



Michigan Messenger



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President's Report



Gary VanHoogstraten

As I sit here reading today's issue of our local paper, a couple articles I read, I feel need to be addressed. As we reach the 9/11 attacks six years ago, is the United States any safer? The first new images of Osama Bin Laden surfaces this past week. They are still looking to whether they are real or not. He seems to have gained a few pounds and his beard and hair is darker. Homeland Security has been quoted that it had no credible information warning of an imminent threat to the United States. Well excuse me, I feel as long as he is supposedly still alive and on the run, he is a threat. President Bush has said he would "lay out a vision for future involvement in Iraq - one believed the American people and their elected parties can support. By coming together on the way forward, we will strengthen Iraq's democracy.

I continue to read and one of the headlines is "Iraqis not providing basic support for their troops." Forget logistics and you loose, and yet the Iraqis have yet to learn that lesson. Military retired leader has said "Logistics remains the Achilles heal of the Iraqi ground forces. There are so many flaws in what the Iraqis are suppose to be doing preventive maintenance and taking care of their own equipment. We need to keep our eyes and ears open and contact our political leaders and let them know how we feel. I am sure all of us have loved ones either fighting over their and sadness for those that have lost any-

one. Do not be afraid to contact the politicians, they are there to listen to what you have to say. I know I addressed this issue locally but I figured it would be a good idea to let the State members know about this also.

Right to Work Initiative

I am on a committee for the State AFL-CIO to stop the attempt to place Right-to-Work on the ballot in November. I will explain some of the information I have in my possession.

1. What is right to work? In 1947, Congress amended the National Labor Relations Act to allow states to make a union shop (where all workers must pay dues or a fee to the worksite union) illegal in their states. In other words, state Right to Work laws make it illegal for a union to collect fees for services that the law requires the union to provide.

2. How does a union shop agreement get in a union contract?. How does it happen that all workers at a worksite must be members of the union? The employer and the negotiating team for the union always have to agree to put in language or a clause into the contract that says if a worker receives the higher pay and better benefits of a union contract, then they should equally pay dues or in lieu of dues a fee to administer the contract. A worker always has the right not to be a member of the union, but they will have to pay a fee for the services they receive. (We all should know that this is not true in the APWU. Members or maybe I should rephrase that, workers have a choice as to whether they want to belong to the APWU or not and there is no fee. At this time, we still have to represent these people, even

though they are not dues paying members).

3. Must the employer also agree that all workers are in the union? Yes, and even more, all of the workers vote to accept or reject the contract with the union workers clause in it. Workers and employers democratically agree to an all union clause, through negotiations and ratification process. A contract vote, like all democratic elections, adheres to the principle of majority rules. (As we know this language also does not apply to the APWU).

4. Aren't there any union members who want Right-to-Work in Michigan? There are always individuals who are unhappy with the outcome of an election. Some members might be mad that they lost a grievance or are otherwise unhappy with their union. However, the majority of the union members know that a unified organization is stronger and will produce a better deal for the workers.

5. Do Right-to-Work states have better economics? No, the only state to go Right-to-Work in 46 years is Oklahoma, which has lost 22,000 manufacturing jobs after the Right-to-Work took effect. North Carolina is a Right-to-Work state, and they have lost an even greater percentage of manufacturing jobs than Michigan in the past few years. Right-to-Work does not mean more jobs in Michigan.

6. And last, why would a ballot issue about Right-to-Work be bad for Michigan? First, it would be divisive. At a time when Michigan businesses and unions should be working together to help our state adjust to a changing economy, a Right-to-Work ballot issue would pit us against each

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President's Report Continued

other. Most voters think politics is too polarized as it is. It would be far better for Michigan's image to the rest of the country to be that of Labor/Management cooperation than workers and employers at odds with each other. Check out this edition of the Messenger further to learn more about the Right-to-Work initiative.

The information concerning Iraq has been printed in our local paper. The Right-to-Work information has been supplied by the State AFL-CIO.

Until next time.



Federal Employees Open Season for Health/ Dental & Vision

Open Season is almost upon us to make changes to our Health, Dental and Vision plans.

If you haven't done so already, I would strongly recommend that you check out the Office of Personnel's website at: <http://www.opm.gov> to view what is available this year. Open Season is from November 12th through December 10th. During this time, you can enroll or change your health plan, Dental and/or Vision coverage. Make sure you don't miss out this year.

As you know, with the new contract, health plan premiums for Postal Workers went up slightly. Check out all the options. While the APWU Consumer Option has dropped in cost, remember only you can weigh which plan is best for you and your family.



The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long
Editor

Fall is Here

The leaves are changing color, the nights and days are getting cooler, and daylight is getting less and less, it must be fall. With fall arriving, one only needs to look around the corner to winter and the holidays, which translates into more overtime for each of us.

I hope each of you had a great summer and have plans to make this fall truly spectacular.

Election and Apathy

The election for the National APWU officers is now history. Congratulations to those who will lead our union for the next three years. While there weren't very many changes in the structure, one thing that did alarm me was the amount of members who didn't vote. I don't know if people are just content on the way things are going, are appreciative of the new contract, too busy to bring a piece of mail to work with them and put it in the mail box, or are just so apathetic that they really don't care what is happening and don't want to be involved. We are a union. Plain and simple. We are a democratic society and one where our voices make the difference. By not even taking the time to vote (of which only 30% of the membership voted in this election), leaves me to wonder and ponder the above. Whatever the reason, the ballots were cast, the numbers tallied, and we now have an APWU officers that was elected by the minority of the membership.

Stupidity

While relaxing before going to bed, I was flipping through the TV channels and came across the Republican Debate which was held in Dearborn, Michigan. What I saw, actually made me more adamant as to why we need to make sure that these challengers don't succeed and get into the White House. The part of the debate that I witnessed was when they were talking about Labor and Unions. The following is an excerpt from the transcript of this debate:

"Mr. Brownback: Sure, they've been good for the United States. I think, historically, my mother

was a union member. She was a mail carrier, a rural mail carrier. She called herself a postal packin' grandma for a good period of time. And it helped her on health care. It helped her, I think, in some negotiations.

Mr. Matthews: OK.

Congressman Tancredo?

Mr. Tancredo: Sam, I don't -- your mom, if she was a postal worker, believe me, she didn't need a union on top of civil service.

Mr. Tancredo: That is really one of the problems: that we do allow civil servants to also have union benefits. And, believe me, that becomes a conflict.

Mr. Tancredo: The creative conflict that occurs between unions and management is usually a good thing. When unions, I think, get off track is when they start to influence public policy, especially with regard to, need I say it, illegal immigration..."

Can you imagine if this type of ideology actually was put into place in the White House?

In closing, I hope everyone enjoys the new format to this paper. From the comments I have received, you seem to like it. Now if I can get it delivered a little quicker, it would even be better.

Until next time, I hope each of you have a great and safe fall. Please remember, if I or any MPWU Board member can assist you, please let us know.

Yours in Solidarity,

Mike

Legislative Report



Regina Favors
Legislative Director

Well, Labor Day is over and the kids are back in school and summer is (almost) over. Did you attend your (area's) Labor Day Parade? If you didn't you missed yet another chance for showing solidarity and strength for your union, your community and labor in general. In any event I hope that everyone had a wonderful time doing whatever it was that gave you pleasure over the break. Of course we are so deeply saddened over the loss of our members and so many members loved ones. My heart, prayers and condolences goes out to all of you and may God's peace and love be a source of strength to comfort you

always. by the time this goes to print there will have been a big indoor rally at to mobilize and gain support on "HEALTH CARE FOR ALL." This event was put on by the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO and the committee was chaired by our own Paul Felton (480-481 Local). The featured speaker scheduled is The Honorable John Conyers and I have no doubts that it will be big and wonderful. The committee did a fantastic job putting this together. Other things that have been happening is the DMC Nurses have been trying to become organized with the Michigan Nurses Association. You know so many take (their) unions and the opportunity to belong for granted. They take things like good working conditions, benefits (good or not so good) and good pay for instance like it is their right or it's automatic and never stop to understand what people who do not have these things must be going through. I was at 'Jobs for Justice' meeting where some of the nurses from the DMC came in and talked about their plight. They talked about being understaffed and overworked (12 and sometimes 12+ hours), having too many patients and

then not even being able to say anything about the conditions being forced on them. They talked about being called in to their H.R. Dept. If they talked to their co-workers about organizing or if they passed out literature even though they were not doing it during or disturbing work. (Yet, they say, it is o.k. for management to put out anti-union information). They talked about retiring and not having healthcare *themselves* or being able to get prescriptions filled because they can't afford it. To me this is unacceptable for someone who has dedicated years of their life helping others. They deserve better. While we are on the subject of unionism, anti-worker legislators are pushing bills HB 4454-4455 and SB 607-608 they have given the (phony) title of "right to work". Actually the title should be right to work FOR LESS. This again is national interest groups, being funded by big corporations, banks and insurance companies who want to increase their business profits by destroying unions, cutting pay and eliminating benefits. You can see it happening more and more every year. Just take a look a where we are now and where we used to be. I have said it before and I say it again, it began with PATCO, and unions have been losing more and more ground every year. Who would have ever believed that the UAW would have lost any ground or any so many jobs, and that is not all DUE TO INCREASED TECHNOLOGY and MECHANIZATION. We as Postal Workers already know what working along side an *individual* who does not pay union dues does for us, don't let them make us a STATE where it costs all of us more in jobs, pay, benefits and everything. GET THE FACTS! Get all the information you can and if you need someone to come and speak at your union meeting or to your members you can contact me or again go to www.miaflcio.org. Once you have done that (and hurry) contact your legislators and let them know that this is bad for Michigan. And lastly, for now anyway, I again was privileged to participate in candidate screenings. We screened approx. 20 or so candidates seeking the endorsement of the AFL-CIO. The offices being sought were Mayors and City Councils of Hazel Park, Garden City, Southfield, Royal Oak, Allen Park, and Warren just to name a few. Almost all of them screened well and you can look for a list of the endorsements when the entire process is complete. Once again, if any of you have or know of any problems, concerns or have the best well wishes for the councilperson, Mayor, or representative please let me know as it can be very helpful in the endorsement process. Once more I feel I have gone on much too long so,

Until next issue,
Stay Informed, Stay Strong, and keep solidarity alive,
Gina

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Veteran's Report



John Smeeckens
Veterans Director

HAPPY VETERANS' DAY 2007

To all my Brother and Sister Veterans' I say "Welcome Home," and most of all "Thank You" for your service to this great

country of ours. Without your sacrifices, we would not have our everyday freedoms and rights that we enjoy here in these United States of America. And on this Veterans' Day, take a moment to hug a Veteran on this, their Holiday, and tell them "Thank You." For those who fight for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.

CALL TO ACTION

The time is now, because the target is you. The DAV (Disabled American Veterans) has launched an expansive two year program to advocate legislation to help disabled Veterans' receive the full rehabilitation and recovery they need to rebuild their lives. A tremendous effort is being made to put forth an effort to focus on sustaining supportive programs well into the future, as well as a renewed emphasis on making mandatory funding of Veterans' health care a reality. To do this we need total support of Veterans' and civilians alike. You need to contact your Senators and Congress people, both on the local and national levels, and ask them to develop appropriate benefits that are real, effective, and meaningful for those who have sacrificed so much on behalf of this great nation. Mental health care for our newest generation of Veterans' is a reality. The VA is underestimating the seriousness of the issues of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). This happens when an explosion takes place close enough to your body to cause your brain to rattle around in your skull. Although the evidence of the TBI does not show up immediately, the effect can be similar to that of PTSD. When and where, are

factors of TBI that cannot yet be determined. Please ask your elected officials to support mandatory Veterans' health care funding to include sustaining supportive programs well into the future for our Veterans' mental health care.

PAY DISPARITY

A recent study done by the Institute for Defense Analysis, found that average annual disability payments showed disparity from state to state, dependant on where the disabled Veterans' lived. Injured Veterans' could be shortchanged in their government disability pay, an internal study showed. Average disability payments were way out of whack- from \$7,556 in Ohio to \$12,395 in New Mexico. Nationwide the average pay was \$8,890. Michigan was 43rd at \$7,999. I'm sure there'll be more to come on this subject.

GET HELP

A recent study by the Institute for Defense Analysis shows that wounded Veterans' who approach the Department of Veterans' Affairs, (formerly the VA, Veterans Administration), without professional assistance receive on average about 1/3 of the compensation that those who are represented by trained Veterans Service Officers (VSO) from the many Veterans' organizations out there, along with your County Veterans' Representatives. I've been spouting this for several years now, and finally someone has done a study that brings out the proof. Go to your County Representative or to a Veterans' Organization that has VSO's on staff, to file any claims or to reopen any of your claims. But most important of all, please don't go it alone. Get Help! If you need the name of a County Veterans Representative, don't hesitate to contact me.

DOW VETS

Approximately 100 Veterans of World War II, who have retired from Dow Chemical Co., will be flown to Washington, D.C., to see the World War II Memorial. The announcement made Midland based Dow Chemical the first major company to sponsor such a flight. Dozens of nonprofit groups have sprung up

nationwide-including Royal Oak based Honor Flight Michigan-to raise money for World War II Veterans' to make the trip to visit their Memorial.

AID/ATTENDANCE

There is a very unused benefit for Veterans out there, especially wartime and spouses of wartime Veterans, and it's a special monthly pension benefit called Aid and Attendance. This pension benefit may be available to wartime Veterans and surviving spouses who have in-home care or who live in nursing-homes or assisted-living facilities. This program is not new, but many Veterans are not aware that they may be eligible. Many elderly Veterans and surviving spouses whose incomes are above the congressionally mandated legal limit for a VA pension may still be eligible for the special monthly Aid and Attendance benefit if they have large medical expenses, including nursing home expenses, for which they do not receive reimbursement. To qualify, claimants must be incapable of self support and in need of regular personal assistance. The basic criteria for the Aid and Attendance benefit include the inability to feed oneself, to dress and undress without assistance, or to take care of one's own bodily needs. People who are bedridden or need help to adjust special prosthetic or orthopedic devices may also be eligible, as well as those who have a physical or mental injury or illness that requires regular assistance to protect them from hazards or dangers in their daily environment. For a wartime Veteran or surviving spouse to qualify for this benefit, the Veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which was during a period of war, and be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Wartime Veterans who entered active duty on or after September 08, 1980 (October 16, 1981 for Officers) must have completed at least 24 continuous months of military service or the period for which they were ordered to active duty. The income threshold for some Veterans is about \$18,234 and may be adjusted by as much as \$1,866 for each additional dependent. A surviving spouse starts

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Veterans Report Continued

at \$11,715 and may be increased by the same \$1,866 for each additional dependent child. Contact your County Veterans Representative or a Veterans Service Officer if you feel you or a family member may qualify for this benefit. Let the representative determine if there is a qualification factor. Don't assume that you might not qualify, let the County Veterans Representative or the Veterans Service Officer do their work to see if you are qualified.

UPDATE-WRAMC

And you thought the Post Office had acronyms, you should look at the Military. This update is for those of you have asked me about Walter Reed Military Hospital and the patient problems they were having. All Soldiers who had been living in Building 18 (the bad building), were moved into the barracks on the WRAMC (Walter Reed Army Medical Center) campus, where each room has a computer, telephone, television and Internet access. Immediate responses also involved a new WRAMC chain of command under MG (Major General) Eric Schoemaker, and new positions created to ensure that Soldiers' needs are met. A Deputy Commanding General position was created and filled by combat Veteran BG (Brigadier General) Michael S. Tucker. His mission is to work on behalf of the Soldiers as the "bureaucracy buster" and ensure the outpatient system is responsive to their needs. "We've found that in many cases this bureaucracy that's grown over the decades frustrates the very best efforts of the most dedicated public servants," said Pete Geren, Acting Secretary of the Army. "We've got Soldiers who are fighting a war overseas, and come back and battle a bureaucracy over here. It shouldn't be that way.

For those who fight for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.

SAD NEWS

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the death of Kenny Mack. E-9 Master Gunnery Sergeant Kenneth

Mack of the United States Marine Corps was killed in action on May 04 2007 in Iraq. Kenney was a 19 year Postal employee and worked out of the Fort Worth V. M. F. This was his 2nd Tour of Duty. He was assigned to the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, 2nd MEF, Camp Lejeune, NC. We have lost a Union brother, who was a Marine, a brother, a husband, a father, and an uncle, please keep Kenny in your prayers and thoughts, along with his family.

HELP THE DVA

The DVA (Department of Veterans Affairs) is asking anyone who knows of a surviving World War I Veteran to contact the DVA. To qualify as a World War I Veteran, someone must have been on active duty between April 06, 1917 and November 11, 1918. Information about these Veterans can be e-mailed to ww1@va.gov; faxed to (202) 273-6702, or mailed to the Office of Public Affairs, DVA (80), 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington, D.C., 20420. There are presently 4 surviving World War I Veterans; John Babcock, 102 from WA; Frank Buckles, 106 from WV; Russell Coffey, 108 from OH; and Harry Landis, 107 from FL.

Until Next Time,

John

*Any and all
submissions for
the November/
December 2007
Edition of the
Michigan
Messenger is
due
Not Later Than
November 15th*

Maintenance Memo



Jane Duggan
Maintenance Director

I am looking forward to seeing some of you at the Area 1, 2, & 3 meeting coming up in October. There are so many issues and changes for maintenance that we can't meet often enough.

Two big things come to mind right away: suspending the 916 exam and settling the KSA 36 cases.

SUSPENDING THE 916 EXAM

We got information that the 916 exam had been unilaterally suspended by the postal service for In-service custodial candidates. On August 31, 2007, a meeting took place at the headquarters level to clarify the impact of the suspension on In-service registers.

I hope it goes without saying that ALL maintenance VACANCIES are filled using THE PECKING ORDER found in the JCIM. (This language will become part of the EL 304 when it is updated.)

When you get to the place in the order for filling maintenance vacancies that allows you to utilize an In-service Register, then use the following order for selection:

- ⇒ Current Maintenance Craft employees who previously passed the In-service 916 in score order.
- ⇒ Current Maintenance Craft employees who have not passed the In-service 916 in Maintenance in installation seniority order.
- ⇒ Other APWU Craft employees who previously passed the In-service 916 in score order.
- ⇒ Other APWU Craft employees who have not passed the In-service

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Maintenance Report Continued

916 in their respective craft installation seniority order.

- ⇒ Non-APWU Craft employees who previously passed the In-service 916 in score order.
- ⇒ Non-APWU Craft employees who have not passed the In-service 916 exam in installation seniority order.

The option to consider transfer requests before In-service candidates has not changed.

KSA 36 SETTLED

On August 3, 2007, Division Director Steve Raymer signed off at the headquarters level on the KSA 36 issue. Gary Kloefer in sending out information on the settlement noted it is the only time he can remember a headquarters level settlement where Out-of-schedule (OOS) overtime is required as a remedy in a posting and bidding issue.

Some places had settled all but the pay issues. This was true in Detroit. Some places had held the entire issue in abeyance pending this national level settlement. The settlement called for the following corrective action:

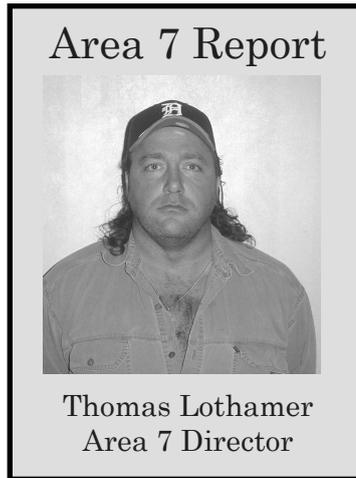
- ⇒ Immediate promotion to an ET position in their current facility. If necessary mirror/shadow positions were to be created if the grievant had been bypassed for promotion.
- ⇒ Higher level pay (ET11) for all the time they should have been an ET.
- ⇒ Out-of-schedule premium, where their working schedule in their former position differed from the schedule they would have worked as an ET but for being denied promotion.
- ⇒ Vacant duty assignments created by application of this settlement will be posted and filled in accordance with Article 38.

This case originated in 2005. There was a scoring error on KSA 36 in certain series of the 932 exam from March 2004 until the error was discovered in late 2005. Once discovered, NTAC re-scored all affected employees and issued new ratings. These ratings gave rise to the cases we are now settling all around the country. It is believed the cost may be as high as a half million dollars.

It always pays to belong. Some days pay better than others.

Solidarity,

Jane

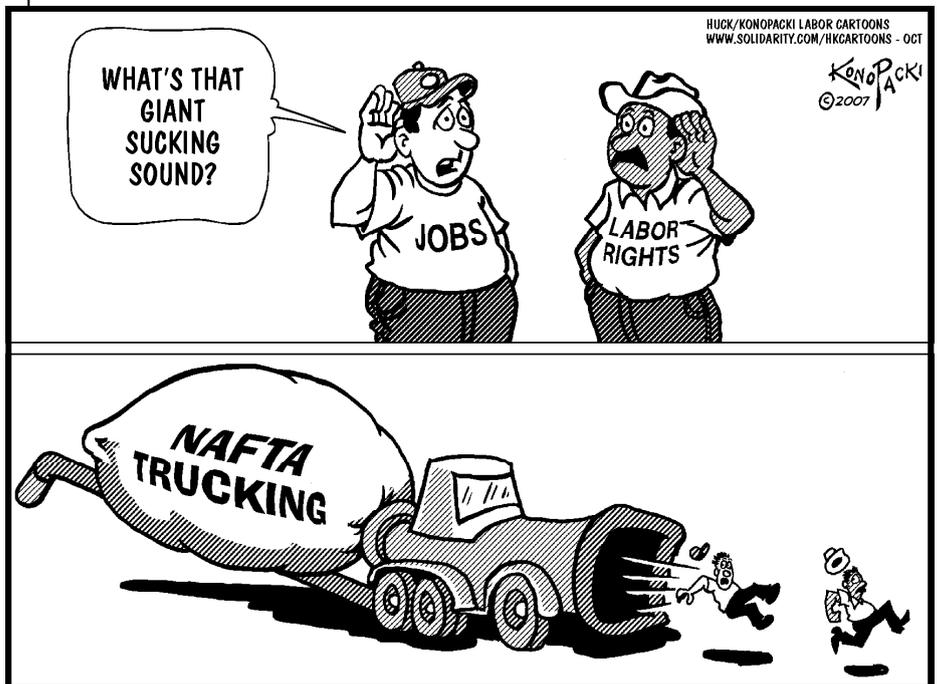


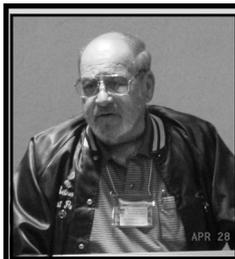
Size Matters

How many times have we heard this in our lives? Well, get your mind back on track and out of the gutter and think about it in regards to our postal careers.

In the world of maintenance in an Associate Office, think about the square footage of your building and parking lot. The USPS is trying to do away with our janitorial/maintenance people. Whenever a custodian retires or transfers from an office I end up spending my day (or several) days trying to convince management that this position is needed. Besides the obvious, who is going to take out the papers and the trash, the USPS has to hire someone else to do snow removal, lawn mowing, cleaning the floors, etc... the list goes on and on for a while. The Postal Services plan is as clear as the writing on the wall. We, in small offices are being forced to hear the argument that there is not enough work for a full time position. This argument is only made in order to offer the job to somebody's friend or relative who is not employed through the USPS as a career employee. Which in these times of disparity, in the great state of Michigan where times are hard as they have been in many, many, many years. It makes sense that people are taking what they can get, however even though a paycheck is a paycheck. Pride and integrity doesn't put food on the table, so people take these jobs and don't even realize or if they do realize they seldom do anything about it to correct the problem. Working for less pay, no benefits, and no future. Kind of reminds me of when scabs cross the picket lines to keep a company running while the real employees stand outside in the weather waiting for the fight to prevail on our side. So, I say to all of you small offices. Stay as proud for as long as you can, stay tough and don't let them take our jobs away. Even if it's not your job today, tomorrow it very well could be. We are small offices individually but together we have a voice, so stay united and remember size does matter.

Thom





Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque
MPWU Retirees President

Rosie Livingston Retires. Our 'Girl Friday', Rosie Livingston, OPEIU secretary for the APWU Retirees' Department, retired from the APWU August 3rd. Rosie was in on the ground floor on the establishment of the department. Her vast administrative knowledge will definitely be missed, but not as much as the friendships she forged with those of us in Chapters in the field. Rosie was always helpful when called upon, and she truly cared about APWU Retirees Dept. members. Greetings can be sent to Rosie at: 9431 Guilford Rd.; Columbia, MD 21046.

Soon, Retirees' Dept. Director, Doug Holbrook, will also retire...again. At this writing, national election ballots are out. By the time you read this we will have a new elected Director. I certainly hope retiree members exercised their right to vote for our own Director for the very first time. While on the subject, I would like to know WHY candidates for National Retiree Delegate to the National Convention, and Retirees' Dept. Director, don't have a home Local or Chapter identification after their name?! This is not the first time I've raised this question. The only way our 40,000 Retirees' Dept. members can determine where the candidates are from is to refer back to the issue of the APWU magazine containing candidates' statements. It shouldn't have to take a resolution to the national convention to have the National Election Committee correct that inequity. Retired members should be more than an afterthought.

Also, by the time this hits the newsstands, State Chapter Trustee Lynn Walker and I will have attended the Retirees' Dept. Conference in Las Vegas in conjunction with the Multi-Craft Conferences. There appears to be an overflowing agenda, hopefully our limited two days won't be shortened with the usual 'dog 'n pony show'. We have submitted agenda items for serious discus-

sion regarding the structure and objectives of the department.

Director Holbrook has advised that the APWU Sec.-Treas.

Department is in the process of implementing the 20% dues rebate formula for ALL Retirees' Dept. members in the state to the State Retiree Chapter. This will not result in a significant difference in dues rebate revenue from the current rebate formula. What it will mean is that as additional Local Chapters are organized in Michigan, the State Chapter will not lose that revenue. Additionally, Local Chapters will automatically become affiliated with the State Retiree Chapter without the necessity of levying a per capita tax for the State Chapter to remain solvent.

I'm encouraged to have received an inquiry from a retired member in the field regarding my column in the last "Messenger" concerning the lack of movement among Locals to form Local Retiree Chapters. Perhaps it will take a nudge from retired members to encourage unorganized Locals to take steps to form a Local Chapter. Again, I'm here to help guide the process.

Complaint Dept. This has been "bugging" me for quite some time, and it's time to say it out loud. I am fully aware we live in the age of technology, and much of our hard copy communications have been replaced via e-mail and the Internet. I would venture to guesstimate that a significant number of our retired members are not computer literate or even possess a computer. We retirees, at least those of us 65 and older, DON'T EVEN OWN A COMPUTER! Only two of our six State Chapter officers have computers.. While I can e-mail on my old Windows 95, and can access some websites, neither I nor this antique computer can do much more than that. You've got to upgrade...take a computer class, we're told. And, on our meager fixed incomes, just WHO is going to foot the bill?! It's discriminating against those retired members who built this Union with pen and paper, and manual typewriters, and we did a pretty damned

good job of it too! Just because the national, state, or Local Union establishes a website with all kinds of attachments, etc., doesn't mean you are reaching the retiree membership. Thus, one of the agenda items I've proposed for the Conference is to establish a quarterly Retirees' Dept. newsletter MAILED to every Retirees' Dept. member. Legislative information, and items like retiree C.O.L.A. updates, which disappeared from the APWU News Service Bulletin (which we haven't seen for eons...probably replaced by the APWU website), will get into the field for retired member consumption. And, I don't want to hear the APWU can't afford it. We can't afford not to!

I must credit Dir. Holbrook for vastly improved communications via the U.S. mails. However, these are only going to Local and State Chapters, and that's just not enough. Perhaps an elected Director will have more leverage on the APWU purse strings. 'Ya think?

Latest C.O.L.A. Info. Realizing this will be dated by the time you read it, this is the latest retiree C.O.L.A. update furnished by the Retirees' Dept. dated, July 26th.

The CPI-W for June is 203.906, up 0.1% from the May index. For purposes of calculating the next C.O.L.A., June's index is 2.4% higher than the third quarter average base index in 2006. The June index is 3.4% higher than the December 2006 index.

Numbers. The number of members in the APWU Retirees' Department is 40,000 and there are 25,000 members who belong to the APWU Health Plan. The following is the age breakdown of our membership in the following categories:

Over 80	12,002
Age 40-50	523
Age 60-80	21,926
Age 30-40	41
Age 50-60	3,894
Ages Not I.D.'d	1,500

It would be interesting to know how many are computer connected!

Be Strong!

Al



NBA at Work

Lynn Pallas-Barber
Central Region - Clerk Craft
National Business Agent

(2) full-time regulars may be excessed outside of the installation and/or craft.

In the month of August the withholding for PARS and AI on the ASFM in Rockford have been cancelled.

It has been some time since I wrote an article for the sate papers. As usual this job is very time consuming and the summer has just flown by. I have also been busy dealing with health issues with my mother. Fall is near and I look forward to the cool brisk feeling in the air. I think fall is my favorite time of the year.

COLA

Union workers earn 30 percent more than nonunion workers, according to the US Dept of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. On 9/21/07 \$686.00 salary increase will be reflected in the paychecks of APWU members. Cost-of-Living Adjustments are one of the many benefits that have been achieved for our members. Not all union members and definitely non-union members have such a benefit. The current adjustment will amount to 33 cents per hour, or \$26.40 per pay period.

EXCESSING

As the Article 12 NBA, I continue to be attending meetings on the excessing issues in Illinois and Michigan. Just recently the USPS has taken a SPBS machine out of the Fox Valley P&DC. Although this movement should affect excessing in the installation to the needs of a section, and no one should be excessed outside of the craft or installation. Fox Valley as well as other facilities in IL have seen excessing with the deployment of AI. Clerks have been excess into the mail handler craft and maintenance crafts.

The Service has recently issued a withholding for Oak Lawn – Moraine Valley, IL due to the removal of a CSBCS machine. In this facility nine (9) PTFs were converted and as a result of a Function 4 Review, it is anticipated that four (4) full-time regular clerks will be excessed outside of the craft within the installation. The USPS has recently issued a withholding notice for Downers Grove/Woodbridge, IL where two

Only one person was excessed in Rockford into the mail handler craft. At the Irving Park RD facility in Chicago, numbers of clerks were excessed into the mail handlers craft when the USPS removed a number of DBCS machines. Well now they have decided to bring the machines back to Irving Park RD and the clerks will have retreat rights. I have been hearing some stories that some of our members do not want to return from the mail handlers craft here and in other facilities. Why they would want to stay in a craft and be represented by a union that negotiates a lower wage level and lower overtime rates puzzles me.

In May withholdings were issued for both Warren, IL and LaFox, IL where one PTF could be excessed outside of the installation and/or craft from each post office.

In July the withholding for Port Huron was cancelled. A withholding is currently pending the excessing of two (2) full-time regulars out of Birmingham, MI. It still remains to be seen as to what may happen if the USPS follows through with the AMP in Pontiac, MI. The Michigan Multi-Plex could adversely affect the staffing in Flint, MI. It could also adversely affect the delivery in the Saginaw area as well. I attended a meeting on 7/30/07 with APWU representatives from Flint, Detroit and Royal Oak and other invited unions. Detroit may also be affected by this new AMP facility. The next step,

management was intending on holding public hearings in Flint and Detroit. I believe that only with the assistance of our legislative representatives in Congress and an adverse position from the public can their intentions be stopped.

VOTE IN THE APWU NATIONAL ELECTION

I cannot impress enough how important is for every member to vote in the national election of our union. Even though this article may be printed after the fact, I felt strongly enough to voice my opinion. It is extremely sad that locals have to practically bribe their (our) members to vote in their own elections. Voting in an election is your voice. Regardless if a member attends union meetings or not, they should at least vote in the elections.

ALL CRAFT CONFERENCE

The All Craft Conference is set for Nov. 5-8, 2007 in Las Vegas. I look forward to seeing my brothers and sisters there. I will assist in teaching a class on PTRs with three other NBAs Bob Bloomer, Pete Coradi and Steve Lukosus.

Until next time,

Lynn

Jacky Potter
and the
Disappearing
Clerk Craft

Now on bookshelves everywhere full of mystery, magic, suspense, deception agony and bonuses. Get your copy today!

A BUSINESS AGENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Donald L. Foley
National Business Agent
Maintenance Craft

"Excess" This term, common in Postal Service jargon - far too common these days - continues to carry its normal connotations. It means, of course, that something is outside or beyond some controlling need or norm. It implies that something is unessential or less than worthwhile. And it is this implication of unworthiness that adds to the impact of the term when it is applied to persons. When Postal employees hear they are, or may be, determined to be excess to the needs of a section or of the installation where they work, it is only natural these workers feel somehow demeaned. It is bad enough to know that being determined excess means that a change is impending, it is made worse by the implication that we are somehow of less worth.

Any employer will have inherent rights to determine whether - at any given time - the workforce is larger than necessary to meet the employer's needs. Without a Union contract, almost any worker is subject to be "let go" as a result of a purely discretionary decision of the employer. And not all Union contracts provide reassignment security in the way the APWU contract does. Coupled with Article 6 provisions against lay off, the terms of Article 12 for reassignment afford workers a level of job security not even imagined by most American workers today. Unfortunately, that seems to be little comfort when it is 'me' who is on the receiving end of reassignment due to excessing. What may be of some comfort is better understanding of how the process is supposed to work.

Maintenance Craft workers have had little reason to understand the intricacies of Article 12, because the changes in the Postal Service over the past forty years have generally been to the advantage of Maintenance Craft jobs - not threatening to them. Times change. The Postal Service's present approach (self-destruction to advance the ideology of privatization) includes the closing of

offices where significant numbers of Maintenance Craft employees work. And we need to understand how Article 12 provisions are supposed to work to our benefit.

It is tremendously important to understand that the effects of Article 12 provisions are very much different for Maintenance Craft workers from the effects on employees of the other Crafts. The general provisions - to keep the impact minimal, to provide appropriate notification, etc. - apply to everyone. The specific provisions that apply to Maintenance Craft workers are generally limited to the terms of Article 12, Section 5.C.4. and Section 5.C.5. That being the case, it is a common mistake to read other portions of Section 5 and try to make sense of their impact on Maintenance Craft workers.

No brief article can fully describe all the details of the workings of Article 12. This will be no such attempt. However, some of the most significant elements of excessing and reassignment can be addressed here. But I will limit this to discussion of the situation in which the Service determines that it needs to reduce the size of the Maintenance Craft complement of an installation by employing the provisions of Article 12.

Section 5.C. establishes some very specific provisions for handling of affected workers under very specific conditions. Each condition carries its own implications, but only two conditions apply to Maintenance Craft reassignments where "excess to the needs of the installation" is involved.

These conditions are controlled by Section 5.C.5. and occur when the Postal Service decides that the number of Maintenance Craft workers in an installation is excess to its needs - in other words, the Service determines it needs to reduce the overall complement of the Maintenance Craft in the installation. One consequence of such a decision may be the reassignment of affected employees to vacant positions outside the Craft, but within the installation. The other consequence may be the reassignment of affected employees within or outside the Craft, but also outside the installation.

It would be unusual that the Service would reduce the overall Maintenance complement in an installation while having enough other positions in the installation to permit reassignment to another Craft within the installation. Generally, changes to an installation's operation sufficient to affect the overall Maintenance complement occur where the other Crafts' positions are also being reduced - as in the case of a so-called "consolidation" of postal installations. When the Service closes or greatly diminishes an installation in favor of moving its operations to another location, virtually every Craft is impacted and loses jobs. Consequently, for the Maintenance Craft, reassignment within the employee's present installation to another Craft is unlikely to occur. However, if it can be done, it must be accomplished prior to making reassignments outside the installation. Should such a reassignment occur, these protections/requirements apply -

- ⇒ Pay protection if placed in a lower level job (saved grade);
- ⇒ Selection by seniority of available positions if multiple reassignments occur;
- ⇒ New seniority in the Craft to which reassigned;
- ⇒ Assured return to Maintenance when residual vacancy occurs; and
- ⇒ Restoration of Maintenance seniority if and when returned.

It is more likely, when the Service determines it has a need to reduce the overall Maintenance Craft complement of an installation, that excess employees would be reassigned to another installation. When this occurs, the Service is obligated to make reassignments to another installation as close as possible to the affected employees' present installation, but includes the obligation upon the Service to find vacant positions wherever they may exist. This, of course, includes the Service's process of withholding vacant positions as they occur in nearby installations in order to accommodate reassignments. Maintenance Craft employees would then be identified as being excess by occupational group, with the Service determining its necessary complement for each occupational group. Junior employees

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

(according to Maintenance Craft installation seniority) would then be notified of involuntary reassignment outside the installation to positions in the same or lower level, first within the Craft or, if necessary, outside the Craft. Should such reassignments occur, these protections/obligations apply -

- ⇒ Relocation expenses may accrue to reassignments according to the '50-mile rule';
- ⇒ Pay protection if placed in a lower level job (saved grade);
- ⇒ Selection by seniority of available positions if multiple reassignments occur;
- ⇒ New seniority if reassigned into a different Craft;
- ⇒ Retention of 'installation' seniority as if no change in installation, if reassigned to a Maintenance Craft vacancy;
- ⇒ Opportunity to secure retreat rights to Maintenance Craft when residual vacancy occurs in former installation;
- ⇒ Retreat rights include option to accept or reject lower level vacancy without jeopardizing all retreat rights;
- ⇒ Continued saved grade protection if retreating to lower level than former position; and
- ⇒ Restoration of Maintenance seniority ('installation' and 'preferred assignment') if and when returned.

Maintenance Craft workers involved in these situations also need to know a few other important points. In order to be reassigned into a Maintenance Craft job, an affected employee must have a qualifying score for that job in the MSS or non-MSS PER evaluation process. This is because the parties have so defined "qualified" and because reassignments are only made into jobs "for which qualified". For example, a MPE8 or ET11 who has only ever achieved a qualifying score for MPE8 or ET11 cannot be considered qualified for MM5, MSC5, BEM8 or any number of other Maintenance Craft jobs - for lack of an appropriate qualifying score.

Because the identification of excess jobs is made by occupational group and because there is no bumping in reassignment procedures, it may happen that a

senior employee of one occupational group may be reassigned out of an installation while a junior employee of a different occupational group could remain.

A senior employee (not being reassigned) may volunteer to take the place of a junior employee for reassignment outside the installation. Such an employee is not afforded retreat rights and takes on the seniority of the employee replaced. The Postal Service must post notice of these opportunities with a list of withheld, available jobs.

Additionally, reassignments cannot be made to higher level positions. Employees affected by Article 12 provisions for involuntary reassignment can only be reassigned into same or lower level jobs. Article 38 requires that reassigned employees receiving saved grade must apply for inclusion on PER's for positions at their former level.

In order to secure the retreat rights connected with reassignment outside the installation, an affected employee must submit a written request to have right of retreat to the installation from which reassigned. This request must be honored and guarantees specific retreat rights under Article 12 and under Article 38.

Where more than one installation's employees are being affected and reassigned "within a close geographic area" at the same time, the Union and the Service must meet at the regional level to determine a "pecking order" for the affected employees' reassignment and selection rights.

With the Postal Service moving forward on its "Transformation" plans, we may expect to see significant numbers of Maintenance Craft employees needing to invoke rights under Articles 12 and 38. It is essential that procedures for reassignments of excess employees be properly implemented at the time these actions occur. The Local Union and the individual members must take an active role in assuring negotiated protections are applied properly. We simply cannot afford to allow management to mismanage life changing personnel actions as badly as it mismanages the business of the Postal Service.

Don

Editor's Note: During a recent Michigan AFL-CIO Community Services Event, the following was handed out to the attendees. The author is unknown, but if it doesn't relate what a union does for not only its' members but for the entire country.

I hope you enjoy.

*"First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—
because I was not a Socialist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for the Trade Unionist, and I did not speak out—
because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

*Then they came for me—
because there was no one left to speak for me."*

- Author Unknown



Read this and pass this along to your children.

It's late summer already, and time to think about getting ready for college. What should you do first and how should you get organized to start the school year off right? First, remember that you can do it!

You can get everything together that you need, arrive on campus and, if you are living in a dorm, get set up and ready to go while staying calm! Here are some helpful suggestions to keep in mind. You might even want to print this page for reference.

Have you received instructions from your college? Schools usually send a packet with information about things like parking permits, public transportation, local restaurants, banks and shopping. If you have a car, you will need to know where parking is allowed for on-campus vehicles, and if the campus is big, where to park for classes that you are driving to.

If you are commuting, are you driving or taking the bus? If you aren't completely sure about roads or bus lines, find out ahead of time the best way to get there and how long it will take. Your professor will appreciate your arrival in class on time!

You might already have your class schedule, or perhaps this may be established after your arrival. In any case, find out what buildings your classes are in and plan your route between them so you will get from one class to the next on time.

Leave enough time before classes start to locate the campus bookstore and get supplies. Read books ahead if you have been instructed to do so. Go to classes with everything you need to participate.

Organize your dorm room! Remember, if you have a roommate, half the space is his or hers. It might be a good idea to get in touch and discuss shared resources, i.e. microwave, refrigerator, and phone. Decide ahead of time where these will go and how room space will be affected.

Is there furniture in the dorm room, or do you have to bring it with you? What will fit where? Besides your bed, you'll need a desk and place to study, good lighting, a comfortable chair, and space for your computer.

How much should you take from home to the dorm room? What is the climate like? Hot or cold? Cold weather means you will need heavier clothes and they take up more space. Maybe you don't need to take all your clothes with you.

You are just starting the school year. Being a student takes a lot of energy! Make the effort to eat right and get enough sleep to be a success both in the classroom and out.

This is an exciting time, a new school year and a new beginning. Be prepared and get set for your best year yet by getting off to a good start!

Mike Humann
www.collegeplanningcoach.com
"Helping Families Manage College Costs"

12 Tips To Keep Debt From Ruining Your Life

Union Plus offers credit counseling and other programs to help members get out of debt and plan for a secure future. Here are 12 tips to get you started on the right path.

1. Don't get any deeper in debt. Cut up all credit cards, except **the one** with the most favorable terms.
2. If you can resist the temptation to use the other accounts, don't close them. Closing accounts reduces your debt-to-available credit ratio and can hurt your credit score.
3. Pay more than the minimum balance due every month.
4. Transfer balances on high-interest cards to cards with better rates.
5. Put it in writing. Make a plan to get out of debt, set a budget, and record income and spending in a notebook or computer program.
6. Consider packing your lunch, or carpooling, brewing your own coffee, switching to basic cable, and whatever else you can do to cut expenses.
7. Grasp the difference between needs and wants. You may want a new car, another pair of shoes, or a night out on the town, but you probably don't need them.
8. Try the "Debt Snowball" method to pay down debt, allocating as much of your budget as possible to monthly bills. Make payments on all accounts but put the most money toward the highest-interest card first. When it is paid off, apply those payments to the next account, and so on.
9. Pay your bills on time to avoid late fees.
10. Know your credit limit and don't exceed it. Exceeding your limit is another way to incur fees. If at all possible do not exceed half of your credit line ever; it will increase your credit score.
11. If you get behind, immediately contact your creditors. The worst thing you can do is ignore the problem. Many creditors will reduce interest rates for customers facing temporary setbacks or those who are willing to ask.
12. If you are having a hard time managing debt on your own, seek help from debt professionals. They may be able to help you pay off your debt and make arrangements with your creditors; which could help you face-off the possibility of reduced credit score, or worse, bankruptcy.

Editor's Note: This information was published in one of the Union Plus information magazines. With holiday shopping right around the corner, I thought it was pertinent to the time and place.

Michigan Tidbits

Watch for School Children and School Buses

Fall is just around the corner and our children are back in school. Michigan law requires that we stop for a school bus when it turns on its flashing red lights. Always put a safe distance between your vehicle and the bus - at least 30 feet. And never drive around a stopped school bus at a rail road crossing. Remember, whenever you see a school bus, it means there are children near by.

Children Researching on the Internet

Help your children safely research school projects online. Try out this site. You will have immediate access to millions of documents, evaluated Web sites, magazine articles, encyclopedias, almanacs, newspapers articles and much more. It is easy and safe for children to retrieve the information they need. This service is provided by the Library of Michigan and is free for all Michigan residents. All that is required is your Michigan driver's license or state ID.

Hunting

As the leaves start to turn, thousands of hunters will take to Michigan's great outdoors. If you plan to hunt this season, remember these basic safety precautions:

- ⇒ Always have complete control of your weapon.
- ⇒ Always treat your firearm as if it were loaded.
- ⇒ Take breaks often to avoid fatigue.
- ⇒ Always unload your weapon before putting it in your vehicle, house or camp.
- ⇒ And, NEVER mix hunting and alcohol.

Be safe and enjoy Michigan's great outdoors. To find rules and regulations, access fall hunting guides, purchase your hunting license online, or more find out more information on the great Michigan Outdoors visit the DNR's website.

Michigan Fall Tours

If you're looking for fabulous fall color, look no further than Michigan--it's around nearly every bend in the road. And to prove our point, here you'll find suggested fall-color tour routes--some following major state highways, others meandering along secondary roads. Along every route, you'll find orchards and country markets, cider mills and wineries, autumn festivals and even a few haunted houses. It's spectacular and it's all in Michigan. Help support Michigan tourism and enjoy the incredible fall colors.

Traffic Data Website

A new website launched by MDOT helps keep motorists informed about traffic and construction on state highways (M, I, and U.S. roads). Known as "MI Drive", the new site consolidates data from a variety of MDOT sources:

- ⇒ Lane closures
- ⇒ Construction projects
- ⇒ Traffic cameras in Detroit and Grand Rapids

Over the next six months the MDOT team will be working hard to provide the 2008 construction season project maps. To view the images from Detroit and Grand Rapids freeway cameras to the MDOT website, where you can also find a list of statewide lane closures.

Comprehensive Legislation to assist Michigan Military Personnel

A bipartisan group of state lawmakers at the Capitol recently introduced a comprehensive legislative package to assist Michigan military personnel. The plan would establish a "Michigan Patriot Business" designation for companies with at least a 50 percent ownership by an active service member or veteran of the Iraq or Afghanistan conflicts. The Michigan Economic Development Corp. would promote these businesses on its Web site and the Michigan Strategic Fund would maintain a list of the qualified businesses. The legislative package allows spouses and children of an armed forces mem-

ber stationed in Michigan to be considered a resident when determining college tuition and permits children of active military personnel who are transferred out of state to retain their in-state residency status for determining college tuition. The plan also sets up a Disabled Veteran Tuition Assistance program granting disabled veterans a tuition grant for a public university based on the percentage of their disability. Other bills in the package would:

- ⇒ allow veterans to participate in a post traumatic stress disorder program to help support their transition from military back to civilian life;
- ⇒ increase a veteran's preference in state purchasing from the current 3 percent to 5 percent of total expenditures for construction, goods and services;
- ⇒ prohibit the lapse of life insurance policies for active duty military personnel; and
- ⇒ safeguard the property of military personnel from sale, foreclosure or seizure of property for mortgage nonpayment while they are serving and for six months after they return from active duty.

Identity Theft

Thousands of Americans fall victim to Identity Theft each year. With your Social Security or credit card number, an imposter can easily steal your identity to start fraudulent bank, credit or cellular phone accounts- even take out loans or file for bankruptcy in your name. So follow some easy steps to help protect your identity and avoid becoming a victim. Destroy or shred anything with your Social Security or credit card numbers before you throw it away. When shopping on the Internet, be sure the company uses secure ordering methods. And check your credit report each year to be sure it's accurate. You can now receive your credit reports for free from the major credit reporting agencies once a year. For more information on identity theft please visit here.

(Continued from page 12)

Michigan Tidbits Continued

Michigan Sportsman Against Hunger

Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger is dedicated to helping distribute wild game to feed hungry Michigan families. I am encouraging you to donate your excess wild game to this worthy non-profit organization. Through a system of processors and food banks, the Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger strives to help those in need. Join today to help this organization fight hunger throughout the state of Michigan. To contact this organization please visit their website.

Family History Month

October 2007 is family history month. I encourage you to take part in exploring your family history. That Web page has information about conducting genealogy research and using the Library and Historical Center, as well as links to online research tools. Click here to register for free Family History Month workshops. They will be held in October at the Michigan Library and Historical Center, 702 W. Kalamazoo St. in Lansing. Sessions will be offered Tuesday mornings, and these sessions will be repeated Wednesday afternoons.

Editor's NOTE: This information was provided via e-Mail from my State Senator Alan Cropsey. Check your own State Senator's information or sign up for their e-Mail updates to keep yourself informed of what is happening in Michigan.

Post office site to remain in Port Huron *Postal Service discards its plans as deadline looms*

By MIKE CONNELL
Times Herald

After 50 months of negotiations, plans for a new Port Huron Post Office apparently are back to the place where they began in August 2003. A long-considered proposal to split postal operations, opening a retail office at Desmond Landing while moving the distribution center to Port Huron Township, has been discarded.

The U.S. Postal Service announced plans Wednesday to build a single facility in central Port Huron. "It has to do with what would best serve our customers for the next 20 to 30 years," said Shannon LaBruyere, a Postal Service spokeswoman. "We determined one facility with everyone in it would best meet the needs of our customers."

Lease expires in 2008

It also portends a big problem for the Postal Service: Its lease on the Military Street building expires next summer. As of today, Acheson Ventures has no plans to extend the lease.

With its latest proposal, the post office said it is seeking either an existing building with at least 21,400 square feet of interior space or a building site of at least 138,665 square feet, which is roughly 3.2 acres. The building or parcel must be located within a "preferred area" bounded by the St. Clair River, Griswold Street, 24th Street and Glenwood Avenue.

Real-estate agents or property owners interested in offering a site don't have much time to act. The Postal Service set 4:30 p.m. Oct. 23 - just 13 days after its announcement - as the deadline for submitting offers.

Deal falls through

Four different Postal Service real-estate specialists have overseen the project in the past four years, which has complicated negotiations.

In March 2005, postal officials announced they were seeking a four-acre site in the city or nearby townships. B. Mark Neal, who was then Port Huron's mayor, lobbied to keep the retail office downtown even if the distribution center was moved to a site near the expressway in Port Huron Township.

Earlier this year, the Postal Service said it was looking for a five-acre site in the township and a building of at least 3,500 square feet in the city. In June, the agency said it was close to an agreement to place the distribution center, also known as a carrier annex, at 26th and Beard streets in the township.

Acheson officials actually signed an agreement to build a retail post office in Desmond Landing.

Instead, postal officials declined to sign and issued Wednesday's proposal for land or a building.

Article originally published Oct 11, 2007 in the Times Herald Newspaper

Write or Call

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Right to Work for Less

Every union member should take a minute to reflect on the value of having a union in their workplace. The union advantage improves the quality of life for members and society in general. Unfortunately, we are all so used to the advantages we have that we take them for granted. Advantages like the 40 hour work week, the fact that we have weekends and lunch breaks, worker's compensation if we are injured and unemployment insurance if we are laid off. It is easy to take such things for granted, but someone fought for these advantages and that someone was more often than not a union member.

Unions have raised the standard of living for us here in Michigan through better wages, affordable health benefits, pensions, and workplace safety standards. But now, we are witnessing an organized attack on unions funded by radical right-wing interests. This spring, "Right to Work" bills were introduced in the State House and Senate. Out of sight right wing groups are threatening to put right to work on Michigan's 2008 ballot. These efforts are meant to break and bankrupt unions by forcing unions to use their resources and members' dues to represent workers who refuse to pay dues.

Right to work laws impose an unfair burden on union members who want to join the union and pay their fair share. These laws are intended to suppress union membership, drag the union down from "free riders" and weaken the union's ability to provide aggressive representation for workers. It is no wonder unscrupulous employers and right-wing fanatics would love to pass right to work in Michigan.

But, what is in it for workers? The quality of life for workers in "Right to Work" states is a sorry record:

- Workers in right to work states earn an average of \$5,900 a year less;
- The percentage of families without health insurance is 20% higher in right to work states;
- The Maximum weekly worker's compensation benefit is 25% less in right to work states;
- In 2000, the infant mortality rate in right to work states was 17% higher;
- A 2006 AFL-CIO health and safety study sited the rate of workplace fatalities at 41% higher in Right to Work states.

Michigan has seen tough economic times, but there is no evidence that "Right to Work" is the solution we seek. There is an abundance of evidence that "Right to Work" would leave our state with a greatly diminished quality of life that would drive away good employers and the young workers who are the future of this great state.

The Truth About **Right to Work for Less**

Right to Work Hurts Everyone

Workers in states with right to work laws have a consistently lower quality of life than in other states—lower wages, higher poverty and infant mortality rates, less access to the health care they need and poorer education for their children.

Lower Wages

The average worker in a right to work state makes about \$5,333 a year less than workers in other states (\$35,500 compared with \$30,167).¹ Weekly wages are \$72 greater in free-bargaining states than in right to work states (\$621 versus \$549).

Fewer People with Health Care

21 percent more people lack health insurance in right to work states compared to free-bargaining states.

Higher Poverty and Infant Mortality Rates

Right to work states have a poverty rate of 12.5 percent, compared with 10.2 percent in other states. Moreover, the infant mortality rate is 16 percent higher in right to work states.

Lower Workers' Compensation Benefits for Workers Injured on the Job

Maximum weekly worker compensation benefits are \$30 higher in free states (\$609 versus \$579 in right to work states).

More Workplace Deaths and Injuries

According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of workplace deaths is 51 percent higher in states with right to work, where unions can't speak up on behalf of workers.

**Don't let your state legislator vote to
Lower your pay!**

Right to Work for Less in Michigan?

**H.B. 4454 and H.B. 4455 Will Hurt
Michigan's Working Families**

'Right to Work' for Less Hurts Everyone. Workers in states with so-called "right to work" laws have a consistently lower quality of life than in other states—lower wages, higher poverty, less access to health care—according to data from the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Census Bureau. Why should Michigan adopt a losing "right to work" strategy that lowers the standard of living for workers and their families?

'Right to Work' Will Not Ease Michigan's Manufacturing Crisis The notion that so-called "right to work" laws give states a competitive edge is completely untrue, especially in today's global economy. Compare North Carolina—a "right to work" state with the smallest percentage of unionization of any state in the country—with Michigan. Between 1994 and 2005, North Carolina's manufacturing job loss, both in absolute numbers and in the decline in the overall share of manufacturing employment, was far greater than that of Michigan. Michigan lost 170,000 factory jobs (20 percent of its manufacturing employment) while North Carolina lost 251,000 such jobs (31 percent of its manufacturing base). Clearly, "right to work" is not the answer to Michigan's factory job crisis.

Michigan Workers Earn More Than Employees in 'Right to Work' States Michigan workers have higher—\$7,600 higher!—average annual pay than workers in states with laws similar to H.B. 4454 and H.B. 4455. Michigan workers earn an average of \$776 each week—almost 22 percent more than workers in "right to work" states.

Fewer People Have Health Coverage and a Pension in 'Right to Work' States The percentage of people without health care coverage in "right to work" states is almost 33 percent greater than in Michigan.

Only Employers and Extreme Right Wing Politicians are Calling for 'Right to Work' Employers have a vested interest in trying to establish laws that weaken unions. Their vested interest is to put more profits into their own vest. The extra money employers would make on the backs of workers in "right to work" states, would

not benefit the workers of Michigan, it would only make employers richer

Right to Work: What is it?

In 1947, the United States Congress amended the National Labor Relations Act to allow states to make union shops illegal in their state. In other words, Right to Work laws make it illegal for unions to equally collect fees from all members for services that the law requires them to provide.

Michigan has never seen the need for Right to Work laws and continues to stick to the original intent of the Labor Relations Act. Michigan employers and unions together usually decide that all workers at the company should pay their fair share of dues.

Right to Work: Who is Behind It?

Right to work is supported by a nationwide, radical right-wing organization named the National Right to Work Committee. The committee includes:

The US Change of Commerce.

Grover Norquist of the anti-union Alliance for Worker Freedom

Former indicted Congressman Tom DeLay

Wal-Mart Corporation.

For-Profit Union busters—big money consultants and lawyers

Holland Coors of the Coors Beer dynasty

Dick and Betsy DeVos

Ask yourself why these powerful people and organization want to weaken unions in Michigan and make us a Right to Work for Less state...

<u>Economic Indicators</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>RTW States</u>
Average Annual Wage	\$39,443	\$31,832
Average Weekly Wages	\$667	\$637
Percent of Private Sectors Workers with Pensions	51.4%	44.4%
Percent of workers without Health insurance	11.6%	15.4%

National Elections

While nationwide Democrats receive 49% of the vote and Republicans receive 49%, however, generally union household vote 74% Democratic. The right wing knows that they will prevail in elections if unions are weakened.

Contact Your Legislators and Tell them we don't need Right to Work in Michigan!
Turn One Page Back to view the list of State Senators and Representatives

Various News and Tidbits You Can Use

TSP drops use of Social Security numbers as participant IDs

In an effort to boost data security, the Thrift Savings Plan will stop using Social Security numbers to identify its 3.8 million participants as of Oct. 1.

No longer will TSP use Social Security numbers to identify enrollees for administrative purposes in their internal computers, for paper monthly statements sent out to enrollees or as user names when enrollees log into their online accounts. Instead, TSP users will be identified with randomly generated account numbers, the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board said in a Sept. 7 *Federal Register* notice. TSP users will also have to start using passwords that day to access their accounts online instead of Personal Identification Numbers, the board said.

Users will receive their account numbers in September. Users can create their own passwords or use a password generated by TSP's computer.

But users should still hang on to their PINs if they want to use Thrift Line, TSP's automated telephone service. Passwords won't work when calling Thrift Line, the board said.

APWU: USPS Determined to Move 40 Per Cent of Window Services

The Postal Service seems hell-bent on moving 40 percent of window services to alternative services, such as Automated Postal Centers. Part of this plan seems to involve computerized Function 4 audits. The so-called Customer Service Variance (CSV) program is gutting post office staffing in various regions.

The CSV program collects data through various Web-based means and filters the results into equations used to establish "retail marketing" benchmarks. By measuring workload, complement, and

time elements, CSV allegedly determines "ideal" staffing levels.

The problem? CSV crunches numbers that crunch employees and service! But there are ways to fight back:

Educate members to make all their clock rings and moves. Sales & Service Associates should record all transactions, standbys, and sign outs. CSV uses recorded work activity to determine staffing needs. Failing to make clock rings can kill your job!

Ensure that Function 4 administrative reviews do not just rubber-stamp CSV results.

Validate earned workload data. The authorized complement in the COINS program must be validated to square with the actual complement at your office. Work schedules on Form 1994s must be compared to real schedules, along with the Unit Operating Plan. (Do you know your unit plan?)

Initiate individual grievances under Articles 3, 5, 7, 12, and the appropriate craft article if there are any discrepancies in the Function 4 review.

Postal Nurses Vote to Merge with APWU

In an overwhelming vote of 51 to 9, on Aug. 17 the National Postal Professional Nurses (NPPN) voted "YES," in favor of merging with the American Postal Workers Union. Pursuant to the APWU Constitution, the nurses will become a part of the Support Services Division, which will be responsible for contract negotiations, interpretation, and enforcement. Postal nurses will continue to be covered by a distinct collective bargaining agreement.

In a telephone vote held Aug. 20 and 21, the APWU National Executive Board approved the merger. "We welcome this group of dedicated professionals as an integral part of our union, and look forward to mutually beneficial activities on behalf of all APWU-represented employees," said APWU President William Burrus. "Article 2 of

the APWU Constitution lists as an objective that the 'APWU affirms its belief in a single union of all postal workers in non-supervisory levels.' The merger of the postal nurses is a positive step in that direction."

The NPPN has had collective bargaining agreements with the USPS since 1978, with its latest contract expiring on Aug. 17. The APWU will represent the NPPN at negotiations, which are set to begin Sept. 18.

AFL-CIO: stop postal outsourcing bandwagon

The United States Postal Service is jumping on the outsourcing and privatizing bandwagon at the expense of good jobs, safety and security, and reliable delivery of basic services.

According to a new USPS program, all new mail delivery locations will be considered for outsourcing to companies that often provide low wages, no benefits, and have no equivalent background check requirements. This program and other attempts to outsource core mail handling functions violate the spirit of the policy established by the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006, which reinforced collective bargaining obligations. In its effort to employ fewer union workers, the USPS is opening its doors to a far less accountable workforce.

"In this post-Anthrax era, it is counter-intuitive that the USPS would entrust any portion of its service with un-screened subcontractors," Wytkind said. "Mail can be sensitive cargo, and Americans expect first-class service for their bills, ballots, and prescription drugs, not to mention their identity protection."



The Union

By: Durwood H. Rose

Retired Member of the Muskegon Area Local

I retired in 1989 – and returned for one week in May of 2000. I listened – once again – to people downgrading the union. The following is an article I put in a book I wrote about the Muskegon Post Office –

The Union

This conversation took place in the men's restroom. A clerk, named Bill, was questioning the value of a union in the Post Office. He was leaning on a protrusion out of the wall, which contained a plexi-glass covering. I asked him if he was aware of the enclosed cat-walk that ran throughout the entire work-room area. He was. And he knew it was for the use of Postal inspectors.

"You're leaning on one of those one-way windows," I told him.

Years before, when we obtained the right to negotiate local conditions (by executive order from John F. Kennedy) the clerk union president, Herm Gust, convinced the PM to allow himself and me to view the inside of the entrance of the inspectors cat walk. We took notice of the observation window of the men's rest room, and Herm asked Fred Ballanger (Superintendent of Mails) to allow us to see the window to the women's rest room.

"There isn't one," Fred growled.

We filed a grievance, and the window in the men's rest room was covered.

"It took my generation 20 years to reach the top of the pay scale," I told Bill. "The Union got that time down to eight years for you – and doubled your pay. We did it so you could stand here, and lean on that window, and say the union has no value."

Nothing's changed. We had our free-loaders then, as we do now. But we continue the fight, and the non-union workers continue to complain. So. What's new?

Editor's Note: Thank you Durwood for your insight to the past. As stated, if we forget the past, we are doomed to repeat it. However, in the case, it seems the past is the present, and the present is the past. Let's just hope the future will not repeat the past and/or present.

Remembering 9/12

This month marks the sixth anniversary of the horrible event that occurred in New York on 9/11. But there was another significant day in our nation's history that week - 9/12. On that day we were what we call ourselves - a *United States*. We stood united and we had the sympathy, respect, and support of the world. Today, we are a dangerously divided country and the U.S. is distrusted and hated around the globe. What happened? On 9/12 we looked to our leadership - but leadership wasn't there. Our nation's fears and anxieties were exploited by profiteers. We were lied to...we are still being lied to.

I remember watching as the top of the second trade tower collapsed and vanished into a cloud of dust...did our democracy disappear into that same dust cloud?

I remember hearing a quote recently that said, "Trust is the most important currency in governance." By using that criterion it can only be said that our present sub-prime "leadership" is bankrupt. Ground zero now extends to our country's farthest borders. The citizens (and future citizens) of our country are saddled with enormous debt. Daily payments are made with American lives. We are in dire need of change... but I wonder ...is it already too late?

I remember a former President once saying, "There is nothing wrong with America that can't be fixed by what is right with America". While the right continues to get it wrong will the left get it at all? Will the fear card continue to win? - Or will the citizens of our country regain the unity of 9/12 and attack the real enemies of our country -- at the polls?

Only you can decide.....stay tuned!

- Author Unknown



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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.

Lastly, 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.



Check Us Out on the Web

MPWU.com

Upcoming Events to Plan For:

- October 12 - 13, 2007 - Area 1, 2, & 3 District Meeting - Troy, Michigan
- November 5 - 8, 2007 - National Multi-Craft Convention, Las Vegas, NV
- Area 4, 5, & 6 District Meeting - Currently being planned in Spring 2008
- May 15 - 17, 2008 - MPWU State Convention, Grand Rapids, MI
- August 2008 - National APWU Convention, Las Vegas, NV



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	



Meet our New NBA Elect
Central Region - Clerk Craft Division "A"
Linda Turney

The votes have been cast and the numbers tallied, and with it, we have a new NBA who will be working alongside John Clark and Lynn Pallas-Barber handling Michigan Grievances at Chicago and providing our stewards and officers with training and information in our daily struggles with management. Due to the untimely death of Percy Harrison in June, an opening occurred in the NBA office in Chicago on the clerk side. Linda Turney has been elected to fill that vacancy with 2077 votes, more than beating out her closest candidate by more than 1400 votes. But who is Linda Turney and what is her background. The following is an excerpt of her information off her website.

To begin with and on behalf of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, we would like to extend our congratulations to Linda and look forward to working with her in the future. Linda joined the Postal Service in

1984 and ten years later was elected President of her local. In 2000, she was the first woman elected as President of Illinois Postal Workers Union and has held both positions through today.

Throughout her union career, she has held various other distinctions. She was the National Constitution Chair in 2006, along with being a Nationally Certified Retirement Trainer, and an Arbitration Advocate for the past 11 years. She has also been dubbed the "COPA Queen" due to the vast amounts of money she has raised for COPA.

Her passion, while she states that the "APWU is my Blood, Heart, Soul.", she is also keen on diversity issues, which was proven by becoming a Sign Language Interpreter

Once again, Congratulations Linda.

Buy Union for Halloween Treats

Here are some of the Brands to Choose From:

- ⇒ Hershey Chocolate Bars and Kisses
- ⇒ Fifth Avenue
- ⇒ Zagnut
- ⇒ York Mint Peppermint Patties
- ⇒ Halloween Candy Corn
- ⇒ Jelly Belly Jellybeans
- ⇒ Jolly Ranchers
- ⇒ Butterfingers
- ⇒ Babe Ruth
- ⇒ Sweetheart Conversation Hearts
- ⇒ Necco Wafers
- ⇒ Clark Bars
- ⇒ Mary Jane Peanut Butter Chews
- ⇒ Thin Mints
- ⇒ Nestles Chocolate
- ⇒ Laffy Taffy
- ⇒ Carmello
- ⇒ Russell Stover Candy
- ⇒ Symphony Bars

Buying Union-Made Candy supports our Brothers and Sister of many different locals throughout the United States. Why not feel proud about what you hand out to the kids this year.

Be Proud To Be Union

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