



# Michigan Messenger

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March / April 2007 Issue



## President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten  
President

Success is the only word to describe the recent District Meeting held in Kalamazoo. I would like to begin by thanking the host locals for the meeting. They did an outstanding job. Russ (Area 8 Director), a big kudos for taking the bull by the horns and making this thing work. Kat, Debbie and Kelly, words can't express how grateful we are for the way you managed not only the hospitality room for the weekend, but got the Auxiliary off to a great start.. The food was great, company was excellent, and you helped in making the weekend a success. I would also like to thank those that agreed to relocate to the Holiday Inn. Due to an error at the Radisson, they were overbooked with another conference, our members stepped forward and made this sacrifice. I wanted to assure you that it was appreciated.

The General Session, which ballooned from a ½ day to a full-day session was conducted by our NBA's from the Clerk Craft, Maintenance Craft, and Motor Vehicle Service Craft. Our NBA's did a great job in explaining the recently ratified Collective Bargaining Agreement. Even though various aspects were not able to be totally understood at this time, due to some of the Memorandums were still under "negotiation" with management. Even so, after talking to many of the members present in this session, they were of the opinion that it was very informative. By the time we reach the Educational Convention in June, all the memorandums should be signed, and we should have another very informative General session.

Another thing that was very pleasantly noticeable was the number of new officers, stewards and members present. It is always a good thing to see new faces stepping

up to the plate; without new blood, this Union could be in trouble in the future. I hope this is just the beginning of what's to come.

On another great note, something is finally off the "back burner." This has been a goal of mine for some time – the rebirth of the Auxiliary in Michigan. As we left the State Convention in Detroit and also the Convention in Philly, the thought of getting the Auxiliary back and running was on my mind. Now it is a reality. I have appointed Kelly Wilinski from Iron Mountain (498-499 Area Local) as the interim President of the Auxiliary. We have hopes by the time our next Convention convenes that we will have our active charter in our state. Many of the members in attendance in Kalamazoo signed up and they also took sign up envelopes back to their locals. One thing all of us have to remember is that you do not have to be an APWU member to join; you just have to be sponsored by an APWU member. Also, if you are an APWU member, you can still be in the Auxiliary. This can filter back to our spouses, siblings and even fiends of APWU members. Kelly will be working with the locals in the State to help get the ball rolling on this. So please, take this as a challenge and get a member to join.

The State Convention in June is soon approaching. June 7, 8, & 9 are the dates and will be held at the Kewadin Inn, Sault Ste Marie, Michigan. Director of Education, Mike McCain has a full program planned. This information will be coming out to all local presidents and is posted on the web site. If you are attending, make sure to bring the whole family, if you would like. We have a planned a program on Friday afternoon and all day on Saturday for the kids. We do not want to have any of the children left out. If you plan to bring your children, and if they are going to participate in the program, please e-Mail me at [miprez1@chartermi.net](mailto:miprez1@chartermi.net) with the numbers so we can prepare. This head count will be of great assistance to make it a success. We have invited the President and Legislative Aide from the Auxiliary to be involved with

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President's Report Continued

the children's program and it sure would be great to be able to tell them our State and many Locals have their auxiliary back and active.

So in closing, two important things I wish to leave you with. JOIN THE AUXILIARY AND GIVE TO COPA. President Burrus has sent out a letter challenging all locals to get their members to give \$2.00 per payday. Can you imagine how much we can get accomplished by just \$52.00 from each member? Don't forget this money can help save your job.

Until Next Time,



*Any and all  
submissions for the  
May/June 2007  
Edition of the  
Michigan Messenger is  
due to the Editor  
Not Later Than  
May 15, 2007*



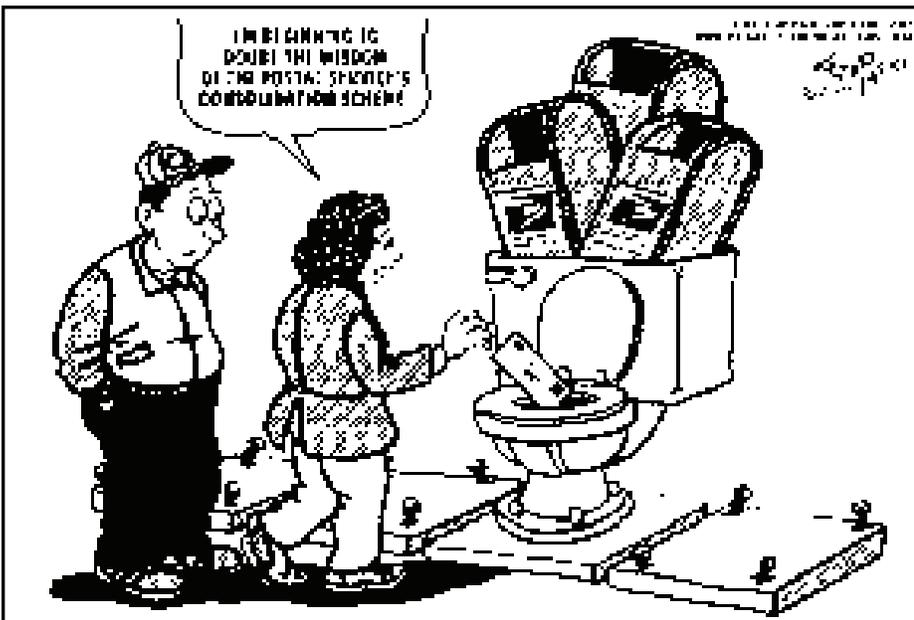
Brothers and Sisters, this report is going to be short and sweet. Suffice to say, the 2007 Educational Convention is now finalized. While specifics of the convention are listed elsewhere in this edition of the Messenger, the following classes will be taught by the following individuals. Please make plans to attend and I look forward to seeing each of you when you arrive.

- \* Arbitration (NBA John Clark)
- \* Basic & Advanced Computers (Area 1 Larry Moyer)
- \* MVS (NBA Merlie Bell & MVS Dir Scott Larabel)
- \* Article 12 (NBA Lynn Pallas-Barber)
- \* OWCP (Dir of HR Ron Krumrie)
- \* Maintenance Issues (NBA Troy Rorman & Maintenance Dir Jane Duggan)
- \* Retirement (Retiree Dir Al LaBrecque)
- \* Veterans Issues (Vet Dir John Smeekens)
- \* PPA (Editor's Training) (PPA Pres Tony Carobine)
- \* Fiduciary Responsibility & Trustee Training (Natl Asst to the Sec Treas - Judy Beard)
- \* Steward Training A-Z (Clerk Craft Dir (Richard Blake)
- \* Article 37 Q&A (NBA Percy Harrison)
- \* MS Word (Area 1 Dir Larry Moyer)
- \* Function 4 Review (NBA Lynn Pallas-Barber)
- \* Auxiliary (MPWU Auxiliary Pres - Kelly Wilinski)

In closing, if you know of any classes that you would like to have at the upcoming Area 1, 2, & 3 District Meeting to be held sometime in the Fall / Spring, please let me know.

Yours in Solidarity,

*Mike*





## The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long  
Editor

### Discounts on Cell Phones through Alltel

In my last article, I mentioned about the discount for Alltel and told you that the information would be posted on the website. Since posting the information, we have had a tremendous response. Unfortunately, there has been some issues with members not reading the “fine print” The 15% discount is available to any member, all they have to do is e-Mail me with their name, local, and cell phone number and I will forward it to Amy (the point of contact) and she will apply the discount. A problem has arisen that members go into the store to get the free activation, and discounts on the merchandise. You must contact and go through our Point of Contact if you wish to receive these “benefits.” Whether you are establishing a new account, or making changes to your existing account, if you want the discounted pricing, you must go through Amy. If you are an Alltel subscriber and are not currently receiving the discount, send me an e-Mail with your contact information. I will verify that you are a member, and then forward it to Amy. She will contact you directly. I know it is a pain to do it this way, but unfortunately; it is the only way at this time. Hopefully down the road, it will change, but as we are reminded, it is always difficult at first.

### Upcoming Educational Convention

The upcoming Educational Convention will take place June 7 – 9, 2007 in Sault Ste Marie. Information is listed on the back page of this edition of the Messenger. I hope to see as many of you as possible at this event.

### Member's News

I would love to be notified of something special that might be happening in your life that you would like to share with the entire State of Michigan. This is your publication, and I personally believe that you are at the center of it.

It is with this in mind that I would like to inform you that Western Michigan Area Local member Phillip Marckini has written and has had a book published called the Sheet Metal

Man. It is a story about a sheet metal worker, who, after another layoff, learns of his nephew's serious illness. In an effort to help, he enters the unfamiliar world of pro baseball and begins a struggle with personal success, his young nephew's illness and a great love from a broken and unsettled past. It is a story of permanence, commitment, and courage that are seeded in hope, having faith, and belief in love. It is being published by Tate Publishing with a release date of May 8 and can be viewed and order at [www.tatepublishing.com](http://www.tatepublishing.com)

### Website

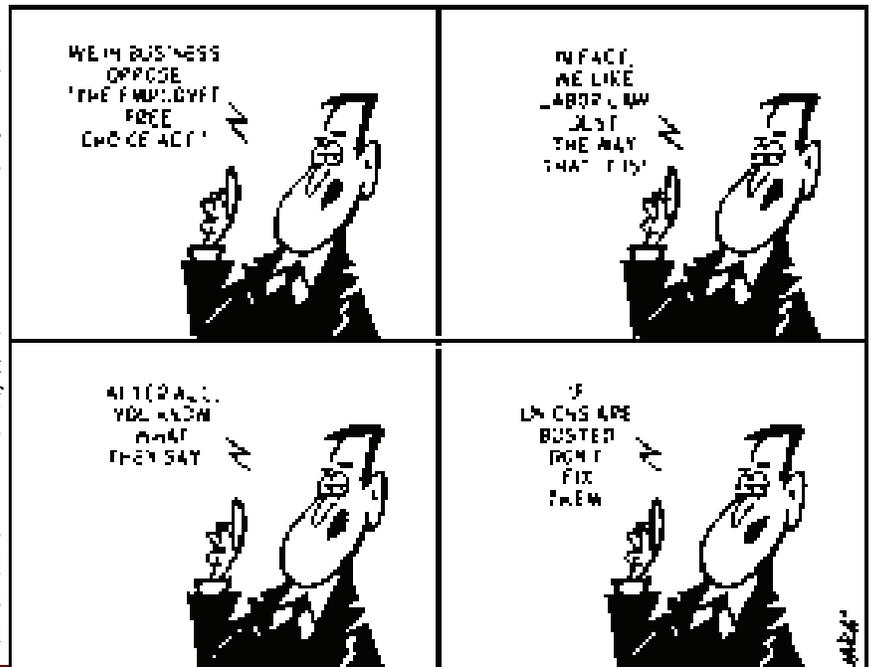
Viewing of the website has definitely increased. If you haven't checked it out lately, I would strongly suggest that you do. In the next few months, the site will be going through a revamp and update. During this time, it might be necessary to take some links off-line, but I hope that the new look will be better and easier to use than the current one.

### Legislative

Before I forget, our Representative Stupak from the UP has introduced legislation to stop the “gouging” of Americans by Oil and other companies. Please take a moment to contact your Representatives and Senators and let them know you wish for them to help by co-sponsoring this legislation. It with your help that we might make this a reality.

Until Next Time...Yours in Solidarity,

*Mike*





## Legislative Report

Regina Favors  
Legislative Director

I would like to begin this article with an apology to all of you for not remembering to talk about the S.O.A.R. (Save Our Annuity Retirement) in my last column. I believe I just took for granted the fact that everyone had knowledge of it but I find that is not the case. To give you a little background on what SOAR is and stands for; in 1976 the U.S. Government was running short of money to keep the Social Security Administration afloat, so they decided to do away with the annuity run by the Civil Service Commission and put Postal and Government employees under Social Security. This outraged the employees so much that they started an organization in Wash. D.C. to fight them all the way. The heads of all Postal and Government **UNIONS** and organizations got together and from that, F.A.I.R. (Fairness for an Independent Retirement) was born. At that time F.A.I.R. asked us (Postal Employees) to get together and form a local chapter, thus the beginning of S.O.A.R. In Detroit, Lou Smiertka, President of NALC Branch #1 and Doug Holbrook, President APWU Detroit came together and formed one of the first S.O.A.R. Chapters in the country (and as far as they know) right now they are the only group of this kind in the entire country still active.

Now, back to the breakfast, each year (for more than 20+ years) the S.O.A.R. Coalition hosts a breakfast where they invite your Representatives and Senators to come and address their constituents (us voters if you please) and let us know how they vote on issues pertaining to Postal and Federal employees as well as letting them know of any issues and concerns we may have. This year's breakfast (the 26th) was held Sunday March 11th at Burton Manor in Livonia where it has been held for many years. Attending this year's breakfast was The Honorable John Conyers Jr., The Honorable Carolyn Cheeks-Kilpatrick, (they always attend when possible), and a representative each for Rep. Kildee, Senator Levin and Senator Stabenow (who would have been there but became ill the day before) (Note: the beginning breakfasts were held at ROMA Hall in Livonia). However, in most recent years, there has not been nearly enough participation/support (as it seems in most everything) from us and from our Senators and Representatives.

I can remember attending (relic that I am-smile) breakfasts that were packed, but again I guess that was at a time when folks were not so apathetic. That was at a time when folks really cared and **BELIEVED** that a difference could/would be made because of their involvement. Congress Kilpatrick spoke deeply and passionately about this (taking action) and this coalition. The Congresswoman applauded what S.O.A.R. was/is and what has been achieved because of it. She spoke of the commitment of the coalition and how important is that we (S.O.A.R.) "stay together, stay strong" and continue the fight not only to keep our pension intact and our service alive, but to keep our voices, our concerns/cares heard on the Hill. The Congresswoman also spoke about the federal budget, the war in Iraq (and the cost of it), and the countless lives being lost senselessly, especially the young who really only joined the military in hopes of gaining a college education. These young people are dying needlessly fighting (what is actually a civil) war that we should never have been in. Congressman Conyers told us that even though it is not currently the "hottest topic" right now, you can never trust that Bu-- will not continue to erode the social security system. Congressman Conyers also talked about bill S206 and the continuing fight on the GPO (Government Pension Offset) and how we need more Senators to co-sponsor this bill, WEP (Windfall Elimination Provision) and Premium Conversion. The representative from Congressman Kildees office spoke on his support for HR82 as well as the Representative from Senator Levin's office and how now might be the best time to get something done about these bills.

On another note, at a recent AFL-CIO board meeting it was reported that the EFCA (Employee Free Choice Act) was nearing passage in The House and has been introduced in the Senate . They gave us a list of the Representatives and Senators who have/have not signed on as co-sponsors. There are **only** 5 Republicans who have

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**Legislative Report Continued**

signed on and **only** 11 Democrats who have not signed on. At the time of this writing there is (was) still time for you to contact your Congressperson to urge them to please take a stand for workers. For more information on who has or has not signed on you can go to [www.miaflcio.com](http://www.miaflcio.com) website or call me and I can send you whatever information that I have. I am asking that you (we) please also take a stand for workers, **OUR UNION(S)**, and our basic freedom to choose to belong to a union. We cannot and should not continue letting G.W. erode the middle class as he has been and destroying unions (even though it appears to be a lost cause). We can still urge our Congressional Officials to fight for our rights and to give the Government back to the people of this rich and (used to be) wonderful country. We need to bring back that old spirit. Where is the **OUTRAGE** over what he (BU--) has done? Where is the **OUTRAGE** over all of the lies that he has and continues to tell? When do we say enough is enough? We need to talk to our friends and relatives everywhere and ask them if they are feeling the pinch and to let them encourage their Congress people of whichever party to say it is now time to give back the rights they have slowly been taking away. Show your love and concern for workers and unions everywhere and above all please let us be prepared to support our union and take action if and when called upon. Please also give generously to COPA because for us that is where it starts.

Last but certainly by no means least, I once again am sending a great big thanks to all of you for your continued prayers and support. Fanchon is awake and currently working hard in re-hab. Fan is in good spirits (most of the time) and she keeps everybody laughing at her antics. the biggest thing she wants right now is to go home and to EAT. She is still on a vent and trach but she is doing quite well as they try to strengthen her muscles, and trying to swallow, walk, and everything else. She has gained much love and support from most of the staff here (pca's, sitters, nurses, maintenance, housekeeping) you name it, and most especially her fantastic re-hab team. The re-hab team even gave her a birthday party because she was asleep for her birthday (Dec. 1) and she kept telling the she was 7 years old. Well the party was very successful and now she wants to know **WHERE ARE HER CHRISTMAS PRESENTS?** (smile) Thank you, Thank You again and please continue to keep her uplifted in prayer and spirit.

Please remember to stay strong and again give generously to COPA to keep our union's voice heard on the Hill.

*Gina*



**Veteran's Report**

**John Smeebens**  
Veterans Director

**DAV MOBILE SERVICE OFFICE TOUR**

You might want to cut this out and use one of your refrigerator magnets to hang it close by. These are the dates, times, and places when and where the DAV Mobile Service Office will be in your area. This service program will provide free assistance to veterans, their dependents and survivors with special attention to those residing in rural areas and localities throughout Michigan, which are not in close proximity to VA facilities. These trucks are pretty high tech with everything you need to get things done. National Service Officers and Department Service Officers will be staffing the MSO's. About two weeks in advance of the stop-over, veterans in the area will usually receive a written notice telling them an MSO will be stationed in their community. **NOTE TIMES!**

**WEEK 1**

**April 30, 2007 Oscoda 10:00am-6:00pm**  
Chapter #130  
American Legion Post 264  
349 South State Street.  
Oscoda, MI 48750  
(989) 362-8671

**May 01, 2007 Cheboygan 10:00am-6:00pm**  
Chapter #90  
WalMart Plaza  
1150 South Main St  
Cheboygan, MI 49721  
(231) 627-6823

**May 02, 2007 Traverse City 10:00am-6:00pm**  
Chapter #38  
VFW Hall 2780  
3400 Veterans Drive  
Traverse City, MI 49686  
(231) 941-9617

**May 03, 2007 Ludington 10:00am-6:00pm**  
Chapter #30  
Community Bldg.  
640 Sherman Oaks Dr.

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**Veterans' Report Continued**

Ludington, MI 49431

**May 04, 2007 Mt.Pleasant** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #112

VFW Post 3033

4841 E. Pickard Road

Mt.Pleasant, MI 48858

(989) 433-2107

**WEEK 2**

**May 07 2007 Shelby Twp** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #129

DAV Memorial Home

47326 Dequindre

Shelby Twp, MI 48317

(586) 739-7124

**May 08, 2007 Berkley** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #19

American Legion Post 374

2079 W. 12 Mile Rd.

Berkley, MI 48072

(248) 879-1127

**May 09, 2007 Livonia** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #114

DAV Memorial Home

30905 Plymouth Road.

Livonia, MI 48150

(313) 537-4018

**May 10, 2007 Taylor** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #116

Harley-Davidson-Motown

14100 Telegraph Road

Taylor, MI 48180

(313) 964-6595

**May 11, 2007 Adrian** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #20

DAV Memorial Home

141 E. Albert St.

Adrian, MI 48221

(517) 265-5685

**WEEK 3**

**May 14, 2007 Sault Ste. Marie** 8:00am-4:00pm

Chapter #52

Sault Ste. Marie National Guard Armory

1170 E. Portage Ave.

Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

(906) 495-5205

**May 15, 2007 Marquette** 9:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #22

D. J. Jacobetti Home for Veterans

425 Fisher Street

Marquette, MI 49855

(906) 228-9559

**May 16, 2007 Chassell** 9:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #115

VFW Hall

Wilson Memorial Drive

Chassell, MI 49916

(906) 779-3194

**May 17, 2007 Kingsford** 9:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #23

Veterans Center

1227 W. Breen Ave.

Kingsford, MI 49802

(No Phone Number Listed)

**WEEK 4**

**May 21, 2007 Kalamazoo** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #6

Red Arrow VFW Post 1527

1920 E. Kilgore Road

Kalamazoo, MI 49001

(269) 373-5304

**May 22, 2007 Grand Rapids** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #2

Grand Rapids Home for Veterans

3000 Monroe NW

Grand Rapids, MI 49505

(616) 318-9010

**May 23, 2007 Big Rapids** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #18

DAV Hall

402 N. Michigan Ave.

Big Rapids, MI 49307

(231) 832-5339

**May 24, 2007 Muskegon** 10:00am-6:00pm

Chapter #11

Chapter Home

2415 S. Laketon Ave.

Muskegon, MI 49442

(No Phone Number Listed)

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Veterans Report Continued

**May 25, 2007 Dowagiac** 10:00am-6:00pm  
Chapter #89  
American Legion Post 563  
806 North Orchard St.  
Dowagiac, MI 49047  
(269) 783-3596

Well there you have it people. The list is long, but what have you got to lose? Just a little time is all it takes. I know time is a valuable commodity, but you just may get rewarded by spending a little time with a Veterans representative. Don't forget to bring your DD-214 and your marriage license and any other information you feel would be helpful.

### MOVING WALL EVENT

The Moving Wall will be on display, in the Upper Peninsula, outside the VFW Post 6165 on the side of M26 in South Range, Michigan on **Friday August 31, 2007 through Monday September 03, 2007**. The Rangers VFW Post 6165 Veterans Stand Down Committee is sponsoring this event and has asked area Veterans groups to help in advertising this event with along with the set-up, security, and events during "The Walls" appearance. The Copper Country Chapter 789 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart will be assisting with planning and fund raising for this project. For information contact Chapter 789 Commander Joe Tormala at joetormala@chartermi.net . For those who are unaware of what the Moving Wall is: The Moving Wall is a traveling half-size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial located in Washington DC. A service mark of Vietnam Combat

Veterans, Ltd, the Moving Wall has been touring the United States since 1984. The Moving Wall was conceived by John Devitt, a Vietnam veteran who attended the 1982 dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Moved by that experience, Devitt created the Moving Wall to share that experience with those who did not have the opportunity to go to Washington.

### NEW CHAPTER

The Military Order of the Purple Heart is working very hard to form and establish a New Chapter in Jackson, Michigan. Anyone interested in helping or joining should call Ronald E. Knapp at (231) 348-8331 or Roger L. Kehrier at (734) 453-2031. They only need 3 more patriots to make this a reality.

### SEMINAR

On a final note I would like to express my thanks to all of you with whom I met at the Area 7, 8, & 9 District Meeting at the Radisson in Kalamazoo on Friday March 2, 2007. I was only able to be there for the one day, but it was an interesting session. It was nice to put faces to some of the names I seen and heard about since my appointment. I look forward to see even more of you at the Educational Convention in Sault Ste. Marie in June.

Again, Thank You for your warm reception. Plus, being from the VMF, I don't get to see the other side as much as some of you others do. You people who work with, and for the clerks, maintenance, etc. are a Godsend to these people, and do one helluva job.



This is a picture of the Moving Wall in Smethport, PA on June 23, 2006.



## Clerk Craft Report

Richard Blake  
Clerk Craft Director

"Dual appointment" casuals and RCR's - it seems as if we're continuing to have problems with the misuse of "dual appointment" RCR-"casuals" in smaller associate offices, and I think that a basic discussion of the issues involved might help us to fight against the negative impact that they have on our PTF clerks in these offices.

The first question that needs to be asked is whether or not the person whom management claims is a "dual appointment" really is one or not. APWU National headquarters receives a list every few weeks or so of "dual" casuals (this list is supposed to include "dual appointment" RCA's as well), that is, casuals who've been designated by the Post Office as being "eligible" to perform Clerk duties. Our President Gary VanHoogstraten receives a copy of this list, and if you have a concern about a particular alleged "dual appointee" in your office, you should contact Gary for a copy of that list. In accordance with the National arbitration award of Arbitrator Das, the only casuals who may be permitted to perform Clerk duties (other than those who were hired as "clerk casuals", of course) are those who have been so designated by the Post Office at the time they were hired. The JCIM language about this issue says "dual craft casual assignments may only occur if such casuals were designated for dual craft appointment when hired", and, "the rules governing the assignment of casuals also apply to dual-appointed rural carrier relief employees". So, either a specific employee is a "dual appointed" casual or RCR, which would at least to some degree legitimize their performance of Clerk craft duties, or they aren't, in which case there is virtually no excuse for utilizing them to perform Clerk craft duties (not "well, they used to be a clerk casual", not "they were supposed to have been designated as a dual casual", not "they need the money", and definitely not "we need the help to get the mail worked"). If they aren't listed as being eligible to perform Clerk duties when hired but they're doing it anyway, contact your local

Steward or Area Director and let them know that a "crossing crafts" grievance needs to be filed ASAP.

If it turns out that the "dual appointee" casual or RCR in your office was designated as being eligible to perform Clerk duties when they were hired, your next step is to be vigilant about enforcing Article 7.1.B.2 of the National Agreement – the language that gives PTF's preference over casuals with regard to workhours. The JCIM language states "PTF employees working at the straight-time rate shall be given priority in scheduling over casual employees...a violation of Article 7.1.B.2 may occur when (1) management schedules a casual for work which a PTF could have performed instead, and (2) the PTF had less than 40 straight-time hours (either work or a combination of work and paid leave) during the service week". An example of how this language works would be like this: Jane is a PTF Clerk, Bob is a "dual-appointee" RCR-clerk casual. Jane is scheduled to work 6 days a week, 6 hours a day (say, from 6 AM until noon) – that adds up to only 36 hours. Bob is utilized 3 afternoons a week, from 4 to 6 PM, to do the outgoing mail dispatch (separate the Priority Mail and the Express Mail, put the letters into trays, label the containers, etc.). Clearly, Jane was "available at the straight-time rate" to have worked an additional 4 hours that week, and doing the dispatch is something she most likely knows how to do, so she should have been brought back to do the outgoing dispatch on 2 of those days. In such an instance, a grievance should be filed for Jane citing Article 7.1.B.2, requesting that she be paid 4 hours of pay at the straight-time rate for the 4 hours of work that she should have been scheduled to perform, and also requesting that management cease and desist violating Article 7.1.B.2. In that scenario, such a grievance would be pretty easy to win, as long as it's properly documented, and Jane is qualified to do the work, and she was "available" to do it (i.e., she doesn't have another job during those hours).

Fighting against the erosion of PTF hours in small associate offices is a never-ending task, but at least when it comes to the issue of "dual appointee" casuals or RCR's, we've got some pretty strong contract language to use against management. If anyone has any specific questions about this particular issue, feel free to contact me or your Area Director.

In Solidarity,  
*Richard*





## Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan  
Maintenance Director

Training behind us. Training ahead. Maintenance training at the recent District Meeting in Kalamazoo was done by NBA Troy Rorman and National Assistant Director, Gary Kloepfer. Sessions focused on changes to Article 38 in the new contract and the MS-47 custodial staffing issues. A CD was issued to participants so it will be easy to go back and look things up.

Our upcoming State Educational Seminar will occur in June in Sault Ste Marie. Classes will include the Maintenance Selection System (MSS), contract update and news on the MS-47 situation. Steve Raymer, Division Director, will be in from Washington to teach the Article 38 Q&A scheduled for Saturday morning. He will be available earlier too. Our NBA Troy Rorman will be with us for the weekend and will be participating. Hope to see you there

I plan to teach an updated version of my MSS class with timelines in Excel in addition to the new and improved flow charts I've taught in some places around the state. I will try to provide language as well as timelines for grieving untimely updates as well as the new to craft and other opportunities.

There will be a lot to discuss at this conference just around our maintenance issues. There will also be some great opportunities for other training including computer with Larry Moyer. I hope many main-

tenance craft members will be able to participate. Our sidebar gatherings are always wonderful too.

On another note, I recently read **ODYSSEUS IN AMERICA: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming** by Jonathon Shay. This book is a sequel to **Achilles in Vietnam**. Both books are hard to read but very helpful. I recommend them both not only to veterans of all eras, but to all who live with vets, work with vets, love vets.

There were many examples that made me think of my Dad's brother who was "shell shocked" multiple times in WWII. Although some of the language has changed, the experiences of active duty military personnel have not. Jonathon Shay's clinical work in Boston may lead to help for many. His new book has a forward by Senators John McCain and Max Cleland.

In Solidarity,

*Jane*

### ***Major Postal Unions at a Glance***

**The American Postal Workers Union (APWU)** is the largest postal union, representing about 272,000 USPS career employees and 5,000 transitional employees primarily in the Clerk, Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Services crafts.

**The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)**, the second largest postal union, represents more than 224,000 career employees. NALC members deliver mail to residences and businesses on city delivery routes.

**National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA)** career and part-time relief workers deliver mail to residences and businesses on rural delivery routes.

**The National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)**, a division of the Laborers' International Union of North America represents over 55,000 career employees engaged in the bulk transfer, loading and unloading of mail.

	<b>APWU</b>	<b>NALC</b>	<b>NRLCA</b>	<b>NPMHU</b>
Represents	272,000	224,000	117,000	55,000
Full Time	223,708	195,583	66,127	50,600
Part Time	46,931	29,193	50,867*	4,630
Maximum Annual Salary	\$57,493	\$49,527	Not Applicable	\$47,203
Minimum Annual Salary	\$27,693	\$37,205	\$35,612	\$30,810
Average Annual Salary	\$46,278	\$46,455	\$49,605	\$42,800
Average Hourly Rate Without Benefits	\$22.41	\$22.46	\$21.64	\$20.80
Average Hourly Rate With Benefits	\$38.08	\$37.31	\$35.59	\$36.28
Source: USPS as of July 2006			* "Non-Career" Employees	



## Area 7 Report

Thomas Lothamer  
Area 7 Director

### Let's Burn A Flag

Memorial Day is fast approaching and I thought I would use this opportunity to discuss a subject close to my heart. **Veterans!** Many of us have served our country and although some of the experiences haven't been so glamorous, I believe in time we do look back with a sense of pride. Pride of country, of our service, and occasionally of ourselves.

I know many Veterans; some of them have disabilities, some you can see and some you cannot. As Union representatives it is our job to help protect their rights. Let me tell you that although there are many avenues for recourse, the answer is always similar: "Yes, of course we support the Veterans;" "Yes, we believe in our country and our way of life in America." Then why would anyone on any level piss all over the very people that helped to preserve their way of life. Some of these people are Vets themselves. I'm not saying they all do this but I have encountered some that push a Vet down and try to keep them down.

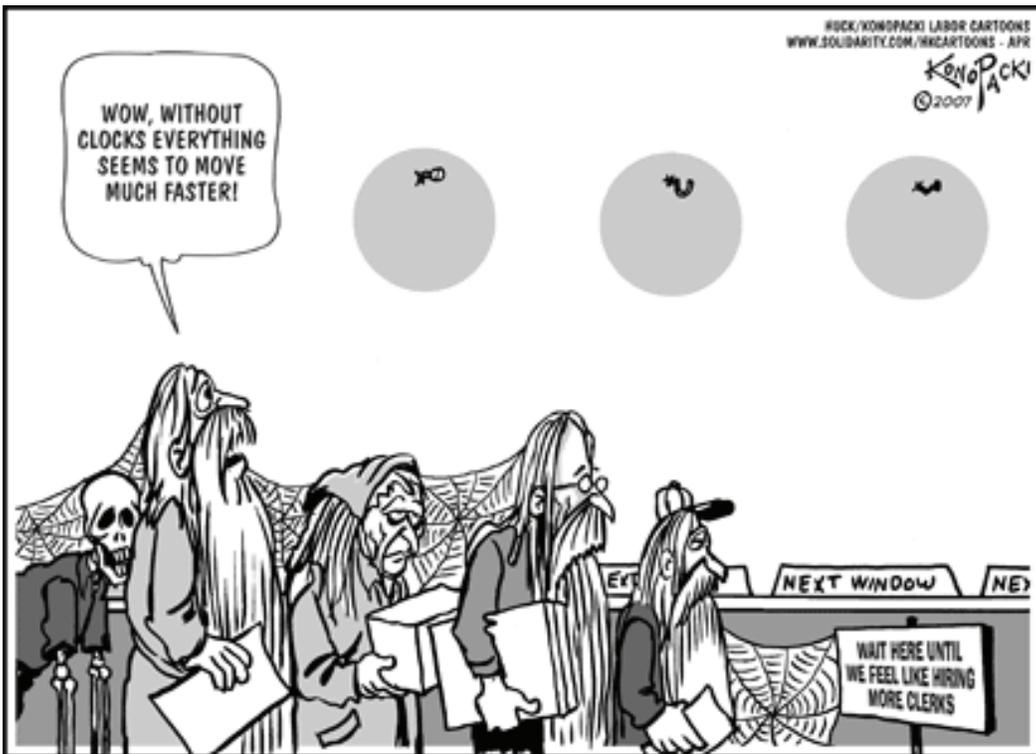
We as Veterans have recourse such as the Merit System Protection Board, the Department of Veteran's Affairs, the grievance procedure, and a whole multitude of Federal laws. Let's face it though; these avenues of approach always seem better on paper than they do when you try to apply them to the system. Man, is the system slow! A Vet could starve to death waiting for a response from their VA doctor, Federal Agency and quite honestly the grievance procedure. These are all good tools but not fast enough in this representative's opinion. Does anyone else besides me feel like snatching up an American Flag, wrapping up with it, and telling anyone who

doesn't honor the Vet that they work with that they must not honor the material that this red, white, and blue piece of cloth represents?

I believe in the Union and in all of our Veterans and I wish when I addressed these issues with management, the response I received would be more than what I get, they count on how slow the system is and I have even commented to managers in the past that having compassion for our Veterans is not doing your job as a Postal Manager and to treat a Veteran any other way, you might as well turn your back on our way of life as we know it, It has been the Veterans that have preserved our way of life. Not the politicians, not the managers of some corporation. Some of these key individuals may have been pulling the strings but it's the Veterans that pulled the triggers. To treat a honorably discharged Veteran with anything else than honor you might as well be burning a flag out in the streets of America.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas A. Lothamer  
Honorably Discharged Veteran  
Persian Gulf War  
United States Marine Corps 1987-1991





## Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque  
MPWU Retirees President

### It's Time To Be Frank!

This is for the attention of active Local leaderships, members and retirees. While Michigan is one of only four states with an organized State Retiree Chapter, we **only** have four (4) organized, functioning Local Retiree Chapters; **Detroit Dist. Area Local, Western MI Area Local, Flint MI Area Local, and Saginaw 486-487 Area Local**, when we have the potential for another 8 or more local retiree chapters!

While we in Michigan are way ahead of most of our Sister states, our level of organized local chapters is far from being stellar. There is no financial advantage for the State Chapter to organize local chapters. The 2006 National Convention adopted a constitutional amendment that; in states where at least 50% of the Retirees Dept. members are in organized local retiree chapters, the State Retiree Chapter will receive a 20% rebate of the annual dues of **ALL** Retirees Dept. members in that state. As more local chapters are organized, State Chapter rebate revenue will actually decrease somewhat. However, one of our State Retiree Chapter Constitution mandates is to actively organize local retiree chapters....thus my message is; that's exactly what I'm attempting to convey to you **IF** anyone is listening and if the shoe fits!

One of the guiding principles of operating an effective, all inclusive Local Union is to pay attention to **details**. One of those "details" is **retirement!** And, in this difficult time of shrinking Union employment and benefits in the private sector, we should all be thankful to God and our Union that we still have a secure retirement program and the means to keep it that way. As past active Local and State Union officers and members, Retiree Chapter officers fully appreciate and understand the daily unending struggles of policing the contracts and labor relations, as well as the internal responsibilities of operating a Local. It's easy to procrastinate, giving retirement subjects only casual attention. Retirement is something happening to 'someone else', or an issue to deal with sometime in the future.

**BUT....that's the point!** That 'someone else' will be **YOU**, whether in 3 years or 30+! What better way to represent retired APWU members' best interests than through the Union which represented us during our work lives....the Union those retired members helped build?! The active Local leadership

and members need to recognize the contributions of all our retired members. So, why not organize a Local Retiree Chapter?!

With an estimated over 40,000 APWU Retirees Dept. members across the nation, there being only four State Retiree Chapters (Ohio, Michigan, Florida and California), and about 36 (soon to be 37 as Pittsburgh is in the process) Local Chapters organized in nearly the 12 years since the Dept. was formed, it is testament to Local and State Union's reluctance, and in some cases outright resistance, to organizing retiree chapters. In view of the great support we've enjoyed in Michigan, I have to qualify that observation by stating it may be more a matter of being a low priority than reluctance here in the Wolverine State. That being said; it's time to shake the bushes and get this on the table in your Local.

Rest assured that your retiree leadership has no agenda to "run the Union" as I've heard from the top echelons of the APWU on down to local levels. We had our turn. That's **YOUR** job, not retirees! But, just as surely as we are now, so you too will be not so far down the road. The reality of retirement and member's inclusion in our Union needs to be given **serious consideration** by the active Local Union leadership! What the retiree leadership is able to accomplish today for greater retiree inclusion in the APWU will benefit you as future retirees far more than for ourselves. Retired members in unorganized Locals need to take some initiative as well. Step up and make yourself available to the Local leadership by proposing organizing a Chapter. It won't get done without the most important ingredient, **YOU**, the retired member. Don't wait for your Local to make the first move, and Locals don't wait for your retired members to come a-knockin'! It's your move to make, and the sooner, the better.

The doors for **retiree inclusion** in our Union are opening slowly, but surely. The only way this can be fully realized will necessarily be with the **full support** of the active Local leadership. You enjoy the leverage of a voice and a vote and resources most retired members don't have access to. The retiree leadership and members look to you, the **active leadership** and members to be the retired members' advocate. We are dependent upon your involvement in **Retiree Involvement!**

**Organizing A Local Retiree Chapter:** The process for organizing a Local Retiree Chapter is relatively simple. First, welcome and invite any prospective retiree leadership in your Local. Make them feel welcome. Target

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(Continued from page 11)

**Retiree Involvement Continued**

retired past officers, stewards and activists. Determine if there are at least **ten (10)** APWU Retirees Dept. members residing within your Local's zip code representation jurisdiction. The APWU Retirees Dept. can furnish that information. Once eligibility to form a Local Retiree Chapter is established, follow the steps below:

**Step 1. - Adopt a Resolution.** (I can furnish you a format), or proper motion at a regular Local Union membership meeting authorizing organizing a Local Retiree Chapter.

**Step 2. – Appoint an Interim Chapter Executive Board.** The Local President normally appoints interim Chapter officers who are members-in-good-standing of the APWU Retirees Dept.: President/Chairperson, Vice-President/Vice-Chair, Secretary and/or Secretary-Treasurer, and Trustees.

**Step 3. – Adopt a Constitution and By-Laws.** Active Local and Chapter officers adopt a proposed Local Retiree Chapter Constitution & By-Laws. The APWU Retirees Dept. has a boilerplate constitution for a guideline they will furnish your Local upon request. (Parent active Locals may want to add language to their Local Union Constitution acknowledging their Local Retiree Chapter as a subordinate body).

**Step 4. – Submit a Letter of Petition.** The Local President submit a Letter of Petition to the APWU Secretary-Treasurer, with a copy to the Director, APWU Retirees Dept., requesting a charter for your Local Retiree Chapter. Accompany the petition letter with copies of the above listed documents in Steps 1, 2, and 3, and establish a permanent file for your Local and Chapter.

I am most willing to furnish sample copies of the necessary documents and formats, and assist in any way I can to organize a Retiree Chapter in your Local.

For those retired members who have established Local Retiree Chapters, you're not off the hook either! Get involved with your Chapter by, at the very least, attending the Chapter's activities and meetings. Just because you're retired from the job, it doesn't mean you are out of the arena! Only the focus has changed to protect, preserve and improve the benefits you have earned and deserve. We can never be so smug as to believe our retirement financial security is untouchable. Whatever our Members of Congress giveth, they also can taketh away!

**H.R. 82 & S.206** are two paramount retiree bills introduced by the U.S. House and U.S. Senate to amend Title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) in this 1st Session of the 110th Congress. Yes, these are perennial pieces of legislation that have gone nowhere even though a majority in the U.S. House, and a significant number of U.S. Senators have cosponsored over the past several years. But, the makeup of Congress has dramatically changed, most importantly, the Chairpersons of Congressional Committees and majority serving on those Committees that will be considering these bills. We cannot hide behind any perceived obstacles to passage of this legislation. Repeal of the hated Hatch Act took session after session of Congress, but we eventually prevailed by keeping it as a paramount issue before our Members of Congress. It's up to every affected retired member to petition your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators to get on board by cosponsoring H.R.82 and S.206. Our chances for passage are better now than we've had in, at least, the last 12 years!

**Premium Conversion**, legislation to allow federal and military retirees to pay their FEHBP health insurance premiums on a tax-free basis has also been introduced in Congress. "Congress": **H.R. 1110** to amend the IRS Code of 1986 to allow Federal, Civilian and Military retirees to pay health insurance on a pretax basis and to allow deduction for TRICARE (military) supplemental premiums. This would require a change in tax law. Federal and postal employees have enjoyed this tax break advantage since 2000, and it is only a matter of fairness that these pretax-deductions should be extended to retirees. It's estimated that the bill would result in average savings to retirees of \$820. a year. I've long held that this is the most doable of our paramount retiree legislation, recognizing that past efforts have been stymied in the House Ways & Means Committee citing the cost in lost tax revenue to be about \$600 million over 10 years. Again, the new makeup of the House Ways & Means Committee and Members of Congress should give us a renewed sense of confidence for our chances of passage IF we all do our part in sending a loud, unmistakable message to our Members of Congress! HEY! In all three of our paramount bills; IT'S OUR MONEY! We Earned It! We Deserve It! They KNOW we vote! Now, it's incumbent upon each and every one of us to let them know WHAT we want and why!

**Finally....**getting off my soapbox...there will be a half-day Retirement program offered at the June 7-9 State Education Convention at Sault Ste. Marie in 'Da U.P. Details as

(Continued from page 12)

Retiree Involvement Continued

to subject matter; whether Retirees Dept. Director, Doug Holbrook will be in attendance, or if we will conduct an open forum are undetermined at this writing. There will also be a State Retiree Chapter Executive Board meeting open to interested observers.

Be Strong!

*Al*



## The Auxiliary Report

Kelly Wilinski  
Auxiliary President

Hello Everybody,

We had a great turnout in Kalamazoo and we signed 31 new members to the Auxiliary but we still need more of you to help out you're union by joining the Auxiliary, and helping us to get all the locals in Michigan to start their own Auxiliary.

I would like to thank the Locals who are helping us to get the Auxiliary in the State of Michigan up and going again. It has been a long time since we had an Auxiliary here but I think with everyone's help we could be one of the best Auxiliaries in the Nation, and put us right back on the map.

At the Educational Convention in Sault Ste. Marie the Auxiliary will be holding their first meeting at which we will be voting on the constitution for the state and we will also be holding elections for the executive board members. I encourage everyone, members and non-members, to attend if possible. The only way to make a change is to have your voice heard. So I would like to see as many people there as possible. The Auxiliary is here to help the union and union members in whatever way we can, but I can't do it alone **I NEED YOU!!!!**

We will also be having our first children's program in Sault Ste. Marie. The program will be a Labor Education class for kids and families. All are invited so please let your local Presidents know if you are planning to attend so that we may have a count for supplies. From what I heard about the class everyone will have a blast.



We will also be having other activities for kids and families. Please make sure to register for these programs when you register for your classes.

The Auxiliary is also asking for all Locals to bring an item for the Auction that will be held on Saturday night, we will also be holding a raffle throughout the weekend, 50/50 drawings.

I would like to answer a question I have been getting about the Auxiliary: In order to be an Auxiliary member you can be a union member, sponsored by a union member, such as family (including kids), friends, and retiree's. Anyone with any questions or wanting to know how to help start a Local Auxiliary in their local can feel free to contact me.

In Sault Ste. Marie we will be collecting Teddy Bears for the National Auxiliary Share Bear Program, which is where they take the bears and put a ribbon on them saying that the APWU would like to thank them for their service and give them to the children of service members going off to war or coming back from war. This is a very worthwhile cause and we should all support it in any way we can. If you would like to donate used bears they will all be donated to the local police department to be handed out to children in tough situations.

Again I would like to thank you all for you're time and for you're support. See you all in Sault Ste. Marie.

*Kelly*

## *History of the APWU*

Late in the 19th century, postal workers became inflamed with the same organizing spirit as other workers. They began to band together in order to fight for fair wages and improved working conditions.

Conditions in the post offices at that time were extremely unhealthy, dangerous and dismal. Buildings were dank, poorly lit, crowded and unventilated. Many workers contracted typhoid and other diseases from the unsanitary environment. Railway Mail Service employees faced the added dangers of frequent rail accidents resulting in numerous deaths and serious injuries each year.

Postal employees were required to work long hours of overtime without additional pay. They were expected to stay on the job until all work was completed—sometimes as long as 18 hours—and to work every other Sunday without extra compensation. The average salary for postal clerks at the turn of the century was \$818 a year, with some workers earning as little as \$100 a year.

Since the Post Office had been established by Congress in 1794, postal workers were appointed to their positions through the spoils system by politicians in return for political favors. Even after the first civil service law was passed by Congress in 1883 requiring competitive exams for workers in the larger facilities, most appointments and promotions continued to depend on political influence, personal favoritism—and sometimes bribery.

To discourage the organization of unions, the Post Office management tried to infuse workers with an image of themselves as different from other workers. They were professional civil servants, white-collar "government officials" who supposedly had little in common with blue-collar skilled craftsmen, industrial workers and unskilled laborers. Management fostered the view that it would be demeaning for them to join a union.

But how else except by unionizing were postal workers to change their miserable working conditions and to improve their intolerably low wages? With their pay and working conditions set by Congress, organized postal workers' earliest efforts were aimed at securing more favorable legislation by sending representatives to plead their cause in Washington. These first efforts were scattered and not very successful. The Postmaster General in 1895 issued a "gag order" forbidding employees of the Post Office from coming to Washington to influence legislation. The penalty for disregarding this order was removal!

### **AFL Charters First Clerks' Local**

The American Federation of Labor (AFL), which was growing by leaps and bounds, stood ready to welcome into its fold federal employees, particularly postal workers, who would join the fight for the 8-hour day. In response to a request from a small group of clerks in Chicago, the AFL chartered Federal Union #8703 in 1900—the first union of federal employees to affiliate with the AFL.

In 1902, in response to the vigorous lobbying undertaken by the fledgling postal worker unions, President Theodore Roosevelt issued an executive order denying basic constitutional rights to all postal and federal employees by forbidding them to solicit members of Congress for wage increases or to influence any other legislation.

This "gag rule" was followed in 1909 with another under President Taft prohibiting postal workers from answering any questions concerning their working conditions that might be posed by Congressional representatives. Despite these obstacles, several organizations of postal workers representing post office clerks, letter carriers and railway mail clerks grew steadily in numbers and in influence. Along with the American Federation of Labor and other unions, they fought to increase wages, improve conditions and pass other favorable legislation.

### **Legislative Gains**

In 1912, the Lloyd-LaFollette Act was passed, rescinding the previous "gag rules" and establishing the right of federal and postal workers to organize unions. The year 1916 saw the adoption of the first Federal Employees Compensation Act for workers injured on the job. In 1920, Congress voted the first Civil Service Retirement Act providing retirement for clerks at age 65. A 10 percent nighttime differential was won in 1928. However, in spite of these legislative gains, little progress was made to improve overall wages.

During the 1920's postal workers' salaries fell behind those of comparable workers in private industry. In the years of the Great Depression the job security of federal employees made their positions the envy of millions of unemployed workers. As part of an effort to curb government spending, postal workers were forced to accept a 15 percent pay cut and one month's furlough. Additionally, when the Wagner Act was passed in 1935 guaranteeing most workers the right to bargain collectively through representatives of their choosing, postal and federal employees were specifically excluded

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from its coverage.

During the '20s and '30s motor vehicle employees, maintenance workers and special delivery messengers employed by the Post Office joined together to organize unions to protect and further their interests and concerns.

During the 1940s, postal workers won some wage increases as a result of intensive campaigning, lobbying and letter-writing. But their experience during the Eisenhower Administration led to increasing dissatisfaction and frustration. In spite of promises to the contrary, wage increases voted by Congress were repeatedly vetoed by President Eisenhower. The limited power of the unions to effectively improve the lot of postal workers was apparent. The Post Office did not recognize the unions as the representatives of the workers; wage increases were blocked by Presidential veto and there was no grievance procedure through which disputes could be resolved.

During this period, a number of postal clerks became increasingly dissatisfied with the established clerks union. In 1959, they organized a new and unique industrial union of postal workers which would recruit members from every post office craft. This was the first step toward the establishment of a progressive industrial union of postal employees.

### **Unions Win Recognition**

In 1962, President Kennedy signed Executive Order 10988 which, for the first time, officially recognized the legitimate role of federal employee unions in the workplace. Representation elections in which 77 percent of the eligible employees participated resulted in the certification of six unions as the exclusive bargaining agents for each of the postal crafts. The unions now had the right to negotiate with management concerning working conditions, promotional standards, grievance procedures, safety and other matters. However, they could not negotiate over wages and fringe benefits. Another major flaw of the Executive Order was that nothing compelled the Post Office management to reach an agreement with the unions. In any dispute, management still had the last word.

The 1960's brought unfulfilled promises of pay equity with private industry. While the unions were hammering out agreements with the Post Office, they still had to lobby for raises in postal salaries to offset the effects of inflation. In the government's effort to curb spending, federal workers' salaries—once again—became the scapegoat. Low pay and money-saving restrictions in overtime led to high employee turnover, a heavy mail backlog and a severe drop in morale. The workers' frustrations mounted and the postal unions appeared incapable of overcoming employee dissatisfaction and the increasing sense of powerlessness.

### **Strike**

On March 18, 1970, the situation erupted. Beginning in New York, thousands of postal workers walked off the job. The strike spread quickly across the country, finally involving more than 200,000 workers. Its impact was to fundamentally change labor-management relations in a major breakthrough for postal unions.

The Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 was adopted establishing the U.S. Postal Service as an independent government agency. For the first time postal unions had the right to negotiate on all matters concerning wages, fringe benefits, cost-of-living adjustments and other financial gains. Salaries and benefits were to compare with private industry and the time to reach the top grade pay was to be reduced from 21 to 8 years. Additionally, postal management was required to bargain in good faith and to make a genuine effort to reach an agreement. Unresolved matters were to be submitted to final and binding arbitration. Finally, postal workers had won most of the rights enjoyed by workers in private industry since the adoption of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935. The one glaring omission was the right to strike.

### **The APWU Is Born**

On July 1, 1971, five postal unions joined together to create the American Postal Workers Union, forming the largest union of postal employees in the world. APWU represents 320,000 clerks, motor vehicle employees, maintenance workers, special delivery messengers, and other Postal Service employees. The merging unions which formed the American Postal Workers Union were the United Federation of Postal Clerks, the National Postal Union, the National Association of Post Office and General Service Maintenance Employees, the National Federation of Motor Vehicle Employees, and the National Association of Special Delivery Messengers.

Strengthened by the unity and solidarity of the different crafts it represents, the APWU has negotiated several National Agreements since 1971, each winning improved wages and working conditions for all postal workers. Collective bargaining has now replaced "collective begging" as the union's primary weapon. Nevertheless, lobbying and political action remain a vital part of the union's program to ensure that those gains won at the bargaining table are not taken away through legislation.

*Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.— George Santayana*

## *A History Of Postal Workers' Salaries*

The chart below shows the progress of postal workers' salaries, beginning immediately before postal employees won the right of genuine collective bargaining, and continuing through the current agreement. Salaries are shown at Level 5, Step 0, and reflect pay rates at the end of each contract.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Increase</u>
<b>1969</b> (Prior to the enactment of the Postal Reorganization Act)	<b>\$8,442</b>	
<b>1970</b> Following the March 1970 strike by postal employees, the enactment of the Postal Reorganization Act mandated salary increases of no less than 6 percent effective Dec. 27, 1969, and 8 percent effective July 18, 1970, as well as a continuation of federal benefits.	<b>\$9,657</b>	<b>14.39%</b>
<b>1971 – 1973</b> The 1971 negotiations resulted in a contract that continued postal work rules and working conditions; provided for salary increases, and included a "capped" cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). All the major postal unions were part of a single bargaining committee, and the two-year agreement was ratified by the members of the unions.	<b>\$11,073</b>	<b>14.66%</b>
<b>1973 – 1975</b> Agreement was reached prior to the expiration of the statutory negotiations period (90 days). The COLA cap was lifted. The two-year agreement was ratified by the membership. All major postal unions were included in a single bargaining committee.	<b>\$13,483</b>	<b>21.76%</b>
<b>1975 – 1978</b> A negotiated agreement was reached within the statutory period, with flat dollar salary increases in each year of the contract. The three-year agreement was ratified by union members. All major postal unions participated in the bargaining committee.	<b>\$16,501</b>	<b>22.38%</b>
<b>1978 – 1981*</b> Negotiations resulted in a tentative agreement that included a capped COLA. The APWU Rank-and-File Bargaining Advisory Committee rejected the agreement, as did union members. Binding arbitration – provided for under the Postal Reorganization Act – was invoked to resolve the impasse. Arbitrator James J. Healy was retained to decide the COLA and no-layoff provisions. Locals threatened to strike. The bargaining committee included the APWU, National Association of Letter Carriers, and National Postal Mail Handlers Union. The National Rural Letter Carriers Association negotiated separately. The arbitrator's ruling uncapped the COLA and required six years of continuous service to achieve protection against layoff. The contract term was three years.	<b>\$21,630</b>	<b>31.08%</b>
<b>1981 – 1984</b> Negotiations resulted in a tentative agreement within the statutory period. The bargaining committee included the APWU and NALC. The three-year agreement was ratified	<b>\$24,173</b>	<b>11.76%</b>

by the membership of the two unions. The National Postal Mail Handlers Union and National Rural Letter Carriers Association negotiated separately.

<b>1984 – 1987*</b> Negotiations resulted in arbitration. Arbitrator Clark Kerr interpreted the standard of "wage comparability" required by the Postal Reorganization Act, and issued an award covering a 42-month period. The bargaining committee included the APWU and NALC.	<b>\$27,401</b>	<b>13.35%</b>
<b>1987 – 1990</b> Negotiations resulted in a three-year tentative agreement, which was ratified by the membership. The bargaining committee included the APWU and NALC.	<b>\$31,766</b>	<b>15.93%</b>
<b>1990 – 1994*</b> Negotiations resulted in referral to arbitration. Arbitrator Richard Mittenhal imposed a four-year agreement, which included Transitional Employees. He referred the issue of the employer's contribution to health benefit premiums to a separate process. Arbitrator Rolph Valtin decided the issue of health benefits premium payment in 1993, which resulted in a 4 percent increase in employees' share of healthcare costs. The APWU and NALC bargained together.	<b>\$35,604</b>	<b>12.08%</b>
<b>1994 – 1998*</b> Negotiations resulted in referral to arbitration. Arbitrator Jack Clarke imposed a four-year agreement. Each of the postal unions bargained separately.	<b>\$37,831</b>	<b>6.25%</b>
<b>1998 – 2000</b> Negotiations resulted in a two-year agreement, which was ratified by the membership. Each of the postal unions bargained separately.	<b>\$40,472</b>	<b>6.98%</b>
<b>2000 – 2003*</b> Negotiations resulted in referral to arbitration. Arbitrator Stephen B. Goldberg imposed a three-year agreement. Each postal union negotiated separately.	<b>\$43,099</b>	<b>6.49%</b>
<b>2003 – 2005</b> APWU and USPS agreed to a two-year extension of the 2000/2003 contract. The extension was ratified by the membership.	<b>\$45,997</b>	<b>6.72%</b>
<b>2005 – 2006</b> APWU and USPS agreed to a one-year contract extension, which was ratified by the membership.	<b>\$47,996</b>	<b>4.35%</b>
<b>2006 – 2010 (Estimated at)</b> APWU and USPS agreed to a four-year contract, which was ratified by the membership.	<b>\$52,747</b>	<b>9.90%</b>

The chart above reflects the contracts between the USPS and the major postal unions. Other postal employees represented by labor unions also have engaged in bargaining with the Postal Service. In total there have been 88 agreements – with 64 agreed to voluntarily, 20 referred to impasse arbitration, three involving fact finding, and one referred to mediation.

At the conclusion of the 2006-2010 contract, postal workers' salaries will have increased – from \$8,442 in 1969 – to an estimated \$52,747.

\* Indicates contracts that were decided in arbitration.

## *Area 7, 8, & 9 District Meeting In Pictures*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### *Wheels and Wrenches*

*It seems to me that someone at the national has some explaining to do to the membership. Last month in my article for the local rag I stated that I had just gotten off of the phone with the national officer for our craft. At that time I was told that the casuals that can be hired in our craft were 90 days and that was what was agreed to during negotiations, now today I find out from our national craft director that our national president signed off the new agreement that allows management to hire 360 day casuals within our craft. This is not what we were told and this is not what we voted for! The casuals that can be hired will have to pass the same DOT tests for CDL's and be put on the list for drug and alcohol testing. We were left out of the PTF upgrade so I was told so that the casuals could stay at 90 days, now it is all changed, Our craft now has the 90/10 ratio in effect so we will start pushing for conversions now. The language of the signed Q&A states 90% full time regulars within the MVS Craft. As per the Q&A signed by our national President it is broke down like this: The percentage of part time employees has always been expressed in the contract as a percentage of the full time employees, and has been enforced at the local level. This contract would require all MVS operations within an installation to be at least 90% full time as soon as practicable. Every installation will be allowed at least 2 part time employees in the motor vehicle craft. Any exceptions will be discussed at the national level. It is the last sentence that scares the hell out of me. The new agreement upgrades all APWU-represented employees' one level, effective Feb. 16, 2008. In the Motor Vehicle Craft, our national craft directors attempted to negotiate a second level upgrade the following jobs: Driver Safety Instructor, Clerk Vehicle Dispatcher, Schedules Examiner, Storekeeper, General Clerk, and Tool & Parts Clerk. It is my understanding that they (national craft directors) are still continuing to seek these additional upgrades through negotiations as I write this article (as per the APWU web site).*

*On the APWU National web site, the MVS Directors explained their decision this way. This decision to maintain the status quo of part-time employees in the Motor Vehicle Craft is based on the reality that the Postal Ser-*

*vice strategies in transportation are changing. Costs and flexibility are often the deciding factor when making a decision to contract out. The upgrades achieved in our craft in the 2000 contract and across-the-board in the new agreement will escalate the PVS costs compared to HCR costs by two levels. This works out to approximately \$11,800 annually for Level 7 Motor Vehicle Operators and \$12,500 for Level 8 Tractor Trailer Operators. The elimination of part-time employees in the Motor Vehicle Craft could have made it difficult to sustain PVS operations in certain installations. In negotiating this agreement, we tried to strike a balance between protecting job security by permitting flexibility, and improving the working conditions in the craft through raises and upgrades. If you buy their explanation that's o.k., I have my doubts. Although I am greatly disappointed with the craft article in the new contract, I will work within the agreement. All of the craft employees in the MVS Craft need to start getting more involved in the administration of the contract and a lot more involved with the local in which you are a member of. I would like to see any of our retired MVS members start or sign up for a retiree's chapter of this or other locals. We need to start voicing our opinions and stop rolling over and playing dead when it comes to issues that involve our jobs. As the members of a proud craft we need to stop all of the complaining and band together and fight for our jobs now and in the future. I ask that all MVS employees to start making a difference TODAY. Call your national officers and let them know what you think, remember that they are elected by us and should represent us.*

*Joe Wrobel  
MVS Director  
480-481 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:**

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:**

- June 7 - 9, 2007 - MPWU Educational Convention; Sault Ste Marie, MI
- August 1 - 4, 2007 - National Postal Press Convention; Reno, NV
- Area 1, 2, & 3 District Meeting - Currently being planned for Spring 2008
- November 5 - 8, 2007 - National Multi-Craft Convention, Las Vegas, NV
- May 15 - 17, 2008 - MPWU State Convention, Grand Rapids, MI



# 2007 MPWU Educational Convention

## Class /Event Schedule:

**Where:** Kewadin Hotel & Casino  
Sault Ste Marie, Michigan2

**When:** June 7 - 9, 2007

### Costs:

Registration: \$50.00

Lodging (to include food (American Plan))

Single Std Room: \$467.36

Whirlpool Upgrade: \$502.81

Living Room Upgrade: \$535.51

If you are planning on attending the Computer Training, there is a questionnaire on the website that needs to be accomplished first.

If you are bringing any children along that would like to be involved in the Auxiliary Children's program, please contact Gary Van via e-mail at MI-Prez1@chartemi.net and let him know.

### Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. — MPWU Executive Board Meeting

### Thursday:

(1:30 - 3:30 p.m)

(3:30 - 5:00 p.m)

General Session

Basic Arbitration

Basic Computer Training

Article 37—Clerk Craft Q&A

Maintenance

MVS

Postal Press

**1:30 - 5:00**

### Friday:

**8:30 - 12:30**

Trustee Training

Basic Arbitration

Basic Computer Training

Article 39 - MVS Q&A

Maintenance

Article 12

Postal Press

Veterans

Basic Arbitration

MS Word Computer Training

OWCP

Maintenance

Function 4

Auxiliary Program (for kids)

### Saturday:

Fiduciary Responsibilities

Basic Arbitration

MS Word Computer Training

OWCP

Auxiliary Workshop (Adults)

Stewards Training A-Z

Article 38 - Maintenance Q&A

Retirement

Basic Arbitration

MS Word Computer Training

OWCP

Stewards Training - A-Z

Auxiliary Program (for kids)

*"Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much higher consideration."* — Abraham Lincoln (16th President of the US)

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