

Michigan

MESSENGER

APWU
APWU

Volume 41, Number 141
September-October, 2009

Affiliated with: American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, APWU Postal Press Association, Michigan State AFL-CIO & Michigan Labor Press

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by Gary
VanHoogstraten,
President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Where Would This Country Be Without Labor?

The first couple weeks in September have some very important meanings in all of our lives. We have the first on the 7th, which is Labor Day. Think about it, where this country would be without Labor. As Union Members we know the importance of this day, and hopefully those without any Union background will have thoughts of how much good the Unions have done for them. Being born and raised in a Union atmosphere, I have seen the good and bad. We have all gone through some tough times in our lives. I attended a small memorial in my local town and the ceremony was very moving and well attended. Being a member of the State AFL-CIO executive board, I have met members from many different Unions. We all have the same purpose and that is to protect our members, jobs, and wages. We also know, going into any negotiations with our opponent that there will be impasses. We know how to deal with these issues and hopefully are able to come to an agreement that both parties can live with. As we left the ceremony that day, we also had to remember our brothers and sisters that have left us to go to a better place. So remember when you see a sister or brother Union member, thank them for their services to help make the workplace a better place.

Another day, September 11th in 2001 was a very tragic day in our lives. This morning, 9/11/2009, the dismal skies were in sharp contrast to a sunny, cloudless day eight years ago. We remember with reference the lives we lost that day. And on this day that marks their deaths, we recall the beauty and meaning of their lives, men and women and children of every color and every creed, from across our nation and from more than 100 others. They were innocent, harming no one; they went about their daily lives. Gone in a horrible instant, they now "dwell in the House of the Lord forever". We honor all those who gave their lives so that others might live, and all the survivors who battled burns and wounds and helped each other rebuild their lives: men and women who gave life to that most simple rules: I am my

brother's keeper, I am my sisters keeper. And once more and another day we grieve. For you and your families, no words can ease the ache of your heart. No deeds can fill the empty places in your homes. But on this day and all that follow, you may find solace in the memory of those you loved, and know that you have the unending support of the American people.

The last subject I have interest is health care legislation. We all know this is a very important subject and one that we had better pay attention to and contact our legislators and let them know your stand. Some of the things that

the late Sen. Kennedy said in a letter to the President were: "Everyone in this room knows what will happen if we do nothing. Our deficit will grow. More families will go bankrupt. More businesses will close. More Americans will lose their coverage when they are sick and need it the most. Many more will die as a result. We know these things to be true. This is why we cannot fail. Because there are too many Americans counting on us to succeed, the ones who suffer silently, and the ones who shared with us in town halls, in e-mails, and in letters."

These words were a part of the

Presidents speech this week and were meant for the legislators present that night and for the millions of people watching it on TV and listening to the radio. The concern and regard for this plight of others, is not a partisan issue. It is not a Republican or Democratic feeling. It too is part of the American character, our ability to stand in others shoes. And recognize that we are ALL in this together. So to those legislators who represent us, forget the damn aisle. Reach across and get legislation passed for Health Care Reform for all of us.

Until next time.



by Michael A.
Long,
Editor

Editor's Report

Update On Craft Conference

viable for the time being.

3. S-1507 plus its amendment which would force an Arbitrator to consider the Postal Service's financial stability when negotiating a contract is still out there. While HR-22 as it came from the house was passed in the Senate, the architect of S-1507 (Sen. Coburn (R-OK)) is still fighting for its passage and is a definite enemy of the APWU.

Also, since the conference, Fiscal Year 2010 Defense Authorization bill passed congress, and is expected to pass the Senate. With this bill, we, USPS employees, as well as other government employees will benefit from:

4. Vaccine to FERS Flu passed Congress. The bill will give FERS employees credit for the unused Sick Leave (beginning with 50% until December 31, 2013, and 100% (full credit) starting on January 1, 2014).

5. FERS employees who left and then returned to government service the ability to redeposit savings in the retirement system and earn credit for years they had previously worked.

6. Workers in Hawaii, Alaska, the Virgin Islands, and other U.S. territories will be moved to a locality-pay system instead of a COLA based system. The locality pay adjustments, unlike COLAs, would be counted in

the calculations for their retirement annuities.

7. Allow employees who choose to work part-time toward the end of their careers to use a higher salary figure in calculations for how the reduced work factors into their retirement benefits.

8. Lastly, the legislation, when passed would make it easier for federal agencies, to include the Postal Service, to rehire retirees (for a limited time) without forcing them to take a cut in their annuity checks.

Letter to the Editor. Since the last edition of the Michigan Messenger, I received a letter from someone requesting submission into the Michigan Messenger. Unfortunately, I am and was unable to place this letter in this edition or any subsequent edition due to it not being signed. The Editorial policy of the Michigan Messenger states clearly: "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." Since the submitter of this letter chose not to provide a return address on his/her letter, nor was the letter signed, I was and am unable to publish it. If this writer chooses to resubmit, please feel free to do so. How-

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by John Marcotte, Legislative Director

Legislative's Report

It's A Very Busy Time

It is a very busy time legislatively for the MPWU. The House has approved a bill that removes the requirement that the postal service pre-fund health care for its retirees *without* the Republican poison pill that requires arbitrators to consider the postal services financial condition when arbitrating contract negotiations. If the senate version is adopted, all the postal service would have to do is spend money (building construction, supervisor bonuses or more meetings at expensive hotels) to ensure a wage freeze or even a wage cut. The senate version of the bill would the death of collective bargaining for the APWU. We all need to contact our representatives and make our voices heard. This provision is simply union busting and has nothing to do with fixing the financial conditions forced on the postal service by the postal reorganization act.

Health care is not only dominating the news it is grinding the work of the Congress to a halt. The grandstanding on health care is preventing many key pieces of legislation from debate and passage. Politics is getting in the way of progress. We need to refocus our elected representatives on the work of the people *in all areas* not just health care reform.

I have been spending time with the leadership and members of the Southwest Michigan Area Local and their Congressman, Fred Upton. Recently an AMP "pre-study" was performed by the Greater Michigan District on moving mail processing operations from Kalamazoo P&DC to the Grand Rapids P&DC and vice versa. This is upsetting on many levels. First the manual that spells out in exact detail how to perform an AMP study has no allowance for a "pre-study". Second the "pre-study" had a recommendation

by "upper district management" that moving mail from Kalamazoo to Grand Rapids would save the postal service money. Does anyone really think that when a real AMP study is performed by employees of this same district that their conclusion will differ from that of "upper district management"? No way. The most indicative fact of the rigging of the whole process is that in the "pre-study" transportation costs and additional time to transport mail are not considered at all! As if the mail will magically transport itself 60 miles away instantly and for free. The fundamental issue when trying to ascertain if moving the mail from one facility to another is feasible is transportation. They have no idea if they can make service standards and no idea if the cost of additional transportation will prevent any savings from being made. This is a screw job if ever I saw one. Our brothers and sisters in Western Michigan are not going to take this lying down and I am glad I was able to assist them in the fight.

On a lighter note I had a great time at 1st District Congressman Stupak's golf outing with Dennis Barber of Iron Mountain. We were invited to play a round of golf and convey your postal concerns as a result of your COPA contributions. The day was a little wet but we were able to have over an hour of the Congressman's time to ourselves as the event wound down. This is exceptional access to a senior member of Congress and your contributions made it happen. He is firmly behind removing our obligation to pre-fund health benefits, will not allow our bargaining rights to be taken away and supports all legislation that benefits the working person. I must say time well spent on our behalf.

The all craft conference was a success. There was vital training on a host of issues including excessing, window clerk do's and don'ts, proper maintenance

staffing as well as the craft open secessions. It was a good chance to let our national officers know what we expect of them in these unsettling times and in the upcoming contract negotiations.

I am trying to make it to a meeting with all of Michigan's Congressional representatives and will always ask the local's of that district to join me. If you know of a Congressional event in your district that the MPWU should be represented at please let me know.

Yours in Solidarity and Friendship.

"FIRE MILLEN" ADVICE WE SHOULD FOLLOW

If you read my last column in the *Michigan Messenger* you know in my opinion the blame for the terrible condition of the USPS falls squarely at the feet of postal headquarters. Living in Michigan it is impossible not to note the parallel paths of the USPS and one of our sport franchises. When the Detroit Lions of the NFL began to decline as a football team many excuses were offered by its ownership and there newly hired CEO Matt Millen. Who claimed it started with the employees. In his opinion the players were not living up to their potential and were malcontents. Management then "cleaned house" and replaced the players with their chosen employees, the kind they could build around. When the player's supervisor the head coach complained management was not giving him enough skilled employees to get the job done management demanded the coach to "get more done with less". The football team got worse, the coach was right. The customers, the people of Michigan were unhappy with the changes and made that clear to the team. So the CEO fired the head coach and brought in another more experienced supervisor to lead the team. The CEO did not listen to the new coach/supervisor or any of the veteran players/employees and brought in the players he alone felt could solve the problem. The team became even worse, the new head coach was right. The people of Michigan were now angry at the state of their football team. The CEO thinking something has to be done fired this coach as well and hired another coach who would teach a new offensive and defensive philosophy. Now the players brought in under the old system did not fit the new direction so all that effort was wasted and the team was not doing what it previously did well and did not have the resources to do what the new philosophy demanded. The team had the worst season in NFL history, the here to before thought of unattainable 0-16 season. The people of Michigan now gave up on their team and spent

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

The MICHIGAN MESSENGER is published six times yearly, and is the official publication of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, also affiliated with the APWU Postal Press Association.

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.





by Richard
Blake,
Clerk Craft
Director

Clerk Craft's Report

— Stand-By Time —

Stand-by time - it seems as if one of management's latest tactics in their relentless war against their employees, particularly those in the Clerk craft, is the use of "stand-by time" as a pretext for "demonstrating" that certain employees are "not needed". There have been instances around the country where managers secretly altered the clock rings of employees who were working at the time to move them into "stand-by time", because their bosses wanted "evidence" that employees "aren't needed". There have also been instances where management has ordered employees to not work - that is, to go on "stand-by time" - even though there was ample work available for them. There were instances in the New York area where SSA's and SSDA's were ordered to go to "stand-by time" at the same time that their office was showing wait-in-line times of over 5 minutes. Handbook M-32 Section 3-4.4 defines "stand-by time" as being solely for situations where the employee or employees "cannot be gainfully employed" at the time; I'd be willing to bet that the window customers who stood in line for over 5 minutes felt that those SSA's and SSDA's who were ordered to "stand-

by time" could have been "gainfully employed" serving those customers. I would strongly suggest that every single office begin to investigate any possible mis-use of "stand-by time" by requesting the "employee moves report" on a weekly basis for the specific operation used for "stand-by time" in your office (it's usually operation 353). Sure, there *might* be legitimate situations where an employee is placed on "stand-by time" for a brief period, such as a limited duty employee for whom there simply isn't any medically-suitable work available for a little while, but that's a long way from secretly moving *productive* employees into "stand-by time" just to produce "evidence" that they're "not needed", or ordering employees *who could be gainfully employed at the time* into "stand-by time", also to produce "evidence" that they're "not needed".

This is what passes for "service" nowadays - there've been some recent situations in Ann Arbor involving the practice of managers performing fraudulent scans of expedited mail (such as Priority and Express Mail); they might seem amusing if they weren't so pathetic. In one instance, a customer ordered something important on-line and asked that it be shipped Priority

Mail. The vendor did so, and e-mailed him the tracking number. The customer checked the "track and confirm" website, and seeing that the piece had arrived in Ann Arbor that morning, he anticipated that it would be delivered by his regular carrier that day. Well, as it turned out this particular piece of mail wasn't sorted in time to make it to the carrier before he left (several Clerks had just been excessed out of the facility, which *might* have had something to do with that...), so it didn't go out with him that day. However, so the piece wouldn't be recorded as a "failure", one of the supervisors scanned it as "attempted" later that day. That evening the customer, who was perplexed that his regular carrier didn't deliver the piece that day, once again checked the "track and confirm" website and to his astonishment he saw that the piece was allegedly "attempted" that afternoon. Well, the customer couldn't understand why this important piece was only "attempted" rather than delivered, since no signature was required (which, in any event, was irrelevant since he was home all day), and the piece was small enough to fit in his mailbox. The following day his regular carrier brought the piece, and the customer "ambushed" the

carrier, accusing him of fraud and laziness. The poor carrier of course had no idea what the customer was complaining about - until the customer showed him the "track and confirm" data from the previous day. The carrier immediately realized what had happened; he never laid eyes on this piece of mail until the following day, and the "attempt" was made *at a time when the carrier was nowhere near this customer's house*, so he realized that it was the supervisor who performed the fraudulent scan.

A classic - I saw that the Flint Local recently ran a nearly 20-year-old article by brother Leo Persails called "The Enemy Within". Unfortunately, Leo's message is even more relevant and timely today, and I'd recommend that everyone read this article. It illustrates an important political principle - people who don't believe in a particular institution *shouldn't be put in charge of that institution*, since there's very little likelihood that they'll run it successfully. A few years ago, while discussing long lines on the window at the Ann Arbor Main Post Office, a manager said to me that "the problem isn't too few employees, it's *too many customers*", and that attitude seems even more common today.

In Solidarity.



by John
Smeekens,
Veterans
Director

Veteran's Report

Happy Veterans' Day 2009

To all my Brother and Sister Veterans' I say "Welcome Home," and most of all "Thank You" for your service to this great country of ours. Without your sacrifices, we would not have our everyday freedoms and rights that we enjoy here in these United States of America. And if you think I'm exaggerating about this, how about the Lady in the Sudan, who was just sentenced to jail for 30 days for wearing PANTS!!! She refused to pay the \$200.00 fine and said she would rather serve her time. The judge (or whatever you call them over there) was kind enough to spare her the 40 lashes that usually go along with the aforementioned crime. So on this Veterans' Day, take a moment to hug a Veteran on this, their Holiday, and tell them "Welcome Home and Thank You." For those who fought for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.

VA BACKLOG

I just received news that there is pres-

ently a **900,000 case backlog at present in the claims system of the VA**. I only hope and pray that the politicians see this and pass some legislation quick to help the Veterans' who are in this backlog and quagmire of paperwork. If your one of the unlucky one's awaiting a response about you claim, **HANG IN THERE**. Remember that your claim is retroactive to the date of acceptance by the VA.

VETERANS' HEALTH CARE WOMENS HEALTH CARE

S. 252, which passed the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee earlier this year, is stuck in the Senate. With time winding down in the year, the Senate is taking on many complicated bills; we need to ensure that the Senate approves this before the end of the session. S. 252 includes a broad range of health-care improvements for **all veterans**, including expanded mental-health services and grants for homeless veteran programs. It also includes a number of significant **improvements for female veterans** and the health care and services VA provides to them. **Improving the care**

and treatment of female veterans is a priority. The women veterans' provisions include:

- Studies into what access barriers exist
- Requiring VA to provide a detailed plan on services and how to provide them
- A detailed study on the long-term health consequences of female vets serving in the Gulf Region
- Improvements into training and care for military sexual trauma
- Providing limited child care services for veterans seeking treatment at VA
- Providing limited newborn care

Other important provisions: improvements to recruiting and retention of medical professionals; pilot program on dental care; expanded mental health counseling through Vet Centers. **SO PLEASE** contact your two Senators and urge them to support this critical bill and to pass it before adjourning for the year. Its provisions - **especially the ones aimed at female veterans** - are priorities. Let them know that you expect their strong support for this

legislation and that you expect them to quickly approve the bill.

PIQUETTE SQUARE

A \$21 million dollar Homeless Veterans' Complex is being built on the former site of the old Studebaker plant in Detroit. It will be able to house 150 Homeless Veterans' once it is up and fully operational. The facility will be approximately 100, 000 square feet, with 5000 square foot of commercial space on the first floor which will be devoted to counseling sections, a computer training area, and a commons area. Each of the 450 square foot apartments will include a full bathroom, living room, bedroom and a kitchen. 70% of the per month cost will be covered by vouchers issued by the State of Michigan, while the remainder will be paid for by the Veteran. The center offers transitional housing for the Veterans' for up to 18 months. The Michigan Veterans' Foundation will provide service staff and volunteers to assist in running the center. Southwest Housing Solutions is the owner of the complex. Their

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by Al
LaBrecque,
Retiree's Chapter
President

Retiree Involvement

All That Glitters Isn't Necessarily Gold!

BEWARE . . . All that glitters isn't necessarily gold! The Voluntary Early Out (VER) with a \$15,000. "incentive" must be looking pretty good to a lot of eligible APWU members in these unprecedented and uncertain times in the Postal Service. My advice is to **BE CAREFUL, BE SMART!** Every retirement situation is as different and unique as snowflakes. No two are alike. I draw on the experiences I witnessed in '92 when the "incentive" was equivalent to six (6) months straight time pay. There's been VERs since, however without any incentives.

At that time, some went out with about \$16K, on average, in their hot little hands. Those who had the minimum age and years of service, made out like bandits. Many who took 2% reductions for each year under the the minimum age or service requirements had regrets after the P.O. door slammed behind them for various and some similar reasons. I understand the \$15K "incentive" is an attractive carrot. Just remember that after Federal, State, or City income tax is deducted, you aren't going to bank \$15K. It may even put you into a higher tax bracket.

Guard against taking an early out purely for emotional reasons. There are too many things to consider. Only you know your individual situation. Do you have dependents other than a spouse? School aged kids? Make certain you have been covered by a FEHBP health insurance and FELGI life insurance for at least 5 years. Do you still have a mortgage or other significant debt obligations? Reliable transportation? Payments? Think about your regular living expenses; utility bills, "toys" like boats and recreational stuff and costly entertainment like golf. Appliances, hot water heaters, septic systems and wells don't live forever. This list could go on forever.

Be sure your spouse is in FULL agreement and understands all the perils. After the '92 early out, all too many found out they couldn't survive on their drastically reduced income, wanted to come back (sorry Charlie), and ended up working nickel & dime, and often undesirable jobs to make ends meet. I understand that it's so very tempting, especially in today's climate. One of the differences from '92 and now is that there aren't many of those nickel & dime minimum waged jobs out there to fall back on. Because these VERs pop up without ample time to make informed, wise decisions by set deadlines, this is a life changing decision being made practically on the

spur of the moment.

If you have doubts, maybe you shouldn't go out. I can't even imagine taking the offer that if you aren't eligible with minimum age and services requirements, that you can resign with a \$15K "buyout". That will be gone before you can turn around, and then what will you do? Be realistic, be careful, and be wise.

Retirees' Dept. Conference in Vegas Sept. 30-Oct. 2. I will be attending as directed by the State Chapter E-Board. Thus far, 2 delegates from the Detroit Chapter, and one from Saginaw will also be attending, along with the usual large contingent from Ohio. I just hope it will be worth our while and expense, not to mention the hassles of air travel and living out of a suitcase which are far from the anticipations of my younger days. This conference/workshops could either be a boon or a bust. The five **elected** National Retiree Delegates, one from each Region, are NOT authorized to attend with necessary expenses. That's an ongoing issue I have long considered to be an anti-retiree environment in our Union's leadership. Internal issues will surely be aired in our general sessions. Director Judy Beard advises that she will have an updated "vitals" pamphlet prepared

for the Conference for APWU member annuitants to provide to their designated spouse/survivors to record where your retirement, health & life insurance, TSP, military records, Social Security, and all other vital documents can be found, as well as OPM and agencies contact information for spouse/survivors upon the death of the annuitant. Among several internal issues I plan to address are; How much has been accumulated in the so-called "Organizing Fund" the \$1. dues increase was dedicated to, and how is it being applied, if at all? Also, reinstatement of the 1-year free membership for new retirees. I will report the actions taken in the next R.I column.

S.1507 intended to relieve the Postal Service from its prefunding future retiree health benefits obligations was amended in Committee which has made the entire bill unacceptable. This anti-union amendment would all but gut meaningful contract negotiations and put every contractual protection, including the vaunted no-layoff provisions at risk. Urgent e-mails, flyers, article after article in Union publications, phone calls, supplicating our retiree membership to call our Senators urging them to vote "NO" on S. 1507 as amended, was answered by retiree Chapter leaders and members nationwide. Some didn't

stop with their own State's Senators but extended to other Senators on the Committee. **APWU retirees answered the call to arms** issued by the APWU leadership. Now....will that same leadership and our active members and delegates to the 2010 National Convention in Detroit recognize and respect that our only value to APWU isn't just as their COPA "cash cows"? That IS the question!

Plagiarizing. I'm deferring to the "M.M." Editor by asking Mike to either continue in this column, or reprint, a column written by APWU national retiree advocate (and Local 480-481 V.P.) Joe Gordon in the Sept., '09 "Communicator" titled; "Part-time Service and Your Annuity Calculation". This excellent information is especially valuable to PTF's in the small A.O.'s and in the field. It's technical and Joe put it in layman's terms which he obviously carefully researched. It's definitely a 'clip & save' article. Brother Gordon obviously put considerable effort into this instruction and it deserves the widest distribution to benefit our PTF members contemplating retirement. (Editor's Note: Please see Joe's article in another column in this edition of the Messenger.)

Be Strong!

Part-Time Service And Your Annuity Calculation

by: Joe Gordon
480-481 Vice-President
Reprinted from: September 2009
Communicator

There seems to be a widespread misinterpretation of the rules regarding the effect part-time service will have on one's retirement calculation. I have seen articles published by several would-be authorities on this matter that I believe to be misleading. Unfortunately, the basic premise that part-time service can and will reduce your retirement benefit, as compared to a full-time retirement benefit, is true. The manner in which this effect is calculated seems to be the confusing issue.

A number of these articles claim part-time service will reduce your high-three calculation, which is technically untrue. The high three for part-time service is essentially the same, or "deemed" the same, as a full-time annuitant's. Instead, the impact of part-time service is determined as follows, which might

seem complicated. Hopefully, this will not be too confusing: The part-time proration factor is simply the ratio of the hours worked in a career that included some part-time work as compared to an entirely full-time career over the same period of time. Furthermore, the proration calculation is slightly different between CSRS and FERS. Are you confused yet? Read on...

COMPUTING THE CSRS PRORATION FACTOR

Compute the actual hours worked as a full-time and/or as a part-time employee over the period from April 7, 1986 to your retirement date (periods as a FTR count as 2087 hours per year regardless of actual hours worked). Then compute the number of **possible full-time hours** that could have been worked, for all periods of service performed on or after April 7, 1986 (again, each year is 2087 hours).

NOTE 1: Include time worked in excess of the scheduled part-time tour of duty, not to exceed full-time credit

in the computation of the **actual hours worked**.

NOTE 2: Include periods of creditable time in a non-pay status in the computation of actual time worked. The "actual time worked" during non-pay status is based on the tour of duty in effect immediately before entry into the non-pay status.

Divide the total **actual hours worked** by the total **possible full-time hours** to obtain the CSRS proration factor. (Round to the nearest percent.) NOTE: The CSRS Proration Factor Worksheet is provided in section 55C1.1-1. CSRS and FERS Handbook April 1998.

COMPUTING THE HIGH-3 AVERAGE PAY

Compute the high-3 average pay for the post-April 6, 1986, basic annuity by using any period of 3 consecutive years of the employee's service that will produce the highest average. The following rules determine what rates of pay to use in this computation.

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— The Enemy Within —

Turning the Postal Service over to private industry isn't a new idea. It's been supported for years by people outside our ranks. The Republican Party has been in power for 17 of the last 21 years. Former President Reagan formulated a committee specifically designed to investigate and report on the Postal Service. It didn't come as any shock when the main report of that committee recommended that private industry take over the Postal Service. The fact that the Republican Party is still trying to give the Postal Service to private industry under the present Bush (senior) Administration is also obvious. The changes made in the last year, and projections for the near future, show a trend to change us to a private concept that could easily result in a private takeover.

There are many old Postal people who will say taking over the USPS isn't possible, simply based on history. It's true that we are unique in that we serve every hamlet and village throughout this great land. It's true that our postage rate is the lowest in the world. It's true our production rate and volume of handling are higher than those of the rest of the world. In fact, we are probably the only major business that other countries can't do cheaper.

Other companies, like GM, Ford, or Chrysler may reap great profits by building cars with cheap labor in Korea, Mexico, or other countries, but that can't be duplicated with mail. Those countries, and others like them, can't move their own mail as cheaply as we move ours. Nothing beats a 25 cent stamp when you compare it with the cost of postage around the world. In addition, nothing

compares to a 25 cent stamp when you compare it to the cost of anything else. You can't buy anything for 25 cents anymore, and it doesn't matter what you want or where you are. A candy bar from a machine starts at 50 cents and everything goes up from there. A 25 cent stamp will send a message from one side of this country to another and hand deliver it to its destination. It's a plain and simple fact; You can't beat the value of a 25 cent stamp.

We know all of that's true, and most of the public would also, if they took the time to consider it. The fact that it's true won't save us, because the people who want to own the Postal Service don't care about the service it provides or the money it saves the public. They care about one thing; the profit that can be made if the government turns over the Postal Service. The 25 cent stamp will be gone with the \$3000 and \$4000 car. It will be a thing of the past, like the \$10 phone bill, and the \$100 plane ride. "They have tried to get us before," some say, "and they never have. What makes you think they can do it now?" The answer to that is simple. They no longer are attacking us from the outside. THE ENEMY IS WITHIN.

They couldn't destroy the USPS as long as we provided the great service at the rate we do. They realize that in order to destroy the USPS, all they had to do was destroy the service. They had to enter with decision-making people who would destroy the service-- people who would structure and mold us into something that duplicated private in-

dustry. The reason for that also, was simple. If we resembled private industry, then private industry would be able to take over. If the service were destroyed, the public would obviously support private industry taking over.

To accomplish this, someone had to be put in charge to promote and accomplish their goals. There would have to be members put on the board of governors who supported their goals. That was easy to do, because the governors are appointed and the Republicans were in office for 17 years. They next needed a Postmaster General who would destroy us from within. That too, was easy. The PMG is appointed by the board of governors.

It admittedly took them a while, because every PMG they appointed was impressed with the dedication and effort of our tradition. That converted a lot of PMG's to support the USPS and its employees. These PMGs found, as all before them had, that the employees are the service. The great tradition of the USPS had been handed down from employee to employee, and therefore the service and tradition still existed. They learned that, in order to destroy the USPS, it would be necessary to destroy its employees and tradition. A plan was devised and finally a PMG was appointed to do just that. It's also possible he may have designed the plan himself, but regardless of where it came from, it's in effect.

Our survival as the USPS is being put to the test. Employees are being fired at the fasted rate in our history.

Excessing and cuts in hours are happening everywhere. Consolidation of MSCs and elimination of jobs, both management and bargaining unit are being ordered, while our work is given away. Job security is a thing of the past for everyone, including management. These people even eat their own.

The greatest threat to all this is the employees of small offices throughout this land. Small offices are the backbone of the USPS. Small offices provide service to every American regardless of profit, plain and simple, they keep private industry out.

The Postmaster General is ordering attacks on postal employees. He is demanding personnel cuts, both in management and in the bargaining unit. He is purchasing equipment and machinery at a blinding pace. A recent purchase request for \$800 million worth of bar code readers demonstrates his push for automation. That is three times the number of other letter sorting machines currently operating nationwide.

Don't confuse bar code readers with LSMs. Bar code readers don't require operators like LSMs do. Bar code readers can also sort mail so it eliminates carriers sort time as well as clerk sort time. Management -- at least at the top -- also has programs in the works to supply the necessary knowledge to businesses so they can bar code their own mail. It's like pre-sort mail is now, going directly to the carrier, only this type of pre-sort will increase by the thousands.

I know some will say that this is only
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Update On Craft Conference

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ever, please legibly sign. I will withhold your name if you so desire.

VERA (Voluntary Early Retirement Authorization) and Your Job(s). If you are planning on retiring from the Postal Service under the VERA, please let your union know. I can tell you that in my local, we are having a difficult time obtaining the names of those who are retiring. The reason we are requesting the information is two-fold. First, you hold a position in the US Postal Service. When you retire, the union wants to make sure that this position is filled in accordance with the National Agreement. If we are unaware that you have retired, until it is too late, it is possible that the union might miss this position and someone who has waited for a position, such as yours, may not have the opportunity to bid on it. Secondly, the union would like to recognize you for being a union member. In many locals, the union gives "Retirement gifts" to members who retire. We can't give you one if you we don't know that you are

retiring. So . . . if you are retiring . . . Let your union know!

Union Plus. At the recent Postal Press Association convention that I attended in August, one of the classes dealt with Union Plus and all the benefits we enjoy as being an APWU member. Not only do we have benefits from the ABA (Accident Benefit Association) and the APWU Voluntary Benefits, but Union Plus is another benefit few seem to use. According to the Union Plus representative that was teaching this class, the benefits include, but not limited to:

- Health Club Discounts
- Credit Cards (with protections in case of Lay Off, Strike, or Disability)
- Scholarships
- Prescription Discounts
- Pet Insurance
- Hybrid Union-Make car Rebate
- Computer Discounts
- plus many more.

There is a link on the MPWU website to learn more about what Union Plus has to offer. Check it out!

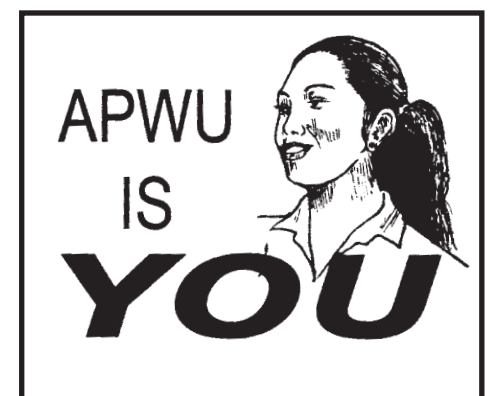
Union Activities and Labor Day 2009. If you or your local had any activities that you or they participated in during the 2009 Labor Day Holiday and have some pictures that you would like to display/show off, please digitally send them to me and I will place them on the MPWU.com website. In the future, I would like to honor members and locals who have participated in their local community in the spirit of Labor. If you have walked in a picket line with a sister union, send me those; if you have assisted in the community, send those pictures to me as well. The list is endless. We need to show not only other members, but the country as well, that Unions not only make up the middle class, but without unions, the nation as a whole would seriously be in trouble. Our communities, our friends, our families, we are all a union. We stand together and support each other when times are tough and celebrate with each other during the good times.

The name and word 'Union' is not a bad word. We as a nation must look

beyond words and to their actual meaning. The current philosophy of our nation states that the word "Union" and "Liberal" (for that matter) are bad; however, on the contrary these words actual mean: Unity and Freedom.

In closing, I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate MPWU Retiree Chapter President Al LaBrecque on his write-up in the July/August 2009 National Tabloid and his win as a Trustee in Hawes Township. For those who did not read it, he won by one vote. Congrats!

Until next time, Yours in Solidarity.



"Fire Millen" Advice We Should Follow

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their time and money on anything but football.

The postal service brought in Jack Potter to lead us into the 21st century. Under his leadership the "casual" employee was brought in to replace the career employee because the problem with the USPS was the under performing career employee. At this time the postal service had the highest rating of all government agencies and its mandates of universal service standards and sanctity of the mail were aggressively pursued. Potter's strategy was a disaster. These less paid, no commitment employees for the most part did not have the skill of the professionals they were replacing. If they did obtain skill many times they left for career positions elsewhere. Overtime skyrocketed as vacancies were not filled or partially replaced by casuals. Productivity dropped as overworked regulars tried to maintain standards 12 hours a day working alongside a constant stream of rookies. Finally the blizzard of grievances came to arbitration and the company paid enormous financial settlements as these actions were clear violations. When the overtime, casuals wages and the settlements/contract enforcement costs are added together the USPS paid good money to lower standards for the American people. For the first time in my postal career I saw committed mail sitting around the floor not worked. This was not going on at only my facility, but at some of the largest plants in the country. I also started to hear many complaints from friends and relatives about mail service

where before it was extremely rare if at all. Fresh off of that waste of billions of postal dollars Potter decided that the employees are still the problem but the solution is extreme automation. To be clear, the automation of letter sorting was clearly a winner for the USPS when they started this process in earnest in the 1990's. It single handily has allowed us to operate below the rate of inflation while keeping our high service standards. Potter's automation was knee jerk and in no way profitable or in the best interests of the postal service. The Tray Management System cost millions and added more maintenance employees than the mail handlers it was suppose to replace and was plagued by delayed mail and mail flying off the system to the floor below. The GAO (general accounting office had to step in and stop the post office from spending money on this system that simply did not work). The APPS system cost billions and after several expensive modifications is still not operating as intended. Many buildings required expensive additions to house this machine. Even if it operate as intended the cost of shipping all the mail necessary to and from the machine to feed it at its intended capacity is astronomical. The net result is paying more money to work the mail after spending billions for new equipment and building modifications.

The FSSP system is spending billions to walk sequence flat mail volume that does not exist. Once the cost of transporting the mail volume to and from the FSSP site is calculated this system will cost more money to oper-

ate than the one it replaces. The "savings" in the carriers having flats walk sequenced is simply non existent by the USPS's own admission. More billions down the drain. Not to be deterred Potter and his leadership have decided it is still the employees that are the problem and consolidation is the answer. This would be laughable if it were not so devastating to the 200 years of excellent service our team has provided. Former postmaster Marvin Runyan was not a loved man in labor circles. As a former executive at Ford Motor Company he brought an outsiders view to the postal service. "Carving Marvin" made and proposed several changes in the postal service that the unions fought valiantly against. However his logic of having processing facilities where the people live and not centralized in major cities is as sound today as then. The one cost the USPS has no control over and in some cases 100% preventable is transporting the mail. By having smaller processing centers more spread out he saved billions in moving mail to a distant processing center and right back to its area of origin.

Postmaster Runyan was committed to honoring existing service standards and proposed the future would require even faster mail service for the USPS to serve the public. By any measure the modern P&DC's (Processing and Distribution Centers) network is a huge success. Now Potter and his cronies in a desperate attempt to "do something" are trying to consolidate these P&DC's into "Mega Plants". They are attempting to take this action in an America

that is even more de-centralized than when Runyan was PMG. The only way to accomplish this is to lower service. Less collection boxes, earlier collection times, reduced window hours and mail taking longer to get to its destination are some examples. I would use the term delayed mail but after they move up the collection times those letters that before would have been delay mail are now not delayed mail and do not effect management bonuses. This action is totally without integrity but it is a slick trick to fool the public. Management has to get the mail off the street earlier to be able to send it to a distant facility. This strategy will result in increased costs as mail is transported back and forth. The mail stream will slow down in an ever increasingly fast pace world.

The USPS is at the critical point that our customers after a lifetime of excellent service are now about to give up on the postal service and spend there money elsewhere. After years of assigning blame it is time for a change. With all the state of the art communication tools at the USPS disposal (satellite conferences, its own intranet, teleconferences and a host of on-line monitoring tools) we still have a 19 century network of area and district offices. These expensive layers of management regurgitate the directions of headquarters staff in lieu of direct communication. This not only leaves instructions to local area and district interpretation it insulates headquarters from the needs of our customers and a sense of exactly how the billions of mail pieces are delivered daily. Yet reducing this expense is low priority for PMG Potter. We are now at the point where Detroit Lions fans went to games by the thousands with "Fire Millen" signs. The true owners of the team was not the Ford family but the Lions fans. They forced the change that was needed. The true owners of the USPS are the American people. It is up to us to educate them and their elected representatives the true state of the postal service and its causes. It is not overpaid workers or the economy. It is the beast that is old fashioned postal bureaucracy and it is time for it to go. We need new effective leadership with a commitment to universal exceptional service. We need streamlined management that is concerned with filing a valuable need for the American people not filing out their 991 form (postal resume). We need leadership that bases decisions on facts not conjecture. We need to clean house. Potter and his gang have proven incapable of leading this organization anywhere except ruin. It is time the owners of the postal service fire the USPS CEO and his staff, insisting on leadership committed to universal exceptional service for the American people.

Yours in Solidarity and Friendship.

Happy Veterans' Day 2009

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President, John Van Camp said, "It is unconscionable that men and women who have served America in the military should be homeless. Piquette Square will not only provide homeless Veterans' with a dignified place to live, but access to supportive services that will enable them to reintegrate into the community." Homeless experts estimate that there are in excess of 4,000 homeless people in Detroit, while the Depart-

ment of Veterans' Affairs estimates that 1 of 3 homeless men nationally is a Veteran. The facility will be located at 285 Piquette. (Thank You to Gayle Burns of the 480-481 Area Local for this information)

SCHUR UPDATE

I've had two meetings in regards to the Marvin E. Schur campaign. One of the meetings was with The Honorable Ms. Kim Meltzer, State Representative from the District in which I live, while

the other meeting was in front of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, where I was invited to speak at a special Board meeting chaired by Ms. Carrie Torrice. I have had several phone conversations with several Sate Senators and State Representatives. The Honorable State Senator Mr. Switalski, of my District, has sent me copies of a package of Bills that have been prepared to be presented to the Michigan State Senate. I just received my Consumers Energy bill, and inside was a brochure that gave a phone number and web site to contact them to sign up for a special program, if your 65 or older, so you will have shut-off protection. Maybe it's a start, we can only hope for the best.

REFRIGERATOR STICKER

Please take a minute to cut this out, and keep it in an easily accessible place just in case it's needed;

IF YOU ARE A VETERAN IN EMOTIONAL CRISIS AND NEED HELP RIGHT NOW, CALL 1-800-273-8255, AVAILABLE 24/7 AND TELL THEM YOU ARE A VETERAN ALL CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.

Is It Overtime Or Does It Just Pay The Same?

Since the district has determined there will be no overtime at the stations and branches, Managers have decided to play a game of charades. Here are some examples:

1. Can't bring a clerk in on overtime? Have a supervisor, carrier, or manager do the work. Settle the grievance at Step 1. Pay the OTDL clerk at the overtime rate. The pay does not show up as overtime hours worked, and the district does not see the OT red flag. Problem solved.
2. Can't bring a clerk in on

overtime? Place them on a 1723, change their days off, and pay them out of schedule premium. The pay does not show up as overtime hours worked, and the district does not see the OT red flag. Problem solved.

3. Repeat 1 & 2

4. Can't bring a clerk in on overtime? Do it anyways, because you have no choice, then have a nice time off on your suspension.

— reprint by: Dawn Ecker,
V.P. Via January 2009 Postmark
publication

Senate Approves Short-Term Relief For USPS

APWU Web News Article #119-09, September 30, 2009 [Updated Oct. 1, 2009]

The Senate approved an appropriations bill Sept. 30 that includes emergency financial relief for the Postal Service. The Fiscal Year 2010 funding measure (H.R. 2918) passed by a vote of 62-38. President Obama signed the legislation that evening.

The postal provision gives the USPS one year of financial relief, allowing it to make a reduced payment to the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund for future-retiree health benefits. Instead of making a scheduled \$5.4 billion payment before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30, the Postal Service had to pay only \$1.4 billion.

Before the vote, the Senate rejected two points of order raised by Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Judd Gregg (R-NH) that were designed to derail the bill. Sixty votes were needed to overcome the procedural challenges. In addition to Senators McCain and Gregg, Sens. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Jim DeMint (R-SC), and Tom Coburn (R-OK), spoke in opposition to the legislation.

THE PAEA

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 (PAEA) established the retiree fund and required the Postal Service to make annual payments to cover health insurance premiums for USPS employees who will retire in the future.

The PAEA specifies the size of the payments for the first 10 years — through FY 2016, the range is \$5.4 billion to \$5.8 billion. After 2016, the

Office of Personnel Management is directed to recalculate the amount of the remaining liability, and to establish a payment schedule to amortize the remaining liability.

The House voted in favor of the combined spending legislation (House Continuing Resolution 191) on Sept. 25 by a vote of 217 to 190.

Although the funding measure provides less relief than earlier bills, its enactment will help the USPS in

the short-term to survive the most devastating economic downturn since the Great Depression.

The passage of funding legislation does not preclude further consideration of S. 1507, a bill introduced by Sen. Tom Carper (D) of Delaware. An amendment offered by Sen. Coburn and approved by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committee provides “that an arbitration board shall consider the financial condition of the

Postal Service in certain labor disputes,” promoting that issue to the forefront of issues to be considered by interest arbitrators.

Sen. John McCain of Arizona also introduced amendments to S. 1507, which are likely to be considered when the bill is considered on the Senate floor.

APWU members are once again urged to contact their two U.S. Senators to oppose S. 1507 as currently structured.

USPS Career Employees Have Decreased

On Rolls and Paid Employee Statistics (ORPES) published last week shows that USPS career employees have decreased by 40,110 since Same Period Last Year (SPLY). Over a 3-year period there are 61,151 less career employees. The chart below covers the last 3 years from 2007 through Pay Period 20 2009 (September 25, 2009). note: USPS Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2009.

A few sidenotes:

- Rural Carriers gained 1,316 positions in 2008 and lost 1,151 by PP 20 2009

- Vehicle Maintenance positions increased by 14 in FY 2008 and

lost 167 by PP 20 2009

- Building and Equipment Maintenance Personnel gained 300 positions in FY 2008 and lost 717 by PP 20 2009

- Headquarters On Rolls and Paid Employees Stats for PP 20 2008 listed 2,857 positions, however the USPS

2008 Annual Report (unaudited) lists 2,892 positions.

- Out of 61,151 Field positions eliminated over the past 3 years — 39,778 positions were eliminated within Same Period Last Year (SPLY). Clerks lost 17,065 positions and City Letter Carriers 11,003 (28,068).

	3-Yr Difference	PP 20-2009	FY 2008	FY 2007
Field Employees				
Postmasters / Installation Heads	1,613	23,672	25,250	25,285
Supervisors / Managers	3,823	28,812	31,787	32,635
Professional Administration and Technical Personnel	1,598	6,460	8,010	8,058
Clerks	26,303	177,842	194,773	204,145
Nurses			134	160
Mail Handlers	4,938	52,954	55,812	57,882
City Delivery Carriers	21,474	200,658	211,661	222,132
Motor Vehicle Operators	613	8,113	8,558	8,726
Rural Delivery Carriers — Full Time	1,151	67,749	68,900	67,584
Building and Equipment				
Building and Equipment Maintenance Personnel	717	39,531	40,248	39,948
Vehicle Maintenance Employees	167	5,252	5,419	5,405
Area/ Operations Offices	269	1047	1316	1281
Total Field Employees	61,151	612,090	651,868	673,241
Total Career Employees	61,634	623,128	663,238	684,762
	3-Yr Difference	PP 20-2009	FY 2008	FY 2007
Headquarters	81	2,811	2,892*	2,858
Inspection Service — Field	374	2,817	2,890	2,991
Inspector General	4	1,155	1,159	1,147

Part-Time Service And Your Annuity Calculation

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If all of the high-3 period falls after April 6, 1986 (as it will for most current employees), use only full-time rates of basic pay for the position. In other words, for part-time service performed after April 6, 1986, use “deemed” full-time rates, the rates the employee would have received if the service had been full-time.

Compute the unreduced post-April 6, 1986, basic annuity by using the applicable steps of the general formula, and the high-3 average pay obtained in paragraph above. The amount of creditable service the employee performed before April 7, 1986, and the amount of total creditable service the employee performed, will determine which step(s) of the general formula (1.5%, 1.75%, and/or 2.0%) apply to the post-April 6, 1986 computation. The computation may involve one, two, or all three of the percentage rates of the general formula. Prorate the amount obtained to reflect the difference between full-time

and part-time service. This is done by multiplying the annual amount for a full-time employee by the CSRS Proration Factor obtained previously.

COMPUTING THE FERS PRORATION FACTOR

Compute the actual time worked and the number of full-time hours that could have been worked, for all periods of civilian and military service creditable under FERS

NOTE 1. Include time worked in excess of the scheduled part-time tour of duty, not to exceed full-time credit, in the computation of the actual time worked.

NOTE 2. Include periods of creditable time in a non-pay status in the computation of actual time worked. The “actual time worked” during non-pay status is based on the tour of duty in effect immediately before entry into the non-pay status.

Divide the total actual hours worked by the total full-time hours to obtain the FERS proration factor. (Round to the

nearest percent).

NOTE 1. The FERS Proration Factor Worksheet is provided in section 55C1.1-1 CSRS and FERS Handbook, April 1998.

COMPUTING THE HIGH-3 AVERAGE PAY

Compute the high-3 average pay for the basic annuity by using any period of 3 consecutive years of the employee’s service that will produce the highest average. Use only the full-time rates of basic pay for the position. In other words, use “deemed” full-time rates, the rates the employee would have received if the service had been full-time.

NOTE 1. See Chapter 50 CSRS and FERS Handbook April 1998 for general instructions about how to compute a high-3 average pay and an explanation of basic pay rate.

NOTE 2. Use deemed full-time rate to compute only the basic annuity. Prorate the employee’s pay according to the part-time tour of duty in determining the following:

COMPUTING THE UNREDUCED BASIC ANNUITY

Compute the unreduced basic annuity as if your entire career was full-time in accordance with Chapter 50, section 50B3.1-1.

PRORATING THE UNREDUCED BASIC ANNUITY

Prorate the amount obtained above to reflect the difference between full-time and part-time service. This is done by multiplying the annual amount obtained above by the FERS proration factor computed in Step 2.

THE FINAL ANALYSIS

Regardless whether you understand the methods defined above, you must recognize that part-time service will most likely reduce one’s anticipated retirement benefit. Thus, one should consider the likelihood when considering a move to a part-time (regular or flexible) at or near the end of one’s postal career. This could be substantial if one’s period of part-time is lengthy or the hours worked per year are considerably less than 2087.

— The Enemy Within —

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automation, which has always increased jobs before. You must understand that under this PMG, employment has to be reduced. The plan requires a cut in hours every time equipment is purchased. A dollar-for-dollar savings must be demonstrated to this PMG -- or else. A perfect example of that arose at a recent meeting in the Central Region.

We were advised that 280 window clerk hours would be eliminated during the fiscal year. I asked if they were aware that Sears wasn't playing Post Office anymore, and would that cause the number to be reevaluated. I was told by one of their experts on automation that contracting-out had no bearing on the reduction. I asked what did, and was told that the cost of the IRTs caused the reduction. I explained that the IRTs don't replace window clerks. IRTs might assist clerks in providing better service, but they don't replace them. I was then advised that the cost had to be made up, regardless. That type of mentality makes this use of automation different from any before it. This automation isn't designed or supplied to improve service. It is sup-

plied to ELIMINATE EMPLOYEES.

Their plan is obvious if you know their goals. They want to buy machines under the guise of improved production and lower labor costs. But they have to justify the cost, especially for amounts like \$800 million. So, jobs are eliminated. When employees are eliminated, particularly on a large scale, so is service. Management's goal is to eliminate small offices, establish mail factories that can't work, and replace people who provide service with machines that don't. If the USPS emerges as 100 mail factories that can't provide service, private industry can do no worse. It doesn't matter whether it works or not. If it did, they wouldn't change it in the first place.

The enemy is no longer on the outside, the enemy is within. The enemy is destroying the best postal service in the world, intentionally and from the inside. There can be no other reason for asking Sears and others to do our work. We can't control the service others would perform. So obviously we are giving away work without control of service.

It's true Sears has nationally withdrawn from this job offer by the USPS, but the PMG will give it to anyone who will take it, and he is still trying. What business gives away it's work without control

of the service unless it doesn't care about the service? You should also be aware that postal officials are seeking to change next-day delivery requirements, yet another attack on service.

The current leaders have turned the Postal Service into a runaway locomotive, and a lot of unsuspecting people are adding fuel without knowing it. They do it either because they are afraid for their jobs, or because they think they will be taken care of if only they shut up. I have news for them, if the service goes, so will their jobs. If the clerk craft and other APWU crafts are eliminated, how many supervisors will it take to supervise machines? If the supervisors are eliminated, how many managers will it take to manage nobody?

It doesn't matter about the mail handlers either. If there are no clerk jobs to get, their union will have nothing to do. And if the carriers think they are the only ones left, that is the biggest joke of all. Who will they drink coffee with during EI meetings? And what will be done with the excess carriers when case time is no longer required? Do they think cluster boxes and other schemes for mail pick up by the public haven't been considered? If not, they will be when you're the last ones left and the enemy comes for you.

THE ENEMY IS WITHIN, and we had all better realize it and prepare to fight. If they destroy the service, private industry will pick up the pieces, and 700,000 of us will be looking for work. The headhunters the PMG is using had better realize that their heads will roll too.

The APWU has always led the way in battling these problems, and we obviously will here also. We have no choice. Nobody else is, and our jobs are at stake. We are first on the firing line, and as usual, our crafts will receive the most cuts. Some management jobs are being cut, with more of the same planned for carriers and mail handlers. Top management even plans to pit office against office to keep work.

They tell us that low productions and grievances cause problems with the "decision gods." They use fear of excessing, and they pit craft against craft, as well as office against office. The choice is clear: We can either lie down and take what they give us, or stand up and have some chance of stopping them. I say we STAND UP. If the USPS is destroyed, I don't want to be part of helping it happen. Stopping a runaway locomotive won't be easy, but lying down won't even slow it.

We need all crafts and managers who really care about our jobs, and the USPS itself, to get involved before it's too late. The enemy is within, and if we are to prevail, everyone has to be involved. The USPS leadership has to be exposed for what they are doing,

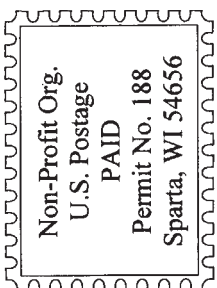
and for what is happening inside. They can't be helped in reaching their goal of destroying employees and the USPS itself. We all have to stand together in this fight, and we have to do it now.

The service cuts have to be exposed, and any inside information on that has to reach Congress and the public. The APWU can't fight this battle alone, and we shouldn't. If the tradition of the USPS is going to survive, if our children and others will ever find a career in the USPS, and if someone will remain to support our retirement the battle has to start now, and it needs every one of us.

The current leaders in Washington are on a self-destruct path. They are a new breed of management, and they require managers to blindly follow, or else. Nobody is safe under their leadership, and that includes all of us. Because you do a good job or suck up won't stop them. That's proven in their MSC consolidations. Everyone in the way was hit by that steamroller, and the after-effects are still coming down. Those driving the steamroller may have thought it was fun, but we will see what they think when they become the targets. This battle can't be won by retirement either. Someone has to pay into that fund to keep payments coming. Everyone is in this battle, and they better get involved. We're not only fighting private hawks and Republican politicians on the outside. The enemy is within, and is destroying the USPS. We all have to get involved, and we have to do it now.

Editor's Note: The preceding article first appeared in the Michigan Postal Workers Union publication in 1989. I recently noticed that it is still be circulated and reprinted in various publications around the nation and felt that it needs to be republished once again in our own Messenger. Joe Foster from the Charlotte Area Local and Editor of the "Perspectives" said this in his reprint of this article: "The first and only time I met the author of the article was at a PPA editor's conference in Milwaukee, WI. This much I know about Leo Persails: He is highly regarded by my PPA counterparts. His views are based on long years of harsh experience, and he has written perhaps the scariest analysis of current postal events that I've seen yet. It has been lightly edited for technical reasons -- punctuation, sentence structure, etc. Read it, then pass it along to someone else-- like your supervisor, or that non-member at the next case who thinks a few bucks for union dues are too much. The war is on, the stakes are high, and if we are to save the Postal Service as an institution of, by, and for the people, we will have to do it ourselves. Ignore Persails at your own risk. You could end up unemployed."

— reprint Originally published in 1989
by Leo F Persails
Flint Michigan Area Local



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