



# Michigan Messenger

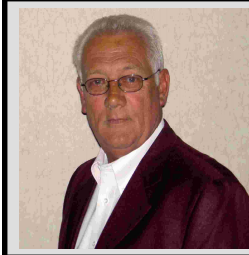
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Volume 32, Issue 127

November / December 2006 Issue

*The Officers and Members of Michigan  
Postal Workers Union Executive Board  
extend you wishes for*





## President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten  
President

At the Constitutional Convention in last May, the delegates directed me to begin looking to align ourselves with the four-state caucus for training and other beneficial ways. This caucus currently includes North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. With this in mind, the month of October saw me either by car or by air every weekend, traveling over 4,400 miles by month's end, which meant a very busy month for me indeed.

My first venture of the month was to Iron Mountain for Area's 10/11/12 District Meeting. Those of you that traveled to the meeting can definitely attest to the abundance of colors in Michigan. This was especially true for me when I was driving from West Branch to the bridge. The reds/oranges/greens were breathtaking. The agenda for the weekend was from Stewards Training, Legislation, to OWCP, along with some election/political fare as well. There was a representative from the State AFL-CIO on a presentation on the elections and what our role as unionist must be (which must have helped, looking at the results). All in all, the weekend was great and the work and hospitality shown by the 498-499 Area Local was to be definitely top rate and if I was a teacher, would have given it an "A+". The employees at Pine Mountain Resort also deserve some of the credit. They were all wonderful and helped make the weekend something to remember.

The next weekend, along with Secretary-Treasurer Darren Joyce, we attended training in Bismarck, North Dakota. This was the first of three weekend training sessions being offered by the four-state caucus for its members. It was great to meet and mingle with many of the officers and members from North Dakota. Classes were instructed by NBA's from Minneapolis, Willie Mellen, Lyle Krueth and also Troy Rorman. Lyle and Willie work so well together and sure did add a lot of humor to their classes. I wish to thank State President Sue Carnahan and all the members from North Dakota for making us feel so welcome and look forward to returning the invite along with the hospitality in June at our Educational Convention.

The next weekend, along with Executive-Secretary Harold Juhl, was a short flight that ended in Rochester Minnesota. This was their Fall Training Seminar hosted at the beautiful Kahler Hotel, which is directly across from the

famous Mayo Clinic. Needless to say, this place is extremely busy all the time, with people coming and going all hours of the day. Additionally, there was a Christian Bible convention in town, and the hotel was also full of delegates. I believe the number that we were told were somewhere around 1,800 of them. WOW!! As we sat in on classes throughout the weekend it seems that Minnesota and Michigan are like twins in training. And I do not mean the baseball twins. On a side note, I did have an opportunity to talk with Barb Maciejewski, the State of Wisconsin's Auxiliary President. She expressed her willingness to assist us in getting our Auxiliary off the ground and going; for which I am sure that Kelly Wilinski (our MPWU Auxiliary President) will definitely be taking her up on. The moment we walked into their registration area, we were greeted by Barb and also Secretary-Treasurer from the Minnesota Postal Workers Union, Richard Haefner. As far as the welcome, training, and everything the weekend, it was also an "A".

The last leg of my travel for the month started out with a 6 hour drive to Iron Mountain. There I met up with Area 12 Director, Dennis Barber and we proceeded another 3 hours to Wausau Wisconsin. The first night was getting to know a lot of great Union Members from Wisconsin and having to struggle through another loss from the Tigers in the World Series. The next morning Dennis and I attended a retirement class instructed by Minnesota State President Don Sevre and Judy McCann. The four states are lucky to have these two very well qualified members to do this training. Don did mention his original training came from Michigan in the Nations first Human Relations/Retirement Seminar held in Midland. We attended classes throughout the weekend and were also invited to their General Board meeting and Council of Locals meeting. In the Council of Locals, which is similar to our Local Presidents Meeting, they discuss what training will be conducted the next year. They take the top priority items and vote on them and they determine when they will be throughout the year. A very good idea and I will speak with Mike McCain about this and see if we can implement something locally as well. Saturday night was a Halloween theme and members dressed up and they had a game of Fear Factor. Quite an evening to say the least.

For those of you keeping count, that is only three of the four states which make up the caucus. The other one, South Dakota, does not have a training session until their convention. I believe it will be in April, which at this time, we do plan on attending

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**President's Report Continued**

I believe that the travel to three of the four State was very informative/educational/ and inspiring. The delegates definitely knew what they were doing by directing us to align ourselves with them. I am sure from what we saw and learned that it will assist Michigan in the future.

The National Agreement has now been negotiated. While at the time of this writing, information is still coming out to the specifics, I am sure it will be ratified. Please take some time to review the changes in this edition of the Messenger and the agreement you will be receiving in the mail at your homes.

In closing, I hope each of you have a great Holiday season. I look forward to seeing many of you next year at the upcoming District Meeting in March and the Educational Convention in June. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Until Next Time

Gary Van Hoogstraten  
President



**We Won!**

That is the general optimism shared among many in the labor movement after the sweeping changes in Congress on November 7th. We proved the American public has a voice and people made their voices heard. Loud and clear! For those who know me, I tend to be an optimist, however, I do try to look at both sides of any argument. This time is not exception; and I am looking towards 2008 and thinking that if things don't change, as we hope, then we might see a change/swing back. All we can do is hope and pray that things will change; gas will get cheaper; and while there might be controversy to this statement, we see some of our men and women come home from Iraq. When polled, many Americans said those were the reason they voted the way they did.

**We have a Contract**

...well, we are technically suppose to ratify it first...but for those of you who have been around long enough to know, once it is approved by the Rank and File committee, it is pretty much a done deal. Brothers and Sisters, while you may argue about this part or that part of the contract and even vote not to ratify it, we have a new contract and we must now learn to live with it and learn it. Look in this edition of the Messenger for highlights as to what has been negotiated.

**Discounts for Cell Phones**

Since I am finally out of contract with Verizon, I have been looking around for a new company. While I have checked all the ones listed for discounts on the website, I have found out that there are two more discounts available for Postal workers from Alltel and Centennial; you just have to ask for it. While this is only my experience that I am sharing, Alltel will give you a 20% discount, while Centennial will give you an 8% discount. If you need more information, please feel free to give me a call.

**Upcoming District Meeting**

The upcoming District Meeting being held in Kalamazoo is almost planned. While the classes to be offered hasn't

(Continued on page 4)



"Privatization: Homeland Security for Corporations  
Union Busting for Labor



(Continued from page 3)  
Long and Short of It Continued

been finalized, one thing for sure will be a contract interpretation session for us to make sense of the new contract and the new memorandums. Make plans to attend.

#### Address Changes

If you plan to move or have already moved, please drop me a line either via mail or eMail to let me know your new address. With the last increase in postage, it now costs 75 cents for the union to get your new address. While it may seem small, we currently average around 50 change of address each edition. That starts to add up to some real money. In some regards, I prefer to be the true sense of penny pincher, especially when it is someone else's money, in this case...yours.

#### Happy Holidays

With the holiday season right around the corner, I and my family would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours the best of the holiday season. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanza, or any of the other holiday festivities or even don't celebrate at all, during this time of the year, and all year round, may you be blessed and kept safe and sound.

Until Next Time,





## Legislative Report

Regina Favors  
Legislative Director

Whew, the elections are over and thank God for the victories that were won! I personally want to thank any of you that helped or volunteered in any of the phone banks and/or labor walks. We worked very hard and labor once again made quite a showing. From all accounts that I have heard and read, about 3 out of 4 union members voted overwhelmingly for the Democratic Party. (Approx. 74% for Democratic House Candidates and 73% for Senate Candidates.) There was also a significant amount with the drop off voters (these are voters who usually do not vote in mid-term elections) with 76% of the ballots cast for Democratic Candidates. So along with our National Union and the AFL-CIO, a great big THANK YOU to you.

I must admit that I was quite disappointed over the vote on Proposal 2 because we worked really hard to get the message across to everyone that it was not just about who gets into college. Once more and again one disgruntled, (remember Madelyn M. O'Hare, and prayer), unhappy, sour individual has spearheaded a personal agenda that will change policies and programs (in our State), and ultimately destroy the progress of those who fought so hard to achieve some balance and equality for all just as our constitution calls for. Furthermore, this one individual actually lied (or did not tell the whole truth, if you will) about the reason she did not "get in" to U of M. The whole thing is that she did not feel that she had to be or even should be placed on a waiting list when she applied for early admission. The truth of the matter is that she did not fill out the postcard to be notified of her admission and that everyone who was placed on that waiting list (in 1995) was actually admitted to the University, so she was not denied admission just "for a person of color". This says nothing for the various programs, and people that affirmative action has helped. Well, it is all academic (at least for now) and I only hope that the outcome will not be as bad as it appears it could be.

Now that being said, it is up to us as voters, as union members, as workers, citizens to ensure and make sure that we hold those that we elected accountable. We need to make sure that our voices are heard in Washington as well as in Lansing. People let us stay mindful and watchful of what is happening with our jobs, our lives and most importantly the future of our children, grandchildren and so on. There is still much work to be done, (the social security issues, the war in Iraq, outsourcing and the list goes on.) I hope the New Year and new Congress will bring about the change we all want and need so desperately for a brighter and much more secure future.

I wish you all a very Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

In Solidarity,  
Gina





## Injury Comp Report

Ron Krumrie  
Human Relations/  
Injury Comp Director

Our district office for almost all claims is in Cleveland, Ohio which is District 9.

### Getting Medical Authorization!!

OWCP authorizes all medical treatment. I repeat **OWCP authorizes all medical treatment**. Not the Post Office. I must repeat again **not the Post Office**.

### Who Authorizes Medical Request?

This question comes up all too often, and the answer is simple if you are aware of what the law states so let's look at the law.

### What is the Federal Employees' Compensation Act?

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act is a law which provides benefits for civilian employees of the United States who have suffered work-related injuries or occupational diseases. These benefits include payment of medical expenses and compensation for wage loss. The law also provides for payment of benefits to dependents of employees who die from work-related injuries or diseases.

### Who administers the Federal Employees' Compensation Act?

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act is administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP), U.S. Department of Labor, through 12 district offices, which are located throughout the United States.

The USPS continues to mislead us by letting us believe that they authorize our medical request. They don't! OWCP (and OWCP only) have authority to approve or deny any medical needs.

To get medical authorization our Doctor needs to request it through OWCP, not the USPS.

Don't let the USPS tell you that they need additional medical reports before they can authorize any additional medical. Don't let the USPS question a doctor's request for physical therapy.

They have no authority in regards to any needs you may have, OWCP is the only ones who can approve or deny.

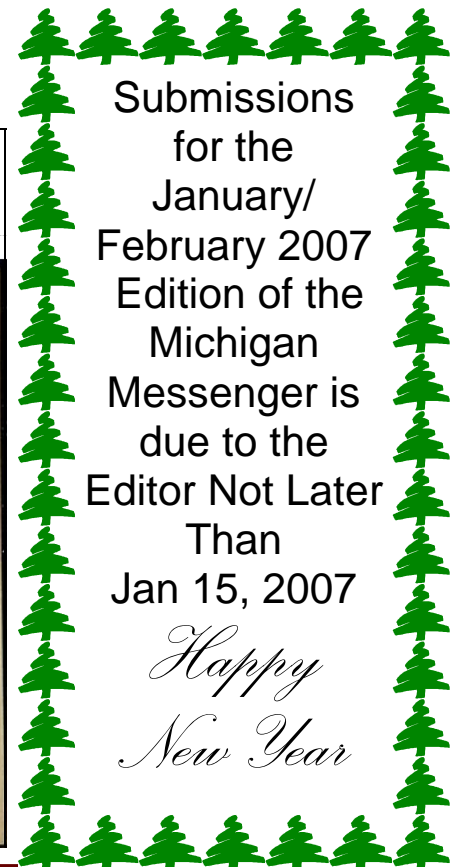
I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday.

May all your grievances be winners and your claims approved.

*Ron*

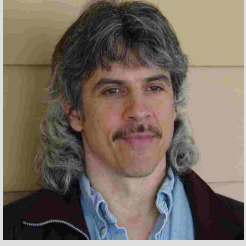
This postcard was printed/shot in 1909-1910. It is either a picture of the USS Pennsylvania or the USS Colorado. Given the circumstance we are currently in, I hope you each remember our service men and women serving during this time of the year.

Photo # NH 100752-KN Christmas greet postal card, showing armored cruisers at San Diego, California



Submissions  
for the  
January/  
February 2007  
Edition of the  
Michigan  
Messenger is  
due to the  
Editor Not Later  
Than  
Jan 15, 2007

*Happy  
New Year*



## Clerk Craft Report

Richard Blake  
Clerk Craft Director

What's new? - this being my first *Messenger* article since being elected as your MPWU Clerk Craft Director, I'd like to report on what I've been doing. Since being elected to this position, I've been fielding quite a few phone calls and e-mails from all over the state on a wide variety of subjects, such as - principal assignment areas, the Bulk Mail Clerk upgrade, demands for medical documentation, relief and pool assignments, limited duty assignments, the assignment of unencumbered employees, and consecutive vs. non-consecutive days off. I've also fielded a fair number of calls that would fall under the heading of "steward shopping" - that is, when an employee is dissatisfied with the way a grievance was handled, or didn't like the answer they received from their steward on a particular subject. I'm perfectly happy to handle such calls from our members, provided that people understand that I cannot and will not reflexively tell them what they want to hear or tell them that their steward was wrong. What I will do is research their question and attempt to respond to them fairly and objectively, once I have enough of the facts that I feel comfortable doing so, while avoiding becoming involved in any Local's internal political issues (which is actually a lot easier said than done).

"Complement Committees" - I'd imagine that many of you have heard of, or perhaps run up against, your district's "complement committee", and I think we all need to



focus more of our attention on them, since *they* are actually responsible for so many of the contract violations we're seeing. As far as I know, originally the "complement committees" had been involved in hiring issues only; unfortunately, their "authority" seems to have extended more and more into *contractual* issues, such as reversions and abolishment's of duty assignments, conversions of PTF's to full-time, and utilization of casuals, among others. As a result, this group appears to have completely usurped the authority of local management to deal *independently* with any of these issues; at least in the Detroit District, local management is prohibited from posting any vacant craft positions without the explicit approval of the "complement committee", they're prohibited from converting any PTF's to full-time without their permission (regardless of the reason for the conversion), they're prohibited from listing vacant positions on "E-reassign" without their permission, and it would appear that they've even interjected themselves into the process of withholding vacant positions for employees facing excessing. In my experience thus far with the effects of the "complement committee" in the Detroit District, it can fairly be said not only that this group is almost *fanatically* anti-employee, but also that they're overtly hostile to much of the language in our National Agreement, and they intend to ignore and/or violate that language at every turn, either by directly ordering that it be violated or by making it virtually *impossible* for an office to get the work done without violating the contract due to extreme understaffing (a word which, by the way, is not in their vocabulary). As a result of their fanatical hostility towards craft employees and Clerks in particular, *they're* the ones responsible for the improper and excessive use of casuals (in violation of the both of the Das national awards) in many offices, the accelerating "dumping" of injured employees from other crafts into the Clerk craft, the improper utilization of PMR's, mandatory overtime for non-ODL employees, increasing performance of bargaining unit work by supervisors, and denial of scheduled leave, as a few examples. As far as I know, there's a "complement committee" in each district within Michigan, as well as one at the Great Lakes Area level as well. It's really very important that we as Clerk craft representatives become aware of the extent to which this group is responsible for so many of the contract violations that we're seeing these days; I've been in contact with some of our National officers concerning the out-of-control actions of this group, and I hope to have more to report in the next issue of the *Messenger*.

Respectfully submitted,

*Richard*





## Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan  
Maintenance Director

First of all, I'd like to salute all the veterans among our members. Many of you are off today marking the holiday. I always take out photos of my Dad and my Uncles in uniform and have them in front of me for the season. Since the maintenance craft has the only jobs in the country guaranteed for vets, we have a high percentage of veterans in our ranks. Now we can be proud that the Michigan Postal Workers Union (MPWU) at our recent constitutional convention recognized this and added a Veteran's Director to our executive board. John Smeekens holds the position. I'm sure his addition to our board will be greatly appreciated by all of us.

Hats off too to all who participated in the October 26<sup>th</sup> national day of picketing. I saw some of your pictures on the national's website and some of you let me know your plans. I was in Oklahoma at the time. We had a great picket at NCED that included at least 60 people. I'm proud to say that six people from my office in Detroit participated. We got front-page coverage in the NORMAN TRANSCRIPT the following day. Hopefully this will be only the first of many national actions against plant consolidation.

On to "maintenance issues": last issue I talked about the "pecking order" for filling vacancies. Since then, I have had several emails asking how to fill various positions. One of these was a situation in which an MM6 vacancy arose. Everyone on the PER was an LC3. In that case, the person on the PER with the highest banded score fills the vacancy. The PER was developed by putting the custodians in banded score order. (Banding gives a role to seniority in promotions.) If there had been an MM5 on the register, s/he would have been at the top since this is one of our "senior qualified" positions.

Refer to article 38 for a full list of senior qualified positions. They include MPE8 to ET11 and MOS 5 to MOS 6. In cases that call for senior qualified, if anyone from the designated group is on the PER, s/he will be at the top. If there is more than one, all of them will be at the top in seniority order followed by all others by score. All others will follow in score order. For example, to fill an ET position, the register will show any and all MPEs at the top in seniority order, followed by all others (e.g. BEMs, MM6s, etc) in score order.

If your office doesn't have many vacancies, it is important to get the contract out every time and be sure that ABID has created a proper register. If each employee's information is properly put into the ABID system, it will generally promote the right person. But, like all computerized systems, it is not foolproof and bears monitoring.

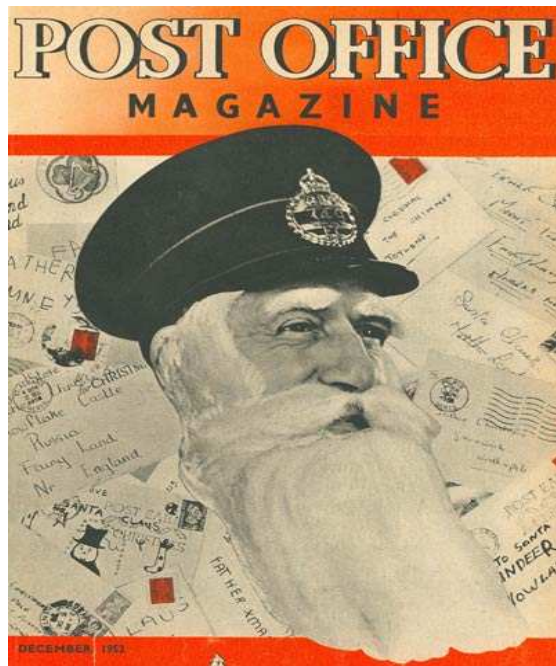
I was sorry to miss the District meeting in Iron Mountain due to the fact that I was in Oklahoma. I'm looking forward to the District 7,8,9 meeting this March in Kalamazoo and, of course, to our educational seminar in June. If the contract is resolved, we should get a settlement of the KSA36 issue. National informed me that management will not discuss any items like that while the contract is pending.

Soon we'll know if we are going to have a negotiated contract. I thought it looked good for that but the most recent update from President Burrus stated the postal service wants a lot of givebacks. You know we aren't having any of that. The "no layoff" clause and other items are essential for us. I assume our national leadership would take us to arbitration before they would cave in on some of the postal service's outrageous demands.

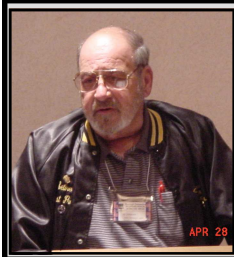
In closing, I want to wish each and every one of you a wonderful holiday season and a new year full of struggle and many victories.

Jane

Originally Printed for the Post Office Department - December 1952



Editor's Note: While I was on Google, this picture popped out at me and thought you might enjoy it too, especially this time of the year.



## Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque  
MPWU Retirees President

Happy Days Are Here Again...The results of the Nov. 7th elections were the most uplifting since voting in my first Presidential election for JFK! Wow! Both chambers of the U.S. Congress back in Democratic hands! Re-election of Gov. Jennifer Granholm over her well-funded GOP opponent! Re-election of our staunch friend Senator Debbie Stabenow over another well-funded GOP challenger! And, the Michigan House was taken back as well. BUT, we still have George II who has the power of veto in the White House. The Dem sweep doesn't at all mean clear sailing for our retiree legislation in the first session of the 110th Congress. It does mean that we have renewed hope for our paramount issues: repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), Government Pension Off-set (GPO), AND passage of Premium Conversion. It also means we ALL must renew OUR efforts to petition our Members of Congress to sponsor and/or cosponsor legislation on these vital retiree issues. It's the best chance we've had in a very long time, and we must take advantage of the new climate in Congress. It won't be easy as each piece of legislation we advocate will cost the government lots of money, and with the Federal budget being in deep deficit, it will still be an uphill battle.

3.3 % COLA increases in retiree annuities and Social Security checks (source: ABC News). At the same time, Medicare Part B premiums will go up \$5.00 per month to \$93.50 per covered person. (source: NARFE), for those of us who have an annual income less than \$80,000. per person. We may even be able to keep some of the COLA increase this time! FEHBP premiums aren't going to jump this Open Season. APWU Health Plan (High Self) will only increase \$1.03, and (High Family) will go up \$3.14. Blue Cross/Blue Shield (Standard Self) will actually go DOWN \$1.67, and (Standard Family) will decrease \$2.80 per month. (source: NARFE).

State Paper Mailing List: As the Editor reported in the last issue of the "Michigan Messenger", the retiree mailing list has been updated to include only those retired members belonging to the MPWU State Retiree Chapter, and the four organized Local Retiree Chapters in Michigan. The Editor is relying on retiree member lists furnished by the national APWU. Frankly, I'm concerned over the accuracy of mailing and membership lists generated by APWU Hq. based on past experience. While I can appreciate the work and cost factor in maintaining a mailing list of all retired members in the state, the "Michigan Messenger" is our best means of communicating with our retired members, many of whom are past Local and State officers who may not be members of the APWU Retirees Department, or the State or Local Retiree Chap-

ters. Anyone who finds that they are, or know of someone who is no longer receiving the "Michigan Messenger" and who wishes to be restored to the mailing list are advised to contact the editor, or your local chapter or myself and we will ensure that it gets updated.

Contract Retro Pay For "Interim" Retirees: The latest APWU News Service Bulletin (11-6-06) details a 'lack of progress' after two months of contract talks with the USPS with expiration looming on Nov. 20th. Gee, imagine that! In anticipation of such an eventuality, I've written Retirees Dept. Dir., Doug Holbrook, to remind our APWU negotiators that should contract negotiations reach impasse by the Nov. 20th deadline, that any arbitrated wage increases be secured for those APWU employees who retire after Nov. 20th, and before any agreed upon or arbitrated settlement. This has been an issue in the past when "interim" retirees were overlooked in a settlement, which provided retroactive pay for all hours worked, annual and sick leave taken, during the interim period. We provided the same reminder to the national Union after the last contract went to arbitration, and "interim" retirees were included in the retroactive pay settlement. I would expect such a reminder is unnecessary, but just don't want to take anything for granted.

National Convention L-M Resolution #4: A Michigan State resolution submitted to the 2006 National Convention Labor-Management Resolutions Committee addressing 1.6B small Associate Post Office clerk craft work and staffing surveys/organizing, was adopted by the delegates. It was resolved that: "...the APWU Clerk Division seek further agreement with the U.S. Postal Service to conduct a second sweep to survey targeted 1.6B Member-At-Large post offices missed in the initial survey, to include organizing members-at-large non-members, and with a recommendation to utilize APWU retired members as surveyors wherever possible."

Some retirees were utilized to conduct 1.6B surveys/organizing in late 2005 as a result of the Das Award to establish a baseline for clerk hours in our small Associate Offices. In my own case, I found postmasters, Postmaster Relief's, and even Rural Carriers performing clerk craft work in blatant violation of contractual 1.6B provisions. Clerk PTF hours and positions are decimated in small 1.6B

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Retiree Involvement Continued

post offices with the work being performed by PM's, PMR's, Rurals and 'Auntie Clarabelle', which is nothing short of criminal in my view. Not all the targeted Associate Offices were surveyed for various reasons and this resolution was submitted to rectify that situation. Retirees in the field are a great resource to be utilized to complete the work of preserving clerk positions and hours in those neglected offices via surveys, as well as organizing the unorganized. Now, it is up to the Clerk Division to implement the resolution adopted by the convention delegates if they are truly committed to preserving small 1.6b post office clerk craft work. This is just another example of what I keep harping; that retired members are a ready resource to be utilized by the APWU....if they will.

The "Management Team", formerly known as the 'Leadership Team', running the 'business' of the APWU, was intended to be the sole subject of this column, but I'm still working on it. I firmly believe the membership has a right to know what is going on at the top of our Union....yes, OUR UNION! The NLRB decision upholding labor charges brought against the APWU by our secretarial OPEIU employees, the past very contentious contract negotiations and especially nasty conduct of the APWU management team with the OPEIU Union negotiators representing our staff secretarial employees, the resulting retaliation by the APWU management team' to 'downsize' by reducing (excessing?) the number of secretarial employees and NBA offices, and proposing to close NBA offices and have our NBA's work out of their homes. Shades of postal management!

Except for an excellent article written by Maintenance NBA Don Foley, little has gotten down to the rank 'n file membership as to how our Union leadership is treating our OPEIU UNION employees. I believe every member has a right to know, and Local and State leaderships have an obligation to inform them! My own Union sensibilities and principles have been severely shaken by the incredible actions of the elected leadership of the APWU, and it cannot be allowed to be swept under the carpet. It's past time to tell it like it is, consequences be damned!

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy 2007! As this is being written on the eve of "St. Antler Day" (deer season) in Michigan, it doesn't seem like the so-called 'Holiday Season' is already upon us. In spite of all the trials and tribulations we face as retirees, postal workers, and Union members, we also have much to be thankful for, including the right to express our views upfront. I wish all our active and retired Brothers and Sisters A VERY MERRY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS, AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR IN GOOD HEALTH FOR YOU AND YOURS.

Be Strong!

*Al*

Area 10, 11, & 12 District Meeting

On October 6 & 7, 2006, the Michigan Postal Workers Union held its Area 10, 11, & 12 District Meeting at Pine Mountain Hotel and Resort in Iron Mountain, Michigan. Everything about this weekend was definitely spectacular. From the scenery, with the trees being in full fall color mode; to the training, which is always first-class; to the friendliness, hospitality and the meeting of new individuals from throughout the state (Editor's note: Read the two letters on page 14). Kudos to the 498-499 Area Local for hosting this event. You definitely outdid yourself.

Friday had a little different flare than normal Area Meetings. Generally, we begin our sessions with an open meeting to allow for interaction between the stewards/officers and the NBAs in attendance. This time, it might have been that it was also election season and the AFL-CIO wanted to make sure we got out and voted, or something different; however, we began with an overview of the 2006 Elections by Brent Gillette from the Michigan AFL-CIO. We learned that you must get out and vote. Your voice (vote) does make a difference, and this last election proved that we (the union family) can make a big difference and change the outcome. We continued though with the open forum afterwards.

After lunch we began the in-depth training that our Area Meetings are famous for...with two breakout sections. Phil Solom from the 498-499 Area Local taught us about Veterans Information dealing with Retirement and where to go to get things done. Ron Krumrie did a class on OWCP. NBA Troy Rorman conducted a Maintenance issues class. Those that attended the classes commented on how much one could learn in a short period of time when given the right information in the right way. Saturday, everyone came together for a Stewards class taught, as always done superbly, by NBAs Lynn Pallas-Barber and John Clark.

Every time someone goes to training, you learn something new. You meet new brothers and sisters in the fight, and you come away with a renewed appreciation and vigor for what the union is, has done, and will do when given the chance.

See you at the next one!

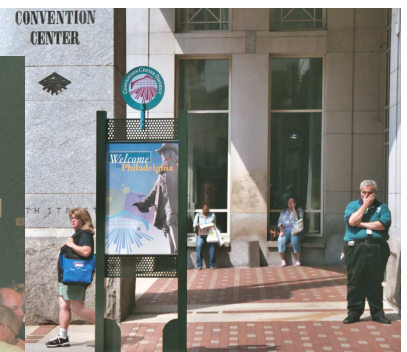
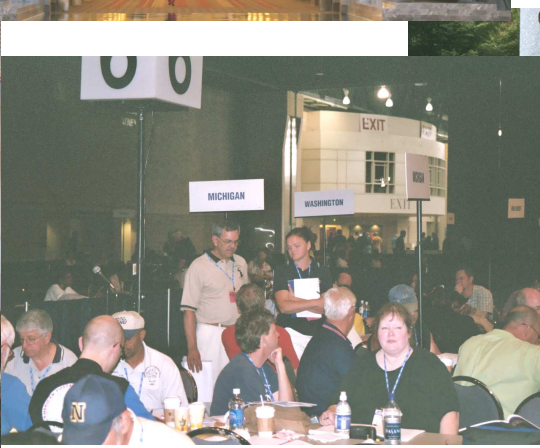
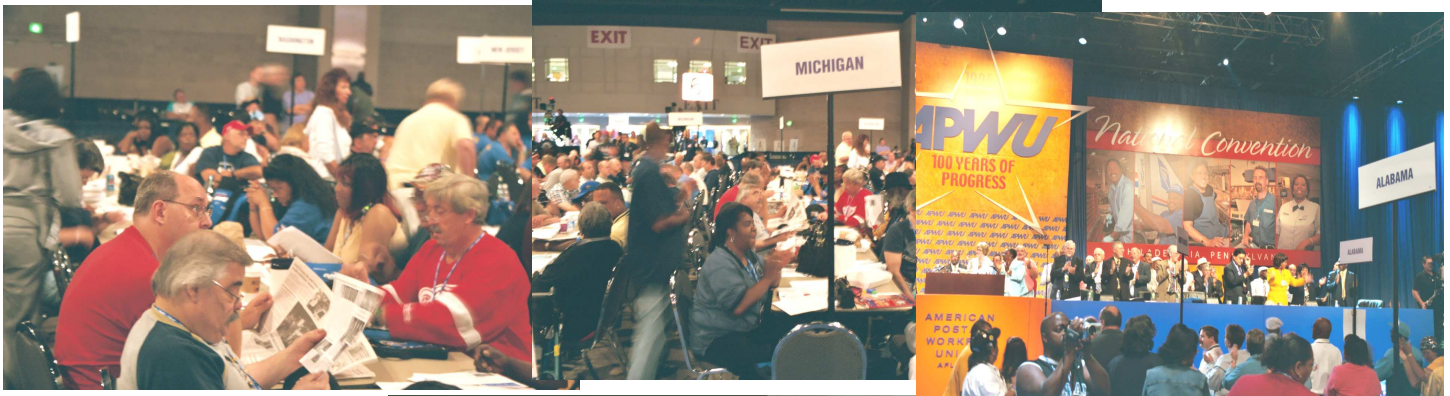
Mike



# More Pictures of the 2006 National Convention

Thanks Again Geoff!!!

Editor's Note: As stated in the previous edition of the Messenger, I would include more photos as soon as received. Hope you enjoy!

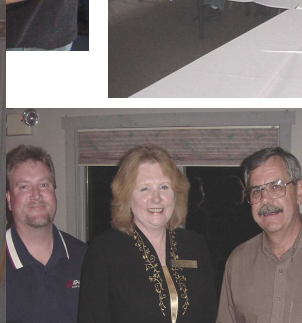






# Area 10, 11, & 12 District Meeting

## in Pictures







**The Terms of the Agreement  
The Four-Year Tentative Agreement Provides for  
the Following:**

**Wages, Upgrades, COLAs:**

- There will be a 1.3 percent raise, effective Nov. 25, 2006;
- All APWU-represented employees will receive an upgrade of one level, effective Feb. 16, 2008, implemented by the adoption of a new pay scale;
- Transitional Employees (TEs) will be upgraded as well;
- There will be a 1.2 percent raise, effective Nov. 21, 2009;
- Cost-of-Living-Adjustments will be made in March and September each year, with a base index of July 2006;

**Healthcare Premiums:**

- ◇ The Postal Service will pay 95 percent of premiums for employees enrolled in the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan, effective in 2008;
- ◇ To be eligible, employees must have been members of a Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP) for a minimum of one year;
- ◇ Employees' share of healthcare premium costs will increase 1 percent each year for employees enrolled in other plans, in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011;

**Workforce Issues:**

- ◆ PTFs will be eliminated as a workforce category in offices of 200 man-years or more, effective Dec. 1, 2007;
- ◆ All Clerk Craft part-time flexible employees in offices of 200 man-years or more in the regular workforce will be converted to regular, no later than Dec. 1, 2007;
- ◆ Except for reporting periods 3 and 4 (December), the limit on the number of casual employees the Postal Service may hire within a district will be decreased from 15 percent to 6 percent of the total number of career employees in the district;
- ◆ The number of casuals that may be hired nationwide within the APWU bargaining unit will be increased from 5.9 percent to 6 percent;
- ◆ Except for reporting period 3 and 4, the number of casuals that may be employed within an installation in any reporting period shall not exceed 11 percent of the total number of Clerk Craft employees within that installation. (Previous contracts did not limit the num-

ber of casuals within an installation);

- ◆ Full-time regular Clerk Craft employees on the Overtime Desired List (ODL) will be given priority scheduling for overtime work over casuals doing overtime work;
- ◆ The total number of part-time regular employees shall not exceed 2.5 percent of the total number of employees in the Clerk, Maintenance, and Motor Vehicle Crafts;
- ◆ In offices of 200 man years or more in the regular work force, career Clerk Craft employees will have consecutive scheduled days off, unless otherwise agreed to by the local parties;
- ◆ In offices of 200 man years or more, casuals will not be assigned to Tour 2 unless there are no career Clerk Craft employees assigned to Tour 1 or Tour 3;
- ◆ Casuals in offices of 200 man-years or more will be limited to assignments that do not require training or testing;
- ◆ Casual employees will have a 360-day period of employment;
- ◆ Casual employment will not be considered "in lieu of full or part-time employees" in installations of 200 man-year or greater;
- ◆ Existing PTF maximization/conversion rules will remain unchanged for other crafts;
- ◆ The full-time to part-time ratio in the Motor Vehicle Craft will continue at the same percentage as exists on Nov. 20, 2006;

**Retail Sales Task Force**

- \* A task force will be convened to establish a Retail Sales Associate program in commercial establishments;
- \* The program will include the union providing lists of prospective workers to the Postal Service to perform retail sales in commercial establishments;
- \* The task force will begin meeting no later than Feb. 7, 2007, and conclude by May 1, 2007;

**Uniform Allowances**

- ⇒ There will be a 2.5 percent increase in uniform and work clothes allowances in each year of the contract;

**Leave, Holiday Provisions**

- At the option of the local parties, the union may assume responsibility for the administration of scheduling overtime, choice vacation periods, and/or holiday work;
- APWU-represented employees will be automatically

(Continued from page 12)

**Terms of the Agreement Continued**

granted up to three days of leave (from annual leave, sick leave, or leave without pay) due to the death of a family member, with additional leave subject to normal leave provisions;

- Up to seven days of administrative leave per year may be granted for donations of bone marrow, stem cells, and blood platelets, with up to 30 days for organ donations:

**Light/Limited Duty Assignments**

- ◆ Management will give advance written notification to the local union president when it plans to reassign an ill or injured light- or limited-duty employee from a non-APWU-represented craft into an APWU-represented craft;
- ◆ The reassignment or re-employment of light- or limited-duty employees from other crafts to perform APWU bargaining unit work must be made in accordance with the provisions of Article 13 of the National Agreement;

**Safety and Health**

- ◇ A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) affirms that safe and healthful working conditions must be provided for postal employees who perform duties at non-postal facilities through engineering and administrative controls, personal protective equipment, enforcement of safe work practices, withdrawal of employees from the private-sector facility, and, if necessary, curtailment of mail;

- ◇ An implementation process will be created to ensure employees in offsite locations are protected by the Postal Service's safety and health program;

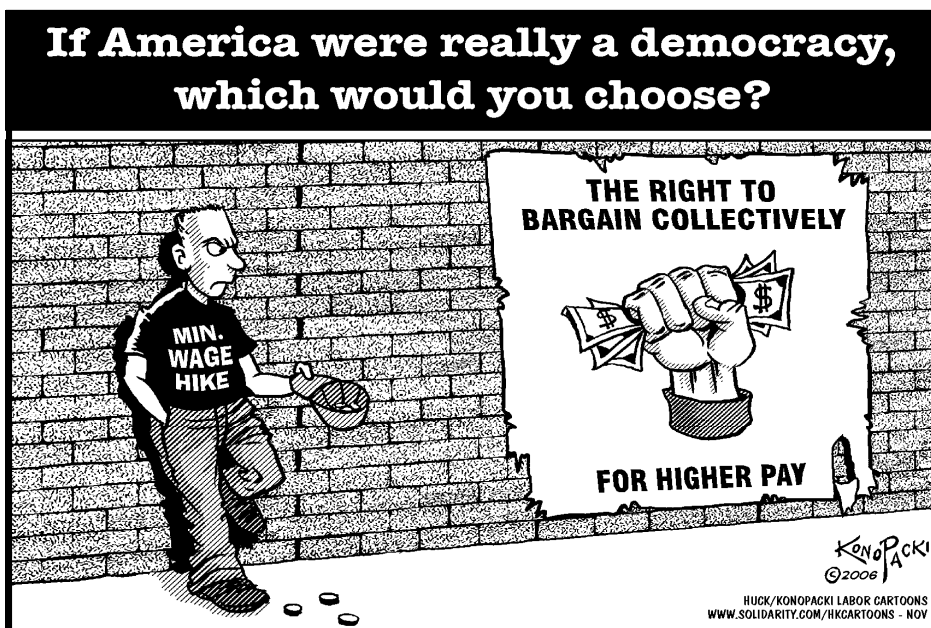
**Local Implementation**


- ⇒ The parties agree to jointly develop a model "Local Memorandum of Understanding" within 90 days from effective date of agreement, which will be applied in those offices not covered by any LMOU because of the absence of a local union structure.

**Miscellaneous Topics**

- \* Social Security numbers will be removed from postal forms where the number is not necessary for processing;
- \* The parties agree to develop a means to provide for the electronic inspection and review of documents, files, and records necessary for processing grievances;
- \* When a decision has been made at the field level to subcontract bargaining unit work, the union at the local level will be given notification;
- \* Memoranda of Understanding were renewed or modified governing Deaf/Hard of Hearing; No Layoff Protection; Enhancing Career Opportunities for TEs; Crossing Craft Assignments; Annual Leave Exchange; Sick Leave for Dependent Care; Leave Sharing; PTF Reassignment Opportunities; Timeliness Regarding Step 2 Appeals; and Local Implementation

Voting for ratification of this agreement will begin on December 18th and will need to be received by January 9th. Make sure you take time to vote!





## Our First District Meeting Letters to the Editor

Recently I went to my first union district meeting and I was asked by Michael Long to write an article about a first time view of the meeting. I appreciate this opportunity and only hope that my article meets the expectations of all concerned as I certainly am not a columnist.

I will admit to thinking it sure is a long way to Iron Mountain and I was not to sure about driving all the way up there on a Thursday and back on Sunday. After going I can honestly say, I sure am glad that I went. Prior to working at the Post Office I worked in apartment management and had been to many classes, seminars and meetings. All of which bored me to death. This can not be said for Iron Mountain. Even though I never served in the armed forces, the class I took on Veteran Benefits taught me a lot of things which could help not only my members locally, but could even help my mother (who is a vet). This was a surprise because I figured there was not much I needed to know about it. Boy was I wrong. Then we had the class on steward training which I knew would help me. It sure was a lot to go through in the time we had and I wish I had been to this training months ago, but wow did I ever get a lot of helpful information. I can see why even a grievance professional could learn a thing or two every time they went to this type of class. Hearing from the business agents how they need a grievance organized and how current grievances are lost will also help me and eventually them. I am certain that a grievance set up at step one like they need them for arbitration will help all along the way and make winning the grievance much more likely at each step. Looking forward to the next grievance I file being much more organized and prepared.

Another part of the experience in Iron Mountain was the after-class time. If people think that the union business ends when the classes do, they are mistaken. I believe that I learned as much if not more after the class time was over as I did during the class. What an incredible group of people to spend time with and learn from. Believe me that when your unions dollars are paying for the trips to these conferences and meetings you are getting your moneys worth. I also used to think it was just a vacation; it is not, it is non-stop business that is a lot of fun.

One thing that was mentioned in the class is that the union is only as strong as its members and how we all need to try to be involved to make the union, post office, government and society a better place. Thankfully a lot of us have been involved in the most recent election and things made a positive swing for us, however it is a never ending battle and we all must stay vigilant or the war could be lost. If you have spare time try to use it in a positive manner, and yes I know none of us have much. I personally work 48 hrs. per week, drive 75 miles per day, MVS craft director, have a 5yr. old, a 16yr. old who wrestles, an 18 yr. old at CMU and the normal house, cat and dog. So boy, do I know how time is at a premium. All I am saying is try to help if you can make the time.

The last thing I wanted to say is thank you to the Iron Mountain local that hosted the District meetings. I felt very welcome and impressed with the job they did. I will not feel so weary about the drive to Iron Mountain again and hope to be as impressed in Jackson in March. Iron Mountain should be very proud of the job they did getting this together. I am looking forward to Kalamazoo and Sault Ste Marie next year. Thank you again for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Michael Mize  
MVS Craft Director  
APWU Local 1766

I had the opportunity to attend my first Steward Training class in beautiful Iron Mountain earlier in October. To me, it couldn't have been in a better location, since I am very much an outdoors person and love the Packers.

I would like to thank my local for allowing me the chance to attend. I had just come forward with my interest in becoming a steward and two weeks later, I was off to Iron Mountain. I had no previous training what so ever and was clueless to the responsibilities of a steward.

I also had no idea how the process worked, nor what to expect at this type of training and once I arrived, I was pleasantly surprised to find out. The training was superbly taught and the information shared was not only relevant, but timely as well. John Clark and Lynn Pallas-Barber did a wonderful stewards training class and provided material for me, and the other attendees to take home. I am still going over and learning from it.

However, I feel the best information for me came after classes was over, but the training definitely was not. It was in the hospitality room that I had the chance to listen and talk to different people from various locals, state officers and the NBAs who were also in attendance. Each of them having their own personal stories and advice for me. It was truly my a pleasure to meet State President Gary Van Hoogstraten, NBA Troy Rorman, John Clark and Lynn Pallas-Barber, and my own local's retired President Lynn Walker; whom by the way, I could listen to him talk for a month and never get bored.

I would like to thank Local 498-499 for hosting the classes and giving me a start on learning to be a steward.

Debora K Holmes  
Steward  
Traverse City Area Local





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

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



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 training, education and information sharing between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

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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:**

- March 2 - 3 2007 - Area 7, 8, & 9 District Meeting, Kalamazoo, MI
- June 7 - 9, 2007 - MPWU Educational Convention; Sault Ste Marie, MI
- August 1 - 4, 2007 - National Postal Press Convention; Reno, NV
- November 2007 - National Multi-Craft Convention, Las Vegas, NV
- May 2008 - MPWU State Convention, Grand Rapids, MI



# Rank-and-File Bargaining Committee Approves Tentative Contract Agreement

12/07/06) The APWU Rank-and-File Bargaining Advisory Committee voted unanimously to approve the union's tentative 2006 Collective Bargaining Agreement on Dec. 7 at a meeting in Washington DC. The agreement will be sent to union members for a ratification vote, which the committee will supervise.

The four-year tentative agreement provides for two wage increases and an upgrade for all APWU-represented employees, in addition to Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) twice per year; it also provides for the elimination of part-time flexibles as a workforce category in large offices, no later than Dec. 1, 2007. All PTFs in offices of 200 man-years or more will be converted to full-time regular by that date. The Postal Service will pay 95 percent of healthcare premiums for employees enrolled in the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan; for workers enrolled in other health plans, the employees' share of premiums will increase 1 percent per year for four years, beginning in 2008.

"This agreement will make fundamental changes to postal employment because the American Postal Workers Union

dared to challenge the past," Burrus said. "We refused to accept the premise that 'the way it has always been' is good enough.

Burrus and other officers briefed the Rank-and-File Committee on Dec. 7; deliberations began immediately after. "I am most pleased by the elimination of part-time flexibles from the workforce in 200 man-year offices," Burrus said. "That has been our objective for generations – and finally we have made significant progress. In 1993 all PTFs on the rolls were converted to regular, but, of course, when new hiring was done, PTFs were back in business. This time, PTFs will be converted and new hiring will be as full-time regulars. "This is truly a major achievement," he said. "Of course, winning across-the-board upgrades is no small matter either."

Princella Vogel, chairperson of the Rank-and-File Committee, said, "We are making history with some of the innovations in this agreement – the elimination of part-time flexies in 200 man-year offices is a major, major accomplishment.

"We understood that we would have to make some sacrifices in health benefits, but we feel the overall package is a good one. We kept the 'No Layoff' clause, and we retained the COLAs. These were both very important."

*View the Contract /Agreement Changes on Pages 13 & 14 of this edition of the Michigan Messenger and check your mail for your ratification vote.*

Winter, the most intimate of seasons, is here: let's enjoy it.  
 The first two stages on our way to Spring are drawing near.  
 Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all, then, kids included.  
 Let's pretend we believe in holidays. In the end, what matters is that we have an excuse to see how many we are, to realize we are still here and that we are still together, on the same page as always.



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