



# ***Michigan Messenger***

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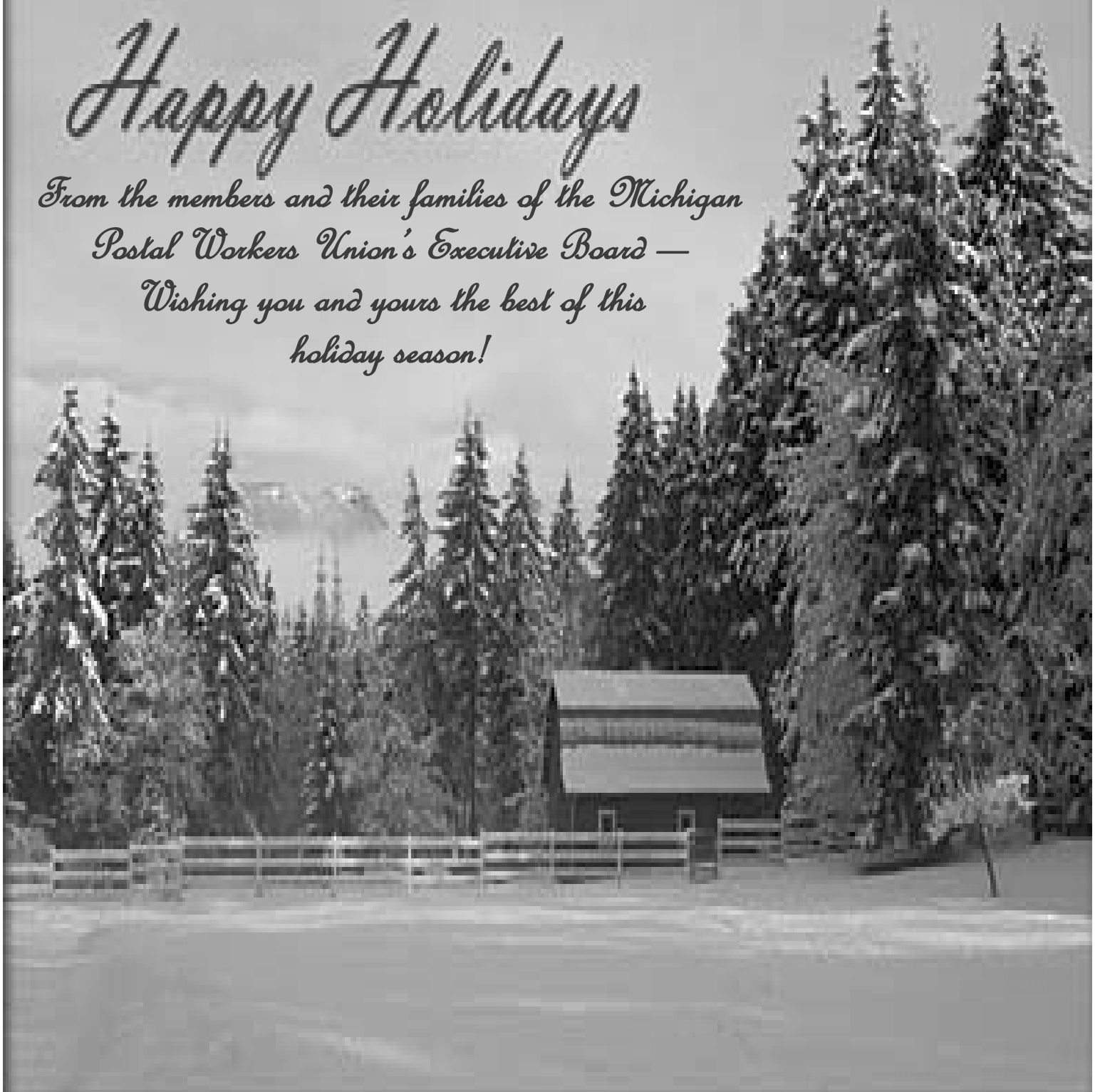
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## *Happy Holidays*

*From the members and their families of the Michigan  
Postal Workers Union's Executive Board —*

*Wishing you and yours the best of this  
holiday season!*



## Presidential Report



**Gary VanHoogstraten**  
President

Here I sit, coffee cup in one hand, and pen in the other. As I face another article deadline, there are many subjects I would like to address. The first and most important thing that comes to mind is that of my recent trip to Las Vegas for the Multi-Craft Convention.

I can applaud the National on correcting some of the minor problems they had in 2005. The most improved was no waiting in the registration lines when I arrived. It was the middle of the afternoon and the city of Vegas was blessed with 80 degree, not a cloud in the sky. The first day I attended a class on Small Office Issues. As your State President, I receive many calls from members out there in the field, and also from the Area Directors. There are some real horror stories as to what's happening to these members in small offices. Mike Morris addressed the State Presidents on Tuesday night. He informed us that the LMOU for MAL's should soon be signed. One thing I will let the members know is that for the first time, there will be language in there for Prime Time Leave. I believe the dates are from April 1st until the end of November. As soon as we get this in writing we will be able to get the word out to the field with the details. Mike also informed us that the offices we visited last time for the 1.6.b surveys, will be again visited. This will probably be after the first of the year. We all know that many Postmasters have increased their hours and the flexies are having their hours reduced. When we go back to these offices, hopefully we will have these LMOU with us for the members.

I am not going to detail the following, but the additional classes I attended were Community Campaigns, The Art Of Compromise, and Dealing With Difficult People. Again, I can't stress how well planned and informative the entire week was as far as training. A highlight of the week was Tuesday afternoon we had former President Bill Clinton address the delegates. The room was packed with some 3,000 members and guests. He spoke on many issues, including his wife running for President. That was not the major focus of his time. He explained where we are here in 2007 compared to where we were when he left office. He never denied making some mistakes and that things have to change for the coun-



try. You could tell he was running out of time to tell us all the problems we are facing with this current administration. I only hope that the members get on the band wagon and if you are not registered to vote, get registered. And make sure you get to the polls next November to make some changes. We have to get politicians in office that are for Labor. Listen to all candidates and see who supports Labor. There are not many of them and we must know who they are. I think I was told sometime ago that the percentage of Union Members in the US was 20%. The sad thing now I believe the figure is down to 7%. That is sad and I know we have lost a lot of jobs, especially here in Michigan. But what about many of these people that choose not to belong to the Union. You know for a fact that there are some of them working right next to you. Give them a word now and then how important is to belong. And as I have said many times,

give to COPA. It will help assist our friends in politics to be able to campaign to get elected.

By the time this article goes to press Veterans Day will have already passed us and also Thanksgiving. I hope we all remembered our veterans in your own way and the same for Thanksgiving. Then we have the Holiday rush coming sooner than we can blink an eye.

All of the Union Members will again have a huge task ahead of you for making it a positive mailing season. And, I know that all of you are up the challenge. We are working on some of the upcoming training sessions put on by the State. There will be more in the upcoming issues of the Michigan Messenger and also our MPWU.COM website.

Until next time,

*Gary Van Hoogstraten*

*Any and all  
submissions for  
the January/  
February 2008  
Edition of the  
Michigan  
Messenger is due  
Not Later Than  
January 15, 2008*

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS &  
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

## The Long and Short of It



**Michael A. Long**  
Editor

### Union

My wife and I were driving home from work the other day, discussing some issues that just had happened, when it struck me. What does Union really mean? We make it so difficult when we think about it, but really, it is super easy. Just look at the letters and it says it all. U – n – I – o – N. Meaning: U (You), n (and), I (me, myself, and I), o (Or), N (Nothing). If we don't stand together, you, me, all of us, we will have just that - Nothing. It is through our collective fortitude that we gain everything we have. We must all stand together for everything. Apathy and self-centeredness must not be part of any equation. What effects one of us, affects us all.

We have all seen it, especially recently, unions giving back to employers, which those who have come before had worked so hard to achieve. It might be small, a few dollars here and there, but believe me. It all adds up. Just look at our own, and the other three major postal labor unions' contract regarding health insurance. One percent more, while small, it adds to millions of dollars to the company. The way I see it, if we don't start fighting like our predecessors have done in the past and looking at the whole picture, instead of just the small things, I am afraid what we will end up looking like.

While I am on this tangent, I would be remiss not to tell you of another situation that happened to me the other day at my local Meijer store. While entering the store, I saw this lady with a "Buy Union" T-shirt on. I was very proud of the fact that this lady wore her

union philosophy on her sleeve, and was going to say something to her when I saw her again while we were checking out; however, I stopped when she went right up to the U-Scan lane and proceeded to ring up her own groceries. How many people now a days, just go into the local grocery store and see those U-Scan lanes. If you ask one of the workers, who is left to help you, regarding these lanes, they make sure to tell you the store rhetoric that no one lost their jobs, etc. I have asked them; and they tell me that same line. I then ask them one simple question. How many new jobs will come from it? And I don't receive an answer. It isn't that people didn't lose their jobs, it is how many jobs will not be created in the future. Like I said before, we need to look at the whole picture, not just a certain swoop of the brush.

### 2008 MPWU Convention

In the next edition of the Messenger, the Convention call will go out; however, many locals will be meeting either at their January meeting to discuss their convention attendance or soon afterwards. I just wanted to ensure that you make sure to check out the MPWU website for information regarding the convention. Everything is listed under the "News & Information" link at the top of the page.

### FMLA and You

Locally, we have a sign posted for our members to contact the Department of Labor with FMLA violations. If you are experiencing difficulty with your FMLA paperwork; getting FMLA approval; being sent back to your doctor for additional documentation; harassment from the Postal Service's FMLA Coordinator, or any other violation of the law entitle you to; please lodge a complaint with the Department of La-

bor. You can call them by dialing 313-226-7448.

### Support Our Troops

When I was writing my article, I had decided to write about sending a card to Any Wounded/Recovering Solider at Walter Reed Medical; however, since writing, I learned that all those cards are returned to sender. Instead, check to see if your local Veterans Organization is doing anything for our troops overseas. Whether it is sending a box of goodies or cards, I know that many local Veteran organization have a list of names, address of most deserving recipients. Happy Holidays!

### EAP and the Holiday Season

The holidays are upon us, and with it, comes many long hours at work, bills from present purchases, and/or maybe you are alone at this time of the year and just need someone to talk to. Remember, EAP is there for you to use. Call 1-800-EAP-4-You (800-327-4968) to speak with a caring, professional representative, or be referred to one locally. It is totally confidential, and best yet, totally free. Use it.

Until Next Time,

*Mike*



## Legislative Report



**Regina Favors**  
Legislative  
Director

HAPPY HOLIDAYS, as we enter into these thankful and joyous seasons let us please remember to keep in prayer those who have lost family members and loved ones and best wishes that they may still be able to enjoy and partake of this Blessed Season. **WHEN PRAYERS GO UP BLESSINGS COME DOWN!!!!**

Just a few points to share with you. The DMC nurses have still got a big fight on their hands. Mr. Duggan continues to put out bad literature about unions and punish, harass and otherwise try to use dirty tactics to

stop these nurses organization drive. Over the summer he (or the DMC) upgraded (promoted) over 400 nurses and gave them pay raises/bonuses and as you know they are now not eligible to be a part of the 'bargaining unit'. We also know that it was basically 'just a show what you can get if you are not union??' type of thing. Other nurses have been disciplined and or threatened for passing out literature or even talking about being unionized. But while doing this Mike Duggan is giving the perception of (working) with the union to get this done and telling the media that everything is going okay, you know that talking out of both sides of your neck ploy!

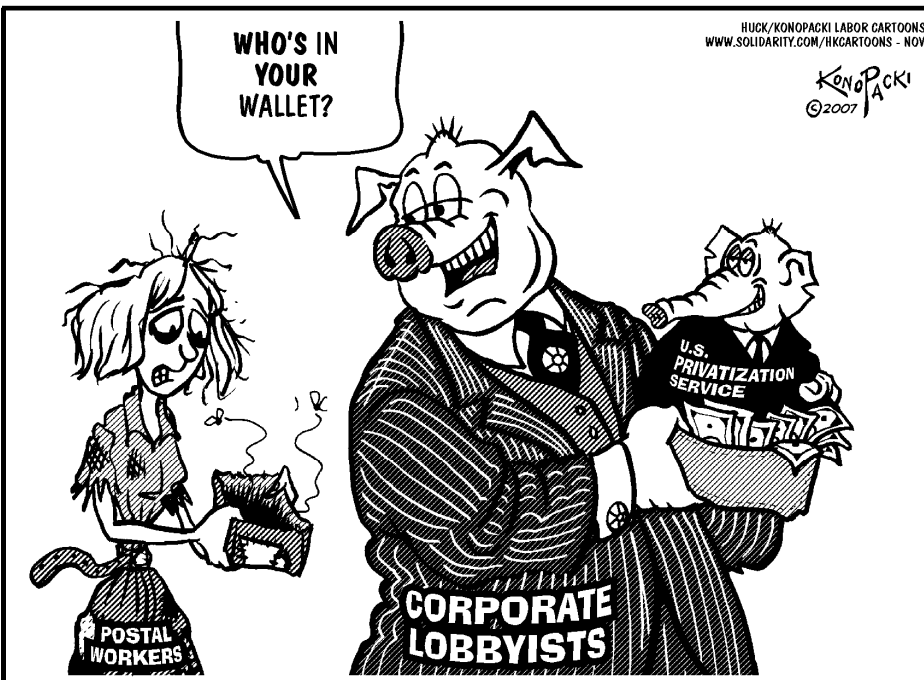
I am sure you all know about the METROPLEX that is scheduled to open next year in Pontiac and the consolidating of parts of Flint, Detroit, Royal Oak and other 480/ 481 areas. I did not know about the U.S.P.S./ Flint Town Hall meeting until a couple of days before it was scheduled but I had planned on being there and unfortunately became ill in route. I hear it was a great meeting and I truly hope that the plans will be successfully shut down.

In Detroit the meeting with U.S.P.S. was held the next day at Wayne State and it went well also. One outcome of the meeting was that Councilwomen Joann Watson and Brenda Jones demanded that the 'service' hold another meeting whereby the residents and business community of the City of Detroit attend. The 'service' tried to hold to the fact that was the purpose and intent of the 10/23/07 meeting. Another meeting was set for 11/1/07. More residents showed up for that meeting and with the petitions, phone calls and the assistance of our Congressional Representatives and Senators there may still be time for it to all be scrapped. Now this is by no means a rub on Pontiac but my answer would be to give those jobs to Pontiac residents, fill that facility with the mail from those workers, citizens and new businesses that this new building will attract and leave the postmark, cancellation unit and employees from Detroit, Flint and surrounding areas alone.

Last issue there was a lot of information about the RTW(right to work) initiative. In case you did not get it, nationally RTW is funded by the Walton Family Foundation (aka Wal-Mart, Castle Rock Foundation (Coors), Publix Supermarket Charities, and Sarah Scaife Foundation (oil and banking companies) just to name a few. Please we **MUST NOT** let this imitative become a reality here. Let us not have a repeat of what happened with the affirmative action initiative. We cannot continue to keep moving backwards.

Trying to keep it short and sweet so please just continue to **GET THE REAL FACTS**, and get involved some way, somehow because it is only with our involvement, voices and most of all our votes that we can even begin to somewhat restore what we have lost. Don't forget, to get more info go to the APWU, MPWU, MIAFLCIO AND WORKINGFAMILIES websites.

**LOVE, PEACE AND JOY TO YOU ALL. ONCE MORE AND AGAIN HAVE A SAFE, HAPPY AND JOY FILLED SEASON. SEE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR!!**



In solidarity,

Sina

P.S. Just one more thing and this is on a personal note, on November 26th one year ago is when my granddaughter became gravely ill. I have not mentioned her in a while but she is continuing to progress. Praise God!!

She still has a long way to go but she has come so very far and is getting stronger day by day and they even tried walking her with a walker now instead of the life gate. Her home schooling will begin soon and we are still praying for a time when she may eat again. She still is keeping us in stitches with all of her antics and right now one of her main goals (as she puts it) is to try hard to walk to the Christmas Tree for her presents. (Smile). Again I am so grateful and Thankful for all of the prayers and well wishes.

## Veteran's Report



John Smeekens  
Veterans Director

## HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Hope all of you had, or are having a great and happy holiday season. Hope you get to spend time with your families and enjoy the com-

pany of each other. But most of all, that your holiday season is blessed and safe. Take a minute to say a prayer for our troops, who cannot be at home with their families. For those who fight for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.

## PAY DISPARITY UPDATE

Do you remember the above titled article I wrote about back in the September/October Messenger? Well check out this update. The Veterans Disability Commission, a 13 member congressional commission, has just released a 562 page report that concluded both the Defense and Veterans Affairs Departments fall woefully short in providing adequate mental health care as well as timely and fair disability payments. *Are you ready for their recommendation?* Veterans disability payments should be increased immediately by up to 25% as part of a sweeping overhaul designed to compensate for a wounded warrior's lost "quality of life," said the special commission. But even going a step further they recommended immediate extra payments to injured Veterans, many of whom feel they lose out on benefits because of an overly narrow government focus on earnings losses or other reasons. Now read on...THESE ARE ONLY RECOMMENDATIONS AND HAVE NOT YET EVEN BEEN LOOKED AT BY THE PEOPLE WHO ARE CAPABLE OF ENACTING ANY OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED IDEAS! I will keep you updated on any news I hear about in regards to the pay disparity or any sweeping overhauls that are being looked

into. Another one of the commissions recommendations was to eliminate the ban on concurrent receipt for all military retirees and those who are medically-separated before reaching the 20-year retirement point, as well as ending the offset that currently prevents survivors of Veterans who die on active-duty or as a result of service-connected disabilities from collecting both their Defense Department Survivor Benefit Plan payment and VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. If you're interested in viewing the commission's 18-page executive summary and full report, go to: <http://www.vetscommission.org/reports.asp>

## S. 1877

S. 1877 is a bill to amend title 4, United States Code, to prescribe that members of the Armed Forces and Veterans out of uniform may render the military salute during hoisting, lowering, or passing of flag. This Bill, if acted on and passed by all individuals necessary to amend title 4 of the United States Code, will allow Veterans who are not in uniform to render the military hand salute as the Flag is hoisted, lowered or as it passes by in a parade. A related bill is H.R. 3380.

## ANTI-WAR MOVIES

Beginning in the fall of 2007, several movies from tinsel town have shown Iraq soldiers and Veterans in a negative light. *In the Valley of Elah*, made by Warner Independent Pictures, came out in September. Its theme is about an Iraq Veteran, who is killed by his fellow soldiers. *Grace Is Gone* came out in October from the Weinstein Company, and shows a family devastated when their mother is killed in Iraq. *Redacted*, coming out in December by Magnolia Pictures, puts in the limelight an Army squad that persecutes an Iraq family. And coming in March is Paramount's *Stop-Loss*, which portrays a Veteran who refuses to go back to Iraq. Isn't it interesting how Hollywood brings out these films while the War is still underway? I guess with Hollywood being so political now it explains why all the bravery displayed by GI's in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other mid-East hot spots have no movies now or in the fu-

ture about the heroism of our American Military.

## VA OPENS NEW CLINICS

To bring health care closer to where Veterans live, the VA has proposed plans to open 38 new community based clinics in 22 states. Michigan got a share, with new clinics opening in Alpena County and Clare County. The new facilities, called community based outpatient clinics, or CBOC's, will become operational by October of 2008. Local VA officials will keep communities and their Veterans informed of milestones in the creation of the new CBOCs. With 153 hospitals and about 700 community based clinics, the VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the country. The VA's health care budget of more than \$34 billion this year will provide health care to about 5.5 million people during nearly 800,000 hospitalizations and 60 million outpatient visits.

## FLAG FOLDING TURMOIL

VA POLICY CHANGE IS ABOUT FAIRNESS – The national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is concerned that misinformation circulating online and in the press is unfairly alleging the Department of Veterans Affairs has banned the mention of God at funeral ceremonies in its national cemeteries. This issue surfaced recently when it was learned the VA changed its policy on the reading of an unofficial script that some volunteer honor guards used during the folding of the American Flag. One variation of the script, which is of unknown origin, specifically recognizes God and the Jewish and Christian religions, but no others, and therein lays the controversy – it violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment that prohibits the government from favoring or disfavoring particular religions. VFW Commander-in-Chief George Lisicki said that neither the U.S. Flag Code nor federal law assigns any special meaning to each individual fold of the American Flag as it is tri-folded at retreat ceremonies, military retirements or veteran funer-

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Veterans Report Continued

als. "There is no government approved or sanctioned script that coincides with an individual flag fold," explained Lisicki, a Vietnam combat veteran from Carteret, N.J. "That means every time the script is read without the prior approval of next-of-kin, an assumption is being made by the volunteer honor guard that the deceased is either Jewish or Christian. A funeral is too delicate a time to make that assumption. "The change in VA policy now requires next-of-kin to request that the script be read, and to provide a copy of it to the honor guard. "Veterans are interred with the religious symbol of their choice on their burial markers. Their families invite preachers, priests, rabbis and imams to lead those in attendance in prayer. One additional step added to the funeral arrangement process does not justify inappropriate allegations that the VA has removed God from funeral ceremonies," said Lisicki. "Our Constitution is about fairness and equality. That's what the VA's policy change is all about – and nothing more. "To view the 39 religions recognized by the VA, go to: <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmemb.asp>.

## MORE SENATE BILLS

Here are some Senate bills separate from the above mentioned ones; Bill #3513 will give certain Veterans' free license plates; Bill #3516 will give \$1.00 hunting/fishing license's to WWI & WWII Veterans' and to Purple Heart recipients along with 100% disabled Veterans'; also included amongst these

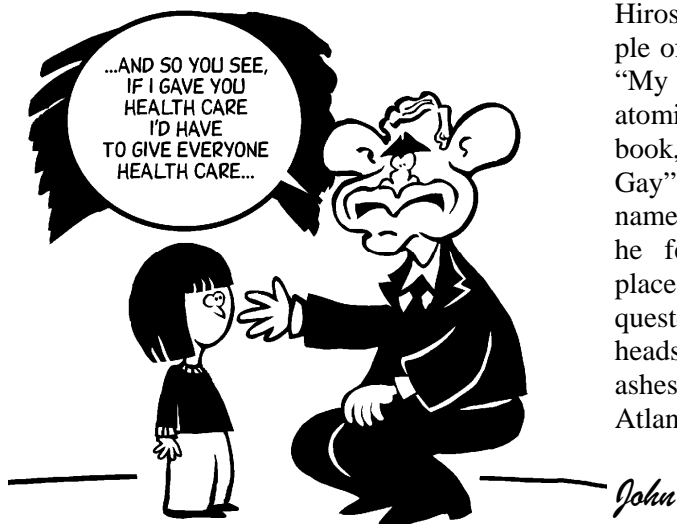
bills are two bills; one which will allow any service member deployed to active duty the ability to terminate a cell phone contract, Bill #4189; and to prohibit foreclosure of real property for active duty personnel, Bill # 4187. Check with your Senators to get more information about these bills which were introduced by Senator Allen.

## PURPLE HEART TRIBUTE

Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup> marked a historic day for the city of Grand Rapids, when the Purple Heart Monument was placed in the Grand Rapids Veterans Park. With the efforts of Susan Cheslek of the Grand Rapids Monument Company for her long hours of planning and design, Rapid Concrete for the labor and Gelock for providing equipment to move the monument into place, both of whom did the work for no compensation, the Grand Rapids Monument is finally a reality. Also a big Thank You goes out to the patriots of Chapter #91 of the Military Order of The Purple Heart, along with their Commander Mr. Don Kramer (whom I will not is an APWU Retired member), and numerous citizens of Grand Rapids and the surrounding areas.

## ATOMIC WAR

Paul Warfield Tibbets Jr., the Army Air Force pilot whose bombing run over the city of Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945, which introduced nuclear war, died Thursday November 1<sup>st</sup> at his home in Columbus, Ohio, at the age of 92. "I never lost a nights sleep over it," Tibbets once said, but to millions of detractors, the nuclear attack on Hiroshima was a cosmic example of man's inhumanity to man. "My job in brief was to wage atomic war," he later wrote in his book, "Flight of the Enola Gay" (1989). The plane was named after his mother. Because he feared giving protestors a place to demonstrate, he requested to forgo a funeral or headstone, but asked that his ashes be scattered over the North Atlantic Ocean.



## Clerk Craft Report



Richard Blake  
Clerk Craft Director

District Meeting - on October 20, I was privileged to assist National Business Agent Lynn Pallas-Barber with Steward training at the Area 1, 2, & 3 District Meeting in Troy. As usual, the class was enthusiastic and attentive, and it's always a pleasure to meet our newer stewards and hear about the problems in their respective offices. I'd like to express my appreciation and thanks for all of the time-consuming work done by Area 1 Director Larry Moyer and the folks from the Troy Local; putting together a District meeting is definitely no picnic, and brother Moyer and the Troy Local membership did an excellent job. For me, the absolute highlight of the class was in meeting one of the newest stewards, from a local in southeastern Michigan. This member reminded me how at least *some* people get involved in the Union for the *right* reasons (not because they're always in trouble, or because they think it'll be a way to get out of work, etc.). This member felt that the steward in his work location wasn't doing a very good job (and after talking to the member for a while I'm afraid I'd have to agree); however, instead of whining about it, or blaming the Union, or dropping out of the Union, or going into management, this member decided to become a steward, and to try to do a better job himself! If only more of our members would follow that example!

Multi-craft Conference - from November 5th through 8th I attended the Multi-craft Conference in Las Vegas; this was my first opportunity to attend one of the Las Vegas conferences as your Clerk craft director. This was the largest such conference on record, with close to 3,000 people registered. I at-

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Clerk Craft Report continued

tended classes on: small office issues, excessing, Function Four, dealing with difficult people, and discipline.

The small office class on 11-5 was taught by, among others, our senior Clerk craft National Business Agent Bob Kessler. For those of you who've never had the opportunity to attend one of his classes, Bob is not only one of the most knowledgeable people in APWU, he's also the most entertaining instructor I've ever had. He spoke passionately about the continuing difficulties faced by the Clerk workforce in small associate offices, and about his displeasure with certain parts of the 2006-2010 national agreement. National Business Agent Dennis Taff spoke about problems with PMR's ("postmaster reliefs") in small offices, and he cleared up some misunderstandings about the impact of the generally unfavorable recent national arbitration decision from Arbitrator Das on this subject; in particular, it's crucial for people to remember that the Das award did not legitimize a situation where a PMR and the postmaster are working simultaneously, which is unfortunately all too common in Level 16 and smaller offices. The class also touched on a new software application, developed by Ben Solis in Texas, which can quickly transform hundreds of pages of "ETC" reports into a simple spreadsheet; this is to assist with maximization grievances. The afternoon of 11-5 I attended the

second half of the all-day excessing class (the class I had originally registered for was cancelled). The class covered various strategic approaches to be used both before and after excessing has occurred, and was particularly informative about implementing employees' retreat rights. The class adjourned early, due to the 4:00 address from former President Bill Clinton. His speech was perhaps a bit more "liberal" than I might have expected of him, especially in his manner of demonstrating how so many of today's pressing political problems are inter-related, and his acknowledgement that the Family and Medical Leave Act which we have in the U.S. lags way behind those in virtually all other industrial democracies. Yes, he promoted Hillary's presidential campaign, but he had nothing negative to say about any of the other Democratic candidates.

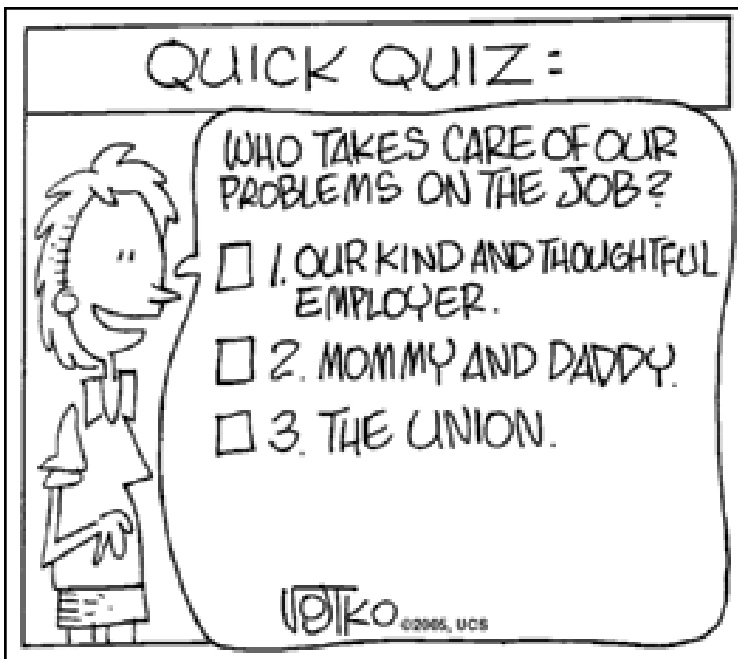
On 11-6 I attended a full-day class on Function Four and protecting Clerk craft jobs. This class had the highest attendance of any class ever in the history of these conferences - over 1,000 students - and we were not disappointed. The presentation by Assistant Clerk Craft Director Mike Morris, and particularly that of Mike Barrett, a window clerk from Buffalo, was incredibly informative and detailed. We covered the basic elements of the Function Four review process, how the Union should prepare for the review, how the man-hour budgets are calculated, and how to react to the report once it's been issued.

Mike also did an amazing analysis of the "WOS" system of tracking window transactions, and how it produces man-hour budgets. Many of us have recently become familiar with management's use of the "WOS" graphs showing "earned" versus "actual" hours used in retail units; management often uses these graphs as an "excuse" for cutting retail staffing. In particular, we

were shown that, based upon the national statistics for "earned" versus "actual" staffing, according to the post office there are presently almost 9,500 too many SSA's and SSDA's in the U.S. We were then shown how absolutely critical it is for every single retail employee to familiarize themselves with this data-collection process and how it affects our jobs. Mike did a comparison of 2 hypothetical window clerks through an 8-hour day, performing exactly the same transactions; 1 clerk did everything the "wrong" way (for the purposes of "earning" retail staffing man-hours), and only "earned" something like 5.5 hours for their work, while the other clerk, who did everything the correct way, earned over 8 hours! While there was an incredible amount of information given to us in this class, and I don't pretend to be an expert in the retail elements of the program, your MPWU officers have already discussed doing a version of this presentation at the next MPWU event due to it's overwhelming importance. Stay tuned to the *Messenger* for more news on this subject.

On Wednesday 11-7, the conference began with a general session, where we were addressed by all of our national officers; after their addresses, we were then addressed by our Clerk craft officers. The Clerk portion of the program began with a wonderful farewell to our late National Business Agent Percy Harrison, and then proceeded to both introduce some of our new officers (such as the newest Clerk craft National Business Agent for the Central Region, Linda Turney) and salute some of our retiring officers. In this session we were also informed that the "model" LMOU's for small associate offices should be completed within the next couple weeks, and that the dispute over the duties that casuals may perform in small offices has been certified for national arbitration. We were also informed of the progress in forcing the mail handlers' Union to participate in the RI-399 dispute process; a national RI-399 arbitrator has finally been selected, and cases have been scheduled. Unfortunately, some of the pending jurisdictional disputes with the mail handlers are pretty old (bordering on

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**Clerk Craft Report Continued**

irrelevant, really), and it'll probably still be a while before the disputes which are pressing today, such as the dispute over work on the "A.I." system on the flat sorting machines, will be adjudicated.

The afternoon of 11-7, I attended a class on "dealing with difficult people", taught for the first time at one of these conferences. This class sought to give stewards some constructive ways of dealing with irrational, abusive, or just plain clueless members ("what do you mean I'm not regular in attendance? I come to work every other Wednesday...that sounds regular to *me!*"). Several different scenarios were acted out by some of the participants, with the instructors (national Assistant Clerk Craft Director Pat Williams and National Business Agent Marty Barron) providing tips and feedback afterwards. Some of the "acting" done by the participants made it pretty obvious that they had already had *plenty* of experience dealing with "difficult" members.

The morning of 11-8, I attended a class on discipline issues, taught by National Business Agents Lyle Kreuth and Jeff Kehlert, and national Assistant Maintenance Craft Director Gary Kloefer. This class covered the basics of the disciplinary procedure, as well as getting into more technical due process arguments. Most of Jeff's presentation came from his excellent "Defenses to Discipline" booklet, which I've had for quite a few years and which has been incredibly helpful. The class also covered "affirmative defenses", and stressed how the burden of proof shifts to the Union in such cases.

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for having had the opportunity to attend the 2007 Multi-Craft Conference as your MPWU Clerk Craft Director. If anyone has any specific questions about any of these topics, or if you'd like me to duplicate any of the CD's for you, please contact me.

In Solidarity,

**Richard**

## Maintenance Memo



Jane Duggan  
Maintenance Director

### **"What happens in Vegas...": News from the Multi-Craft Conference**

For maintenance members, our multi-craft conference started with a Maintenance General Session followed by a Central Region Breakout in the afternoon. Our NBAs (Troy Rorman, Don Foley and Vance Zimmerman) conducted an informative session. Here are some of the highlights:

The 2006 contract has new language under Article 32 regarding local notification.

- ⇒ EL-312 mandates management to forecast maintenance vacancies. Doing so will force opening In-service registers in many instances. Once an In-service announcement has been posted, it would be improper to hire from an Entrance hiring register.
- ⇒ EL-312 preference eligible veterans should be considered for ALL career and non-career positions.

This session was shortened so everyone could attend a speech by Former President Bill Clinton. Although he clearly was there to campaign for Hillary, he gave a very broad ranging talk going back to his first week in office and covering the major things we should all be concerned about.

Tuesday morning when maintenance returned to general session, VP Cliff Guffey was first to address the body. He talked about veterans and subcontracting...pointing out that this is another issue we should take to the community. Specifically, Guffey pointed out that even if contractors are forced to hire vets when custodial work

is contracted out, they will be paid at a substantially lower wage. He believes the community would be outraged if they understood this.

Guffey has been part of the national effort to stop the move to the Michigan Metroplex. He had been in Detroit for hearings and worked with both the Flint and Detroit locals. (I heard from a co-worker in Detroit that Guffey represented us very well in one of the public hearings.)

Guffey was followed by Secretary-Treasurer Terry Stapleton. His watchword was "change". "Change" coming from DC means moving headlong toward business unionism. Stapleton was echoed later in the week by President Burrus.

### **FMLA Author, Laura Campbell, Remembered**

Tuesday, after the national officers spoke, I asked to be recognized for a point of personal privilege. I noted that Clinton had taken pride in the fact that he signed the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). In Detroit, the previous week, a UAW attorney – Laura Campbell, who was one of the principal authors of the FMLA legislation, died after a long battle with cancer.

I asked for a moment of silence – not just for Laura Campbell but for all those who have gone before us who contributed to the life we have. From Michigan, I noted the Underground Railroad participants, the Flint sit-down strikers and the Ford Hunger Marchers. Of course I asked everyone to bring to mind the Brothers and Sisters from their local who have died during the months since our 2006 convention.

When the general session got under way, we discussed the two resolutions that had been submitted and several "issues" raised from the floor that may need to be addressed with resolutions at our next national convention.

NBA Don Foley spoke passionately on Resolution #2 regarding the proposal to close some APWU field offices. Foley

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(Continued from page 8)

#### Maintenance Report Continued

stated that APWU is not functioning under the principles of democratic unionism. Rather, he said, Washington is looking for a bottom line of cutting costs. He spoke about the unionized office workers we would be letting go and the difficulty of guaranteeing representation if the grievances are centralized. Clearly this will be one of the biggest issues at our next national convention.

#### **FSS, FSSP and Sub-Contracting**

Some of the important issues that were discussed in the general session are custodial sub-contracting, the new FSS and FSSP. The production prototype FSS (Flats Sequence Sorter) is in Virginia. Some facilities are scheduled to get up to 5 of the new machines. They will be staffed with four (4) ETs per machine. FSSP (Field's Sole Source Provider) is greatly undercutting our AMO work. Our AMS/AMT personnel no longer write work orders. Now all work is called in to an 800 number and management decides what to assign and what to contract out.

This is a sampling of the issues we are faced with as a craft. We need to maintain vigilance and continue to develop more creative ways to fight back. Our district meetings are one avenue we have here in Michigan. I'd like to thank our NBA, Troy Rorman for teaching at the recent District 1 meeting in Troy. I believe we will have one more district meeting before our 2008 Constitutional Convention. I hope to see you there.

Brother Vance Zimmerman, Central Region NBA "A", and I taught the Maintenance Selection System (MSS) at the Central Region Maintenance Conference in Minnesota and also at the multi-craft. It was an honor to work with Vance and the class was well received. We had 186 members sign up to take our class in Vegas. I continue to get email inquiries from around the country.

I want to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season. Be sure to make time for family and friends. Keep up the struggle as we bring 2007 to a close.

Solidarity,

*Gane*

## Area 7 Report



Thomas Lothamer  
Area 7 Director

How will we be remembered?

The holidays are upon us and many people gather to share with one another and remember those that we cannot be with any longer. When you figure the amount of time your job consumes you it makes you think about how you would be remembered. What will be your legacy in the Postal Service?

There have been those that were honest hard working folks who just want the best that life can offer them. That sounds like the majority of us in today's world. The last of the blue collars in America. The United Postal Workers.

The ones, who seem to stand out, vary from one extreme to another. There is the gray haired old man who waters the plants and everyone loves not because of his speed in his job but how he communicates with

you as he makes your visit to mail your package or letters a better part of your day.

The manager who was selfish and abusive who made the employees and customers dread the time spent within the confines of the prison walls of the post office. The Ebenezer of Postal present.

Speaking of Postal present, what about Postal future. With contract stations and private cleaning services on the rise covering thousands of potential jobs for us and our own and the marketing efforts to "encourage" on line postage labeling at a cheaper rate and convenience from your homes along with Automated Postal Centers, it is truly impossible to say but it looks like in the bigger scheme of things our work force could be reduced to a size so small that our voice would not be heard.

The US Department of Labor told me recently that only approximately 6% to 8% of America is organized. That makes you think in the bigger picture just where do we compare? The auto-workers are disappearing in record numbers. I think we should pay close attention to their situation.

Our decline not only affects our lives as employees but consolidation of small offices is the next logical step in the Postal Services effort to farm out our work. Then everyone we know will be

(Continued on page 10)



(Continued from page 9)

**Area 7 Report Continued**

traveling ½ to an hour to get to the closest office. The communities that I have seen in Michigan that were supported by the autoworkers in some capacity are being devastated due to their absence. We do not do for our communities as the autoworkers have done but we are an integral part of our communities. A heart beat of our town, our state and our country.

Michael Moore should do a documentary on the Postal Service although it doesn't take a visionary to read the writing on the wall for our future. We do however need to expose ourselves to our communities and draw attention to the face of our nation that is the Post Office. So easy to take for granted, so missed when we are gone.

Give this some thought this holiday season if you know someone who hasn't signed up for the Union yet because they can't justify the expense or even yourself when you are asked to donate to COPA to help the Union's legislative fight in Washington D. C. It is a piece of cake to set up through postal ease and a couple of bucks a pay check you would never miss compared to the alternative if we don't keep given more to maintain our way of life.

Only you control your legacy, so keep that in mind as you come to work everyday. Educate yourself and stay in contact with your stewards and officers because without education and communication on a regular basis we will become isolated and weak.

I hope everyone has a safe holiday and thinks about how will they be remembered.

Sincerely yours in solidarity,

*Thomas*

**APWA  
APWU**

## Retiree Involvement



**Al LaBrecque**  
MPWU Retirees President

I will have a complete report on the Nov. 5-6 Retirees' Dept. Conference in Las Vegas prepared for the next issue of the "M.M." Deadline and "St. Antler Day" collided, and one must observe the 'high holy days' of Michigan deer season. In the week since we left 84 degrees for 32 in Spruce, we've been extremely busy buttoning up for....excuse my language....WINTER!

I must say that the conference was two days of substance, led by outgoing Director, Doug Holbrook. (Read the goodbye letter from Doug to the Right of this column). Every agenda item we submitted, previously outlined in the "R.I." column, was addressed, with Dept. Director-elect, Judy Beard taking copious minutes.

Encouraging is the observation that there was far more consensus among participants from Local and State Chapters from around the country than in any previous conference, including the sense that the retiree leadership in the field are not content to be second-class citizens of the APWU.

With that; 'Tis the Season to wish ALL my retired and active Sisters & Brothers....A BLESSED & MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND A HAPPY & HEALTHY 2008!

Be Strong!

*Al*



**American Postal W**

**Douglas C. Holbrook**  
Director, APWU Retirees  
Department  
(202) 842-8585  
(202) 682-2528 (FAX)

**TO: APWU LOCAL**

This will be my Retirees Department. quickly. I believe we much to do to develop

I sincerely thank me and the activities Sister Judy Beard will the very best during he your full support to he department.

The APWU Ret legislation. This is an activity, but we have surpass our goal for C and we should pass the the Retirees provide the must be highlighted m understand that when their issues.

We have seen others. That situation the local chapters will local union. We cannot The local chapters must facing the union and re

**National Executive Board**  
William Burrus  
President

Cliff "C.J." Guffey  
Executive Vice President

Terry R. Stapleton  
Secretary-Treasurer

Greg Bell  
Industrial Relations Director

James "Jim" McCarthy  
Director, Clerk Division

Steven G. "Steve" Raymer  
Director, Maintenance Division

Robert C. "Bob" Pritchard  
Director, MVS Division

Sherry M. Stone  
Central Region

Jim Burke  
Eastern Region

Elizabeth "Liz" Powell  
Northeast Region

William E. "Bill" Sullivan  
Southern Region

Omar M. Gonzalez  
Western Region



## Goodbye Letter from Retirees Director Doug Holbrook

-2-

### Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

November 2, 2007

### AND STATE RETIREE CHAPTERS

Last letter to you as the Director of the APWU. These past 30 months have gone by very fast. We have made progress, but the department has not been the Retirees Department within the APWU.

Thank each and every one of you for your support of this department. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of November, I will assume the duties as the Director. I wish her the best term of office. I sincerely hope you will commit to the department. I am sure you will continue to promote this

The Retirees Department must become more involved in the area that I would have liked to have seen more progress. We have not reached our potential. The Retirees will not be COPA again this year. Our goal was \$200,000, but we fell short by several thousands of dollars. Since the amount of COPA funds, the issues of retirees are shared by the entire union. The active workers must support them. When they retire, the legislative issues of today will be

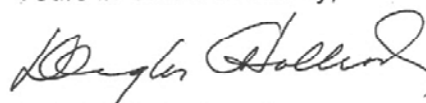
There has been progress in many chapters and almost none in the future. It is very disappointing to me. I hope in the future we will become active and receive the support of the union. We cannot manage the chapters from the national level. We must become involved at the local level with issues of retirees.

A good example of this type of retiree involvement occurred in Ohio recently. The Cleveland retirees traveled to Canton to help support the local union because of the proposal to close a local post office. I also know this type of retiree involvement has occurred in Michigan, and the retirees want to help in many ways to protect the jobs of postal workers.

Another goal I had was the growth of our membership. I wish I could tell you that our membership is over 50,000, however I cannot. I can tell you that our membership has reached over 40,000. We must continue to increase the membership. We can do certain things from Washington, but the locals should start talking about retirement the first days of employment, and encourage those retiring to join the Retirees Department of the APWU.

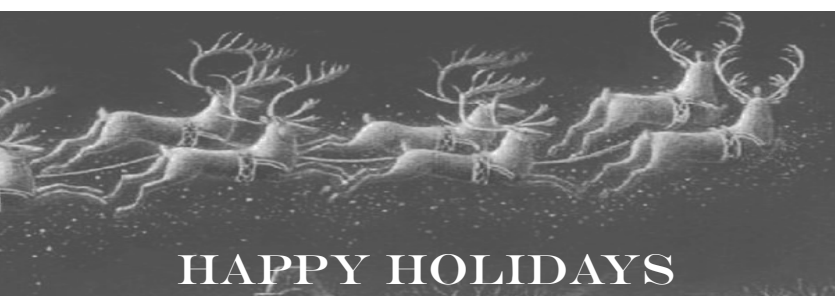
Until I have the opportunity to talk to you or see you, my sincere best wishes to the local chapter officers and all members of the APWU Retirees Department.

Yours in Union Solidarity,



Douglas C. Holbrook  
Director  
APWU Retirees Department

DCH:ks  
opeiu #2  
afl-cio



## Michigan Tidbits

### Veterans Day

November 11th was declared Veterans Day in 1919 by President Woodrow Wilson to honor the soldiers of World War I, and was then known as Armistice Day. We now celebrate this day to honor all veterans that have served for the United States of America. On June 1, 1954 the holiday known as Armistice Day changed to Veterans Day as a tribute for the nobility of all soldiers who have fought for or who are fighting for the U.S. today. Help participate in Veterans Day:

- ⇒ Participate in local parades or events.
- ⇒ Send a letter of appreciation to members of district American Legion and VFW posts.
- ⇒ Distribute copies of the *Veteran's Benefits and Services* booklet to veteran's organizations
- ⇒ Write an op-ed column honoring our country's veterans, particularly those service men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- ⇒ Visit the infirmed at one of Michigan's Veteran's Hospitals.

For more information please visit the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs website.

### Insurance Facts & Buyers Guide

Michigan is the first state to coordinate regulation of financial institutions, insurance, and securities industries under the federal Financial Services Modernization Act of 1999. The Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) provides information regarding financial institutions, insurance, and securities. OFIS is part of the Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG) and is primarily fee-funded, requiring minimal public tax dollars for its regulatory and consumer assistance activities. Take advantage of the 2007 Buyers Guide to Home & Renters Insurance in Michigan. This is a comprehensive guide that gives you information on the rates and types of home and renters insurance. If you are interested in other types of insurance, visit here. If you have any other questions or concerns with financial or insurance institutions visit their website or contact one of their offices.

### Consumer Protection Legislation

Consumer protection legislation signed into law. This legislation will protect residents from potential theft of their Social Security. The Bills allow the register of deeds to remove or obscure all or at least the first five digits of a Social Security on copies of documents being provided to an individual or copies contained in a county's book of records. The register of deeds must obscure or remove the numbers from copies of documents, unless prohibited by law, regulation, court order or rule. Following split legal opinions on the matter, legislation was needed to clarify the register of deed's obligation. This bill was designed to protect consumers' interests.

### 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 member 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](#).

### 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.

Editor's Note: this information is provided by my State Senator Alan Cropsey. While unfortunately, he is a republican, the information he gives is pertinent to Michigan as a whole.

## Gasoline Saving Tips

From a man who has been in the petroleum pipeline business for about 31 years, currently working for the Kinder-Morgan Pipeline in San Jose , CA .

We deliver about 4 million gallons in a 24-hour period from the pipe line; one day it's diesel, the next day it's jet fuel and gasoline. We have 34 storage tanks here with a total capacity of 16,800,000 gallons.

Here are some tricks to help you get your money's worth.

1. Fill up your car or truck in the morning when the temperature is still cool. Remember that all service stations have their storage tanks buried below ground; and the colder the ground, the denser the gasoline. When it gets warmer gasoline expands, so if you're filling up in the afternoon or in the evening, what should be a gallon is not exactly a gallon. In the petroleum business, the specific gravity and temperature of the fuel (gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, ethanol and other petroleum products) are significant. Every truckload that we load is temperature-

compensated so that the indicated gallon is actually the amount pumped. A one-degree rise in temperature is a big deal for businesses, but service stations don't have temperature compensation at their pumps.

2. If a tanker truck is filling the station's tank at the time you want to buy gas, do not fill up; most likely dirt and sludge in the tank is being stirred up when gas is being delivered, and you might be transferring that dirt from the bottom of their tank into your car's tank.

3. Fill up when your gas tank is half-full (or half-empty), because the more gas you have in your tank the less air there is and gasoline evaporates rapidly, especially when it's warm. The extra gas also helps keep your gasoline in-tank pump from getting too hot in the summer and wearing out sooner than they should. (Gasoline storage tanks have an internal floating 'roof' membrane to act as a barrier between the gas and the atmosphere, thereby minimizing evaporation)

4. If you look at the trigger you'll see that it has three delivery settings: slow, medium and high. When you're filling up do not squeeze the trigger of the nozzle to the high setting. You should be pumping at the slow setting, thereby minimizing vapors created while you are pumping.

5. Hoses at the pump are corrugated; the corrugations act as a return path for vapor recovery, from gas that already has been metered. If you are pumping at the high setting, the agitated gasoline contains more vapor, which is being sucked back into the underground tank, so you're getting less gas for your money.

Hope this will help ease your 'pain at the pump'.

*Editor's Note: This information was sent to me via e-Mail. I was unable to verify the authenticity of this prior to putting in the Messenger. However, if it works a little, even better.*

The below "Certificate" was created in another PPA publication. However, it has been changed to bring it more in line with the information that is asked for in Michigan. Please make sure that your doctor does fill out the form completely to ensure approval from your supervisor.

### CERTIFICATE OF PHYSICIAN OR PRACTITIONER

Name of Employee:

Period Under Professional Care

From: (Month, Day, Year)

To: (Month, Day, Year)

During this absence, the Patient was **INCAPACITED FOR DUTY** due to:

<p>_____ Illness or Injury in regards to: _____</p> <p>_____ Pregnancy and Confinement</p> <p>_____ Care for a Family Member</p>	<p>(Do not give Diagnosis or Prognosis)</p> <p>_____ Contagious Disease</p> <p>_____ Undergoing medical, dental or Optical examination or treatment</p>
--	---

Signature

Date

Address

Telephone #

## Lets Compare Negotiations vs. Arbitration

Editor's Note: As most of you are aware, when the APWU is negotiating our contract, I have stated that either it gets approved or when it goes in front of the arbitrator, they are going to give us whatever they already negotiated. The recent National Letters Carrier agreement is the prime comparison. In December 2006, the Rural Carriers reached a Tentative Contract Agreement. In February 2007, the membership rejected the contract, and on December 5, 2007, the Arbitrators handed down their decision. Lets see the difference, shall we.

### What was Negotiated

#### WAGES, COLA

##### • General Wage Increases:

- o 1.2% wage increase effective November 25, 2006
- o 1.2% wage increase effective November 24, 2007
- o 1.2% wage increase effective November 22, 2008
- o 1.2% wage increase effective November 21, 2009

##### Cost-of-Living Adjustments:

- o The second full pay period after the release of the January 2007 index
- o The second full pay period after the release of the July 2007 index
- o The second full pay period after the release of the January 2008 index
- o The second full pay period after the release of the July 2008 index
- o The second full pay period after the release of the January 2009 index
- o The second full pay period after the release of the July 2009 index
- o The second full pay period after the release of the January 2010 index
- o The second full pay period after the release of the July 2010 index

##### Special Leave Replacement Provisions:

- o Newly-hired RCA's will be paid actual or evaluated time for the route, whichever is greater, for the first five pay periods.
- o An RCA/RCR assigned to a route without having been trained on that route will be paid actual or evaluated time for the route, whichever is greater.
- o An RCA/RCR assigned to a route that he/she has not served in the past 12 months will be paid actual or evaluated time for the route, whichever is greater.

#### HEALTH INSURANCE

- Employees' share of health insurance premiums will increase by 1% each year during the term of the contract.

#### EMA, VEHICLES

##### • Equipment Maintenance Allowance:

- o The EMA base rate during the term of the contract will increase by 5 ½ cents.
- o The EMA base rate will be increased by 3 cents effective with the January 2007 adjustment.
- o The EMA base rate will be increased by ½ cent in October of 2007 to be effective with the January 2008 adjustment.
- o The EMA base rate will be increased by 1 cent in October of 2008 to be effective with the January 2009 adjustment.
- o The EMA base rate will be increased by 1 cent in October of 2009 to be effective with the January 2010 adjustment.

##### Postal-provided right-hand drive vehicles:

- o The Postal Service will provide 15,000 right-hand drive postal-owned or postal-leased vehicles on rural routes over a five-year period beginning January 1, 2009 and ending December 31, 2013.
- Right-hand drive incentives:
  - o The following incentives apply to ALL bargaining unit employees.
  - o \$1,000 incentive to purchase a new right-hand drive vehicle.
  - o \$500 incentive to purchase a used right-hand drive vehicle.
  - o \$500 incentive to purchase an approved right-hand drive conversion kit.

#### MAIL COUNT

- o 4 week count in February/March 2007
- o 2 week count in February/March 2008
- o 4 week count in February/March 2009
- o 2 week count in February/March 2010
- o All counts include opt-in language
- o 4 week counts include a holiday

#### Miscellaneous Work Rule Changes

- o All regular carriers provided two opportunities each year to sign the Relief Day Work List
- o Time to appeal to Step 3 changed from 10 to 15 days
- o PTF's eligible for court leave
- o Retained "No Layoff" clause and added protection for PTF's Other Provisions
- o The parties reached other understandings on contract language changes in various articles and MOU's.

### What was Arbitrated (Handed Down)

#### Duration of Agreement

The 2006 National Agreement will have a four-year term beginning on November 21, 2006 and expiring at 12 midnight, November 20, 2010. Unless otherwise provided, this Agreement shall be effective with the issuance of this Award.

#### General Wage Increase

Wage increases are awarded as follows:

⇒ Effective November 25, 2006 – the basic annual salary for each step shall be increased by an amount equal to 1.2% of the basic annual salary for the grade and step in effect on September 2, 2006.

⇒ Effective November 24, 2007 – the basic annual salary for each step shall be increased by an amount equal to 1.5% of the basic annual salary for the grade and step in effect on September 2, 2006.

⇒ Effective November 22, 2008 – the basic annual salary for each step shall be increased by an amount equal to 1.5% of the basic annual salary for the grade and step in effect on September 2, 2006.

⇒ Effective November 21, 2009 – the basic annual salary for each step shall be increased by an amount equal to 1.5% of the basic annual salary for the grade and step in effect on September 2, 2006.

#### Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

COLA continues under the current formula, with a base index of May 2007. COLA roll-in for the RCA/RCRs will occur February 2011.

#### One Time Cash Payment

All eligible full-time rural carriers will receive a one-time cash payment of \$686, not to be included in basic pay. All other career rural carriers shall receive a one-time cash payment in proportion to the number of paid hours in the year prior to the effective date of payment.

#### Equipment Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

The current EMA shall continue to except the base rate of 38.5 cents will be increased by 7.5 cents as follows:

⇒ Effective January 2008 – 3.0 cents

⇒ Effective October 2008 – 2.0 cents

⇒ Effective October 2009 – 2.5 cents

#### Health Benefits Premiums

The formula for determining the division of the premium for current employees will be adjusted to decrease the Employer's contribution as follows:

◇ Effective Plan Year 2009 – 2%

◇ Effective Plan Year 2010 – 1%

◇ Effective Plan Year 2011 – 1%

#### Temporary Relief Carriers (TRC).

The formula for determining the number of TRCs shall be changed to a cap of 15% of all regular rural routes at the Area level. This cap replaces the formula provide in the last two sentences of Article 7.D.1.

#### Change of Address Credits

The credit for change of addresses (COAs) will be 15 seconds for each 3982 label received during the mail count unless the carrier is required to perform any additional duties of completing Form 3575, 3546, an/or writing addresses on Form 3982. In such instances, the credit for the 3982 will be two minutes.

#### Employer Provided Vehicles

The Postal Service will furnish 15,000 postal-owned vehicle (3,000 per year) on rural routes from 2009 – 2013.

**Other Provisions** - The new agreement shall incorporate the changes set forth in the Tentative Agreement reached by the parties on December 8, 2006, except insofar as this Award modifies and/or supplements those terms. Otherwise, all provision of the 2000 National Agreement as extended, including all Memorandum of Understanding under the 2000 National Agreement, as extended, which have not be dealt with in this Award shall remain in full force and effect.



## Area 1, 2, & 3 District Meeting & Multi-Craft in Pictures



Cynthia Gladness and Bob Racine (EAP Consultants from the GMD and SE Districts (Respectively) were on-hand and gave an overview.



Larry Moyer and Noland Smith (Troy Local) was host to the attendees of the District Mtg.



Attendees at the Dist Mtg during the Open Session on Friday, October 19, 2007



Attendees addressing the NBAs at the Open Session on October 19th.



JCIM Training Attendees



Former MPWU Editor (Carol Phelps) and Area 8 Director Jerry Phelps meet with Harold Juhl and Gary Van at the District Meeting.



Another Shot of Attendees at the Opening Session



Basic & Advanced Stewards Class



During the District Meeting, they were giving a tour of the new Multi-Plex in Pontiac. Huge is an understatement.



Attendees of the 2007 Multi-Craft Conference listening to President Bill Clinton's Address. Over 3,000 people attended this year's conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Photos courtesy of Geoff Higgins of the Detroit District Area Local)



## College Planning

### Tips on Writing a Killer College Essay

College application season is in full force and effect for high school seniors!!! Here are five tips on how to write a killer college essay, which often makes or breaks the chances for admission.

Before we get to the tips, think about the essay as more than yet another part of the application to complete. It's your chance to introduce yourself to the admissions committee - but, best of all, you don't actually have to shake their hands and look them in the eye! Your essay should do that for you.

The essay is your chance to tell the admissions committee about who you are as a person. So you should let your true self come through. The worst thing you can do is be boring, or try to write an essay the way you think other candidates are writing it. (Of course if you are boring by nature, you should probably let that come through.) Seriously, you want to make an impression; not be lumped in with the herd. Let's roll out the tips:

Be yourself. If you are funny, write a funny essay; if you are serious, write a serious essay. Do NOT try to write a funny essay if you are seriously NOT funny! And vice versa.

Tell 'them something different from what they'll read on your list of extracurricular activities or transcript. Don't just rehash other, obvious parts of your application. Think about what most students might write in response to the question and then try something a little different.

Don't try to take on too much. Focus on one "most influential person," one event, or one activity. Not 13. Tackling too much tends to make your essay too watered down or disjointed. And not credible. Concentrate on topics you care about.

Don't be afraid to reveal yourself in your writing. Admissions officers want the four corners of your application to get to know you and learn a little about how you think.

Write thoughtfully and from your heart. It's clear as day who believes in what they are writing compared to those who are simply saying what they think admissions officers want to hear.

I hope you remember these when it comes time to attack your essay! Pass 'them on to anyone who could use this help.

### 12 Tips to Getting Killer Private Scholarships for College

In a previous email, I wrote about several tips to help you avoid getting scammed when you are looking for money for college. In this article, I'll reveal to you the exact steps you should take if you are going to be looking for money for school. First off though, you have to realize it's a little bit like Las Vegas or the Casinos: Less than 10% (6.9% if you want to be exact) of the undergraduate students that apply each year actually receive anything at all, and the average amount of total private scholarship money they receive over four years is \$2,051, or about enough to pay for their books for ONE of those years. So, the chances of actually winning anything are 14.5 to 1. In other words, if you apply for 14 scholarships, you should win one of them. And the most competitive scholarships receive 400 applications for every one scholarship they give out.

For example: Each year over 100,000 students apply for the Coca-Cola scholarship, but only 250 total awards are given. 50 for \$20,000 and 200 for \$4,000. So, before you start applying, you have to know that you're going to be swimming upstream a little. One more final word before I get to the tips: Private scholarship money represents less than 2% of the total money that's available. For information on where to find the other 98%, you can visit my website at [www.collegeplanningcoach.com](http://www.collegeplanningcoach.com). OK, on to the tips: 12 tips to getting a scholarship

1. Start with a FREE, reputable online scholarship search, like [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) or [www.srnexpress.com](http://www.srnexpress.com) or buy a scholarship book that is less than one year old. Also, library and colleges themselves are good sources of info. You should NEVER have to pay for this information. There are simply too many good free sources to choose from.
2. Check your and your parents' employers. Many have scholarships that nobody knows about because they've never asked, so that not many other students are competing for them. Each time I teach a class on this subject, I get a call or two the next day from parents thanking me for this, and telling me they found some obscure scholarship through their work worth thousands of dollars.
3. If you are at least 1/16th Native American, check with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They often have killer scholarships available depending on what tribe you are from.
4. Since you don't have unlimited time, apply wisely. Do NOT apply for scholarships that 'everyone' can apply for, or that aren't worth that much money to begin with. Try to find things that are more unique to you. For

example: Loyola Chicago has a scholarship only for people who meet two criteria: They're Catholic and they have the last name Zolp. If you meet those two criteria, you're pretty much in! See, this is different than Coca-Cola scholarship that almost anybody can apply for. Look for stuff that matches you and your interests as closely as possible, and weed out as many others as possible, so you improve your odds.

5. Do NOT waste time applying for scholarships that you do not qualify for. For example: don't apply for a scholarship that has a 3.75 GPA requirement if you have a 3.6.

6. Do make sure you get your application in on time. Missing a deadline just means you wasted your time, since most often, you will automatically be disqualified.

7. Don't assume you don't qualify just because you don't have a perfect GPA or perfect SAT scores. During the research process, you can learn what they are looking for and many sponsors are looking for something other than grades, like community service or a religious affiliation.

8. Read the directions. Don't leave sections blank. I know this sounds obvious, but we see a lot of students make simple mistakes because they didn't take the time to read everything first.

9. Write a good essay about something you're enthusiastic about. Put some time into it, then let it sit a couple of days before you come back and proofread it. Make sure it goes in without any blatant spelling or grammatical errors.

10. If they are required, get letters of recommendation from people who will do a good job for you, not just whoever is handy and can get it done quickly.

11. Start NOW. As in RIGHT NOW. Don't wait until you're a senior or already in college.

12. Lastly, don't forget to apply for financial aid, even if you think that you don't qualify or your family makes too much money. This is where over \$100 billion each year is available, versus less than three billion for scholarship money. Many parents miss this altogether.

With these tips in hand, I can't guarantee you that you'll get anything. However, I can assure you that you will be taking steps that will 'stack the deck' in your favor and dramatically improve your odds. Good luck, and happy hunting.

*Mike Humann is one of the nation's leading expert on everything related to college, from selecting a career and major, to getting in to your top school, to being able to afford it. Contact him if you have questions at: [collegeplanningcoach.com](http://collegeplanningcoach.com) or email him at: [collegeplanningcoach@ameritech.net](mailto:collegeplanningcoach@ameritech.net)*



## What does Oil 'really' mean to the United States?

In 1979 a young cartoonist drawing for a labor paper in Racine, Wisconsin left a meeting with his editor, Roger Bybee. They had decided that the week's cartoon should deal with Jimmy Carter's decision to reinstate draft registration. The cartoonist drove north for a block and turned left at a Shell station and an idea was born. Not long after publication in Racine Labor, the cartoon made an appearance in a wide variety of newspapers, thanks to syndication — everything from the Washington Post to the LA Sun.

Twenty-eight years and five presidents later, the idea seems to take on a life of its own, appearing sometimes as a text message, sometimes as a web graphic. The now not-so-young cartoonist himself has redrawn the cartoon several times. That's partially because the idea, unfortunately, tends to remain current, and partially to remind people that the origin of this particular idea was the gas station at the corner of Washington Ave. and Twelfth St. in Racine, Wisconsin.



*Editor's Note: Wow. 28 years later, and the message is still as current as it was then. I have included the four cartoons that I could find that this cartoonist did regarding this, I hope you enjoy. Just proves the fact that those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it.*



Ronald Regan



George H.W. Bush (or a.k.a. Daddy Bush)



Current "President" George W. Bush

## President's Report

By John Marcotte

To start off my report I've included a couple of pictures from our meeting with Senior Plant Manager Susan Arnson and Congressman Bart Stupak at the Grand Traverse Resort. At this meeting for management was SPM Arnson, 497/496 POOM Phil Williams, TC Plant Manager Gary Klish, and Acting Gaylord Postmaster Cherwinski. Representing the union was myself and Secretary/ Treasurer Amy Owen. The Congressman called this meeting to request that the Gaylord post office be given updated equipment (AFCS and another DBCS) to increase our ability to serve the 497 area and the return of Saturday mail processing. Our job was to remove the districts smoke screen and challenge their lame excuses for why this has not already happened.



Although Arnson is new to the district there can be no doubt in her mind that Congressman Stupak will not allow the citizens of northern Michigan or the Gaylord post office to be screwed over by their consolidation schemes.

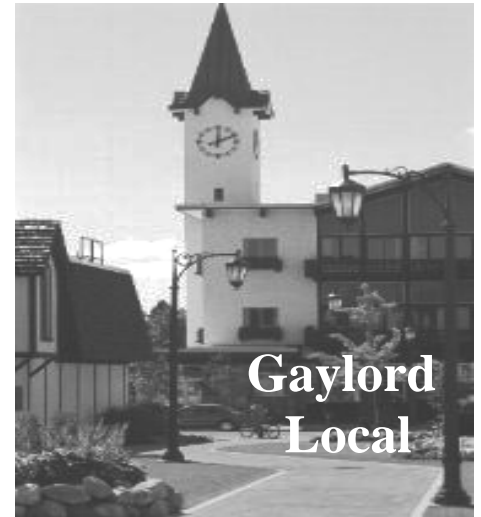
Congratulations to all our newly hired PTF's on completing their 90 day probationary period without incident. I am excited to have you as part of our union family and encourage any of you with interest in union activities to please get involved. This local belongs to you and we would all benefit from your involvement. I look forward to working with you in making our post office a better workplace.

While at the multi-craft convention held in Las Vegas, Nevada I was able to gain some valuable knowledge. I attended as many classes as I could in the time allowed. One was a four-hour class on small office issues which was not only informative but allowed me to network with other local presidents that are facing the same issues we face. Hopefully this

will lead to a united front against the elimination of our lobs. A four-hour class on legal rights and responsibilities was given by a labor law attorney from Washington DC. This was an eye opening class for a lot of the locals. Fortunately for us by attending the Department of Labor's seminars and following their advice on compliance over the last four years our local was not caught off guard. Make no mistake the DOL under the Bush administration has been turned into an attack dog used to harass local unions. The eight hour class on Subcontracting and the ASM (administrative support manual) was very technical but extremely informative on how to defend our jobs against the rising tide of subcontracting. The four-hour breakout session for central region gave our local the chance to discuss the particular issues facing us and our neighboring locals with our national business agents. Both the Clerk and Maintenance opening sessions were informative and well worth attending. Also, there was a president's conference after hours as well. All in all I felt it was worth the local's investment by attending this convention. However, I am an outspoken critic of the multi-craft conference concept. I had to make hard choices on which seminars to attend by both crafts instructing at the same time. There is no savings to the local's by having one conference and all but requires us to travel to Las Vegas due to the combined size of the crafts. Further, we must hold the national union accountable to the resolution adopted at convention requiring our conventions to be held only at 100% union hotels. The sheer size of our delegation limits the choice of union hotels unnecessarily. *We must* support our brothers and sisters striving for a living wage and decent benefits in the hotel industry.

Another election season has come and gone and I am proud to be part of a local that had 84% of its members vote in this election. I would like to thank all of you who voted. I am grateful for your support and humbled by your faith in the job I have done and confidence in the work yet to accomplish. It is now time to move forward in making the Gaylord Local the best local. With your support and involvement we will succeed in getting the equipment and resources necessary to provide excellent service to the people of northern Michigan and secure our jobs at the Gaylord post office.

Here we are in the middle of another busy holiday season. As we navigate the busiest of times for both work and home I want to



pause reminding myself some of the things I have to be thankful for. Regardless of its aches and pains I live in a country that has more personal freedoms than any other, these are guaranteed by our Constitution. I am thankful to the long line of men and women that have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States by serving in our armed services. I have never been unable to feed my family or have gone hungry myself. I am thankful to the farmers and laborers whose hard work allows me to take this for granted. I have a job that is not subject to layoffs, with a fixed schedule, pays me a living wage and a representative will intervene on my behalf if I feel my employer has acted unfairly. I am thankful for the collective bargaining agreement that provides these things and for all the men and women active in the APWU that created and enforce this contract. Although it sounds like a simple list; personal freedom, freedom from hunger and a decent job are a rare thing for the majority of people on this planet. Worse if we can not put aside our petty squabbling and see the "globalization" of our economy for what it is, it will become a rare thing in this country as well. Long lines at stores, outrageous in-laws and hyped up kids just don't seem to be that big a deal when put in perspective. I wish you all the very best for this holiday season.

Yours in Solidarity and Friendship,

John

The Local Union Page

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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.



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	

Check Us Out on the Web

**MPWU.com**Upcoming Events to Plan For:*May 15 - 17, 2008 - MPWU State Convention, Grand Rapids, MI**August 18 - 22, 2008 - National APWU Convention, Las Vegas, NV**Area 4, 5, & 6 District Meeting - Currently being planned for Fall 2008*

## Injured on the Job? -- Take Heed!

### DO NOT SIGN – PS FORM 2488

Injured employees have many forms placed in front of them to sign. Most are standard DOL forms for OWCP. However, we are receiving calls from members that the Injury Comp office is requesting update information from limited duty employees and includes PS Form 2488 in the package they send out. The DOL Vocational Rehab nurse is also presenting this optional form to employees.

PS Form 2488 is a Postal, not OWCP form! It is authorization for medical report – for your lifetime medical history. Do not ever sign this form!!! It gives postal management authorization to dig through all your medical records from your birth to the present. The form is voluntary, NOT mandatory. BEWEARE!

Postal Management has no business knowing your private, unrelated medical history and they have no right to pry into your personal information. DO NOT ALLOW THEM ACCESS! If management or the rehab nurse tells an employee that they need to sign this form in order to process their claim, IT IS A LIE. As a matter of fact, you are not required to sign any form presented to you. Make sure you take time to read everyone of them.

Information obtained from a PS Form 2488 may be used to deny claims and prompt workers comp fraud investigations by postal inspectors. Always read any form placed in front of you and insist on your rights under the law and our contract. If you have any concerns/questions, ask for a union steward.

### Injury On-the-Job Information

- An injured worker must have an injury to file a Form CA-1 or a CA-2
- COP is counted in calendar days.
- To file a claim for a traumatic injury, the injury must occur within a single workday or shift.
- An injured worker is required to notify the attending physician of light or limited duty work available within their medical restrictions and to return to work as soon as possible.
- An injured worker has the right to withdraw a claim under FECA.
- A recurrence of injury filed on a Form CA-2A always requires a reference to a previous approved claim.
- A claim for disability will be denied if the supporting medical evidence provided by a Chiropractor is for any diagnosis other than sublexation.
- Mileage is paid for trips to the doctor and/or physical therapy for an Occupational Disease that has been approved by the OWCP at 37 ½ cents a mile.
- Failure to appear for a medical exam ordered by the OWCP office could result in termination of benefits.
- The OWCP office can require an injured worker to submit to a "fitness for duty exam" several time.
- An injured worker is required to cooperate in the "Nurses Intervention Program" sponsored by the OWCP Office.
- To be eligible for payment of medical bills, they must be submitted within one year that a claim is filed or the date the claim is accepted, whichever is later.
- An injured worker cannot submit new evidence in support of their claim to the ECAB.

(Reprinted from Georgia Mailbag, September 2007)

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