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President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten
President



I recently came across some interesting reading on the postal rate increase issue. The article begun by stating: "Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the post office, the United States Postal Service has started the process of raising rates again." The article continued by saying: "The Postal Service says this time, the increase is because of rising gas prices. Like the excuse it has trotted out in previous rate hikes, this one ignores the real problem. On May 3, less than four months after it raised the prices from 37 cents to 39 cents, the Postal Service filed another increase, which would push the price of a First Class stamp to 42 cents and beyond. PMG John Potter has further stated the Postal Service is likely to start hiking prices annually in 2009. So it looks like the average letter-mailing people have just started and will definitely be getting nickel and dime to death in the coming years. The thing is, if the Postal Service were just an ordinary business, then customers could take their business elsewhere. But the fact is the Postal Service is a government-owned enterprise that enjoys a monopoly to keep out competitors." This article continued saying

that when the Postal Service filed for the rate increase that took effect in January, it claimed it needed the hike to meet a congressional escrow requirement. The USPS had an overpayment into a retirement fund, and when this was discovered, Congress demanded that it put the overpayment aside, in escrow, to pay down some of its health-care liabilities. In other words, the USPS thought it owed money to lets say Creditor A; they found out they didn't owe anything, in fact, the Creditor owed them some money back; and then was asked to take that same money and pay the money to Creditor B instead. It went on to say that the Postal Service is blaming the stamp-price increase on rising fuel costs. On the surface, that seems reasonable enough. The price of gasoline has a major effect on the Postal Services bottom line.

This week more than a few people who sent out Mothers' Day cards told postal workers at the window about the rates going up this past January. Now all of the sudden there is words that another increase is on its way. The Postal Service has been shaky for more than a decade, losing ground to the Internet and they say

our benefits. Congress passed a temporary fix in 2003 that allowed the service to catch up on its finances and avoid hikes until this year while lawmakers worked on broad reforms. Well apparently these broad reforms did not work. One postal worker working the window said he could stand behind the costs of stamps even though other window clerks like him are getting shelled over their prices. He went on saying, "We're the front lines." As postal workers we can still stand tall for the outstanding daily activities we do. Everything is going up throughout the United States. People talk about the high cost of fuel, cars, homes, and I could go on and on. But being we are in the eye of the public more than most industries, we are in the limelight. I can personally say I am proud of each and every Postal Worker in Michigan especially, and throughout the entire United States.

With all the turmoil in the auto industry, I came cross an article with the caption: "Delphi Too Broke to Pay Workers, But Executives Get \$98 Million in Bonuses." The article continued saying top bosses in Delphi Corpo-

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President's Report Continued

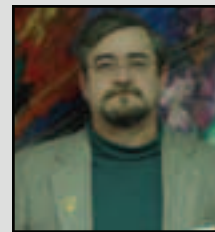
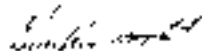
ration claim the company is so broke, it can't afford to pay fair wages to union workers who make the company successful, but it does have enough money to give managers millions in bonuses this year. A senior management employee told the Federal Bankruptcy Judge that the bonuses likely would go to managers and salaried workers because the company is exceeding its financial projections. How in the world can he tell this bankruptcy judge, that in the midst of the company filing for bankruptcy, that "the company is exceeding its financial projections (e.g. making more money than it thought)? An attorney for the Union was quoted: "It is grossly unfair to be increasing the compensation of salaried and management, while making drastic attempts to cut the pay of hourly workers." The news of the bonuses reinforces the fact that the nations largest auto parts supplier is using the bankruptcy process to impose deep wage and benefit cuts. In other words, they haven't been able to break the union in the past, so now they are going to try a different angle. Meanwhile, Delphi continues to show its anti-union stripes. The company is advertising for replacement workers across the country to work for \$10 – 14 per hour, half of what union workers make, in the event of a strike. My feelings are they have to hire these replacements to pay for the bonuses they are taking from the company. This reminds me and possibly many of you of the possible strike at Northwest Airlines last year. At NWA, management knew a strike was looming, so they hired all the replacement workers for a very reduced hourly wage from what they paid their union workforce, housed them, fed them, etc., however, the strike never came and most of these "scabs" were fired. As we all know, a strike could shut down Delphi and

impact production at GM, Delphi's largest customer.

We have just finished another successful state convention in Detroit. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Detroit District Area Local for the wonderful job they did in hosting this event. The convention ran smoothly, with little interruptions and little fan fare. The delegates in attendance performed all their duties in an excellent manner and we were able to get through all the resolutions and business in a timely manner. Thank you for all those who attended. We saw some who have been around for a while, but was very nice was to see all the new delegates in attendance. It is good to get new blood in the union every chance we can.

With that, I would like to welcome the newest Executive Board Members of the MPWU: Michael McCain (Educational Dir), Vickie Beasley (Area 2 Dir), Joanna Atkinson (Area 5 Dir), Tom Lothamer (Area 7 Dir), Russ Nicoson (Area 8), and Michelle Gregory (Area 9 Dir). Unfortunately, with new board members also mean that we have to say goodbye to some. I would like to thank these individuals are all their hard work and daily struggle and sacrifice as they represented the members of the MPWU. Those officers were Mark Hart, Chris Ulmer, Joan Norton, George Corneail, Dan McCloskey, Jennifer Gilbert. And last, but certainly not least is Bob Maloney. Bob was one of the most senior Board Members that put in a lot of his own time for which he did not receive credit. I can say he will be missed but I know as long as he is an active Local President, he will be there for any assistance needed.

Until Next Time,



Secretary's Writings

Harold Juhl
Executive Secretary

The 2006 State Constitutional Convention has been put to rest. I would like to thank the Detroit District Area Local for hosting this year's Convention, and congratulate them for doing a fine job. I would like to thank the delegates for their support and confidence in me, as I was unopposed for the position of Executive Secretary. I will continue perform the duties to the best of my ability. Congratulations to all of the new State Officers and the ones who are returning for another term. I have already been busy with getting the resolutions typed and sent on to the National. I have also ordered new business cards and jackets for the new officers. I am currently updating the Constitution with the new changes that were voted on and passed at the Convention and have forwarded the respective resolutions to National to be acted upon when we get to Philadelphia.

I want to thank Laura Bullock from the Flint Michigan Area Local for assisting me by taking minutes throughout the convention. I am very appreciative for all she did. Thank You!

In closing, I hope everyone has a great summer and I hope to see everyone at the upcoming National Convention.

In Solidarity,

Harold





Education at Work

Michael McCain
Director of Education

Hello all from around the State, I hope that everyone enjoyed the Convention in Detroit and that we all took something positive back to our locals.

I am looking forward to serving our members as the Director of Education for the State, and I hope I can bring new ideas to the table that can help us achieve so much more. I really would like to thank Mark Hart for the class guy that he is and I really respect. I think we have some of the best State Officers in the Country and can't wait to start working with them.

I have met and talked with many in the AFL-CIO locally on how best we can reach our members. Hopefully if this is done correctly, it could reflect positively in the polls this August and especially in November for local and national elections. Remember to get out there and vote! AFL-CIO also has some good quality training that could even help our members achieve college credits, and they can even help with finishing your degrees.

I have been looking into a beginner's computer course and advanced course so we can best use today's technology to our advantage. Hopefully we can incorporate something like this in the upcoming Educational Convention next year, stay tuned.

I would also like to thank everyone who had their hands in helping me with the State Convention, because I would not have been able to do it with out you, Gary Vanhoogstraten for his calming demeanor when I thought all was going to fail, Harold Juhl for your sense of humor and good advice, Darren Joyce for your words of encouragement and the way you conduct yourself. To all the ones from the Detroit District Area Local Tony Corbin what a job on the drinks, Regina Favors and Chris Ulmer for always being there for the last minute details. A special thanks to Geoffrey Higgins and Jane Duggan for being the rock that kept me together.

In closing, I would like to have all the State Officers, Craft Directors, and Area Directors please send me any suggestions, comments, or ideas that may be helpful to best serve our members.

Yours in Solidarity,

Mike



The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long
Editor

I would like to begin this article by thanking you for allowing me to serve you for another two years as your editor. At this last convention, the delegates gave me some ideas on what you, the membership, would like to see in this paper. I have taken your advice and hopefully, you will see some changes in this edition. One of the biggest is that all articles now run consecutively. No more going from page two to page ten to finish an article. I am currently searching for items for the children to give them information on the union at their level, along with some games....but I have to say...there isn't much out there. But, until then, let me know if you like this new format or if you have any other suggestions to improve and keep you informed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Randy Barnes from the Southwest Michigan Area Local for his help in taking some photos during the convention and especially at the Installation Dinner. It was a BIG help!

I would also like to ask that any Executive Board member that hasn't done so yet, or would like a different one, please get me a photo to use in the paper, on the website, and in the upcoming convention book for next year.

This year's convention is now in the history books. It was a great one to say the least. Kudos to the Detroit District Area Local for hosting an outstanding convention; as being a member of the next convention city local in Grand Rapids, I can definitely attest that we will have some huge shoes to fill.

I would like to express my gratitude to the departing board members for your tireless and selfless representation of the membership. I consider each of you a good friend, and I look forward to seeing each of you at the upcoming union events. To the new board members, I welcome each of you and stand ready to assist you if needed.

As always, Yours in Solidarity,

Mike



Injury Comp Report

Ron Krumrie
Human Relations/
Injury Comp Director

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 even you and me.

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 collective bargaining 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, and our statement of accepted facts. The Department of Labor is contracting out work, such as bill paying, and this is causing many problems, such as medical bills being denied, or not being properly paid.

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 good written medical reports when needed. 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 all required medical information is by far the biggest reason for denial of our claims. Why? Many don't want to deal with all the paperwork that is required. Many have had bills that were 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 Management. **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 get our claim approved.

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.

Finding Information

Several resources describing the provisions of the law and how they are applied are available:

a. The Federal Employees' Compensation Act as amended, 5 USC 8101 et seq., is the source of entitlement to compensation benefits for Federal workers. Because virtually all of the provisions of the FECA have been interpreted and more fully described through OWCP directives and decisions of the Employees' Compensation Appeals Board, other resources will usually prove more helpful than the FECA itself except in locating citations found in OWCP decisions.

b. The Code of Federal Regulations, 20 CFR Chapter 10, Part A, more fully describes the provisions of the law and contains additional information concerning administration of the program. References to the regulations may occasionally be found in letters and decisions of OWCP.

c. The Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual describes in detail the procedures used by OWCP personnel in processing claims. It is divided into several sections by subject area.

d. Handbook for Employing Agency Personnel (Publication CA-810) is

meant to serve as a handbook for Federal agency personnel specialists, compensation specialists, and supervisors.

e. Questions and Answers About the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (Pamphlet CA-550) describes in non-technical language the basic provisions of the law and includes information concerning the most common issues about entitlement and claims processing. It is intended for use primarily by employees, who may obtain single copies by contacting the district office.

e. Decisions of the Employees' Compensation Appeals Board may be found in bound volumes in most law libraries. .

In closing let me share this with you:

"Let no one be discouraged by the belief there is nothing one person can do against the enormous array of the world's ills, misery, ignorance, and violence. Few will have the greatness to bend history, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. And in the total of all those acts will be written the history of a generation." - Robert Francis Kennedy

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

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

Ron



Legislative Report

Regina Favors
Legislative Director

Let me begin by sending an overwhelming thank you for once again allowing me to serve you as your legislative director. Welcome aboard to the new members of the e-board and thank you very much to the outgoing officers, I have enjoyed working and serving with you. As before I will continue to give you my very best in news, views, and all information possible.

The convention was as usual exciting, and eventful. We passed a lot of resolutions, some of which sparked a ton of debate but in the end are thought to be good additions to our constitution.

Legislatively, one more time I am asking..."what has (and is) happening to our Country???" I say our (and I feel I have the right to say OUR) because I was BORN here. I did not sneak into America and I am not working here for under the table pay. I am not making U.S. dollars and sending it out of the Country. I live here, I spend my money here and I pay more than my fair share of taxes here.

Yet under this current leadership I am no longer "guaranteed" to hold or keep a good union job, paying good benefits because the rich, greedy, big corporations want to outsource and/or use illegals so they don't have pay for benefits etc. Can anyone explain to me why it is that, they (the big corporations, big conglomerates) want to continually raise rates and lobby the legislature to make certain businesses competitive, lift the monopoly and then privatize, (i.e. the Post Office [fed-ex and brown}, the cable company, Ma-Bell [remember her], and I am sure you can think of others, just for their own greed? Then they turn around and tell the citizens of this great country that because of the unions they cannot continue to pay good wages and benefits. They are the ones making all the money, why can't they?

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Now don't get it twisted, I am not complaining or slandering or demeaning any immigrants for wanting to obtain a better life (which is something we as U.S. citizens also want) but I am thoroughly upset by the recent events surrounding the situation. I watched part of the Minutemen's protest on Capitol Hill and I was aghast at the signs saying, "no one is illegal". Well I beg to disagree because if someone did not come into this Country legally then what else could they be? I don't know, maybe I am wrong and if so could someone clue me in? Other than that, I guess I need to do some more studying, so until next time...

In Strong Solidarity,

Regina



Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan
Maintenance Director

Open Season in Progress

In the last issue, I addressed the Open Season process. If things are moving along as planned, interviews should be complete and the testing process should be scheduled for dates in June. The entire process is to be complete by the end of August. If scores are not back on time, you need to file a grievance asking "upon successful completion" to be made whole.

What's next? Update.

Some of you may have applied for Open Season and been informed that you are only eligible to update. Others may have tested years ago and are also only eligible to update for any position where you were scored "INELIGIBLE". Here are the facts on the Update Process:

An In-craft employee who has received a rating or a set of ratings for an In-craft group (including rating of ineligible) has the right to update those ratings. An employee may update as often as she/he has new training or experiences) for the failed KSAs for any given position. This can happen as often as once a month if the employee meets the criteria.

Prior to initiating the update process, an In-craft applicant must prove additional experience, education, or training to correct all deficient KSAs.

The maintenance MSS coordinator keeps the records in the employee's file until all failed KSAs are addressed. Evidence of additional training or experience must be submitted within 30 days of its completion.

Once the process starts, management has 37 days from the date of the applicant's update request to complete the process and have the results available for the employee.

The applicant completes only the appropriate sheets from the candidate supplemental applicant booklet to address the KSAs, which have been approved for update.

The supervisor and the review panel evaluation cover only KSAs being updated. If the KSAs approved for update require an examination, one will be scheduled.

Updates are processed by NTAC and the applicant is guaranteed that the new score will not be lower than the pre-update score. If the update yields a lower score, NTAC reports the original score.

Eligible applicants are placed on the In-craft register, in score order, as soon as results are received. However, the register shall not be updated during the period of time a vacant position is in the process of being filled.

If the results are not back in 37 days as mandated by the contract, a grievance should be filed. Ask that "upon successful completion of the update process" the employee "will be made whole for any/all lost time and/or benefits including but not limited to higher level and out of schedule if appropriate".

The attached flow chart will hopefully give you a visual presentation of this information and make it easy to keep track of the process in case you need to file a grievance.

MPWU Constitutional Convention

Our recent state constitutional convention was held in Detroit. Maintenance was well represented. Our NBA, Troy Rorman, was in for a day and then had to move on to the Minnesota state convention. Brother Idowu Balogun, our National Rep at Large was also in. He joined us for a short maintenance break out where we had a chance to cover a few items – MSS was at the top of the list of problem areas.

I want to thank the members who were present for selecting me for state maintenance craft director for another term. I plan to spend more time in the future working on the issues in the state. I will do my best to help with the various questions/problems that arise. My phone and email are on the state website so you can reach me most any time.

Jane



Area 2 Report

Vickie Beasley
Area 2 Director

I would like to start my first article for the Michigan Messenger by relaying my personal thanks for affording myself the opportunity to hold the position of Area 2 Director. I have served in various positions with my home local - Detroit District, and currently hold the position of Clerk Craft Director.

The Detroit District Area Local recently hosted the 20th Biennial Michigan Postal Workers Union Convention at the Marriott Hotel within the Renaissance Center, Downtown Detroit. I sincerely hope all the delegates enjoyed our fair city -- we welcome you back anytime. I enjoyed seeing so many familiar faces, as well as a few new ones.

I enjoyed the opportunity to Chair Resolution Committee #5. I have participated on various committees, but this was a first for me to participate as a Committee Chairperson. I would like to thank you for allowing me to do so, and appreciated the chance to learn.

We all had the chance to obtain knowledge from many knowledgeable individuals from National Officers who attended, former and current state officers, and many local officers and members. Everyone had the chance to learn from each other and from the guests in attendance.

In closing, Gary has tasked me to help with the Area 3 Director duties until the new Area 3 Director is appointed. If anyone in the area needs me for any reason, please do not hesitate to give me a call. My contact information is in the back of this edition of the Messenger.

Yours in Solidarity,

Vickie



Area 5 Report

Joanna Atkinson
Area 5 Director

My name is Joanna Atkinson and I was elected as the Area 5 representative at the MPWU State Convention in Detroit Michigan. I will be representing the offices within the 486 and 487 zip codes.

I would like to tell you a little about me so you will have some background information. I have been with the postal service since 1979 and became active in the union in 1980. I have held numerous jobs with the postal service including window clerk, pouch rack, LSM operator and currently am an automation clerk running DPS.

I have held numerous positions with the union such as steward, vice president, president and secretary in our local. I am married to Bob for 20 years and live in St Charles. I work in the Saginaw post office. I am currently on midnights, working 10:30 pm to 6:30 am. My scheduled days off are Sunday and Monday. I work at the Wheeler Street Station and my work number is (989) 771-5769. My home number is (989) 865-7924. I generally am awake by 12:30 or 1:00 in the afternoon, but if you need to get a hold of me before that you can call my home any time and leave a message and I will get back with you ASAP. If you are up when I am at work, you can also call me there, but to be honest with you, I can spend more time talking to you when I am at home.

I look forward to helping you in what ever way I can. Please feel free to call if you have questions, and if I don't know the answer I will find out.

Joanna



"The grand prize is a job that pays union scale."



Area 7 Report

Thomas Lothamer
Area 7 Director

Thanks to all those who supported me during my recent campaign for Area 7 director. For those of you who do not know me let me take a moment to introduce myself as the newest representative for the Southwest Michigan Area.

I was raised in Quincy, MI where I attended school from K-12. I played football, wrestling, and track. I was involved in the Varsity club as well as some Youth in Government. I was a member of V.I.C.A. and a president of H.O.S.A. (both of these organizations are vocational clubs). I graduated in 1985 and tried my hand at vocational college, waiting tables, and factory work over the course of the next couple of years until joining the United States Marine Corps in 1987. I became a Military Policeman and traveled extensively during my four year tour. I am an honorably discharged Veteran of the Persian Gulf War. I spent my time from my discharge in 1991 until 1995 again working in factories two union and two non-union. Let me tell any of you who have ever worked for non-union, It's not always so good. I am truly thankful for my union rights and privileges. I hired into the Post Office in June 1995 and have worked in Coldwater my whole career. I spent 10 and 1/2 years to the day as a PTF and have only been a regular since December 2005. My local is the Southwest Michigan Area Local located in Kalamazoo, MI. and I have been a steward for the last six years, Trustee for a year and am on my third year as Local Business Agent.

For those of you who don't know what goes on at these conventions let me try to explain. There are two types of conventions, one would be an educational convention which is where we as officers and stewards are given updated training on how to perform our duties. The other is constitutional conventions which is where everyone who wants to make a change or addition to our National Contract can begin the process much like a bill begins before becoming a law. Does anyone remember those cartoons after school "I'm just a bill yeah, I'm only a bill and I'm sittin' here on Capital Hill." Maybe you know what I am talking about, maybe you don't. Depends on how

old you are and how much television you watched. Anyways, that is the convention we just finished at the state level and the resolutions (bills) are now on their way to Philadelphia to be heard and discussed in August at the National convention.

If you don't know if I am your representative or not (I have to look at a list that I have to know for sure) these offices in Michigan are yours and I am here for you. Not only for grievances but for questions as well so feel free to contact me. Athens, Baroda, Bedford, Berrien Center, Breedsville, Bridgman, Buchanan, Centreville, Ceresco, Climax, Coloma, Comstock, Constantine, Covert, Decatur, Dowling, East Leroy, Eau Claire, Fulton, Galien, Grand Junction, Harbert, Hartford, Lacota, Lakeside, Lawrence, Lawton, Leonidas, Mattawan, Mendon, Nashville, Nazareth, New Buffalo, New Troy, Nottawa, Otsego, Quincy, Riverside, Sawyer, Schoolcraft, Sherwood, Sodus, South Haven, Stevensville, Union City, Union Pier, Vermontville, Watervliet, and White Pigeon.

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E m a i l T L o -
thamer@msn.com (please
use APWU for subject
matter so I don't accident-
ally delete it with my
junk mail.)

Thomas

The Forever Stamp

The U.S. Postal Service's announcement of a "forever" stamp has prompted a few people to speculate that the stamps will be hoarded, and others to wonder why the USPS is willing to sacrifice revenue.

Hoarding wouldn't make much sense, economist Mark Thoma explains in the Economist's View blog. Stamp prices have increased at approximately the rate of inflation over the past 30 years, while most of the time you've been able to put your money in a Treasury note or bank account and earn a little more than the inflation rate. Thoma's example: If you expect stamp prices to rise by 3 percent a year from now, and you buy \$1,000 worth of stamps, your expected return is \$30. But you have to consider the time value of money: A risk-free investment at 5 percent would earn \$50 in a year. So you're really \$20 behind if you stock up on stamps.

If you think about it from the Post Office's point of view, they don't mind if people stock up. The hoarder has stamps that he or she can use someday, but the Post Office has the hoarder's money — and can probably make a decent return on that money.

Really, this is about convenience — or, in economics parlance, about reducing transaction costs. The postage increase this year didn't put much of a dent in people's budgets, but it did cause a lot of extra trips to the Post Office for 2-cent stamps.

One key detail about the forever stamps hasn't been disclosed yet: The Postal Service hasn't said how long they'll stay on sale. If the USPS moves to a schedule of annual rate increases, as postal officials have discussed, there would be a strong incentive to stock up on forever stamps just before a rate increase goes into effect. If postal officials are concerned about maximizing revenue, they could make forever stamps unavailable when a rate increase is imminent.



Area 9 Report

Michelle Gregory
Area 9 Director

To the members of the Area 9, please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Michelle Gregory. It was a privilege and honor to be a delegate to the recent State Convention, as I had not attended one in 10 years. Also, at the recent State Convention, I was elected to serve you as your new Area 9 Director for the MPWU. I would like to thank all the members who supported me for this position, and will take my Oath of Office very seriously. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jennifer Gilbert for the last two years.

For those who don't know me, I am from the Western Michigan Area Local, and have been elected as the new Area 9 Director for the MPWU. I have been a steward for my Local for the past 13 years and hope to bring the knowledge I have gained over the years to the position of Area 9 Director. I have also had some training in the area of FMLA through our Local, which is available to whomever is in need of it. I am a firm believer in sharing knowledge, and gaining knowledge. We, as stewards never stop learning. It is our key to success in our battle against management.

Anyone needing to get in contact with me, I can be reached at my home local during the hours of 2250-0700 at (616) 776-1489 or e-mail me at mmgregory7@yahoo.com. If you can't reach me during my work hours, leave a message and I will call you back during your work hours, or at home if you wish.

I look forward to taking on the challenge of this position, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any of the slightest concerns in your office within the 493-494 area.

In Solidarity,

Michelle



Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque
MPWU Retirees President

Convention Report: The 3rd Biennial State Retiree Chapter Convention convened on Friday, April 28, 2006 in conjunction with the MPWU State Convention. Due to personal circumstances, my attendance was abbreviated, but all our basic business was accomplished. We conducted our State Chapter E-Board meeting Thursday evening, and opened our one-day convention Friday morning with all four Local Retiree Chapters well represented.

After completing preliminary agenda items, we were privileged to welcome **Douglas C. Holbrook**, APWU Retirees Department Director. Doug flew in specifically to address our retiree delegates here in his home state, and home Local city, Detroit. Holbrook congratulated Michigan on our State Chapter, noting only four State chapters have been organized; Ohio, Florida and California being the other states. He hopes to see more states establish chapters and will help organize them.

Doug acknowledged that people need reasons to join, and that he has received considerable input through proposals from Michigan, including making sure the five elected National Retiree Delegates and Local and State Chapters are furnished the APWU News Service Bulletin. At our suggestion, Holbrook is attempting to furnish advertising for the Retirees Department to APWU Local and State publications promoting membership.

Director Holbrook addressed serious problems with OPM in processing retirements and some of their disposi-

tions. He announced that there will be a national Retirees Dept. Conference in 2007 in conjunction with the APWU All-Craft Conferences in Las Vegas, in compliance with one of our long-standing proposals. He stressed that during his tenure as APWU Sec.-Treas., the Retirees Department was established at the '92 National Convention in Detroit to keep APWU retirees involved in their Union, **not just for COPA!** It was encouraging to have our long held perception that retirees are merely valued as "cash cows" for COPA is being heard at the highest levels of our Union. What effect that has will be told at the 2006 National Convention in Philly. It was noted from the floor that retirees exceeded the COPA goal of \$200,000 in 2005 by 16 grand! It is my considered opinion that if delegates to the National Convention fail to open the door the APWU house for Retirees Dept. members, we will witness the beginning of the decline of our Department which could very well have an adverse effect on the level of future COPA contributions. As Doug said; people need reasons to belong.

Legislatively, Doug remarked that we have great friends from Michigan in Congress; citing U.S. Reps. John Con-

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yers and John Dingell, and Senators Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin, with Levin being the senior member on the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. Holbrook is concerned regarding retiree issues which may be affected in contract negotiations coming up in August, specifically the anticipated USPS proposals to cut health care benefits. Emphasizing organizing retirees, Local and State Chapters need to be involved in signing up retirees in the Dept. Doug stated that if any Chapter or member required assistance to call the Dept's toll free number: **1-877-APWU NOW** and ask for the Retirees Dept. and/or leave a message and they will get back with you.

Likewise encouraging was Doug's suggestions that the Retirees Dept. needed a 'policy book' on our priority issues, legislatively and internally, and that we can make a difference. We were asked to think about the structure of the Department in the next year, and establish what is our mission, with efforts to expand our web site. Holbrook concluded by being emphatic that he will not be a candidate for Director in the first election for that position in '07, leaving the burning question as to who will be the candidate(s) for the 3-year term. In the next 18 months, he stated that he will be doing whatever he can to advance the Department before leaving us being very proud of the Department, while expressing being as frustrated as we are at what is not being done. In that vein, whoever the candidates for Department Director and National Retiree Delegate are; they can expect to be questioned as to their positions on our proposals for advancement of the Department, including our priority resolutions and our expectations that if elected they will commit to their support of retiree issues on the floor of the National Convention. I

strongly suggest that all our sister Chapters follow suit.

Doug advised that he would be flying back to D.C. and home that afternoon to observe his 45th wedding anniversary the next day. We expressed our gratitude for Doug's special effort to recognize our State Chapter Convention and sharing his insights with us as the highlight of the convention.

Prior to lunch recess, officer's reports were given and a motion was offered and debated to send the President to the pre-national convention Retirees Dept. Conference in Philadelphia in August with necessary expenses, finances permitting, and to allocate up to \$300. for any other delegate who may attend on their own, again finances permitting, which was unanimously adopted. The afternoon session was rather intense in our attempt to accomplish all our constitutionally necessary business.

To make matters 'interesting'; a proposal from the floor, which was eventually made into a motion that; a resolution from this body be submitted to the MPWU State Union delegates in session to; "Establish a liaison from the MPWU State Retiree Chapter who shall be the President, or their designee of the Retiree Chapter, to address retiree issues. This representative will be authorized to attend MPWU Executive Board meetings with necessary expenses (to be) borne by (the) Michigan Postal Workers Union; however they shall not have a voice or vote on the Board." At that point I explained that as Chapter president, I've always had access to MPWU E-Board Meetings and graciously granted permission to address the Board on retiree and Chapter issues. I also insisted that the motion/resolution include that the liaison attend without a voice or vote on the MPWU E-Board. The delegate's intent, however, appeared to be authorization to attend "...with necessary ex-

penses borne by the MPWU".

The hastily composed last-minute resolution was submitted to the MPWU Constitution Committee late Friday. Since I had to leave early Saturday, I was unable to observe the debate on the State Convention floor, but I was not confident it would receive delegate approval as written. While the Constitution Resolutions Committee recommended non-concurrence, after the expected pro and con debate, the resolution was adopted by the delegates as written, somewhat to my surprise. From information I've received since, I'm not so sure MPWU delegates clearly understood they were authorizing funding necessary expenses for the State Retiree Chapter liaison to attend MPWU E-Board meetings. As I previously stated; there never has been any concern regarding my access to the MPWU E-Board meetings, and even if the proposal had not been adopted, availability to E-Board meetings has never been a problem nor do I anticipate it will be in the future. As I reflect on our Chapter discussion on the issue, I recall that the intent of the maker(s) of the resolution revolved around the Chapter's limited funds to be able to attend.

However, resolutions are not always proposed for the present, but for the foreseeable future inasmuch as current MPWU State Union and Chapter leaderships will eventually give way to the next generation of leadership to continue to apply direction established by their predecessors. For as long as I continue to chair this State Chapter, let me assure the MPWU State Union leadership, as well as the State Chapter officers and our respective members, that attendance at MPWU E-Board meetings will continue to be on an as needed basis with the approval of both the Chapter President and MPWU State Presi-

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dent. Our parent MPWU has been consistently generous in its support of our State Chapter, and I have no intention of taking undue advantage of that generosity.

Nominations for State Chapter office were conducted. Unopposed offices for President; Al LaBrecque, Vice-President; George W. Hendricks, and Secretary-Treasurer; Jerrold Clairmont were declared elected by acclamation. Five candidates vied for the three Trustee positions. Elected were; Charles Kolhoff (Saginaw), Patricia Miller (Flint), and Lynn Charles Walker (Honor-Traverse City). Thanks to the Election Committee of Jerry Clairmont, Chair, and members Sue Dick (Flint) and Winifred Cook (Detroit) for their service.

Delegates then discussed the five priority resolutions we presented to the State MPWU for their approval and eventual submission to the APWU National Convention, and what I consider the "guts" of what needs to be accomplished to advance the inclusion of the Retirees Department and retiree members in our parent APWU. These resolutions require another whole article to educate our delegates to the National Convention for their support in Philly, which will hopefully we will be able to publish before the convention in August. All five were adopted by MPWU delegates, but not without some serious debate both in Committee and on the Convention floor resulting in some amendments. But, all survived essentially intact. The "40-40-20" resolution which would rebate 20% of ALL retiree members' dues in a state to the State Chapter rather than the 40% now rebated of ONLY those retiree members NOT belonging to a Local Chapter was unanimously adopted by MPWU delegates. I view this as essential to the continued growth of the Retirees Dept. and or-

ganizing Local Retiree Chapters.

One interesting 'tidbit' I learned while in Detroit was that all retired former national officers have been invited by the APWU President to attend the National Convention in Philly for two days with expenses. Now, that's been done in the past and I have no particular problem with that, EXCEPT for the fact that our **elected** five National Retiree Delegates to the Convention will NOT be compensated the past customary Level 5, Step O for their service and required attendance.

Adding insult to injury, I'm given to understand that national hosted a dinner for retired former national officers during a previous National Convention to which not even our **elected** National Retiree Delegates were invited. Not that I consider that omission an intentional snub, but it clearly demonstrates where on the APWU totem pole the Retirees Department is located. A resolution to compensate the five **elected** National Retiree Delegates for their attendance at National Conventions at L-5, S-O up to 40 hours in a week was adopted by the MPWU Convention and is being submitted to the APWU Constitution Committee for national delegate consideration.

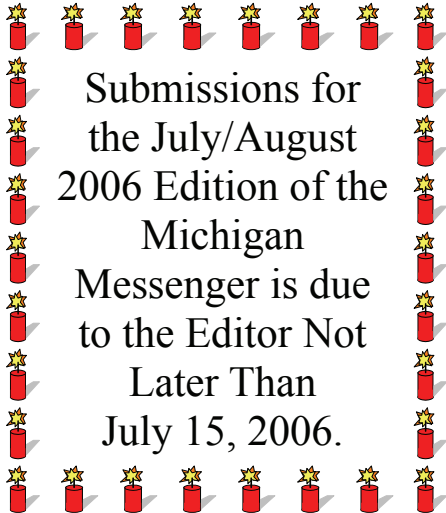
At the risk of missing mention of someone, I must recognize all those who assisted in making our 3rd biennial State Retiree Chapter Convention successful. As always; MPWU President Gary VanHooogstraten, Exec.-Secretary Harold Juhl, and most notably; Sec.-Treas. Darren Joyce were extremely accommodating, as was Editor Mike Long in preparing our ballots and the aforementioned resolution with his 'flying fingers' on the computer to print them for us. To the host Detroit District Area Local for their kind hospitality, to Patty Miller for her service in recording the minutes of our E-Board meeting and convention, to MPWU Constitution Committee chair-

man, Mark Hart and that committee's members for allowing me to address them regarding clarification on Resolution #2; Retirees Dept. members eligibility to elect our top three APWU General Officers and resident Legislative, Human Relations Dept. officers and Director APWU Health Plan. And, finally to our elected State Chapter officers and delegates for their diligent participation to complete our business at hand. I am personally deeply grateful to all those mentioned herein and to our MPWU delegates who supported the State Chapter and our efforts in so many ways, be they large or small.

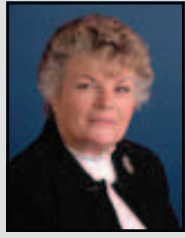
Now, it's on to the next phase in our quest to advance the best interests of our membership and the APWU Retirees Department at the pre-National Convention Retirees Dept. Conference and the APWU's highest governing body, the National Convention, this coming August in the City of Brotherly Love.

Stay Strong!

Al



Submissions for
 the July/August
 2006 Edition of the
 Michigan
 Messenger is due
 to the Editor Not
 Later Than
 July 15, 2006.



NBA Report

Lynn Pallas-Barber
NBA - Clerk Div. - Chicago

WOMEN IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Rose Scheiderman 1882-1972

Rose Scheiderman was born in Saven, Poland in 1882. She was the daughter of Jewish parents. Her family immigrated to the United States when she was eight years old. After her father passed away, Rose and her brothers and sisters were raised in orphanages.

At thirteen years old, Rose went to work in a department store. In search of higher wages, she ended up working in a factory where she developed radical political views. She became an active socialist and trade unionist. She also played a very active part in women's suffrage.

She founded the Jewish Socialist United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers' Union in 1903. She eventually became president of the Women's Trade Union League. Rose was forced to leave school after the sixth grade. She was forced to help support her family. After leaving the department stores she went to work at the factory of Hein and Fox. She worked from 0800 to 1600 stitching linings into golf caps, yachting caps and other types of caps. She was paid for piece work. She earned from 3 ½ cents to 10 cents a dozen. The average weekly wage was \$5.00. These women and girls would have made more except they had to provide their own sewing machines. Their employer charged them \$45 for the machines which they were allowed to pay off in installment payments. They paid \$5 down and \$1 a month.

Rose participated in 2 strikes and helped organize the other women and girls. When management attempted to run and open shop system, the right to engage and discharge employees as they saw fit, and whether the employees were union or nonunion, the workers took to the streets and picketed. The tactics were meant as union busting and there was an attempt to replace the union workers with child labor and raw immigrant girls.

The strike lasted for 13 weeks and the women and girls established their reputation. They were on the picket lines for 11 hours each day and they were able to convince nonunion members to join them and quit working against the union.

After her union had won two victories with their strikes, Rose became more active in organizing other women. She began organizing sales women, waitresses and even domestic servants. She continued in her struggle in the labor movement until she became the president of the Women's Trade Union League.

STATE CONVENTIONS

It was certainly a different view for me at the MPWU State Convention. Sitting in the back of the room as a guest is certainly not the same thing as being a delegate on the convention floor. I missed the opportunity to express my opinion at the mikes.

I want to once gain thank the MWPU Executive Board and the delegates for honoring me with the dedication of the convention book and the clock and plaque that was given to me at the dinner Saturday night. For once I was speechless and had a difficult time expressing what I needed to say; normally I am not usually at a loss for words. I have made some life long valuable friends in my brothers and sisters by being involved in the MPWU. Thank you again, so very much!!

This was also my first convention in the State of Illinois. It was great to be an invited guest. I was given the opportunity to address the delegates on Saturday and enjoyed their convention as well. The Illinois delegates have been extremely successful in their campaign and efforts for COPA. Linda Turney, the COPA queen has proven to be and excellent speaker, educator and organizer.

Our next endeavor is the National Convention in Philadelphia. It certainly is a real honor to belong and be involved in our great union. Just think where we would be without it as postal workers. Our convention is the democracy of our union and work.

NEW ARGUMENT

New argument in arbitration is a two-way street. It becomes difficult to put a case on in arbitration and have management slap you in the face with new argument objections. It is even harder when those objections are upheld by the majority of arbitrators. In turn, we as the Union also get to object to any new arguments that they attempt to raise.

I cannot impress enough how important it is to fully develop and document your grievances. Management in their Step 3 denials is going for the jugular vein. When an arti-

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cle is mentioned in a grievance and not developed in the file they are attacking us and stating that the Union is barred from submitting new argument and evidence for the first time at arbitration. They are attacking our remedies as well with statements that the Union's remedy is unsupported, inappropriate, unwarranted and improper. They are labeling our grievances as procedurally defective. It is becoming more and more important that our cases are properly developed and documented.

EXCESSING

As the Article 12 NBA I am involved in the excessing that is going on in our States of Michigan and Illinois. The Postal Service will be moving and rearranging our membership based on their number crunching tactics. Function 4 reviews will be the wave of our future. The Northern Illinois District was hit first in our area. The first wave of excessing is now complete and the second wave is close at hand. There has also been some withholding and excessing anticipated for Central Illinois District as well. Most of the excessing in Central Illinois has been within the installations of Bloomington and Springfield. The withholding for Decatur has been recently corrected and may eventually have only one impacted employee excessed from the installation.

Excessing has once again come to Michigan as well. There are currently withholdings for Birmingham, Novi and now Farmington, Benton Harbor and Holland. The number of reported impacted employees is a total of 39. It is hoped that attrition may relieve some of the excessing. It is extremely important that locals keep track of the residual vacancies and report them to the Regional Coordinator's office. It is also important to track the withheld positions as well. Just recently the Great Lakes Area had too many withheld positions per the number of impacted employees for Birmingham and Novi. The struggle continues!!

Until next time,

In Solidarity,

Lynn

Breast Cancer Stamps Raises over \$50 Million for Breast Cancer Research

WASHINGTON, May 9 /PRNewswire/ -- The U.S. Postal Service announced today that the Breast Cancer Research semi-postal stamp has raised over \$50.3 million for research. With Mother's Day just around the corner, the Postal Service encourages consumers to use this stamp on Mother's Day cards to further increase funding for research.

The U.S. Postal Service's Breast Cancer Research stamp was first issued in 1998 pursuant to legislation enacted by Congress and over 695 million stamps have been sold. As a "semi-postal" stamp, the U.S. Postal Service's Breast Cancer Research stamp sells for 45 cents and is valid for postage at the prevailing 39-cent First-Class Mail(R) letter rate. Seventy percent of the net difference is paid to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and 30 percent is paid to the Department of Defense (DoD). The NIH and DoD, which both conduct breast cancer research, were identified as recipients of the funds by the legislation enacted in 1997.

The self-adhesive Breast Cancer Research semi-postal is a nondenominational stamp, bearing the words "USA" and "First-Class." The background of the vertically formatted stamp design features overlapping areas of pastel blue, yellow, orange and green. Along the top are the words "BREAST CANCER." A line drawing of a female figure, suggesting a "goddess of the hunt or fight" is the main element, while the phrase "FUND THE FIGHT. FIND A CURE(R)," appears flowing left to right across the stamp in a clockwise, circular pattern, outlining where the figure's right breast would be.

The stamp was designed by breast cancer survivor Ethel Kessler of Bethesda, MD, and illustrated by Whitney Sherman of Baltimore.





MPWU 20th Biennial Convention



In Pictures





The New Michigan Postal Workers Union Executive Board, being sworn in by NBA Lynn Pallas-Barber.

Postal Tidbits

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Update; For Employees Covered by the National Agreement and the Operating Services Agreement:

(May 18, 2006) In April, the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) rose to 587.3. After the third month of the sixth-month measuring period, the tenth Cost-Of-Living Adjustment under the extended 2000 National Agreement and the extended 2000 Operating Services Agreement would be \$500 per year. The adjustment would amount to a 24 cents per hour increase, or \$19.20 per pay period. However, the tenth COLA (the second under the 2005-2006 extension agreements) will be made based on the July 2006 CPI and will be effective Sept. 2, 2006 (pay period 19-06, pay date Sept. 22, 2006), *provided the July CPI is released by Aug. 18, 2006*, otherwise it will be effective pay period 20-06. The ninth COLA (\$457 per year, \$17.60 per pay period, 22 cents per hour) took effect March 18, 2006 (pay period 07-2006, pay date April 7, 2006).

Effective with the March COLA, employees covered by the 2000 National Agreement and the 2000 Operating Services Agreement have received the following cost-of-living adjustments totaling \$3,078: \$457 (March 18, 2006); \$728 (Sept. 3, 2005); \$208 (March 19, 2005); \$624 (Sept. 4, 2004); \$208 (March 6, 2004); \$291 (Sept. 6, 2003); \$250 (March 8, 2003); and \$312 (Sept. 7, 2002).

LOCKHEED MARTIN AWARDED CONTRACTS TO IMPROVE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL PROCESSING SYSTEM

OWEGO, NY, May 24, 2006 -- Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT] has been awarded two contracts totaling \$9 million from the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to upgrade and increase the processing capability of the Remote Computer Reader (RCR) system. The Remote Computer Reader upgrade will provide additional capacity to handle processing during peak periods. The additional capacity will allow the USPS to sort more mail and create more flexible mail processing options, which are extremely beneficial during the holiday season.

"The Remote Computer Reader is a great example of how Lockheed Martin partners with our customer to deliver outstanding results," said Brian Tanton, vice president and general manager of Lockheed Martin Distribution Technologies. "Our relationship with the Postal Service on RCR spans more than a decade, illustrating how systems can be continuously upgraded with the latest technology." RCR consists of arrays of computer servers loaded with software trained to decipher printed or handwritten addresses on letters. RCR now accurately machine reads 86 percent of handwritten addresses, versus 2 percent in 1995, and 93 percent of typed or printed addresses, up from 35 percent in 1995. It is installed in approximately 350 U.S. Postal Service Processing and Distribution Centers in major cities. Lockheed Martin is a leading supplier to the U.S. Postal Service and other postal systems around the world of address recognition solutions, which read handwritten or machine printed addresses automatically.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2005 sales of \$37.2 billion.

Maintenance Breaks

If an ET gets a "call" when they are at break, they should respond that they are on break and ask if management wants them to go off of their break and then go on break when they are done with the call. Management should say yes, go on break when you are done with the call, if they want the ET to go off of break for a call. And then they would restart their break. Management may be able to interrupt your break, but you should be able to take it. If an ET is on lunch and ET gets called off of lunch to fix a machine, they should respond that they are on lunch. If they are taken off lunch early then they should clock in and get OT pay to fix the machine because they will go over their 8 hour day. They should not fix the machine while off the clock. If you start making them pay you OT pay by clocking in to fix equipment then that should deter them from calling people off of lunch break. In some offices where this was done, ET's would clock in, fix the machine, force them to pay OT pay, file a grievance for not being allowed to finish lunch as per the ELM regulations on meal time, if applicable. Eventually management quit calling them off of lunch in some places.

Troy Rorman, NBA

United Won't Fly US Mail: Airline fails to qualify as a domestic mail carrier because of its performance in delivery mail on time.

United Airlines will stop carrying US domestic mail after June 30, after it failed to qualify for a contract renewal and declined a short-term contract extension.

United said it did not qualify for a five-year domestic mail contract renewal from the USPS based on its on-time domestic mail delivery performance from October thru March.

The airline will continue to carry international mail, which is said makes up most of its mail service in volume and revenue. United told its employees "We absolutely have to deliver on our promise of service to every customer."

The next chance for United to bid on mail service is 2011.

A Mother's Dictionary

- **Amnesia:** A condition that enable a woman who has gone through labor to have another child.
- **Bottle Feeding:** An opportunity for daddy to get up at 2:00 am too.
- **Eat:** What kids do between meals, but not at them
- **Energy:** An element of vitality kids always have in abundance until asked to do something.
- **Family Planning:** The art of spacing your children just far enough apart to keep you on the edge of financial disaster.
- **Feedback:** The inevitable result when the baby doesn't appreciate the strained carrots.
- **Full Name:** What you call your child when you're angry with him or her.
- **Grandparents:** The people who think your children are wonderful even though they're sure you're not raising them right.
- **Hamper:** A wicker container with a lid, usually surrounded by, but not containing, dirty clothing.
- **Handi-Wipes:** Pants, shirt-sleeves, drapes, etc.
- **Independent:** How we want our children to be as long as they do everything we say.
- **Joy Ride:** Going without the kids.
- **Maybe:** No
- **Overstuffed Recliner:** Mom's nickname for Dad.
- **Prepared Childbirth:** A contradiction in terms.
- **Showoff:** A child who is more talented than yours.
- **Sterilize:** What you do to your first baby's pacifier by boiling it, and to your last baby's pacifier by blowing on it.
- **Top Bunk:** A place you should never put a child wearing Superman pajamas.
- **Two-Minute Warning:** When the baby's face turns red and she begins to make those all too familiar grunting noises.

Can You Remember

- 1.Candy Cigarettes?
- 2.Wax coke-shaped bottles with colored sugar water inside?
- 3.Soda pop machines that dispensed glass bottles?
- 4.Coffee shots with tableside juke boxes?
- 5.Blackjack chewing gum?
- 6.Home milk delivery in glass bottles, with cardboard stoppers?
- 7.Party lines?
- 8.Newsreels before the movie?
- 9.P.F. Flyers?
- 10.Butch wax?
- 11.Telephone numbers with a word prefix? (Drexel-5505)
- 12.Peashooters?
- 13.Howdy Doody?
- 14.78 RPM Records?
- 15.S&H Green Stamps?
- 16.Hi-Fi's?
- 17.Metal ice cube trays, with levers?
- 18.Mimeograph paper?
- 19.Blue flash bulbs?
- 20.Beanie and Cecil?
- 21.Roller skate keys?
- 22.Cork popguns?
- 23.Drive-Ins?
- 24.Studebakers?
- 25.Wash tub wringers?

Now...add up your score. If you remembered 0 to 5, you're still young. If you remember 6 to 15, you are getting older. If you remembered 16 to 25, you are older than dirt.

What is a Mother?

A mother is the truest friend we have. When trials, heavy and sudden fall upon us...When adversity takes the place of prosperity...When troubles thicken around us....Still will she cling to us and endeavor by her kind precepts and counsels to dissipate the clouds of darkness and cause peace to return to our hears.

- Washington Irving

Now You Know Everything

- ◆ The liquid inside young coconuts can be used as a substitute for blood plasma.
- ◆ No piece of paper can be folded in half more than seven (7) times
- ◆ Donkeys kill more people annually than plane crashes.
- ◆ You burn more calories sleeping than you do watching television.
- ◆ Oak trees do not produce acorns until they are fifty (50) years of age or older.
- ◆ The first product to have a bar code was Wrigley's gum.
- ◆ The king of hearts is the only king without a mustache.
- ◆ American Airlines saved \$40,000 in 1987 by eliminating one (1) olive from each salad served in first class.
- ◆ Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise.
- ◆ Apples, not caffeine, are more efficient at waking you up in the morning.
- ◆ Most dust particles in your house are made from dead skin. (No wonder my house is so DUSTY!).
- ◆ The first owner of the Marlboro Company died of lung cancer. So did the first "Marlboro Man."
- ◆ Walt Disney was afraid of mice.
- ◆ Pearls melt in vinegar.
- ◆ The three most valuable brand names on earth: Marlboro, Coca Cola, and Budweiser, in that order.
- ◆ It is possible to lead a cow upstairs...but not downstairs.
- ◆ Dentists have recommended that a toothbrush be kept at least six (6) feet from a toilet to avoid airborne particles resulting from the flush. (I keep my toothbrush in the living room now!).
- ◆ Richard Millhouse Nixon was the first US president whose name contains all the letters from the word "criminal." The second? William Jefferson Clinton (Please don't tell me you're Surprised?).
- ◆ And the best for last....Turtles can breathe through their butts. (I know some people like that; don't you?)

Now you know everything there is to know.

Let Management Know The Union Only Enforces the Contract

Editor's Note: To begin this is in addition to my column earlier in this edition of the Messenger, I recently came across some actions by my management locally and from others that I am in contact with throughout the state, I have been told it is happening everywhere. I was going to let it slide, but it happened again recently which broke the last straw, so I held up the Messenger to write this editorial. The lateness of this Messenger edition is totally my fault, and I will make every attempt that it doesn't happen again.

How many times have you gone to work, only to find management spouting the immortal words: "We would do that, but the union won't let us." Or, how about: "We would have more staffing, but the union filed a Casual grievance and now we can't hire anyone, so everyone has to work overtime." Sound familiar? I know personally, both statements have a special meaning to me. In my head, when I hear these words, I translate their words to mean: "I would like to break the contract, but I would have to deal with the consequences." Or, "We don't need to hire anyone else in as a career, we can just continue to hire casuals, but we got caught."

Better yet, how many times have you heard: "The union won't allow us to give you overtime," or "the union says that we can't do that," or "the union won't allow us to help you," or "the union is only there to protect those lazy bums that don't want to work or call in sick all the time." Sound familiar?

Lets put one big misconception to rest first. The National Agreement or the Contract, as it is called, is signed by both parties: Management AND the union. It is an AGREEMENT between both parties on how things will be done; how employees will be compensated and treated, etc. It is not the Union's contract only. The union's only job is to enforce it.

Article 3 of the National Agreement is quite specific when it comes to the actions of management. It states: "The employer shall have the exclusive right, subject to the provisions of this Agreement and consistent with applicable laws and regulations:" It goes on to state what they can do. However, the wording following: "subject to" is the clincher. They can't go against the contract when they want. If they do, then technically, they don't have the right to "manage."

Lately there has been casual-in-lieu-of grievances being won, and big money has been paid to those aggrieved. Management is now looking at their casual utilization and cutting back. Because of this, OTDL listers and non-listers are being required to work overtime to cover. Management then tells its employees it is the union's fault.

The union doesn't cause any of this to happen, or probably anything else that comes to management's mind. I have found that management uses this excuse so they

can continue to mismanage and blame someone else.

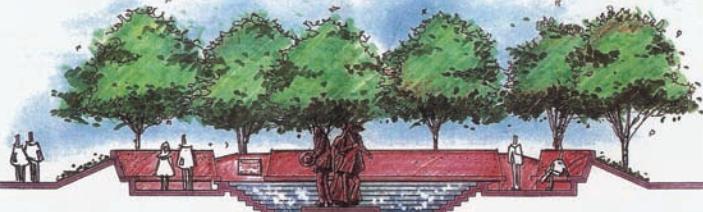
To sum it up: The union does NOT schedule you. The union does NOT give out overtime. The union does NOT staff the operation. The union does NOT issue discipline. The union does NOT run the Post Office. The union DOES enforce the contract and what has been agreed upon. The union ensures that everyone is treated fairly. Plain and Simple. The next time management comes to you and says it is the union's fault, you can just give them a copy of this article, and tell them that it is about time that they do their job! As long as they follow the contract while they do it.

To coin a fellow union brother's (Lynn Walker) favorite expression: Know Your Contract! If you know your contract, you know what you can and they can't do!

-Michael Long

The Spirit of Solidarity

Labor Monument Campaign



Make your mark in History. Buy a brick to support the Spirit of Solidarity Monument in Downtown Grand Rapids. Located in Ah-Nab-Awen Park at the entrance of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, this monument will be a lasting reminder to over 500,000 visitors each year of the courage, vision and sacrifices of our immigrant ancestors in the building of the American Labor Movement!

I support The Spirit of Solidarity! I would like to buy _____ bricks, at \$100.00 per brick. My check for \$ _____ is enclosed. In case there are any questions about my message, I can be contacted by phone during the day at (_____) _____, or in the evenings at (_____) _____.

My mailing address is: Name _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Maximum four bricks per person or organization.
Please send your check to:
Labor Heritage Society of West Michigan 1515 McKay Tower Grand Rapids, MI 49503

One letter per block, 14 letters across, three lines down.
Periods, commas and other grammatical symbols count as one space, as does the space between words.
The Labor Heritage Society of West Michigan, Inc., reserves the right to reject objectionable submissions.
Contributions to the LHSWM are tax deductible.

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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: editor@mpwu.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.



The Michigan Postal Workers Union proudly represents the Members at Large within the Great State of Michigan. The following locals have also affiliated with the MPWU for assistance in the training of education and information between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Alpena | Battle Creek |
| Central MI | Detroit |
| Farmington | Flint |
| 480-481 | 498-499 |
| Gaylord | Hillsdale |
| Jackson | Ludington |
| Manistee | Muskegon |
| Petoskey | Pontiac |
| Roger City | Saginaw |
| Sault Ste Marie | Traverse City |
| Southwest Michigan | Troy Local |
| Western Michigan | |

Upcoming Events to Plan For:

- August 14 - 18, 2006 - APWU National Convention, Philadelphia, PA
- Sept/Oct 2006 - Area 10, 11, & 12 District Meeting, Iron Mountain, MI
- Mar/Apr 2007 - Area 7, 8, & 9 District Meeting, Jackson, MI
- June 1-3, 2007 - MPWU Educational Convention; Sault Ste Marie, MI
- August 1 - 4, 2007 - National Postal Press Convention; Reno, NV



Two services you have at your disposal — 24 Hours a Day, Seven Days a Week. Use them!

What Is the Employee Assistance Program? The EAP is a counseling and referral service staffed by master's-degree trained mental health professionals and designed to help you with your personal, job or family problems. It is a confidential program that is free and voluntary.

What Kinds of Problems Does the EAP Help Resolve? Our professional counselors are prepared to assist you with virtually any issue or problem which can affect your work performance or personal health. Some of the most common concerns brought to the EAP include: (1) Emotional; (2) Marital; (3) Family Issues; (4) Alcohol or Other Drug Abuse; (5) Job Related Problems; (6) Legal/Financial; (7) Any Other Problems

What Can I Expect From the EAP? A telephone call is all it takes to make an appointment with an EAP counselor. The counselor will meet with you in a confidential setting and: (a) Help you assess the problem; (b) Meet with family members, as needed; (c) Provide short-term counseling, as appropriate; (d) Assist you in selecting other professional services and resources, as necessary; (e) Follow-up to ensure that you receive quality services.

How Much Will the EAP Cost Me? There is no cost to employees who receive counseling and other services provided directly by the EAP counselor. If additional outside treatment or professional services are needed, the costs are your responsibility if not covered by your Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan or private insurance. The EAP counselor will work with you to identify the best available outside treatment program and services in line with our individual finances.

Is The EAP Confidential? Yes, your privacy is protected by strict confidentiality laws and regulation and by professional ethical standards for counselors. The details of your discussion with the counselor may not be released to anyone without your prior written consent. Participation in the EAP will not jeopardize your job or career.

When Is The Best Time To Contact The EAP? Don't wait too long! The sooner you seek help, the sooner your problems can be addressed. Problems left unresolved often can lead to more serious situations with a greater risk that your health or job performance will be jeopardized. If you take advantage of the help and support offered through the EAP and address your problems before they become serious, you and the U.S. Postal Service both will be winners! For information or assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call:

1-800-EAP-4-YOU
(1-800-327-4968)
TTY 1-877-492-7341

or by Logging onto:
<http://www.eap4you.com>

LifeCare offers a variety of free referral services and resources to all APWU-represented USPS workers, and their immediate family members. An employer-provided benefit negotiated by the APWU, LifeCare offers information, education and referral services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, via telephone and online. LifeCare can help you with:

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- Adoption
- Parenting
- Adult Care
- Grandparenting

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- Special Education
- Colleges/Universities
- Financial Aid
- Health & Wellness
- Diet/Nutrition
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- Insurance
- Retirement
- Estate Planning
- Wills
- Free 30-Minute Consultations with Attorneys and/or Financial Counselors

Everyday Issues

- Automotive
- Home Improvement
- Pet Care
- Relocation
- Travel

And much, much more.

LifeCare can be reached toll-free by telephone at 800-873-4636 or by logging onto Lifecare.com. Services for the deaf/hard of hearing are available by dialing 800-873-1322.

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