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Presidential Report



Gary VanHoogstraten
President

The 21st Biennial Convention of the Michigan Postal Workers Union is now in the history books. I wish to thank President Dick Page and his Local for hosting this years convention and making sure all of us were welcomed and enjoyed, but still got to the business at hand. I would also like to thank our outgoing officers and they were Jane Duggan, Ron Krumrie and Regina Favors.. It is a tough pill to swallow with the loss of these three because of the representation they gave the members. I have all the faith in Larry Miller, Jennifer Amos and John Marcotte to continue to represent our members. The three of them come to the Board with knowledge and enthusiasm to be able to continue the work that Jane/Regina/and Ron did.

There was a lot of debate during the 2 1/2 days of deliberation and yes there were some tense moments in our discussions. I had the feeling by the end of the week and I hope many others had the same feelings that we came out of this convention United. We cleared the air on a lot of issues that will help make us a better State Union. There will be some changes

made from many of the resolutions and suggestions that were made. I believe that this committee of a minimum of 7 Local Presidents/Designees will solve some problems and make suggestions to lead us in the upcoming years. I know many officers will be reporting on the convention but I just wanted to give some of my thoughts of the weekend.

I was reading an article from the MSNBC web site this morning. The caption of this article was "Is ExxonMobil's future running dry". Are we witnessing the death of ExxonMobil? It is a strange question to ask when oil is about \$125 per barrel and ExxonMobil reporting a \$11 billion in the first quarter profits. Yes, revenue in the first quarter was up 34%, to \$117 billion, from the first quarter in 2007. And yes, net income climbed 17% to \$10.9 billion. But production of oil and natural gas was down 6%. ExxonMobil had an explanation, of course company's lower production was a result of resource-rich countries demands for shares for oil and natural gas productions as prices climbed. A decline of older fields, the loss of production when Venezuela nationalized ExxonMobil operations in that country in 2007. Why could oil hit \$180 a barrel? Just when crude is becoming more

costly to extract and process, producers in three key countries are short of cash. And without that money, recent funds won't do much good. Needless to say, today's \$4.00 a gallon would look cheap if oil prices hit \$180 a barrel. At that price for a barrel of oil, gasoline would cost somewhere north of \$5.50 a gallon. With the summer months creeping upon us, we all have to look at ways to conserve. I know that many people will not be able to take the vacations they have had in the past. I for one, do not know the answer. I wish I did. We have to lean on our political friends to see if they can figure a way out of this problem. I believe we are in a minor recession and the powers above should be able to assist us. I believe I have bent your ear long enough. I will close for now wishing all of you a safe and enjoyable summer.

Until Next Time,



Secretary's Writings



Harold Juhl
Executive Secretary

Another State Constitutional Convention in the books. I want to say, "Job well done" by the WMAL on hosting this year's convention. Overall I thought the convention ran fairly smooth. The local also did a great job with the hospitality room. I believe we came out of the convention as one united union. As the Executive Secretary I had a lot of work to perform after hours to make sure the minutes were out for the next day. I want to give a **big thank you** to Laura Bullock for her help. She definitely made my job a little easier to do. I ran for another term as the Executive Secretary and I was unopposed. I want to thank everyone for his or her confidence in me to do the job. I will, as in the past do this job to the best of my abilities. It is an honor to hold this position in the MPWU.

I submitted all of our resolutions that were passed by the body to National for the upcoming National Convention. I would like to make a suggestion that for the next State Convention that all resolutions be submitted to me on a CD and one hard copy. This will eliminate extra typing that I have to do to get the resolutions ready to send to National.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a great summer and enjoy it with your families.

In Solidarity,

Harold

The Long and Short of It



Michael A. Long
Editor

Another Convention has come and gone. Changes have occurred, some for the better, and for some we will have to see what happens in the future. Overall though and throughout, we became a stronger union. Stronger by debate, stronger by democracy, we have persevered.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Western Michigan Area Local for being host to this year's convention in Grand Rapids. It was a difficult

To Regina, Jane, Scott, and Harold, thank you for the time and service you have given to the membership and to the Michigan Postal Workers Union. Welcome to John, Jennifer, Larry, and Joe. Your willingness to serve the membership is notable and will be a valuable asset to the state. I look forward to working with you for the next term and longer.

New Board, E-Mails, Website

I have finally completed the update to the website for the new officers, as well as changing over all the e-Mails of all the officers. In an attempt to make it uniform to contact the officers and

directors of this organization, all the officers' e-mail is now, generally, their office name @ mpwu.com. For an example, to contact an Area Director, just e-Mail the area (e.g. For Area 1, e-Mail: Area1Director@mpwu.com.) This is the same for all the Area Directors. For all other officers, just type: President; ExecSecretary; Treasurer; Editor; Education; InjuryComp; Veterans; Clerk Craft Dir; Maintenance; and MVSDirector1, all of them @mpwu.com. Hopefully, this will make it faster and easier for you to get a hold of someone.

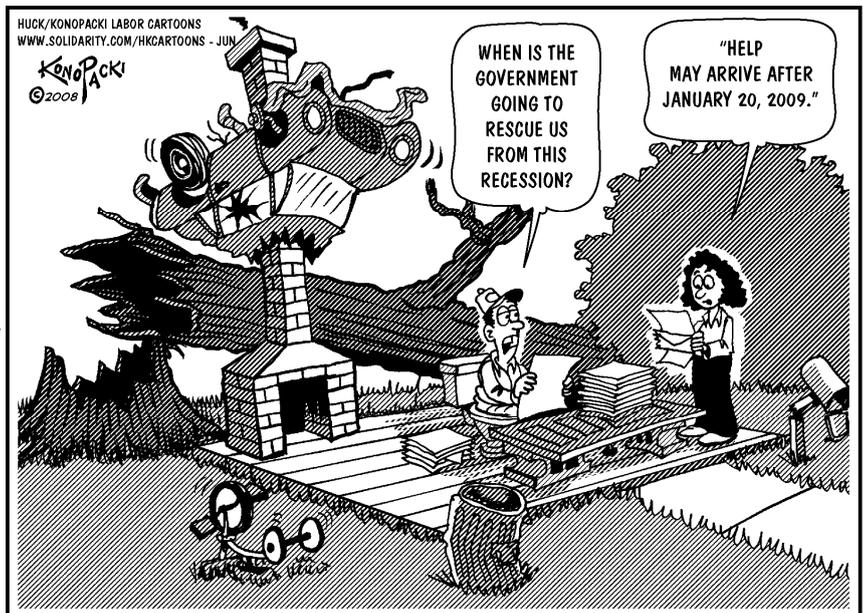
Summertime and Traveling

Every year, I write about the benefits of using your Postal ID for getting reduced rates on Hotel rooms; however, this year, I have found even a better way to get discounts on Airline tickets. The next time you are looking to fly somewhere, check out the Internet, and I am not talking about the normal Orbitz, Travelocity, or places like that. Go to Yahoo, Google or another search engine and search for Discount Codes for that flight, hotel, rental car, etc. You will be surprised what you might find. Just for your information, I booked my flight to Vegas, with my wife and my daughter and saved 12% using a discount code I found on-line.

Until Next Time.

Yours in Solidarity,

Michael A. Long



Legislative Report



John Marcotte
Legislative Director

First of all I would like to recognize and thank Regina Favors for the fine job she has done as our legislative director. I hope I can live up to the high standard she has set as a unionist and state board member. I would also like

to thank all the delegates that attended the state convention for their long days and spirited debate. This work is necessary in order to exercise the democratic process that is the running of our union. I am humbled and honored for this body to have elected me as your legislative director.

This being an election year we will have to hit the ground running in order to change the direction this country is headed. The selling off of the American dream to special interests and foreign governments at the expense of the middle class must end. As members of the APWU you are my sisters and brothers in the fight for a better life for the working men and women of this country. A casual glance at the headlines reveals the obvious; this is no longer a subtle intellectual debate. This is a war on the middle class way of life and the middle class is losing.

Strong words but let me give you some of the reasons I believe they ring true. The federal government admits that the number of people living below the poverty line and those receiving aid to buy food is at an all time high since the great depression. Foreclosures on home mortgages are at an all time high. The cost of a college education has increased two to three times the rate of inflation over the last two decades. Home heating and gasoline costs have more doubled over the last two years. Food cost are now so high providing basic nutrition for ones family is a common problem in America for the first time in generations and is the source of rioting in countries throughout the world. All this and yet wages

have been stagnant for those same two decades. It does not take a Wall Street economist to figure out escalating costs for basic needs and flat wages for workers places a choke hold on the middle class. For over a decade, each year more and more families fell out of the middle class and slid under the poverty line.

The above facts are tragic but now I will let you know what I see as the sinister nature behind our countries current condition and what we have to do to change direction. The politicians we elect to Congress and the White House have a Constitutional duty to "promote the general welfare" of the American people and its "posterity". This simply means they will work to make our lives better and that of our children. For over twenty years this has not happened. The USA was the richest nation and the industrialized giant of the world with a huge trade surplus. We now have trade deficits so large it is hard to comprehend and we are the number one debtor nation. Did this industrial work go away? No, there is record demand for steel, cars and technology all of these industries were dominated by American companies. A series of trade agreements that were bad for the American people including NAFTA were signed into law. This tilted the playing field so far in our competitor's favor it is actually more advantageous for a company to move overseas even if there is no production cost savings in that move. Tens of thousands of middle class manufacturing jobs were immediately sent overseas and the promised "high paying, high tech" jobs that were to replace them never materialized. The response of the republican controlled government was not to stop this disaster but to continue NAFTA and to try to ratify a new trade agreement with Central America just like NAFTA. Further Bush's executive branch refuses to enforce trade agreements and safety laws that Congress has passed. Automobile trade between the USA and South Korea is to be a one for one. When the auto industry complained to the White House of unfair trade it showed 700,000 cars made in Korea sold in the US and 4,000 cars made in the US and sold in Korea. The Bush administration

refused to enforce the treaty or force Korea to comply. Foreign companies are not made to conform to safety and health requirements that American companies must follow giving them a further competitive edge. How many headlines of dangerous foreign products sold in America in violation of our laws do we have to read before we get it? This administration refuses to make foreign companies compete on a level playing field even if our health and lives are at risk.

I do not have to tell you what has happened to your electric and heat bills or to gasoline costs. With the difficult struggle the average American has to endure trying to maintain a home, this administration has responded with NO ENERGY POLICY whatsoever. Our electric grid is from the 1950's and hopelessly inadequate. We have zero excess oil refining capacity ensuring any severe weather, accident or even maintenance causes a shortage in supply and increased prices. We continue to allow unregulated off shore trading of oil futures doubling the cost of crude oil and the only work that gets done is trading paper. This administrations solution was to promote ethanol usage. A technology that burns more oil to create ethanol than it saves by using that ethanol. This made the problem worse. The result of this boondoggle was a shortage of food crops like corn and wheat driving up prices at the grocery store.

Why would a government sit by and do nothing or take actions that make things harder on a majority of its citizens. Well the results may shed some light on the why. The top 1% of richest Americans has seen their incomes skyrocket over the last decade. Corporate executive's salaries have become excessive and obscene even while those same companies lay off workers and ask for wage concessions. During this whole time money has poured into Washington influencing policy and making law.

I've heard that unions are the problem with America. If it wasn't for them companies would make money and we would all be better off. Let's look at that. Union membership is at an all time low. Wage concessions have been the

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Legislative Report Continued

norm in almost every contract that has been up for negotiations. If unions are the problem than right now the country should be in the best shape ever because unions are staggering. The truth is this country is in the worst shape since the Great Depression. The great middle class that was the envy of the world is in danger of being a thing of the past.

John F. Kennedy wanted to improve all Americans lives and told us he was going to "raise the boat" so all Americans equally shared in prosperity. This is the kind of politicians we must **demand** represent us in Washington. The boat is not only sinking it is heading for the rocks. The good news is we have the power to steer this country back on course. We must hold our elected officials accountable for making our lives better and that of every American not just the select few. We must get involved in getting the right candidates elected and holding those elected to task. We no longer have the luxury of ignoring the political process. I will be in contact with your local presidents asking for help to get candidates elected in your districts that will support our way of life and policies to protect the American people. These candidates must be apposed to the postal service subcontracting its core function of our government only to enrich mailing houses and our corporate competitors. I look forward to working with all of you in using our collective strength to help restore the American dream. It may not feel like it but *we have the power*. As your legislative director it is my job to make sure we use it.

I hope all of you get to enjoy your families and friends over another wonderful Michigan summer. Thank you again for the chance to serve you on your MPWU executive board and you will hear from me soon.

Yours in Brotherhood and Solidarity,

John

Veteran's Report



John Smeekens
Veterans Director

Unbelievable Welcome Home

11 Airmen, who disappeared on December 3, 1943, from World War II have been identified and are being returned home for burial with military honors. The men were members of the Army Air Forces 43rd Bomber Group, 63rd Bomber Squadron. They were listed as missing after their B-24 Liberator, the Swan, failed to return from a mission. The crew has departed from New Guinea on a reconnaissance mission over New Hanover Island in the Bismarck Sea. They reported dropping their bombs on target, but, despite several radio contacts with their base, never returned. The remains were recovered between 2004 and 2007 after members of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command located and excavated a site on New Guinea where wreckage had been spotted by native hunters four years earlier. They are as follows: Pilot – Capt. Robert Coleman of Wilmington DE; 2nd Lt Ronald F. Ward of Cambridge Mass; 1st Lt George E. Wallinder of San Antonio TX; 2nd Lt Kenneth L. Cassidy of Worcester, MA; 2nd Lt Irving Schechner of New York; Tech Sgt William L. Fraser of Maplewood MO; Tech Sgt Paul Miccias of Piscataway NJ; Tech Sgt Robert C. Morgan of Flint, MI; Staff Sgt Albert J. Caruso of Kearney, NJ; Staff Sgt Robert E. Frank of Plainfield NJ; and Pvt Joseph Thompson of Compton CA.

A funeral was held on Thursday, April 24, 2008 for Tech Sgt Robert C. Morgan of Flint, Michigan. Sgt Morgan was buried at Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan. Donald Morgan of Flushing, Michigan, brother of Sgt Morgan, who was only 11 years old when his brother died, described him as "a great guy" who wanted to go to college and study engineering. He said: "It was nice to find him and give him the burial he deserved." Donald Morgan said his mother, Clara Morgan, ever gave up hope that her son would come home. She kept the porch light on for him every night until she died in 1984 at the age of 89. **WELCOME HOME BROTHERS!**

VA Health Care

Military Veterans' who served in combat since November 11, 1998, including Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, are now eligible for five years of free medical care for most conditions from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The five year deadline has no effect upon Veterans' with medical conditions related to their military service. Veterans may apply at any time after their discharge from the military, even decades later, for medical care for service-connected health problems. Combat Veterans who were discharged between November 11, 1998, and January 16, 2003, and who never took advantage of VA's health care system, have until January 27, 2011 to qualify for free VA health care. The five year window is also open to activated Reservists and members of the National Guard, if they served in a theatre or combat operations after November 11, 1998 and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions. Veterans who take advantage of this five year window to receive VA health care can continue to receive care after five years, although they may have to pay co-payments for medical problems unrelated to their military service. Co-payments range from \$8.00 for a 30 day supply of prescript medicine to \$1,024.00 for the first 90 days of inpatient care each year. And now dental care has been extended to 180 days after discharge instead of the old 90-day limit.

The Woman Veteran

Recognizing the valor, service and sacrifice of America's 1.7 million women Veterans, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has created a comprehensive array of benefits and programs

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Veterans Report Continued

The Fourth National Summit on Women Veterans Issues will be held in Washington DC from June 20, to June 22, 2008. Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of the Veterans Affairs stated that: "Women who have served this country in uniform - whether Veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, the Current Global War on Terror, or peacetime service - have earned our respect and thanks, and they have also earned the full range of VA programs offered by a grateful nation." The VA offers a multitude of services and program to respond to the unique needs of women Veterans. VA offer comprehensive, high quality primary health care services for women, including Pap smears, mammography, and general reproductive health care. Along with these services, VA's mental health care for women includes substance abuse counseling, evaluation and treatment of military sexual trauma, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

More information on the Fourth National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues can be found at www.va.gov/women-vet. For those who fight for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.

Postage Increase

Please don't forget to encourage others to write to Postmaster General Jack Potter, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington DC 20260-0010 to make the Purple Heart Stamp a forever stamp. And while you are at, send one along from yourself and your family.

2008 Michigan MSO Tour

Check for when and where the Mobile Service Office will be in your area. Stop in for free Veterans' information and to speak to a Veterans Representative to assist in filing claims, or to answer ANY of your questions in regards to Veterans' Benefits and Service available for Veterans and their Dependents.

June 7, 2008

Detroit - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Cummings Harley-Davidson
5350 Davis Rd
Detroit, MI

June 10, 2008

Iron River - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Chapter #67, American Legion Post 17
326 1st Ave
Iron River, MI 49935

June 13, 2008

Port Huron - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Gilbert Harley-Davidson
3350 Lapeer Rd
Port Huron, MI

June 17, 2008

Kalamazoo - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Chapter #6, VFW Post 1527
1920 E. Kilgore Rd
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

June 19, 2008

Holland - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Chapter #14 - DAV Home
1185 Mat Urban Drive
Holland, MI 49423
(616) 396-2714

June 9, 2008

Marquette: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
D.J. Jacobetti Home for Veterans
425 Fisher
Marquette, MI

June 11, 2008

Escanaba - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Chapter #24, VFW Post 2998
904 Sheridan Rd
PO Box 276
Escanaba, MI 49829

June 14 & 15, 2008

Clinton Township - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Wolverine Harley-Davidson
44660 North Graitiot Ave
Clinton Township, MI

June 18, 2008

Benton Harbor - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Chapter #17 - Moose Lodge #1570
2180 Union Street
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

June 20 & 21, 2008

Rothbury - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sandy's Harley-Davidson
5900 Water Rd
Rothbury, MI

Do Not Hesitate to contact these people if you have ANY QUESTION concerning veterans' benefits, spousal benefits, or dependent benefits. They are there to help you understand the myriad of things available to veterans and their spouse and/or dependents. If you can't make it to one of these Mobile Service Offices, call your county's veterans representative.

Until Next Time,

Remember to thank a vet!

John

Maintenance Memo



Larry Miller
Maintenance Director

Greetings Sisters and Brothers of the Michigan Postal Workers Union.

My name is Larry Miller and hail from the 480-481 Area Local in Southeast Michigan. I am replacing Sister Jane Duggan that has retired from the Postal Service and has elected not to seek another term of office.

First let me say that I have known Jane for many years and she is a true unionist in every sense of the term. I know Jane has versed the members in Michigan on the MSS system, and various maintenance issues and it's inter workings. No one in the country in my opinion knows this system better than Jane and she will be missed, but yet has been gracious enough to offer assistance in her retirement if needed. So we will miss you Jane and only wish the best for you in your future endeavors.

I would like to recognize Brother Andy Wojcik from Traverse City who also sought this position; Andy has also been around for some time and is well versed in Maintenance issues. I consider him a friend and a great resource in the northern part of Michigan. I would like to think that Andy and I set an example of how candidates conduct themselves during the election process.

My goal over the next two years is to educate the membership on proper staffing and record keeping to maintain and increase Maintenance positions in Michigan. You may know that I teach Maintenance Staffing at many venues around the country as well as the new Staffing Advocates around the country. I've been conducting staffing for longer than I can remember but I know my first was done when I was a Clerk Steward around 1978. I transferred into Maintenance in

1985. I began my carrier at the Postal Service in early 1976.

What I'm seeing around the country lately is that management is eliminating certain positions that I believe would be difficult for them if we as employees have done our job and kept good records over the years. While in future articles and training I will get into the details, let me say now that every maintenance employee should/must keep track of their work hours and under the proper work code. Work Codes are extremely important. And I will be posting some links on the MPWU web site, showing the different codes and when then should be used, one I get settled in to this position.

Record keeping is really important if you hold on to the position of Building Maintenance Custodian. I can't place enough emphasis how proper recordkeeping is essential to the Union maintaining these positions. Keep track of everything you do especially the Non-Cleaning duties. Just keep a personal record on a pad of paper of the maintenance you perform. This will help the Union maintain these positions when and if you leave this position or for other sisters or brothers seeking the BMC job.

Until next time, be safe, work safe and enjoy your summer. Thank you again for electing me to your Maintenance Craft Director for the next two year's Together lets make this the best informed and active membership in the country and strive to do the same for our Sister and Brothers throughout this great Nation.

Larry

Wheels & Wrenches



Joe Wrobel
MVS Craft Director

While I was at the state convention I received a letter from our National officers and I would like to share some of it with you. Bob Prichard could not attend and for some unknown reason and the request wasn't forward to Mike Foster. Mike said in his letter that the National officers just completed the 3 day arbitration hearing on the Article 19 violation dealing with the Maintenance bulletin which extended the estimated repair time for a lead technician to complete a preventative maintenance inspection on postal vehicles. This bulletin was challenged because the Postal Service unilaterally changed the VMF bulletin without notification and added additional duties while they were at it. The national also pre arbitrated the insulin dependant case, so now the post office does not automatically disqualify drivers that use insulin, it requires a case by case review of each employee to determine the employees suitability. I have some CD's that have these cases on them and would be willing to forward a copy to your MVS director if you contact me through the MPWU web site.

Since this is the first time that I have been elected to this position I don't have a lot to report on from across the state. I hope in the future that I can make contact and start to deal with some of the MVS issues across the area. The DSI positions seem to be a big problem across the country, Postal management change the entire program and added many different task and responsibilities to the job with out any pay increases or compensation. Our national officer's have3 grieved these issues and are currently waiting for arbitration or a hearing date. When this happens I will get the word out to you as soon as I am able.

In closing let me say thank you for giving me a chance to represent all of you on the state level and I am looking forward to serving in this position.

Joe

Area 5 Report



Joanna Atkinson
Area 5 Director

Hello to all. The State Convention is over and hopefully all the major issues were dealt with to everyone's satisfaction. The convention itself was well attended and the debate was "lively". It is my hope that all locals came away with a sense of unity and the state organization will continue to prosper and grow.

This will be the turn of the Area 4, 5 and 6 District Meeting. The three of us, Laura, Mary and I met and have tentatively agreed to try something different that will hopefully save both the locals and the state quite a bit of money. We have been discussing adding one day to the state educational conference (Thursday) and having the district meeting then. Our feeling was the delegates could come in early and we would have an area director meeting in the morning and a small office class in the afternoon taught by Lynn Pallas Barber. We have already spoken with Lynn about this to reserve her. If anyone has a problem with this, please contact any one, or all of us. There is plenty of time to discuss the district meeting.

I will be serving as the Area 5 Director again for the members in the small AO's with zip codes starting with 486 or 487. I am available by phone or Email. My Email address is: joanna.atkinson2@sbcglobal.net. My phone numbers are Home 989-865-7924, Cell 989-295-5454 and Work 989-771-5718. I do work midnights and generally go to sleep right when I get home, but if you call and leave a message I will get right back with you. I have met or made contact with many of you over the past two years and look forward to helping you the next two years.

Joanna

Area 9 Report



Amy Puhalski
Area 9 Director

Greetings!

The Michigan Postal Workers Constitution Convention has come and gone. During the convention, elections were held for your state executive board. With great pleasure I was elected as the Area 9 Director. This position covers members at large in the 493 & 494 areas. If you have any questions on who is your APWU representative feel free to give me a call and either I will assist or direct you to someone that will.

I definitely look forward to the next 2 years representing each and every one of you in my Area. I would like to personally thank all my fellow union brothers and sisters of this great union that worked very hard at making our state convention a great success. The Western Michigan Area Local was the host local and I have to say what a fine job we did. Thank You to Gary Van, Darren Joyce, Harold Juhl, and Mike Long. All the hard work that you put into the convention is greatly appreciated. Without you all it would not have been a success. Congratulations to the rest of the Michigan Postal Workers Executive Board, I look forward to working with you all over the next 2 years.

During the past month I was approached by a Postmaster requesting a meeting to discuss issues that may be forthcoming. While discussing issues in her office she made me aware of the POOM's intent to reduce clerk hours in the associate offices and increase the amount of clerk work that the Postmaster are to perform. After receiving this information I called a few more Postmasters to confirm what I was

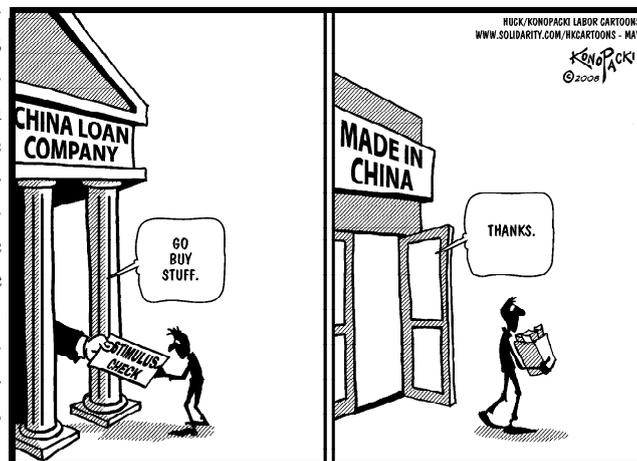
told. The few of them who would talk about it agreed to this fact. It appeared that they were as unhappy with this directive as their clerks were.

During this past year while working with associate offices it became quite clear to me that some of the clerks do not really care if management or for that matter the RCA's are taking work away from us. It appears that if this is beneficial to them (e.g. leaving early, not working a split shift, having an extra day off etc....) they are not going to report the violations to the union. It troubles me to think that individuals do not believe that management will use this to reduce or eliminate clerk hours. I have watched management try to eliminate way too many clerk positions. We as clerks need to protect every minute of our work. It is management's responsibility to get another clerk to cover your hours. If they do not and they perform the duties or assign the duties to an RCA we file a grievance. Sooner or later you would think that management would catch on after they are forced to a monetary settlement. I cannot express enough how important it is to protect our work!

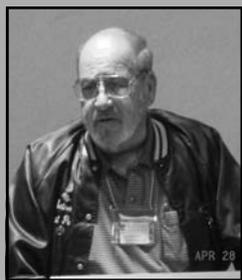
Spring has finally arrived and summer is fast approaching. Unfortunately summer comes and goes at such a fast pace. With our schedules so full during the summer months we seldom slow down to really enjoy the beautiful outdoors, the smell of the flowers, the sound of the birds and the beautiful water that surrounds us all. The state of Michigan is beautiful, take the time to enjoy! I hope each and every one of you has a safe, wonderful summer. Enjoy!

Yours in Solidarity,

Amy



Retiree Involvement



Al LaBrecque
MPWU Retirees President

Taking' Care Of Business! The 4th Biennial Convention of the Michigan State Retiree Chapter is history. We sailed right through all our constitutionally mandated business without a hitch. Highlights of our deliberations will be recounted later in this column. The Western MI Area Local was the consummate host Local, great hospitality, and Co-Chair, MPWU Editor Michael Long, went the extra mile to make sure the State Chapter had all the facilities and amenities we needed to conduct a successful convention, even though his Mother was hospitalized in ICU as the result of a serious traffic accident. We are especially grateful to Mike and pray his Mother has a full recovery.

The MPWU State Union, E-Board and delegates were, as always, completely supportive of the Chapter's efforts. We couldn't get it done without that great support, convention after convention, year after year. Delegates demonstrated that support by adopting two retiree related resolutions. One submitted by yours truly through my home Flint MI Area Local....yes, ONE Only ONE resolution submitted to the State Convention to be forwarded to the National Convention in August. The text of that ONE resolution follows. The other retiree resolution adopted was submitted through the WMAL to revise the Local Retiree Chapter's dues rebate formula from the current 40% to 65%, which will require an APWU Constitution amendment.

Subject: APWU RETIREES' DEPARTMENT CONFERENCES.

Whereas; The APWU Retirees' Department conducted its' first-ever Conference in conjunction with the APWU All-Craft

Conferences in Las Vegas, NV, November 5-6, 2007, and

Whereas; The highly productive 2007 Retirees' Department Conference provided Local and State Retiree Chapter participants the unique opportunity to interact with their active Local and State Union Sisters and Brothers, as well as APWU National officers, and

Whereas; APWU President, William Burrus, addressed Retirees' Department participants in session declaring that; when APWU National Convention delegates established the All-Craft Conferences via an adopted resolution, that there were no provisions to include the Retirees' Department, or any APWU Department, and would not be permitted to do so again unless authorized by this Union's highest governing body, and

Whereas; Local and State Retiree Chapters necessarily operate with very limited financial resources, it makes sound fiscal sense to conduct APWU Retirees' Department Conferences in conjunction with the established APWU All-Craft Conferences to share in the advantage of negotiated lodging rates, facility resources, and staff,

Therefore Be It;

RESOLVED: That this 21st Biennial Convention of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, in session at Grand Rapids, MI, May 15-17, 2008, go on record as being in favor of forwarding and supporting this proposal for adoption by delegates in session at the 19th Biennial APWU National Convention to: **"Establish that; APWU Retirees' Department Conferences shall be conducted in conjunction with APWU All-Craft Conferences held in years between National Conventions."**

I am hopeful that Michigan delegates to the National Convention will actively support this resolution in Las Vegas. We are aware of several other retiree related resolutions that will be offered for national delegate consideration. Pittsburgh is expected to submit constitutional amendments regarding a proposed retiree dues increase, utilization and recognition of the 5 **elected**

National Retiree Delegates as elected officers of the APWU. I've seen a draft resolution out of California proposing to seat full-dues paying retirees as delegates with a voice and vote at the national convention. Our State Chapter Convention discussed the retiree resolutions proposals, pro and con, at length. At this time, I'm reserving comment and endorsement (or not) for a later column devoted to those issues.

New Local Retiree Chapters? Since the first of the year, I've gotten some positive input from four Michigan active Locals who are in various stages of considering organizing Local Retiree Chapters. I'm optimistic that Local's deliberations on forming a Local Chapter will bear fruit in the coming months. All it will take is a proper motion or resolution adopted at a regular Local Union membership meeting to jump start the process. One recurring theme of reluctance to organize Local Retiree Chapters is the concern (or fear) that retired officers and/or members will "run", or otherwise interfere with the business or politics of the parent Local. It's my experience that this is not only an unfounded concern, but more of an excuse to justify not organizing a Chapter.

First of all; Retiree Chapters are not "Unions". Chapters are subordinate bodies to their parent Local or State Union. For that matter; retired members who continue to pay dues required by their Local, full national per capita, whether or not they are a dues-paying member of the Retirees' Dept., have always had the right to a voice and vote, run for office or delegate to conventions. In that respect, nothing has changed. Nothing will change. I'd like to have a nickel for every time I've heard that our Sister Union, NALC, is "run" by their retirees. I have a son (of whom I'm very proud) who is V.P. of his Local NALC Branch who would dispute that charge. That aside; The APWU and NALC each have their own specific constitutional language regarding retirees' level of eligibility to participate in their respective Unions. The NALC does not have the same structure for their retirees as the APWU has established with our own Department and

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Retiree Involvement Continued

elected Director. The APWU Retirees' Dept. is modeled after the UAW Retiree Dept. and Retiree Chapters. UAW retirees certainly don't "run" their Union!

Big First Step! The Southwest MI Area Local has taken the first step in considering organizing a Local Retiree Chapter. SMAL President, Russ Johnson, graciously invited me to address their Local's regular Union meeting on Sunday evening in Oshtemo/Kalamazoo the day after the convention in Grand Rapids. That worked out well inasmuch as I was in that area of the state. The officers and members attending were very receptive, even enthusiastic, giving me more than ample time to make my presentation and respond to excellent questions. The SMAL's generous hospitality made the trip and overnight stay a positive and rewarding experience. Hopefully, it will bear fruit and further generate more Michigan Locals to take that 'Big First Step'. After 6 days of living out of a suitcase, I pointed the old lizzy north and had 5 hrs. 45 min to reflect over the week's events and issues. If anyone ever wanted to know, it's 294 miles from Oshtemo to Spruce! WHERE? You say?!

Brief Highlights: While the State Retiree Chapter Convention didn't have a great quantity of delegates attending, we definitely had quality delegates. After all the preliminaries and greetings from MPWU Pres., Gary VanHoogstraten, accompanied by MPWU Sec.-Treas., Darren Joyce were accomplished; Sec.-Treas. Jerry Clairmont, reported the annual audit shows the financial records of the Chapter are in good order, agreeing with the balance of funds as of March 31st. We got right down to business when scheduled guest speaker; Retirees' Dept. Dir. Judy Beard, called en route to advise her flight from D.C. had been delayed due to bad weather. The Constitution Committee Chair, Lynn Walker, reported concurrence on an amendment to the State Chapter Constitution; Art. 10. "Representation" adding: *"The State Retiree Chapter shall be entitled to one (1) vote for each twenty (20) members,*

or fraction thereof, of the unrepresented members and the votes apportioned equally among the State Chapter officers present and voting, with the balance to be cast by the President." "Unrepresented" retiree members are those not belonging to a Local Chapter, otherwise referred to as 'members-at-large'.

The agenda moved to discussion of the aforementioned retiree resolutions. Delegates then were presented the proposal to send one, or more, delegates to the pre-National Convention APWU Retirees' Dept. Conference at Las Vegas in August, finances permitting. A motion was made to send the President, who is an automatic delegate, and if I am unable to attend, I was directed to name an alternate from the E-Board. This was determined based on projected finances available, and increased costs such as airfare. Upon disposing of Old Business, we proceeded to Nominations of State Chapter officers. All incumbent officers were nominated without opposition and declared elected by acclamation: Al LaBrecque, Pres., George W. Hendricks, V.P., Jerrold Clairmont, Sec.-Treas., and Trustees: Charles Kolhoff, Patricia Miller, and Lynn Charles Walker.

After lunch recess an open session was conducted featuring guest speaker; Sharon Gire, Dir. Michigan office of Services to the Aging, who gave an impressive overview of the services her federally and state funded agency offers. It was a first-time effort to provide valuable information to take back to our respective Locals and Chapters directly affecting those who are already retired. I plan to propose the possibility of a half-day seminar featuring a representative this agency for retired members and Local's Human Relations officers at the State Education Convention in Bay City next year.

With all our necessary business concluded, Sister Judy Beard arrived and took the podium for an excellent presentation outlining many of the concerns and proposals put forth at the Retirees' Dept. Conference last Nov. In the first 5 months of her term, Judy reports pro-

gress and definite recognition of the issues retiree members and leadership in the field have been clamoring for without much success, pointing out that since she is elected the administration can't "fire" her for positions she takes on retiree issues. Judy stressed the importance of legislative activity, and has already testified before Members of Congress, along with the APWU President and Legislative Dept. Dir., on legislation to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision/Government Pension Offset (WEP/GPO). There was a general Q. & A. from the floor. Then, Ms. Donna Dean, APWU Central Region legislative coordinator appointed by the APWU through the AFL-CIO, gave an inspiring presentation on the grassroots political and legislative agenda she is spearheading this election year, involving Locals, Chapters and retirees to elect our friends, and defeat our enemies. We were also graced with a presentation by APWU Auxiliary Pres. Doris Poland, accompanied by MPWU Auxiliary Pres., Kelly Wilinski.

On Saturday, many of our retiree delegates observed the State Union convention in action. Unfortunately, due to unexpected illness, Sec.-Treas. Jerry Clairmont and Charlie Kolhoff, were forced to leave for Saginaw. V.P. George Hendricks experienced a painful foot injury, and was likewise unable to attend the installation dinner that evening where our State Chapter officers received the oath of office along with newly elected and re-elected MPWU State officers. That concluded a very successful and fulfilling convention week. We are all wishing both Brothers Jerry and George full and quick recoveries from their ailments. Now, it's moving on to preparations for the August APWU National Convention, legislative and political activity with a reminder that; **"America IS A Union!"**

Be Strong!

Al

Members at Large Frequent

1. **Q.** Can the postmaster perform distribution and/or window duties in my office? **A.** If your office has less than 100 bargaining-unit employees, the postmaster may perform bargaining unit work only if it is listed in their position description. Typically, the position description for postmasters in level 20 and below post offices states they "may personally handle window transactions and perform distribution task as the workload requires." (Different rules apply to larger offices).
2. **Q.** My postmaster has historically performed two hours of clerk work per day. Can he/she, or a new postmaster, or an Officer in Charge (OIC), work more hours than that? **A.** No. At least two national-level arbitrators have ruled that postmasters and supervisors may perform only the amount of work that historically has been performed by supervisors in an office. If the amount increase, or the number of clerk hours decreased, you should contract your union steward.
3. **Q.** Whose job is it to: give accountable mail to carriers; to clear the carriers when they return; to check the undeliverable bulk business mail (UBBM) and to perform other allied duties? **A.** The M-39 handbook contains language indicating that clerks should be scheduled to perform these functions. It says the supervisor's responsibilities are to: "Review mail undeliverable as addressed (UAA) to identify errors and maximize efficient handling procedures at delivery units and at Computerized Forwarding System (CFS) units." The regular and routine disposal of undeliverable bulk mail should be preformed by clerks. This is not considered a "Distribution task" and should not be performed by postmasters or supervisors. Postmasters also should not be doing WebBats (PO Box record keeping on the web), bulk mail acceptance, or other ancillary duties. Contact your union steward if you have questions about this.
4. **Q.** How many Postmaster Relief (PMR) employees can be utilized in an office? **A.** By Definition, a PMR "is a non-career hourly rate employee who performs as a relief or leave replacement during the absence of the postmaster in an EAS 16 or below Post Office." PMRs should not be working in an office unless the postmaster is absent. If a PMR is working in an office, at the same time as the postmaster, contact your union steward. PMRs should not be hired in offices with career bargaining unit employees, in accordance with ASM Part 123.4.
5. **Q.** Can a PMR from another office perform clerk work in my office? **A.** PMR from another office can perform clerk duties only if he or she has been properly hired as a dual-appointed casual in your office or if he or she is working for the sole purpose of providing coverage for clerks on annual leave in accordance with the pecking order established in the Local Memorandum of Understand for Offices without a Local Union Structure (furthermore cited in this Q&A as LMOU), Item 4.g.3. If you have a question regarding whether a PMR has been properly hired or dually appointed, contact your union steward.
6. **Q.** Can the postmaster send home a part-time flexible (PTFs) and continue to work the window without them? **A.** It depends on the history of the postmaster working in the particular office. If you have a question about the historical practices in your office, contact your union steward.
7. **Q.** What must the union demonstrate in order to require management to convert a part-time flexible to full-time regular? **A.** The union must be able to demonstrate that the PTF hours (including leave hours) are being utilized in a way that could support a full-time duty assignment. The hours do not have to be from a single PTF, a combination of PTF hours may be used to establish the need for a full-time job. Article 7.3.B. requires management to maximize full-time employment and minimize part-time employment in all postal installations. If you believe your office has sufficient PTF hours to support a full-time job, contact your union steward.
8. **Q.** If a full-time regular clerk retires, what happens to his or her duty assignment? **A.** A vacant duty assignment must be posted within 28 days of the date it became vacant. Changes to the assignment may be made. If the USPS does not have sufficient work to support the full-time duty assignment, management may revert the duty assignment, provided the Postal Service notifies the APWU Regional Coordinator or their designee in writing within 28 days.
9. **Q.** Who must management notify when full-time duty assignments are abolished or reverted? **A.** Management must notify the local union president when a job is reverted (e.g. when a vacant duty assignment is eliminated). If your office is not a part of a local, management must notify the Regional Coordinator (or his or her designee) in accordance with the LMOU, Item 12. The same is true if a job is abolished (e.g. when an occupied duty assignment is eliminated.) The Regional Coordinator also must be notified, if the abolishment will result in excessing outside the installation.
10. **Q.** How many casuals can be employed and for how long? Casuals may not be employed in excess of 360 days. In offices of less than 200 man-years, they may not be hired in lieu of career employees. If a casual is hired in your office, contact your union steward. The union will monitor the employment of casuals to ensure that they are hired and utilized properly.
11. **Q.** Can a casual continue to work when a PTF is sent home? **A.** PTFs working at the straight-time rate must be given priority scheduling over casuals.
12. **Q.** Can a PTF clerk be required to carry mail? **A.** Clerks are not typically scheduled to carry mail; however, there are clerk positions with duties that include carrying mail. Clerks also may be required to deliver and pick-up Express Mail. If you have a question about the history in your office, contact your union steward.
13. **Q.** What kind of work can casuals perform? **A.** Casuals may *not* perform accountable duties, such as working the window, accountable mail. Registered mail; duties that require postal training with a deferment period; duties that require scheme study with a deferment period; or duties that require a sill that is subject to testing, such as typing. They may perform non-core duties such as boxing mail, spreading mail to carriers, etc.

requently Asked Questions

- 14. Q.** What is a dual-appointed casual and what are the rules regarding their use? **A.** Section 348.11 of the ELM defines a dual appointment as an employee who is appointed to more than one position. It goes on to state that PMRs and Rural Carrier Reliefs (RCRs) may have dual appointments a casuals, but only under very limited circumstances. Section 348.12 of the ELM states that before such dual appointments are considered, the postmaster should first increase the PTF hours – even if it requires the use of overtime. Postmasters also must consider brining in PTFs from different offices, if they are available. If a PMR, or RCR, has a dual appointment, or is working as a casual in your office, contact your union steward.
- 15. Q.** Can City Letter Carriers perform Clerk Craft duties? **A.** No. Cross-craft assignments are limited to employees in the same wage level. In addition, there must be a corresponding heavy workload in the graining craft and a light workload in the losing craft. These circumstances rarely occur.
- 16. Q.** Can Rural Letter Carriers ever perform Clerk Craft duties? **A.** No.
- 17. Q.** Can Custodians perform Clerk Craft Duties? **A.** No, because they are assigned to a different wage level.
- 18. Q.** Whose job is it to “spread” mail to carrier cases? **A.** In small post offices this is typically a function of the Clerk Craft.
- 19. Q.** Can I be required to pay a window shortage without being given a Letter of Demand in writing? **A.** No. Before you can be required to repay a shortage in your accountability, you must be given a written Letter of Demand, signed by the Postmaster or his or her designee. The letter must include a statement of your appeal rights and options for repayment. Contact your union steward immediately if you receive a Letter of Demand.
- 20. Q.** Is there every any justification for allowing the postmaster or anyone else to work from my cash drawer? **A.** No. It is a clear violation of postal regulations to allow anyone to work out of your drawer. If it happens, contact your union steward.
- 21. Q.** Can an injured on-the-job (limited duty) City Letter Carrier or Rural Letter Carrier perform Clerk Craft duties? **A.** It depends on the facts in each individual circumstance. If you have a question regarding this, contact your union steward.
- 22. Q.** Can my postmaster send home PTFs while injured rural or city carriers continue to perform clerk work? **A.** It depends on the facts in each individual circumstance. If you have a question regarding this, contact your union steward.
- 23. Q.** If I am ill or injured but my doctor says I can perform limited work, is the postmaster required to find work I am able to perform? **A.** If you wish to perform light-duty work, you should submit a written request to your postmaster, along with a note from your doctor indicating the type of work you are able to perform. The postmaster must make every effort to accommodate your request. If your request for light duty is denied, contact your union steward.
- 24. Q.** Can I be required to request a light-duty assignment if I am not able to perform the full duties of my job? **A.** No.
- 25. Q.** What are my rights regarding the Family Medical Leave Act? **A.** The Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) is an excellent reference. (See Article 10, beginning on Page 13). If you have a question about leave under the FMLA, contact your union steward.
- 26. Q.** Can my postmaster choose annual leave before the clerks and refuse to give clerks the same weeks he or she has chosen? **A.** No. The LMOU requires management to grant leave to a minimum of one clerk during the choice vacation period (April 1 through November 30). In addition, Section 512.61.a of the ELM requires management to grant vacation leave to bargaining unit employees when requested “to the extent practicable,” while postmaster must only be granted leave “when their services can best be spared.” (Section 512.62).
- 27. Q.** Do we have to sign-up for faction along with the carriers in the office? **A.** No.
- 28. Q.** How do I sign up for annual leave? **A.** Items 4 through 8 of the LMOU, along with Article 8 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement outline the provision governing annual leave.
- 29. Q.** How long does my postmaster have t let me know whether my annual leave request is approved? **A.** The LMOU states that employees must submit their choice vacation selections by February 15, and that the postmaster has until March 1 to post the approved vacation schedule. All other leave requests should be acted upon and returned within a reasonable time frame. If your leave request is not acted upon within two weeks, contact your union steward.
- 30. Q.** Can my postmaster deny a request for sick leave? **A.** No. if you are sick, your PS Form 3971 serves as a notification of your absence; it is not a request. If management charges you with an AWOL or otherwise refuses to pay you, contact your union steward.
- 31. Q.** Can I be required to provide medical documentation if I call in sick? **A.** Medical documentation is only required for absences of more than three days. For absences of three days or less, the postmaster may require documentation only if there is a valid reason to doubt that the request is legitimate. If your postmaster requires medical documentation for absences of three days or less, contact your union steward.
- 32. Q.** Do I get rest breaks? If so, how long are they? **A.** All employees are entitled to reasonable rest breaks. If there is no standard practice in your office, a 10-minute rest break after two hours work is generally considered reasonable. If there is not a standard time for rest breaks in your office and you are refused a rest break, contact your union steward.
- 33. Q.** If the only clerk in the office is given an officer-in-charge (OIC) assignment, who should perform the clerk work? **A.** It depends. The USPS has the right to schedule PTFs from other offices. These clerks should be

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Members at Large Frequent

schedule if they are available. The OIC can only perform the duties of the postmaster.

34. **Q.** If my office has a custodian, who performs the work when he or she is on leave? **A.** In accordance with a July 10, 1991 Maintenance Management Order (MMO-21-91), the pecking order should be: Mechanics, PTF Clerks, PTF carriers. This given first priority for the work to the Maintenance craft, then the Clerk Craft, and finally, the Carrier Craft.
35. **Q.** Who should perform clerk work when a clerk is on annual leave? **A.** In accordance with the LMOU, the work should go first to other clerks within the office, then to available PTF clerks from surrounding offices, and finally, if no career clerks are available within the commuting area, to PMRs, for the sole purpose of back-filling for bargaining unit annual leave.
36. **Q.** If I use sick leave or annual leave early in the service week, can the postmaster change the leave to a non-scheduled day and make me work later in the week? **A.** No. If a PTF makes a valid request for leave, their non-scheduled workday should not be changed to make them available for another day of straight-time work. If your leave is changed to a non-scheduled day, contact your union steward.
37. **Q.** If I wish to use annual leave or sick leave as a PTF, how many hours must I use in order to get the day off? **A.** You can be required to use only the number of hours you would have worked if you had not taken leave. (See Section 312.6 of the F-21 Handbook.)
38. **Q.** What if there is a dispute over the number of hours I use? **A.** If a dispute arises regarding the number of hours a part-time flexible employee would have been scheduled to work, the schedule is considered to have been equal to the average hours worked by other part-time flexible employees in the same work location on the day in question. [See the ELM at 513.421.b (3).]
39. **Q.** Do I have to schedule doctors' appointments on my own time? **A.** No. You have a right to use sick leave for scheduled doctors' appointments if the appointments are scheduled during your normal work hours.
40. **Q.** Can my postmaster require me to return to work after a doctor's appointment? **A.** Unless your doctor indicates that you are incapacitated, you may be required to return to work to finish your scheduled workday.
41. **Q.** What are the daily work-hour guarantees for part-time flexibles? **A.** A PTF in an office with less than 200 man-years is guaranteed two hours work or pay when called in to work, unless there is a "call back." (See question #41.) If a PTF is instructed to clock out and return to work within two hours, it is considered a split shift and no new guarantee applies. If, before you leave work, you are instructed to return to work after two hours or more, you are entitled to another two-hour guarantee.
42. **Q.** How many splits shifts can I be assigned in a day? **A.** The only limit on the number of split shifts a PTF may be required to work is that all work hours – including lunch breaks – must occur within a 12-hour time span. For example, a PTF who reports to work at 4 a.m. would not be available for any work after 4 p.m.
43. **Q.** What is a "call back?" **A.** When an employee completes a scheduled tour, clocks out, leaves the premises, and is contacted after he or she has clocked out and instructed to return to work, it is considered a call back, regardless of the interval between shifts. You are guaranteed an additional four hours of work or pay if you are called back to work.
44. **Q.** If I am scheduled to work in the afternoon only, but my boss calls me in the morning and tells me to come in, is it considered a "call back?" **A.** Yes. Because you were not notified before the end of your previous tour, you have a four-hour guarantee for the morning call-in. You retain your two-hour guarantee for the afternoon, for a total of six hours.
45. **Q.** What if I am *not* scheduled for a given day, but my boss calls me the day before or the same day and tells me to come to work. Is that considered a "call back?" **A.** Yes, you have a four-hour guarantee for that call-in.
46. **Q.** As a part-time flexible, can the postmaster require me to return to work after more than a two-hour break? If so, do I have a work-hour guarantee? **A.** Yes. If you are notified prior to leaving the post office, your guarantee is two hours. If you are called back, your guarantee is four hours.
47. **Q.** If there is more than one PTF in an office, do the hours of work have to be equal? **A.** Generally, PTF hours should be equitably divided over the course of a pay period or accounting period, except where the distribution of work hours is controlled by past practice. For example, sometimes the junior PTFs are told when they are hired that they are only being employed to perform relief duties for the other clerks (or for lunch relief or to cover vacation periods). In such cases these PTFs could properly be scheduled for fewer hours than the other PTFs. If you have a question about this, contact your union steward." (updated 08/04/23)
48. **Q.** As a full-time regular, if I am required to work one of my off-days, can management send me home prior to working eight hours? **A.** Full-time regulars are guaranteed a minimum of eight hours work or pay any time they report to work. If you are sent home after working less than eight hours, the Postal Service must pay you for eight hours nonetheless.
49. **Q.** Is management required to have an overtime desired list? **A.** Yes, if there are full-time employees in the office. Only full-time regulars may sign the overtime desired list.
50. **Q.** Can full-time regulars work overtime if part-time flexibles in the office are getting less than 40 hours in a week? **A.** Yes. There is no correlation between FTR and PTF overtime.
51. **Q.** Can part-time flexibles get overtime if the full-time regulars don't get overtime? **A.** Yes. There is no correlation between PTF and FTR overtime.
52. **Q.** Can Hub Clerks work in my office? **A.** Yes. Hub Clerk is the name given to part-time flexible clerks who are assigned to offices other than their own.
53. **Q.** If Hub Clerks work in my office, can management reduce the hours of part-time flexibles who are permanently assigned to my office? **A.** Hub Clerks

ly Asked Questions....continued

should not be scheduled to work to the detriment of PTFs who were hired in or permanently reassigned to the gaining office. PTFs in the gaining office should be utilized at the straight-time rate before work is given to Hub Clerks.

54. Q. Can Hub Clerks work overtime in my office before full-time regulars on the overtime desired list work overtime? **A.** Hub Clerks can work overtime only if the overtime has been first offered to full-time clerks on the overtime desired list in the gaining office.

55. Q. Can I be required to work in an office other than my home office? **A.** Hub Clerks can be required to work in offices other than their home office. (The Hub Clerk Memorandum between the APWU and the USPS applies only to part-time flexibles.)

56. Q. If I am assigned to an office other than my home office, should I get paid mileage or travel pay? **A.** Yes. You are required to be compensated for travel time and/or mileage in accordance with Section 438 of the ELM and Chapter 7 of Handbook F-15.

57. Q. If the postmaster is absent or leaves the office, is someone else in charge? **A.** If so, does that mean a clerk should receive higher level pay? If so, what level pay should they receive? **A.** Typically, a clerk should be placed on higher-level pay in the absence of the postmaster.

58. Q. If my postmaster is off on Saturday, what level should I be paid when I am working in the office on that day? **A.** Level 7. Contact your union steward if you have a question.

59. Q. If I am performing higher-level duties every day, can I be upgraded? **A.** Section 233 of the ELM requires that full-time employees who perform higher level duties every day, regardless of the amount of time, should be ranked at the higher level. If you have a question about this, contact your union steward.

60. Q. What is a Function Four audit? How can a Function Four review affect me? **A.** A Function Four audit is a management tool to review the operation and staffing of the office. The results could affect clerk hours and work.

Contact your union steward if there is a Function Four review in your office.

61. Q. If a Function Four report recommends that someone should be excessed from my office, who is excessed? **A.** Contact your union steward. It could be that no one should be excessed. If excessing is necessary, the employees to be excessed are identified by juniority from among the employees occupying the same craft, level, and status (full-time regular or part-time regular).

62. Q. What does the contract require of management before excessing can occur? **A.** Casual hours must be eliminated to the extent possible and PTF hours must be reduced.

63. Q. What should a window clerk do if management suggests that he or she cuts corners in order to "get the line down" when the lobby is full of customers? **A.** Continue to work the window in a professional manner and do not cut corners, especially when it comes to financial transactions. Contact your union steward.

64. Q. We are working shorthanded, but the postmaster tells us that his or her boss won't allow additional hiring. Is there anything we can do? **A.** Hiring is generally a management decision, but you should contact your union steward. The union will investigate whether management is violating the Collective Bargaining Agreement in order to avoid hiring.

65. Q. Is there ever any justification for working "off the clock"? **A.** No. Working off the clock is strictly forbidden by postal regulations and you could be disciplined for doing so. The postmaster also could be disciplined if employees work while off the clock with the postmaster's knowledge or tacit approval.

66. Q. I see contractual violations every day in my office, but I am afraid that my postmaster will retaliate if I inform the union. What can I do? **A.** You have to decide whether you want to permit management to continue to violate the contract or whether you want to stand up for your rights. If you decide to take a stand, the full force of the APWU will be with you.

67. Q. How can I get a copy of the contract and JCIM? **A.** Visit www.apwu.org to download a free PDF version of the con-

tract (www.apwu.org/dept/ind-rel/sc/ircba.htm) or JCIM, visit (www.apwu.org/dept/ind-rel/irj cim.htm) to order a printed copy.

68. Q. Who should I contact if I want to ask a question about the contract or if I want to file a grievance? **A.** Members at Large, visit the Michigan Postal Workers Union website at www.mpwu.com and click on "Find Your Area Director." You also can ask your co-workers or employees working in nearby post offices about who to call.

69. Q. What if my postmaster won't allow me to contact the union while I am at work? **A.** Make your initial contact when you are off the clock. The union steward should be able to correct your problem.

70. Q. If I am not already in the union, why should I join? **A.** There are numerous reasons why you should join the APWU, but the main reason is to support the ONLY organization that can and does represent you both in the post office and in Congress.

71. Q. How can I join the Union? **A.** Contact your union steward and fill out a Form 1187, or visit www.apwu.org/join/howto.htm.

72. Q. Can I join any nearby local that I choose? **A.** It depends on the area. Contact your union steward for advice.

73. Q. How many members must we have to form our own local? **A.** Ten.

74. Q. Where can I find this and other questions that might arise? **A.** On the APWU website, under the Members at Large section.

Members-At-Large (MAL) Members.

The MPWU has a system of representation of MAL members in place. Michigan is divided into areas based upon zip codes. The Members at Large are represented in each area by elected Area Directors. MALs can find contact information either in this publication or on the MPWU.com website.

Buying Back Military Time

Reprinted from PostalMag.com

Q: I served in the military and now work at the Postal Service. I heard that I can "buy back my military time" and have it counted towards my postal retirement. How can I do that, and should I do that?

A: In accordance with Public Law 97-253, employees covered under the Federal Employee's Retirement System (FERS) will receive credit for their Post-56 military service if a deposit is made under FERS. For FERS employees, the deposit is 3% of basic military pay. An interest-free grace period will extend for three years after the date of the career appointment. At the end of the three year grace period, interest will accrue on the unpaid balance. All military service must be honorable in order to complete a buy back.

How to "buy back" your military time:

1. Call the USPS HR Shared Service Center at 1-877-477-3273, Option 5. Tell the representative that you wish to buy back your military time.

2. The USPS will send you a packet which includes a form for obtaining your estimated earnings during military service. Follow the instructions in the packet for obtaining your estimated earnings and also your DD 214 (Report of Separation). An official copy of your DD 214 must accompany your request for estimated earnings. The DD 214 must be a "Member 4" copy or one which contains character of service and time lost information. If you are unable to locate a copy of your DD 214, you will need to order an Undeleted copy at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov> or complete and mail the SF180 form enclosed in the packet. More info: How to obtain your DD 214.

3. After obtaining your estimated earnings from the U.S. Military, send the completed forms back to the Postal Service's HR Shared Service Center. Use the return mailing label included in the packet.

4. If you wish to make payment for your military service, you will need to complete Section 12, Election of Payment, on

PS Form 2805, *Military Deposit Worksheet* and SF 3108, *Application to Make Service Credit Payment* (instructions and forms included in packet). You may make a lump sum payment by check or money order, installment payments (\$50.00 minimum) also by check or money order, or payroll deductions (in \$5.00 increments).

5. When the deposit has been paid in full, your retirement computation date will be adjusted to include your military service.

Should you buy back your military time?

The choice of course is up to you, depending on the amount of deposit and time added to retirement. The general consensus is that if you retired from the military then you shouldn't buy back your military time and combine your military retirement and postal retirement. If you did not retire from the military (for example you served one or two enlistments like many people do) then the general consensus is that you should buy back your military time and have that time added to your postal retirement

Example

PostalMag.com owner Tom Wakefield recently bought back his military time. Tom served in the military from August 1985 to January 1990 for a period of about 4 years and 5 months. (He extended his 4-year enlistment by 5 months for an additional overseas tour.) Tom's basic military earnings for those 4 years and 5 months was \$45,153.21. Based on these earnings, Tom's amount due for buying back his time was \$1,354.60. However, Tom wasn't very smart and waited until 2008 to buy back his time, and \$1,844.03 interest had accrued, making the total amount \$3,198.63. Nevertheless, Tom decided that this amount was worth having 4 years and 5 months added to his postal retirement, and he sent a check for \$3,198.63 to HR. Tom is very satisfied with his buy back. Instead of having 18 years of service in the Postal Service, having joined the USPS on June 2, 1990, Tom now has 22 years and 5 months counted towards his postal retirement, as of June 2, 2008.

CLARIFICATION - Health Benefit Update/Correction to Postal Bulletin

Reference Postal Bulletin, 22232, dated May 8, 2008.

It is the employee's responsibility to report life events which may cause you or your family member to lose eligibility. It is also our own responsibility to complete and submit any required paperwork to change your enrollment and/or apply for any continuation of coverage, if eligible, within the time limits specified. If you have questions, contact the HRSSC on 1-877-477-3273, Opt #5.

DHL TO EXPAND USPS DELIVERIES - German firm has agreement of cooperation with USPS

The Postal Service is one step closer to PMG Jack Potter's vision of being the last mile of delivery for every American. Deutsche Post — which owns DHL — announced today that it has an agreement of cooperation with USPS that will have us delivering 40,000 more packages a day using Priority Mail and Parcel Select Service. The agreement also makes USPS the exclusive delivery provider for DHL to nearly 3,600 of the nation's ZIP Codes.

DHL will use Priority Mail — USPS' premiere two- to three-day shipping service — and Parcel Select, one of the Postal Service's ground package services.

Parcel Select is a reliable, low-cost way for businesses to ship packages to residential customers. Postal Service business partners — including traditional competitors like DHL, FedEx and UPS — pick up packages from large retailers and then transport and deposit these packages at a USPS facility near the customer's address. From there, letter carriers deliver the packages the last

News You Can Actually Use!

OPM suspends portion of contract for electronic retirement system

By Brittany R. Ballenstedt
bballenstedt@govexec.com May 29, 2008

The Office of Personnel Management has suspended a portion of a 10-year, \$290 million contract awarded to Hewitt Associates to create a new electronic retirement system.

OPM decided late Wednesday to suspend part of a contract with Hewitt, a human resources consulting company based in Lincolnshire, Ill., to develop the system. The suspended portion, valued at \$27 million, involved creating a retirement calculation system.

The move came just days before OPM was scheduled to launch wave two of the retirement project for employees at the U. S. Postal Service. Currently, 26,000 employees at the General Services Administration have converted to the system, with OPM expecting to transfer all federal employees to RetireEZ by February 2009.

OPM requested \$15.2 million from Congress to continue the project in fiscal 2009.

National Averages for Entry-Level Salaries

(January 2008 – Salary.com)

Occupation	Salary
Accountant	\$40,653
Accounting Clerk	\$29,707
Advertising Clerk	\$37,955
Aircraft – Electrician	\$40,985
Auditor – Internal	\$47,334
Benefits Clerk	\$34,435
Branch Management Trainee	\$34,678
Broadcast Technician	\$40,206
Budget Analyst	\$46,169
Cartoonist/Animator	\$50,258
Chauffeur	\$30,018
Claims Clerk	\$28,969
Commercial Loan Officer	\$64,026
Computer Maintenance Technician	\$40,560
Computer Operator	\$33,292
Computer Programmer	\$52,041
Conservation Technician	\$37,617
Consumer Loan Collection Clerk	\$23,476

Consumer Loan Processor	\$27,510
Copywriter	\$40,275
Data Control Clerk	\$28,544
Drafting Specialist (CAD)	\$39,725
Dispatcher	\$34,138
E-Commerce Customer Services Representative	\$31,899
Environmental Engineering Technician	\$40,255
Financial Analyst	\$46,687
Fire Fighter	\$39,166
Loan Processing Clerk	\$30,089
Massage Therapist	\$45,326
Mechanic – Airframe and Engine	\$46,629
Nurse – Licensed Practical	\$38,253
Nurse – Registered	\$59,577
Operations Clerk	\$24,190
Payroll Clerk	\$32,787
Physical Therapist	\$67,407
Proofreader	\$39,778
Public Relations Specialist	\$42,259
Reporter	\$30,643
Restaurant Asst Manager	\$36,599
Secretary	\$30,893
Social Worker – BSW	\$42,472
Tax Accountant	\$45,636
Teacher – Elementary	\$48,916
Teacher – High School	\$50,032
Telecommunications Specialist	45,141
Veterinary Assistant	\$25,758
Web Designer	\$45,977

Now, compare the wage at Level 5/I (entry level at the Post Office (average) of: \$45,733) When someone tells you that they will quit, and find a job that pays better on the outside, make sure you remind them of what you saw here.

And lastly,

What's wrong with this picture?

Since when did we have to worry about another company's flight and mail schedule. Aren't we our own mailers? Next we are going to see....USPS has changed its name...to UPS? What do you think? Am I wrong...What's wrong with this picture? ...

-----Original Message-----

From: ***** - Washington, DC

Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 2:58 PM

Subject: Payroll Check Mailing for PP 11-2008

Payroll Check Mailing for PP 11-2008

As with all major Holidays, for the Memorial Day Holiday, FedEx air transportation will be operating under their Holiday flight schedule. Fed Ex will not have a flight leaving the Twin Cities AMC on Monday night, May 26, 2008. All checks will be held at the AMC and dispatched Tuesday night.

It is likely some offices may not remember this Fed Ex Holiday Scheduling and wonder why they haven't received their first shipment of checks by Tuesday/Wednesday. Please remind offices of the Fed Ex Holiday Schedule.

Net to Bank - This is an excellent opportunity to remind employees to establish Payroll Net To Bank to ensure prompt payment directly to their bank account. Net To Bank may be setup on-line using the PostalEASE Employee Website at <https://ewss.usps.gov/esymain.htm>.

Thank you,

[Signed]



College Planning

Here are the last three tips to be aware of if you are travelling to visit a college.

⇒ Ditch the tour guide. Once you've learned some of the main features of the school, the best way to see the campus is by wandering around on your own for awhile. This will give you a chance to see what everything is really like. Be sure to sit in on a class or two, or at least poke your head in the door.

⇒ Get a soda or coffee in one of the student lounges. While you're at it, get something to eat as well. You might as well find out now what the food is like now. Some schools are known for having 5-star cuisine, while others have food that is barely edible. You're going to be there for four to five years, so this is an important step. We don't want you to starve!

⇒ Check out the library, computer lab, gym, and laundry. Even though this isn't directly related to what you'll be studying and your major, you'll be spending plenty of time at all of these areas, so be sure to take a look at them as well.

While this list isn't comprehensive, hopefully it will give you a real good feel for what each campus is like. You will do much better at a school that you are happy at and enjoy attending, so don't assume that all schools are the same and that this step isn't necessary. Or, worse, don't make the mistake of waiting until you hear if you're in or not before arranging a visit. We want to make sure the schools that you apply to are schools that you actually want to attend. Most of all, be sure to have fun.

Mike Hunnan
Collegeplanningcoach.com
248-939-2978

2008 Michigan Postal Workers Union 21st Bier

Delegation on Day 1 Morning



Central Region Grassroots Coordinator Donna Dean (Left) talks with Regina Favors (previous MPWU Legislative Director)

Our Newest NBA Linda Turney addresses the delegates on Day 1



NBA John Clark (left) and National Clerk Craft James McCarthy take time to pose for a picture.



Traverse City Delegation pose for a picture under the Traverse City Room Hotel Sign



Retiree Chapter Executive Board

(L-R Al LaBrecque, Lynn Walker, Jerrold Clairmont, George Hendircks, Patty Miller & Charles Kolhoff)

Annual Constitutional Convention - May 15 - 17, 2008; Grand Rapids, Michigan



(L-R) National Auxiliary President Doris Poland and MPWU Auxiliary President Kelly Wilinski



NBA Troy Rorman, newly elected MPWU Maintenance Director Larry Miller, and National Asst Maintenance Director Greg See



2008 - 5th Biennial Retiree's Convention



National APWU Retirees Director—Judy Beard addresses the delegates to the Retirees Convention



POWER Meeting Attendees



Auxiliary Meeting Attendees



Our New MPWU Executive Board, APWU Auxiliary Board, Retirees Chapter Board, and POWER Representative being sworn in by NBA Lynn Pallas-Barber and National Auxiliary Present Doris Poland

Fellow Sisters and Brothers,

Thank you to the MPWU for putting on another great Constitutional Convention, and to the Western Michigan Area Local for hosting the event. John successfully ran for the Legislative Director, so you will be hearing more from me on our page.

Management conceded to having our first Labor-Management meeting in nearly two years this week. Many issues were discussed. Something always on the list is job reversions. Management contended that SCF30 was reverted due to declining volumes. We are grieving this reversion as there is no standard. The LMOU issue of overtime by tour has been clarified. Overtime is strictly by tour. 8 hour shifts of overtime will be offered to employees on that

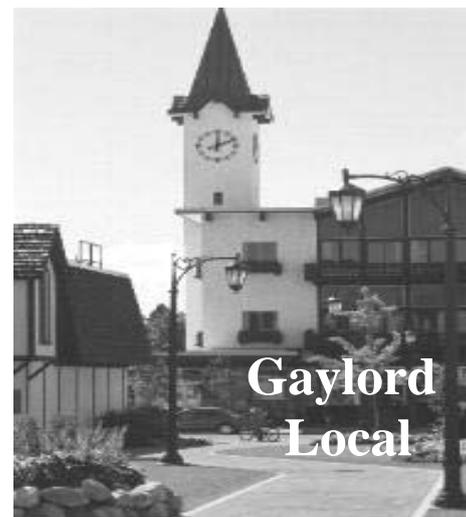
tour. In a case where more overtime is needed and the list is exhausted a list person from another tour may work the overtime prior to mandating someone not on the list. 2 and 4 hour opportunities will be as normally assigned. 1723 (Higher level assignments) will be made available

prior to the assignment whenever possible. It was stressed to supervisors their importance. Discussion of developing a SOP for the UFSM1000 including number of operators required to run the machine. Also, the need for a flat sorter bid job on Tour 3 was brought up. The long standing policy of not allowing union time on Sunday's has been repealed. As long



Gaylord Officers at the 2008 Michigan Postal Workers Union State Convention—Grand Rapids, MI May 15—17, 2008 (L-R: Vice-President Linda Hart, President John Marcotte, Secretary/Treasurer - Amy Owens.)

as work has been completed and time permits, union time will be granted. Gaylord will be on EXFC along with all offices in Michigan in FY09. Management wished to stress the importance of scanning all mail once this happens. The results of the custodial staffing package done by



Larry Miller were reviewed. The union is asking that we staff at the new levels established in this package. The union also requested a second AMT (Area Maintenance Technician). The current staffing package supports a second AMT.

Our summer meeting will be held at Chet Collin's house on June 14th. See the union board for more information and sign up. Hope to see you there.

In solidarity,

Amy K. Owen
Secretary/Treasurer

United we stand,

WORKING CLASS

WORKING CLASS

divided we fall.

KONOPACKI
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WWW.SOLIDARITY.COM/HKCARTOONS - JU

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, the APWU or the Postal Press. Any and all correspondence to the Editor may be sent to: Michael Long, Editor, PO Box 280, Sheridan, MI 48884-0280; fax to: 616-776-1536; or e-Mail to: mpwueditor@yahoo.com

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

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 | Charlotte |
| Cheboygan | Detroit District |
| Farmington | Fenton |
| Flint | 480-481 |
| 498-499 | Gaylord |
| Hillsdale | Jackson |
| Ludington | Muskegon |
| Petoskey | Pontiac |
| Roger City | Saginaw |
| Saint Ignance | Sault Ste Marie |
| Southwest MI | Stevensville |
| Traverse City | Troy Local |
| Western MI | |

Check Us Out on the Web

MPWU.com

Upcoming Events to Plan For:

- August 18 - 22, 2008 - National APWU Convention, Las Vegas, NV
- Area 4, 5, & 6 District Meeting - Currently being planned
- June 12 - 14, 2009—MPWU Educational Convention, Bay City, MI
- July/August 2009 - National Postal Press Convention, Las Vegas, NV
- April/May 2010 - MPWU Constitutional Convention, Lansing, MI



Summer Safety

766,500 children were reported missing in 1999; that's 2,100 every day!
(Source: National Center for missing children)

10 SUMMER CHILD SAFETY TIPS -- WWW.KIDSAFEINFO.COM

1. Always **Check First** with your parents or the person in charge before you go anywhere or do anything, and remember to check in.
2. Always **take a Friend**.
3. Don't be tricked by people who offer you special treats or gifts. Never accept anything from anyone without your parent's permission.
4. Never go into a public restroom, mall, video arcade or park by yourself.
5. Remain calm if you feel lost. Identify the safest place to go or person to ask for help in being reunited with your family. Never search for them on your own.
6. Don't wear cloths or carry items with your name on the outside, and don't be confused just because someone you don't know calls out your name.
7. Don't be afraid to say **NO** and **GET AWAY** from any situations that make you feel uncomfortable or confused. **TRUST YOUR FEELINGS**, and be sure to **TELL** a trusted adult if something happens that makes you feel this way.
8. Never agree to get together with someone you "meet" online without first checking with your parents. If your parents agree to the meeting, be sure that it is in a public place and bring your mother or father along.
9. Never send a person your picture or anything else online without first checking with your parents.
10. Do not give out personal information such as address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number, or the name and location of your school without your parents' permission.



IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT

- ◆ Don't fight the current
- ◆ Swim out of the current, then to shore
- ◆ If you can't escape, float or tread water
- ◆ If you need help, call or wave for assistance

SAFETY

- ◆ Know how to swim
- ◆ Never swim alone
- ◆ If in doubt, don't go out

More information about rip currents can be found at the following web sites:
www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov
www.usfa.org

Editor's NOTE: With school out, many kids will be either heading to the beach, to a friend's house, to the mall, or just taking a bike trip along the side of the road. Make sure they are safe. This information was compiled on-line with some important information for you to address with your children. If we can save just one child, it would be worth it.

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