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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Legislative's Report	Page 2
Editor's Report	Page 3
Human Relations Report	Page 3
Clerk Craft Report	Page 4
Area 5 Director Report	Page 4
Veteran's Report.....	Page 5
Area 6 Vice President Report	Page 6
Area 7 Report	Page 6
Retiree's Involvement.....	Page 7
Going Postal In The Digital Era..	Page 8



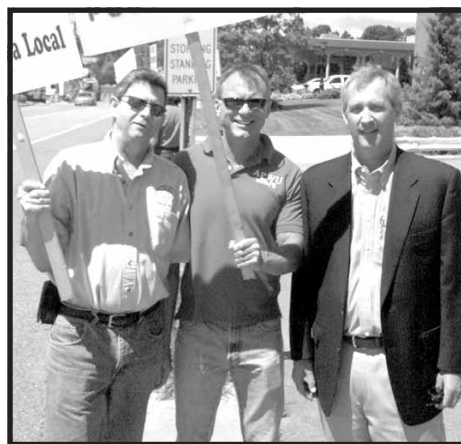
by John Marcotte,
President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Busy Summer For The MPWU

It's been a busy summer for the MPWU and after attending the District labor/management meetings throughout the state and it's not going to slow down anytime soon. The direction postal management wants to take is predictable and unwise. They are still attempting to adjust the workforce to a reduced staffing level. As troubling as that is for a union leader, it is the method in which they are arriving at what they perceive as proper staffing levels that is alarming. All postal installations are unique. Size of facility, amount of mail, size of area serviced, age of workforce, geography and road conditions are all factors that enter into the equation when arriving at staffing needed to properly serve the American public at an installation. Management in our state, against its own manuals and experience is taking the one size fits all approach to proper staffing. This will expose many of our brothers and sisters to the hardships of excessing unnecessarily and leave facilities without the staffing necessary to maintain delivery and service standards. Worse what I understand of management's plan is that management will set BPI goals for a facility and then staff accordingly. This will invoke article 12 of our union contract and excess employees to this new staffing recommendation will be forced into withheld positions if they wish to remain postal employees. All this before they even know if they can get the work done in a facility with this new staffing level. You heard me right not the current BPI or a BPI the facility has attained in the past but a goal or target BPI for the facility. This top down approach is unwise, ignores the direct input of the managers and supervisors in the facility and is shortsighted, but it is simplistic. I've always observed simple minds look for simple solutions and usually the simple solution is no solution at all. This drastic approach to staffing will surely decrease service, ignore delivery standards and generate massive overtime. The first step in this plan is a "function one" audit of which my facility will be the first to experience this and I will inform local presidents of how this

process will work as soon as I have the information. If the function four audits are any indication I have little hope of a fair evaluation. These same managers will not admit failure when this happens they will just mandate "no overtime" or "no penalty overtime" in these facilities. This will create supervisors



Bloomfield Picket.

doing bargaining unit work violations, crossing crafts violations, mail sitting in buildings not worked, delayed mail and the destruction of the goodwill the American people have toward the postal service that took decades to build up. The July 13th USA Today front page had a survey of business owners asking them to single out the things they need to do to improve business in this economy. The number one result was 37% of these leaders saying they needed to increase customer service. USPS management has aggressively pursued the reduction of customer service for the past 3-4 years and this process will only take

those steps farther. We are taking the first downward steps into a death spiral for revenues.

All this because upper management will not use the rules and system we have in place now. Supervisors are responsible to keep employees busy giving a fair days work for a fair days pay. That is the work standard of the USPS not BPI. If management would devote its resources to holding supervisors accountable for their decision making and removing those that fail to manage according to the handbooks and manuals we would surely improve efficiency. Not following a contract management willingly signed is grossly counterproductive. The service pays the rightful employees for the violation anyway and incurs the time and expenses of both sides of the grievance procedure. Somehow the cost of violating the USPS's own work rules is never calculated. The union time for the stewards, the time employees are off the floor, the time management spends on grievances, the labor relations department costs and the resulting cost of the disruption to the unit and reduce morale of the employees. All this is added to the settlement costs of the grievances. Somehow the settlement costs of the grievances are the only figure management looks at and they have never taken a serious look at reducing this number. As a government agency we need to stop trying to reinvent the wheel and start giving our customers the best service we can while

following the rules that are already in place.

It was my pleasure for the MPWU to be included in the informational pickets at the Bloomfield Hills post office and the Fort Street Facility in Detroit. We must stand up to defend our jobs and the public from an overreaching postal bureaucracy that has forgotten who we really work for. For you EAS that may be reading this article we work for the American people not the mailing industry. I commend the DDAL and the 480-481 Area locals for a well run and professional events. On that note the Traverse City Area and 480-481 Area locals are sending support along with the MPWU to Iron Mountain in defense of



Iron Mountain Picket.

the selling of the cultural icon that is the Iron Mountain post office built in the depression with artworks and architectural detail that can not be replaced. I commend these locals on their willingness

continued on page 5



Bloomfield Picket.



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by Paul Felton,
 Legislative Director

Legislative Report

Will Congress Decide Our Contract?

Back in the old days, before the 1970 postal strike, postal workers could not get a raise unless it was granted by Congress. We won the right to collective bargaining with that strike and subsequent legislation, so Congress no longer dictates our wage level and benefits. But action or inaction by Congress will have an enormous impact on the outcome of our contract battle this year. So the answer to the question that is the title of this article – “Will Congress Decide Our Contract?” – is “yes and no.”

WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL

On June 19th, the Washington Post ran an editorial that expresses what the enemies of labor would like Congress to do this year: 1) give USPS the go-ahead to eliminate Saturday mail service, 2) pass legislation that would force arbitrators to consider the USPS financial picture when determining our wages and benefits, and 3) continue the requirement that USPS pre-fund future retiree health benefits at the rate of more than \$5 billion a year. If Congress does what the Washington Post editors want, we will get a lousy contract no matter how skilled our bargainers and arbitration advocates are.

If Congress gives the go-ahead for 5-day delivery, management will have a better chance of convincing an arbitrator to get rid of our No Layoff protection. If Arbitrators are supposed to base our pay on the USPS financial situation at contract time, we will not get a raise and could even be forced to give back (of course, management could always arrange to be in the red at contract time if Congress mandated that arbitrators base our wages on

management’s ability to pay us). And the pre-funding of health care is the major cause of management’s deficit at the moment. An act of Congress mandated that USPS pre-fund a 75 year obligation over a period of just 10 years. No other government agency has a similar obligation. Management and the APWU are in agreement that this needs to be changed – but the labor-haters and union-busters (such as the Editors at the Washington Post) are staunchly opposed.

COPA, E-TEAM, AND ACTIVISM

We need to fight back, and there are three components to this fight.

First, we need everyone to give money to COPA. This gives our legislative

coordinated response. You will be directed to send a message to your Congressional representative which has already been written for you, although you have the option of writing your own message as well. It’s free, it’s easy, and it’s a way to build a massive response when our rights and benefits come under attack.

The third component is activism. Anyone reading this can send a letter to the Postal Regulatory Commission opposing the 5-day delivery proposal. You can find such a letter on the web site of the 480-481 Area Local. Go to www.apwu480.org and go to the web page of Paul Felton, Editor, scroll down to the end of the article headed by “Take Action” and click on “PRC Letter.” Print out the letter and send it in – or write your own letter, whichever you prefer.

METRO DETROIT ACTIVISM

I am pleased to report that Metro Detroit AFL-CIO President Sandra Williams has organized a coalition of public employee unions. APWU was in on the ground floor. Unions representing bus drivers, school teachers,



Bloomfield Picket.

city employees, and county employees were also included. On June 12 we held a strategy summit, and during the breakout session, the postal workers’ breakout, consisting of reps from APWU, NALC and NPMHU, decided to jointly organize a picket for June

24th. On June 15 there was a Town Hall Meeting, featuring speakers from all of the public employee unions in the coalition. The postal viewpoint was presented jointly by Brother John Dick of NALC Branch 3126 and myself – in a symbolic show of solidarity.



Iron Mountain Picket.

The June 24 picket was bigger than

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	

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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.



Editor's Report



by Michael A.
Long,
Editor

Do You Remember When?

Do you remember when Service was actually part of what we did in the performance of our duties?

Do you remember when we were actually praised/ata-boy for going above and beyond our job to provide service to the American Public, instead of being required the next time to do more?

Do you remember when first-line supervisors actually knew the job they were supervising?

Do you remember when first-line supervisors had the actual fortitude to tell upper management if something would not work and not just follow them blindly?

Do you remember when Supervisors actually allowed craft employees to do their jobs?

Do you remember when craft employees actually did the work, without the "help" of management?

Do you remember when employees stuck together and stood up for themselves?

Do you remember when the contract was actually followed and adhered to?

Do you remember when the word of one person actually meant something and they strived to live by their word?

Unfortunately, most of us can't remember when any of this was true. Especially as of late! Now a day, we are chastised when we actually provide service. It may seem as though the above is just a list of questions; however, it is actually a statement of a progression of how bad it has become.

As it was related to me by one of my co-workers: She was trying to fix a zip code on a particular piece of mail to ensure that this piece of mail arrived to the correct destination; but was instructed by our Senior MDO that "the customer didn't pay for that level of service. Either send it as it is, or send it to Dead Letter." What kind of service is that? Or, what kind of praise to the employee is that? Instead of trying to go above and beyond her job, and provide the public with exceptional service, which should have been commended, her actions were trampled, as well as her spirit.

Not only did this one incident happen recently, but others take place on a daily basis. The reason I personally feel is that you have people (supervisors) doing a job that they have no idea how it is actually performed. How many managers/supervisors currently oversee an area that they have never worked (e.g. former Mail Handlers supervising Automation; or clerks supervising Mail Handlers, or Carriers, etc.). Because of this lack of "experience," the supervisors are reliant on listening to upper management (who, as stated before,

since most of them started in the same situation as these supervisors, most of them have no idea of the areas as well as to how to run an operation; however these new supervisors follow their directions blindly, even if it is wrong.

This leads to the simple statement: "Let the people who know how to run the mail, fix the machines, or transport the mail do their job." It isn't that difficult. Am I going to say that some people don't need to be told or "directed" on a minute-by-minute basis. Unfortunately, no. Even though we are all supposed to be adults; some do not act like it.

Thus, this leads to management, trying to "show" or help the employees how to do their job. Do I have to remind you about the statement two paragraphs above? It is my opinion that this has to stop. I am aware that Article 3 gives management certain rights, and training is one of those rights, but management must also remember that these rights are "subject to the provisions of this Agree-

ment and consistent with applicable laws and regulations." However, instead of filing a grievance, employees just "roll over" and allow this to happen.

However, employees not only just roll over, but then when management goes to another machine, others just take a "blind eye" and allow it to happen once again. We must stand together and fight this injustice head-on.

This leads me to another "injustice" that must be addressed and hopefully rectified. In my office, excessing has begun with a vengeance. However, since this is only affecting the most junior employees (at this time), most don't seem to "bat an eye" when an early-out is offered, or using Leave Without Pay for taking time off. In just one week alone, in my section, over 177 hours of Leave Without Pay were used. That is four positions management can try to justify that is no longer needed. Your actions have a direct result to other employees. If there isn't work in your

area, find work elsewhere. The contract allows this. Stay busy and make sure management follows and adheres to the contract.

And lastly, and probably the most contentions is when management doesn't follow the contract and allows the above to happen. Quite a few times, when a grievance is filed, management is then made aware of the infraction (remember, most of them never worked in the area to know what they are doing or doing wrong). We sometimes settle for "Cease and desist" language and ensure that it doesn't happen. However, it generally happens again, and again. When someone signs a grievance settlement, or even signs the contract (at National level); that is their word that they will follow the contract and their agreements. It wasn't so long ago, that a person's word was their bond. And that bond also goes to the American public. We have been instructed to provide a service. Thus the cycle starts all over again.



by Jennifer
Amos,
Human
Relations
Director

Human Relation's Report

NRP Update

tails admitted somebody else did the searching so they don't know what was found.

When asked, the team could not tell the union how they came to the conclusion that no work was available; they read from a script and did not deviate. After all, if they actually had to genuinely address questions with sincere answers, we might have been able to avoid the adverse and disruptive action impacting employees since the process started.

Management is determined to decrease the number of employees no matter what it takes; the NRP process took good workers out of our sections. These employees were (and still are) willing and able to work, performing the same duty assignments given to them prior to the NRP assessment.

WE ARE HERE TO ASSIST

Employees that are sent home should keep in contact with the union. We will file grievances and assist with appeals dealing with the Department of Labor. We will provide up-to-date information and instructions whenever possible. I have placed a 24-page NRP information packet on our local web site so anyone can review the process and their rights. Go to wmal.org to view the packet.

We need to make sure impacted employees know they have the right to file for unemployment as well as the right

to file an EEO and MSPB appeal. The packet provides advice and instructions.

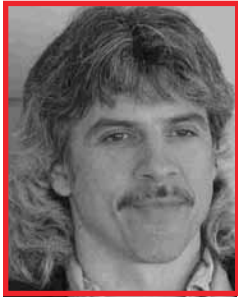
EEO AND THE REHAB ACT OF 1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, at Sections 501, 504 and 505 prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of disability. Discrimination is prohibited in all aspects of employment against persons with disabilities who, with reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a job. Certain aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were amended in 2008, and the definitions, as amended, also apply to employees covered by the Rehab Act. These recent changes to the law clarified and broadened the definition of "disability", thereby expanding the number and types of persons who are protected by these disability nondiscrimination laws.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) protects qualified applicants and employees with disabilities from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, job training, fringe benefits, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment on the basis of disability. It requires that covered entities provide qualified applicants and employees with disabilities with reasonable accommodations that do not impose undue hardship.

continued on page 7

Clerk Craft Report



by Richard
Blake,
Clerk Craft
Director

Stop Giving Management Flexibility

Let's stop giving management "flexibility" that they're not entitled to.

We all are painfully aware that our jobs, particularly in the Clerk craft, are under attack like never before. In understaffed offices (which means pretty much all of them), management has been trying to deal with the understaffing by looking for "flexibility" in how they schedule and utilize their Clerk staff, especially in 200 man-year offices which no longer have PTF's. One of the ways they try to achieve this "flexibility" is by attempting to bribe individual employees into surrendering their contractual rights, and some of our short-sighted and self-serving members seem all too willing to grant management "flexibility" that's explicitly prohibited by the National Agreement - and then they act like they don't see the connection.

Every summer we seem to see many instances where full-time regular employees want to "earn a few extra bucks" on their non-scheduled day, but they don't want to work 8 hours. There's just one problem with that - the language in the Article 8 Chapter of the JCIM that states "management may not solicit employees to work less than their scheduling guarantee, nor may employees be scheduled to work if they are not available to work the entire guarantee . . . an employee may waive a guarantee in case of personal illness or emergency". It does not say "an employee may waive a guarantee if they just don't feel like working 8 hours", or "an employee may waive a guarantee if it's a nice day and they want to go fishing later", or "an employee may waive a guarantee if they're trying to solicit a favor from their supervisor". Every week I wind up investigating situ-

ations where full-time regular Clerks are compensated less than 8 hours on their non-scheduled day, and in no more than a tiny fraction of those cases did the employee actually fill out a 3971 waiving the remainder of their guarantee "for personal illness or emergency" - they either weren't available for the full 8 hours (in which case they never should have been scheduled), or they just didn't feel like working 8 hours. Well, neither of them is a valid reason to disregard the contractual guarantees negotiated on our behalf. In an arbitration award out of Galveston Texas, Arbitrator Toedt put it quite bluntly: "Although this practice may have suited individual employees, it amounts to allowing individual employees to negotiate their own terms and conditions of employment. This is simply not allowed". Kudos to Arbitrator Toedt for telling it like it is.

Another tactic to use against reversions

As we continue to see full-time regular Clerk duty assignments reverted and abolished left and right, we should be aware that in certain circumstances there's another strategy we can use against reversions or abolishments over and above just citing Article 37.3.A.2 or 37.1.B. Article 37.4.D of the National Agreement, and the language in the Article 37 Chapter of the JCIM (questions 260 through 263) sets forth a requirement that there be the same number of full-time regular duty assignments in an installation as there are full-time regular Clerks, with some exceptions. If management reverts or abolishes a full-time regular Clerk duty assignment at the same time that there are one or more unencumbered employees (what we used to call "unassigned regulars"), even if the reversion was procedurally proper, and even if the reversion appeared justified for that matter, management has probably violated Article 37.4.D. (arbitrators are starting to acknowledge this argument in reversion cases). If there are fewer full-time regular duty assignments in an installation than full-time regular Clerks, there are only 3 exceptions that would prevent it from being a violation: (1) if a Clerk is unencumbered because they're detailed to a non-bargaining position, such as a long-term 204B whose duty assignment was taken away and reposted, (2) if a Clerk is unencumbered because that particular Clerk has been identified as being subject to being excessed out of the installation, and (3) if a Clerk is unencumbered because they're "medically unsuitable for assignment" such as a full-time regular Clerk in a NRP job.

In addition, if there are fewer full-time regular duty assignments in an installation than full-time regular Clerks, if a particular Clerk has been unencumbered for 120 days and none of the 3 exceptions above are applicable to them, per Article 37.4.D that "demonstrates the need to post a newly-created duty assignment". So, in any situation where an installation has fewer full-time regular duty assignments than full-time regular Clerks, and none of those 3 exceptions are applicable, be sure to cite Article 37.4.D any time a full-time regular duty assignment is reverted or abolished, or, if a full-time regular Clerk has been unencumbered for 120 days, file a grievance citing Article 37.4.D demanding that a newly-created duty assignment be posted for bids. We've been successful using both approaches in Ann Arbor to either force the creation of new duty assignments or force management to back off a planned reversion or abolishment. Every single job is important, so KEEP FIGHTING FOR EVERY JOB!

In Solidarity.

Area 5 Director



by Joanna
Atkinson,
Area 5
Director

Still Taking Pay Out Of Clerks' Pocket

welcome to call and leave me a message and I will call you back ASAP.

I have filed a number of grievances on postmasters doing the box mail instead of clerks. If I haven't contacted you by phone, please call me so we can get a grievance going for your office. There was an arbitration award that basically states the postmaster cannot sort box mail. Of course it goes into more detail in the award but that is the jest of it. The award was forwarded to me by Linda Turney, one of our NBA's in Chicago. Call me or send a statement to

me: Joanna Atkinson, 10018 S Graham, St Charles, MI 48655.

The national convention is right around the corner. It will be held in Detroit this time. And our national contact expires this year also. Lots of things going on. Hope everyone is having a great summer. At least this year the weather is cooperating. Soon you will be receiving your ballot for national officers. Send it in!!! This is your chance to vote for your national officers. Don't just sit back and let someone else make the decision.

Bloomfield & Iron Mountain Picketing



Iron Mountain Picket.

— All Iron Mountain Picket photos by Tony Carobine.



Bloomfield Picket.

— All Bloomfield Picket photos by Paul Felton.

Veteran's Report

— Important Updates —



by John
Smekens,
Veterans
Director

LEGAL HELP

The University of Detroit Mercy School of Law is proud to announce a new Veterans Appellate Clinic course beginning this fall. The new Veterans Appellate Clinic will provide free legal representation to low income veterans with cases pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). For the past three years, UDM Law's Veterans Law Clinic has been dedicated to providing assistance to Michigan veterans appealing their denied federal benefits claims at the Regional Office and the Board of Veterans Appeals. In UDM Law's new Veterans Appellate Clinic, students will provide assistance to veterans who are appealing their denied claims to the CAVC. "We're thrilled to expand our veterans' assistance to the court level," said Tammy Kudialis, Director of UDM's Project SALUTE. "We believe it's important not only to provide this service to those who have served our country, but to educate and train our students to practice before the CAVC so our veterans can rely on them in the future as well."

The CAVC has reported that 68 percent of all new cases filed at the Court are self represented veterans. The goal of the new clinic is to assist in reducing this number. To that end, second and third year law students, working under the supervision of UDM faculty, will begin providing representation to veterans at the CAVC this fall.

As part of UDM Law's commitment to serving the community and developing practice ready graduates, all UDM law students are required to participate in a clinic while in law school. If you know of a low income Veteran that may need assistance, call 1-888-UDM-LAW4. (Special thanks to Alesa G. Sliver, Project Salute Event Coordinator, of UDM Law School, for this information)

KOREAN LOA

If you know of a Korean War Veteran who would enjoy a "Letter Of Appreciation," from the President of the Republic of Korea, honoring the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War, please contact me; (that information should be here in this issues directory), and I will get the information out to you, or it can be obtained at <http://eng.koreanwar60.go.kr/apply.asp>. For those who fought for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.

SMOKING BANNED

The smoking lamp is going out all across the Navy's submarine fleet,

where the mission to run silent, run deep, now will be carried out by sailors ordered to run undersea operations without cigarettes, cigars or pipes. This is the latest front in the long war against tobacco declared by the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs, whose programs to help military personnel kick the smoking habit are intended to protect the health of the current force, and to save the government hundreds of millions of dollars a year in health care costs for those who have served, and smoked, in uniform. NOTE; that while smoking is being banned on submarines, the Pentagon is lifting a decades-old ban on women serving aboard these vessels.

AIR FORCE STOP LOSS

Air Force officials are still seeking Airmen who have been impacted by stop-loss. Eligible Airmen were involuntarily held on active duty between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2009. They may be eligible for \$500 for each month they were affected. If you are unsure as to whether or not you are eligible, you should still apply. To file a claim, visit the Air Force Personnel Center website at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stoploss. Those serving in the Reserve or Guard at the time of stop-loss may apply at the Air Reserve Personnel Center website at <https://arpc.afrc.af.mil/vPC-GR>. For more information, visit the Air Force Personnel Center personal services website or call the Total Force Service Center at (800) 525-0102.

HOMELESS HOTLINE

The Department of Veterans Affairs

has announced a new telephone hotline number to provide emergency support and resources to homeless Veterans. The hotline of the new National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, 1-877-4AID VET will provide homeless Veterans with timely assistance and coordinated access to VA and community services. Family members, workers at community agencies and non-VA providers also may call the hotline to find out about the many programs and services available to assist homeless Veterans.

VA CLINIC IN MICHIGAN

While there are plans to build a Veterans Affairs Clinic in Cheboygan, there is still no sign of it. Michael Wise, the Cheboygan County Veterans Services Coordinator, "says . . . the regional VA's office in Saginaw visited recently and told him that they were moving forward, and there will be a clinic in Cheboygan County for sure, details have to be worked out and as soon as they're worked out, they'll be able to give a time, place, and all that stuff."

How about everyone in that area start contacting their local elected officials, since this looks like an election year, and see if they can't get some type of push going for this clinic!!!

MORE ON RURAL CLINICS

The Senate VA Committee has discussed rural health care initiatives and long-range goals. Witnesses have talked about efforts to improve access, quality and coordination of care, with emphasis on telehealth and telemedicine services. Committee members have referred to

rural outreach services, mobile clinics and other options as a way to help reduce the burden of care for those veterans living in *highly rural areas*. The VA established an Office of Rural Health in 2008. For complete hearing coverage and more updated information, visit the Senate VA Committee website at <http://veterans.senate.gov/>. This information is from June 18, 2010.

THE WALL THAT HEALS

A replica of The Wall, the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Wall from Washington D.C., will be in Clinton Township September 2 through 5, 2010. This is the Labor Day weekend. The set up will be on the South East corner of Romeo Plank Road and Canal Road near the Township offices. If you're in the area, stop by and make a visit. To some, it's not as emotional as D.C., but it still puts you in awe.

ON PATROL

I hope I'm not crossing any lines of impropriety with what I'm about to say, and if I do, I extend my sincere apology to this board and all members. The USO is a fine organization, and if you are a Veteran, and you have ever had the experience of dealing with the USO, then you have an understanding of its job, and what it accomplishes. They put out a magazine called On Patrol, quarterly, and it brings tears to my eyes every time I read it. And yes, I do read it more than once. If you're interested in subscription information, call 877 9-ON-PATROL. The USO provides support services to the members of the United States Armed Forces and their families.

Busy Summer For The MPWU



Iron Mountain Picket.

continued from page 1

to support our brothers and sisters, it is through solidarity we will prevail and this is an excellent example of that.

By the time your read this our first telephone executive board meeting will have taken place. By using this

media for a board meeting we can meet more often and be more responsive to our member's and our member local's needs. This is a trial run for this and I'm sure some bugs will have to be worked out but the benefits will far outweigh the effort.

I encourage all local presidents or their designees to attend the Nation President's Conference being held in Kalamazoo in October. This is a great opportunity with this conference in our own backyard. Southwest Michigan Area local has generously agreed to support the MPWU in making this event a success and we are very grateful. The NPC in Colorado Springs was informative and gave a personal

insight into and one on one time with both candidates for national president. Brother's Dick Page from Western Michigan and Larry Miller from 480-481 added to the proceedings with there comments and input to the items under discussion. I feel with your support the NPC in Kalamazoo will be an even better event.

I am waiting on final negotiations with the two candidates for the district meeting in Gaylord in October to be finalized. As soon as a contract is signed I will ask Mike Long to update the website. This is a beautiful time of year up here in God's country and Area's 10, 11 and 12 welcome you to be part of it and obtain good union training while enjoying the colors. Sorry this was so long but as I said in the beginning a lot is happening right now and the MPWU is embracing the challenge.

Yours in Solidarity and friendship.

Area 6 Vice President

Finding Our Way Forward

by Loren Adams,
Area 6 Vice President

Everyone realizes the storm is fast approaching, but many simply ignore the obvious – perhaps as a means of survival. I remember how Grandma Emma Adams used to herd us kids down to the storm cellar every time she heard the thunder roll. She remembered the day a tornado swooped up her two aunts at Belleville, Arkansas around 1908, and she didn't want a repeat.

The APWU is fast approaching a storm – a decision day – negotiations during the time of the greatest economic strain on the Postal Service in 80 years as well as the entire United States since the Great Depression of the 30s.

Yes, escaping by avoiding or ignoring seems to be a temporary fix. But the day of reckoning eventually catches up to those that choose retreat. There are good reasons the ostrich buries its head in the sand and turtle withdraws into its shell. But eventually the predator gets the best of them. The sense of false security goes like this, "If I just ignore the problem, it'll go away." (Somewhat like, "If we build it, they will come," but in reverse.) "Out of sight, out of mind." "No news is good news."

No war has ever been won by soldiers on retreat. By the same token, no union movement has succeeded by

being led by the meek, the weak, or the inactive. The Union needs an optimistic, proactive, positive, solutions-based leadership that'll meet this challenge with unwavering determination.

Yes, we're facing crisis of Apocalyptic proportions. Yes, national leaders are dropping out like flies as they apparently watch the same storm approaching that we are. (Were officers of the Titanic first to abandon ship?)

The question remains, "But what can we as individuals (despite national officers jumping ship) do to prepare?" Almost every day I'm confronted by members inquiring as to what's happening on the national level, whether management is preparing to force five-day delivery down America's throat, etc. I tell them I don't have all the answers, and management seldom communicates with me – even for that which they're contractually obligated. It's as if we're peering through a tinted glass trying to ascertain the future. I sure don't have all the answers, but I have a few suggestions for the near term.

The first suggestion would be to SAVE MONEY. I realize most postal employees think "This too will pass, so we can carry on as usual." But I wouldn't count on it this time. Cut expenses to bare-bones and delay big-purchase items. Get your credit card

debt down to ZERO. Pay off your car and home, if possible. The hard fact is we don't know how much we'll be earning this time next year. So, keep that primary thought in mind.

My second suggestion is to pick new national officers with some SPINE. And some BRAINS. Negotiations are not a walk in the park. We need a Mother Jones in these tough times to steer APWU back on course, and there are some great national leaders from which to choose. How can you discover the best? Pay attention; read online and via publications, and talk to local and state leaders in-the-know.

My third suggestion is probably the most important. Get INVOLVED in your local union. Go to meetings. Visit your co-workers when they're in the hospital. Recognize special days and dates in their lives. Back them up with witness statements when requested. Become a shoulder to cry on, or become that morale booster so desperately needed in times like these. Make your workplace a vibrant community instead of a miserable compound. There's strength in numbers; that rule never changes. The stronger the locals are, the stronger the national organization. And the only way to build strength is to show genuine concern for one

another. UNION is not simply about the Contract or work issues.

"UNION" is about UNITY, and the only way to build this invaluable solidarity is to care for those around you. Be sincere about it too.

I'm reminded of the "Prayer of St. Francis" written around 900 years ago. It goes like this:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis' prayer has meant so much to me all my life.

We can make it through this dark night if we just stick together. For, as Benjamin Franklin so aptly put it, "Either we hang together or we hang separately." United we stand; divided we fall.

Area 7 Director

Changes Are Taking Place

by Randy Barnes,
Area 7 Director

As your new Area 7 Director, I would like to introduce myself. I'm a Maintenance employee and work at the Kalamazoo P & DC. I have been employed with the Postal Service for

15 years and been actively involved with the Union for approximately 10 years. I've served as a Steward and Maintenance Craft Director prior to becoming a Local Business Agent for Southwest Michigan Area Local.

As each and every one of us knows, changes are taking place within the Postal Service which affect our lives tremendously, including our families and fellow co-workers. Here at the Kalamazoo P & DC just recently almost all of the Tour 3 Clerks jobs have been abolished and twenty-seven (27) received Excessing Letters. Associate Offices are being effected and PTF hours could be cut back.

Be prepared for management to try to implement changes in your job duties and hours worked. You should contact your Union Representative if this occurs. We are here to help secure your job and hold management responsible for upholding the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

I cannot stress enough our need to

ban together against any attempt by management to weaken our position. Strong Union involvement is needed NOW more than ever. Attend you local Union Meetings. Get involved to save your job.

We all need to be aware and vigilant against further attempts by manage-

ment to decrease our service, to close our offices and to weaken our workforce.

If you need to contact me please check out Page 2 of this publication or visit the MPWU.com, or my local's website (small143.com) and information can be obtained there.

Bloomfield Picketing



Will Congress Decide Our Contract?

continued from page 2

previous pickets because all three postal unions were behind it, and we got people from other unions in the coalition to come out. We also had a gentleman named John Marcotte (President of the MPWU) who came down from Gaylord (he also joined in a smaller picket the same day at a Bloomfield Hills Post Office that management wants to close). At the picket and the Town Hall Meeting, we got a stack of letters to the Postal Regulatory Commission signed. There was

a really good spirit at the picket, and those members who showed up were invigorated by the day of activism.

Membership involvement is the key to victory. Whether it's picketing, writing a letter, talking to your coworkers, joining the E-team, giving money to COPA – or all of the above – we need to get our coworkers involved. Because we need to budge Congress to move in our direction this year, in order to give our national APWU negotiators a chance to get us a contract we can ratify.



by Al
LaBrecque,
Retiree's Chapter
President

Retiree Involvement

Congratulations!

DECLARED ELECTED! Retirees' Dept. Director, Judy Beard, has been re-elected by acclamation by virtue of having been unopposed. This is a tribute to Sister Beard's good work and effectiveness. Likewise re-elected without opposition were our own; Sister Lynn Pallas-Barber, NBA Clerk – Chicago Region, and Brother Michael Foster, National Assistant MVS Director. On a somber note, it signals the impending retirement of NBA, John Clark. John's outstanding representation skills and presence will be missed. Congratulations to them all!

SHORT SHRIFT? Why is it that candidates for national APWU office; from President to the Hawaii and Alaska NBA's, are identified by their home Local Union after their name, both on the APWU News Service bulletin announcements and official ballot, while candidates for APWU Retirees' Dept. Director and Retiree National Convention Delegate are not identified by either a Local or State Chapter, or their city and state of residence? This isn't a new question or an 'inadvertent omission'! This glaring inequity has been brought to the attention of previous election committees, APWU Sec.-Treas.'s, and Dept. Directors.

Voting retired members deserve the common courtesy of being informed of where their candidates are from, the same as all other APWU candidates. This should not have to go through the Resolutions process at another Convention to remedy this short shuffling of retiree candidates and retiree voters. In this 13-state Central Region, candidates for Delegate are probably known within their home state, but not so much in the other 12 states. Unless retiree voting members take the time to read candidate's statements in the July/Aug. "American Postal Worker" magazine; the only identifying factors are (I) indicating an incumbent and their names as a clue to their gender.

NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES: This an 11th hour appeal to all Michigan State and Local delegates to the Detroit Convention to actively support retiree Resolutions to amend the APWU Constitution that were so strongly supported at the MPWU State Convention. I urge you to study the Resolutions in the Report of the Constitution Committee and their recommendations. Form your arguments for debate from the "Whereas", \$36. per year dues-paying retired members deserve eligibility to vote for APWU General and Resident officers who directly affect retiree's membership.

The Retirees' Dept. desperately needs a department Technician to service the inquiries and needs of retired members, their spouses and survivors. The workload justifies it. The salary of the Retirees' Dept. Director needs to be raised to the same level as all other APWU department directors as a matter of equity. The workload and the fact that the Retirees' Dept. is financially self-sustained justify the raise. We can afford it!

Delegates are also asked to support Resolutions to re-designate Retiree National Convention Delegates to "Regional Retiree Representatives", as well as to establish an elected Assistant Retirees' Dept. Director. But, CAUTION! Not all retiree related Resolutions are favorable. One proposes to establish eligibility for non-APWU spouses to become dues-paying members with a voice and vote and eligible to hold Chapter office. While it may be well intentioned; this proposal is no more appropriate than it would be to allow non-APWU spouses to belong to an active APWU Local or to hold office. Spouses are encouraged to belong to the APWU Auxiliary. We are a "Department" of the APWU, unlike like NARFE which enrolls spouses.

Active Local and State delegates are retiree's voice and vote on the Convention floor. We depend on you. Whatever you accomplish, or fail to accomplish, will affect your own future retiree membership. We'll be monitoring Convention actions with keen interest.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION: While on the subject of the Convention; I've asked Dir. Beard to inquire as to the feasibility of the APWU providing "Amigo's" or scooters for our physically challenged delegates to the 2-day pre-Convention Retirees' Dept. Conference. Walking distances at Cobo Hall are brutal. Given APWU expenditures for extra-curricular delegate entertainment and special accommodations for the leadership and staff; this isn't too much to reasonably accommodate physically challenged delegates. Most would welcome the availability of shuttles similar to those utilized in airport terminals to relieve persons with walking difficulties.

CLOSED DOORS! There's a "Debt Commission" lurking behind closed doors! Be acutely aware that this 18-member Commission comprised of 6 Dems, 6 GOP, and 6 Administration appointees has seniors, postal/federal retirees, AND active employees squarely in their crosshairs! If 14 of the 18 concur with the Commission's recommendations; House Speaker Pelosi, and Senate Majority Leader Reid have agreed to bring it to an up-or-down vote under an expedited procedure that doesn't al-

low for amendments. It's a blank check at our peril and expense!

A bi-partisan commission suggests their recommendations will be fair and balanced. That's the naive theory. This "fiscal reform" commission's modus operandi is deeply troubling. This is not hollering "wolf". It's not like we haven't been there before, folks! Those who were retired in the late '80's and early '90's are painfully aware that annual CSRS annuitant COLA's were delayed the first 3 months each year. Social Security beneficiaries weren't affected. Politically, postal/federal retirees were the safest target to balance the federal budget on our backs. CSRS retirees who are also Social Security eligible due to sufficient S.S. earnings in the private sector, already suffer a reduced benefit due to the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) foisted upon us by Congress.

Let's not forget the draconian recommendations of the Clinton "Commission On Entitlements" targeting Social Security, Medicare, and federal retiree/employee "entitlements", suggesting that we were feeding at the federal government's trough at taxpayer expense. Never mind that these are EARNED entitlements promised as a condition of our employment and retirement. Don't ever forget that; "Whatever Congress giveth, Congress can taketh away"! The forces of privatization persist. It will

be open season on S.S., Medicare, and federal retiree benefits for the privatizers and anti-senior politicians.

If congressional action on the Commission's almost to be certain devastating recommendations does not occur until December, AFTER the November federal elections, it avoids political accountability. That's patently dishonest! This debacle that's designed to sidestep the normal legislative process by fast-tracking proposals that will almost certainly be detrimental to seniors, current and future federal retirees; that stifles full debate in the light of day, that muzzles constituent input, and doesn't permit amendments, is dangerously flawed.

The threat is real, and it's here and now! If you have never before answered the frequent calls to step up and contact your Members of Congress, this is the one time you had better get serious, if for no other reason than for your own self-preservation in retirement, now and in the future. It is with a sense of urgency that I implore every member, active and retired, regardless of personal political affiliation or that of your Members of Congress, to strenuously object to any legislation that may result from this "back room" Commission's recommendations. Insist that any debt or fiscal reform proposals are subject to the open, transparent legislative process.

Be Strong!

NRP Update

continued from page 3

Any Postal Service employee who believes that he or she has been illegally discriminated against can contact an EEO counselor at (888) 336-8777. This counseling request must be made **within 45 calendar days** of the alleged discriminatory act. The counselor will attempt to help the parties agree on a resolution. The Postal Service may offer mediation as part of the EEO process. If the matter is not resolved, the EEO counselor will advise the employee of the procedures for filing a formal complaint.

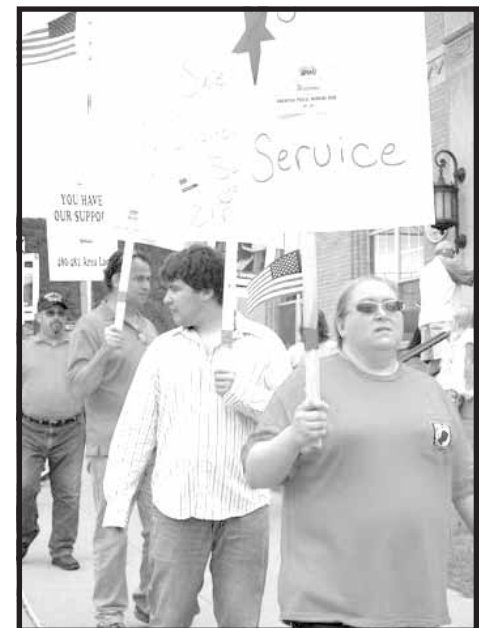
There is vital information regarding a class action EEOC decision that all impacted employees should review. Go to <http://www.nrpclassaction.com/> to see what rights to which you may be eligible.

Impacted employees may request Reasonable Accommodations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Write your plant manager/MDO or Labor Relations Manager. A greater number of IOD employees meet the criteria for a certifiable disability due to recently passed revisions.

Request light duty as well and make sure you get a decision in writing. Management's denial may help with your EEO claim.

As usual, you can contact me if you need my assistance at jennia1957@aol.com

Iron Mountain Picketing



Going Postal In The Digital Era

by John Nichols

Domestic policy debates of late have degenerated into an absurd argument about whether government can do anything right. Even Democrats can be heard mouthing the false premise that private markets are always the answer to the nation's public problems. But government does do things right; indeed, it does something right every day on a massive scale. The oldest of America's major public services—established by decree of the Continental Congress, brought into being by Benjamin Franklin and enumerated in the first article of the Constitution as a vital tool for binding together the new Republic—carries on in the twenty-first century as an essential and possibly transformative arm of the federal government, a service that has only begun to tap this agency's potential.

This is the proper starting point for progressives to enter the great debate about the future of the US Postal Service—and enter they must if there is to be any hope for maintaining it at a time when public services are under overwhelming political and economic assault. Because of declining mail volume and Congressional reforms that transformed the Postal Service from a taxpayer-supported institution into a "revenue neutral" agency that is expected to pay for itself, the Postal Service recorded a

\$3.8 billion loss in 2009 and is, according to an extreme but oft-quoted estimate, on track to accumulate a \$238 billion deficit by 2020. The service has also been harmed by poor political and managerial choices—not to mention accounting errors that have socked it with pension liabilities that are as unsustainable as they are unreasonable.

The Postal Service's economic turbulence has fostered the fantasy that it is no longer necessary in an age when "warp-speed Internet" is constantly juxtaposed against "snail mail." Yet the USPS is anything but "an anachronism" on "a slow march into oblivion." It is a national treasure that provides an immense and irreplaceable public service. The scope and character of that service will change in the twenty-first century—ideally to provide a broader range of information, vote-by-mail systems, community services and even banking options to hundreds of millions of Americans who continue to rely on their local post office as the nerve center of their neighborhood or small town. But before any of this can happen, we must recognize that the Postal Service can and must remain public if we are to maintain the essential infrastructures of democracy.

Letter To Iron Mountain Editor

EDITOR:

I write you concerning the article "USPS looks to sell Iron Mountain post office building" by Lisa Hoffmann. As I read your article, I have questions of the postal service that were not addressed by your article.

The postal service pays no property taxes on the buildings it owns. So what expenses are the postal services going to save by selling the property? Further, once the USPS becomes a renter in the building, the new owner will have no choice but to pass on the property taxes to the USPS in the form of higher rent. How is this savings?

In the article, the USPS stated its plan is to sell the building and rent space back in the same building or in a building nearby. If there is demand for this building space in the area, wouldn't it be easier and more profitable for the USPS to rent out the currently unused space in its building and retain ownership?

The USPS also stated that lower mail volume that is not expected to come back is the reason that the space in the Iron Mountain Post Office will not be needed in the future. How would the USPS have any idea what the mail volume will be in the future?

This economic recession is the worst since the Great Depression; there is simply no situation to compare this to. Isn't it more likely that when the economy recovers, businesses will advertise and solicit sales more? Study after study confirms that mail advertising is the most effective method per dollar spent.

Also business (bulk) mail makes up 90 percent of the mail the USPS processes. Personal correspondence and bill paying account for 10 percent of postal mail volume. So personal mail can decrease by 50 percent and a 10 percent increase in business (bulk) mail will increase mail volume by twice as much as the personal mail loss.

So why on earth is the USPS beating the drum of internet usage

effecting volume and that personal mail is projected to go down? That ship has sailed, personal correspondence is a minor aspect of the USPS's business model. It would be like saying the Ford Motor Company's sales volume will continue to lower because large sedans are projected to sell less in the future when large sedans account for only 10 percent of their sales.

Large businesses have multiple products and follow customer demand. To use misleading information when dealing with the American people leads me to believe the USPS is trying to engineer an outcome. The USPS has weathered the internet effect and still is sound financially.

Had Congress not recently required the USPS to pay for current employees' future retirement medical benefits, the postal service would have made a profit every year of this economic downturn.

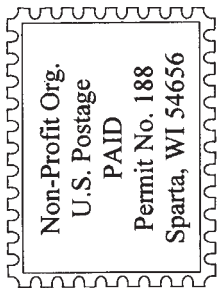
This requirement to pay retirees medical premiums 20 to 30 years prior to the employee retiring and even if they don't retire from the postal service is not required of any entity, public or private. Only the post office has this \$5 billion a year burden.

I feel this is only the latest attack on universal mail service required by U.S. law. The USPS has been on a campaign to lower service to the rural areas of this country.

Reduced window hours, closing post offices, removing collection boxes, overnight mail now taking two to three days. These are all actions already taken by the postal services in northern Michigan.

The USPS is refusing to honor its mandate to serve all Americans equally regardless of their location. How long after the Iron Mountain Post Office is sold before the USPS will be citing the high cost of renting the post office in Iron Mountain as the reason the mail and jobs need to be moved into a plant far away and the mail service to the U.P. suffers even more?

John Marcotte, Gaylord,
President of Michigan
Postal Workers Union



Time Dated Information!
Please Expedite Delivery.



Return to APWU/MPWU
c/o Michael Long, Editor
P.O. Box 280
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**Area 10, 11, & 12
District Meeting**
When: October 14, 15 & 16, 2010
Where: Otsego Club
696 M-32 Gaylord MI, 49734

Costs and Class Information will be updated on the website.