

# Michigan

## MESSENGER

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by John Marcotte,  
President

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

# A Perfect Storm Of Union Activities

What an exciting time for our union. We are in the middle of a "perfect storm" of union activities with the national convention, national elections and beginning of contract negotiations all within a couple of months. At the time of this printing the national convention has come and gone and I have to say the Detroit District Area Local deserves great praise for hosting a wonderful and productive convention. I can not thank President Chris Ulmer and all of the DDAL's executive board enough for including the MPWU in the events. The spirit of brotherhood and solidarity expressed by the members of the DDAL is what unionism is all about and the only way we can prevail against management's insidious campaign to dis-

mantle the postal service piece by piece. One of the convention highlights for me was to speak at the rally in the street and I wish to thank Legislative Director Myke Reid for his kind introduction at this event. Due to time constraints I did not give my speech and just spoke a few words from the heart in an attempt to keep our convention on schedule. I would however like to give the high points of that speech to you now.

An often reprinted article in many APWU publications is the article written by Leo Persails describing the many attempts by outside interests to dismantle the post office and his warning that the dismantling of the postal service will be by an enemy from within. In it he describes that only the postal service itself could dismantle the postal service. At the time this was considered thoughtful and intel-

ligent but unlikely to occur. I'm telling you now it not only will occur, it already has occurred. With Postmaster General Jack Potter and his headquarters leadership team we not only have an enemy to a postal service that binds the country together by universal service we have puppets of the large mailers who have been engaged in a campaign to steer the USPS away from serving the American people and toward corporate welfare of large mailers. Examining his sad record as PMG it is easy to see where his loyalty lays. Under his command he approved the tray management system, the APPS for parcel sortation and now the FSSP system for sequencing flats. Each one of these was an outlandish expenditure of money justified by data that was so misleading it was obvious the USPS was spending enormous money to sort the same mail at little if no

savings. All of these actions were pushed by the large mailers and funded not by the revenues the large mailers were paying but by the first class stamps bought by the American people. By law the USPS must have all categories and classes of mail "stand on their own" financially. So the costs of delivering a flat, first class letter, third class letter or parcel mail is paid for by the revenue the sender pays to mail that item. For years under Potter this law was ignored and the first class letter was subsidizing flat and third class mail. In effect the average citizen was being taxed by excessive postage for their mail and this money was given to large mailers and mailing houses in the form of lower postage for their products and discounts in excess of costs avoided. The treachery goes farther than that. PMG Potter hailed

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by Paul Felton,  
Legislative Director

## Legislative Report

# — No Tea For Me —

My last article was called "Will Congress Decide Our Contract?" The headline was an overstatement, but just barely. There is critical legislation pending that will either (worst case scenario) make it next to impossible to get a decent contract or (best case scenario) pave the way for our national negotiators to bring back a contract we can ratify.

With elections coming, the question "Will Congress Decide Our Contract?" should be followed with the obvious fact that "You Will Decide Who's in Congress" (as well as the Governor and various other positions). I urge members to cast a vote based on your future as a postal worker rather than social, ideological, or emotional issues, whether from the "tea party" movement or anywhere else on the political spectrum.

### TWO SCENARIOS

Let me review the scenarios facing postal workers. Worst case scenario: Congress approves 5-day delivery, which strengthens management's argument to an arbitrator to get rid of the No Lay-off clause. Congress passes legislation

requiring arbitrators to be guided by the financial condition of the Postal Service when determining our wages, which strengthens management's argument for substantial wage cuts. Under this scenario, the most brilliant union advocates would have trouble bringing back a contract we could ratify.

The best case scenario is as follows: Congress approves the principle of six-day delivery and also passes HR 5746, which would change the formula for USPS contributions to the CSRS fund. Without going into technical details, this bill would take USPS out of the red and make it possible for us to get a reasonable contract.

By the way, if you haven't done so yet, go to the web site [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org) and look for the place where you can send a message to Congress to pass HR 5746. Send an e-mail or a letter, or both. By doing so, you can help us in our contract fight.

Since it is extremely possible that the negotiation/arbitration process will drag on past November 20, who we elect to Congress is vital. In fact, if on November 2nd a Republican Congress is elected, that will embolden management to stone-

wall us at the bargaining table because management would expect the legislation described under the "worst case scenario" to be enacted shortly.

So think carefully before you vote.

I also should mention that marching with the union movement on Labor Day in Detroit was the Democratic team for Governor-Lieutenant Governor-Secretary of State: Virg Bernero, Brenda Lawrence (a former postal worker), and Jocelyn Benson. I have heard Mr. Bernero speak under the theme "Main Street, Not Wall Street," and I find him quite preferable to a nerd who favors the anti-union right-to-work movement.

### CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

I think it appropriate to use this space to comment on a few of the legislative resolutions passed at the National APWU Convention in Detroit. Remember, just as with contractual resolutions, passing a resolution does not achieve anything; it only states a goal we hope to achieve.

Resolution 194 calls for reinstatement of restrictions on banks that were part of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933. In 1999 Congress repealed a section of that act which mandated that banks which operated both as commercial and investment

banks must be split up. The repeal of this section paved the way for the economic collapse a few years ago.

Resolution 196 called for the health benefits and premiums paid by retirees to be locked in at the time of retirement, and not be allowed to change unless it's to the benefit of the retiree.

Resolution 199 entitled the "Future of USPS" called for an end to mailer discounts, an agency shop for APWU (meaning all workers in our bargaining unit have to join the union), and a full voice and vote for the unions on the Postal Board of Governors and the Postal Rate Commission.

Resolution 201 called for the national APWU to resume the practice of mass legislative mobilizations in Washington. I can remember one such mobilization, many years ago visiting Congressman Bonior (which dates this item). What struck me was not so much that we convinced the Congressman of anything (he already agreed with everything we brought up) but the energizing and educational value of the trip for the members who attended.

Resolution 202 called for a financial transactions tax, that would put a small

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# A Perfect Storm Of Union Activities

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the Postal Reorganization Act as just the changes he needed to move the postal service into the 21st century. What he didn't tell you was that he knew full well that to require a pre funding of employee healthcare would put a burden so heavy that even the amazing productivity of the postal workers could not overcome. To be clear, before this change in law the USPS had a thirty year record of universal service to all of America while the price of the stamp increased less than the rate of inflation. All the while our union fought for our share of the productivity in the form of compensation to allow us the benefits of a middle class lifestyle. The USPS was a win-win for the American people, postal workers and the American economy. A scant few years after this law was passed the USPS is about to exceed its borrowing authority (15 billion dollars), has aggressively reduced universal service with reduced window hours and closing of locations and has plans to consolidate from many strategically located mail processing locations to a few enormous mega plants. This consolidation makes it harder to serve the American people but makes it easier for mailing houses to achieve maximum discounts while minimizing the locations mailing houses have to drop off mail, pushing that distribution cost on to the postal service. All data indicates, as a rule, as the size of the facility increases the efficiency decreases. Is this the direction PMG Potter was referring to for the 21st century? No less than the destruction of the USPS as we know it. Together with his willing accomplices they have refused to do the common sense things to solve the problems facing the USPS. Did they stop a money losing partnership with FED EX? No. Did they stop paying mailing houses to do postal work at a premium? No. Did they have idle workers perform the work mailing houses were doing to make these employees productive? No. Did they stop excessive money losing discounts? No. What they did do is try to violate the law two more times with attempts to go to 5 day delivery and now changing delivery standards. By their

excessive excessing the USPS is soon going to be unable to deliver the mail in a timely manner due to a lack of employees to perform the work.

As we speak mail is stacking up in plants all over the country. It is time for the individual greed and corporate welfare to stop. It is time for retired postal executives to stop working for companies that benefited from their actions as a civil servant. It is time for the postal service to be returned to its owners, the American people. It is time for Jack Potter to give back his millions in deferred compensa-

tion; it is time for Jack Potter to give back service to the American people; it is time for Jack Potter to give back a postal network that was well designed and stop the needless excessing; It is time for Jack Potter to give back the billions in foolish contracts and work discounts bankrupting the postal service; It is time to give back the postal service to postal workers who want to serve the American people not Wall Street! It is time to GIVE IT BACK JACK! GIVE IT BACK JACK! GIVE IT BACK JACK!

Yours in Friendship and Solidarity.

# No Tea For Me

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tax on stock trades and similar financial actions. It would primarily affect large-scale traders, and in particular it would discourage some of the high-risk financial transactions that led to the economic collapse a few years back.

Resolution C-222 called for meaningful actions to oppose the war and support the troops. It called for all of our troops to be brought home from Iraq and Afghanistan promptly. It also demanded that our nation keep its promise to veterans by ensuring quality jobs with living wages, quality medical care, and recognition that their medical conditions are service-related without them having to jump through hoops to prove it. This resolution passed, after considerable discussion (and an amendment that didn't pass) around the meaning of the word "promptly."

Resolution C-224 called for opposition to Arizona's controversial anti-immigrant law, and for passage of a national immigration reform law that was more balanced. I don't carry my birth certificate around, and if I was stopped because the authorities didn't like my ethnic background I could not prove I am a citizen. That's not going to happen to me because I am a Caucasian, but that's exactly what the Arizona law would do to anyone who looks like they might come from Mexico. I also strongly believe that we should not target the undocumented workers who are

victims in this situation; we should target those who profit by exploiting immigrant labor. However, the resolution was amended (and weakened) by removing the reference to the Arizona law, so what passed was a call for national immigration reform.

## JOBS, JUSTICE AND PEACE

On August 28 (the day after our National Convention) there was a spirited and well-attended march and rally in Detroit for "Jobs, Justice and Peace." It was spearheaded by the new national UAW President Bob King and the Reverend Jesse Jackson. The issues addressed included aid for the unemployed, job creation, moratorium on foreclosures, fair trade, and ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The speakers included labor leaders, clergy, civil rights leaders and political figures, such as candidate for Governor Virg Bernero (who gave his "Main Street not Wall Street" speech, Senator Sabenow and a number of Congressmen. UAW President King recognizes that to be successful, labor must unite with other groups that are under attack from the same corporate power structure that confronts us. This march and rally was a wonderful first step in building such a coalition.

## APWU RALLY

And lest I forget, on Tuesday of the Convention, we recessed at noon and had a humungous rally in downtown Detroit to save Saturday delivery. We got good media coverage and we had an impact. When I got back to work the following week, coworkers were talking about it. A letter carrier friend of mine says customers on his route were talking to him about it. And a friend of mine (a retired autoworker) said she was eating at a restaurant downtown a few days after the protest and the restaurant still had a Save Saturday Service sign in the window. I am a firm believer in mass mobilizations, both for the energizing effect they have on the participants and for the impact on the general public. Achieving any of labor's legislative aims will be a lot easier if there is a mass movement in the streets. The right wing understands this. As some of the events described in this article indicate, the labor movement is moving in this direction as well.

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.







by Michael A. Long,  
Editor

## Editor's Report

# National Convention Made History

Brothers and Sisters,

The National Convention is now in the history books; and when we look back on it, I am definitely sure that it will be recorded as one of the best. The Detroit District Area Local did an outstanding job in their hosting of this convention, and I would like to personally thank each and every member of the DDAL for this tireless efforts. Without trying to miss anyone, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chris Ulmer (DDAL President) and Marcus Smith (DDAL Organization Director and Convention Chairperson) and their families for the work and energy that was needed for this convention to run as smoothly as it did.

When I sat down to write this article, I said that I was going to keep it short and sweet; however, as always, something just keeps gnawing at me . . . that is management continually doing our work. While I am aware that this has been a problem in the Associate Offices for many years, and we are constantly talking about it, and filing grievances; lately it is happening more and more within the larger plants and installations as well. Management is cutting, cutting, and cutting more; for the first time in history, every locations within Michigan is under withholding and if what I have been told is correct, almost every plant is now excessing out. A few years ago, this was unheard of! It used to be, if a station or office needed to excess out their regular position, they would send them to the plant to work; now, the opposite is true.

Sorry for that tangent, but as I was saying, management continues to cut jobs and service, and what are they doing now? Trying to do the work themselves, and it isn't limited only to the APWU craft positions. This week, I have seen a few times management sweeping the mail, or loading a ledge (just to "help" mind you, or to try to get that last tray of mail in), or even as a co-workers reported to me, management is going through Gaylord and containers looking for mail, and then containerizing them, and shipping them to various operations. This is craft work! It is NOT management work! In both the APWU and the Mail Handlers contract, Article 3 pretty much says the same thing: Management has "the exclusive right, **subject to the provisions of this agreement**" (which means, if they violate another part of the contract, this part does not apply (hence, they can't do it) . . . "D. To determine the methods, means, and **personnel** by which such operations are to be conducted." Doesn't management understand that they are to determine

which personnel to use (e.g. Clerks, Carriers, Mail Handlers, etc.), NOT themselves?

I can see management now, and yes, I know they read this publication; that they will say . . . we will just determine that it is management work. Not so fast. Remember when I said earlier that if you violate another Article in the agreement, Article 3 does not apply either; thus you can't determine anything if you violate the other part. Article 1.6 is where it says what a person in management can do in respect to the performance of bargaining unit work. "**Section 6. Performance of Bargaining Unit Work.** (A.) Supervisors are prohibited from performing bargaining unit work at post offices with 100 or more bargaining unit employees, except: (1) in an emergency; (2) for the purpose of training or

instruction of employees; (3) to assure the proper operation of equipment; (4) to protect the safety of employees; or to protect the property of the USPS. (B.) In offices with less than 100 bargaining unit employees, supervisors are prohibited from performing bargaining unit work except as enumerated in Section 6.A. 1 through 5 above or when the duties are included in the supervisor's position description.

As you can see, management has no right to do anything that is bargaining work, especially at the larger 100 plus man-year offices.

In closing, since the next edition of the *Michigan Messenger* won't come out until December, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a safe and enjoyable Fall season. For those hunters, take a moment to brush up

on your hunter safety and then, have a great time in the woods! I hope to see as many of you as possible at the upcoming District meeting in Gaylord this October. Many great classes are scheduled (with yours truly finally taking a plunge and teaching something I do enjoy . . . Computers.)

On a final note, Please! Please!! Please!!! Get out and vote on November 2nd. During the midterm election cycle, many people sit it out and stay home. We have to ensure that everyone, all union members and their families get out to vote and support Labor and Union friendly candidates; but whom ever you vote for, just make sure you get out there and vote. It is one of the most easy to use rights we have; but so often overlooked!

Yours in Solidarity.



by Jennifer Amos,  
Human Relations Director

## Human Relation's Report

# Chapter 546 Of ELM

tions so we can address as many concerns as possible. If you email these questions to me beforehand, I can

do some research and present a well thought-out answer.

In Solidarity.

I appreciate my local membership for sending me to the 2010 National Convention in Detroit, Michigan. Along with representing our members, I had time to talk with Richard Boutwell from the Human Relations staff. I also spent some time speaking to him after I got home from the convention about the NRP.

NRP teams have removed employees all over the country and I'm currently trying to get several employees back to work from our own area. It hasn't been an easy process. I wish I had an easy answer for those stewards dealing with this situation in Michigan, but I don't.

Each situation is unique and has to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. I'd love to hear from anyone who has had success getting impacted employees back to work! Email me at [jennia1957@aol.com](mailto:jennia1957@aol.com).

Using Chapter 546 of the ELM is your strongest argument when filing grievances for the employee's sent home due to NWA. Did management really make EVERY effort possible to find them work? Not "necessary" work, but medically suitable work. And . . . who is performing those duties now? Emphasize Chapter 546 of the ELM — that may be the key to success.

We have a district meeting coming up in Gaylord Michigan October 14 - 16, 2010. I will lead a class in OWCP and the NRP. I would ask if you plan to attend the class please prepare ques-



## Area 3 Director

by Robin Ely,  
Area 3 Director

# We Are Not Alone

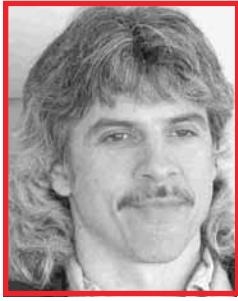
The next problem soon to be on our plates in the very near future is the merging of local offices. I have been getting phones calls about the Gregory Post Office moving the carriers to the Pickney Post Office. Now the big question is what will happen to the clerks from Gregory? I will be very busy trying to get the answer to that question.

I know in my home office (Belleville) management is trying really hard to cut the PTF hours. They are being scheduled 6 days a week with a 2 hour lunch on most days. Sometimes they are lucky to get 40 hours. I am sure this is happening in other offices. Management will send a PTF on a two hour lunch while they do the dispatch work. I file the grievance and get the clerk paid. We need to protect our jobs. Management needs to stop doing bargaining unit work. They could easily have solved the problem without a grievance. STOP DOING BARGAINING UNIT WORK . . .

Hope everyone had a great summer. This fall and winter will be a tough one since our contract will be expiring. Hopefully we will get a decent contract that we will all be able to accept. It sure is going to be a tough battle.

## Clerk Craft Report

# Convention Report



by Richard  
Blake,  
Clerk Craft  
Director

**2010 National Convention and workshops** — from August 21 through August 28, I attended the 2010 Clerk Division Conference, the 2010 APWU National Convention, and the Post-Convention workshops in Detroit Michigan. The Clerk Division Conference included reports to the delegates from our National officers, discussion of the roughly 45 resolutions which were submitted prior to the start of the Convention (many of which dealt with issues of job security), and a memorial service for the brothers and sisters who passed since our last Convention. Surprisingly, the delegates decided **not** to have an open forum at this year's Conference, which struck me as pretty odd in that we get so few opportunities to have that type of dialogue with our National officers. Due to the delegates rushing through the debate on the resolutions on Saturday, and then choosing not to have an open forum on Sunday, the Clerk Division Conference ended early each day.

On Monday 8-23 the convention featured an address from President Burrus, who as we all know will not be seeking re-election, making this his last National Convention. He stated that the

APWU bargaining units are now 83% organized, an all-time high. He spoke on the challenges that we'll be facing in our upcoming national negotiations, the importance of electing pro-worker candidates in the November election, and he voiced his fears concerning the potential effects of a reduction in delivery days. As in past conventions, the Rules Committee reported on the first day, and the delegates voted to amend the rules to permit retiree delegates to be seated on the convention floor. The Finance Committee reported that APWU is presently at around 182,000 members. Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell discussed the issue of "non-functioning" Locals around the country. The Labor-Management Committee then began its report on the roughly 100 resolutions that had been submitted; the biggest debate of the day on Monday concerned a resolution seeking to require management to pay grievance settlements within a shorter time frame. Tuesday 8-24 saw the Labor-Management Committee resume discussion of resolutions, with the biggest debate over a resolution dealing with subcontracting. We were joined during the day by Reverend Jesse Jackson, who is a child of postal workers. He joined the delegates' march to Campius

Martius, where we rallied to save 6-day delivery. Many other Union speakers were present as well, often referring to the attacks on all public sector workers. After the convention resumed, we were addressed by NALC President Fred Rolando, who echoed our calls to save 6-day delivery, and who offered a number of bold ideas for "growing" the USPS in the future. Later that day the delegates once again debated the idea of "universal seniority", but once again the idea went down to defeat.

On Wednesday 8-25 the Constitution Committee reported. The delegates discussed the idea of a dues increase at great length, with delegates making impassioned speeches both for against an increase; the final vote was close to 50/50, but since a dues increase would have been a constitutional change, it required the approval of a 2/3 majority and therefore was rejected. Much debate also took place around the issue of permitting the President to choose not to fill vacancies within the APWU structure; that resolution was rejected by the delegates.

On Thursday 8-26 deliberations on constitutional issues continued; by far the longest debate concerned the issue of "telephonic" (as opposed to face-to-face) Step 3 and Pre-arbitration meetings. While some national officers insisted that the policy of "telephonic" Step 3 meetings (instituted as a way of reducing what was characterized as "excessive" travel expenses) had no adverse effect on the processing of grievances, many of the delegates, including several National Business Agents, felt otherwise. The delegates eventually adopted a resolution permitting National Business Agents to hold face-to-face Step 3 meetings when necessary. There was also much debate on Thursday over the precise wording of a resolution calling for withdrawal of US combat troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as debate on a resolution dealing with immigration. Friday 8-27 saw the final deliberations on late-submitted Labor-Management Committee resolutions, including one resolution which more or less mandated that in the upcoming national negotiations, newly-hired postal workers would bear the brunt of any possible "concessions". President Burrus relinquished the Chair to speak against that resolution, stating that he thought it was a bad idea for the delegates to "hand-cuff" him to any one particular negotiating strategy.

On Saturday 8-28 I attended 2 half-day Post-Convention workshops. The morning workshop was a broad overview of US labor law, including such matters as the NLRA, duty

of fair representation, and the Family and Medical Leave Act. I had some specific questions about recent NLRB actions in Region 7 (the region which covers the entire lower peninsula), and the attorney from our national law firm indicated that some of the recent Region 7 decisions seemed pretty bizarre to him. Another important aspect of that class was the discussion on FMLA; while most of the delegates probably didn't want to hear this, it was explained very well — much of what we refer to as "harassment" by the postal service when we apply for FMLA is not necessarily meant to deprive us of our rights under the Act, but merely to deprive us of **pay** for our absence. After all, the American FMLA is by far the weakest of any such law in any industrialized country, and it is not a "type" of leave, nor does it **ever** guarantee payment for any particular absence, it merely affords protection from discipline for such absences. Most of what we refer to as "harassment" associated with FMLA is merely the employer enforcing (in the most hyper-technical, annoying, contentious manner possible) *their own leave regulations*, which in most cases does not constitute a violation of the Act. The afternoon class was titled "Survival in a Function Four Environment", taught by National Business Agents Russ Bugary and Willie Mellen. This class zoomed through a host of issues related to Clerk staffing and work protection, such as Article 1.6, casuals, function four reviews, and "DUR's", otherwise known as "delivery unit relocations". Willie Mellen is the "point person" for all DUR-related issues in the Central Region, and he put together a large file on the issues related to DUR's, such as excessing, Article 1.6, PMR;s, etc. I would recommend that any officer, steward, or local President who might be looking at a DUR in the near future should have this information, and I would be happy to copy this file onto a disc for anyone who wants one.

I want to thank the members of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, and specifically those delegates to the 2010 MPWU Convention, for choosing to send me as a MPWU delegate to our National Convention. I would be happy to provide copies of any of the Committee reports, or the resolution book, to any member who would like them. Lastly, in appreciation of those MPWU delegates who voted to send me, I want to report that I completed the week **under budget** — mostly due to my habit of forgetting to ask for receipts!

In Solidarity.

## Area 5 Director



by Joanna  
Atkinson,  
Area 5  
Director

## Area 5 News

being disapproved now. Apparently her position is that unless you are forced to go to an office, you don't get paid mileage. I called our NBA's and the union's position of course is not that. Our position is you get paid mileage regardless. Of course I have grievances going on this and I am hopeful they will be resolved. There are offices out there that desperately need a clerk to come in and help to cover both for the craft employees as well as the Postmaster taking annual leave. I can't believe the POOM really thinks a clerk will travel 50 miles for a couple of hours of work.

Our national contract is up this year and meetings will be starting soon. Our National officers will be facing some tough times this year but I have the utmost faith in them to get us the best possible contract they can.

I have been busy with a lot of new grievances and phone calls from our members in the field. As always, please call me whenever you have a question. My phone number is 989-295-5454. I do work midnights, but if you leave a message I will call you back.

The National Convention is over and it was a great convention. The Detroit local did an excellent job with all of the details of the convention. It was well attended and I heard nothing but good comments from all of the delegates. President Burrus was in rare form, but for the most part it was well run. This was his last convention to chair as he is retiring after this term. We are losing a lot of National Officers and they will all be missed. John Clark will be retiring at the end of this term also. He has done so much for the union during his terms in office and I will miss him greatly. He has always been there to answer whatever questions I have asked over the years. John, I hope you and Rosie enjoy retirement! You both certainly deserve it.

Many things are happening in the area 5 offices. Linda Woods is back as the POOM. And now she is changing the rules again. I have a number of clerks calling that their e-travel is





by Jason Rushing, Maintenance Craft Director

## Maintenance Craft Report

# — PAR And PER's —

Hello Brothers and Sisters,  
 Let me start out with a quick reminder about PAR and PER's. As I talked about before, Preferred Assignment Registers and Promotion Eligibility Registers are items that run in the back ground. PAR and PER fills, will take place and become effective most of the time before you even see a posting or hear about them. Please raise your right hand, I (state your name) promise to look at the PAR and PER lists at least every 6 months to see if I am listed there. By staying on top of the lists you will remember if you put your name on a list or not. That will save you and your APWU steward many hours of headaches trying to fix something you wanted before but don't want now. A PAR and PER will stay active until you are awarded your 1st choice or you withdraw your name from said lists either by letter or by declination form. Get everything in writing and keep copies. If your in an office going through excessing or the threat of, you need to know where you are on the lists. There will be movement of employees. Enough about that.

Delegates just returned from our APWU National Convention at Cobo Hall in Detroit, MI, August 21 through August 28. Hopefully all who attended retained some new knowledge and had a good time with fellow brothers and sister union members at the convention. There were very on point debates regarding the future of the APWU and the United States Postal Service. One of the key opening day discussions, was that our union is alive and well and we need to keep going. This idea was emphasized with the attendance of under 35 year olds. The National Union gave an incentive for 35 and under year olds, young activists, to attend the National Convention at a slightly discounted rate. There was a good showing of them and President Burrus addressed them at a special meeting to emphasize the importance of their participation in their union. There was a rally/ march on Tuesday from the convention hall to Campus Martius Park to reinforce our desire to Save Our Saturday Service - 5 Day No Way! It was attended by convention delegation of approximately 2500 along with guest Unions. The march was highlighted with address's by APWU President William Burrus, Detroit APWU President Christopher Ulmer, Rev. Jesse Jackson and Congressman John Conyers. The overall theme of the convention was CHANGE. Change is what is so

dramatically going on in the Postal Service right now. There are so many changes going on right now everyone needs to stay on their feet to make sure what is changed is changed correctly. This applies to all aspects of your job, the biggest and most serious one is the excessing of employees. Another hot topic on the convention floor was a proposed dues increase. There are

many arguments for and against a dues increase. The delegates finally debated and voted against a dues increase. Since this is Mr. Burrus's last convention, not seeking re-election, there was a dinner honoring his long time service to the APWU. The Maintenance Craft, the Clerk Craft, MVS Craft and Support Services all had important resolutions they brought

before the convention floor. Besides the convention business, the delegates got to participation in the normal convention activities such as the parade of states, COPA night, Burrus dinner, honoring Veterans and other activities. I thank you, the membership for allowing me to represent you, at the APWU National Convention 2010.

In Union Solidarity.



by Joe Wrobel, Motor Vehicle Craft Director

## Motor Vehicle Craft Report

# Wheels And Wrenches

Its election time and I would like to say that I hope all Members voted. It amazes me that the most important choices that we make pass some of us by without a second thought. MVS is looking at some of the same challenges that we have been for the past several years, contracting out (art. 32) is constantly rearing its head. Some of the higher ups are still convinced that contracting out is the way to go, not thinking at all about the quality of

work that is being done. The pilot program might come into our state in the upcoming year, I along with all of the local MVS craft directors are going to do our best to keep it out. Our national officers wrote the following on their web page about the step 4 grievance that was filed back in September of 2009. We are starting to take a different approach to stop HCR's from expanding any further. Here is the article in part; *As part of our long-standing battle to protect our jobs against subcontractors, MVS officers at the national level filed a Step 4 grievance on Sept. 1, 2009,*

*asserting that Highway Contract Route (HCR) drivers must be counted as casuals. The grievance (Case #HQT20097) has been appealed to arbitration.*

If HCR drivers are counted as casuals, the casual complement would exceed the number permitted under the terms of Collective Bargaining Agreement in most installations; such a ruling would strengthen the union's effort to limit subcontracting.

We recommend that every local union file a grievance on this issue, and appeal the grievance to Step 3. We have *continued on page 11*

## Area 10, 11, & 12 District Meeting

**WHEN:** October 14 - 16, 2010  
**WHERE:** Otsego Club, 696 M-32, Gaylord, MI 49734  
 (800) 752-5510

**COSTS:** Registration: \$75.00

**NOTE:** To make reservations, you need to call the hotel directly and inform them you are with the Michigan Postal Workers Union to receive the negotiated rate. Reservations via the website will not be eligible for reduced rate. To view hotel type, click the link at the top to view their website.

**ROOMS:** (Nightly Rates below do not include taxes and fees (which is approximately 19%))

- \$ 85 - Blue Spruce Lodge (Standard Hotel Room)
- \$105 - White Birch Executive Lodge (Deluxe Hotel Room)
- \$155 - Hilltop Lodge Executive Lodge (Premium Hotel Room)
- \$ 75 - The lofts (twin beds) (Economy Rooms)
- \$329 - Townhouse (7-12 people) (3-4br home w/garage)
- \$329 - Cabins (7-12 people) (4 br home (no garage))

CLASS SCHEDULE	CLASS	INSTRUCTOR
<b>THURSDAY (OCTOBER 14, 2010)</b>		
1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Veterans Issues	John Smeekens
1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Article 1.6B	Lynn Pallas-Barber
1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Computers	Michael Long (please e-Mail as to what you would like the class to be focused on)
<b>FRIDAY (OCTOBER 15, 2010)</b>		
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Beginning and Advanced Stewards	Patrick Chornoby & Richard Blake (along with the newest NBA following the election)
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Motor Vehicle Services	Joe Wrobel
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Article 12	Lynn Pallas-Barber
<b>SATURDAY (OCTOBER 16, 2010)</b>		
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Workers Compensation/NRP	Jennifer Amos
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Retirement	Joe Gordon
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Maintenance	Jason Rushing

(to include specifics to Maintenance Residuals and Excessing)

**NOTE:** Friday and Saturday are all-day classes. Lunch and Break times will be posted.





by John  
Smeekens,  
Veterans  
Director

## Veteran's Report

# Convention Comments

What a showing of HONOR and respect to see Angela Barbret, Gold Star Mother of the 480-481 Area Local, open the convention, reciting The Pledge of Allegiance. I just wish they would have announced her, like they did *all the others*.

And on Red Friday, it was great to see how many people were wearing their Red Shirts to show support for our troops. I just wish more, were involved in this endeavor! It would have been great to see that room in a sea of Red!

Now onto the convention! I will not name names, but I wish those who voted *against* some of the Veterans issues brought up on the floor, could have explained to me their reason for being against the two, what I felt, important issues, affecting Veterans'. If anyone would care to discuss these two issues with me, I would be more than happy to sit down with you. If you do not understand the issues, feel free to contact me for a further explanation. It was a great feeling to see the 99% support from all the delegates, of all the locals, representing the Great State of Michigan. The final vote count was 824 For, to 821 Against. When called onstage by Chairman Burrus, to visually see the vote, we called for a teller count, because I had forgotten that it was a Constitutional Amendment needing a 2/3 thirds majority. In my zeal, I was only thinking majority. After having support from some well known union people from around the country, I was sure it would be passed.

The other incident that really upset me was the portable coffee shop that was set up in front of the City of Detroit World War II Memorial, outside the Wayne County Room where the convention was being held. Anytime I visit COBO, I make it a point to visit this memorial and pay respect to my Mother's first husband, touch his name, and say a prayer, as me and my family had done, the numerous times we attended functions at COBO, since I was a child. I spoke to the head of security, who took me to the upstairs offices at COBO, where I was introduced to a gentleman named Raj, who just nodded and said "I'm sorry", while I explained to him the disrespect of placing the portable coffee shop in front of the memorial covering half of the names of those who had made the Ultimate Sacrifice. He continued to say "I'm Sorry", and that's when I realized that he probably did not understand my concerns. Since the convention, I have addressed this issue by sending a letter to the Mayor of Detroit, Mr. Bing, and I also contacted channel 2 newscasters office Mr. Wolchack, who runs the Wall of Shame. As of this writing, I have not received any response from either of these individuals or their offices.

The other aspects of the convention were interesting as they usually are. We all work for the same company, and were in the same union, but we definitely have differing views, ideas, and opinions on how things should be done. But this what makes the convention process a great experience!

### DARREN'S DIARY

Well, Operation New Dawn, the new name for what's happening over in Iraq and Afghanistan, is now officially affecting me and my family. On August 21, 2010, I drove my son-in-law Darren, along with my daughter Janet (Darren's wife), and his son Jake to metro airport, where Darren departed for Gulf Port, Mississippi, for further training and an overseas physical, before he departs for duty in either Iraq or Afghanistan. Darren is in the Naval reserves, and is a SeaBee, in a construction battalion. His unit has been activated and is now in the process of preparing to go overseas. FYI, Darren is a USPS employee, who is a letter carrier and works out of the Mt. Clemens Office. Janet, my daughter, is an APWU clerk, who works out of the same office. Updates will be posted here, to let those of you who are interested, know how Darren's doing. In honor of his duty, I went High & Tight. We ask that you please keep him in your prayers. Thank You!!!

### RECTUM SIMPSON

Some people, from and in and around Washington, are demanding that the Republican co-chairman of President Barack Obama's deficit reduction commission look for a new line of work. It seems that Mr. Simpson (wonder if there's any relation to Bart or Homer), said of Vietnam veterans receiving benefits for diabetes, "The irony is that the Veterans who saved this country are now, in a way, not helping us to save the country in this fiscal mess." Simpson, an Army Veteran, was once the chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. Several sources have said the president disagrees with the comments and the sentiment behind the statements. I wonder if his retirement package from his political career will be part of "this fiscal mess!"

### MENTAL FAMILY HELP

On August 31, 2010, an informational letter providing clinical guidance to expand authority for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide mental health and other services to members of a Veteran's immediate family, the legal guardian of a Veteran, or the individual in whose household the Veteran certifies an intention to live ("eligible individuals"), was issued. This expanded authority was enacted as part of Public Law 110-387. Public Law 110-387 revised the definition

of hospital care in title 38 U.S.C. § 1701 to include marriage and family counseling in the list of services that could be provided, if considered appropriate for the effective treatment and rehabilitation of a Veteran, as part of a Veteran's hospital care. The revised definition of hospital care thus now includes "such mental health services, consultation, professional counseling, marriage and family counseling, and training for the members of the immediate family or legal guardian of a Veteran, or the individual in whose household such Veteran certifies an intention to live, as the Secretary considers appropriate for the effective treatment and rehabilitation of a Veteran receiving care under the last sentence of (38 U.S.C. § 1781 (b)). *The new law gives authority to mental health clinicians to provide marriage and family counseling and other mental health services under the preceding conditions.* **REMEMBER TO ALWAYS SEEK HELP FROM YOUR COUNTY VETERANS COUNSELOR FOR CLARIFICATION OR FROM A VSO THROUGH A VETERANS' ORGANIZATION.**

### VETERANS' DAY 2010

Please take a moment on this Veterans' Day to hug a Veteran, and tell them "Thank You for your service to


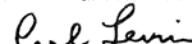
our Country and WELCOME HOME." And whatever your beliefs are, please keep them in your thoughts, and say a prayer for those who are presently in the military and are serving this country, and keeping in place, our freedoms. To my Veteran brothers and sisters I say; "WELCOME HOME AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY."

And on that note, about my Brother and Sister Veterans', who are you, and where are you? As I stood at the convention and discussed Veterans' issues with numerous people, and I saw the support of people, when at the microphone discussing Veterans' issues, there were people I recognized, but I was not aware that they were a Veteran. So here's what I'm asking of you, my Brother and Sister Veterans'; send me a post card letting me know who you are, where you're from, and what office you're affiliated with. Also, who you served with, when, where, and anything else you'd like to share. Then all I have to do is try to put a face to each card. If you go online to the MPWU web site, you can pull up my name and address, or send me an e-mail if you don't want to go via post card (I just thought that a post card would help our business). I would love to meet and greet all of you.

## Attention Readers Of Retiree Involvement

Readers of the "Retiree Involvement" column may recall my questioning Michigan Senator, Carl Levin's vote in the Senate, along with 11 other Democrats and Senator Lieberman, with the majority of Republicans, to deny a \$250 payment to seniors, veterans, and persons with dis-

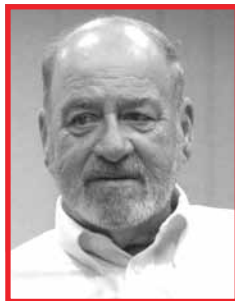
abilities, to compensate for the lack of a COLA in 2010. Senator Debbie Stabenow voted in the affirmative. The measure was defeated 50-47. Senator Levin's letter is in response to my inquiry. The Senate's "Pay-As-You-Go" rule appears to have been the determining factor.

<small>CARL LEVIN MICHIGAN</small>	<small>COMMITTEES: ARMED SERVICES GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS SMALL BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE</small>
	<b>United States Senate</b> <small>WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2202</small>
April 27, 2010	
Mr. Al LaBrecque Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO 3550 Wilson St. Spruce, MI 48762	
Dear Mr. LaBrecque:	
Thank you for contacting me regarding the Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2010.	
In 1975, the Social Security Act was amended to allow for a COLA for Social Security recipients to compensate for the effects of inflation. This COLA is calculated by a formula using the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Based on this formula, the Social Security Administration announced that there will not be a COLA in Social Security benefits for 2010 because there was no increase in the CPI from 2008 to 2009.	
On March 3, 2010, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) offered an amendment that would have provided those receiving Social Security with a payment of \$250. Once this amendment was offered, another Senator pointed out that the Sanders' amendment was not in order because it violated a Senate rule that requires amendments to be funded. In response, Senator Sanders asked that the Senate rule be waived, which requires sixty votes. Forty-seven Senators voted to waive this rule, but I felt the amendment should be paid for and joined the majority of Senators in voting against waiving the rule.	
Michiganians are all well aware of the distressed economic situation in our state, and the day to day hardships so many of our residents continue to face. Congress must do what it can to soften the economic blows to those who are struggling, but I believe we should do so in a way that is responsible and does not add to the growing deficit. We can pay for higher priorities, like easing the financial plight of so many seniors, by reducing funds for lower priorities or closing tax loopholes, which are numerous. I am afraid the Sanders' amendment did not attempt to do that but simply wanted us to add to the deficit by waiving the Senate rule.	
Thank you for contacting me.	
Sincerely, 	



## Retiree Involvement

# Report On Conference



by Al  
LaBrecque,  
Retiree's Chapter  
President

Retirees' Dept. Conference Report: This column is intended to focus on the APWU Retirees' Dept. pre-National Convention 2-day Conference. I'll get to that, but I first have to make some corrections to this column in the July/Aug. issue of the "Messenger". In my haste to congratulate Michigan candidates for APWU office declared elected due to being unopposed; I mistakenly reported Bro. Michael Foster, MVS Asst. Dir., when, in fact, he is in a 2-way race. My failure to facts check!

The second gaffe was the rather pointed criticism I described as 'short shrift', questioning why candidates on the APWU ballot for Retirees' Dept. positions are not identified by their Local or State Chapter the same as all other APWU candidates are I.D.'d by their home Local Union? That's one of the hazards of writing something that's only published bi-monthly. In the interim, I had expressed this concern to Dept. Dir. Judy Beard. Sister Beard took this concern to APWU Sec.-Treas. Liz Powell. I received an e-mail from the Chairman of the APWU Election Committee, informing me that candidates on the ballot for Retirees' Dept. positions would include their home Retiree Chapter. I, at the same time, offer my mea culpa for jumping the gun with my criticism, but to also express my gratitude to Sister Beard, Liz Powell, and the Election Committee for their prompt resolution to this long-standing omission.

While I'm at it, I may as well address another item from my previous column regarding 'reasonable accommodation' for physically challenged delegates to navigate the long walking distances at Cobo Hall at the Conference and Convention. Again, Dir. Beard did her level best to get the responsible Convention Committee parties to provide scooters for that purpose. Despite best efforts, it just didn't work out as intended. This is an issue that we have time to revisit and I'll be making a case for it in future columns and with our Dept. Dir. It shouldn't take a Convention Resolution to provide reasonable accommodation for our physically challenged delegates.

**Conference Report:** As expected, the pre-National Convention Retirees' Dept. Conference was an intense 2-day exercise. Our Michigan State Chapter delegates; Sister Patty Miller, and Brothers Charlie Kolhoff and Al Fouche, did our state proud. V.P. Hendricks joined us on Day #2 following his MVS Div. conference schedule. Hat's off to Bro. Fouche and

his Detroit Local Chapter for being perfect hosts and providing the staffing for a smooth operation at the registration booth. State Chapter Sec.-Treas. Lynn Walker was unable to attend due to having developed a blood clot in his leg. Bro. Walker advises he's well on the mend, and we wish him a speedy, complete recovery.

Day #1 was primarily devoted to speakers invited to address issues vital to the best interests of retirees and seniors that included Barbara Easterling, Pres. of the AFL-CIO affiliated Alliance for Retired Americans. Other speakers of note were; Janet Witt, Mgr., National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare, Myke Reid, APWU Dir. Legislative/Political Dept., and Warren Danford, UAW Retired Workers Dept. We were treated to excellent PowerPoint presentations providing vital information to the delegates, intended to take back to our members.

It was my privilege to welcome the well over 100 retiree delegates on behalf of the Michigan State Retiree Chapter. I must confess I was taken off-guard being on the welcoming agenda due to not having read the session lineup in my registration packet. So, I did it off the cuff making it short and sweet. Then, Judy blindsided me with a last-minute assignment to introduce NARFE Dir. of Pre-Retirement Seminars, Mary Pierson, handing me a sheet with Mrs. Pierson's background info for my introduction remarks. It was suggested that I ad lib two issues I've had as a NARFE member and have related in this column; NARFE holding their national convention at the Grand Rapids anti-labor DeVos-Amway Convention Center, and the insulting "Save a stamp. Renew online" statement printed on the NARFE membership renewal application. I admit to making those points rather emphatic in my intro of Mrs. Pierson.

Mrs. Pierson graciously acknowledged those concerns, recognizing that active and retired Union postal workers comprise a majority of NARFE's membership. She advised that delegates to NARFE conventions no longer select future convention sites as they did in this case, which are now determined by the NARFE E-Board, so that the DeVos-Amway gaffe should not occur again. On the objection to the "Save a stamp" statement on the NARFE membership renewal application, Pierson offered her sincere apologies, agreeing that it is insensitive to postal worker NARFE members and promised to address this issue upon return to NARFE Hq. As an aside; I just attended my local NARFE Chapter meeting where a member brought his

renewal form, mad as a wet hen that NARFE would print "Save a stamp" on it. As a result, and to their credit, the Alpena Thunder Bay Chapter #1487 adopted a motion to send a letter to the NARFE State Federation and national Hq. objecting to the statement.

Far too much was jammed into the Conference to relate in detail. But, these are some statistics which were presented that should interest members. With all the federal election scare tactics by the anti-senior privatizers, and the behind-closed door deliberations of the "Commission on Fiscal Reform", the Social Security Trust Fund is fully funded through 2037 with \$2.6 trillion currently on the books. Internally, the Retirees' Dept. is the second largest Dept. in the APWU with 38,559 dues-paying members as of April 2010. Validating our long-held contention that the Retirees' Dept. is completely financially self-sustaining; after expenditures the Dept. boasts a healthy income balance of \$1,259,681.16 derived from the basic \$24. per annum retiree dues, and a balance in the dedicated Dept. Organizing Fund of \$308,201.49 which is derived from the additional \$1. per month increase adopted by the 2008 convention, for the period ending July 31st. Additionally, as of April, 2010, retiree COPA contributions already amounted to \$90,123.10. The 2009 retiree generated COPA monies totaled over \$209,000., accounting for nearly one-fourth of all COPA funds raised.

Those facts notwithstanding, and much to our disappointment, those statistics did not translate into gaining the favor of the active APWU leaderships and convention delegates on our retiree Constitutional amendment Resolutions. All five of our Michigan endorsed retiree Resolutions were soundly rejected. My assessments of what's been described as "a drubbing" will be subject for a future column I'm inclined to title; "Telling it like it is." Allow me to make it crystal clear that Michigan delegations stood behind our retiree initiatives, and have expressed their dismay over the strong opposition by the majority of the some 3,000 convention delegates.

If I were to point out a Conference shortcoming, it's that Dir. Beard's agenda, while excellent in content, was too ambitious for the time we had to get into the business segment. Deliberations for our recommendations on the retiree Constitution amendment Resolutions to revise the Dept's structure and direction were compressed into the Day #2 afternoon session, leaving no time to discuss a laundry list of agenda items submitted by Local and State Chapters. They remain live

issues for another time. Overall, I give the Conference a B+, and our retiree delegates an A+ for their spirited participation. I'm advised that the Convention adopted a Resolution to reduce the pre-Convention Division Conferences from 2 days to one. We didn't have sufficient time to accomplish our Retirees' Dept. agenda in two days. One Local Chapter's agenda item proposed we conduct our off year Conferences in Wash., D.C. instead of Las Vegas (with the All-Crafts). I could endorse that as it could be an opportunity to lobby Members of Congress on our legislative priorities. We have much to consider and do moving forward.

I have to acknowledge the special efforts of MPWU Pres. John Marcotte to hand carry two of our Michigan retiree Resolutions inadvertently omitted from the Constitution Committee Report so that they were timely for consideration by the Convention, despite the end result. Likewise, to MPWU Sec.-Treas. Darren Joyce, for handling arrangements for our State Chapter delegate's lodging in Detroit. And, a heartfelt Thank You to Michigan State and Local delegates for their steadfast support of our retiree initiatives.

**GAYLORD DISTRICT MEETING:** The State Chapter E-Board has approved the attendance of Sec.-Treas. Lynn Walker and myself to attend the MPWU Areas 10, 11, & 12 District Meeting Oct. 13-15. Gaylord is practically in Lynn and my 'backyards', and an excellent opportunity to connect with our northern Michigan active and retired members. We'll be available to respond to inquiries on retirement and Retirees' Dept. subjects.

**NOVEMBER 2nd!** That's the date every active and retired member of the Union and our family and friends MUST make absolutely certain to GET OUT AND VOTE! This is the weirdest political climate I've witnessed in all my years of political activity! Danger lurks in the apathy and disillusionment over the current economic situation predicting a low voter turnout that could launch some pretty radical thinking candidates into office who could have a devastating impact on our vested job and retirement security interests. It's up to each and everyone of us to exercise our patriotic obligation to elect our friends and to defeat our enemies. No excuses! Absentee ballots are readily available if you can't make it to the polls. Contact your city, county or township Clerk for an absentee ballot, mark it and MAIL IT! If you don't vote for who or what you want, don't complain about who or what you get!

Be Strong!

# APWU Is A Force To Be Reckoned With

The American Postal Workers Union stepped up to the plate, and Our Strong voices were heard Loud and Clear from the streets of the City of Detroit at the 20th biennial National Convention as we began our march, and march we did.

The issues we face, The Subcontracting in the MVS and Maintenance Craft, and job security dominated the Clerk craft discussions. As we all stood together and took to the streets of the Motor City.

It is obvious the "APWU is a force to be reckoned with" were the words from Chris Ulmer the President of the Detroit District area Local and Host Local for the Convention. The Cry from the Demonstration "Five Day? NO WAY!" as APWU President Bill Burrus and The Reverend Jessie Jackson Led the way hand in hand. A Rally for good paying jobs with benefits. Mr. Jackson held with our cause, the son of a Postal employee who passed away while working for the Postal Service the Rev Jackson said "We are all

Postal Workers fighting back! Its time to stand up and save our jobs and save our service! We bailed out the bankers in wall street, now it time to help our working class." The streets were lined with office workers and business workers who emptied the skyscrapers, and lined the streets and applauded our cause "Save Saturday Service"! Bill Burrus said the "APWU members must tell America that we shouldn't be fooled by the plans of the USPS plan to close mail boxes on Saturday".

With the support of the NACL, and 200,000 working members of the AFL-CIO the message was clear. It is time to Stand Up and be Counted, and to Fight Back with informational pickets for the public, letters to our legislators and continuing support to COPA. "We now stand in the streets of Detroit where our bothers and sisters stood tall and Unionism has strong roots. Those who stood before us and fought hard to get us where we are today our voices are heard" Was the message from John Marcotte President of The Michigan

Postal Workers Union.

Mr. Burrus Stated "Our Union is Alive and Strong." We are responding to the Challenge and the anemic hiring practices of the USPS to reduce our ranks, the assurance from Burrus that 83 percent of eligible postal employees belong to the APWU. He urged postal workers. "We all have a stake in the upcoming elections, we must have a voice on Capital Hill. It is time for a change and we must fight for that change. We will Not Go Back".

From the time of the Call to Order on Monday the 23rd of August and the Presentation of Colors by Boy Scouts Troop 889, lead by Senior patrol Leader Joseph Rushing, to the Closing ceremony on the 27th the delegates from almost 300 union locals all over the Nation and even our union brothers and sisters from Puerto Rico, Hawaii/Guam/Samoa and Saipan and the Virgin Islands, and 5 retirees Department delegates, we were Hard at work addressing over 200 resolutions.

When the delegates were finished

for the day it was time to reduce the stress of the day by letting their hair down whether at the Fox Theater for entertainment by the Miracles and the Contours, the Karaoke at the Ice Breaker at the Ren Cen Ballroom or the COPA in the Riverview Ballroom at Cobo Hall.

The fact is, the roots run deep in the Motor City. From the History of Unionism to the Rich History of Music and Entertainment. A hardy hats off to our union brothers and sisters of the MPWU the host state, and the Detroit District Area Local the host Local. For a job well done, and for a class act. We hit a Home Run, that made all who attended this APWU National Convention a Memory rich in dedication and commitment and hard work, and fun and entertainment. Yes to the Motor City, and the APWU. "We are Alive and Strong". In the words of the Rev. Jessie Jackson "Don't Give Up, Keep Hope Alive!"

— reprint Andrew Wojcik Traverse City Area Local, State Delegate MPWU

## — Various Information —

### NEW WEBSITE FOR JOB SEEKERS

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration has launched a new website to help job seekers find employment. The website - [www.myskillsmyfuture.org](http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org) - helps the unemployed match their current skills to new careers and uncover what training is needed to transition from one job to another.

Although unemployment rates have decreased in the 9th District, the federal government should be doing everything in its power during these tough economic times to help people find work and I'm pleased that the Department of Labor has set up this site to aid citizens searching for jobs. This new website matches skills and prior work experience with new occupations. This tool will help many people find challenging, rewarding work.

### HOLIDAY MAIL FOR HEROES

In December 2007, Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. approached the Red Cross asking to assist in distributing thousands of holiday cards for wounded service men and women. In response to this request, the Red Cross partnered with Pitney Bowes to turn the project into a larger opportunity that could reach members of the military at other facilities in our country and abroad. Now in its fourth year, the Holiday Mail for Heroes program provides Americans with the opportunity to extend holiday greetings, expressions of gratitude and well wishes to service members, veterans and their families worldwide. I encourage you to

share your words of support by sending holiday greeting cards to our service members. Information about the program can be found at [www.redcross.org/holidaymail](http://www.redcross.org/holidaymail).

### ELIMINATION OF PAPER PAYROLL SAVINGS BONDS Q&A

Paper Payroll Savings Bond Program to be discontinued soon.

Q - What is changing?

A - The US Department of Treasury will stop issuing paper savings bonds through federal agency savings plans. This includes USPS.

Q - Why the change?

A - The change is being made: (1) To reduce program costs & (2) To support the Treasury's long-term plan to issue all securities electronically.

Q - When does the change take place?

A - The paper payroll program for savings bonds for federal employees ends September 30, 2010.

Q - Will I be notified?

A - Treasury is including informational inserts with printed bonds mailed to employees. USPS employees, who participate in the savings bond program, should have already received a detailed letter in mid-August.

Q - How long can I purchase paper bonds?

A - The last opportunity to purchase paper bonds through a USPS payroll bond deduction is pay period (PP) 19/2010. (Earnings Statement: 9/17/2010)

Q - What happens to unapplied funds?

A - USPS will close paper bond accounts and refund any unapplied funds in PP 20/2010.

Q - What do I do to continue purchasing bonds through a payroll deduction?

A - 1. First, establish a TreasuryDirect account <<https://www.treasurydirect.gov/RS/BPDLogin?application=rscreate&page=rscreate>>. Purchase, manage, and redeem electronic savings bonds online 24/7.

2. Then, establish an allotment via PostalEase <<https://ewss.usps.gov/esymain.htm>>.

Q - Where can I go for more information?

A - Visit the TreasuryDirect website: <http://www.treasurydirect.gov/>; See the Postal Bulletin, September 2010; or Go to Ask a Question on the Accounting website: <http://acs.usps.gov/help/selfService.php>

### HEALTH REFORM CHANGES FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS PROGRAM - EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2011

With the signing of the Affordable Care Act, several provision of the ACA will affect eligibility and benefits under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program beginning January 1, 2011.

**Changes to the FEHB Program Depending Eligibility Rules under the ACA:**

- Children between ages 22 and 26 are now covered under their parent's Self and Family enrollment up to age 26.
- Married children (but NOT their spouse or their own children) are covered up to age 26. This is true even if the child is currently under age 22. Children who are eligible for

or have their own employer-provided health insurance are eligible for coverage up to age 26.

- Stepchildren do not need to live with the enrollee in a parent-child relationship to be eligible for coverage up to age 26.

- Children who are incapable of self-support because of a mental or physical disability that began before age 26 are eligible to continue coverage. Contact HRSSC for additional information.

- Foster children are eligible for coverage up to age 26.

NOTE: Children do not have to live with their parent, be financially depending upon their parent or be students to be covered up to age 26. There is also no requirement that the child have prior or current insurance coverage.

**Changes to the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS):**

Beginning January 1, 2011, currently eligible over-the-counter (OTC) products that are medicines or drugs will not be eligible for reimbursement from your Health Care FSA - unless - you have a prescription for that item written by your physician. The only exception is insulin (you will not need a prescription). Other currently eligible OTC items that are not medicines or drugs will not require a prescription. You will only be reimbursed for eligible OTC medicines and drugs purchased before January 1, 2011, and you must submit your claim on or before April 30, 2011.

Need more information? Contact FSAFEDS at 877-372-3337 or go to [www.opm.gov/insure](http://www.opm.gov/insure).



# Labor Day 2010: Puppets Of The Plutocrats

America should just go ahead and cancel Labor Day. Really.

Other than as an excuse for a picnic, what's the point? Three hundred and sixty-four days a year, we honor plutocrats, and one Monday holiday in September is going to make up for it?

Organized labor no doubt would object. Big deal. **One worker in eight belongs to a labor union.** And last year, for the first time in history, more public-sector workers (500,000 more) belonged to a union than did private-sector workers.

Oh, the irony. For the second year in a row, Americans "celebrate" Labor Day with unemployment at 9.6 percent or higher. **Corporate profits** are 5.7 higher now than then they were in the fourth quarter of 2007, when the recession began. The number of jobs is 5.9 percent lower.

Labor — by which we mean not only organized labor but the entire working class — should just give it up. Roll over. Turn turtle. Admit it: The class war is over, and you lost. You not only lost, you collaborated.

Organized labor still may be fighting the good fight. But a lot of the working class is out there marching in the streets on behalf of the monied class, **puppets of the plutocrats**, angry as hell at all of the wrong people.

Oh, it wasn't always like this. Labor Day became a federal holiday in 1894 because President Grover Cleveland and Congress were frightened of labor's power.

This was after Eugene V. Debs of the Railroad Workers Union had brought the country to its knees over the **Pullman car strike**. Cleveland had put the strike down with the Army, probably illegally, killing 13 people in the process.

At one point Debs had 250,000 workers off the job. Labor Day, which was rushed through Congress in six days flat, became a way to pacify them. Labor Day signaled the beginning of the end of what Mark Twain called the **"Gilded Age,"** when there was more disparity between rich and poor than at any time in the nation's history, except maybe this one.

More important were the real gains that labor achieved in the next few decades: higher wages, shorter work weeks, the progressive income tax and acceptance of the fundamental concept that labor was as important as capital in the production of goods and the provision of services.

That concept is all but gone today, a victim not only of industrialization, the technological revolution and globalization, but also of shrewd, cynical and effective politics.

**Working-class** America got distracted by its own success. It had houses in the suburbs, 500 TV channels and cheap credit so it could go to Wal-Mart and buy all the foreign-made toys it wanted.

In the 1970s, conservative billionaires began funding think tanks to attack the forces of progressivism. The Reagan Revolution co-opted a lot of labor votes with jingoism. The late **Lee Atwater** perfected the use of "wedge issues" — God, guns, gays and abortion — to distract the working class from economic issues.

In the 1990s, **Roger Ailes**, an old Nixon and Reagan hand, helped launch the career of Rush Limbaugh and turned Fox News into an advocacy platform for the political goals of America's billionaires. Working-class America was so busy applauding that it didn't notice that its pockets were being picked.

**Banks and** big business bought control of Congress, which passed a series of tax and banking laws that fostered the **largest transfer of wealth in America's history.** The money went not from the rich to poor — that would be socialistic "income redistribution." No, it went from the working class to the rich.

Today, the **Tax Policy Center**, a non-partisan arm of the Brookings Institution, projects that in 2011 that the top 1 percent of all wage earners will take home 18 percent of all income. The top tenth of that 1 percent will take home 8.2 percent all by itself.

Between 1979 and 2007 (before the Big Recession) the average after-tax income of the top 1 percent of the population nearly quadrupled, from \$347,000 to over \$1.3 million.

Things aren't so rosy for the middle class. **Median household income dropped** 2.5 percent between 1999 and 2009 in inflation-adjusted terms, the Census Bureau reports. That is, unless you live in Missouri, where median household income dropped by 14.6 percent.

Here's one our favorite class warfare facts, from this year's **"Executive Excess"** study by the Institute for Policy Studies: "American workers . . . are taking home less in real weekly wages than they took home in the 1970s. Back in those years, precious few top executives made over 30 times what their workers made. In 2009, we calculate . . . CEOs of major U.S. corporations averaged 263 times the average compensation of American workers."

Layoffs pay. The study found that the chief executive officers of the 50 firms that laid off the most workers during the recession took home an

average of nearly \$12 million last year — 42 percent more than the average pay of all the CEOs at S&P 500 firms.

**No wonder** workers are angry. No wonder they're massing in large protest rallies.

No, wait. Those are the Tea Partiers and the Becksters.

They're angry at federal health care reform, even though it will save them money and reduce the deficit.

They're angry about the Wall Street bailout. Except for the fact that it was absolutely necessary because the titans of Wall Street had a gun at the head of the world economy, they should be angry.

They're angry about the \$787 billion in stimulus spending, even though it returned a fat tax break to them, saved

the jobs of cops and teachers and state employees and paid unemployment compensation to the victims of the Wall Street manipulators.

Workers need to be angry, but at the right people — the ones who for 30 years have been steering ever more of the wealth of this nation into fewer and fewer hands.

Ironically, it is those plutocrats — oil and insurance company executives, big bankers and other Wall Street tycoons — who are orchestrating many of these protest rallies.

This is where labor is most effectively organized on Labor Day Weekend 2010: against the interests of working America.

— reprint *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*  
Editorial — 9/5/2010

## Letter To Editor

by: **Bob Maloney**  
(Pontiac Local President;  
former MPWU Clerk Craft Director)

What the Heck is Wrong with Us?

I was reading in the National tabloid the other day; and in it, there was a graft off all the States and how much money each State had given to COPA throughout the year. Being this article was in the August edition, I looked to see how Michigan was performing. As you may know, the National Union establishes quotas for each State on their COPA giving; and I can't begin to tell you how disappointed I was with that figure. For this year, we have only given 15 percent of our quota, and this is already eight months into the year. I know we are a big State with many members, and as such, we have a good size quota to fill, but only 15 percent? What the Heck is Wrong with Us?

We have a lot of APWU members in this State, but how many of you are giving to COPA? Obviously, not many! I know that you, as members, are inundated with requests for donations, and I know that you are told a lot how the Union needs these funds. I know you are told the ways and a lot of other rhetoric and lah, blah, bhaw. I know, I have heard it all too. But there are some things you need to know whether you live in Detroit, Iron Mountain, Gaylord, or Grand Rapids and any place in between, this is an election year and we need to be able to financially back our friends in Congress.

Now I have had members come up to me and ask what we will have to give up in the next union contract negotiations. Thinks like pay and benefits give backs, or COLA,

or cuts in Vacation time, or paying more for health care, etc. The first think I ask them is how much they gave to COPA this past year. Well, they look at me like the Deer when the headlights hit them in the middle of the road. I tell them that anything we win at the Bargaining table, we can still loose in the halls of Congress. Very simple! Now, the average Postal Workers makes approximately \$50,000 dollars a year; however, most can't afford to send a lousy \$26.00 a year to COPA to our National Union? This two dollars a month; less than eight cents a day. You don't even flinch when spending a buck or two a day for coffee; how about eight cents? If you did that, not only would the State of Michigan easily make its' quota, but the union as a whole would have the necessary funds to be able to support our union and labor friendly candidates.

I have always given to COPA, because it is and was the right thing to do. So I am asking you to do the right thing and send a check in to COPA. It is easy! Write the check, and mail it (which not only supports COPA, but also our jobs), and send it to: APWU COPA; PO Box 96542; Washington DC 20077. Do it for me, and yourself, and that guy/lady that works next to you all day.

Think about when our Union officers are sitting across the table from these Postal bosses looking down their noses at us. You need to do one thing to send a message to them that we are not as week as they think we are. And maybe for the first time in your postal career you can stand up to these people, and it only cost you eight cents a day, or a lousy \$26.00 dollars.



# — Turney Talks —

by Linda J. Turney

*When you read, you empower yourself. When you write, you influence others.*

## AGENT OF CHANGE

In Illinois we are celebrating the 150 birthday of Jane Addams. She was born to a wealthy family in Cedarville IL on September 6, 1860. Jane was considered a radical and the FBI considered her one of the most dangerous women in America. She believed in the common good in that we all had a stake in each other's future. At age 29, she used her inheritance to establish Hull House. It was a neighborhood community center, the first of its kind in the U.S. She sought to assist immigrants and bridge the class divide. Hull House provided English classes, child care, job training programs, free medical and dental, and allowed Union workers to organize there. Although some saw immigrants and Union workers as a problem, Jane saw it in terms of the challenge and beauty of Democracy.

As Unionists we should try to stay true to Jane's legacy not just as deliverer of services to our members and the community, but also as an agent for change.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE IN SMALL OFFICES A BUMPY ROAD

One of our many goals as Union

representatives is to protect our work and future work. In 1978, Arbitrator Garratt gave us language interpreting Article 1.6.B. stating that work historically performed by bargaining unit employees can be protected as long as the Union can prove the work was and is being performed by clerks.

Delivery Unit Relocation (DUR) and Delivery Unit Optimization (DUO) are new phrases for the same old 1.6.B. issues. If management moves the carriers out of the office and there is work in the office that has been historically performed by clerks, the work is still ours. We must be able to prove by testimony and documentation that working the window and throwing box mail was historically clerk work and the Postmaster or OIC has increased the amount of collective bargaining work he/she does. One easy way to prove that the work is ours, is to go back and look at the Surveys that were taken close to 10 years ago. The Surveys should reveal the number of hours for both the Postmaster and the clerks.

As the number of employees are reduced under DUR, the Postmaster's administrative time may be reduced due to his/her level being reduced. The program bases administrative time on level, for example, if a Postmaster was given 3 hours of administrative

work and had his/her level reduced, the program may now only give him/her 1 hour of administrative work. The Postmaster is guaranteed 40 hours a week. The Postmaster now is increasing their performance of window and box mail work to the detriment of work that exists and belongs to us. This is when we need to file a grievance and prove that the work that exists in the office has historically been performed by clerks. Go out there and file that grievance.

## TIDBIT

Here is an interesting little tidbit. While Arbitrator Garratt was writing his decision in 1978 concerning Article 1.6.B., Arbitrator Das was working as an intern in his office.

## RI-399

Unfortunately, there is no good news about RI-399. I have to appreciate Tom Mair for doing everything he can on cases that seem to be almost impossible. No Union has ever won a jurisdictional dispute at the National Level. These cases need to be dealt with on a case by case basis. Many of them have been rejected as cases for arbitration because we cannot risk going forward only to get more arbitral decisions with bad language. This is a good example of why going to arbitration in every case does not necessarily produce the result we hope for. A three way agreement between APWU, Mail Handlers and USPS Management does not exist and is unlikely to happen in the near future.

## RETREAT RIGHTS

After being excessed, Article 12.5.c.5 and Article 37.3.B. deals with an individual's right to retreat. Excessed clerks are often being forgotten when it comes to retreating back to a residual vacancy. Management is obligated to put the excessed clerks' bids in so that they can have an opportunity to retreat to the job. They have a right to the vacancies. Any excessed employee can request that bids be mailed to them. I would suggest that employees interested in retreat rights notify management in writing that they wish to receive notice of all bids. When a person is excessed out of your office, they need to be informed about all bids. Tell excessed clerks they have personal reasons for keeping up with jobs in their original office.

## CONVENTION THOUGHTS

At a time when we are presently involved in National Negotiations with the USPS, a smaller than normal group of delegates attended the APWU Convention in Detroit to do the work of our organization.

One major issue for APWU is that we want our "No Lay-off Clause" to remain. Union members often say that they want Article 12, excessing,

to be taken out of our contract. No matter how we dislike the hardship of excessing, we must understand it as an extension of our "No Lay-off Clause". Without management's ability to excess, management will demand that they get the right to lay us off instead. We have options to choose from under Article 12. We may remain as regulars and go to another office. We may choose to be a PTF or PTR or carrier depending on the situation. While we see no relief in sight concerning excessing, deleting it is not the answer. Postal employees very rarely decide to leave USPS employment. We have the lowest attrition rate compared to other work forces.

It doesn't get any better than to have a seat at the negotiating table. APWU members are responsible for our own destiny. Very few workers can claim that. By having a seat at the table, we can clearly state that we have no interest in concession bargaining. A two tier system has not and will not work.

## AGENTS OF CHANGE, BILL, JIM, AND JOHN

The only thing that stays the same is change. Change was the theme behind this year's convention. President Bill Burrus is retiring from 30 years of service at APWU Headquarters. President Burrus has much to be proud of as he leaves our Union in good financial order as well as 30 years of prosperity for Postal Workers. As President Bob Gunter and I looked around the Illinois delegation, we remarked that many of the names and faces have changed. It seems as though the farther backward we look, the clearer into the future we can see. Congratulations, President Burrus for raising Postal Workers into the middle class and giving them a place at the table to negotiate their destiny.

It has been a pleasure working with Clerk Craft Director, Jim McCarthy. Over the past three years I have had an opportunity to work with Jim to discuss his interpretation of a contract that he had a strong hand in writing and negotiating. Jim is an intelligent man with much insight into the enforcement and meaning of our contract. APWU will miss him in the clerk craft.

National Business Agent, John Clark, is also seeking change to spend more time with family and friends. He intends to bike and kayak and live an active life style. He wants to do all the things he had no time for as an NBA. John's commitment to excellence has benefitted postal workers in Illinois and Michigan.

Change always involves risks and growth; stepping from the known into the unknown is not always easy, but whether we want it or not, change will come.

Good Luck to President Bill Burrus, Jim McCarthy, John Clark and all those who are stepping into the unknown. Thanks for being our Agents of Change.

## RETAIL HUDDLE SUNCOAST DISTRICT

September 9, 2010

For all retail employees – including supervisors, managers, and Postmasters

We have received notification from Headquarters that the Retail Customer Experience program will be managed by a new vendor beginning October 1, 2010 (FY 2011). The new vendor is Synovate. During a brief telecom this afternoon, seven members of the Synovate team were introduced and welcomed to the USPS Retail team.

A general overview was given and the following information disclosed:

- o Shops will begin for FY 2011 on October 1; however, the new website for Synovate will not be available for at least the first two weeks of the new FY. Until the new site is available, **all** RCE data and/or reports must be retrieved from RDM.
- o There are no changes to the evaluation questions and/or format and the evaluations will look similar to the current evaluations. It will take Synovate at least one year to receive the necessary data to determine if the questionnaire needs to be modified.
- o The process of challenges/inquiries will be reinstated and will be done online through the website as opposed to emails. Challenges/inquiries will still follow the current channel of progression – Unit to District to Area to HQs. The time frame for response to challenges/inquiries should be no more than 7 days.
- o Shops will be conducted on days that resemble the customer traffic pattern of the office. Many shops will be conducted during peak periods to review how offices operate on busy days and/or during busy time bands.
- o Synovate gave an overview of their training process for their shoppers and assured us that they have quality control in place. Each shop is reviewed at least 3 times by three separate individuals and a data check is also conducted. Integrity of the data was stressed.
- o For FY 2010, only those offices that failed a DIM Weight shop in FY08 and/or FY09 received (or will receive) a DIM Weight shop in FY 10. Because Synovate is a new vendor – all offices will receive a DIM Weight shop in FY 2011.

I am sure there will be additional RCE telecoms as we get closer to the end of the FY. We will keep you abreast of information as we receive it.



# Workers Support Workers

by Donald L. Foley  
National Business Agent  
Maintenance Craft

*"You know, if one person, just one person does it they may think he's really sick . . . And if three people do it, three, can you imagine, three people . . . They may think it's an organization. And can you, can you imagine fifty people a day, . . . fifty people a day . . . And friends they may think it's a movement."* (with my apologies to Arlo Guthrie)

I read in the paper the other day that the private sector — American corporate capitalist enterprise — is sitting on two trillion dollars (\$2,000,000,000.00) capital, not spending it to hire, to increase production or to start new plants, just sitting on it. I have also been watching Wall Street and reading the reports. It seems Wall Street is doing very well — especially the banks and other financial institutions, the very businesses that caused the meltdown of the economy. Those in charge of those "industries" have not felt the pain, no, bonuses are up as are profits. Meanwhile a recently released study points out that the number of families whose household income has taken a drastic — 25% or greater negative turn has continued the steady growth that has been occurring for the last several decades. It's the same old song the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Add to that the follow-up line, and the poor become more and more numerous.

So what would we want to see done about this problem? For most Americans the economy is in the toilet; the ranks of the jobless seem to just grow and grow; American industry has, without any sign of conscience, shipped our jobs overseas; workers in thirdworld nations are exploited to increase profits while we just lose more and more jobs. The Republicans are relentlessly criticizing the Democrats and especially the President for allegedly failed attempts to shore up the crumbling economy. But what about those capitalists upon whom the Republicans would have us place all reliance for righting this sinking ship? If the corporate-capitalist-pandering politicians (of both parties) believe "free" markets are the answer, that "free" capitalist initiative is far better than government intervention in the economy, why are they not urging corporate capitalists to get off the dime and invest those trillions of dollars in generating new jobs, new plants, new industries? For that matter, why aren't those capitalists doing it of their own accord?

For most of us it seems simple enough — quit shipping industry and the jobs it supports overseas, get back to producing right here at home. But who will make that happen? The owners of industry won't. The politicians won't. And apparently, we won't. Apparently, we don't. Apparently, we are too un-

willing to recognize what it means to be part of the problem.

Rather than being part of the problem, what are we doing about it? You and me, what are we doing? It is not as if we are completely impotent. Sure you could petition your members of Congress, for all that is worth. But do you speak with your dollars? Consider how significant "the markets" believe consumerism is. Where does Wal-Mart draw its revenue? Where do you buy? What do you buy?

You and I, brothers and sisters, are NOT *entitled* to the best bargain, the cheapest price. You and I have no special *entitlement* to participate with corporate capitalist CEO's in the rape of third-world labor, in the exploitation of child labor. You and I have no special *entitlement*. Instead, you and I have obligations.

Every American worker whose wages come as the result of a union contract has the obligation to speak with those dollars, to support union-labor jobs by spending those union produced dollars. You cannot possibly decry the criminality of corporate capitalism's pillaging of the economy if you make no effort to speak with your dollars in support of union-labor products and services. When you shop at Wal-Mart instead of the local, unionized grocery

chain, you cooperate with CEO's in the destruction of the American working middle class. When you buy that "inexpensive" pair of jeans made in Sri Lanka instead of Union Line or other union-made jeans, you help to eliminate jobs in America. When you contract with a non-union contractor for home repairs instead of seeking out a union contractor, you contribute to the persistent depression of wages for your neighbors — and, soon enough, for your children and grandchildren. The Wal-Mart motto — "Save money. Live better" — is a lie. If each and every one of us seeks only to find the cheapest means, the lowest price products, we become full participants in corporate capitalism's pernicious campaign to destroy the labor movement and the working middle class. Those of us who enjoy the benefits of union wages have a responsibility to see that those wages go to support the labor movement as fully as we possibly can. Does that cost more money? You bet your sweet ass it does. Be thankful for having been blessed with the opportunity to spend it.

But I should also note that the harder I look to find union made products and services, the more appalled I become at the abject failure of the labor movement itself, especially the AFL-CIO. Sure you

can find on the internet the AFL-CIO Union Label & Service Trades Department. But don't expect that to provide a compendium of businesses where you can go to shop for union made products. There used to be an AFL-CIO sponsored website (which I cannot find now) that provided lists of companies offering union-made products and services; but that was always of minimal help in actually locating a retailer or contractor. No, each of us is left to our own devices to do what ought to be done — to find those remaining products and services that bear the union label. You will not find them at Wal-Mart, but you will find them on the internet.

It is certainly time consuming and it limits your scope of choices, but then that is really what this is all about — choices. Next time there is something to buy, think — think about the consequences of your choice; make a conscious choice that reflects working class principles and rejects corporate capitalism's race to the bottom. What will you choose? If you do not speak with your dollars to protect union-labor jobs, who will? Just who will save American jobs? It's your choice. If there is any truth to the capitalist principle that markets respond to demand, that demand should be the voice of your dollars.

## Area 7 Director

### Workplace Intimidation

by  
Randy  
Barnes,  
Area 7 Director

Are you under stress? Worried about your job and the future? Many of us are feeling these same pressures and the stress that comes with are job more these days. Unfortunately, there are some supervisors taking advantage of this situation and using our fears and uncertainties against us.

Throughout our daily activities even those that are so ingrained, we feel we can do them without a thought but mistakes can be made. It happens to all of us. Some supervisors are using hard-nosed tactics to manage their offices. An informal job discussion would be adequate instead they want to jump to written discipline. Some even resort to veiled threats against your job security. At the recent National Convention I found out that these tactics are being used throughout the nation.

PTF hours are being reduced to a mere two hours a week. Management has been doing the work they take away from the hourly employee. It has to be reported in order to be investigated by your Steward. These tactics are what we must fight against. We have to safeguard the hours we work as well as the duties we perform. If you are experiencing this

in the office you work at, call for your Union Rep.

Postmasters and supervisors are NOT to be doing the work of an hourly employee. They take away our work, our hours and the bottom line, our pay. Postal management has been on a drive to cut costs any way that they can. They have closed offices, consolidated operations of processing plants, reduced hours, etc . . . It is happening everywhere.

You have the right to be represented by your union. Do not let them intimidate you with threats against your job. If you feel threatened by management intimidation, call the Threat Line and ask for your Union Representative. If you do not hear from the Union within one or two days, call yourself. You have the right to representation and should not be put off to an unreasonable amount of time. Our Local has a new website ([small143.com](http://small143.com)) that you can Officers by phone or emails. Some postmasters may try to stall you with this type of tactic. They may tell you to let things go for now, that it will all work out for the better. Don't believe it. Again, ask for your Union Representative or make the call yourself.

We have to fight for what we have and

not let them take anymore away from us, the same as our brothers and sisters before us.

### Wheels And Wrenches

*continued from page 5*

developed a template that is available on the MVS pages of the APWU Web site, [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org).

If any local has not filed a grievance it is suggested that you do so ASAP.

I wanted to remind all of you as our national officers enter into negotiations for the national contract the if you have any suggestions (keep them civil) write them at: MVS Division at APWU National Headquarters in Washington, DC. Written correspondence can be mailed to 1300 L. Street NW, Washington, DC, 20005.

There has been a couple of good art 32 cases filed by the WMAL, we were hoping to arbitration these cases but the U.S.P.S. advocate backed out at the last minute. Keep up the good work and don't lose faith, We can't give up the struggle must continue.



by Larry  
Moyer,  
Area 1  
Director

## Area 1 Director

# The Beginning Of Down Hill Spiral

**SUMMER HOURS**-Shortly after my last article was submitted in May, we had a District Labor Management Meeting. The summer hours was an agenda item discussed. We the union officers present made the points of how devastating the reduction of hours is to our dwindling customer base and to the PTF clerks. The postmasters and supervisors are not given a reduction in work hours, but our clerks sure were last summer. Our new MPWU President John Marcotte attended the meeting to meet our District Manager and to familiarize himself with our issues. John stated better than anyone else present He stated that he had taken some college business classes and Stated, **“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. I do not know if we finally got through to them, and John’s comment “was the icing on the cake”. But he is

absolutely right. If your company is hurting for revenue that is the last cut to make. If you make it harder for your customers to do business with you they will go to our competitors, If we make it harder for the customer to deal with us, if our service suffers, our customer base will dwindle and they will visit Fed Ex and UPS.

**LACK OF COMMUNICATION** - In general I have not have had phone calls returned or e mails responded to by mangers at the district level. Interestingly enough in one of my problem offices, the postmaster was playing games with the clerk with regard to granting leave for the first two weeks of July. The clerk submitted the leave in January, the postmaster told the clerk to resubmit closer to the dates in question assuring her that the leave would be granted. A month before the start of the leave the clerk contacted me and I called the postmaster. After being screamed at by the postmaster over the phone I emailed her and articulated my position that the clerk has the leave and it must be granted per Article 10 of the National Agreement. The postmaster was ok with the clerk having the week days off, but insisted she was to

report on Saturday July 3 as the postmaster was “tired” of working for her in March when this clerk took leave. The clerk was going camping with her family up north and was expected by the postmaster to drive home for one day of six hours of work. The POOM did not like my e mail response to the postmaster, and accused me of attempting to tell the postmaster “how to run her office”. If only I had such **authority** to do so the USPS would be a better run organization! I responded to the POOM and then the “wall of silence” came down. After the clerk panicking as the start date of the leave approached, I called the Southeast Michigan District Manager and left her a message about this problem. She returned my call and told me she would take care of it, after a follow up call she informed me that the POOM claimed the postmaster “took care” of the problem two weeks earlier. So the POOM in his effort to “protect” his “favorite” postmaster lied to the district manger claiming the leave was granted when indeed it was not. Thank you **Former District Manager Karen Schenk** for doing the right thing on this issue! The sad part of the story is this is repeated at least every two years. This office had three workplace interventions that I took part in the past yet this postmaster is still working, despite she is not cooperative with other postmasters who wish to work the clerk mentioned above as a hub clerk but this postmaster makes it difficult for her to work elsewhere.

**POLITICS** - As I write this, the ballots for our National officers to lead the APWU for the next three years are going out in the mail. Be a responsible union member and participate, vote and mail back your ballot.

In our state of Michigan there is debate about having debates between the Republican Rick Snyder and Democrat Virg Bernero the candidates for Governor of Michigan. Add to that the Tea Party candidates winning in other states Republican races. If Snyder and the Republicans win in Michigan will they try to make Michigan a “Right to Work” state? Will the Republicans take control of one or both houses of Congress in the fall? What right to work would do is to stop “closed shop” workplaces in which to be employed you must be a member of the union, unlike the open shop we have in the postal service. This will weaken the unions.

As for the Democrats, we were sold a “bill of goods”. Organized Labor supported President Obama. What did we get in return? Not the enactment of the Free Choice Act

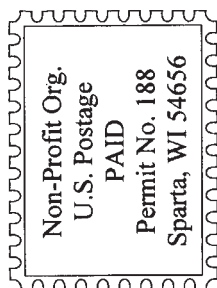
to enable unions to organize workers easier than we can presently. Then we have regressive regulations still in place from the George W. Bush administration that unions are required to follow. We had much discussion about them at the MPWU executive board meeting. President Obama has been in office now for approximately 18 months. Why would it take Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solis this long to revise the regressive reporting requirements put on to place by Bush Labor Secretary Elaine Chao? And if Secretary Solis cannot implement revisions to the Labor Management Standards Act, why has this not been submitted to Congress to amend the law? Democrats have a majority in the House of Representatives and a bare majority in the Senate. Start exercising leadership! But, once again Democratic members of Congress will be coming around to Organized Labor asking for support. Organized Labor will give its support, because we know the Republicans will support the interests of business. Once again the interests of Organized Labor are given lukewarm support or interest by Democrats except at election time.

**EXCESSING** - In my last article I spoke of clerks identified for excessing in my office as being sent to take driving training to become a letter carrier. Management after my protests that we are working double digit overtime weekly convinced district management to cancel the excessing. But on paper at least we still have two clerks to many. I have been advised that management will be targeting smaller offices in October after the start of the new fiscal year. How many more clerks can you excess? In one office the PTF clerk transferred to another office, if the FTR clerk is excessed will the postmaster do all the work? I don’t think so. This will be fought vigorously.

**POSTAL INCREASE** - Recently, the USPS at headquarters announced a rate hike of 2 cents for first class mail. This is designed to get the public opposed to the **“overpaid underworked”** employees represented by the APWU as we start negotiations on a new National Agreement. I don’t know about you, but with the shortage of employees I have not worked harder in my career, which will lead to greater stress and accidents on the job in my opinion. Coincidence? I don’t believe so. This was planned. Purportedly if the Congress changes the prepayment of retirement funds in the trust fund then the increase will not be needed. Time will tell how this plays out.

**In closing**, as always, if you have problems call me or your local Area Director, or Union Steward.

Solidarity.



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