



# Michigan MESSENGER

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by Gary  
VanHoogstraten,  
President

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### *A Choice As To What Road To Take*

There comes a time in one's life where there is a choice as to what road to go on. As I look at the company I stand with, Leo Persails, Lynn Charles Walker, and Clyde Hartshorn, I can only say it was and has been more than an honor to be one of the State Presidents for the Michigan Postal Workers Union.

All the hours, miles, meetings and the number of members throughout the United States has made it well worth it. It has been an interesting road of highs and lows since becoming a Board Member back in 1984 and I have no regrets. I can say that the MPWU has been like a rock to me. No one, without the help of the Officers and members, would have had the fortitude to deal with the slings and arrows that have assailed upon us. It would have been in a much emptier place without you, but, it is also reassuring to

know that as I leave this position, I know the MPWU is and will be in good hands.

Yes, it was some 26 years ago that I came trembling through the hallowed portals of this great Union, not knowing what to expect or what a rollercoaster ride I was in for: but one thing for sure, I have never had any second thoughts.

think there would be enough room in the book and without a doubt I would probably miss someone, suffice to say: Thank You, to all of you for whom I have had the privilege to work with and along side in our great union, some who have taught me so much. It is with gratitude that I look back and see what progress

were there for all of us. It is because of their sacrifice and fortitude to the future for what we now have.

Even though I am leaving this office, but I will continue watching the progress with interest. The Union will always have a special place in my heart. I am certain that you will all go on to achieve

far better things than I did, but the friends I have made will always be remembered. Brother Leo Persails has always said the two most important functions of the Union are: representation and education. I believe our State Union has followed his words.

I would like to close for now by stating a quote from the former coach and now deceased from North Carolina State, Jim Valvano, "Don't give up, don't ever give up". Like I have told many of the officers as of late, I will only be a phone call away. I say now, that I raise my glass to all of you as I bid farewell.

*"I can say that the MPWU has been like a rock to me. No one, without the help of the Officers and members, would have had the fortitude to deal with the slings and arrows that have assailed upon us."*

I do want to say that it is hard to put it into words as to how much this Union has meant to me. Not just the business side, but all the fun and laughter we shared. Yes we had some long nights, laboring away preparing for what was on the agenda for the next day. If I were to try and thank each of you, I don't

our Union has made. I want to pay tribute to my colleagues for their support and even for those doubters as well. Thank you for the never ending supply of black coffee, or an occasional cocktail, but not to forget the outcome of our challenges.

I would be remise if I didn't thank all of my deceased sisters and brothers that



by Michael A.  
Long,  
Editor

## Editor's Report

### *Looking Over The Past Two Years*

As I sit here, the last article for this term of office, I look at what has happened in the past two years and just sit in awe.

Here we are, two years later, we have elected a Democrat for President of the United States, we have full control of the Senate and House of Representatives for the first time since the early 1990's, and we still seem not to be able to get our collective heads out of our butts long enough to make positive change for the country as a whole. Even though, we have done our best, lobbyist are still in control of Congress, and thus, the country. No matter what we do, how much we give (please don't take this as to stop giving, we can at least try and block some), and what we do, Lobbyist are still going to have an unlimited

bank account, and staff to contact and influence our representatives. I personally feel, until we address this, nothing will change. This goes for our State Representatives in Michigan as well. Since our Representatives are now Term Limited, the only people who have any knowledge of the past are the lobbyist in that field/area. And once again, they have the money, staff, power (whatever you want to call it) to affect change.

While I am on my Legislative Soap Box, I just learned something within the past few weeks that I never knew, and thought I would share. Did you know that the office staff of your representative, while may work for your representative, does not technically work for them? I was shocked to learn that the Political party that your representative is associated with (either Democrats or Republicans) can come into their office, and if you alienate them, they can

fire the staff. I was always under the assumption that if you work for your representative, you work for them. Guess I was wrong.

Next Edition. Just a reminder, that the deadline for the next issue of the Michigan Messenger is May 15, 2010. As a guide, all deadlines are the 15th of every odd month.

Postal Soap Box. Well, it looks like Potter is not going to let up on the 5 day work week. It is now been stated that when (am not going to say if anymore) we go to a five-day work week, there will be drastic lay-offs and reductions (mostly in the Carrier craft). According to the Postal Reporter.com: "Potter said the **Postal Service would eliminate about 26,000 positions through employee attrition and lay off 13,000 part-time workers**, most of whom carry the mail once a week as substitutes." 13,000 lay offs! Would someone

please explain to me something . . . how does a company save money with lay-offs (besides the benefits). I have always been told that when you apply for unemployment through the state, they send you a check; however, they turn around and send a bill to the company that laid you off to cover that payment (e.g. Unemployment Insurance). Where is the savings?

On a final note, I was asked what the delay is with the Michigan Messenger reaching your homes as of late? I can only say one thing . . . the Postal Service. The last issue of the Michigan Messenger was submitted to the Printer on February 2nd, and was printed and put into the mail stream on February 11th. I was notified by some locals that some of their members did not receive the paper until March 5th or even later. There is no reason for that, except for

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by John  
Marcotte,  
Legislative  
Director

## Legislative Report

# Full Scale Media Blitz

the American people.

In this announcement Potter freely admits he has lower service already and in areas he and his henchmen have determined are not profitable he has initiated office closings for financial reasons. There is one big problem with this supposed well thought of plan. It's illegal. The Postal Reorganization Act clearly states in its **first paragraph** that under no conditions is the USPS to reduce service to rural customers for reasons of cost. So of his many options he picks the one that violates the very law that created the USPS. In fact he admits he has already violated US Law by closing and reducing services to rural customers.

As for his statement that he needs arbitrators to consider the financial health of the postal service when negotiating contracts, this is worded to sway a public that does not understand how a quasi-governmental agency work. A private company is responsible to its stockholders to make a profit. Its executives have huge incentives that only pay if the company makes a profit and pay directly related to how much profit is made. An executive who purposely spent money on unnecessary deployment of faulty machinery, outsourcing work at additional cost and by hiring excessive management employees would not only ensure a loss of 70-85% of her/his income, the stockholder (board of directors) would fire the CEO immediately.

We have no stockholders, our PMG and 40 of his corporate thugs each made a \$25,000.00 bonus last year. In this same year Potter spoke of an unprecedented drop in mail revenues creating a crisis at the USPS. If capable of giving themselves bonuses while a company under there control is spiraling toward insolvency these managers are more than willing to purposely operate the postal service in a constant deficit to

fraudulently drive down postal workers wages and benefits.

Mr. Potter spoke of needing more flexibility in the postal workforce to be more profitable. This is hilarious considering this same man agreed to make all PTF's in offices over 200 man years' full time regular employees in 2007. 2007 is a full ten years into the drop in mail volume caused by the internet. This was a great benefit won at the table by the APWU but only a madman or a man on a mission would have signed that contract. I'm going to go with the later and the mission is to

- (a) Create a patsy to take the fall (APWU) so no one researching the financial condition of the postal service when his colossal mismanagement delivers the inevitable resulting bankrupt USPS.
- (b) Allow postal management to achieve there long standing goal of not having to staff small unprofitable post offices and to break the negotiating power of the APWU.

Mr. Potter spoke of employee expense being 80% of the cost of operating the postal service. This sounds like a lot to the average American. However, we don't make anything. We have no raw material expenses, we do not pay property taxes, we are self insured. We transport your mail from point a, to point b., it's pretty much all we do. Like all service industries we are labor intensive, it will always be that way no matter what changes are made. Potters release of this blurb is misleading and unfair but par for the course for this man.

Potter spoke of the great need to make changes in a hurry before it's too late for the postal service to survive. The postal service has been a pillar of our nation since its inception and thrived for more than 200 years through many changes. The one change we can't survive is the corrupt way its work has been outsourced at a greater cost to private companies and the constant stream of faulty decisions coming out of

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## Looking Over The Past Two Years

*continued from page 1*

the mail. Unfortunately, even though we work for this company, we can't control what happens. The only thing I can tell you, and I know it isn't much comfort, is that as soon as the paper goes to the printer, within a day or two, it is up on the website to be viewed, downloaded, and/or printed. I would encourage you to do this.

Until next time.

Yours in Solidarity.

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

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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.



by Richard  
Blake,  
Clerk Craft  
Director

A “seat at the table”? — over the past 10 years or so, the Clerk craft has lost roughly one hundred thousand jobs, far more than any other category of career postal worker; during that time we’ve also lost a greater percentage of our jobs than any of the other large crafts. Of course, a large percentage of these job losses are due to increased automation, and there’s no doubt that a large percentage of the losses can also be attributed to declines in mail volume. But is that the whole story? How many of those hundred thousand jobs have been “lost” (I’m putting “lost” in quotations because I really don’t think that the work associated with these jobs has actually disappeared) due to daily encroachment by bosses and workers in other crafts? And, how much of this daily encroachment has been caused by completely unreasonable reductions in Clerk staffing, such that there’s really no other way to get the work done?

Thinking about these troubling job losses, and hoping that we might find some new ways to prevent these losses from continuing, I’ve come to the conclusion that a **big** part of the problem is that the Clerk craft is the only major craft where employee staffing is solely at the mercy of the employer. For that matter, not only is the *staffing* solely at the mercy of the employer, the actual *data used to make the staffing decisions* is also solely under their control, and is produced solely by the employer. Let’s look at some examples from the other crafts. In the Maintenance craft, Handbook MS-47 pretty much dictates what the staffing should be in a given office; if a building is 70,000 square feet, for instance, the employer can’t write down that it’s 64,000 in a pretext to reduce staffing, because the Union *has the opportunity to double-check management’s figures*, and the Union will demonstrate that the actual number is still 70,000. If a given office has 500 light fixtures, then that dictates how many man-hours must be devoted to such tasks as changing light bulbs, dusting the fixtures, etc. The employer can’t claim that the office only has 400 light fixtures, because the Union *has the opportunity to double-check management’s figures*, and once again, the Union will demonstrate that there are actually 500 light fixtures instead of 400. The employer simply cannot dream up a perceived “target number” for the Maintenance staffing in a given facility, and then produce doctored “numbers” intended to magically justify that target number, *because the Union has the ability and the authority to challenge those numbers* — unlike in the Clerk craft.

In the Motor Vehicle Service craft,

## Clerk Craft Report

# A “Seat At The Table”?

there are standard units of time associated with every conceivable repair that a postal vehicle might need, *and those units of time are not subject to being unilaterally changed by the employer*. If changing the brake pads on an LLV is allotted 2.2 hours, then that’s the end of the story. A mechanic’s supervisor can’t legitimately order him or her to complete a brake job in 1.4 hours, and the postal service can’t *unilaterally* change the allotted 2.2 hours to 1.4 either, and then eliminate Mechanic positions based on such a change, without being subject to challenge. Fortunately, the postal service can’t come up with “data” which demonstrates how 6 drivers “should be” able to drive 7 trucks, either (though I sincerely believe that some of their Function Four “experts” could do so if given the chance). In the Letter Carrier craft, we’ve all seen how NALC representatives are involved in the route inspection process. Management simply cannot claim that there are fewer houses on a given block than there really are, *because the NALC representative will challenge them*; management cannot deliberately under-count the volume of mail on a route which is under inspection, *because the NALC representative will challenge their figures*. Just like in the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Service crafts, management cannot come up with a preconceived “target” of eliminating a certain number of routes in a given office and then produce doc-

tored “numbers” to justify their target, *because the NALC’s involvement in the process won’t allow that to happen*.

But what about in the Clerk craft? It seems that almost from one year to the next, management keeps changing their methodology used to determine Clerk craft staffing - RAP, AWPS, CSV, SOV, and countless other acronyms have been used over the years to describe management’s latest staffing methodologies. Has the APWU had *any* input into these methodologies at all, or into the units of time associated with various tasks? Nope — all of that is *exclusively* under management’s control, and has not been subject to our challenge. When we’re at meetings to discuss Function Four reviews or proposed excessing, do we even have the ability to *understand* the “numbers” thrown at us by management, let alone the ability to *challenge* those numbers? I’ve been in meetings with management where they state that their latest methodology only permits X amount of time for a certain task - even though I know perfectly well, as a Clerk with 25 years of experience on the workroom floor, that *nobody*, except maybe Superman, could possibly complete that task safely and properly in such a short period of time. What contractual mechanism do we have, as Clerk stewards, to challenge such ridiculous numbers? Unfortunately, **none**. In a general session at a previous Multi-Craft Conference in

Las Vegas, some of our national Clerk craft officers had to field some pretty hostile questions from the crowd about this exact issue; the response at the time was that they would “look into” filing a national dispute under Article 34 — which never happened.

Let me be perfectly clear that I do not intend this article to serve as an indictment of the actions of any of our Clerk craft officers at the headquarters level over the past decade, since I’m speaking with the wonderful clarity of 20/20 hindsight. I’m simply hoping to encourage some discussion about this issue as we head into negotiations for our next National Agreement. Could we possibly have prevented some of the job losses which we **know** have been precipitated by “Function Four” (or “CSV”, or “SOV”, or whatever) if we had a greater involvement in the work evaluation process for Clerks (what some of our officers refer to as a “*seat at the table*”), like NALC’s involvement in route inspections? I’d like to think that we could have. Would we have to pay a steep “price” in order to get something like this into our next National Agreement? Probably so . . . but wouldn’t it be worth it if we were able to save 10,000 jobs over the course of the next contract?

I’d love to hear from some of the members and officers out there about this issue.

In Solidarity.



by Joe  
Wrobel,  
Motor Vehicle  
Craft Director

## Motor Vehicle Craft Report

# Wheels And Wrenches

tests in the safety-sensitive transportation industry, the APWU was able to negotiate these provisions, which ensure that every employee is afforded at least one last chance following a positive drug test. (The DOT would remove from safety-sensitive employment any worker who engages in illegal drug use, whether or not they are on the clock at the time of the drug use.) Whereas breath tests can detect alcohol blood levels for a relatively short period of time, drugs can be detected long after their initial use. As a result, employees may test positive for drugs even if they are not impaired at the time of the test; additionally, they may test positive for drugs that are found in prescription and over-the-counter medication. The new rules represent a big step forward: They prevent postal officials from firing employees for first-time positive tests. The old language permitted management to discharge employees, although it was not required”. Once again I encourage everyone to read the entire article there

is a lot of good information in it.

At this time I can report that the pilot PVS program seems to be at a stand still as of now. That does not mean that it is dead, it only means that management has stopped pushing for it in this area. We need to remember that the contract expires this year, and the possibility of management trying to get some small part of the program into the contract is a possibility that we can’t ignore. I do know that our national president did make it clear that article 32 would not be open to negotiations if he can help it. This means a couple of things, first that the contracting out of our work is still going to be an uphill battle, second is that we have to find a new approach to challenge contracting out of our work. Once again if any MVS craft employee sees another craft employee doing our work please file a grievance so that this can be stopped.

A lot of Districts have been getting some of the so called “green” vehicles *continued on page 4*





by John  
Smeekens,  
Veterans  
Director

Former MPWU State Secretary-Treasurer and APWU Central Michigan Area Local past President, William "Bill" Smith, recently received the following information, in a letter form, via U. S. Mail, from the CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE A CHICAGO. Dated Chicago, January 28, 2010.

• • • •

"Dear Mr. Smith,

*It is my pleasure as Consul General of France in Chicago to inform you, on the behalf of the people of France, that the President of the French Republic has named you Knight of the Legion of Honor\* for your valorous action during World War II.*

*My fellow countrymen will never forget your sacrifice. Their children and grandchildren are as proud of your courageous actions as can be your own children and grandchildren.*

*This outstanding distinction is the highest honor that France can bestow upon those who have achieved remarkable deeds for France. It is also a sign of true gratitude for your invaluable contribution to the liberation of France during these difficult times in the history of our nation.*

*It is a privilege for me to send you my sincere and warmest congratulations. Please accept my very best wishes for yourself and your family and friends.*

*Merci beaucoup for all you did!*

*Sincerely yours,*

*Jean-Baptiste Main de Boissiere,  
Consul General."*

• • • •

One hell of an Honor bestowed upon one of our Veterans' from World War II. And considering the war ended in 45,

1945 that is; it only took about 65 years to get. In 2005, Mr. Smith was finally awarded his Bronze Star and Combat Infantryman's Badge, by Sen. Carl Levin. Mr. Smith and his wife Kate are enjoying retirement in Holt Michigan. Mr. Smith, "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY." And thanks to Al LaBrecque, our own State Retiree Chapter President, for the above information.

#### PTSD UPDATE

The military has agreed to expedite a review of records, of thousands of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who were discharged with post-traumatic stress disorder to determine whether they were improperly denied benefits. The agreement stems from a judge's order in a class action lawsuit originally filed by several combat veterans who alleged the military illegally denied them health care and other benefits, and to others who were discharged, because of the disorder, during a six-year period that ended Oct. 14, 2008. Legal notices will be mailed to about 4,300 veterans informing them that they can "opt-in" to the lawsuit until July 24 to participate in an expedited review. Attorneys for the veterans estimate that millions could be paid to veterans under the agreement, with some veterans receiving hundreds or more dollars in increased monthly benefits. Former Army Sgt. Juan Perez, 36, of Owosso, Mich., said the resolution of the suit filed in 2008 in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims was a relief. Perez, a father of five who did two tours in Iraq, said he struggles with migraine headaches and an eye injury related to a head injury sustained in Baghdad. He also has nightmares and takes medication for his mood related

to PTSD. Since he left the military, he said he and his wife were laid off from their jobs and declared bankruptcy. "I'm glad that they are finally moving forward and re-evaluating the Soldiers, that need to be re-evaluated, and doing the right thing," said Perez. "It's been kind of a struggle not only for me but a lot of individuals that didn't get what they were supposed to get in the first place." An anxiety disorder, PTSD can develop after a terrifying event where the person was physically harmed or felt threatened. Symptoms range from flashbacks to problem drinking and/or drug abuse. The lawsuit will address the issue of disability ratings given by the military to veterans that were discharged with PTSD. Each of the plaintiffs was given a rating of 10 percent or less. The law requires the military to assign a disability rating of at least 50 percent to those discharged for PTSD, said Bart Stichman, co-executive director the National Veterans Legal Services Program, a nonprofit organization that represented the veterans. Since October 2008, the military has given a 50 percent rating to those discharged with PTSD, Stichman said. The higher rating ensures that the veteran receives lifelong monthly disability payments, free health care for the veteran and the veteran's spouse, as well as health care for the veteran's minor children. If a veteran qualifies for a higher disability rating, they may receive back pay as well as reimbursement for health care expenses.

#### BLUE WATER NAVY

In a January 2010 Bulletin, a new expanded list of Navy ships, acknowledges operations on the inland waterways of Vietnam. In addition to the USS Ingersoll (DD 652) (previously shown in M21-1 MR), it lists 11 other deep water ships which plied the bays and rivers of Vietnam during the periods shown. Even more interesting, the VA now acknowledges that certain types or classes of ships (e.g., Swift Boats; LST's) either operated full time in the inland waterways of Vietnam or frequently enough, when sent to Vietnam, to receive blanket recognition. With this latter category, VA states that if a veteran can be placed on the ship during its tour in Vietnamese waters, it concedes that the veteran is eligible for the herbicide presumptions. For the named ships, it is still necessary to show that the veteran was a member of the crew during the ships "tour" in Vietnamese waters. Personnel records should show "from/to" dates for assignment to the ship. For ships without specific dates in Vietnam, VA will still have to identify when the ship was there. Often, this can be done by

reviewing the ships history found on the internet. You should obtain the most authoritative evidence possible and submit it to YOUR VSO OR COUNTY VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVE, to support YOUR claim. The V A may accept it without additional verification. I have a copy of the C&P Bulletin that discusses the above information. It may help you in your claims process. Contact me and I'll get a copy to you and/or your VSO or County Representative.

#### THE WALL

Someone sent me the link below, which is a virtual wall of all those lost during the Viet Nam war with their names, some bio, and other information on our lost comrades. It's a very interesting link. Pass it on to other veterans, or those who you think would like this.

First click on a state. When it opens, click on their City of residence, then click on their name! There are help buttons to assist you in your search.

<http://www.virtualwall.org/iStates.htm>

#### FEMALE VETS

The Senate unanimously passed The Caregiver and Veterans' Omnibus Health Services Act which included 7 key provisions for Female Veterans'; improvements in training and care for military sexual trauma, child care services for Veterans' seeking treatment at the V A, more services to Veterans' in rural areas, studies on access to care for female Veterans', emergency care outside of the VA for catastrophically disabled Veterans', caregiver support and counseling and a stipend for family members taking care of Veterans', and enhanced programs aimed at reducing homelessness among Veterans'.

They need your help. The Pentagon's office in charge of accounting for U. S. Troops missing from the nation's wars is asking for help. They need DNA samples from family members of Americans missing in action. 68% of Korean War families, 66% of Vietnam War families and 63% of Cold War families with unaccounted-for-relatives have provided samples. But only .01% of World War II families have done so. The office has stated that they identify some 75 MIA's annually, but many more could be identified- and quicker- if more reference samples were on file. They ask that families of missing personnel-both uniformed and federally employed civilians- contact the specific service in which the person served:

ARMY: 1-800-892-2490, NAVY: 1-800-443-9298, AIR FORCE: 1-800-531-5501, MARINE CORPS: 1-800-847-1597, STATE DEPARTMENT: (202) 647-5470.

## Wheels And Wrenches

*continued from page 3*

in their fleet. Remember that postal management has agreed that "All vehicle component systems, including air conditioning, are to be kept operational and functional," so management has the responsibility to train the mechanics

on the proper repair of these vehicles. I understand that some of the trainers from the TTC are going out to the districts and doing the training rather than sending the mechanics to Oklahoma. We will have to see how that works out.

## E-Payroll

Payroll is up and running. If you go to [liteblue.usps.gov](http://liteblue.usps.gov), scroll down to payroll and click you can pull up your pay stub. The stub online is pretty detailed, it even shows how many stewardship duty time hours you had for that specific pay period.

There is also a link that you can click on to opt out of receiving your check stub via mail . . . Can you believe it!





# 2010 MICHIGAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION 22nd Biennial Constitutional, Retiree And Auxiliary Convention

**Friday, April 15-17, 2010**  
**Ramada Lansing Hotel And Conference Center**  
**Lansing, Michigan**

## CONVENTION CALL

The 22nd Biennial Convention of the Michigan Postal Workers Union will convene on April 15, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. at the Ramada Lansing Hotel and Conference Center in Lansing, Michigan and will adjourn at the conclusion of business on April 17, 2010.

### Costs:

**Hotel: \$83.00** (plus 15% taxes (total price includes self-parking )

Registration: \$75.00 per delegate

⇒ Resolutions need to be submitted to and received by Executive Secretary Harold Juhl by March 15, 2010.

Resolutions need to be signed by both the President and Secretary of the local submitting (hard copy) along with a copy on digital media (e.g. Flash Drive or e-mail). A template for resolutions is available on the website.

⇒ A list of all delegates attending the convention need to be submitted by March 15, 2010. (via the website)

**Article 7 of the MPWU Constitution states: "Time of the Convention and Election of Officers"**

Section 1: The Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, shall convene the same year as the National Convention of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, on any Thursday, Friday, and Saturday in April or May. In any week except that which precedes Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Mothers Day, or Memorial Day.

Section 2: It shall be the sole responsibility of the State Union to plan and expedite the proceedings of the Convention, including suitable and ample accommodations for delegates. It shall further be the responsibility of the State President to appoint two (2) members of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, and the President of the State Convention Committee to work with any Local who represents the Convention location as voted under Article 7, Section 5. The financial responsibility of the State Convention shall be solely that of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO.

Section 3: The Convention shall convene at 9:30 a.m. on the first day and recess at 11:30 a.m., immediately after the committee assignments and reconvene at 3:00 p.m. The Constitution Committee shall meet the day prior to the first day of the MPWU Constitution Convention. This time is to be utilized for official use by the committees. The

Convention shall remain in session until completed.

Section 4: Nominators for, all candidates for Executive Board positions shall be the last order of business, Friday of the Convention. No candidate shall be allowed to run for more than one (1) office. Any nominee must accept or decline a nomination for office prior to the closing of nominations. Convention Delegates as well as the Convention City shall be the first order of business on Saturday, 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. shall be reserved exclusively for purpose of caucus.

Section 5: The election of Officers will take place at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday of the Convention. A President, Secretary Treasurer, Executive Secretary, Director of Education, Human Relations/ Compensation Director, Legislative Director, Editor, (3) Craft Directors, Area directors, Convention Delegates,

plus Convention City, will be elected at this time, by secret ballot.

Section 6: [A] The three (3) Craft Directors shall be elected by secret ballot in accordance with Section 5 above, but Craft Directors shall be elected from delegates from their Craft only. [B] Area Directors shall be elected by secret ballot from delegates, present from their Area only. If a Craft or Area Director is not represented by at least one delegate to the Convention, or if there are no candidates from a specific Craft or Area, for the position of Craft or area Director, then the President shall appoint a member of that Craft or Area to that position, with the advise and consent of a majority of the Executive Board. [C] If after three (3) ballots have been cast, a tie exists, a toss of a coin will break the tie.

Section 7: All terms of office shall be from the date of the certification by

Election Committee, until the conclusions of the elections, at the next scheduled MPWU State Convention.

Section 8: Any retired member, who is paying full dues to their Local Union, may hold office in this Union. Any retired member who retires from State Office, can at the discretion of the Present, be used in an advisory capacity.

In addition, **Article 9 (Representation), Section 1**, states: Each Local Union or Area local affiliated with the MPWU shall be entitled to representation in the State Convention on the following basis: All locals shall receive one delegate for each twenty (20) members or any portion thereof. To be computed on the basis of the previous twenty-four (24) month's average paid membership. In addition, no Local may pay more than three (3) months back dues at one time, prior to the State Convention.

## Full Scale Media Blitz

*continued from page 2*

the PMG's office. I just became aware that the FSSP is being deployed even though the OIG said it is not ready for deployment. This is a multi-billion dollar project that the OIG says is a waste.

Jack Potter is a sick joke as a PMG/CEO. He is simply a pawn for a mailing industry that is addicted to huge subsidies by the postal service. We all need to rise up and educate the public and our Congressman so we can end the nightmare that is postal headquarters leadership. Further we need to push for the 78 billion that the USPS overpaid on Potters watch to the civil service retirement fund be directly applied to the future health care costs of our retirees. This would almost pay off the full amount of that requirement and allow the USPS to operate without the crushing 5 billion dollar payments to this fund yearly.

### 2010 CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

The following was written prior to the March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline and I was kindly offered an opportunity to quickly amend it since the passing of Health care reform a few days later by the House of Representatives. I chose to let it stand, for while the House has passed the bill previously passed by the Senate it will need to go through a reconciliation process and legal challenges mounted by 39

states. So in short this is far from over. Further I still feel while negotiations on health care were going on for over a year other legislative issues could have been taken up and passed that help the working family. So while slightly dated I feel it is worth your time reading it.

The status of the legislative process as it pertains to members of the MPWU is a complicated question to answer as we assemble in congress in 2010. On the positive side the union movement made significant a victory by assisting in getting Democratic Party majorities in both houses of Congress and a Democratic President. President Obama has been an outspoken supporter of universal service to postal patrons and a strong viable Postal Service with six day delivery. On this we all can be very proud.

While the APWU and the MPWU are strong supporters of health care reform it is unfortunate that this issue is sucking all the air out of this Congress. Let me be clear; the Democratic Party at election time is strong supporters of unions and the American worker. However over the last couple of decade's legislative help for unions or the American worker has been scant. After president Clinton's signing of the Family Medical Leave Act how many of you can think of any laws passed that help you directly as a union member or worker?

It is my opinion that after the health care debate bogged down it was time

to work on other agenda items while the Democrats controlled both houses of Congress. One of those big items is the Employee Free Choice Act. This act would illuminate the intimidation and dirty tactics that companies use to prevent unions from entering a work place and ensuring a fair days wage to their employees. With super majorities in both houses it should be quick work to end debate and pass this over due bill.

By restarting the health care debate I feel the Democrats are going for broke on one issue and ignoring all the good that they could accomplish in other areas. Like it or not the fact is the American people simply do not trust Congress to reform health care in the manner that Congress has attempted so far. I feel it is time to move on to other items and keep working on better health care bill behind the scenes. Allowing Republicans to try and grab some high ground by filing law suits and scare Americans may not be the best approach. With some momentum on their side by proving to the American people that Congress can pass other quality legislation it would set up a better health care bill for passage prior to the election. Republicans blocking a good health care bill at election time is not good for getting Republicans elected.

By the time this is read by you six months is all that remains of this Con-

*continued on page 7*



by Al  
LaBrecque,  
Retiree's Chapter  
President

**Offline!** My technologically ancient Millennium 2000 computer gave up the ghost. So, at this writing I'm offline for the foreseeable future, relying on the phone, good 'ol U.S. Mails (as I prefer), and smoke signals. Lost my extensive e-mail address book too. So, it's back to basics!

**NARFE Response:** In a not unexpectedly curt written response from NARFE Pres., Margaret L. Baptiste, to my critical letter expressing concerns as a unionist and dues-paying NARFE member that; the 2010 NARFE National Convention is being held at the anti-labor DeVos-Amway combine's hotel-convention facilities in Grand Rapids; Baptiste outlined the site selection process, beginning with a 2006 NARFE convention delegate vote. The revealing part of her letter stated the bid was "enthusiastically supported" by the then Michigan Federation president, members of the Grand Rapids chapter, and site selection committee who "looked at a great many factors". They either missed or ignored the "factor" that DeVos-Amway is the very antithesis of Organized Labor in Michigan! It speaks volumes about the mindset of NARFE leadership, baring NARFE's apparent disregard for the guiding principles of Organize Labor.

**Retirees Respond!** I'm gratified by a surprising amount of requests I've received from members across Michigan, even one from Alabama, for my 2008 "Messenger" column on the basics of Medicare Parts A & B, and have been pleased to respond to each. So far, at least, I haven't discovered any "misconceptions" in that information, and my offer stands. It's comforting to know someone actually reads this column!

**State Retiree Chapter Convention:** By the time you read this we will be (or already have) convening the 5th Biennial MPWU State Retiree Chapter Convention in Lansing, the 10th Anniversary of being chartered as the 2nd State Retiree Chapter in the APWU. We'll be electing Chapter officers for the 2010-2012 term, considering Resolutions for the APWU National Convention this August in Detroit, determining our activities for the next 2 years, and entertaining speakers that will include Retirees' Dept. Dir., Judy Beard. There will be a valuable exchange of information that I'll report in the next column. Primary will be action on Resolutions to provide greater inclusion of retirees in our Union, and Department structuring issues. It's time for us to get down to brass tacks on our APWU retiree initiatives agenda for the 2010 APWU National Convention. And, I'm looking forward to being with "my kind of people" again.

## Retiree Involvement

# Offline! Relying On The Phone

**Excise Tax Threat!** With the U.S. House and Senate versions of health care legislation at a stalemate (at this writing), the Obama Administration is attempting to revive health insurance reform with a 'modified' proposal. What's disappointing about the White House proposal is that it still contains an **excise tax** on so-called "Cadillac" plans. An "excise tax" used to imply a "luxury tax". The way things are shaping up, maybe retirees' ability to pay their health insurance premiums **WILL BE A LUXURY!**

Although reportedly delayed until 2018, it would impose a tax on FEHBP insurance plans for retired and active postal/federal workers; specifically Blue Cross/Blue Shield standard family plans. While this is the sole objection to overall insurance reform, this excise tax renders it unacceptable. Any compromise to soften the hit to our annuities by applying a delayed formula is equally fatal. Retiree FEHBP health insurance premiums are deducted from **after taxed** annuity incomes, while active worker's since 2000 have had the option of having their premiums deducted from their pre-tax earnings. Retirees who can afford it the least are already taxed the most! Furthermore, retiree premium rates are already considerably higher than that of active employees.

At this rate, imposition of the proposed excise tax which may be as high as 40%, retirees on fixed annuities are at risk of being priced out of FEHBP coverage. If the excise tax proposal on FEHBP plans remains in any reconciled bill, making coverage unaffordable for retired postal/federal workers; all the positive aspects of reform will be of little consequence. While health insurance reform is necessary for our country and citizens; "reform" financed on the backs of retired and active working families is totally unacceptable!

**Beware!** He's out of mothballs! Alan Simpson, former GOP Senator from Wyoming, that's who! I was floored by TV news when Pres. Obama announced the co-chairs of a "bi-partisan" Budget (or 'Fiscal Responsibility & Reform') Commission, naming the dour Simpson and no-name Democrat, Erskine Bowles, as the other. I had a chilling flashback to 1993 when Pres. Clinton appointed a Commission on Entitlements (meaning hatchet jobs on S.S. & Medicare, and federal retiree benefits), with Simpson and the late aristocratic Senator Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) co-chairing. Their recommendations were brutal! Now, here we go again! It will be open season on Social Security, Medicare and federal retiree benefits for the privatizers and anti-seniors politicians in spite of "assurances" that S.S. & Medicare will be off limits. Bet me!

The AFL-CIO Alliance for Retired

Americans (ARA) warns; "...a "fiscal task force", "debt reduction panel", or "blue ribbon debt commission" makes it possible for the federal government to easily make substantial cuts to Social Security and Medicare with impunity. Any commission that convenes behind closed doors circumventing the normal legislative process and fast-tracking legislation through Congress, leaving no room for debate, constituent input, or amendments is fundamentally undemocratic and a betrayal of the American people."

"Congress thusly avoids any political accountability, as many commission supporters have expressly stated they desire...and most especially if action on commission recommendations does not occur until AFTER the Nov. 2010 elections, thereby insulating Congressional incumbents from political fallout. Social Security did not cause the debt problem and should not be eviscerated to solve it. The rising cost of Medicare is the direct result of the ever-increasing cost of health care, not the Medicare program itself."

Any members who are concerned that this Commission could adversely affect your current or future S.S. and Medicare benefits should be contacting their Members of Congress to tell them to ensure that any debt reduction measures are undertaken as part of the normal legislative process, not a commission whose agenda includes slashing S.S., Medicare or federal retired worker benefits.

**"Friends?"** Don't take our "friends" in Congress for granted! We have two influential U.S. Senators in Michigan, both "friendly" Democrats. One; Senator Debbie Stabenow, once again demonstrated her consistent support for middle class worker/retiree issues by voting "Yea" to provide a \$250 emergency payment (H.R. 4213) to seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities in 2010 to compensate for no COLA. It was defeated in the Senate 50-47!

Senator Carl Levin, joined by 11 other Dems and Senator Lieberman, and the majority of Senate Republicans, voted "Nay", and I want to know WHY? "Friends" have a right, even an obligation, to ask their "friends" in Congress "Why" when they vote against our best interests. Some long-term legislators tend to develop an arrogance of insulation from their constituents after repeated re-elections. While I don't suggest pulling support over a single issue, they shouldn't expect a free pass when they fail to represent our welfare. "Friends" shouldn't take "friends" for granted!

Now, another "friend", Senator Levin's brother; U.S. Rep. Sandy Levin (D-MI 12th Dist.), has been elevated to Chair the powerful House Ways & Means Committee, replacing NY Rep. Charles Rangel. Rangel has sat on our WEP/GPO

and Premium Conversion bills in Committee. In my view, Rep. Levin's voting record in the House on our paramount issues doesn't provide much confidence that we'll see WEP/GPO or Premium Conversion move out of Ways & Means for a floor vote anytime soon.

**Medicare Anomaly:** The .10 cent differential in the Medicare Part B premium, \$96.40 to \$96.50, while still confusing, is no longer a mystery. It's called the "Variable Supplemental Medical Insurance protection calculation." Yup, V-SMI!

The calculation formula is nothing short of the most creative math using rounding down to get the desired number I've seen since 4th Grade! If you've never heard of V-SMI, neither did the offices of Sen. Stabenow or Rep. Bart Stupak, until that is; they pried it out of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), who provided a detailed report on V-SMI, and the .10 cent differential calculation. It's too long for reprint here, but as always, I'll furnish members a copy upon request.

The report basically turns upside down what we were previously given to understand that; when there is no S.S. COLA increase, Medicare Part B premiums, by law, would not increase. Wrong! It actually means that your bottom line S.S. benefit will **not decrease!** CMS says Part B premiums DID INCREASE from \$96.40 to \$110.50. But, the V-SMI protection "held harmless" S.S. beneficiaries via their creative calculations which would confuse an elementary school math teacher! So, the Part B premium is \$96.50 for 2009 S.S. beneficiaries, but your net monthly S.S. benefit isn't affected. Just lends credence to the old axiom that; "Figures don't lie, but liars can figure". Go figure!

**Requiem:** We received the sad news via the "unofficial" APWU website; [21cpw.com](http://21cpw.com), that Brother Willie Sainato passed away in February. Brother Sainato was one of the first five (5) elected National Retiree Delegates to the '96 & '98 APWU National Conventions from the N.E. Region, which included Byron Denton-Western, Mack Walters-Eastern, Wallace Baldwin-Southern, and myself-Central Region. Willie actively participated in developing the historic Resolutions to amend the APWU Constitution which structured the Retirees' Dept. by establishing Local and State Retiree Chapters, and a dues rebate formula to Chapters. Sainato was retired from the NY Metro Area Local. *"Eternal rest grant unto him 'O Lord, and let Perpetual Light shine upon him. Amen."*

**Pearl of Wisdom:** "Just because you do not take an interest in politics, doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you". Pericles - 430 B.C.

Be Strong!



# 2010 MICHIGAN STATE RETIREE CHAPTER 5th Biennial Constitutional Convention

**Friday, April 16, 2010**

**Ramada Lansing Hotel And Conference Center  
Lansing, Michigan**

## MPWU STATE RETIREE CHAPTER CONVENTION CALL

The 4th Biennial Constitutional Convention of the State Retiree Chapter, Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, will convene on Friday, April 16, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. at the Ramada Lansing Hotel and Conference Center in Lansing, Michigan, in conjunction with the 22nd Biennial Constitutional Convention of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO. If business is not completed by adjournment on Friday, Convention will reconvene on Saturday. Time to be announced.

**Registration:** Thursday, April 15th, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; Friday, April 16th, 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

**Hotel Reservations:** \$83. (plus 15% taxes (which includes self parking). Ramada Lansing Hotel and Conference Center; 7501 West Saginaw Highway, Lansing, MI 48917; Phone: (517) 627-3211. Be sure to tell reservations that you are with "Group - PWU" to receive the proper room rate.

**Registration Fee:** \$75.00\*\*State Retiree Chapter E-Board officer registration fees will be included in expenses. (No registration fee will be charged for one-day commuter retiree delegates.)

**Meals:** There will be no American Plan. Everyone will be on their own for meals. State Retiree Chapter E-Board officers meal expenses will be included in authorized expenses upon submission

of receipts, beginning with Thursday dinner and ending with Sunday breakfast.

**Delegates:** Article 10, MPWU State Retiree Chapter Constitution states: "The voting strength of member Local Retiree Chapters at Convention shall be one (1) vote for every twenty (20) members, or fraction thereof. Representation shall be based upon the membership of each member Local Retiree Chapter in the year preceding the Convention. Members -At-Large shall be entitled to one (1) vote each. Each MPWU State Retiree Chapter officer holding an elective office shall have a voice and one (1) vote and shall be a delegate to the MPWU State Retiree Chapter Convention." (NOTE: In order to fulfill these provisions, Local Retiree Chapters are requested to bring their Local Chapter dues rebate printouts to the Convention to verify the voting strength of each Local Retiree Chapter. While it may not be necessary, we want to be correct and without question).

**NOMINATION & ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Article 6. "Elections". "All regular elections shall be held in conjunction with the election of officers of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO. Officers shall be elected by secret ballot vote. Notice of election shall be advertised in the *Michigan Messenger* at least thirty (30) days preceding the election. Nominations and elections

procedures shall be in accordance with the MPWU Constitution. Appeals to the conduct of elections shall be in accordance with the elections appeals procedures of the MPWU Constitution."

## ARTICLE 5. OFFICERS.

Section 1. "The elected officers of this State Chapter shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and up to three (3) Trustees."

Section 2. "To be eligible for office, a member must be in good standing for three (3) months immediately preceding the election, as certified by the Secretary-Treasurer."

Section 3. "To be eligible to vote in an election of officers, a member must be in good standing for the three (3) months immediately preceding the election as certified by the Chapter Secretary-Treasurer."

Nominations for State Retiree Chapter officers will be the last order of business prior to lunch recess on Friday, April 16th. Elections of State Retiree Chapter officers will be conducted at 3:00 p.m., Friday, April 16th. Election results will be announced prior to adjournment on Friday, April 16th.

**CREDENTIALS:** Credential cards will be issued to MPWU State Retiree Chapter Executive Board officers. Credential cards for Local Retiree Chapter delegates and M.A.L. delegates may be obtained from: Al LaBrecque; 3550

Wilson St.; Spruce, MI 48762, or call 989-736-8173; or e-mail: [allab@sisna.com](mailto:allab@sisna.com). Local Retiree Chapter credential cards are to be filled out showing both the name of the delegate and Local Retiree Chapter represented. Credentials must be typed or printed and signed by the Local Retiree Chapter President and Secretary, or Secretary-Treasurer. Green Cards should be furnished to the delegates for exchange with the Credentials Committee in Lansing when registering. Return the Blue Card at once to: MPWU Sec.-Treas., Darren Joyce; P.O. Box 1124; Flint, MI 48501, no later than March 30th!

**Resolutions:** Resolutions intended to be submitted to the MPWU State Convention for consideration by the MPWU State Convention delegates, must be submitted through a Local Retiree Chapter's parent APWU Local for submission to, and received by MPWU State Exec.-Sec., Harold Juhl, by March 15, 2010. Resolutions intended to be considered by the delegates to the State Retiree Chapter Convention must be submitted to the Trustees no later than 12 Noon, April 16th.

**Guest Speaker:** Judy Beard, National APWU Retiree Department Director

If you have any further questions, concerns, or need more information, please contact State Retiree President Al LaBrecque.

## Full Scale Media Blitz

*continued from page 5*

gress's term and the bulk of that will be used attempting to get reelected. Unless a real change in the direction of the Democratic Party happened between the deadline to submit this article to the MPWU Convention Report and the conventions commencement I think we are in danger of squandering a chance to really help the labor movement in this country. The Employee Free Choice Act must be passed by this Congress.

More good news is that the USPS is revealing itself to be exactly what we all know them to be. Clueless. In every instance that I have been privy to examine the data after a decision by management to consolidate operations it is obvious the USPS makes decisions first and asks questions later. This fact is not lost on our Congressional representatives. Republicans and Democrats both have been shocked that when they request the justification for decisions

of the USPS it is either non-existent or false. The postal service claims it must make these moves to save money yet can't seem to find any facts to support that these changes will save money. The OIG recently released a study that the USPS could not prove its recent consolidations saved any money at all. Oh and by the way, the OIG found the USPS paid over 70 billion too much to the Civil Service Retirement System, over the last eight years! We need to band together and educate Congress just what a self serving mess USPS leadership has become. As such I am requesting to hold a Legislative Committee meeting at this convention. The President, Executive Secretary, Area Directors as well as the Legislative Director have Legislative duties per the MPWU constitution. This will be a great way to coordinate our efforts with the Locals of the state to interact with Congress on our behalf. Yours in Solidarity and Friendship.

## Don't Use Your Personal Vehicle On The Clock! Why?

**Liability** — If you are involved in an accident while using your own vehicle for work purposes, there are specific exclusions relating to claims for vehicle and contents damage.

**Insurance Companies** — Your personal insurance company may not honor your claim if you were using your own vehicle for work purposes and your private coverage may be cancelled. If you think the Postal Service will cover your claim, think again.

**It's Illegal** — It is against federal law to transport mail in your private vehicle unless you're under a contract to do so.

**You don't have to!** — You cannot be required or coerced to use your own vehicle for official travel. If you find yourself in this situation, see your steward immediately.

**Please give it some serious thought before you decide to use your vehicle for travel between installations no matter how convenient it may be for you. Take a government vehicle or ask for a ride from a supervisor.**

For those of you who were wondering about this following item we published in the December 2009 issue of our newsletter (specifically the legal issue), I refer you to the U.S. Code, Title 18-Crimes & Criminal Procedure, Part I-Crimes, Chapter 83-Postal Service. This entire chapter deals only with the Postal Service. I refer you to subsections 1693, 1694, 1696, 1697, 1703 and 1731. I recommend you visit [www.law.cornell.edu](http://www.law.cornell.edu) to search the U.S. Code. This entire chapter is an interesting read. While our local president is not an attorney, it was his interpretation of the code that propelled us to make the statement that we did.





by Thomas  
Lothamer  
Area 7  
Director

### DON'T LET OUR MAIL SERVICE FALL APART

The U.S. Postal Service is proposing to close part of our local post office, which will reduce service for individual citizens and small businesses.

The USPS was founded to serve all Americans, yet the plans to downsize were developed behind closed doors, without community input and without concern for community impact.

For more information, call 1-877-7-OUR MAIL American Postal Workers Union

*— William Burrus, President*

These words were plastered everywhere four years ago in Philadelphia when we picketed as a Union to inform the American people of our situation and the pending problem many of our brothers and sisters were about to face.

The fight has trudged on and many people have moved. Some have lost their jobs over what were not termination offenses just a few years ago. You see the times

## Area 7 Director

# — Everyday Heroes —

are getting a little bit more cut throat and when it gets like that then the core of what was once vital has now become just a few words on paper.

Others have been excessed into a different location or job or both. The situation in our Associate Offices is what I observe first hand. Co-workers, fellow PTF's who you shared hours with is now a 204b performing the same duties so that the Postmaster and the P.O.O.M. can meet the projected budgets of some bean counter who is telling them that they can do more for less and then it becomes interpreted as well, the work is still here but we can look good if we shift the hours into a different pay location and call it something else. This is the first danger.

Then, there are the rural carriers. This craft has increased its work force 34.98% from 1997 through 2010. Rural carriers are distributing mail, getting POS training to work the window and have accountability just like the PTF clerks but yet they are not clerks, keys to the office, working the Postmaster's day off, handling reports, doing timekeeping, scheduling, dispatch.

The APWU has done some good work in

preventing closures of post offices in other parts of the Nation; at least we have fought a good fight. Some have been prevented and some have been drastically downsized and moved to other locations. Such as is the case right here in Michigan.

As an Associate Office representative, for the last decade it easy to see the trend that has been more of a shift of work than a reduction. In 1997 the USPS had 190,888,100,000 pieces of mail and in 2009 the USPS had 175,677,200,000 pieces of mail. This is a decline of 7.97%. Senior management staff increased 44.23% and the Inspector General increased 1039.6% over this same time period. These numbers are truly staggering, especially when you know by working in these offices that are best supporters is are communities. When people purchase on-line postage, they think they are supporting us, well they are supporting the business and maybe some level 18 Postmasters family but none of the working class because they were fired or reduced (starved) out of their position because their rural carrier co-worker was ready to cut their throat.

High Morals and good intentions are the first to go when it comes down to a person's livelihood. We need better protection out here in the field. Two hour guarantee per pay period doesn't make for a good argument when we

are trying to sign people up to support our cause. Our cause of preventing reduction in large offices has to begin in the protection of small offices or our destiny as a Union will be short lived. The incentive to be a manager is even more prevalent than it has ever been because the lack of protection that we are providing out in the field. There are those of us who fight but the main focus has been and probably will always be in the larger offices because that is where you larger voting is and that is a big part of our problem.

Let us not forget that it is the individual member that collectively makes us strong. The business of our Union should not mirror the business of the USPS. Our last dollar should be for representation. If the business fails then we do not exist has been an argument I have heard other representatives say, but to prevail with a manager because it is not cost effective is the greatest injustice imaginable.

Let's do a better job of serving our one man year offices, our three and ten man year offices. These are our everyday heroes. An everyday hero sits and waits to help others, doesn't pass judgment, helps fix the situation, then goes back and waits to be called again. A person you can always count on to be there if needed, well they need us. Let us not let the forces of a private sector attitude decay our fiber as a Union. Let us be an everyday hero and change the way things are perceived in our small towns and Associate Offices.

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Senator Dick Durbin  
309 Hart Senate Building  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin,

I am opposed to 5 day delivery for the United States Postal Service. This dramatic change would adversely affect business mailers and constituents throughout the United States. Customers might not timely receive essential medicines or critical legal documents with deadlines. Mortgage and bill payments would be delayed enough to create late charges.

The Postal Service is an essential operation for all businesses; therefore, I support the Postal Service's request for legislation that would revise the payment schedule for future retiree health care benefits. This is not a bail out but an adjustment providing time for economic recovery and mail volumes to return to normal levels, at which time, payments to the fund will resume.

Changing to a 5 day delivery will result in loss of revenue and will drive away customers dependent on mail 6 days a week. Postage rates will increase in May. Raising rates and cutting service would result in disaster for the USPS and our nation's commerce.

While the Postal Service faces enormous challenges due to reduction of mail volume; reducing service is not the answer.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,