

# Michigan MESSENGER

APWU  
APWU

Volume 41, Number 146  
May-June, 2010

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

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Legislative's Report .....                       | Page 2 |
| Editor's Report .....                            | Page 3 |
| Maintenance Craft Report.....                    | Page 3 |
| Veteran's Report.....                            | Page 4 |
| Area 1 Director Report.....                      | Page 5 |
| Area 12 Director Report .....                    | Page 5 |
| OSHA Cites USPS For<br>"Willful" Violations..... | Page 6 |
| Retiree's Involvement.....                       | Page 7 |
| MPWU Convention Photos .....                     | Page 8 |



by John  
Marcotte,  
President

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

# I Am Honored And Humbled

First of all I would like to thank the membership of the MPWU for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president. I am both honored and humbled to follow in the long line of outstanding individuals who have served in this position. I feel I need to single out the previous president Gary VanHoogstraten who decided to end a long and successful career of service to the MPWU by announcing his decision to not seek reelection this term. All of us have benefited greatly from Gary's leadership of the MPWU. As I told the executive board in my first meeting Gary's departure left some very big shoes to fill, I just hope I don't trip trying to walk in them. Gary has been absolutely wonderful in allowing me to contact him for advice and counsel and he has made himself available once again to the MPWU for whatever we need. Thank you Gary for all that you do and have done for us, I feel blessed to have followed you as president of the MPWU. Good luck to Gary in all of his pursuits now that he has the time to devote to them. I would also like to echo the executive board's recognition of the fine job done by Richard Blake while Gary was on a leave of absence of his presidential duties. I feel he handled a difficult situation with class and grace and should be commended for filling in so well in Gary's absence.

One of the first duties as president was to inventory and evaluate the assets of the MPWU and their storage and control. Looking at the square footage of office and storage space we receive and the ability to use the meeting spaces I feel this is a good return on the rental expense that the MPWU incurs.

I attended the Southeast Michigan district labor/management meeting in Troy on May 6th to represent the MPWU and present its concerns. I also participated in a meeting with Karen Schenck Southeast Michigan District Manager afterward. I expressed our position that the APWU has reduced over 100,000 jobs in the USPS's quest to right size the postal service, its now someone else turn to make sacrifices. I suggested not

filling the level 11 and 13 postmaster's positions and allowing the nearest higher level postmaster to supervise the office. The level 6 and level 7 clerks in those offices can serve the customer without having to be on a telecom or attend meetings. To shift this window clerk work in violation of the contract to the

postmasters is not only bereft of honor it costs the company more money. In today's high speed communication age having 5 postmasters within a ten minute drive is wasteful and unnecessary. This savings could keep many service locations open and continue the level of service our customers require. All

in all the meeting was well run with the local unions in attendance voicing the memberships concerns forcefully but in a professional manner.

The MPWU has engaged in some fiscal changes that we feel will allow us to operate in an efficient and open manner. Darren and I are working on getting these changes implemented and will present the results to a phone executive board meeting. Holding e-board meetings in person are very expensive thus making them hard to hold except at convention time. This is an attempt to engage the e-board throughout the year without sacrificing other priorities for the MPWU's financial resources. Darren has been supportive of any changes to make the MPWU's finances more stable and transparent. My feeling is that the result of these changes will be the membership will realize just how good a job our executive officers have done in spending our money wisely and keeping our books.

Once again thank you again for the pleasure of representing you as your president. I take the responsibility very seriously and will do all I can so the MPWU serves all of its members and is a vehicle to bring all Michigan APWU locals together in solidarity.

Yours in Solidarity and Friendship.

## MPWU Break-in Update

At the MPWU convention in Lansing our Secretary/Treasurer Darren Joyce's room was broken into and the materials he was working on were stolen. This included the MPWU checkbook, MPWU Credit Card, Checks made out to the MPWU, cash box with around \$2000.00 cash and other supplies. The Eaton Co. sheriff department was on the scene as soon as the theft was discovered. Darren quickly stopped all authorized use of the MPWU accounts and obtained new accounts. Using the fraud investigation team from the MPWU's bank (Fifth Third) Darren was able to track fraudulent transactions with the bank. Fifth Third was able to gather detailed information on a person of interest and is awaiting subpoena of bank records to aid in the investigation. Having been in contacts several times with the sheriff's department and I feel we are close to solving this crime and it is my hope funds may be returned to the MPWU. Due to sound fiscal planning and spending policies this theft has not hampered the operation of the MPWU or put us in financial hardship. I contacted all executive board members when it was revealed that checks written to the MPWU were being altered and cashed. If you wrote a check to the MPWU at convention please review your records carefully and if you find any fraud please contact myself or Darren immediately. Information will follow as it becomes available.

## MPWU New Executive Board 2010-2012 Being Sworn In





- President** .....John Marcotte  
U&C (989) 619-1741  
e-Mail: John.L.Marcotte@gmail.com
- Executive Secretary** .....Harold Juhl  
W: (517) 337-8753; H: (517) 651-7115;  
FAX: (517) 332-4391  
e-Mail: juh1ems@hotmail.com
- Secretary-Treasurer** .....Darren Joyce  
W (810)257-1530; U (810)239-0931;  
FAX (810) 239-6879  
e-Mail: fmal11@comcast.net
- Dir. of Edca. & Research** .....Michael McCain  
U: (313) 532-9305; H: (586) 445-8025  
e-Mail: mpwueducation@yahoo.com
- Editor** .....Michael Long  
U: (616) 776-1489; C (616) 302-1409;  
F: (616) 776-1536  
e-Mail: mpwueditor@yahoo.com
- Legislative Director** .....Paul Felton  
H (313) 884-8082; W: (248) 758-5786  
e-Mail: pdf111@comcast.net
- HR/Injury Comp. Director** .....Jennifer Amos  
W&U (616) 776-1489; F: (616) 776-1536  
e-Mail: jennia1957@aol.com
- Clerk Craft Director**.....Richard Blake  
H (734) 433-5461; U: (313) 532-9305;  
W (734) 665-1107  
e-Mail: rwb139@aol.com
- Maintenance Craft Director** .....Jason Rushing  
C: (736) 634-9294; H: (736) 953-0581  
e-Mail: jrushing@twmi.rr.com
- Motor Vehicle Service Craft Dir.** .....Joe Wrobel  
U (248) 543-3262; W (248) 546-7146  
e-Mail: yrubnu@hotmail.com
- Veterans Director** .....John Smeekens  
W (248) 546-7146; U (248) 543-3262;  
e-Mail: mpwuvetdirector@ameritech.net
- Area 1 Director** .....Larry Moyer  
W (248) 619-1590; H: (810) 678-3479;  
C (810) 338-2659  
e-Mail: apwu6723@bignet.net
- Area 2 Director** .....James Stevenson  
C (313) 465-0757; U: (313) 964-1100;  
e-Mail: jstevenson1995@yahoo.com
- Area 3 Director** .....Robin Ely  
W (734) 697-0047
- Area 4 Director** .....Laura Bullock  
W: (810)257-1567; U (810)239-0931;  
H: (810) 606-0465  
e-Mail: fmal11@comcast.net
- Area 5 Director** .....Joanna Atkinson  
W (989) 771-5718  
C (989) 295-5454  
e-Mail: Joanna.atkinson2@sbcglobal.net
- Area 6 Director** .....Mary Stephenson  
W: (517) 337-8753; C: (517) 612-3563;  
H: (517) 639-4873
- Area 7 Director** .....Randy Barnes  
W: (269) 353-5625; C: (269) 352-4283;  
e-Mail: rbarnes2310@hotmail.com
- Area 8 Director** .....Therese Cowan  
C: (517) 315-1304  
e-Mail: tac273@comcast.net
- Area 9 Director** ..... Jack Fryling  
W: (616) 977-1041; U: (616) 977-1050  
e-Mail: Jfry259163@aol.com
- Area 10 Director**.....Debra Holmes  
W: (231) 933-1020; C: (231) 642-6034  
e-Mail: TrophyHound@yahoo.com
- Area 11 Director**..... Richard Lemorie  
W: (989) 354-2520; H: (989) 356-2302  
e-Mail: Area11Director@mpwu.com
- Area 12 Director**.....Michelle Yuhasey  
W: (906) 776-2000; C: (906) 282-5756  
e-Mail: Michellieyuhasey@yahoo.com
- P.O.W.E.R. Rep** ..... Karen Hodges  
H (616) 453-7091; W (616) 776-1542;  
U: (616) 776-1489 e-Mail: kjhodmich@aol.com
- State Retiree Chpt. President** .....Al LaBrecque  
H: (989) 736-8173  
e-Mail: allab@sisna.com
- MPWU Aux. President** ..... Kelly Wilniski  
H (906) 779-1348; C (906) 282-2897  
e-Mail: Kwilniski@charter.net
- MPWU Historian**.....Debbie Brand  
H: (269) 729-9600; W: (269) 965-3286  
e-Mail: brandapwu@aol.com



by Paul Felton, Legislative Director

## Legislative Report

# Five Day — No Way!

The Postal Service proposal to eliminate Saturday delivery is not a done deal, and we should be organizing against it. Before USPS can implement this cutback, they need to get it approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) and also by Congress. That gives us a chance to fight it.

Some of our members may welcome the proposal, thinking it means weekends off for everyone. But I see disastrous consequences. I work at the Michigan Metroplex, one of the few facilities that has been taking in employees excessed from other installations. Reduce delivery to 5 days, and we will see massive bid abolishment and possible excessing from the Metroplex. Obviously we will no longer accept APWU-represented employees into our installation, and they'll also be competing with excess NALC employees. Five-day delivery would create a massive army of excess employees with nowhere to go (we already have some of our members excessed from Detroit to Pittsburgh; where will they send all the excess folks created by this proposal?). I believe this is part of a USPS strategy to convince an arbitrator to get rid of our No Layoff clause because excessing is totally unworkable. That's why the slow pace of the PRC in considering this proposal frustrates management – and gives us time to organize!

### ORGANIZE AND WIN

This is an issue that lends itself to an activist type of organizing. A type of organizing that doesn't just concentrate on the non-member, but rather on the good members who are supportive but not active. It's time to get them active, reaching out to coworkers and the community.

When talking to the general public,

we won't emphasize our own self-interest as postal workers. We should concentrate on two themes: 1) cutting back on delivery harms the customer, and 2) this reduction in service is not necessary financially.

### HARM TO THE CUSTOMER

Many citizens rely on checks that come on the first of the month; there are even some workplaces that mail out their weekly or biweekly paychecks. These obviously should not be delayed. There are people who get prescription medicine in the mail; a delay of a couple of days could be catastrophic. And on holiday weekends, there would be no delivery Saturday, Sunday or Monday, so the medicine would be delayed half-a-week! Seniors are comforted by the fact that a letter carrier who knows them comes by every day; in fact lives have been saved by carriers. These examples counteract the sentiment that "It's no big deal" if we cut out a day of delivery. It is a big deal to some of our customers.

### NOT NECESSARY

Management's estimate of a \$238 billion deficit over ten years is a fantastic exaggeration. As Bill Burrus wrote in the May-June *American Postal Worker* that would assume a yearly deficit several times larger than any deficit we've suffered so far. And if Congress would straighten out the ridiculous requirement that USPS spend \$5 billion a year to pre-fund retiree health insurance (a requirement imposed on no other agency), we'd be in pretty good shape financially.

But even assuming a modest deficit, the proper response is **not to cut service**. I'm not just talking about Saturday delivery; I'm talking about short-staffing the windows, closing branches and stations, and other cuts involving the people who actually do the work.

There is a ridiculous ratio in the Post

Office of 1 manager for every 8 employees – a ratio of 1 to 20 would be more reasonable. Headquarters personnel have increased 38% in the last decade, while bargaining unit positions have been slashed. And these are higher paid people, who cut into the USPS budget (at contract time their salaries will be included in the "labor costs" management complains about to an arbitrator).

The other big revenue issue is the more than 10 cent per letter discount given to the large mailers. We could do the same work in-house much cheaper. At a recent meeting of representatives of public employee unions (more on that later) I took out the envelopes in which my car insurance and electric bill were mailed to me. The postage on both of them was 33+ cents. The other people in the room were outraged. Why do these big companies get such a big discount when management is cutting service to the general public because it's short of cash?

### ORGANIZE

I encourage APWU folks around the state to work with the NALC where possible, and with other AFL-CIO affiliates where appropriate. In the Metro Detroit area, an NALC President came to a picket sponsored by the Detroit District Area Local APWU recently. And I'm working with a group of public sector unions, under the auspices of the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO, which is planning a town hall meeting on June 15th. We will get our message out to public school employees, bus drivers, etc, and we will hear their stories as well. I expect the 10 minutes allotted to postal workers will be split between APWU and NALC, which is fine; we should be fighting this battle together.

If your area doesn't have enough of a labor movement to build such an event, you can organize an informational picket and also a letter writing campaign. You can send letters to the following address: Postal Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations, 901 New York Ave NW, Suite 200, Washington DC 20268-0001.

This is an issue that we can mobilize our members around and we can win!

I end this section of my article with a poem . . .

### FIVE DAY POEM

While service is cut and jobs are slashed  
The management folks, they stay  
A ratio of 8 to 1  
Five Day – No Way!

When management forecasts a deficit  
*continued on page 6*

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        | Stevensville  |
| Battle Creek     | 480-481   | Pontiac         | Traverse City |
| Central MI       | 498-499   | Roger City      | Troy Local    |
| Cheboygan        | Gaylord   | 486-487         | Western MI    |
| Detroit District | Jackson   | Sault Ste Marie |               |
| Farmington       | Ludington | Southwest MI    |               |

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 Michael A. Long,  
Editor

## Editor's Report

# Changes Are Coming Soon

I would like to start by thanking the membership for electing me to another two years as your editor of this fine publication. I would like to thank Bob Atkinson for running for this position at the convention.

Following the convention, I was privilege to attend the Michigan Labor Press Educational Conference in Thompsonville, Michigan. This conference is focused on the educating of all union communicators, not only those of the APWU or NALC. Brothers and Sisters from all different unions (UAW, CWA, Steel Workers, etc.) are on hand to depart their knowledge of union communications and to share their struggle and learn from each other.

At this conference, we had three more representatives from the Postal Unions in attendance: Fellow APWU Union Brother Mark Raymond from the Flint Michigan Area Local, as well as three other Sisters from the NALC (one from the Lansing Branch and two from the Grand Rapids Branch). From what I learned, all of us learned a lot to share with you over the coming months.

One of the biggest changes you will find coming in the near future will be changes to the MPWU Website and an incorporation of the site into on-line social networking sites as well (most notably: Face book). As was taught at this conference, the majority of not only our active members, but even retirees are going on-line on these social

websites and looking up old friends and making new ones. Keep on the lookout for us.

At the Constitutional Convention, a few changes occurred to help make the Michigan Messenger more current and hopefully arrive a little sooner to you, the member. One of these changes is a mandate that the paper must go to the printer not later than five days after the deadline date. However, lately, the proper has been with the mailing of the Michigan Messenger. The last edition of the Messenger was placed into the mail stream on April 2nd. However, some of our members did not receive the publication until April 22nd or later. This is an issue that we must fix, and if you have any idea how to do this, please let me know.

My contact information is located on Page 2 of *the Messenger*.

On a closing note, is it just me or has the Postal Service really started to lose their collective mind (and no, it is not a typo, I mean "mind" as a single entity). What is this with details and changes to positions? The craft is being hit hard by cuts and cut-backs, but it doesn't seem to be affecting management. On the contrary, if one person leaves, they just slide another person into the position, and once all the shuffling is done, they take someone off the floor (which is already short staffed), and promote them into a 204b position. Come on now! Enough is enough! And yes, we are watching. If we need to be cut, make it across the board, not just to craft.



by Jason Rushing,  
Maintenance  
Craft Director

## Maintenance Craft Report

# Issues And Information

Hello APWU members of the great State of Michigan! My name is Jason Rushing. I am your newly elected MPWU Maintenance Craft Director. It is my pleasure to assist you with your Maintenance issues when the need arises.

Information about the Maintenance Craft is important, but it has to get put out to make it useful. I have a few items to talk about to keep everyone informed.

PAR forms. In the Maintenance Craft we use PAR forms to indicate what job, tour and off days we prefer within our group and level of work. The PAR form you fill out today could be filled tomorrow, next week or next year. There is no expiration date on a PAR form. If you change your mind after filling out a PAR form you can submit another, within limits of the contract, but whatever is filled out last has to be honored. You are not supposed to put on the PAR form the job you currently hold. Also, don't put on the PAR form something you really don't want.

Maintenance Craft has issues with too many contractors doing our work. For Custodians at the stations and small offices, work doesn't stop because you go on vacation, are out sick or have other reasons to be off. The work must still be completed. Management should solicit other Custodial employees for overtime or for longer absences a contract person may be appropriate, either way the work must be done. First opportunity to do Custodial work goes to the Maintenance

Craft, obviously. There is a pecking order if no other Maintenance employee is at your office. No, Supervisors, OIC's, Postmasters are not in the pecking order.

All work no matter how small needs to be documented by either work orders or PM routes. This is how you can help protect our jobs. We need to get credit for all the work we do on a daily basis. This would include snow removal, extra lobby mopping and cleaning during cer-

tain seasons for Custodians. Any work that is done needs to be documented so hours can go into the next staffing package.

If you have more specific questions, there are very good sources on our National APWU website, at [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org). The site has past arbitration awards, Step 4's and almost all the handbooks and manuals you could wish for in downloadable and PDF formats. The Maintenance Craft has specific CBA

language that applies only to us for job posting, filling, promotions, crossing occupational groups and many more items. The National website is a great place to look for needed information to show Management what the contract really says! Don't let Management tell you what the CBA says, look it up for yourself. Questions, concerns please feel free to contact me anytime at [jrushing@mi.rr.com](mailto:jrushing@mi.rr.com).

In Union Solidarity.

## Letter To The Editor

Gary Van Hoogstraten  
Former President  
Michigan Postal Workers Union

*"Only a fool would try to deprive working men and women of their rights to join the Union of their choice."* — this was a quote from President Dwight D Eisenhower.

I would like to begin by thanking Richard Blake and the entire Executive Board for stepping up and taking over in my recent absence. It was more than I expected and I am sorry for that. Not being able to attend the convention was one of the hardest things for me to swallow. If there was any way possible that I could have been there, believe me I would have. I appreciate all the cards, e-mails and phone calls I received during my 12 day hospital stay and my recovery. I especially want to thank the delegates for the beautiful cards and money I received. I know the State Union is in good hands with John as your new President. I would like to

thank a few people but I would not know where to start and finish. I know that I would miss someone. In closing, I wish you all the best of luck. As I told many of you, I am only a phone call away.

I am out of office, but they have not buried me yet.

Keep in touch and I will be seeing you. Thanks to All, and God Bless this union and the United States.

## Thanks For Your Support

by Harold Juhl,  
Executive Secretary

I would like to start by saying thank you to all of you who supported me in this election and to say I will do the job to the best of my abilities as always. I would like to welcome all of the new E-Board members and wish them luck in their respective positions. As the Executive Secretary I will be here for the Officers and Members of the State for your supplies and anything else you may need. Don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to serving the next two years as the Executive Secretary for the Michi-

gan Postal Workers Union. Again thank you for your support and confidence and allowing me the opportunity to serve you.

In Solidarity,





by John Smeekens, Veterans Director

## Veteran's Report

# I'm Only A Phone Call Away!

### YES

That was the answer I gave to Ms. Turney, when asked if I would accept the nomination for Veterans' Director for the Michigan Postal Workers Union, on Friday April 16, 2010, at the State Convention being held at the Ramada Inn, in Lansing, Michigan. I would like to thank Mr. Roscoe Woods Jr., a Veteran, and Executive Vice President of the 480-481 Area Local, for nominating me for the position. And I would also like to thank all of those present, at the nomination process, for your acclamation of my nomination. For those of you out there who are Veterans', or if you know of a Veteran or Veterans' family, who may need some assistance in getting started or pointed in the right direction to get a benefit or benefits; **I'M ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY!** Congratulations to all the Executive Board members and Area

Local Directors on your appointments, and I Thank All of You for your support.

### GOLD STAR SERVICE

This year's Gold Star Mothers Memorial Service will be held Sunday August 08, 2010, at the White Chapel Memorial Park Cemetery located at 621 West Long Lake Road in Troy Michigan. Line up for marching units will start at 11:00 a.m., with a parade of Colors at Noon. There will be a luncheon, following the service, at the Village Stinson VFW Post 9021, located in Warren Michigan. The public is welcome. The Post is located at 32100 Ryan Road, phone number is 586-264-3490. If you have any questions, you can contact Ken Klee at the following; [k.j.klee@comcast.net](mailto:k.j.klee@comcast.net).

### MILITARY DOGS

After completing their service, some military working dogs are made available for adoption. Adoption laws give priority to their handlers, then to civilian law enforcement agencies and finally to the

general public. An Adoption Suitability Test — given and videotaped by the dog's handler — is required by the DoD to determine if the animal is suitable for civilian adoption. To request an application, call 210-671-5874.

### VA LOAN LIMITS FOR 2010

The VA loan limits for 2010 will remain the same as 2009 due to the economic status of the housing market. Don't forget that with a VA home loan you don't have to pay for PMI, as the loan is backed by the government.

### MILITARY FMLA

Here is a new link for the new FMLA for Military. This information is direct from Ms. Sue Carney from National; [http://www.ngelaw.com/news/pubs\\_detail.aspx?ID=1129](http://www.ngelaw.com/news/pubs_detail.aspx?ID=1129)

### SEMPER FI ERNIE

Ernie Harwell, the famous Detroit Tiger baseball announcer, died Tuesday, May 04, 2010. I'm telling you this, because as I've said before, our greatest generation of Veterans', those of World War II, are dying at a rate of about 1,500 a day. Mr. Harwell joined the United States Marine Corps during World War II and served for 4 years. He said his most vivid memories were "going to boot camp, and being on Wake Island around the same time the Japanese surrendered to the United States in 1945." Now I'm sure everyone knew him as "Mr. Baseball", but how many knew he was a Veteran? There was a giant placard, for people who came to Comerica Park, to sign, and as one Veteran signed, all it said was "From one Jarhead to another — Semper Fi." Thank You for your service to our country Mr. Harwell.

### NAVY MEMORIAL

Did you know that dozens of memorials and monuments honor the Allied World War II airborne and ground sacrifices of D-Day, but none specifically paid tribute to those who gave their lives at sea during the invasion. Well now the 1,068 sailors and Coast Guardsmen who lost their lives during that invasion have been memorialized in a 12 foot bronze statue near the Utah Beach Museum in north-western France. National Commander Clarence Hill, a retired Navy Captain of the American Legion, will visit the memorial during D-Day ceremonies in June of this year.

### PRIORITY 8

With these tough economic times, if you are a Veteran, and your income is limited, especially part time flexes, you should look into the new qualifying income levels for being enrolled in the VA health care system. You are eligible even if you have **no service-related medical**

**conditions.** Remember to contact your County Veterans Office or a VSO from one of the numerous Veterans' Organizations out there, and spread the word to other Veterans'.

### ONLY TWO REMAIN

John Babcock passed away on February 18, 2010 in Canada. He was Canada's last surviving World War I Veteran. Although he became an American Citizen after the War, he reinstated his Canadian Citizenship in 2008. Only two remaining Veterans of World War I remain alive. British national Claude Choules (age 108), who lives in Australia, and American Frank Buckles (age 108), of West Virginia.

### ARLINGTON

Starting this spring, there will be an attempt to repair several cracks in the Tomb of The Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, by using a grouting procedure. If this does not work out as a long term fix, Arlington officials have accepted a donation of a chunk of snow white marble from the same quarry in Colorado where the original marble was cut. Grouting cost \$70,000.00 vs. Replacement cost estimated at \$2.2 million!

### VOHSA

The Veterans' Omnibus Health Service Act was signed into law by President Obama on May 05, 2010. This new law provides funding, health care coverage, training, and support to the family caregivers of severely wounded veterans. Now when our Veterans return home with serious injuries, their families will have help paying the bills and caring for their loved ones. The bill also helps them pay for travel, so they can go with their loved one when they receive hospital treatments.

With more women serving today in the Military, the VA needs to modernize and provide better health care for women veterans. This legislation requires the VA to plan appropriately for the future health needs of women who return home from combat. This law also requires the VA to offer mental health counseling to all returning veterans, and gives the VA resources to find ways to reduce suicide rates for veterans. In addition, it creates several pilot programs to provide essential services to veterans, such as child care, dental care, and readjustment for returning combat veterans. The law also provides support to help homeless veterans. Nearly 130,000 men and women Veterans' are homeless. This law uses an integrated approach to bring together non-profit organizations, the VA, and local governments to reach out to homeless veterans and help find them housing and make sure they know about the benefits available to them.

## Human Relation's Report

by Jennifer Amos, Human Relations Director

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>WMAL.ORG/OWCP.HTM</b><br>STEP BY STEP GUIDANCE FOR FILING YOUR<br>WORK RELATED OWCP CLAIM<br>Jennifer Amos<br>Human Relations Director Michigan Postal Workers Union |  |  |
| <b>MOST COMMON CLAIMS</b>   |  |  |
| Traumatic<br>Injury<br>CA 1   | Occupational<br>Disease/Illness<br>CA 2                    | Recurrence<br>of Disability<br>CA 2a                               |
| <b>DOCUMENTING YOUR CLAIM</b>   |  |  |
| Causal<br>Relationship  | Five Basic<br>Elements of<br>an Injury                     | Burden<br>of Proof   |
| Samples of<br>Employee Statements<br><i>(to submit with your claim)</i>   | Sample Letter to<br>Doctor Requesting<br>Medical Narrative | Description of<br>Job Duties<br><i>(to submit with your claim)</i> |
| <b>RESOURCES</b>  |  |  |
| OWCP Bill<br>Processing<br>Portal   | OWCP<br>Forms  | FECA<br>Federal Employees<br>Compensation Act                      |
| When Injured<br>at Work<br>Pub CA 11  | ICD 9 Codes  | Logical Answers<br>to Practical<br>Questions                       |
| Contacting Your<br>District Office  | ELM<br>Chapter 540<br>Injury Compensation                  | USPS<br>Injury Comp<br>Contacts                                    |
| IMPORTANT NOTE: REQUEST AND KEEP COPIES OF EVERYTHING!!!!   |  |  |



by Larry Moyer  
Area 1 Director

## Area 1 Director

# Keeping You Up-To-Date

**MPWU Convention** – I wish to thank the delegates assembled for one again having vigorous debate on the issues facing our great union in light of the most trying times we have in my opinion ever faced. I thank President Gary VanHoogstraten for his service to the Michigan Postal Workers Union and wish him get well soon!

I also thank Richard Blake our clerk craft director for his stepping in as Acting President and presiding over our convention without a hitch. I look forward to working with our new MPWU President John Marcotte and the other members of the MPWU Executive board.

I also thank the delegates for re electing me as Area 1 Director. I truly enjoy representing the most vulnerable members of our union, the PTF clerks in the small offices.

**SUMMER HOURS** – In a repeat of last year, the Southeast Michigan District Manager is proposing to cut hours in the smaller Associate offices. I will again take new grievance from those clerks whose hours are cut as I did last

year. As of this writing, I do not know how extensive the cuts will be, but I also recommend that those clerks whose hours are cut to apply for unemployment benefits with the unemployment agency for being underemployed. Last summer, a number of clerks who applied did receive unemployment benefits.

**EXCESSING** – In an interesting twist, district management has proposed to have clerks identified for excessing to take driving training to become a letter carrier. This is a violation of article 12 Section 5 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. If the employee fails the driving training or the physical exam will a termination notice soon follow? Management upon issuing a 60 day excessing notice *must provide a list of vacancies*. They did provide a list to me only after I asked for it. This is improper excessing and I will pursue a grievance on this issue.

**CUTS TO THE BARGAINING UNIT WHILE MANAGEMENT RANKS GROW** – In the Southeast Michigan District one of our POOM's retired. Instead of the District manager appointing one POOM as prior district managers have done, she appointed

seven acting POOMs as a "training opportunity" with purportedly higher level pay. (Is this like snow white and the seven dwarfs?) One of these acting POOM's came from Bristol Virginia where our district manger was formerly assigned. It never ceases to amaze me that managment can cut the clerk craft in particular, propose five day delivery to cut more bargaining unit jobs but always seem to find money for relocation expenses and training opportunities for themselves.

**FIVE DAY DELIVERY** – The last I read was that the majority of Congress was opposed to allowing the USPS to reduce deliveries to five days from six. We must continue the pressure on Congress to maintain six day delivery! If you have not contacted your member of Congress or US Senators Car Levin and Debbie Stabenow, do so today! My understanding is that Congress feels that the US Postal Service has not found enough savings. I agree!

Are you aware that the members of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States (NAPUS) and the League of Postmasters attend their conventions on postal service time?

When the union member attends conventions we take either Leave with Out Pay (LWOP) or Annual Leave. (I have used both over the years). How many millions of dollars does the USPS pay out yearly for postmasters to attend their State and National Conventions? Also, can a postmaster attend the state and national conventions for both postmaster organizations? Potentially the postal service could pay a postmaster to attend two state and national conventions every other year. **Let us be serious and take a look at cutting this waste before harming our customers by reducing service!**

**In closing**, our new MPWU President John Marcotte stated to our district manager at a District Labor Management Meeting "you do not cut service when you are losing money, this is the last action other organizations take. This is the beginning of a "downhill spiral". This is paraphrased as I remember brother Marcotte stating it. Well said brother!

As always, if you have problems call me or your local Area Director, or Union Steward.

Solidarity.



by Michelle L. Yuhasey  
Area 12 Director

## Area 12 Director

# Unify

Brothers and sisters now is the time to look back and remember what was entrusted to us 40 years ago. Since I personally was not born yet, I must read and gather information from those who were. Their goal was the same as ours is today but their solidarity was solidified in knowing that they were making strides towards equality and higher standards of employment. We all have to put aside our personal feelings and think of the whole picture for what it is now and to be in the future. Every member has different personalities, opinions and positions along with coming from traditional families, extended family situations, single life, single parenting families and same sex relationships. Our membership is the true meaning of diversity thus the future of this Union has to be shaped with flexibility. For the things that are not palatable for you means you must realize that other's situations (that may not effect you) are important to them.

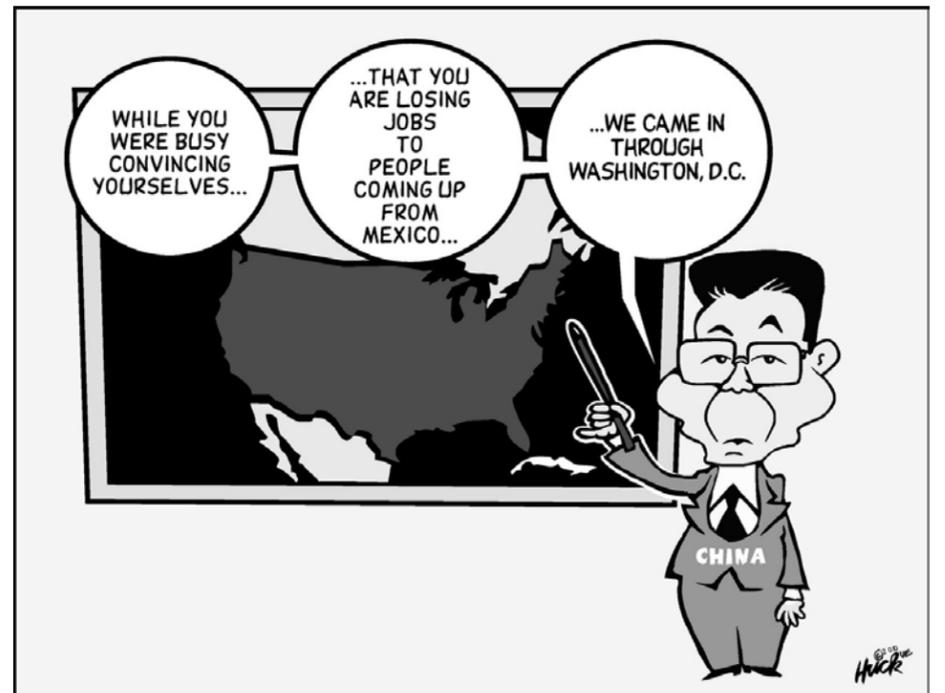
With the economic down turn, postal management has used its ability for glossing over the truth to their advantage. Does the public know half the manuals by which the post office

governs? Do they or the employees know that each manual has additions, deletions and more sub-manuals for each subject? NO! The postal management team nationwide wants the public and it's employees to be "mushrooms", live in the dark and believe the bull they feed us. When have they ever kept to what they set as rules, regulations and guidelines? NEVER! They refuse to acknowledge what is federal law, what is written in contracts and well known established practices unless forced upon them by unions and arbitrators. One big example of glossing over the truth is the facade of eliminating managers. We all know that none of them were fired only placed in levels lower than their current positions. BUT what they didn't tell the public nor the employees is that they kept their same pay level really changing nothing at all. If half the members of postal management were loyal and truthful (or educated) who would need stewards or grievances?

Now more than ever before in the history of our organization we MUST truly practice solidarity. Management will never cut their own. Craft employees, especially the largest craft, Clerks are the biggest targets. In my installation

alone, I was hired as 68th in seniority, there isn't even 68 Clerks on our roster at this date and time. Looking the other way knowing that what you have seen is a contract violation has to halt. Every inch we give by turning our heads in fear of retaliation is another foot they have just taken from us. Management should not be our only worry. Other crafts are

also after what they know falls under the clerk craft umbrella. Let's face it, what we as Clerks take for granted everyone else would like to have. In closing I am going to quote another MPWU State Officer, "We simply cannot confront these threats to our jobs and our national agreement if we remain divided over personalities or turf wars."



# OSHA Cites USPS For 'Willful' Safety Violations Says Agency Knowingly Endangered Employees

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has charged the USPS in Providence, RI with 12 willful and serious safety violations, and ordered it to pay fines of \$558,000. The Postal Service "ignored long-established safety standards and knowingly put its workers in harm's way," OSHA said. The violations "exposed workers at the Providence facility to the serious and potentially fatal hazards of shock, electrocution and arc-flash."

The citations [PDF] substantiate charges levied by the APWU regarding the Postal Service's failure to adhere to OSHA standards for electrical safety. The Postal Service has 15 days to respond.

"These sizable fines reflect the severity and ongoing nature of these hazards," Dr. David Michaels,

OSHA assistant secretary, said in a press release. Inspectors found untrained or unqualified workers performing tests on live electrical equipment at the Providence Processing & Distribution Center, the news release noted, generating eight citations for willful safety violations and fines of \$530,000.

The remaining \$28,000 in fines were associated with four citations for serious safety violations, including failing to instruct workers on the proper procedures for locking out machines' power sources to prevent unexpected startup during maintenance and related hazards. The inspection also revealed that personal protective equipment, work practices and warning signs were inadequate, OSHA said.

OSHA inspections were conducted

between Nov. 2, 2009, and April 28, 2010, after the Providence Area Local filed a complaint. "We did what we were supposed to do," said Ronald Mathieu, president of the local. "It's our job to make sure people go home the same way they came to work."

The local acted in response to a request from national Industrial Relations Director Greg Bell, who sent a letter to local presidents encouraging them to file complaints over the Postal Service's failure to comply with OSHA's electrical regulations.

"APWU has made many attempts to discuss and correct known electrical risks and hazards," Bell wrote to locals on Oct. 22, 2009 [letter, complaint form and instructions for local presidents - PDF]. OSHA conducted inspections of postal facilities in

2007 and 2008 and found violations of various electrical safety standards, he said. "The Postal Service agreed that these hazards existed and entered into informal settlements, but has so far failed to correct the problems."

To combat the USPS intransigence, the national union developed guidelines and urged locals across the country to file OSHA complaints.

"I commend the Providence Local for their diligent efforts to correct these dangerous hazards," Bell said. He also praised the efforts of Northeast Region Coordinator John Dirzius, who lent support to the Providence Local and other locals in the region that filed similar charges.

"The Providence Local is the first to generate citations, but many others are in the pipeline," Bell said.

## — Five Day – No Way! —

continued from page 2

With numbers they do play

Their losses are exaggerated  
Five Day – No Way!

When banks and insurance companies  
mail their statements

They only have to pay  
33 cents instead of 44  
Five day – No Way!

When people get medicine in the mail  
They can't wait another day  
Don't stop Saturday delivery  
Five day – No Way!

The customers and postal workers  
We need to have our say  
Let's everybody stand and shout  
Five Day – No Way!

### COPA AND E-TEAM

Every APWU member should give to COPA, especially this year when we're negotiating a contract that will be greatly influenced by Congressional action (or inaction) on several pieces of legislation. And every member should go to the [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org) web site and click on Departments and Divisions Legislative and join the APWU E-Team. This costs nothing, but it allows you to be part of a mass e-mail movement whenever a critical piece of legislation is pending. More on this in the next issue of the *Messenger*.

### COAL MINERS

Just a few words about the 29 miners who died recently. Their deaths will be old news by the time you read this. They worked for a deeply unprincipled company, whose CEO spent \$2.5 million in a state Supreme Court race to ensure that none of his company's safety violations would be taken seriously. This is a non-union mine, and ignoring safety issues yielded higher productivity

and profits – until 29 workers paid the price. Corporations want to be treated as "persons" when it comes to their right to make campaign contributions; maybe they should also be treated as persons here and indicted on 29 counts of negligent homicide.

### MY NEW JOB

I wish to thank everyone who voted for me for Legislative Director at the MPWU Convention, and also thank Ron Krumrie, who also ran for this position, for running a clean and respectful campaign. Before the election we shook hands and both agreed that the position would be in good hands no matter who was elected.

The MPWU Constitution lists the main duty of the Legislative Director as writing 6 articles a year for the *Michigan Messenger*, which I certainly intend to do. Beyond that I plan to take an activist approach to the position. We need to organize our members to take action on legislative issues; it's not my job to do everything myself. As I stated earlier, I think there should be pickets, rallies, or town hall meetings throughout the state that get members and the community involved. I will make information and resources available to Local Presidents and Area Directors. It's not my intention to do a lot of traveling at union expense to meet with Congressmen all over Michigan, unless asked to do so and authorized by the State President. In general, I think Local leaders and Area Directors are in a better position to create ongoing relationships with Congressmen and their aides.

I look forward to working with these Officers and to serving the membership in my new job.

Postal Regulatory Commission  
901 New York Ave NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20268-0001

ATTN: Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations:

I am writing to express my disagreement with the USPS proposal to eliminate Saturday delivery, and to other service cuts such as understaffing the windows and closing Post Offices that serve the communities in which they are located.

Postal officials are greatly exaggerating the financial difficulties they face. And whatever deficit they do face can be addressed in a different manner. They could eliminate layers of management (for example, headquarters personnel has increased by 38 percent since 2000, while the bargaining unit numbers have been slashed), they could reduce or eliminate the more-than-10-cent discount given to many corporate mailers, they could get Congress to allow them to use the \$75 billion they overpaid into the pension fund to offset the Congressionally-imposed requirement that USPS pre-fund future retiree health care.

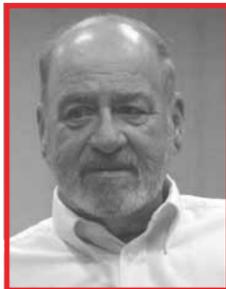
Whatever the solution, it should not be to cut out a day of delivery. There are some mail items that simply cannot be delayed another day – such as checks, medicine, and a variety of other items. There are also businesses (such as NetFlix and Blockbuster) to whom Saturday delivery is important.

Please take my viewpoint into consideration when you make a decision on Five-Day-Delivery.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

## Retiree Involvement



by Al LaBrecque, Retiree's Chapter President

# My Heartfelt Gratitude Goes To You

**THANK YOU!** This is to express my heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the State Retiree Chapter E-Board and delegates to our MPWU E-Board officer and delegates to the State Convention. The tremendous support and recognition we were afforded by our Michigan active Union Brothers and Sisters is a model for our other 49 APWU State Unions, Territories and Locals to follow. As State Chapter pres., I was given the courtesy of being called upon by Resolutions Committees on 3 occasions to clarify our retiree Resolutions.

One, initially non-concurred by the committee was reversed to concurrence, and the Convention voted to allow me to speak on it from the floor. Several delegates took the microphone to speak (eloquently, I might add) in support, and the Resolution was overwhelmingly adopted. Our State Chapter Convention delegates and Retirees' Dept. Director, Judy Beard, were invited onto the Convention floor and treated to a rousing reception by the assembly. It was truly a moment that "touched our buttons". "Thank You" is hardly adequate to express our gratitude.

I'll forgo a State Chapter Convention report at this writing except to say; "We took care of business", and to announce the State Chapter E-Board election results. Re-elected were: Al LaBrecque, Pres., George W. Hendricks, V.P., and Trustees; Patricia Miller and Charles Kolhoff. Lynn Charles Walker was elected Sec.-Treas. replacing Jerrold Clairmont who chose not to run again, and Alton "Al" Fouche as Trustee replacing Brother Walker in that position. Jerry Clairmont will continue as Pres. of the Saginaw 486-487 Local Chapter. Jerry served as State Chapter Sec.-Treas. since we were chartered in 2000. I enjoyed a great working relationship with Jerry who was meticulous in his duties. I'm deeply grateful for our 10 years of working together as the Chapter's fiduciary officers, and treasurer our nearly 40 year friendship. God Bless you in good health, Brother!

**Be Not Afraid!** I fully expect our Michigan State and Local Union delegates to the APWU National Convention to exercise their leadership and great support for our retiree Constitutional amendment Resolutions in August in Detroit. Delegates who will have the final say have an obligation to understand exactly what they are voting on. To that end, the "Whereas" explains the reasons the makers of the Resolutions propose to amend the Constitution, the Union's governing document, and they are not to be taken lightly. Those Resolutions are:

**Resolved:** To amend the APWU Constitution & By-Laws; Article 3, Section 4.(d) by deleting the current language in (d), and inserting: "\$36 per annum members of the APWU Retiree's Department shall be eligible to vote for the three (3) APWU General Officers: President, Executive Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer, and four (4) resident department officers: "Director and Assistant Director Legislative/Political Department, Director Human Relations Department, and Director, APWU Health Plan; excluding all Local, State, and National resident and Craft/Division officers not specifically listed herein, or in any matter pertaining to National Agreement ratification, LMOU's, or proposed work stoppage.

This is why: the current provisions listed in (d) are unnecessary language since the "option" to pay full national per capita directly to APWU has always been available to retired members. In six years, it hasn't resulted in an increase in full dues-paying retirees. Retired members who choose the "option" to pay full per-capita dues directly to national forfeit eligibility to vote or candidacy for Local Union office, including delegate to State or National Conventions, unless they pay whatever dues as may be required by their Local Union. Retirees who built this Union and who have "paid their dues," shouldn't be required to either "buy" or be denied the right to vote for the seven (7) national officers whose duties directly impact retirees' membership by requiring payment of full national per capita dues, which are unaffordable for most.

The Retirees' Department is financially self-sufficient with membership and revenues increase. 40,000 Department \$36 per year members account for some \$960,000 annually into the APWU General Fund. Another \$480,000 in dues is dedicated to Chapter rebates and a Department "Organizing Fund." Retirees are consistently the biggest contributors to COPA, over \$227,000 in 2009. And, retirees account for the vast majority of APWU Health Plan enrollees. It is about accountability! The level of dues should not dictate the level of accountability to \$36 per year retirees by the seven general and resident officers who duties directly affect retired members. Giving this limited right to vote provides greater incentive for retired members to remain connected to their Union.

Delegates should understand that by adopting this Constitutional amendment \$36 retiree members **will not** be eligible to be a candidate for any Local, State, or National APWU office, other than for Director Retirees Department, National Retiree Delegate, and for Local or State

Chapter office. **Be Not Afraid!**

**Resolved:** To amend APWU Constitution and By-Laws, Article 8, Section 11 by adding; subsection (a) to the current Section 11, and adding subsection (b): "A Retiree's Department Technician under the administrative control of the Department Director, appointed by the Director, subject to the approval by the President, and whose duties shall consist of researching and responding to inquiries on CSRS/FERS retirement matters as a Department liaison to OPM, USPS Human Resources, Shared Services, Social Security Administration, and related agency resources; to be compensated at the established rate commensurate with that of an APWU retirement advocate, and credited to and against the Retiree's Department budget.

This is why: It is a fact that the Retirees' Department receives more mail, phone, e-mail inquiries on a variety of retirement issues and internal Department business from retired members, their spouse/survivors, active members and Locals, and State and Local Retiree chapters than all other APWU Departments combined. One (1) elected Director and one (1) OPEIU secretary comprise the entire Department. That staff alone is not sufficient to handle the demands of the workload. The proposed Technician, appointed by the Director, subject to the approval of the President, would be under the administrative direction of the Director. Not only can the Department's revenues justify funding a Technician, it will be credited to and against the Retirees' Department budget.

Establishing a Retirees' Department Technician to service the needs and inquiries of retired members, their spouse/survivors, active members, chapters in the field, and active Locals, with expertise as a CSRS/FERS retirement advocate, and acting as Department liaison to OPM, USPS Human Resources Shared

Service, Social Security Administration, and related agencies would relieve the Director to engage in the core activities of the Department and focus on the objectives of legislative and political activity, organizing new members and Local and State chapters, and retiree-related education programs.

It is fully expected that the National Convention will be deliberating on numerous contentious Constitutional amendments to substantially affect the direction and structure of our Union. It is imperative that retiree resolutions are not lost in the shuffle.

We have endorsed/cosponsored three resolutions authored by the Pittsburgh Area Retiree Chapter:

1. To re-designate the five (5) elected National Retiree Delegates as elected "Regional Retiree Representatives" with retiree representation duties and fair compensation.
2. To increase the salary of the Retirees' Department Director to the same level as that of other APWU Department Directors.
3. To establish the elected position of "Assistant Retirees' Department Director."

A retiree-related resolution expected to be offered at the National Convention would propose to permit member's non-APWU spouses to belong to Local Retiree Chapters with a voice and vote, and eligibility to hold Chapter office. I am adamantly opposed, and ask the delegates to reject this proposed amendment. We have an APWU Auxiliary where spouses are welcome to belong, and to become active. This proposal would be no more acceptable than to allow non-APWU spouses to belong to a Local Union with a voice and vote, and eligibility to run for office. It is a gimmick to raise dues revenue for Local Chapters, and would set a dangerous precedent. We are a "Department" of the Union, not a NARFE affiliate!

Be Strong!



# MPWU State Convention



## Detroit Informational Picket From Highland Park



## MPWU Retirees Chapter



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 188  
Sparta, WI 54656

Time Dated Information!  
Please Expedite Delivery.



Return to APWU/MPWU  
c/o Michael Long, Editor  
P.O. Box 280  
Sheridan, MI 48884-0280  
Address Service Requested

*In memory of Chris,  
Loving son and daddy.*

*Don't grieve for me,  
For now I'm free, I  
Followed the path laid for me.  
I could not stay another day,  
To laugh, to love, to work, to play.  
Tasks left undone must stay that way;  
I found that peace at the close of day.*

In 2005, Chris was diagnosed with chronic meningitis complicated by Ramsay Hunt Syndrome. He suffered with severe headaches daily for years. He no longer suffers with pain. In his memory a donation has been made to the:

Meningitis Foundation of America  
P.O. Box 1818  
El Mirage, AZ 85335

A heart felt "Thank You" to all my brothers and sisters for the generous donations collected at the State Convention of the MPWU. Love lives on in the kindness and gentle words of others. Thanks again for your expression of sympathy.

Lynn Pallas-Barber and family