filed under the Freedom of Information Act and was compiled by the Postal Industry Practice Group of the law firm Wickwire Gavin, P.C. in Vienna VA.

Postal Payroll

The periodic reports posted on the Postal Rate Commission website may not be everyone's idea of a fun read, but they are full of interesting numbers when you poke around in them. Today brings a sheaf of payroll reports – itemizing in mind-numbing detail (1,408 pages to be exact) what the USPS has paid out to its employees in the first 16 weeks of the fiscal year. If you're thinking that maybe you will skip reading the whole thing just now, here are some of the interesting numbers:

- A billion dollars a week: the average postal payroll so far this year, totaling salaries and benefits for all employees.
- \$2.3 Billion: the amount spent so far on retirement funding, including the employer contribution to CSRS and FERS pensions, Social Security, Medicare, and Thrift Savings.
- \$1.4 Billion: that's how much has been paid out so far on health benefits (That's more than has been spent so far on the hourly wages of Mail Handlers or Rural Letter Carriers.)
- \$1.5 Billion: total cost of overtime, or just under \$100 million a week. The average rate is \$32.96 an hour.
- 13%: the average overtime percentage (OT/total hours) for bargaining unit employees. The rates varies widely by employee type – for clerks it's 13%, for city carriers: 15%, for mail handlers it's 19%, while rural carriers (paid on an evaluated system) get less than 3% overtime.



- \$13.67/hour: the average hourly wage paid to casual or temporary employees, including Postal and Rural Carrier relief's.
- \$405 million: the amount paid out in sick leave for the first 16 weeks. The total sick leave rate was just under 4%. Bargaining unit sick leave was 4.4% Management employees nationwide had a sick-leave rate of 3.3%, but the Headquarters non-bargaining sick leave rate was 4.5%

National Payroll Hours Summary Report for Pay Period 02, FY 2006 (That's the pay period ending January 20, 2006 – figures cited are fiscal year to date.)

This flow chart is submitted via Jane Duggan, MPWU Maintenance Director to be used for maintenance employees who wish to utilize the MSS System for job promotions. Please refer to Jane's article for more information



The Six Most Common Thrift Savings Mistakes

By Noel Aube

Reprinted from 960 Dispatch Mar-Apr 2006 Newsletter

Not contributing at all is probably the biggest mistake people make, but there are others that can cost you in more ways than you know. Most investors help up pretty well during the recent bear market. Most continued to contribute and few made big changes in their asset allocations. Millions of workers are still blowing it every day when dealing with their retirement plans. Here are the six biggest blunders you can make:

Not signing up

Most participants get a decent range of investment options, reasonable fees and a company match. There is simply no reason not to participate in the thrift saving plan, yet many eligible workers fail to sign up. That is just dumb.

Missing out on the full-company match

The post office matches your contributions, dollar for dollar on the first 3% and fifty cents on the dollar for the next 2% of your salary. Your match is very generous and it only makes sense to take maximum advantage of what it essentially free money.

Don't think you can afford to contribute enough to get the full match? You are probably wrong. Each dollar you don't put into a retirement plan is subject to federal, state, and local income taxes. So if you are in the 30% combined (federal and state) tax bracket, each buck you toss into a thrift saving will reduce your paycheck by 70 cents.

If you are afraid of going whole hog, just inch your contributions up each quarter by 1% more of your salary. Most people can compensate for the decreased income by bringing lunch from home on or two times each week.

Taking too little risk

Most investors seem to understand that stock and stock mutual funds are going to

give them the best returns in the long run. It is understandable that some people would want to lighten up on stocks, either because they were approaching retirement or they learned they weren't quite as risk-tolerant as they thought. But few investors will be able to reach their retirement goals without any exposure at all to equities. Leading financial planners believe the average investor needs to keep at least half of his portfolio invested in stocks, regardless of age, if he wants an adequate income in retirement.

Take too much risk

At the opposite end of the scale of the investors who overloaded on stocks, nearly 30% put all or nearly all, of their money into their TSP equity funds and very little in their fixed income side. During the go-go years, it was popular to opine that only old folks needed bonds. The stock market swoon, however, proved that most investors could benefit from the cushioning effect of bonds and cash.

Many of the folks who panicked and cashed out at the bottom of the market might have been able to stand pat had they had some bonds adding value to their portfolios. The classic balanced portfolio is: 60% stocks, 30% bonds, and 10% cash – is a good starting position for most investors. You can ratchet up the stock exposure if you are young or aggressive.

Taking out Loans

This may seem like a great idea! Borrow your own money and pay yourself interest! But watch out, this has plenty of traps for the unwary.

The biggest pitfall is the risk you take should you lose your job. Your loan would become due, and if you couldn't pay it back at once, you would owe

income taxes and penalties on the unpaid balance.

The interest rate you pay yourself may be lower than what you would pay most other creditors, but paying yourself interest is no substitute for the real return you would be earning if you had invested those payments instead.

Borrowing from your retirement funds is often a sign that you are overspending – particularly if you are using the proceeds to pay off credit card debt. People who use “easy outs” like TSP and home equity loans to pay off their cards often don't change the underlying behavior that put them in the hole. They just run up their balances again – winding up another day older and deeper in debt.

Cashing out

Next to no signing up, cashing out your TSP when you leave your job is the dumbest move you can make with a retirement plan. They doubtless think they have years to save for retirement, so why not enjoy the cash now? But the younger you are, the bigger the price you pay for a TSP cash out. That is because your money, had it been left alone, could have earned tax-deferred returns for decades. That \$10,000 you cashed out at 25 could have netted you \$200,000 or more in retirement cash, assuming an 8% average annual return and retirement at age 65. Then there's the tax bite. Combined, the income taxes and penalties you pay typically equal a quarter to nearly half of your early withdrawal. Your TSP money isn't a windfall, to be blown on vacations, or cars or anything else that will be long forgotten by the time you are 65. This money may be all you have to live on. So treat it with some respect people.

Reprinted – The Outlook

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Position is Currently Vacant

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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 in others.

(Continued from page 3)

Clerk Craft Report continued

Clerk Craft Director. I do not plan on running again for the position at the upcoming convention. This is due to my health only, since I have deeply enjoyed being your Director and only wish I could have done more over the last several years, but again, the stroke has left it hard for me to get around. I will still be President of my local for a while, so you will still see me around. I will still be at the same phone number if anyone needs any kind of help or just to answer a question. Again, thank you for letting me be your Clerk Craft Director. Stay strong and don't be afraid to fight the good fight. Remember Caesar would not have been a lion if the Romans had been sheep.

Bob

Check us out on the web @
MPWU.com

Upcoming Events to Plan For:

April 27 - 29, 2006 - MPWU Biennial Convention, Detroit, MI

August 12 - 19, 2006 - APWU National Convention, Philadelphia, PA

Fall 2006 - Area 7, 8, & 9 District Meeting. Still be planned

June 2007 - MPWU Educational Conference, Sault Ste Marie, MI





New Benefits from AFLAC for APWU Members

By: Sue Carney

National Director, Human Relations Department

The help union members protect their future against catastrophic events, APWU is pleased to offer cancer and critical-illness insurance coverage. These comprehensive, affordable benefits, made available through AFLAC are being offered exclusively to APWU members and their qualifying family members.

These benefits are designed to provide a financial safety net to members should they or a covered family member suffer a serious illness. Both medical-catastrophe programs will pay cash benefits directly to the enrollees, regardless of any other insurance they may have.

Every member should consider the following when trying to determine whether these plans could benefit them:

⇒ The American Cancer Society estimates that one in two men

and one in three women will be diagnosed with cancer during their lives.

⇒ The Centers for Disease Control reports that chronic diseases – such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes are the leading causes of illness, disability and death, and the most costly of all health problems.

⇒ Families affected by a diagnosis of cancer or another serious medical condition often are devastated by lost wages, uncovered medical expenses, and related costs at a time when financial hardship should be the least of their worries.

Information on the AFLAC plans will be made available to all APWU local and state affiliates, and local presidents will be given an opportunity to schedule an explanation-of-benefits meeting for their membership. Contact information will be

provided for each area, and additional AFLAC program and enrollment details will be accessible through the APWU Web site, www.apwu.org.

The APWU Critical Illness Benefit Plan and the Cancer Benefit Plan each offer multiple levels of coverage, with premium for the individual, one-parent family, and two-parent family. The waiting period for coverage to begin has been waived. The APWU encourages every member to take advantage of the benefits these plans have to offer.

Once you enroll and as long as your policy remains in effect, your premium will stay the same and not increase with age, or terminate after age 70.

For more detailed information, contact Greg Best, Michigan Regional AFLAC Rep. at (810) 249-9311 and/or log onto the MPWU website.

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