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by John
Marcotte,
President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Destruction By Profiteering And Legislation

At the time this article was sent to print PMG Donahoe's plan for "saving the USPS" was just released. In this plan service will slow down significantly, transportation costs will skyrocket and hundreds of owned facilities will be closed. I want to thank the 498-499 local, Traverse City Area Local, Gaylord Area Local and the Central Michigan Area Local for allowing me to appear on TV, radio and print media in your region in response to this scheme to dismantle the USPS. I would also like to thank all of our locals for their support in this most trying of times.

The effect on the American people is devastating. Closure of thousands of post offices making access to our products extremely difficult, mail service slowing down to a level as to make the USPS's service simply not an option for businesses and citizens.

Due to these self-inflicted impediments first class mail volume will exponentially drop to effectively zero within scant months of this plan's institution. Postal management has stated on several occasions that first class stamps are up to 18 times more profitable than bulk mail and it pays all the bills at the USPS. The USPS will continue to bleed red ink even if we get relief from prefunding health care if this plan is adopted.

So the above information begs the question; why would the PMG create and institute a plan that ensures the USPS continues the death spiral it entered with the passage of the Postal Accountability and Enforcement Act (PAEA) of 2006? The answer is because that is exactly where it wants to be. A financial crisis must be present so the dismantling of the USPS can continue. Taking a 70 billion dollar government service ever closer toward privatization. The major mailing industry can continue its profiteering and corporate welfare by getting postage rates that do not cover the costs of delivery. We will further weaken our competitive position against the private sector FED EX and UPS (brown) increasing their profits.

The facts are clear. Closing a post office purely for financial reasons is against the law. Yet what have we been

hearing at every town hall meeting? This post office doesn't sell enough stamps to cover its expenses. In this ever increasingly fast paced world the future is faster delivery with accountability (tracking). So our plan is to slow down service and shutter hundreds of geographically advantageous facilities that the USPS invested tens of billions building. We

"The goals of those wanting the destruction of the USPS are clear. They are bold, brazen and motivated by greed. It is up to us to get the word out and inform the American people what is going on and what is at stake."

are returning to a 1960's network in a 21st century world.

I would say this plan makes no sense but that would not be true. It makes perfect sense for the major mailing industry and the private sector package delivery services. The USPS headquarters has been way too intimate with the mailing industry for way too long.

Holding closed-door meetings with major mailers to make postal policy. Handing out discounts that exceed the

cost avoided like its candy on Halloween. Signing work sharing agreements with mailing houses that pay them way more than the cost of its own employees working the mail. Entering agreements with private sector delivery services that time and time again cost the USPS more money than if its own employees or network performed the work.

The goals of those wanting the destruction of the USPS are clear. They are bold, brazen and motivated by greed. It is up to us to get the word out and inform the American people what is going on and what is at stake. Imagine small business needing to mail something without the USPS to hold prices down for small mailers? How do they compete with large competition that gets a huge discount from UPS or FED EX? Is it profitable to serve rural

America the same as big cities? What will be the costs for rural America be from a private delivery service without our universal service mandate? What is your recourse if your documents are tampered with by a private delivery service and how will this affect the legal and court system?

Passing H.R.1351 is essential but only the beginning. We have been quiet much too long. We are right and just to save the USPS. It is good for our communities and good for America to have a strong government delivery service. You cannot leave it up to somebody else. We need every member to talk to his or her friends and families, walk the picket line, speak at town hall meetings and lobby our representatives if we are to prevail. There is no excuse good enough to not get involved.

You can go to MPWU.com and read a copy of an OP-ED piece I was asked to write explaining how the USPS got into the position we are in (Post office in crisis). It is a good explanation for the non-postal worker and gives you a place to start the conversation.

Yours in Solidarity and Friendship.



by Paul
Felton,
Legislative
Director

Legislative Report

Fight For Your Job And Your Future

Postal management has asked Congress to pass a law to void our No Layoff clause and reduce our health and retirement benefits. It was barely two months after signing a contract that gave us job security that they claimed their financial situation had changed so drastically that they needed relief from the contract they just signed. This is unbelievable, this is outrageous, and this is an attack that we must respond to forcefully.

Coworkers are asking me "Can they get away with this?" My response is "Only if we let them."

I hope every member reading this understands that the national, state and

local APWU leadership cannot fight this battle without the involvement of the membership. **You** have to be involved. **You** have to be active. **You** have to talk to your neighbors, friends, family and any community organization you belong to. **You** have to get them involved.

DO MORE THAN THE MINIMUM

Our national leadership has asked each and every member to contact your Congressional representative by mail, email, phone, or in person. We have scheduled rallies in every Congressional district on Sept. 27th. This is the minimum that every member

should do. I'm calling on you to do more than the minimum.

On Labor Day in Detroit APAU members distributed a flier to the Labor Movement asking their support. We are following that up at AFL-CIO meetings asking the activists in other unions to support postal workers.

We also have developed a flier for the general public, the text of which is reprinted below. Use the information in the flier to talk to friends and family and ask them to contact their Congressional representatives. We need to bombard the fence-sitting folks in DC with our message.

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- President**John Marcotte
U&C (989) 619-1741
e-Mail: John.L.Marcotte@gmail.com
- Executive Secretary**Harold Juhl
W: (517) 337-8753; H: (517) 651-7115;
FAX: (517) 332-4391
e-Mail: juhlems@hotmail.com
- Secretary-Treasurer** Darren Joyce
W: (810)257-1530; U: (810)239-0931;
FAX: (810) 239-6879
e-Mail: fmail1@comcast.net
- Dir. of Edca. & Research** Lucy Morton
U: (248) 543-3262; C: (248) 660-3139
e-Mail: lucyapwu56@hotmail.com
- Editor**Michael Long
U: (616) 776-1489; C: (616) 302-1409;
F: (616) 776-1536
e-Mail: mpwueditor@yahoo.com
- Legislative Director**Paul Felton
H: (313) 884-8082; W: (248) 758-5786
e-Mail: pdf111@comcast.net
- HR/Injury Comp. Director**Jennifer Amos
W&U (616) 776-1489; F: (616) 776-1536
e-Mail: jennia1957@aol.com
- Clerk Craft Director**Richard Blake
H: (734) 433-5461; U: (313) 532-9305;
W: (734) 665-1107
e-Mail: rwb139@aol.com
- Maintenance Craft Director**Jason Rushing
C: (736) 634-9294; H: (736) 953-0581
e-Mail: jrushing@twmi.rr.com
- Motor Vehicle Service Craft Dir.**Joe Wrobel
U: (248) 543-3262; W: (248) 546-7146
e-Mail: yrubnu@hotmail.com
- Veterans Director**John Smeekens
W: (248) 546-7146; U: (248) 543-3262;
e-Mail: mpwuvetdirector@ameritech.net
- Area 1 Director (480/481)**Larry Moyer
W: (248) 619-1590; H: (810) 678-3479;
C: (810) 338-2659
e-Mail: apwu6723@bignet.net
- Area 2 Director (482)**James Stevenson
C: (313) 465-0757; U: (313) 964-1100;
e-Mail: jstevenson1995@yahoo.com
- Area 3 Director (483)**Robin Ely
W: (734) 697-0047
e-Mail: relyapwu480-481@charter.net
- Area 4 Director (484/485)**Laura Bullock
W: (810)257-1567; U: (810)239-0931;
H: (810) 606-0465
e-Mail: fmail1@comcast.net
- Area 5 Director (486/487)**Joanna Atkinson
W: (989) 771-5718
C: (989) 295-5454
e-Mail: Joanna.atkinson2@sbcglobal.net
- Area 6 Director (488/489)**Mary Stephenson
W: (517) 337-8753; C: (517) 612-3563;
H: (517) 639-4873
e-Mail: mpwuarea6director@yahoo.com
- Area 7 Director (490/491)**Randy Barnes
W: (269) 353-5625; C: (269) 352-4283;
e-Mail: rbarnes2310@hotmail.com
- Area 8 Director (492)**Thomas Lothamer
U: (269) 677-6198; H: (517) 639-4873
e-Mail: tlothamer@msn.com
- Area 9 Director (493/494)**Jack Fryling
W: (616) 977-1041; U: (616) 977-1050
e-Mail: jfry259163@aol.com
- Area 10 Director (496)**Debora Holmes
W: (231) 933-1020; C: (231) 642-6034
e-Mail: TrophyHound@yahoo.com
- Area 11 Director (497)** Richard Lemorie
C: (231) 268-8239
- Area 12 Director (498/499)**Dennis Barber
U: (906) 774-6303
e-Mail: DBarber3619@sbcglobal.net
- P.O.W.E.R. Rep** Karen Hodges
H: (616) 453-7091; W: (616) 776-1542;
U: (616) 776-1489 e-Mail: kjhodmich@aol.com
- State Retiree Chpt. President**Al LaBrecque
H: (989) 736-8173
e-Mail: allab@sisna.com
- MPWU Aux. President** Kelly Wilniski
H: (906) 779-1348; C: (906) 282-2897
e-Mail: Kwilniski@charter.net
- MPWU Historian**Debbie Brand
H: (269) 729-9600; W: (269) 965-3286
e-Mail: brandapwu@aol.com
- MPWU Advisor** Gary VanHoogstraten
(989-894-2656)e-Mail: hystreet@att.net



by Gary Van Hoogstraten MPWU Advisor

MPWU Advisor

Politicians, Grow Up!

In a surprise announcement to me this week, I saw an article where Mark Gaffney the President of the Michigan State AFL-CIO, would not seek reelection this year at their convention. I first met Mark in 1999 when he became President of the State Federation, because I was on the General Board appointed by Frank Garrison, the former President. I have a lot of respect and admiration for him because I feel he was one of the most knowledgeable Union Members I have ever met. He was a member of the United Steelworkers of America and the Teamsters. I remember one of our State Educational Conventions in Midland, Mark taught at one of our General Sessions. I can remember many of our members coming

up to me after he left and asked me how someone as young as he was, to have so much knowledge as he addresses them. I told them it was because of his dedication and background. Mark was always there for the Michigan Postal Workers Union when he was President. He will be truly missed. Thank You President Gaffney.

All they needed in Washington these past few months was a huge red and white tent and it would have made a real circus atmosphere. The only thing these politicians accomplished is to raise the debt ceiling so we can be further in debt. They already had a committee of six bipartisan members so now they will have another committee of 12 to come up with cuts by Thanksgiving.

So what if this doesn't happen, the politicians will not get their free turkey? I wish they would all grow up and do what

they were elected for, and that is work for the people in their respective districts, and not those that fill their pockets.

We already had a debt of \$14.3 trillion and we add \$400 billion now and \$500 billion in the fall. They made cuts of \$2.1 trillion —\$1 trillion in cuts will be made immediately and the rest will be spread over 10 years. These people have to forget the party lines and vote for their people.

I have two grandchildren and these problems will filter down to them as they grow up. They will be placed in a financial ruin as they grow up. I believe we should have term limits so for the next 15 months, you have time to weigh all that has been done and contact your representatives to see what they intend on doing for you and the country for the next 15 months. If they are not the right person for you, vote them out.

Fight For Your Job And Your Future

continued from page 1

If you are a veteran, let your Congressman know that it would be absolutely intolerable if an organization with something like 20 percent veterans in its workforce would be unable to meet payroll – all because of unfair legislation passed by Congress in 2006. If you belong to a veteran's organization take some fellow veterans along with you.

WE HAVE THE POWER

We have a lot more power than we realize. We have members in every Congressional district in the country. We have a coalition of postal unions working together – whatever differences we may have with the unions representing carriers, mail handlers, etc, we are all united in the effort to pass HR-1351.

We have logic on our side. At a time when political leaders of both parties are talking about creating jobs, Congress should not take action to destroy jobs.

At this point it doesn't matter if you

are a Democrat, Republican, Third Party, Independent or an infrequent voter. Now is the time to spring into action. Now is the time to act like a **Union** and stand together as one. Because together, we can win this battle.

The text of the flier our Local distributed is reprinted below. Use it as is, modify it to your liking, or say the same thing in your own words. You don't have to be an expert in all the technicalities and legalisms to get the basic point across to your friends and neighbors. Just talk to people you know, talk from the heart, and you'll be surprised at the reception you'll get.

DON'T LET THEM DISMANTLE THE POSTAL SERVICE

Dear Postal Customer:

The mail service you take for granted is now in serious danger, due to political games in Washington DC. So are the jobs of more than 100,000 postal workers. This letter was written by the American

Postal Workers Union (APWU). We won't kid you – we are very concerned about our jobs. But we are just as concerned about maintaining the quality of mail service we bring you every day, in spite of Congress (and sometimes in spite of our own management).

If Congress doesn't get its act together, more than 3600 Post Offices may close (possibly including yours) and over 300 processing plants may shut down (meaning delays in the mail). Obviously this affects both **our jobs and your mail service**.

The financial difficulty facing the Postal Service was caused by Congress, when they passed a law making USPS pay \$5 billion a year to guarantee there would be health benefits for retirees **75 years** into the future. Meanwhile, our pension is over-funded by 75 billion dollars and Congress won't let that money be used to help USPS through these rough economic times. Remember: the Post Office does not get any tax dollars. Yet it would be on a break-even economic footing if not for the actions of Congress.

The APWU recently negotiated a contract that traded off economic concessions for job security. Our contract saved the Postal Service \$3.8 billion, but protected our jobs. Now Congress is considering legislation that would cause layoffs. Our jobs contribute to the economy of every community in America. Our national economy will take a major hit if there are massive postal layoffs. And just as important, our jobs provide quality service to every community in America, and bills pending in Congress could throw the service into chaos.

We urge you to contact your Congressman and ask them to support HR-1351 and oppose HR-2309. Our future and your mail service depend on it.

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

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

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

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

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

Editor's Report



by Michael A.
Long,
Editor

What Doesn't Kill Us Makes Us Stronger

A B C D E F G . . . The first things we learned in school was our ABCs. Not that difficult for us now, but then . . . what a headache they caused, heck I still have a hard time when doing them backwards . . . but that is for another time and place.

The first thing we learn is always the hardest; however, once we get it, once we know it, and once we master it, it seems that, just as those darn ABCs back then, are now child's play. We can sometimes forget how difficult new and difficult things are. Whether it is change in a family situation, change in a job condition, change in whatever happens, at the onset, it seems difficult, and that we will never get through it . . . however, somehow, we always do, and we seem to look back on that challenge and/or circumstance with admiration, respect or sometimes still fear (if we have failed to conquer it fully or learn from it). Remember the old adage, what doesn't kill us, makes us stronger . . . I strongly believe that we are now in the midst of one of those "make us stronger" days.

At work, in the Postal Service, we are going through change. We are being told by one side that we are bankrupt and don't expect our jobs to be around. Another side is saying that we are closing facilities left and right and moving our people (in my personal belief that management hopes those individuals would rather quit than move), and then we have the political stage of HR 1351, HR 2309, S1010, and S353. All bills will change us in one shape or another, but to what extent and to what end. The union has firmly stood behind HR 1351 because it does the most to save us from this current situation we now face; but to be honest, and in my personal belief . . . for how long? I was listening to Representative Stephen Lynch (D) on the Ed Show (for those who have cable or satellite, I strongly recommend this show on MSNBC) this week, and learned something. The 7+ billion that we have overpaid into FERS is not coming back to the USPS to starve off this condition as we (or at least I) have thought. According to Rep Lynch, that money will be used as an incentive to get people to retire. While the bill will stop the pre-payment requirement, the money will not come back to the Postal Service as alluded to. However, the amount of people who are currently eligible to retire and who would leave if they did a buy-out, is just staggering (at least in my office and from what I hear from others). The change of the Postal Service is here to stay. My belief and opinion is that the Postal Service will

remain for years and years to come; however, maybe not in the same form as we have come to know it. However, at one end? We are part of the Constitution (take that Tea Baggers). We not only have a constitutional obligation to deliver mail, we also have a moral obligation to do so as well. Until our Representatives learn this, I feel we will be on the rollercoaster for a long time to come. However, as I was stating, with the change also comes growth. We as a union have become stronger though this ordeal. We have become

stronger not only politically, but also amongst our brothers and sisters from different unions. When was the last time can anyone remember the APWU, NALC, NPMHU, NAPS, and NRLCA all marching and rallying together, with one voice and one purpose? These are monumental occurrences, and one that we can't forget and hopefully move forward. We have grown also in different areas. We have learned new and different things while fighting this ordeal we are now in.

More close to home, we have learned

that we need to ensure our own situations are taken care of, in the chance, we have to move and go to a different location. We are now, once again, like we were in school... Learning and continuing to grow. We might make mistakes and fall back; however, what we must always remember is to never stop learning, never stop growing, and when you look back at this "bump in the road" in the future, you will do so just as those ABCs, and be wondering why you ever or even for a second worried about it.



by Jason
Rushing,
Maintenance
Craft Director

Maintenance Craft Report

Being An Asset

way, stay informed. Ask questions and research what your being told. When your told something by the Postal Service utilize the resources you have at your fingertips. Look on **APWU.ORG** and see if information is posted. Ask your local union officials questions and plan on attending local union meetings or informational meetings to get the facts for your own circumstances.

Unfortunately some of the new Collective Bargaining agreement language

is still being argued over. There is however much language that is in writing and enforceable. Great language on contracting out, bringing contracted work back in house and e-reassign opportunities just to name a few for the Maintenance Craft. We still await a decision on what Information Technology work Electronic Technicians will be responsible for and the remedy members will receive.

In Union Solidarity.

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

In light of unprecedented changes in the way the Postal Service plans on staying viable, everyone needs to again, be an asset to the Post Office. That could mean taking training offered to you for your job. It could require going to Oklahoma or just in-house refresher training. You could also update your Maintenance test scores for a possible promotion or change of occupational group. You want to be as employable as you can be to the Postal Service, although right now, contractual changes, moving, etc. is done by seniority, rather juniority. If you e-reassign though, your skills and training could play a part in your reassignment.

Now, there is no since in worrying too much about what will happen to the Postal Service but it would be good to know your options when something happens. Something will happen in the near future I am pretty sure of that. Educating yourself on article 12 would be good even if your not a steward or officer of a local union office.

Being involved in your local community getting the real deal out about the Postal Service to friends and family, is a good use of time. It is amazing to me, how many customers don't know how the Post Office is funded or works on a day to day basis. Being involved could also be as simple as letter writing or contacting senators and congressmen. (Did you notice I said letter writing and not e-mailing? You should do both!) It could be more involved like visiting senators and congressmen at their local office to voice your opinion and facts. Many activists visit the senators and congressmen at their State or Capital Hill locations as a group or individually.

When possible changes come your

Union Plus Helps You Plan For College

Editor's Note: Have children getting ready and thinking about heading to college in the near future? It is never to late to start looking, saving, or planning on where to attend. Union Plus offers our members the tools and resources to help! Check out their website at **Unionplus.org** for this and more tools and assistance in your daily life.

The new Union Plus College Test Prep website, provided by The Princeton Review (TPR), has some great resources for union members and their children who are planning for college:

- 1. Free new college planning resources, including a new Action Plan** tool that jumpstarts the process with a get-into-college timeline and college planner.
- 2. College search tools** updated with advanced features to help you find schools based on test scores or GPA- and you can save and share your filtered searches.
- 3. Great advice articles** where you can easily navigate everything from tests to admissions to financial aid, plus new college and law blogs.
- 4. An improved enrollment process with an all new Course Finder** that guides students through college test prep (for SAT, ACT, GRE, MCAT, etc.) and includes course offerings by test type including location maps.
- 5. A free PSAT, SAT or ACT practice test.** For high school sophomores, now is the perfect time to take a free practice PSAT test; for high school juniors now is the perfect time to take a free practice SAT/ACT test. You can search for free test dates and locations in your area at the link below.

So check out the new college test prep site. And don't forget to apply for the Union Plus scholarship too. Brought to you by Union Plus/Privilege.

New Program Launched For ABA Members!

Dear Brother and Sister:

The APW-ABA is partnering with Unum, Sun Life and USI-Affinity to provide additional benefits for APW Members, Associate Members, Retirees, and Spouses. In addition to the APW-ABA's Value, Advantage and Plus programs that members are currently eligible for, you will now have access to affordable permanent Whole Life Insurance and additional expanded Accident Insurance. NO medical questions and NO physical.

Go to: **apw-aba.org** for more information and to learn how to join.



by John
Smeekens,
Veterans
Director

Veteran's Report

Please Be True

While addressing the American Legion, President Obama declared his support and admiration for America's service members and veterans. In an effort to alleviate vet's fears about budget cuts, the president told the American Legion audience, "As a nation, we're facing tough choices as we put our fiscal house in order. But I want to be absolutely clear--we cannot, and we must not, balance the budget on the backs of our veterans. And as Commander in Chief, I won't allow it."

SHIP LIST UPDATE

An updated list of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships confirmed to have operated on Vietnam's inland waterways, docked on shore, or had crewmembers sent ashore, has been posted at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/> to assist Vietnam Veterans in determining potential eligibility for compensation benefits. If this pertains to you, you may be eligible for exposure to **AGENT ORANGE!** You need to contact that County Veterans' Representative to find out more information that may be relate to some of your health issues or problems.

AGENT ORANGE DEADLINE ???

Vietnam Veterans who are concerned that they could lose retroactive benefits for herbicide related presumptive disabilities if they do not file a claim by August 30, 2011, take note. As Paul Harvey used to say: "Here's the rest of the story."

The American Legion recently released a statement which suggested that August 30, 2011, was the last day veterans could file for one of the three new presumptive disabilities associated with exposure to herbicides and still get retroactive benefits. The reality is somewhat more involved; Section 3.114 of 38 CFR carves out an exception to the effective date rule (date of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. 38 CFR 3.400(b)(2)) when a law or regulation is changed to grant a new benefit. If a veteran meets the criteria for service connection on or before the date of the change, then they could receive retroactive benefits back to the date of the change if they file a claim within 1 year. After that, VA can still award retroactive benefits up to 1 year prior to the date of claim. Here's how 38 CFR 3.114 works: A veteran with Vietnam service is diagnosed with Ischemic Heart Disease (IHD) on June 3, 2008. The regulation creating a presumption for IHD related to herbicides went into effect August 30, 2010. If he applies for service connection for IHD on April 7, 2011, the VA

should grant service connection effective August 30, 2010. If he applies for service connection for IHD on January 12, 2012, the VA should grant service connection effective January 12, 2011. **DON'T FORGET TO SEE THAT COUNTY VETERANS' REP. OR A VSO FROM A LOCAL VETERANS ORGANIZATION !!!**

UNCLAIMED FUNDS

Veterans and their families may be eligible for anywhere between \$5.00 and up to \$750.00 and possibly \$4000.00 (in rare

(VA) has embarked on a major initiative to reach out to women Veterans in order to solicit their input on ways to enhance the health care services VA provides to women Veterans. Representatives at VA's Health Resource Center (HRC) are placing calls to women Veterans nationwide, asking them to share their experiences with VA and suggest potential enhancements that will further VA's mission to provide the best care anywhere.

Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veteran

information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, please visit: www.va.gov/womenvet and www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth.

COACH CARE

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a telephone service, Coaching into Care, to provide assistance to family members and friends trying to encourage their

Veteran to seek health care for possible readjustment and mental health issues.

Those closest to Veterans are often the first to recognize when Veterans are having problems. Family members and friends may not know how or what to say to get their Veterans to seek help. The Coaching into Care line will help them find the right words, and how to do it! To help Veterans address problems and support Veterans in making decisions

about getting care, the Coaching into Care program offers unlimited, free coaching with family members or friends over a series of telephone calls. The priority is connecting Veterans with VA care in their community through the family member's help and encouragement. Callers receive professional coaching on solving specific logistical obstacles and encouraging sometimes reluctant Veterans to seek care while still respecting the Veteran's right to make personal decisions. Coaching into Care, launched in March 2011, and has had more than 650 calls with family members or friends of greater than 175 Veterans to encourage them to seek care. This phone line is connected to VA's Veterans Crisis Line, Caregiver Support Line, and the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans. This way, if the caller or Veteran is in an immediate crisis, or has concerns regarding caregiving for a disabled Veteran, or seeking assistance regarding homelessness, there is no wrong number for families to call. Callers can reach VA's Coaching into Care program at the toll-free number 1-888-823-7458, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, and online at <http://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/>. As always, Veterans can reach immediate help at the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, press 1 for Veterans.

VETERANS' DAY 2011

Please take a moment on this Veterans' Day to hug a Veteran, and tell them "Thank You for your service to our Country and WELCOME HOME." And whatever your beliefs are, please keep them in your thoughts, and say a prayer for those who are presently in the military and are serving this country, and keeping in place, our freedoms. To my Veteran brothers and sisters I say; **"WELCOME HOME AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY."**

"Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veteran population. Of the 22.7 million living Veterans, more than 1.8 million are women."

cases), as unclaimed funds have reached a total of \$33 million dollars. These funds are from unclaimed life insurance policy payments, dividend checks and refunds. They have been accumulating since 1917 with most from the World War II era. Veterans families are urged to check if they are eligible at the following web site. <https://insurance.va.gov/liability/ufsearch.htm>[1]. Or call 800-669-8477. I highly recommend that if you attempt to do this that you have available with you the Veterans' name, date of birth, death date, and if possible the insurance policy number. And if really possible, a copy of the Veterans' DD-214.

WALTER REED

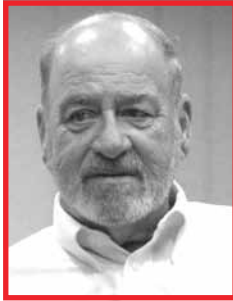
For more than a 100 years, hundreds of thousands of this nation's war wounded, their families, and even some Presidents, were treated at Walter Reed, the Army's flagship Hospital, in Washington D. C. Major Walter Reed, the military physician who discovered that mosquitoes transmitted yellow fever, had his sword symbolically handed over to the Navy, to transfer the hospital's operations to a new and upgraded facility at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda Maryland, and Fort Belvoir Virginia. The new facility, for this state of the art hospital, for Veterans and Presidents, is \$2.6 billion, from the Defense Budget. It will be called The Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. At the ceremony in late July, it was both somber and celebratory. I'll bet that the 480/481 Area Locals own Executive Vice President Roscoe Woods Jr., who was stationed at Walter Reed while serving with the U. S. Army, shed a tear as he remembered that part of his, Tour of Duty.

WOMEN VETERANS'

The Department of Veterans Affairs

population. Of the 22.7 million living Veterans, more than 1.8 million are women. They comprise nearly 8 percent of the total Veteran population and 6 percent of all Veterans who use VA health care services. VA estimates by 2020 women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population and 9.5 percent of VA patients. The HRC, which started placing calls on June 1, is contacting women Veterans who have enrolled, but have not begun using VA services. The HRC representatives making the calls are also informing women Veterans about the services VA offers and quickly connecting them with appropriate departments if they are interested in trying VA health care. Veterans who have complaints about VA are connected to a patient advocate who helps resolve issues. VA has trained professionals in all aspects of women's health, including general primary care, osteoporosis management, heart disease, mental health care, menopausal services and obesity-related issues, such as diabetes. Preventive screenings for breast and cervical cancer are also areas in which VA excels. Soon, all VA facilities will offer comprehensive primary care for women from a single provider. The Women Veterans Health Care program has made significant changes in the last few years to enhance the health care offered to eligible women Veterans. This changes include: **Adopting key policies to improve access and enhance services for women Veterans; Implementing comprehensive primary care for women Veterans; Conducting cutting-edge research on the effects of military service on women's lives; Improving communication and outreach to women Veterans; and Providing mental health, homelessness and other services designed to meet the unique needs of women Veterans.** For more

Retiree Involvement



by Al
LaBrecque,
Retiree's Chapter
President

Proposal To 'Remedy' The USPS

"There's a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls." Walter Reuther

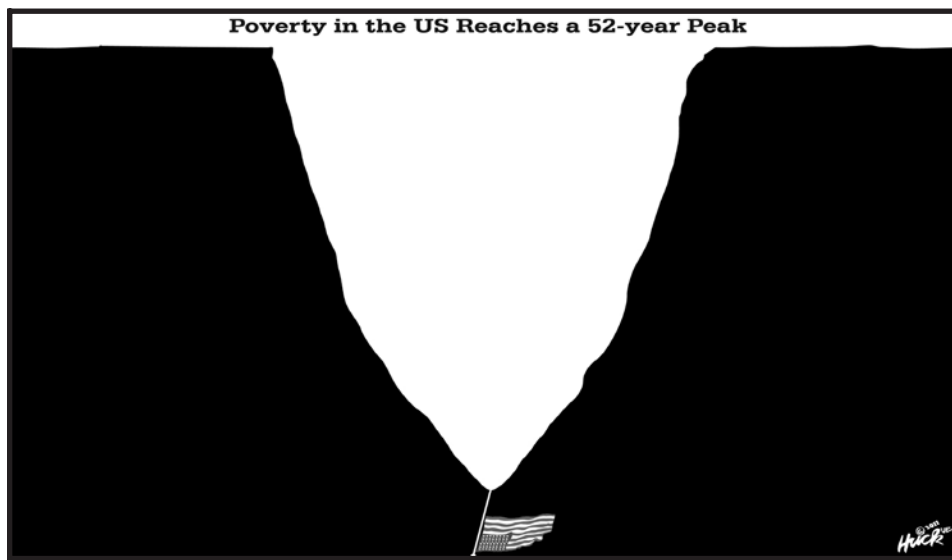
BLITZKRIEG! Every member, active and retired has to be sickened by the media blitz orchestrated by the Postal Service to condition the American mailing public into accepting the PMG's draconian proposals to 'remedy' the USPS's financial condition. "The List" of 3,700 rural P.O. and urban station and branch closures! PMG pandering to Congress to circumvent the Union contract by seeking legislation that would include no-layoff protection to enable lopping off another 120,000 bargaining unit postal workers, which the PMG referenced as a "head-count"! 5-day (or less) delivery! Dump its 480,000 active and retired employees out of FEHBP! The cluster bombshell announcement of consolidation of over half of our mail processing plants, possibly seven (7) here in Michigan! As if that's not enough, PMG Donahoe tells Congress that if he doesn't get his way, the USPS will bankrupt on Sept. 30th! News pundits immediately pounced on that, predicting no mail delivery this winter!

Scared yet? I'd like a nickel for every time I've said; "Just because we're retired, we're NEVER out of the arena!" Whether you're a rural Associate Office PTF, a career craft employee in a mail processing plant, or retiree living in God's country; you might consider arming yourself with a crucifix, garlic, a wooden stake and silver bullet out of self-preservation, but shame on any of us who fail to contact our Member(s) of Congress to slay this monstrosity by cosponsoring and supporting H.R. 1351! Information in this, and your other Union publications provide us with all the facts needed to make our case with our Members of Congress.

CLOSURES! I trust APWU/MPWU Locals are actively engaged in objecting to station and branch closures in their jurisdictions, and the horrors of consolidations. Who will speak up for our rural P.O.'s on "the list"? That's where we retirees come in! Not to toot my own horn, but this is what I was able to do when I got wind of a USPS public meeting proposing closure of the Barton City 48705 P.O. which is located in the township where I'm on the Twp. Board of Trustees. First I wrote a Letter to the Editor in our weekly newspaper with a S.O.S. "Save Our Service" alert to 48705 postal customers to attend the public meeting. About 50 attended. Next, I composed a flyer, made 60 copies to handout at the meeting listing the name, address and phone numbers of the District USPS "Discontinuance Coordinator" to state their objections in writing, and the

1st District Congressman, Dan Benishek (R), petitioning his support for H.R. 1351. I armed myself with all our facts and talking points, giving the audience the "other side of the story"...ours! Don't give these USPS discontinuance squads a free pass! The American mailing public, whether in Barton City or New York City, deserve to hear all the facts. Retirees can do that!

RETIREE INVOLVEMENT! While this probably isn't the best time to be raising internal retiree issues, it's time to be



perfectly up-front with our dues-paying retired members and parent APWU leaderships at all levels. Michigan has been an exception. We couldn't expect greater support and cooperation than we enjoy. Alas, that's not the norm across the APWU. This isn't intended to create further division, but it needs saying. I've been resolved to give our new APWU administration every benefit that there will be an enlightened atmosphere with this valuable resource. I've given national a pass considering leadership transition in the midst of contract negotiations. But, that fish has been fried.

Our festering retiree issues are about to come to a head and could well erupt at the Oct. Retirees' Dept. Conference in Las Vegas. To better explain the contentious issues we're referencing, the following are excerpts from a newsletter, THE RETIREE RECORD, published by the president of the Pittsburgh Area Retiree Chapter, John P. Richards:

"...There will be a huge meeting in October known as the All Craft Conference. The Conference meets every other year opposite to conventions. The Retiree Department is meeting as part of that conference. Scores of national officers will attend with full expenses paid by the Union." "...There are five (5) retirees elected from the Retiree Department as delegates to the national convention. These five are the total 'field' representatives that 'represent' over 30,000 retirees nation wide. This writer is one of those delegates, elected by the Eastern Region. We have just been informed that the five

elected delegates WILL NOT be invited to the All Craft Conference as 'representatives' of the Union this time."

A LITTLE HISTORY LESSON . . .

The Retiree Department and the five elected delegates were created during the Biller administration. They were invited to the All Craft Conferences as delegates, expenses paid, and a small stipend. During the Burrus years, the stipend was ended and each conference was a hassle for the five delegates. Once they even had their

rooms cancelled and had to fight to get them reinstated. This is the first conference under the Guffey administration. He is making it crystal clear that he does not consider the five elected delegates worthy to be assigned to their department conference." ". . . Part of the business of the Retiree Department Conference is preliminary consideration of issues to be presented at the convention the following year. Another major feature is classes and presentations by speakers about issues related to retirees."

COMMENT — According to reports, from the outset when the Retiree Department was created, there has been a love — hate relationship with it. The Union behaves as if they LOVE our COPA activities — donating at 20% of the total collected every year. \$234,000 last year, for example - but they HATE the retirees that make the contributions! Treatment of the five elected convention delegates is but one example of that behavior. Equally if not worse treatment of retirees is seen at conventions. At the last convention, for example, the hand picked Rules Committee rejected our proffer to permit retirees in attendance to merely sit with their Locals on the convention floor without voice or vote. It took a floor fight and retiree friendly Locals to attain that modest achievement." ". . . Rumbles have been heard from time to time throughout the Union retiree community about these issues, and the disbursing of COPA funds. There can be little argument that during 'normal' times all if not most COPA fund-

ing is directed in support of active Union members — with little or none toward retiree issues. But these are far from normal times for the Postal Service." ". . . This is a time for serious reflection to determine if our political resources are best used in the COPA arena or can they be better and more effectively used to impact RETIREE issues in some other organization whose sole interest is retiree concerns?"

IN MY VIEW — I concur with Bro. Richards' assessments regarding the relationship between our Union and its retirees. As one of the first five (5) elected Retiree Delegates (Central Region '96-'98) I can attest to what John describes as the history of our struggle to advance Retiree Involvement within the Union we helped build. However, while I've heard the same rumblings Bro. Richards references, I'm not ready to go so far as to advocate renouncing APWU retiree membership and jump ship to a more accepting organization. Perhaps naively, I remain hopeful we can work from within to heal past wounds and open the door wider to the APWU House for retirees. Like it or not, the Retirees' Dept. is the second largest APWU department. We don't cost the APWU one red cent! We're entirely financially self-sustaining! Only a fraction of retiree generated dues revenue is budgeted to the Retirees' Dept. The rest stays in the APWU general fund. COPA is at the heart of the reason the Dept. exists! Pardon me if we retirees have a perception that the APWU wants our money, just not us! Consider that the majority of APWU Health Plan enrollees are retirees who are required to belong to the Retirees' Dept. or be a full dues-paying member to be eligible for the Plan. More money! The APWU reaps 7-figure dividends annually from its Health Plan. Without retirees, the APWU Health Plan would cease to exist.

A glimmer of hope was raised when in a Sept. 12th Retirees' Dept. teleconference, Pres. Guffey, Sec.-Treas. Liz Powell, and a special asst. to Exec. V.P. Greg Bell spoke to retiree Chapter leaderships across the country, enlisting our participation to pressure our Members of Congress to enact H.R. 1351. We're ready, willing and able to mobilize! At the same time, it must be said; Don't just come to us when you want our assistance, but treat us as if retirees are a valuable resource to be utilized beyond our cash value! Patience is wearing thin, time is running out.

In the meantime, unless we all band together to get H.R. 1351 enacted by Congress, and have them reject the PMG's outrageous proposals, all this could prove irrelevant. As never before, we have to be . . . Be Strong!



by Robin Ely, Area 3 Director

Area 3 Director

Give The Gift Of Stamps

Hope everyone had a great summer. With fall right around the corner we will all be busy trying to plan for the Holiday Season. Let's make it a fun filled holiday season.

We need to do everything we can to re-introduce the United States Post Office to friends, family and the general public. This holiday season save yourself the hustle and bustle of fighting

the crowds at the Malls and Department Stores trying to find the perfect gift for everyone on your shopping list. Shop where it supports you and your family. Just like the UAW auto workers express the fact that we Americans should be buying UAW built cars. We can give the gift of stamps. A lot of stores sell boxes of assorted gift cards. Buy your friends and family a box of cards and a book of stamps. To make it even easier on your friends and family you could also buy them a calendar and write in birthdays

and anniversary. Or you could even pick up free calendars at your local bank, credit union or insurance agency. The look on your families face will priceless when they open a gift with a calendar, cards and stamps. Especially the ones who pay their bills online or send party invites Via Email. Just simply explain to them that we need to shop where we will be getting our retirement someday.

We also need to re introduce the importance of the post office to students of all ages. We need to make an effort to

get the teachers to teach their students how to fill out an envelope or package correctly. The importance of sending greeting cards and letter to the people who matter most in their lives. We can also start this process in our own homes. We all have family to reach out too. We need to teach the importance of first class mail to our own children, their friends, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, etc . . .

Lets take back what is important to us: FIRST CLASS MAIL



by Joanna Atkinson, Area 5 Director

Area 5 Director

The Lines Are Drawn, The Fight Continues

The lines in the sand are drawn and the fight continues. Hopefully everyone was able to join in on the rallies across the state about the pending bill 1351. If you didn't, it really was your loss. These rallies really get your juices flowing and tends to bring our union members together and make the union stronger. I know the rally we did in

Midland in front of Dave Camps office was a great success. We had so many members from the APWU that had never participated in something like this before. I really am proud of the Saginaw local. And thanks to all who did come out !!!

Postmasters in the small associate offices continue to violate the contract by not recording all of the time spent doing clerk work on the forms they complete. I still need the clerks in these offices

to give me a call, 989-295-5454, so we can continue to file on this. I know this will be a long battle but we need to fight back on this. I am disappointed that the agreement made between the National APWU and headquarters USPS is already being violated each and every day. I believe many of us thought this would take care of many issues. Wrong!

As everyone knows by now, all plants within the state except 3 are be-

ing studied to be closed and send the mail processing to one of the three remaining sites. Again, we need to fight this. Write to your Congressperson and get your family and neighbors to do the same. This will affect everyone, not just the folks that work in the plants. Go to the web site for the APWU and get all of the information you need. The site is apwu.org. There is loads of information waiting for you to check out.



by Michael O'Hearn, National Business Agent

NBA Report

— Remedy —

As an NBA, I see a lot of grievances. One thing I noticed is that many stewards do a great job on their grievances until it gets to the remedy. I am not sure why that is? Maybe you wrote so much that you got tired at the end and didn't think the remedy was important enough to devote that much time and energy to it. This is wrong. The remedy is every bit as important as any other part of your grievance. I decided to take some time to explain what you should be thinking of when writing a remedy.

First, always look to the future. Think about ways to correct the violation in the future. Back in the 1980's, there was a series of movies starring Michael J. Fox in which he traveled back in time to correct problems in a Delorean car which was modified by Professor Brown (played by Christopher Lloyd). The series of movies were called "Back to the Future." Going back ever further, I remember a cartoon on the Rocky and Bullwinkle show which featured a boy and his dog (Sherman and Peabody) going back

in time to correct historical events in their Way-Back Machine. I guess I am dating myself a bit here. H.G. Wells wrote a novel about going back and forward in time in a time machine. "The Time Machine" was published in 1895. That is a little before my time. I'm not quite that old. Time travel is a popular theme in fiction. However, it is fiction. You cannot go back in time to fix a problem. You have to look to the future. If management has violated our contract by their actions, you can't go back in time and change those actions. Therefore, it is important to always include language in your remedy to address future violations. Write something like "Management is to cease and desist from violating our contract by . . . (statement of the violation here)." For example, in an overtime grievance you might write in your remedy "Management is to cease and desist from improperly assigning overtime to non-OTDL employees before maximizing the OTDL." If the grievance is about denied annual leave, write "Management is to cease and desist from improperly denying annual leave." The

exception is discipline grievances. Management will not cease and desist from disciplining employees. So, don't ask for that. However, definitely write that management is to rescind the discipline and make the grievant whole.

Let us talk about a make whole remedy a little bit. You should always request that the grievant or grievants should be made whole. A make whole remedy is one that tries to award the grievants whatever it is that they lost from management's actions. For instance, in an improper reversion of a job grievance, you should ask for the job to be posted for bid (a future remedy) and award out of schedule pay to the eventual successful bidder and make him/her whole. If it is a crossing crafts grievance, ask for the amount of time worked in our craft to be paid to the grievant or grievants and make them whole. Who is to get the payment is also an issue that you should give careful consideration. In the grievance about crossing crafts, you should consider who would have performed this work if management had not improperly assigned it to the wrong craft. If you

have PTF's in your office who are not making 40 hours a week, perhaps they would have worked this extra work and then they would get the remedy. If your PTF's are all making forty hours a week, then perhaps the employees on the OTDL would have performed this work. It's your call. However, you should be able to explain the logic of your decision as you may have to defend your decision to the labor board.

About monetary remedies, try to be as specific as possible about what you are asking for. If you can, figure out exactly what you want in dollars and cents. If you want a grievant to be paid for a missed opportunity of overtime of two hours, take the grievant's rate of pay and multiply it times 2 for two hours and multiply that by 1.5 for the time and a half for the overtime pay rate. So, if the grievant is a level 6 Step O employee, the calculations presently would be \$25.5268 X 2 X 1.5 which equals \$76.5804. Therefore, in your remedy write "Pay the grievant for 2 hours at the overtime rate or \$76.58." Also, name the grievant

continued on page 8

Legislative Update



by Lynn Pallas-Barber, National Business Agent

Hit Or Miss The Latest Questions ???

On 9/14/11 the USPS contacted APWU headquarters and provided a list of mail processing cites where they plan to conduct Area Mail Processing (AMP) feasibility studies for possible consolidation of some operations and non-AMP studies which could result in consolidations. This is the latest battle that now faces us as postal workers and APWU members. This could be a huge battle as it is nationwide, but we need to stand together and not panic right now. This is nothing like we have ever seen before. There are still a lot of unanswered questions and the rumors will run rampant.

252 PDFs and PDCs were listed. The list is extensive and can be found on the APWU home page. Nine (9) PDCs are possibly affected in Illinois. Six (6) are possibly affected in Michigan. Transportation will become a huge problem for management and inevitably the service will suffer. They should be looking for ways to improve the service not dismantle it.

By the time this is printed September 27, 2011 will have come and gone. Let's hope that our efforts on that day sent a clear message to the public that it is imperative to Save Our Service to Save Their Service. This sounds repetitive but family; friends and everyone must get involved and contact their Congress person.

IMPERATIVE LEGISLATIVE

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.

DO YOU HAVE A CLUW?
September 7-10, 2011 I had the honor and privilege of representing the APWU as one of the delegates at the Sixteenth Biennial Convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). Attending this convention is always like a shot in the arm. It is rejuvenating to meet with Union members from different Unions all over the country. The convention provided some dynamic speakers from affiliates of CLUW. The theme of the convention was: Educating, Motivating and Mobilizing. That theme was carried through the convention by the speakers and the delegates. Congratulations go out to our very own sisters, CLUW President Karen See and Treasurer Judy Beard for a job well done.

The message of all the speakers was the same. The attack of working women and men in this country is anti-worker, anti-family and anti-union. The Republicans are waging a war on Unions, working people and collective bargaining. The battle grounds

have been in Wisconsin, Ohio and in Michigan. In Michigan the Republican legislature plans to introduce "Freedom to Work". This legislation has nothing to do with freedom. It is nothing but a reintroduction to "Right to Work". Who would have ever believed that Michigan could possibly become a right to work state? "Freedom to Work" is another name for an old scam concocted by rich corporate special interests to increase their profits by weakening the labor unions. Their goal is to reduce pay and benefits for all workers, organized or not, and to weaken safety regulations. They want to silence workers' voices in the political process and ultimately eliminate their political opponents.

It will be imperative that we undo what was done in the elections in 2010. The elections in 2012 will be more important than ever. We must all get out and vote.

"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,
Yours in Union Solidarity.

— Remedy —

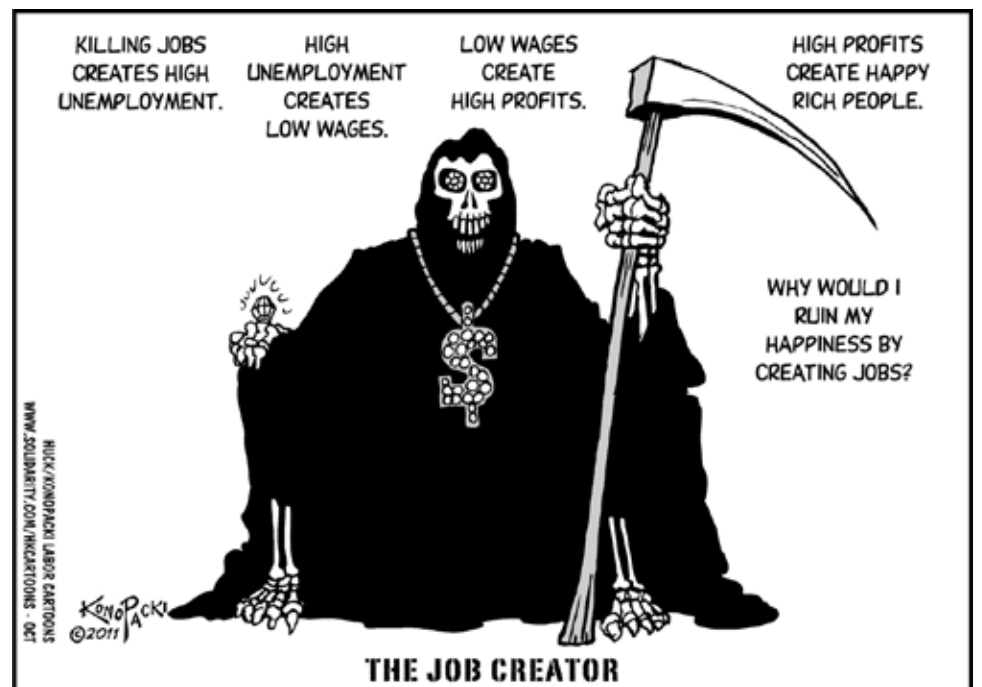
continued on page 8
important or grievants whenever possible. Write "The grievants, Susan Jones, James Tyler, Ray Kennedy, and Patricia Thomas, are each to be paid for 2 hours at the overtime rate or \$76.58 each." This will clear up a lot of problems for your grievance down the line in the grievance procedure. Never ask for a ridiculous amount for your remedy. As an example, don't ask for all ten people on the OTDL to be paid two hours each for a single person not on the list working two hours of overtime. Not only will you not get that but you will give management an argument to deny your grievance. Management will claim that your grievance is defective because your remedy is inappropriate and does not fall within the boundaries of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Management will argue that the union is seeking an unjustified enrichment or a windfall. Remember that your remedy should fit the result of management's action and nothing more. As Arbitrator Richard Mittenhal wrote in a National Arbitration Award "Perhaps most importantly, the purpose of a remedy is to place employees (and Management) in the position they would have been in had there been no contract violation. The remedy serves to restore the status quo ante." Therefore, don't ask for an exaggerated amount for any monetary remedy.

While we are on the subject of what

not to ask for, don't ask for the supervisor or postmaster to be disciplined. Again, you will not get that and again, you just give management a reason to deny your grievance with the claim that your grievance is defective because your remedy is outside the scope of the CBA. Don't ask for an apology from the supervisor. The reason is the same as above. Additionally, I don't understand what good an insincere apology does anyone? Management is not sorry and probably never will be sorry for their actions. Don't ask for punitive damages or one million dollars for the humiliation suffered by the grievant or the union. Again, you will not get any

of that and you just give management a reason to deny your grievance as defective.

In conclusion, write your remedies simply and clearly. Ask management to "cease and desist" in their violation. Always ask for a make whole remedy. Ask specifically for what you want in dollars and cents and specify exactly who is to get the money. Don't ask for more than the grievant is entitled to and don't ask for discipline, apologies, or punitive damages. Remember, a remedy is what you are striving for in your grievance. So, give it plenty of attention and consideration.





by Linda Turney

Tourney Talks

Postal Support Employees Or PSE's

There are many challenges concerning our new contract that we must meet head on. One of those provisions is concerning Postal Support Employees. The Postal Service started hiring PSEs on May 23, 2011.

The PSE is hired at the grade for the position. A PSE hired to work as a mail processing clerk would be hired as a Grade 6. This is because career mail processing clerks are level 6. The only clerk craft positions normally utilized in level 15 and 16 Post Offices are window clerks (Sales, Service & Distribution Associates or SSDAs) and Mail Processing Clerks (MPCs). These are both level 6. If the Postal Service creates and utilizes Level 4 Post Office Clerk PSE job descriptions in level 15 and 16 Post Offices, we should grieve that under Article 7 and the PSE MOU. The level 4 Post Office clerk may only be used in Post Offices with less than 190 revenue units.

We should also challenge the use of PSEs who work the window in any post office with less than three career retail

clerks whose duties include working the window in the installation. Article 7.1.B.4 states: *In level 21 and below offices, PSEs in retail/customer services (Function4) who work the window will not exceed 20% of the career retail clerks in that installation whose duties include working the window. The rounding-up rule of .5 and above applies.* Unless there are three or more career clerks in that installation whose duties include working the window, PSEs hired in that installation cannot work the window for these reasons.

PSE work in level 15 and 16 is not "new work" as defined in Article 7.1.B.6. (Page 13 of the flimsy contract) because it does not include in-house work that is historically recognized as bargaining unit work.

PSEs are not PMR replacements. PMRs were eliminated by the 1.6.B. global settlement MOU in Level 15, 16, and 18 post offices. The Global Settlement places limits on the amount of bargaining unit work that may be performed by the Postmaster so the employees that

replace the PMRs will be working in the office at the same time the postmaster is there. In the past, PMRs could only be used to replace Postmasters; they should not have been working while the postmaster was there.

This issue has been appealed by Mike Morris at Step 4, please file your grievances. The grievances will be held pending the outcome of the National Level case.

convention. I taught a class with Pat Davis-Weeks and Martha Shun-King regarding organizing. Cliff Guffey spoke to the delegates who readily passed a resolution in support of our effort to pass HR1351. Our own Judy Beard holds the high office of Treasurer of National CLUW and the esteemed National President is APWU's Karen See.

CLUW seeks to unify Union women, determine common workplace problems and develop action programs within the framework of each associated Union to attain our objectives. CLUW educates Union women to insure and strengthen participation in the workplace. CLUW encourages women's ideas and leadership.

In times of trouble, we seek assistance from fellow Union members. CLUW is one of those places we can ask for assistance. After the convention, I met with Chicago Local CLUW members. CLUW members took our petitions to contact their Congressman on behalf of the Postal Service. Some of them will attend our September 27, 2011 rally. All of them will contact their Congressman and get petitions signed. Postal Workers have good friends because we have CLUW.

A few of the other issues in which CLUW is involved is: Single Payer with Medicare for all, Social Security, Paid Family Leave, Paycheck Fairness, Buy American, End LGBT Discrimination, Green jobs and Protecting Voting Rights. Members in APWU should join and participate in CLUW. APWU is greatly involved in running this organization. CLUW is actively supporting us; we can reciprocate by joining them.

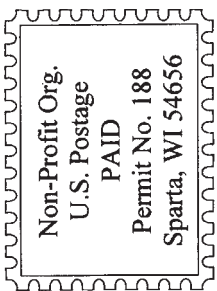


CLUW

Women in the American labor movement have been shaped by diverse, cultural, legal, demographic and ethnic-racial influences. This is exemplified by the recent Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) convention. The American Postal Workers Union was out in full force at this

HR-1351 Poem

I'd like to tell you all a tale
 Concerning folks who work the mail
 Congress put us in a financial squeeze
 And now everyone plainly sees
 The Postal Service has no money
 If it wasn't sad it would be funny
 That they blame the ones who do the work
 And their own responsibility shirk
 'Cause Congress caused this economic mess
 And now this crisis we must address
 All postal workers must unite
 We all must take part in this fight
 To Congress all of us must write
 And say to everyone in sight
 That no tax money do we spend
 And on our service they do depend
 Once everybody sees the facts
 They'll see who really should get the axe
 Those Congressmen who passed a bill
 That caused the Postal Service ill
 So now I'm putting out the call
 To postal workers one and all
 And we won't say our job is done
 'Till we've passed HR-1351



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