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by John Marcotte,
President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We Have A Solid Foundation

I hope this article finds you fully enjoying all that summertime in Michigan has to offer. At this time of year I can't help but be thankful for living in "God's country".

The Educational Convention in Bay City, Michigan dedicated to Gary VanHooqstraten was a credit to Educational Director Lucy Morton, the host local 486-487, the MPWU Executive Board who aided her efforts and the Instructors who generously gave their time. The new contract was explained in detail with question and answer sessions. Our Business Agents and National Officers were available for one on one discussion. Retirees received education on postal and personal issues critical to navigating the now rough waters of retirement created by the attacks of medical expenses, uncompensated inflationary effects and recently Governor Snyder's shifting tax burden. While there was a large amount of general secession focusing on the new contractual language the Crafts did breakout for secessions more detailed and specific. It was gratifying to see the dedication of the stewards

and officers in these training secessions to understanding the new contract and their preparation for the daunting task of implementing and enforcing the new language. Hats off to the 486-487 local for being such a wonderful host. Doris, Joanna and all of members who made this event so warm and welcoming deserve our thanks. Great job!

in this article. Thank you Gary for everything.

Without leaders such as Gary and all previous MPWU presidents and board members that came before us we would not have the solid foundation we have to improve our members lives. I do not want to mention particular names because the hard work of every past board

currently no custodian. Area directors have made contact with postmasters about the reduction of clerk work performed by management. These parts of the new contract are already in effect. If your office is not in compliance contact your Area Director listed in this paper. Now we are engaging in the conversion of PTF's to regulars in level 21 and above offices and LMOU (Local Memorandum Of Understanding) negotiations. Your officers can negotiate a wonderful LMOU but it is worthless if you don't enforce it by contacting your steward/area director when violations occur. LMOU's are often overlooked by the membership but they have a huge effect on our work lives. Support your negotiating team in this challenging process and make your workplace a better place to be.

In closing, there are many changes underway on the management side of the fence and this has delayed progress the union can make on the new contract provisions. These management changes should be complete when you read this and as such allow us to conduct full speed negotiations and representation.

Yours in Solidarity and Friendship.

"Support your negotiating team in this challenging process and make your workplace a better place to be."

It was also an excellent time to reflect on the long, dedicated service Gary has given to all of us. He has held every position you can think of in the MPWU over his long career and served us well in every one. Retirement did not slow Gary's zeal in representing our members or giving of himself to us all. Gary has continued to work for the membership after leaving office and has assisted me with sound advice and the benefit of his experience without hesitation. We all owe Gary more than we can mention

member is deserving of our thanks and I do not have the room here for all of them. Know this, all of our past board members are welcome at MPWU functions. You are not forgotten and your presence even if only social allows us to learn from you. We forget out past at the peril of the future.

Now it is on to the hard work of maximizing this contract for our members. Implementation of the contract is underway. The MPWU is pursuing the movement of the contract custodial work to the PTF's where there is cur-

Legislative Report

— Same Struggle —



by Paul Felton,
Legislative Director

Congressman Darrell Issa of California chairs the House Committee that deals with postal issues. He is no friend of postal workers. Issa has introduced a bill, HR-2309, that threatens our jobs, wages and benefits. It calls for the creation of a special board which will take over the Postal Service (in effect, putting USPS in "receivership") if the Postal Service is "delinquent" in meeting its financial obligations.

What does this mean? A few years back, Congress passed legislation forcing USPS to put \$5 billion every year into a special fund for retiree health benefits far into the future. This is to-

tally unnecessary. No other government agency has this requirement. Without this \$5 billion a year obligation, USPS would not be in the red. And the same law made it harder for USPS to raise the price of stamps. So USPS is being squeezed. Postal management recently announced that due to its financial situation, they will stop paying into the FERS retirement fund. So Mr. Issa's bill represents a real danger.

Under HR-2309, the board that would take control has the power to close Post Offices, to rip up the negotiated union contract and rewrite it to include layoffs, lower wages and a cut in our benefits. This board could overrule the wishes of both parties that negotiated a contract in good faith.

In other words, first Congress ensures that USPS loses money; then they use that as an excuse to attack postal employee wages, benefits and job security.

This is very similar to Michigan Governor Rick Snyder's Emergency Financial Manager (EFM) legislation. First he cut revenue sharing to every city, town and school district in the state. Then he said, if any city, town, or school district has a "financial emergency," the state will appoint a manager who can dissolve your local government, rewrite any laws he doesn't approve of, and rip up or rewrite any union contract without regard for the wishes of the parties that negotiated it. See, first I cut off your cash flow, then I blame you for having

a financial emergency and I attack - the public employees.

There's also a bill in Congress that would make postal workers pay more for our health benefits; this was sponsored by Senator McCain of Arizona (and there's a similar provision in Issa's 2309 bill). That provision is similar to provisions found in bills making their way through quite a few state legislatures. There's even a bill in Congress that would stop letting unions get your dues deducted from your paycheck (I guess the steward would have to try to collect it every two weeks). This is similar to a law in Wisconsin that was clearly intended to destroy the unions there.

Let's put it simply. There's an orga-
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The Millionaire Suits

by Leo F. Persails

If you have been watching the circus over the US debt ceiling lately, have you read between the lines. The hidden news which is not reported by the corporate news media, is the real news. The real news is so well hidden it's been missed by most Americans.

These millionaire republican suits refuse to let their peers making over a million a year, be taxed more. They will even permit chaos in the country

by welching on the debt they created before they permit it. That's the real issue over the circus about the debt ceiling, DON'T RAISE TAXES on those making over a million a year.

I'm sorry, RAISING their taxes isn't the issue. The issue is ELIMINATION OF PRIOR TAX REDUCTIONS The same tax reductions given to those making over a million a year when Bush and the millionaire suits had total control. There is a big difference in perception by the average American over STOP-

PING a tax reduction for millionaires, and RAISING anyone's taxes. It is simply unbelievable the news media has hidden the true REDUCTION news during this entire debt raising circus.

That may be the issue here, but is it the biggest hidden issue in this debt circus? Where in the news have we

"The millionaire suits are now telling us on the corporate news media that the money left should be spend certain ways. Their arguments are very interesting if you read between the lines."

heard that the same republican millionaire suits refusing to raise the debt ceiling now, previously voted 8 times to raise the debt ceiling a total of 5.5 trillion, during the Bush years. They not only voted to raise the debt ceiling without a balanced budget they also REDUCED MILLIONAIRE TAXES which increased the debt even more. The same debt they created they now want the middle class to pay. Don't expect the millionaire owners of the corporate news media to tell you things

like that either. The guys that own the news corporations like their tax breaks to. It sure would be good to hear it from some Democrats though, when they get their one chance in a thousand to tell real facts on the media. It does make you wonder just how many millionaires are up there wanting to keep their tax reduction.

Is that the real issue or is there more that the millionaire corporate news media isn't telling you. The recent battle over the debt ceiling has revealed some other important facts if you were listening close. The millionaire suits are now telling us on the corporate news media that the money left should be spend certain ways. Their arguments are very interesting if you read between the lines. Their arguments claim that the US brings in 200 billion a month in taxes. The US also borrows 130 billion a month to make payroll including entitlements. Those entitlements include social security and Medicare.
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— Same Struggle —

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nized attack on public employee rights at the state level (in close to 20 states) and at the national level. We have to fight back at both levels. It is the same struggle.

Congressman Lynch of Massachusetts has introduced HR-1351 which would relieve the Postal Service of the financial burden arbitrarily placed on it by Congress a few years back. I urge every member to contact their representative. (If you don't know who that is go to the mpwu.com web site, go to my web page and scroll down to where it says Contact Congress. A few more clicks and you'll have your Congressman's name and mailing address.) Your message is

simple: Pass 1351 and defeat 2309!

I particularly urge veterans to get involved. We need a few Republican votes to pass 1351, and I think the specter of veterans possibly going without paychecks might persuade a few Republicans to support us, while the usual union arguments would fall on deaf ears. (There have been reports that USPS might not be able to make payroll in the not-so-distant future if HR-1351 doesn't pass.) A delegation of veterans visiting a Republican Congressman might get a receptive ear.

While the Democrats are friendlier than the Republicans, I would not take anyone's vote for granted. I would like to think that no harmful legislation will pass as long as the Democrats

have a majority in the Senate and a Democrat occupies the White House (with his veto power). Yet the state of New Jersey, with a Democratic majority legislature, recently passed some anti-union legislation. It was done mostly with Republican votes. A majority of the Democrats voted with labor, but enough Democrats defected to allow the Republicans to prevail. And given President Obama's history of compromising with the Republicans, we cannot even take his veto for granted. So everyone should contact your Congressman, regardless of party affiliation.

Meanwhile, we need to keep fighting Governor Snyder here at home. By the time you read this article, the petition-gathering phase of the Recall Snyder movement will be just about over. There is now another petition to put on the ballot a repeal of the Emergency Financial Manager law, and I will write more about that next time.

We need everyone to get involved, and we need stewards and Officers to be visible in this fight. I say this partly because that's what it means to be a leader. I also say this because it might be another avenue we can use to recruit the non-member — if they see the union leadership fighting to stave off attacks on our livelihood coming from Washington, they might forget about the steward who was unable to resolve that grievance (which probably wasn't a violation in the first place).

The struggle continues.

The Michigan Postal Workers Union proudly represents the Members at Large within the Great State of Michigan. The following locals have also affiliated with the MPWU for training, education and information sharing between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

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

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, the APWU or the Postal Press. Any and all correspondence to the Editor may be sent to: Michael Long, Editor, PO Box 280, Sheridan, MI 48884-0280; fax to: 616-776-1536; or e-Mail to: mpwueditor@yahoo.com

Your articles are welcome! They must be signed to be printed, but your name will be withheld upon request. Articles sent via electronic media will be treated as being signed. Be aware that articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

Lastly, this paper is designed with everyone in mind, please be aware that all mistakes are intentional for the express purpose of keeping those happy that are most happy when finding errors in others.

Editor's Report

— Al Dente —



by Michael A. Long,
Editor

The philosophy of management can be described in two words: Al Dente. How does cooking of pasta equate to management's style of running this business? I, for one, can think of no other words or phrase that better signifies this management style than the words of old Italy. Long ago, and even now in some parts of the world, cooks, to ensure pasta is ready for consumption, throw it against the wall and seeing if it sticks. When it sticks, the person cooking the pasta knows it is ready and will be "al dente."

The same philosophy holds true for Postal Management, except instead of pasta, their style is symbolically of throwing their ideas against the wall and see which one "sticks." This is the only explanation I can muster as to the reason why we seem to have the same ideas being rehashed over, and over, and over again. Remember the old adage — those who forget history are doomed to repeat it, the same holds true here at the Postal Service; however, due to the Postal Service and their transferring of supervisors and managers from here to there (instead of letting anyone go), and with their own arrogant thinking, management thinks their ideas are special, and they have to try their "idea" at the new location; even though it was tried before, and didn't work. I guess back we are back to throwing more ideas against the wall, and hopefully the next one will not only be 'al dente' but also can be stomached by those of us who have to carry it out.

Have you seen the latest statement from PMG Donahoe? He stated that he "expects nearly half of all US post offices to be closed by 2017 or 2018" Is one of those going to be yours? Now more than ever, you need to contact your Representative and tell them to support legislation favorable to the working men and women who work for the Postal Service. Currently there are a few bills in Congress that need to be passed in order for us to continue to operate. HR 1351 (Support) will address and allow the Postal Service to use billions of dollars in pension overpayments to meet its current and future financial obligations (including the mandate to pre-fund the healthcare of retirees). It will also leave our contract intact. However, on the contrary HR 2309 (Do NOT support) would do nothing to correct the overpayments and/or pre-funding requirement. However, it would lower our wages, abolish benefits, end layoff protection, and require us to pay more for healthcare. Additionally HR 2309 would force the Postal Service to close over two (2) billion dollars of offices within the next two years. Action is easy. Log on to the MPWU.com website and click on the Legislative Action. There is a link there

where you can tell your Representative how you feel on this issue. Also, you can write your representative a letter (let me point out, that one hand-written letter from a constituent carries more weight and has more impact than hundreds of pre-filled in post cards, e-Mails, etc.), or you can pick up the phone and call their office. All this information can be found on-line, or contact me or Legislative Director Paul Felton (information is on Page 2 of the *Messenger*) and we will be more than

happy to provide you with your information. One important note to mention when talking with your representative is that the Postal Service workforce comprises of more than 15 percent veterans. Many of them disabled. If this happens, can you imagine the implications to the National economy? I shudder to ponder it.

I hope all of you enjoy the remaining summer we have left. In this edition of the *Messenger*, I have compiled a list of discounts that we as union members

(through Union Plus) and Postal workers have available to us. This is not a complete list, but a general compilation.

In closing, I would like to thank all those who I met for the first time at the Educational Convention and to publicly congratulate Lucy Morton for an outstanding job. She was thrown into it mid-stream and caught on, and allowed it to flow like a pro. I would also like to welcome Dennis Barber back as the Area 12 Director.



by Gary Van Hoogstraten
MPWU
Advisor

MPWU Advisor

Thank You For Your Support

I wish to thank all of you for your support and dedication at the Educational Convention and in years past. I especially want to thank the MPWU for the beautiful clock they gave me on the last day of the convention. I didn't have the chance to address the delegates at the convention so, please indulge me; this is what I had planned on saying:

"I would like to thank all of you for allowing me this opportunity to serve you the last fifteen years as President of the Michigan Postal Workers Union. The state union has come a long way during my tenure. I look out and stand here humbled to be in the elite group of brothers that have served before me. I see Leo Persails, the first and one of the most union-minded brothers ever to lead us; then we have Lynn Charles Walker, another strong unionist that has not only given all to the union, but has been one of the most successful coaches in girls basketball ever to step on to a basketball floor. We all can look above and see Clyde Hartshorn looking down at us smiling, but still looking over his shoulder in a nervous way. To be in this class of four presidents makes me speechless. We have heard of the four roses, four horsemen, four-leaf clover, and now that we have John as our President, maybe we could be called the Fab Five. I want to thank all of those who have been on the board of the MPWU for the last twenty-five years or so since I have been a board member as well.

I would like to thank all my present and past local Presidents, who have taught me so much and have supported me throughout all the years: Gordon Roosa; Al Benedict Moore; Rickey Brown; Jo Atkinson; Ms. Norton; Larry Jerman, and Doris Honeman.

The Michigan Postal Workers Union

was the first state to have a Veterans Director on the board. John Smeekens has gone above and beyond to make this position a success. We have an extremely active Retiree's chapter, under the director of Al LaBrecque and his board. I am proud of my own local for having over 100 active members in our chapter.

We have been fortunate in Michigan to have hosted National Convention, Human Relations Conferences, and most recently, a National President Conference. I still have hopes for the possibility of margining

Brother or Sister, or many of them; but I can tell you, growing up, no one would ever have said anything bad about me because she would be the first one to stand behind me, and me for her. We had our difference, and what brother and sisters didn't, but at the end of the day, we knew we had each other covered. I would like to introduce my lovely sister Sherry, her husband Joe (a Great union-minded GM Retiree), and their daughter Tracey and most special niece anyone can have."

I recently read a couple articles in the Detroit newspapers. The first one had the headlines "Why allow gas price gouging?" There is probably many taxpayers that will say anything different. How can we allow this to happen each and every holiday? I think we should flood our legislators, and maybe we should boycott certain gas stations come holiday time. We could do one each day for a week before and after the holiday. After a month long decline, the average gas price rose some \$.20 - \$.30 per gallon during the holiday. They tell us that recent



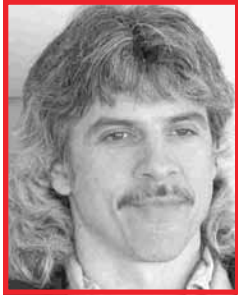
Pictured above from right to left my Sherry, her husband Joe (a Great union-minded GM Retiree), and their daughter Tracey.

with the 4-state caucus (North & South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Minnesota). We made the first move by going to their conventions and I hope they will do us the courtesy also. There are two people that I have to recognize, not just from a union stand but more on a personal one. They have stuck with me through thick and thin, in some of the most troubled times in my personal life. Without their support, I am not sure where I would have gotten the strength. Two of the most dedicated union members, and more than that, someone I can truly call friends: Lynn & Dennis Barber.

Last but not least, we get to the best. I am not sure if all of you had the same pleasure in life as I did by having a

rise is being fueled by refinery problems in Ohio and Indiana. Also as an excuse is a concern that petroleum exporting countries will cut oil production. In the past few weeks, oil went from \$91 per barrel to \$98 per barrel. One of the reasons gas and oil prices slumped was because the government and international energy agency released about 90 million barrels of oil from their reserve. Chief oil analyst said the Midwest has presented the greatest roller coaster ride in 2011. If you want go to the web site "GasBuddy.Com", you can see gas prices in Michigan and in the United States. If you agree with me about boycotting gas stations, get in touch with your local Union representatives and make this happen the next holiday.

Clerk Craft Report



by Richard
Blake,
Clerk Craft
Director

18th Biennial MPWU Educational Convention

From June 9 through June 11 2011 I attended the 18th Biennial MPWU Educational Convention in Bay City. This Educational Convention was significantly different from prior Educational Conventions, due to the fact that it focused almost exclusively on the recently-ratified 2010-2015 National Agreement.

The day started on Thursday with a political presentation from Brent Gillette of the Michigan AFL-CIO (APWU National Legislative Director Myke Reid was a last-minute cancellation, so brother Gillette had to “double up” on his presentation). At this time I would prefer to save my ranting about the current class war in America for a full column at a later date. After lunch, training on negotiating new LMOU’s was conducted by National Business Agents Lynn Pallas-Barber and Troy Rorman. The most critical points that we all need to remember from that training are:

- if you intend to renegotiate your LMOU, you must notify management no later than 8-15-11
- if you do not intend to renegotiate your LMOU, you **must** nonetheless secure an agreement with management extending the current LMOU through the term of the new contract
- LMOU negotiations must be conducted during a period of 30 consecutive days, beginning no earlier than 8-1 and ending no later than 9-30

- the parties must at least be ready to exchange their initial proposals within the first 21 days

- in the event of impasse, the proposed LMOU must be appealed to impasse no later than 11-4-11

- any LMOU language which the employer is trying to characterize as “inconsistent with” or “in conflict with” the new contract nonetheless remains in effect until 1-30-12

- management has the right to insist upon renegotiating your LMOU

- when management seeks to characterize LMOU language as being

(note: you can use this to your advantage. Many managers are very uncomfortable being in a Union hall; if you’re close to agreement, just the thought of having to spend another day in a Union hall will sometimes nudge management into agreeing to the Union’s proposals)

- all proposals and counter-proposals need to be in writing

- it’s best for your negotiating team to caucus privately before agreeing to **anything**. Keep in mind that while your chief negotiator may be experienced and well-qualified, it’s always best to listen to a variety of viewpoints before

which the post office **does not** necessarily agree with. Until such time as these issues are resolved, it’s going to be a while before we have clear direction on the real-world meaning of a lot of the new language.

On Saturday the 11th, I attended the all-day training on Clerk issues in the new contract, presented by National Business Agents Lynn Pallas-Barber and Mike O’Hearn. In particular, much of the new language dealing with Clerk craft issues, such as non-traditional full-time positions and Lead Clerk issues, is so full of subject-

“The new contract obviously is so dramatically different from previous contracts that only time will tell whether it’s adoption was really in our best interest.”

“inconsistent with” or “in conflict with” the new contract, or if they seek to characterize LMOU language as being an “unreasonable burden”, they have the burden of both explaining and documenting their position (“Article 3” or “because I said so” won’t quite get it)

- the parties need to establish ground rules right away

- there are no official “minutes” of LMOU negotiations; each side keeps their own notes

- the Union’s negotiators need to be off the clock during negotiations

- meeting sites should be rotated

agreeing to any specific language

- set clear, realistic, achievable goals, try for the most clear and concise language that you can get

- don’t be too quick to make any concessions, or to agree with any proposed language. Read the language, and then read it again.

- if the **ONLY** change you want to make in your LMOU is to replace all references to “casuals” with references to “PSE’s”, that would **not** require you to renegotiate the LMOU

For the entire day on Friday the 10th, Maintenance Craft Director Steve Raymer and Assistant Motor Vehicle Craft Director Mike Foster briefed us on the new contract. The new contract obviously is so dramatically different from previous contracts that only time will tell whether it’s adoption was really in our best interest. Due to the fact that so much of the new contractual language is found in Memoranda of Understanding rather than in the body of the contract itself, if one were to examine only the contract they’d miss the most critical elements. In addition, the most frustrating things about this initial training in the new contract were (1) it’s absolutely full of language that’s open to different interpretations, so it’s really too early to conclusively state just what certain new language will mean on the workroom floor, and (2) due in part to the fact that so much of the language is somewhat subjective, management has already begun trying to renege on (or as they put it, “clarify”) some of the language. This could be seen by the fact that there are 2 separate Question & Answer documents presently in circulation: one represents items that both the Union and management have agreed on, and the other one represents the Union’s interpretation of various language,

and still is in need of clarification, that much of what was discussed is “subject to change”. For instance, until such time as the federal Office of Personnel Management gives it’s opinion regarding the new “non-traditional” full-time positions, they cannot be posted for bids; the leave accrual rates for non-traditional positions have not been agreed on, nor has the issue of how much leave a non-traditional full-time employee will need to take. The parties have a year to agree on what the Lead Clerk duty assignment will entail, so there wasn’t much to talk about that wasn’t speculative. The language compelling management to create “desirable” duty assignments is so subjective that it’s impossible to determine just what it means at this time. The new limitations on the performance of bargaining unit work by management in small offices is all well and good, **except that the parties are so far apart on what the definition of “bargaining unit work” is.** I found all of this to be especially frustrating, because I’ve already received quite a few emails asking about the new contract, and even after 2 days of training I’m not really in a position to properly answer most of those questions. Given some of the totally loony things management in some of the small AO’s has been telling the employees, I definitely wish that I were able to answer these members’ questions more conclusively.

We all received copies of the CD used by the Business Agents and National Officers in their presentations; I would be glad to burn copies of these CD’s for any steward or officer who wants one. I would also be glad to send copies of the Question & Answer documents to anyone who wants them as well.

In Solidarity.

The Millionaire Suits

continued from page 2

The suits claim the 130 billion a month will stop if the debt ceiling isn’t raised because nobody will lend money to a country with a bad credit rating. They further claim the 200 billion a month left should be spent on certain things and to look good they include social security.

Have you read between the lines yet? **THE ONLY MONEY OUR GOVERNMENT RUNS ON IS WHAT COMES IN MONTHLY!** Here is the real issue disclosed during this debt circus. Where are the trillions of dollars accumulated since the Roosevelt years when more came in then went out to social security? Money most Americans thought was tucked away safe in some social security fund. Where are the trillions Americans paid in for years to earn entitlements for Medicare? Where are the billions made by the Post Office in good years **WHERE ARE THE EXTRA BILLIONS PAID IN ADVANCE BY THE POST OFFICE FOR FUTURE RETIREMENTS?** Where is the Civil Service Retirement Fund? **IT’S ALL**

GONE, spent by the millionaire suits, and now they want more tax breaks for the rich and less benefits for those that have **ALREADY** paid for them. What about the states, have they done the same at their level with their funds?

Many Americans have wondered and some even believed there were no secured funds for the benefits they had paid into for years, but most thought the money was there. Americans thought they were paying into a future retirement fund, but the money wasn’t spent for that by the millionaire suits. This circus over the debt ceiling has disclosed many things about the millionaire suits, but the fact they spent all of our money and now want us to agree to change social security and other entitlements is the worst yet. The millionaire suits need to be run out of Congress. Working class Americans need to take back Congress. If you can’t find a job and Congress spent all your retirement money, maybe a job in Congress isn’t that bad.

LORD KNOWS THE PEOPLE NEED YOU!



by Jason
Rushing,
Maintenance
Craft Director

Maintenance Craft Report

Everyone Needs To Get Involved

Delegates attended the MPWU Education Conference in Bay City Michigan, June 9-11, 2011. The conference was opened up by MPWU President John Marcotte. He welcomed everyone and wished them all a great convention. He had concerns with the leadership of our cities, states, congress and house being anti-union. Nothing new there. His real concern though was at the speed at which anti union legislation and bills are being passed and introduced.

With that being said he introduced Brent Gillett, AFL-CIO State/National Mobilizer and Political Director. Brent relayed to us the urgent message that everyone needs to get involved, while we still have unions left! There are bills to take away, or reduce, union's

collective bargaining rights already in process of becoming fact. Right now Brent states, there are 63 Republicans and 47 Democrats in the House of Representatives. Not good for unions. In the Senate there are 26 Republicans and 12 Democrats, again not good for unions. Bargaining rights and safety checks have been taken away from Police, Firefighters, Teachers, OSHA repeals, Childcare givers to name a few. The latest attack on everyone as whole is the repeal in pricing stickers requirements at stores. Stores no longer have to put a sticker on items for sale if its posted somewhere by the product or they have scanners throughout the store. SO, you better keep an eye on items prices before going to the check out. Brent was a great speaker full of energy and information. He cited the AFL-CIO's website www.miaflcio.org for

information on pickets, gatherings, protesting and other events.

When Brett was done, Sue Carney, APWU Human Resources Director gave us great information on all the things her office does for Veterans every year. Throughout the year they do BBQ's at veterans hospitals, clothing drives, backpack program for homeless Vets and more. She touched on the NRP program, stating that once we get the Service to court, we are doing well. MSPB is doing well against NRP program as well. Info has it that the NRP program itself is coming to a close, according to good sources of Sue's.

Most important to me was the Maintenance classes given by Troy Rorman, NBA and National Maintenance Craft Director Steve Raymer. Discussion started with the Memorandum of Understanding

concerning Maintenance Craft Jobs. The new PSE category can only hold Custodial positions. Most of these will be in detached offices, away from major areas. As contracts expire for Custodial services, PSE's will be hired for jobs. Veterans are still first in line for these jobs. Get the word out when you see a posting so Vets can put their applications in online at www.usps.com. Also discussed from this memo was an audit of EAS and Contractor jobs, to see if we can bring back more work back to the bargaining unit. This discussion will take place at headquarters. Other discussions and information was passed out concerning RMSS, job filling and posting, seniority and excessing limits. Director Raymer took questions people had to get it straight from the source.

In Union Solidarity



by Larry
Moyer,
Area 1
Director

Area 1 Director

Know Your Contract

New Contract – As you are well aware by now we have the new Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2010-2015. This is the most radical change of a contract since Postal Reorganization of 1970. I was quite vocal in my opposition of this contract. But being a realist, I knew that with the current economic conditions, the contract would pass overwhelmingly, which it did.

In particular, three changes were made that I was most outraged over.

Non-Traditional Full Time (NTFT's) – We as a union, and the labor movement in general had a goal of full-time employment for members of the bargaining unit. We never reached this goal as many of our members in our smaller Associate Offices, hire in and retire from as a PTF employee. That being said, we had 90/10 ratio of FTR to PTF, then 200 man year off ices or larger all full time and now Level 21 post office and higher all Full Time. Did we not take a step backward with the NTFT's? How do you say to a member who has been a 40 hour FTR, now will become a NTFT and possibly lose 10 hours of work a week?

The first "template" created for the NTFT calls for four ten hour days. But until the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) renders a decision on how these employees retirement will be calculated, no NTFT's will be established.

Postal Service Employees (PSE's) –

I remember the t-shirts from the 90's. I know my goals" at a National Convention. One of the "goals" called for the "elimination of casuals". I still have my shirt and it is one I still wear with pride all be it is faded.

What do we have with the new PSE's? These employees are "enhanced casuals". The postal service will get away with exploiting these lower wage employees and the union agreed with the right to represent them, and to provide them limited leave and health insurance in the APWU Health Plan. How self serving for our national officers at Headquarters!

We are expected as a union to embrace these employees, and I will but I see hard feelings between the career members and the PSE's. After our recent Michigan Postal Workers Union Educational Convention, I still do not have my questions about the use of PSE's in the field answered, despite reducing my questions to writing to our National Business Agents who were going to forward them on to APWU Headquarters.

I feel that it is a disgrace that Postal Management has not promoted the PSE's for Veterans as they agreed to do so, and are telling the Postmaster Reliefs to apply as their positions are eliminated as of 8-24-2011.

Limits on Excessing – On first glance the language is odd. "Forty Miles but no more than fifty Miles". Is it 40 or 50 miles? Under the last agreement, we had members excessed from the Detroit

Post Office to Traaverse City, MI, Sault Saint Marie, Michigan, Pistburgh, PA, and Iowa. Now with the new language in Article 12 the parties will meet to discuss what steps will be taken if the employees cannot be placed within 50 miles. What is the difference between then and now? Instead of the Regional Coordinators of the APWU agreeing to excess across the country, now our National officers will agree to waive the "50 mile limit"? This is a win?

As I write this article, I am at a cottage in Northern Michigan on Bear Lake in Kalkaska County with my family. Passing the small towns on the way here I can guarantee that no positions will likely be found within 50 miles.

On to other issues . . .

Q and A on the New Agreement – With the postal Service getting grief from Congress, and the Postal Supervisor and Postmaster Organizations on our new collective bargaining agreement has refused (as of this writing) to sign a Joint Contract Interpretation Manual as was done in the past two prior agreements. No problem, the APWU has issued unilaterally a Q and A on the New Agreement. I will use this to enforce our new agreement.

Death of the USPS? – Our OIC had a service talk and explained a possible shout down of operations at the start of the 2012 Fiscal Year (10-1-2011) if the USPS does not get relief on the overpayment into the Retirement fund and 5 day delivery. I suggest that the USPS go further that they did eliminat-

ing the Southeast Michigan District into the Detroit District. Do you really need Areas, or Districts? Run everything out of Headquarters in DC. Local managers now cannot make a decision without a POOM or District Manger giving approval. Thing of the top heavy management you could eliminate!

It is very important for all remembers to support the legislation of Congressman Steven Lynch to stop the overpayment of the Retirement fund. If you have not contacted your member of the House of Representatives I urge you ask them why they are not supporting the Lynch bill. I find it odd that our Michigan Democratic members (and "friends of labor") John Dingell, John Conyers, and Sander Levin are not co-signers of the Lynch bill. Why?

In closing-I will be having a meeting with the members-at-large in Area 1 in August to discuss the New Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Until next time; Solidarity.





by Richard
Lemorie,
Area 11
Director

Area 11 Director

One Of Many Changes

Hello Area 11, I can't hardly believe that the year is over half over already. As everyone knows we have a new contract and I wanted to touch on one of many changes. The item I'm going to touch on is very important and is going to require continuous close monitoring by everyone for awhile to get management use to the contract and get the work back to the bargaining unit, especially in the associate offices without stewards. In the AOs the employees must be vigilant because these are your hours and not the Postmasters or other supervisor.

Article 1.6.B Postmasters performing bargaining unit work.

In level 20 offices or above absolutely

no supervisors/postmasters may perform any bargaining unit work, except as permitted under Article 1.6.A. Performance of Bargaining Unit Work. 1. in an emergency, 2. for the purpose of training or instruction of employees, 3. to assure proper operation of equipment, 4. to protect the safety of employees, or 5. to protect the property of the USPS. The easiest way to tell if they are doing our work, they are doing more than just supervising employees.

In level 18 offices a Postmaster may do up to 15 hours a week of bargaining unit work provided it is in their position description. A postmaster and a supervisor are not allowed to perform our bargaining unit work in the same day and any hours of bargaining unit work performed by a supervisor counts

against the 15 hour weekly total.

In level 16 offices the Postmaster is permitted to perform no more than 25 hours of bargaining unit work per week, and there are no longer any PMR's in level 16 offices.

In level 15 offices the postmaster has the same requirements as in level 16 offices.

If there is a second supervisor in any of these offices only ONE of the supervisory employees may perform bargaining unit work, either the supervisor or the postmaster NOT both.

I will be requesting information from my Area 11 offices and start the process of returning our work to our bargaining unit employees. But In the AO's without any union presence (MALs) I also request for the employees to keep

me informed as much as possible to any violations of 1.6.B so that I may take action to attempt to rectify the problem. The second issue I would like to address is the possibility of the smaller locals merging with a larger local or the State, and there are numerous benefits of this. First of all there is strength in numbers, meaning the more members represented by a local will increase the strength at the negotiating table, better training for the stewards and access to more skilled stewards usually found in larger locals because of a larger experience base. It is also imperative that we get more members involved either as stewards or alternate stewards so that we are extremely effective at monitoring the contract.

Yours in Solidarity.

CEO For Governor Anyone?

by Leo F. Persails

If Governors appear to act more like CEOs than Governors, it's because many of them were CEOs prior to being elected. One of them was CEO of a company that was fined over a billion dollars for Medicare fraud prior to the election. Most of these new CEO Governors are millionaires and at least one is a billionaire. The majority voted for them knowing that, so their actions should come as no surprise now. Some of these CEO Governors first efforts resulted in tax cuts for corporations and tax increases on seniors and other middle class citizens. Many have attacked schools with big cuts per child, plus teacher pay and benefits. They did it to support their corporate tax cuts. Did you expect something different from a CEO?

Yes their polished campaign and corporate news media presentation sounded good, but the bottom line for CEOs is profit and salary, they don't get promoted otherwise. Not one CEO has ever been hired to increase employment. The economy and lack of jobs right now was contributed to by CEO led cuts in company employment. The only time that a CEO was hired to increase employment was when the public hired them to do it in several states in the last election. The

public knew what they were doing, but what were they thinking?

There shouldn't be any surprise what former CEOs would do in government office. These CEO Governors actually told you they wanted to reduce taxes on corporations to draw business from other states to create jobs. Did you really believe the CEO meant SMALL business when he said tax cuts would be to help business create jobs? Did you wonder if all the new CEO Governors did the same thing, why any business would leave one state to start up in another CEO Governor's state? That wouldn't make a lot of sense when all the CEO Governors states reduced taxes to create jobs. Maybe they meant they could attract business from China or some other foreign country where a lot of their fellow CEOs already went to get tax breaks and cheap labor.

There is also the possibility that new jobs weren't the real reason for the tax cuts. It's possible this is just another reason to reduce taxes on the rich. It could also be another reason to get their fellow CEO's and top Executives a raise. If you are wondering how a tax deduction could result in a raise for CEO's and company Executives, consider this possibility. Tax deductions on corporations would reduce expenditures

and increase the profit margin. If you consider that most Executive Boards of companies set all employee salaries and bonuses, including their own and the CEO's, you might see a different possibility for the tax cuts. Executive and CEO raises usually result from increased company sales or production, but not in this case. Increased revenue and pay raises for CEOs and their executives will come from tax cuts by the CEO governor and the republican state legislature. The final difference is these raises will actually be funded by school children, teachers, and senior citizens.

Now that the tax breaks, the funding cuts, and the tax increases have been made, the real changes and additional hidden tax increases by the CEO Governor and the republican legislature will soon follow. The tax base that funded schools will be spent somewhere else, and the need to fund schools will now come from increased mileage through your property tax. That's right; everyone including the corporate news media will forget the school funding was cut. Nobody in the news media asked where that \$370 per school child shift in tax dollars went. The issue will now turn to the need to fund schools with new tax funds so our children will have proper systems to teach them. That will require school mileage increases and that will result in EVERYONE getting a tax increase through their property tax. Michigan's greatest tax shift will then be finalized, and most tax payers won't know how it happened, or who to blame for it.

It's true you will probably never see or hear these possible reasons for the tax cuts on the news. One reason may

be the corporate news media also has Executives and CEOs. They also control what news is reported and how the news is reported. There has been a lot of success in turning Americans against other Americans lately. Many of us anticipate and expect the Republicans to do that, but everyone is caught off guard when the news media helps. Many of us have to be careful in what we believe is news, especially when millionaire CEOs require how that news is reported to us. The rich republicans may be attacking working class Americans and even turning those Americans against each other, but it's the corporate news media reporting, that presents it to the public.

What's the next attack, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security? The Washington CEOs are already after that. Besides one attack on American workers at a time is more than most Americans can find time for. Right now many have their hands full trying to figure why they voted for these CEO Governors to begin with.

Yes, the public bought these new CEO Governors and they will pay for the changes they are left with for a long time. Elections have consequences, and this one is proving that again. Many are calling for recalls and that is fine, but it will take a lot more effort now than it would have if everyone had worked in the election to begin with. I will believe enough Americans have wised up to the corporate news media and the top 5% of the rich, when I see it. There are too many Americans without a job, or working for less, that don't know who to blame yet. Good luck with the rest that believe the corporate news is really news.

CEO Governor anyone?

APWU IS
YOU



Veteran's Report

Information To Help You



by John
Smeeckens,
Veterans
Director

L Z Cheboygan

A Remembrance Ride and Michigan Veterans Reunion, is planned for July 29-31, in Cheboygan. Everyone is welcome to join in at the reunion to stand up for our POW/MIAs and their families. Contact Dave Hizer at, davek9vet@hotmail.com, for more information >

VA Funding Okayed

The House passed a \$128 billion (FY 2012) Military Construction/VA Appropriations bill this week which provides VA \$2.4 billion more than last year. It also includes \$52.5 billion in Advanced Appropriations for FY 2013 medical care, and a VFW-supported amendment that would provide \$20 million to expand VA's suicide prevention social media outreach program. Veterans Organizations were disappointed that the bill is \$2 billion less than what was recommended for VA construction funding. There was concern that the shortfall would further delay projects currently under construction, as well as those being planned. There was hope that the Senate would look to increase major and minor construction accounts when they take up the bill in the coming weeks.

Bills Need Our Help

We need to contact our Representatives in Congress to push for the passage of the Hiring Heroes Act, H.R. 1941, which was recently introduced in the House by Rep. Bishop (D-GA) as a companion bill to S. 941, introduced by Sen. Murray (D-WA). Veterans Organizations strongly support the Hiring Heroes Act, which would extend Chapter 31 (VocRehab) benefits for disabled veterans who have exhausted unemployment benefits, *streamline the federal hiring process for separating service members*, and make Transition Assistance Program attendance mandatory. Tell your representatives in Congress to support the Hiring Heroes Act. This would be in conjunction with the letter, sent to APWU Military Veterans', by our own APWU President and Veteran, Mr. Cliff Guffey.

TSGLI Payments

Service members who suffered a traumatic injury from Oct. 7, 2001, to present day, could be retroactively eligible for as much as \$100,000, according to the VA. Troops who suffered one of several types of injury, including amputation, brain injury or

burns, now qualify for compensation under the Service members' Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection program, regardless of where they were injured. Previously, service members were eligible only if they suffered the injuries after Dec. 1, 2005. The recent passage of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2010 grandfathered eligibility back to Oct. 7, 2001. The traumatic insurance supplement was a tremendous victory back in April 2005, when the proposal went from bill to law in 27 days. For more information on eligibility or to

website or the **Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay website**. All military pay information can be found in **Military.com's Pay Section**.

Afghanistan Troop Withdrawal

President Obama has announced his plan to withdraw 10,000 troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2011, and 23,000 more by the end of summer 2012. The majority of the remaining 68,000 troops could also be home by 2014 depending on conditions on the ground. The war in Afghanistan is America's

found that Iraq and Afghanistan war vets with PTSD are two to three times more likely than vets without PTSD to suffer from heart disease. Older vets with PTSD are twice as likely to develop dementia. "There is something about the mind-body connection and the impact that having PTSD has on the body that has a wear and tear effect," said researcher Dr. Thomas Neylan from the San Francisco VA Medical Center. The good news: researchers say the more they know about PTSD, the better they can treat it. Researchers say

"The war in Afghanistan is America's longest war and has resulted in 1,500 combat deaths. The war has also cost billions of dollars, primarily because Afghanistan is a landlocked country."

the rate of PTSD among vets coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan is as high now as it was during the Vietnam War. What's new about it this time is that troops are being *deployed on*

apply, go to www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/TSGLI/TSGLI.htm. **TRY IT! CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY!**

New Clinics

I am pleased to announce that the Veterans Affairs Administration has selected a site in Mackinaw City for a new veterans' clinic, which will open later this year. The VA has now opened new clinics in Alpena, Clare and Bad Axe. They will be opening another one in Cadillac in late Summer or early Fall, and have also approved a clinic for Grayling to open in 2012.

Wounded Warriors

Army senior leaders and the organization Operation Homefront recently launched the "Army Homefront Fund," which will aid Wounded Warriors from the Army. Operation Homefront has provided cash grants to assist Soldiers and their families with everyday expenses such as rent, food and health care. **The organization serves all service members from all services.** To request aid or learn more, visit the **Army Homefront Fund website** or the **Operation Homefront website**.

Stop Loss

The deadline to submit claims for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay was recently extended to October 21, 2011. Army officials are hoping remaining candidates for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay take action and apply. The Army estimates a total of 120,000 Soldiers, veterans and beneficiaries may be eligible for the pay. Those eligible for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay receive \$500 for each month held a stop-loss status. For more information on eligibility criteria and to submit a claim, visit the Army's **Stop Loss Pay**

longest war and has resulted in 1,500 combat deaths. The war has also cost billions of dollars, primarily because Afghanistan is a landlocked country. Pundits on both sides of the issue agree that any progress made in Afghanistan is fragile at best, that al Qaeda has been mostly defeated and that America cannot continue to help the country forever. As the president said, it's time to focus on building here at home.

PTSD

What you are about to read is shocking, but honest. Don't go it alone. Call out for HELP. Someone will be there. You are not alone. We will help each other if necessary! Thousands of American troops will be coming home from Afghanistan soon. As President Barack Obama announced a new exit strategy and a major troop reduction which could result in a total of 33,000 men and women returning home over the next 15 months. And many will be coming home suffering from a disorder that's now being described as an epidemic, wounds of war worse than anyone ever imagined. The latest research was recently unveiled in San Francisco. Doctors now say PTSD is not just a mental disorder, but that it affects the entire body. Vets with PTSD are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer, heart disease and other illnesses and these troops that survived war, are dying earlier at home.

Shell shock, battle fatigue, post traumatic stress disorder, whatever the name, studies show as many as 20 percent of all vets returning from Iraq and Afghanistan live with PTSD, and new research just released by the San Francisco VA Medical Center confirms what many vets have long known: PTSD is not just an illness that haunts the mind, it affects the entire body. The research

multiple tours, making PTSD even tougher for this generation of troops to live with and tougher for doctors to treat.

You've read numerous articles here, and I can't stress it enough. CONTACT YOUR COUNTY VETERANS REPRESENTATIVE TO SEEK ASSISTANCE !!! OR SEEK HELP FROM A VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS VSO. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO GET HELP !!! JUST DO IT! Call me if necessary; I'm not licensed in anything but B.S., but I will get you the name or phone number of someone to get you started.

The Wall

The American Veterans Traveling Tribute (www.avtt.org) Cost of Freedom Tribute - The Wall - will make at least two appearances in Michigan this summer, including Commerce Township for Detroit's Bike Week (www.detroit-bikeweek.com) from July 27th - 31st, and in Cadillac from August 3rd - 7th (www.thewall.cadillacpost94.org).

There are several traveling replicas of the Wall sponsored by various organizations, and all pay honor to those lost in the Vietnam War. However, this particular wall differs in several ways. This Wall is a 4/5 scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., larger than most of the other traveling Walls. There are also several other displays that travel with the Cost of Freedom Tribute, which include a Walk of Heroes, a WW II tribute, a Korean War tribute, a 9/11 tribute, a Gold Dog Tag collection from casualties since Vietnam, a Gold Dog Tag collection for global war on terror casualties, and a Vietnam remembrances art display.

For the Cadillac event, the Wall will *continued on page 9*

Retiree Involvement

With Every Ending Comes A Beginning



by Al
LaBrecque,
Retiree's Chapter
President

EDUCATION CONVENTION – The 2011 Ed Convention in Bay City meant more than just the educational aspect. This Convention was dedicated to honoring our immediate past State President, Gary VanHooqstraten, for his long, outstanding leadership. As it turned out, we didn't have an opportunity to express the sincere gratitude of the Michigan State Retiree Chapter for his unwavering support for "Retiree Involvement".

As I recall, we were in Midland when the newly elected NBA Clyde Hartshorn, Jr., passed the gavel of the MPWU presidency to then Exec.-Sec., Gary Van. It was a "comfortable" transition of leadership. Members may be unaware that Gary was a MHSAA basketball official in the Saginaw Valley for many years, as well as a softball umpire. A good sports official is the one we hardly notice because they are in charge of the contest without fanfare with the focus on the players and game. That's pretty much how Gary Van approached MPWU leadership; with a firm hand, taking care of details, and relying on the officers around him.

From the very beginning of his tenure, Gary fully supported the activities of the State Retiree Chapter, treating us as a valued partner in accommodating our programs and initiatives. One of Gary Van's leadership qualities that served him and the MPWU so well is that he recognized that when in leadership you're only as successful as the people you have around you. To his credit, Gary always made certain to acknowledge that fact. Brother Gary distinguished himself as MPWU president in the tradition of his predecessors; Frank Kowal, Jr., Leo Persails, Lynn Charles Walker, and Clyde Hartshorn, Jr., taking his rightful place in the line of the Great Lakes State's Postal Workers Union past leadership.

With every ending comes a beginning. As a full dues-paying member of his Saginaw 486-487 Area Local, the Local and State Retiree Chapters, Gary VanHooqstraten has much to offer, and the "Welcome mat" is out! His leadership, advice, and friendship is appreciated beyond measure. "There's no greater calling than to serve your Brother, and no greater satisfaction than to have done it well." Walter P. Reuther, UAW Pres.

EDUCATION – The State Retiree Chapter E-Board met, taking care of necessary business which included sponsoring 3 delegates to the APWU Retirees' Dept. Conference in Las Vegas in October: Pres. Al LaBrecque (automatic), Sec.-Treas. Lynn Walker, and Trustee Patty Miller. Instructors for retiree re-

lated classes were top-notch, thanks to APWU Retirees' Dept., Judy Beard, who 'saved our bacon' with her expertise in securing instructors of such high caliber. And, while we had quality attendance, quantity didn't meet expectations.

Michigan Local presidents were mailed a letter well before the Convention requesting they consider assigning their officer having Human Relations responsibilities, or whoever handled retirement matters, to one or more of the classes. Dir. Beard had her D.C. staff mail a notice to members of the Saginaw

retired members are eligible to apply for disaster relief assistance. The fund is sustained through voluntary contributions. Since Hurricane Katrina, the numerous wildfires, floods, tornadoes, and natural disasters have seriously depleted fund reserves. It was pointed out that it's equally important for retirees to contribute to the Disaster Relief Fund to help ensure its solvency. We are all at risk for an Act of God disaster.

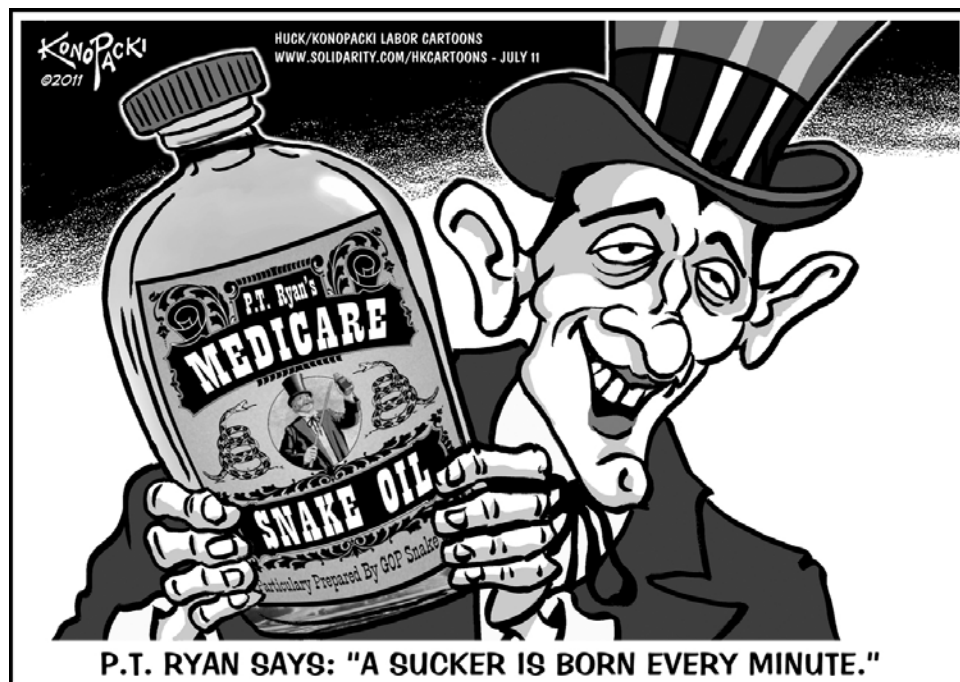
HAT'S OFF! Two Michigan Locals; the "Cradle of Labor" Flint MI Area Local and Alpena MI Local, placed

ably not for many of their own members." AARP has since recanted their position, undoubtedly due to a membership backlash. This isn't the first time AARP has been called out for taking a position contrary to senior's best interests. AARP supported the prescription Medicare Part D boondoggle resulting in a huge membership defection. ARA says; "The voices of doom are wrong. The S.S. Trust Fund has a \$2.6 trillion surplus, and it is projected to grow to \$4.3 trillion by 2023. We do not need to cut benefits" "The ARA will always stand up for seniors and the middle class. We are for strengthening S.S. for today's seniors and for generations to come." The GOP mantra of cutting spending and not raising taxes on the wealthiest 2% translates to reducing so-called entitlements benefits; S.S. and Medicare. Eliminating the S.S. payment cap for the highest wage earners is the most obvious way of preserving S.S. for future recipients.

BUT, IT WON'T MATTER! Terms of the APWU-USPS contract, all the ongoing consolidation and labor relations issues; nothing will matter if we allow the Postal Service to default. I never thought we would see the day, but this is no "crying wolf"! It's a matter of survival for postal workers, postal retirees, and the American mailing public. H.R. 1351 is key to the immediate remedy for the USPS's financial woes. Throw in H.R. 2309 proposed by Rep. Darrell Issa (R), and the Postal Service as we know it will be history. H.R. 2309 would eliminate six-day delivery, negate contractual protections including the no-layoff provisions, and that's just for starters! If your Member of Congress is on record as supporting H.R. 1351, be sure to Thank them. It's likewise critically important to request they adamantly oppose H.R. 2309.

My own 1st District Congressman Benishek (R) remains noncommittal on H.R. 1351 despite my repeated request that he cosponsor and support H.R. 1351. At this writing, I'll be meeting with a Benishek staff rep. where I'll reiterate the request for his support to relieve the USPS from it's absurd overfunding of future retiree health benefits, and make a case that it's imperative that Benishek opposes H.R. 2309. I urge every 1st District postal worker and community leaders from the U.P. and N.E. Michigan lower peninsula to contact Rep. Benishek, attend his district appearance events, holding his feet to the fire on these 'life and death' bills.

It's crunch time! At no time in my 52-year postal labor movement involvement has the situation been more dire, and at no time has the need been greater to . . . Be Strong!



P.T. RYAN SAYS: "A SUCKER IS BORN EVERY MINUTE."

Local Retiree Chapter. I completely understand that active Local delegate's hunger to absorb as much info on the new contract as possible may well have been a contributing factor for the lack of response. Likewise, the letter to retiree members was on fairly short notice, but we appreciated the two who showed up. Thus, attendance consisted of Local and State Retiree Chapter officers.

We try to design our classes to educate both active and retiree leaderships on issues that affect and benefit active and retired members we represent and their families; CSRS/FERS Retirement, Alzheimer's Assn. "Know The 10 Signs", Social Security & Medicare, and a day long Open Session led by Dir. Beard for valuable exchange of information. The opening day General Session featured the State AFL-CIO's Political/Legislative Dir. who revealed a shocking laundry list of regressive legislation aimed at middle class working families, the poor, seniors, and organized labor, either already enacted or on Lansing's legislative agenda. Locals, Retiree Chapters and members are encouraged to rally and speak out against this assault by our CEO Gov. and his GOP majority.

APWU Human Relations Dir., Sue Carney, followed referencing in her remarks the Postal Employees Disaster Relief Fund. It's important to note that

1st in their respective categories for the APWU contest to get out the vote on contract ratification. Tops in the 200-499 member Local category, Flint voted 92.2%. Alpena voted 100% in the 1-49 member Local category. Those impressive totals reflect a high degree of leadership and direction.

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS – As previously reported; the MPWU and State Chapter attended a meeting of Unions hosted by the Michigan State AFL-CIO, to consider organizing a State ARA Chapter. It was agreed by the various Unions participating to organize and appoint a Constitution Committee. Brother Gary VanHooqstraten was appointed to represent the MPWU and our State Retiree Chapter. ARA is a national organization growing out of the labor movement that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4 million retirees and their families. Our State Chapter is enrolled as a member entity, and the APWU Retirees' Dept. regularly partners with ARA at the national level on senior's issues, particularly for the protection of Social Security and Medicare benefits.

ARA recently took AARP to task for allegedly supporting cutting S.S. benefits stating; "AARP does not speak for all seniors, and on this topic prob-



by Linda
Turney

Tourney Talks

Fight Back

Against War On Your Rights!

Public Unions lost a big battle in WI because the state supreme court has allowed Governor Walker to strip bargaining rights from workers. Meanwhile, governors in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri are attacking Unions. Illinois is barely holding on.

Congressional Republicans are taking aim at the NLRB, which issued a minor change allowing workers to vote on whether to unionize after a union has been proposed, rather than delaying the vote.

Congressmen Issa and Ross have now proposed a bill to limit **YOUR RIGHTS**. This is serious. The bill requires the Post Office to take into account the financial situation of

the Post Office and compensation comparability before reaching any agreement. It requires an increase in health and life insurance premium percentage regardless of our current agreement that you approved.

This bill will create a "Solvency Authority" to require Unions to renegotiate existing Contracts. This "Solvency Authority" will have the ability to **unilaterally** modify our Contract if renegotiations fail.

Ask members of your churches, synagogues and mosques to stop this legislation. We have been a part of every community and this will have an effect on everyone. This will negatively affect the Postal Service and our jobs.

The war on workers' rights is undermining America. The economy will never recover until American workers have more money in their pockets to buy goods and services. **UNIONS** are the best way to give workers bargaining power to get better pay.

In 1955, over a third of Americans in the private sector were organized. Today, it is fewer than 7%. This decline has brought stagnation of American wages; more wealth at the top while the middle class was forced to have both parents work outside the home to increase the family purchasing power. Those working are required to work longer hours and with higher productivity for lower pay.

Germany has resisted the decades of stagnant wages that have existed in America. One of the big reasons for that is because the German Labor Unions are still powerful enough to insist that German workers get their fair share of the economic gains. Union representatives are included in important decisions made by employers. The only way to sustain growth and prosperity in the United States is by retain-

ing and respecting collective bargaining rights for workers in both the private and public sectors.

The current right wing ultra-rich assault on workers' rights continues a long term plan by the Koch brothers and others to reduce wages and benefits for workers while they continue to reap the benefits of higher worker productivity and low wages. The Koch brothers just secretly met with Republican Gov-

"Now is the time to fight back. Write letters, go to demonstrations, keep informed and pressure your Congressman and Senators. Is it Labor's Swan Song or our Victory lap? We must fight back."

ernors from Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida, New Jersey and others. They are the Governors destroying collective bargaining and Unions. The Koch Brothers have and are bankrolling these elected officials. Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, for example, is secretly silencing democracy and allowing Michigan's emergency manager law to appoint managers to rule over cities and void decisions elected officials have made. The Mackinac Center for Public Policy, which is founded through contributions from the Koch brothers, has been advocating the emergency manager law since 2005.

Now is the time to fight back. Write letters, go to demonstrations, keep informed and pressure your Congressman and Senators. Is it Labor's Swan Song or our Victory lap? We must fight back.

HR 1351

Every Union Member, every Postal Worker needs to take this seriously and contact their Congressman. Ask them to support our legislation HR 1351 which corrects the overfunding of the pension accounts and restores financial stability to the Postal Service.

Recess is a favorite time for school children and Unionists. Congress has blocked out August 5 - September 7 to meet with constituents. Make an appointment today to talk to your Congressman concerning our legislation.

Out of Schedule (OOS) And Guaranteed Time

Out of Schedule premium is defined in ELM 434.611 which states:

Out of schedule premium is paid to eligible full-time bargaining unit employees for time worked outside of and instead of their regularly scheduled workday or workweek when employees work on a temporary schedule at

the request of management.

ELM 434.612 Timely Notice:

Payment of out-of-schedule premium is dependent on timely notice being given by management of the temporary schedule change, as follows:

a. If notice of a temporary change is given to an employee by Wednesday of the preceding service week, even if this change is revised later, the employee's time can be limited to

the employee's time may be limited to the revised schedule change. Out of schedule is still paid for hours worked outside of his/her regular schedule.

If management does **not** give timely notice (the Wednesday preceding the service week), the grievant is entitled to work his/her regular schedule. According to the **F-21 section 232.17** states: *"If notice of a temporary schedule change is not given to the employee by Wednesday of the preceding service week, then the employee is entitled to work his regular schedule. Therefore, any hours worked in addition to the employee's regular schedule are not worked "instead of" his regu-*

lar schedule. Such additional hours worked are not considered as "out of schedule premium hours, but rather the employee would be paid regular overtime for hours worked in excess of 8 hours per service day or 40 hours per service week."

b. If notice of a temporary schedule change is not given to the employee by Wednesday of the preceding service week, the employee is entitled to work his or her regular schedule. Therefore, any hours worked in addition to the employee's regular schedule are not worked "instead of" his or her regular schedule. The additional hours worked are not considered as out-of-schedule premium hours. Instead, they are paid as overtime hours worked in excess of 8 hours per service day or 40 hours per service week.

It is important to note that payment of out of schedule depends on management's requirement to give timely notice on the Wednesday preceding the service week. If timely notice is given,

Therefore, a grievant could be given both OOS and Guaranteed Time. Here is an example:

If I normally work 2:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and next week management changes my schedule to 12:00 midnight until 8:30 a.m. on **FRIDAY** of the preceding service week, I am entitled to two (2) hours of OOS pay from 12:00 midnight until 2:00 a.m. I am also entitled to work my regular schedule which will end at 10:30 so I am entitled to guaranteed time from 8:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m.

If you have any further questions on this call me.

Information To Help You

continued from page 7

have a motorcycle escort from Reed City to Cadillac on August 3rd. Staging will be from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. at the Marathon Truck Stop at exit 153 on US 131. An escort briefing will be at 2:45 p.m., and the escort will depart at 3:00 p.m., traveling approximately 45 minutes north to Cadillac. The escort will travel through downtown Cadillac, ending at the city park on the east shore of Lake Cadillac.

On Sunday, August 7th, there will be a Ride to the Wall. Individuals and groups (Rolling Thunder, Legion Riders, Forgotten Eagles, etc.) are encouraged to ride to Cadillac on Sunday, arriving between 1:30 and 2:00 p.m., passing by the south side of the Wall at West Cass Street and proceeding to

a designated parking lot. A Vietnam Veterans Ride of Honor will commence at 2:00 p.m. with a Vietnam veteran of each military service, as well as a woman rider, riding past the Wall in honor of the fallen, missing and women from each military branch who gave their lives during the Vietnam War.

Event coordinators are looking for Vietnam veterans from each of the five (5) service branches that were represented in Vietnam, including a woman veteran to represent the women who served in Vietnam, to be part of Sunday's Vietnam Veterans Ride of Honor. Anyone wanting more information about the escort from Reed City to Cadillac, or anyone wanting to help with security may contact Mike Bell at mikbl@yahoo.com, or call him at 231-920-3678..

Legislative Update



by Lynn
Pallas-Barber,
National
Business Agent

Contact Your Congress Person

Once again it is imperative that every member contact their Congress person and if they have not signed on to support H.R. 1351 they must do so our very existence is dependent on it.

H.R. 1351 - the "United States Postal Service Pension Obligation Recalculation and Restoration Act of 2011" was introduced by Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) on April 4, 2011. This bill is intended to address the previously reported overpayments made into both the CSRS and FERS pension plans. It also instructs OPM to modify its methodology to avoid such overpayments in the future. As you may be aware recent independent auditing reports have disclosed overpayments into the CSRS pension to be between \$55 billion and \$75 billion dollars. At present the FERS system has been overpaid nearly \$7 billion dollars. The bill also eliminates the current requirement to make annual payments of over \$5 billion dollars a year to prefund future retiree health benefit obligations by transferring the previously mentioned overpayments into that fund. This bill is strongly supported by the APWU.

Union Busting Buried Within Issa's H.R. 2309 Postal Reform Bill

To add insult to injury Congressman Issa has introduced the following: Recently Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) introduced a postal reform bill containing parts closely resembling a law passed in Michigan earlier this year, aimed at unilaterally modifying collective bargaining agreements.

Rep. Issa's bill would create a Solvency Authority to oversee the USPS that will be empowered to single handedly "reject, modify, or terminate 1 or more terms and conditions of an existing collective bargaining agreement" after simply "meeting and conferring with the

appropriate bargaining representative."

The Michigan law has already been used at the state level to assault collective bargaining rights. Michigan's law gives what they label as an "emergency" manager, the right to unilaterally modify collective bargaining agreements currently in place.

This resulted in the appointed "fiscal emergency manager" of the Detroit Public Schools to issue layoff notices to every single teacher in the public school system only a month after this law passed at the state level. The manager then moved to renegotiate the union's contract. The new law only required the emergency manager to "meet and confer" with union officials about the contract, not bargain in good faith, which is the nucleus of collective bargaining.

Congressman Issa is attacking collective bargaining rights without even looking at what is really causing the financial problems of the Postal Service. Issa's H.R. 2309 does not even address the congressional mandate requiring the postal service to annually pay \$5.5 billion dollars a year for future retiree health care benefits. This is something that no other company in the private sector or government agency is required to do. Nor does it address the billions in overpayments made into both CSRS and FERS accounts by the Postal Service.

All of this is simply aimed at ending any real effective power for work-

ers who want a union and decide to come together to collectively bargain.

Rep. Stephen Lynch's (MA) H.R. 1351 will let the USPS use billions of dollars in CSRS and FERS overpayments to meet its financial obligations. Unlike, other bills that address the pension overpayments H.R. 1351 will

not attack the rights of workers to collectively bargain.

The APWU is asking all of its members to call your U.S. representative today and urge them to cosponsor and support H.R. 1351. Also make sure you voice your opposition to Congressman Issa's H.R. 2309. You can reach your member of congress by calling the Capitol Hill switchboard today at (202) 224-3121 or to find your member of congress



POWER

After returning home from the recent POWER National Convention in Puerto Rico one can only feel rejuvenated. Spending some time with sisters from all over the country is a rewarding experience.

Director Mike Morris addressed the convention on Friday. In his report he stated that it was hoped that an agreement had been reached with the USPS on the NTFT bid assignments this week. He also reported that four (4) disputes had been filed by his office: 1. PSE hired in the Maintenance Craft other than as custodians. 2. The USPS has unilaterally created Level 4 PSE position description. 3. Level 4 PSEs should be hired at the grade of work that they perform. In the Clerk Craft that should be Level 6. The USPS believes that they can use the Level 4 PSEs to replace the PMRs and that these PSEs will not count toward the 20% District cap. 4. A dispute over the Global 1.6.B has been filed on the language about all the time spent staffing the window must be counted and the USPS believes that only means time performing transactions.

Karen See, president of CLUW addressed the delegates. She asked if any one of the delegates knew Sarah Bagley. I was not able to respond in the positive. After being presented with this challenge I had to find out who she was and I'd like to share what I found.

Sarah George Bagley

Sarah was an advocate for women's

rights and one of the most important labor leaders in New England during the 1840s. She was an advocate of shorter workdays for factory operatives and mechanics. She campaigned to make 10 hour days the maximum in Massachusetts. Her activities in support of mill workers in Lowell, MA put her in contact with a broader network of reformers in areas of women's rights, communitarianism, abolition, peace, prison reform, and health reform. Sarah Bagley and her coworkers became familiar with middle-class reform activities, demonstrating the ways in which working people embraced this reform. Sarah was a textile worker, a labor activist and a homeopathic physician.

As Sarah Bagley fought for the rights of the working class – the middle class in the 1840s so we do today as Union activists. The struggles continue!

Multicraft Positions

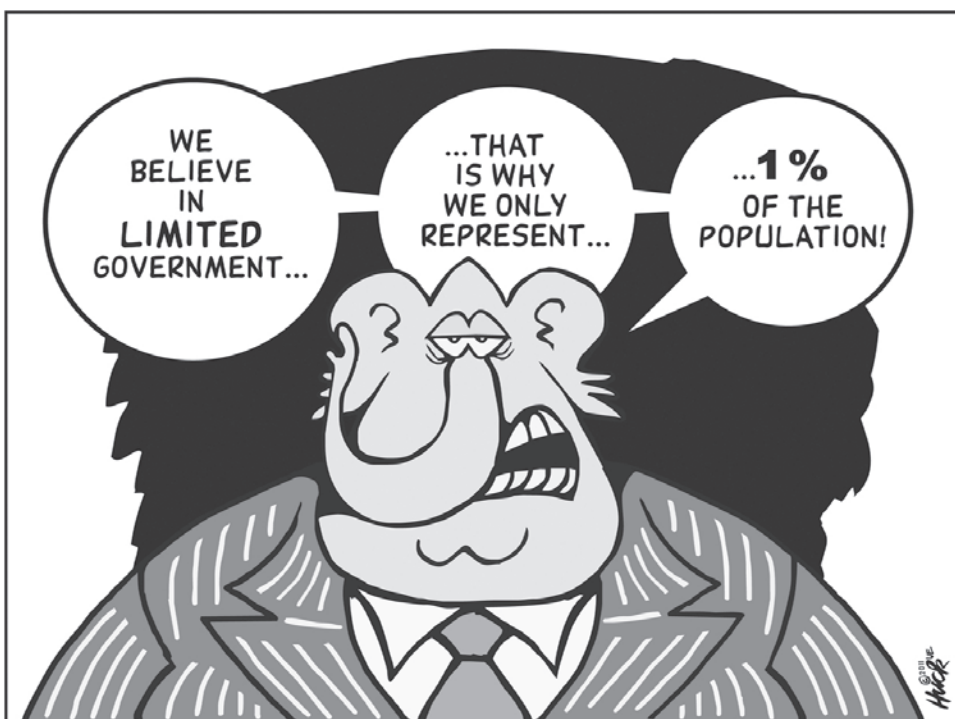
Recently there have been some questions coming from the field concerning multicraft positions. There are Standard Position Descriptions in the EL-201 which have been agreed upon as multicraft. Such positions are Training Tech, PEDC – SP#2621. This is a BQ position which is posted office wide and selected regardless of craft. This is a Clerk Craft position. Vehicle Operations & Maintenance Assistant (VOMA) – SP#2195 is a position which is posted to city carriers, clerks, bldg./equip maint, motor vehicle and special delivery. This is also a Senior Qualified position which is assigned to the craft of the successful bidder. A Data Collection Tech is a BQ clerk craft position which is posted in the clerk craft only. This is not a position that management can create locally. All bid duty assignments have to be titled with agreed upon Standard Position Descriptions found in the EL-201.

Beware that management may attempt to combine duties from different crafts to create and assignment. The provisions of Article 7.2 must be strictly enforced. Normally work in different crafts, occupational groups or levels will not be combined into one job. If you have any concerns about job posting it is best to call your NBAs in Chicago. A clerk craft duty assignment should never be awarded to an employee in different craft unless it is in an official duty assignment which is posted multicraft per the EL-201.

"Leadership is an opportunity to serve. It is not a trumpet call to self-importance," a quote by Donald Walters.

"I can be changed by what happens to me, but I refuse to be reduced by it," a quote by Maya Angelou.

And with those words of wisdom, I remain, yours in Union Solidarity. Until next time.



Discounts For Being An APWU Member And USPS Employee (through either Union Plus and/or USPS Deals)

Automobile

Insurance	(thru Union Plus)	800-294-9496		
Purchases				
Union Made	(thru Union+)	\$100 rebate **		
Hybrid Union Made		\$200 rebate**		

** Rebate is when item is purchased thru Union Plus Auto Buying Service. Hybrid rebate is an additional \$100 on top of the \$100 for Union Made Cars.

Rentals	(thru Union Plus)	Save upto 25%		
Alamo		800-462-5266	ID# 7015700	
Avis		800-698-5685	ID# B723700	
Budget		800-455-2848	ID# V816100	
Enterprise		877-222-9711		
Hertz		800-654-2200	ID# 205666	
National		800-227-7368	ID# 5029562	

Repair

Maaco	(thru USPS)			
Goodyear	(thru Union+)	10% on Serv.	5% on Tires	

Roadside (thru Union Plus) 800-454-8722

Cell Phones

Provider		Plan Disc.	Phone Disc.	Assc. Disc.
AT&T	(thru USPS)	25%	50%	50%
	(thru Union Plus)	15%		
Sprint/Nextel		25%	100%	20%
T-Mobile		15%		
US Cellar		20%		
Verizon Wireless		20%	40-100%	25%

College Courses

College	(thru USPS)	
Ashford University		
Brandman University		10% discount
Capella University		5% discount (if Prior Military: 10 - 20%)
Central Michigan University		15% discount
DeVry University		Unknown Disc.
Drexel University		10-25% discount
Grand Cayon University		5% discount
Kaplan University		10% discount
Keiser University		15% Scholarship Discount

Medaille College	5% discount
Rasmussen College	10% discount
Regis University	10% discount
Strayer University	Unknown Disc.
University of Phoenix	Fourth Class Free (after three classes)

Computer Deals

Type		
Compaq	(thru USPS)	Various
Dell	(thru Union Plus)	10-30%

Credit Cards

USPS Credit Card	15.24% APR*	(thru Chase Bank (USPS Deals))
Union Plus Credit Card	14.99 - 23.24 APR*	(thru HSBC Bank (Union +))
Union Plus Secured Credit Card		

General Household Discounts

Health Clubs	(thru Union +)	888-294-1500
Pet Insurance	(thru Union +)	866-473-7387

Supplies (thru USPS Deals)

MSC® Industrial Supply Company
 Account number: 1868335
 Credit cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover
 Telephone number: 800-msc4gov (800.672.4468)

W. W. Grainger, Inc.
 Account number: 861770246
 Credit cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express
 Telephone number: 800-govteam (800.468-8326)

Travel & Entertainment Discounts

Hotels	Use Your Govt ID	upto 50% off	
Entertainment Discounts		800-565-3712	ID# 744387769
Movie Ticket Discounts		" "	" "
Theme Park Discounts		" "	" "

Travel & Tours

Union Plus Travel Center	http://www.unionplus.org/Travel
Worldwide Vacation Tours	http://www.unionplus.org/Tours

"Biblical" Parable

In the beginning was the Plan
 And then came the Assumptions
 And the Assumptions were without form
 And the Plan was completely without substance
 And the darkness was on the faces of the Employees
 And they spoke unto their Supervisors saying:
 "It's a Crock of Ship and it Stinketh"
 And the Supervisors went unto their Department Heads and sayeth;
 "It is a Pail of Dung, and none may abide by the odour thereof."
 And the Department Heads went unto their managements and sayeth unto them;
 "It is a container of Excrement, and it is very strong, Such that none may abide by it."
 And the Managers went unto their Director and sayeth;
 "It is a Vessel of Fertilizer, and none may abide its' strength."
 And the director went unto the Executive Vice President and sayeth;
 "It promoteth growth, and it is very powerful."
 And the Executive Vice-President went to the President and sayeth;
 "This Powerful New Plan will actively promote the growth and efficiency of the System."
 And the President looked upon the Plan and saw that it was good.
 And the Plan became Policy.

Reprint from the 1990's

Editor's note: I came across this recently and thought it was as prevalent today as it was then. Please enjoy!

CELL PHONES & DRIVING

Did You Know?

- 1. Number 1 killer of American teens is distracted driving
- 2. 299 teens are killed or seriously injured by the average American teenager every hour in a month
- 3. months in jail and a \$250 fine is the penalty for being caught texting and driving in the State of Utah
- 4. teens more likely to get in an accident if you use a cell phone while you drive
- 5. out of 10 teens say their parents won't follow through on punishment if they are caught texting and driving
- 6. collisions are caused every 10 minutes because of cell phone use in the U.S.
- 7. people die every day from accidents involving cell phone use
- 8. percent of drivers admit to downloading apps and watching TV videos on their phones while driving
- 9. out of 10 teens say they've seen drivers distracted by cell phones and other things
- 0. People die every day from driving while distracted

18% of all fatal accidents are caused by cell phone use.

Degrees Of Distraction

- Audio: Notices that distract you
- Visual: Taking your eyes off the road
- Manual: Taking your hands off the wheel
- Cognitive: Taking your mind off the road

DEATHS
 5474 people in the U.S. were killed in distracted related accidents in 2009. An Additional 448,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes that were reported to have involved distracted driving.

State Texting Laws

- Universal Texting ban
- No texting ban
- Texting ban on new drivers only
- Texting ban on both new and school bus drivers only

Created By The Christensen Law Firm
 Sources:
<http://www.distraction.gov/stats-and-facts/>
<http://www.nationwide.com/newsroom/dwd-surveys.jsp>
<http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/the-most-used-while-apps.php>
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38042731/ns/technology-and-science-wireless/#/1/new-problem-apping-while-driving>

Time Is Of The Essence

by Michael O'Hearn,
National Business Agent

Timing is everything in some matters. For all stewards out there, it could mean your grievance is alive or it is dead. If you miss a time limit on your grievance, our contract says you have waived the grievance. That means it is dead. As an NBA, I see a lot of grievances. In many of them, management is raising timeliness issues. It is heartbreaking to see a well documented, well argued grievance that runs afoul of the time limits. Whenever I teach a basic stewards class, I always emphasize that you must hit your time limits. Nothing kills a grievance quicker than not making a time limit. It is a simple thing. Yet, somehow many stewards are still missing time limits. If you are having a problem, get an extension of the time limits in writing. Be sure to specify what time limit you are extending and for exactly how long you are extending it. If you can't get an extension, then file on time even if your file is incomplete. Don't wait on something from the grievant or management. If you have requested information and management has not gotten back to you, just file the grievance and mention in your grievance that management withheld information. **DON'T WAIT!**

Another problem in timeliness develops when you are waiting on a meeting or a decision from management. For example, if you have filed your grievance on time at step 1 and you have discussed the grievance at step 1, but management is putting you off on giving you a decision, don't let your time limit expire waiting for management's decision. Management has five days to give you a decision after your discussion at step 1. After these five days, you have ten days to file at step 2 whether you get a decision or not. Don't wait on management. If management misses a time limit, our contract says that the grievance is to be moved to the next step. Therefore, management doesn't really get as heavy a penalty as when you miss a time limit. Sometimes management will wait on purpose to see if they can get you to wait on them and miss your time limit which kills the grievance. They are tickled pink. If they can accomplish this through your ignorance. Don't let them do this to you. Appeal it to step 2 whether you get their decision or not within the ten days from when their decision was due. Also, mention in your grievance that management refused to give a decision and violate due process principles. The same goes for

management not scheduling a meeting at any step. Just appeal it to the next step after their limit for scheduling a meeting expires and before your limit expires for appealing to the next step.

A special timeliness issue can occur in cases where a member has veteran rights and they are being fired. Management issues the removal notice in a different way than other members. First, they will issue a proposed notice of removal with the veteran's MSPB rights in it. Then, 30 days later, they will issue a decision to remove leader. The proposed notice of removal sounds like the member is not yet issued discipline or the member may not be fired yet. This is not the case. You must file your step 1 grievance within 14 days of the proposed notice of removal. If you wait until the decision letter, you will be too late. Don't let someone get fired based on that kind of technicality. If you see something that confuses you or is not quite what you use to, call and ask someone for help. Call me or your other NBAs.

Step 1: Fourteen (14) days from the date on which the employee or the Union first learned or may reasonably have been expected to have learned of its cause.

Step 1 Management Decision: five days (5) from the Step 1 discussion.

Step 2 appeal: Ten days (10) from Management's decision.

Step 2 Meeting: Seven days (7) from receipt of the Step 2 appeal.

Step 2 Management Decision: Ten (10) days from the Step 2 meeting.

Step 2 Additions and Corrections: Ten (10) days from the receipt of Management's decision.

Step 3 Appeal to Arbitration: Thirty (30) days from the receipt of Management's decision.

Direct Appeal to Arbitration: Thirty (30) days from the receipt of Management's decision.

All time limits are subject to agreements to extend the time limits by both parties. **PLEASE DON'T MISS A TIME LIMIT!**

Letter To The Editor

by Richard A. Plahna
(Member from Traverse City Area Local)

Change is inevitable in this world, but that does not mean that it is necessarily desirable. In our little plant in Traverse City, a recent change has proven to be very undesirable, indeed. Though it has been policy for some time, policy supported by the contract (and by commonsense), that each DBCS is to be staffed, except in very rare cases, with two operators; however, now, an operator is now often forced to run a machine alone. A creative variation has three operators on two machines, which, of course, often leaves one operator alone, and of course, management manages to abuse its' own policy, often leaving one operator alone for extended period. The primary result of this curious new policy is a new form of chaos; one is not always sure exactly which two machines one is to shepherd.

But more important is this: we hear nothing about safety. A primary reason for having two operators on each DBCS is to ensure the safety of the operators. But since two operators per machine apparently does not satisfy the all-holy bottom line, the possibility of injuries is conveniently ignored.

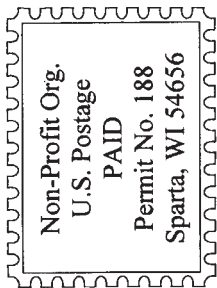
Even in the best of time, the horrid hours of tour one are physically and psychologically taxing. Considering that fatigue lessens attention, every effort should be made to protect the workers. And so, it seems evident that a policy that leaves an operator alone on a DBCS is flawed and the motivations for such a policy must be questioned.

But then, always there returns to my weary thoughts the sad truth of the matter, of this matter and of many other matters, the matter does not truly matter. No matter how much I may rail and stack my modifiers; no matter how much I may play quasi-Shakespeare and quibble with the word – "matter"; no matter whether one or five operators staff a DBCS . . . very little matters. There is in all this a sense of play, for it is like a game, this contest between labor and management. Which team will score first? Who will win? Well, we all win, in that we are paid; and we all lose, in that we are postal service minions.

True enough is it that often there are reasons to questions management's motives, but we of labor are not privy to the councils of upper management – we are balled enough by lower management. We may suffer from what appears to be their foolish machination, and we may curse the day we became postal workers, but in the end, on that glorious day when we enter the blessed realm of the retired, all the matters will sink to silent vague memories, and we shall at last find peach (well, at least I and hose of my ilk shall).

I suspect that much of the contention between management and labor is rooted in a sub-conscious self-loathing that growls in the stomachs and crawls with the malicious talons through the craniums of most postal workers, from the well-healed Postmaster General and his followers, to those of us who wear jeans and steel-toed shoes – for we all once had dreams.

As so, I have said, have ended this therapy of words, and now I am fatigued and care little for anything but that day when I may escape this postal nightmare and may, at last, cast stress aside and sleep the night through.



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