

# Michigan

## MESSENGER

APWA  
APWU

Volume 41, Number 157  
November-December, 2011

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

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Legislative Report .....	Page 2
Editor's Report .....	Page 3
Clerk Craft Report .....	Page 3
Maintenance Craft Report.....	Page 4
Motor Vehicle Craft Report .....	Page 5
Rally Photos .....	Pages 6 & 7
Veteran's Report.....	Page 8
Retiree Involvement.....	Page 9
Area 1 Director .....	Page 10
NBA Reports .....	Pages 10
Tourney Talks.....	Page 11

## President's Report

# The Enemies Main Weapon



by John  
Marcotte,  
President

In this issue I will discuss the main weapon the enemies of the working man have wielded in their never ending quest to destroy the middle class. Since the 1990's enemies of the working class have wreaked havoc on the pillars of American social justice not by changing the laws that created them but by simply not funding them. Social Security, Medicare, OSHA and EPA laws ensured that working people could; retire with dignity, afford medical care as they age, work without undo risk of injury and live in an America not over run with pollution.

These laws would never be able to be reversed through a debate on their merits in Congress. What the ultra right wing needed was a crisis. So that dismantling laws that greatly benefit a large majority of Americans would be considered a necessary option to solve the crisis. The crisis they invented was an accelerating deficit. How they created it was by cutting taxes while raising spending.

Prior to the 1990's the Republicans and Democrats would tend to disagree on how to solve the countries problems, much like today. They would compromise on a bill somewhere near the middle of each of their respective positions and laws governing this country were made. Congress would then look at the expenses of the country and adjust taxes appropriately; both parties felt that adjusting taxation to spending was the duty of every fiscally responsible legislator. Even Ronald Reagan after cutting taxes too severely early in his first term, which caused a stunning Federal deficit, spent his last six years as president raising taxes eleven times in an attempt to bring taxes in line with spending.

Somewhere in the 1990's the Re-

publican Party was hijacked by a "no new taxes" minority starting with George H.W. Bush defeat of Bob Dole in a fight to replace Reagan as the Republican nominee for president. This irresponsible, irrational platform is appealing in sound bites but disastrous in practice as it ensures the underfund-

to simply pay interest on this debt before he left office. Over two years later the Republican controlled House of Representatives still refuses to raise taxes to pay for laws they enacted.

Why? Look at the agenda of the ultra-right wing funded by billionaires. Cut Medicare benefits, reduce

This same group of anti-worker ultra-right wing extremists is using the same game plan to dismantle the USPS and destroy the lives of its half million unionized middle class workers. They created a crisis by passing the PAEA of 2006. This forced 5 billion a year in highly questionable health care

pre-funding payments while outlawing raising money from stamps to pay for it. The financial crisis this caused now has the USPS planning on dismantling its mail-processing network, cutting service standards and closing thousands of post offices. If this plan continues the USPS will enter into an irreversible course toward privatization. Shifting a self funded 70 billion dollar a year government service providing a middle class lifestyles to its half million working families and universal service to all America, to a group of private companies providing poverty level wages to its workers, enormous profits for its owners and shareholders and service only where it is most profitable.

There is only one way to restore our country and the heritage that is being stolen from us, all solely to enrich the select few. Get politically active, demand worker equality, demand fair taxation and educate our friends and neighbors on how to reverse this destructive decent into third world status. The same politicians, who are intent on abolishing Social Security and Medicare not by debate in Congress and the will of the people but by creating a financial crisis, have now generated a financial crisis for the USPS. Only by constant pressure on our elected federal representatives by each and every one of us can we secure our jobs and our way of life. We fight or we perish. Do we rise up and demand what is rightfully ours or do we fade quietly into the night? The choice is yours.

In Solidarity and Friendship.



ing of our government. As any tax cut is initiated none are raised or created to cover this shortfall requiring Congress to take on more debt. More debt requires more money each year to pay interest on the debt. This requires even more debt in a spiral familiar to many Americans as their own experience with credit card debt.

Currently 98% of Republicans in Congress have signed an oath never to raise taxes. They started two wars, added diabetic drug and supplies coverage, started a new department of the government (homeland security) and started the war on terror all without funding any of it. The economy under Bush II sank into the worst recession since the 1930's. Lowering tax revenue and causing more spending on benefits for Americans out of work, this exploded the Federal deficit and required an enormous amount of money

Social Security, repeal OSHA regulations and disband the EPA. They claim this will create jobs and we simply don't have the money to pay for these programs. Aren't these the same guys who said that lowering the taxes on the rich would create jobs? The Bush tax cuts have been in effect for ten years, does anyone see any jobs? The money for our social safety net would still be there if not for massive interest payments on intentionally created debt. Today, the top 400 taxpayers making an average of 347 million dollars a year pay 17% of their income in federal taxes. This is less than a worker who makes twenty six thousand dollars a year (this worker pays payroll taxes on all of his earnings). So the worker pays more in taxes than the super-rich while the government programs he/she relies on for quality of life are not funded and in peril.

HUCK/KONOPACKI LABOR CARTOONS  
WWW.SOLIDARITY.COM/HKARTOONS - DEC



**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: fmall1@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: fmall1@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: kjhdmich@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 VanHoostraten  
(989-894-2656) .....e-Mail: hystreet@att.net



by Paul Felton, Legislative Director

## Legislative Report

# Democracy And The Future Of The Postal Service

It is the middle of October. There are two bills up for consideration in the House of Representatives. First they have to go through a committee, which is dominated by Republicans. One bill, HR-1351, which is supported by APWU, is cosponsored by a majority of House members. In other words, if the Committee allowed the House to take a vote, 1351 would pass. But the Committee, chaired by Congressman Darrell Issa, refuses to let this bill reach the House floor. Instead, the Committee sends to the house another bill which is nothing but an attack on postal workers, and which is designed to dismantle the Postal Service as we know it. In the Senate, Barbara Mikulski introduces a good bill, which is a companion bill to HR-1351. This bill will never come to a vote in the Senate. Even though the Democrats have a majority in the Senate, Republicans routinely use the "cloture" procedure to block a majority vote. It takes 60 votes out of a 100 to close debate. While this procedure was designed to allow everyone a full chance to air their views, Republicans routinely vote against closing debate on anything they oppose. So 41 votes out of 100 can block any bill from becoming law. In other words, in both the House and the Senate, the minority rules.

It is November 9. A "compromise" bill passed a Senate Committee and will be sent to the entire Senate for a vote. It would provide a limited amount of financial relief to the Postal Service — enough to downsize by offering financial incentives to people who retire. Yet it would result in the dismantling of USPS as we know it and would satisfy the ultimate aims of the Republicans, the privatizers, and PMG Donohoe. It would change the criteria arbitrators use to determine future contracts, making it

easier for management to slash wages. It would dramatically reduce compensation for injured employees who reach retirement age. It would allow for the elimination of Saturday delivery after two years.

This "compromise" represents the Democrats meeting the Republicans "halfway." It is similar to a lot of "compromises" that have taken place on a variety of issues. The Republicans stonewall and a Democratic President and Senate give the Republicans most of what they want. And in some cases, there are Democrats under the influence of corporate dollars who join the Republican side of an issue. This is what passes for "democracy" in Congress.

### PEOPLE POWER

It is September 27. Postal unions join together on a nationwide scale to rally in every Congressional District in the country. There is unity among the NALC, Mail Handlers and APWU. I was at a rally of over 200 people in front of Candice Miller's office. I saw

coworkers there who never had been to a demonstration of this kind. A powerful statement was made by the leadership and rank-and-file of the postal unions.

It is October 14. A kickoff rally for Occupy Detroit brings together a diverse group of progressive people. The "Occupy" movement (which started with Occupy Wall Street in New York) brings together the 99 percent of the population that is under attack from the top one percent. It has the potential to change the political landscape in America. Just as corporate money influences and distorts the way issues are discussed in Congress, a mass movement of people in the streets can bring the discussion back to reality.

Democracy isn't just a matter of voting on Election Day. Democracy is also about what we do in between elections to mobilize and influence the behavior of the folks we elected. September 27 and October 14 were good starts. Whether this movement will be able to save the Postal Service as we know it is hard to predict.

## Various Items Of Interest

### STEP 4 DISPUTE REGARDING CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TWO DAYS OFF

In accordance with the provisions of Article 15, Section 2 and 4, of the Contract, the APWU has initiated a Step 4 dispute regarding six day work weeks in Customer Service.

The Postal Service has issued instructions to the field that NTFT Duty Assignments in Customer Service (Function 4) may be created with less than two days off.

In the Non-Traditional Work Schedules Task Force MOU the parties agreed

on the concept of the "creation of a 'full-time' duty assignments that have non-traditional scheduling . . ." The parties specifically agreed that these "nontraditional work schedules may include those with less than 40 hours or less than 5 days a week, or more than 8 hours a day, split shifts, etc."

Nothing in the Collective Bargaining Agreement permits the establishment of duty assignments with less than two days off for career employees in Customer Service in the regular work force other than to create desirable duty assignments for purposes of maximization in offices Level 20 and below.

### GET THE FREE UNION PLUS IPHONE APP!

Do you have an iPhone or iPod Touch? Do you utilize your Union Plus Benefits? If your answer is yes to both of these questions, you are the perfect candidate for the new Union Plus iPhone App! You can access your union's Union Plus benefits on-the-go with the Union Plus Union Member Benefits app! It's the easy way for union members to access money-saving Union Plus benefits including 15% off AT&T wireless service, a mortgage program, and discounts on everything from car rentals to credit counseling and movie tickets to a motor club . . . and more! Check it out!  
*continued on page 12*

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

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

The MICHIGAN MESSENGER is published six times yearly, and is the official publication of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, also affiliated with the APWU Postal Press Association.

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

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

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

## Editor's Report



by Michael A. Long, Editor

# Fight, Fight And Fight Again

Happy Holidays. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, EID, Winter Solstice, or any other seasonal celebration, I want to take this opportunity to wish a happy one to you and yours.

While we are celebrating this time of the year, please take a moment to reflect upon what not only we, the Postal Service has gone through, but the entire labor movement, this year. The battles and degradations we have taken on with corporations continually sending our jobs overseas to save a buck, to new empowered governors flexing their political will and dissolving unions at a whim. With our own

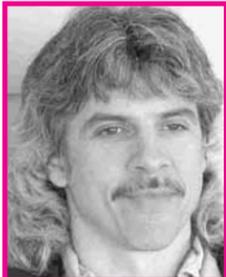
union, and our sister unions, we are going through one of the biggest fights we have seen in quite some time. Do I feel we will prevail? Hell yes! Do I think we will have to fight like we have never done before to prevail? Hell yes! It is simple. We HAVE to draw a line in the sand and do not move. We have very few political friends right now; however, we do have the public on our side. We need to use it. Occupy Wall Street has allowed the public to see truly what we have become. Now with "the man" trying to bust even this movement and force its dismantlement, it has shown even more light, and has caused even more to rise up and fight. Whatever we have learned, there is one word we need to make sure we never forget . . . Fight, Fight, and then fight

like hell to get what we not only want, but what we deserve.

This issue of the *Michigan Messenger* is going to be larger than usual. There is much information to put out there, but one thing I want to make sure that draws your attention is the photos in this edition. On September 27th, your union, along with the unions of the Mail Handlers and the Letter Carriers went out and picketed your local representative's office to show not only them, but the public, what not only we, but the entire nation is facing with the cuts to the Postal Service. These photos represent only a small fraction of those members who went out and gave of their time to get this message out. If you were unable to do this, I would ask one thing . . . Please write, via an ac-

tual letter, your congress representative and tell them your thoughts and feelings regarding HR 2309 and HR 1351. If you need any information, please look at the National APWU website and formulate your own opinion and your own letter. You need to make your voice heard. Whether it is marching in a demonstration, calling and or visiting your representative, or writing them, you need to make sure you don't lose that one thing that nobody else can take away from you . . . your voice and your vote. Make it known! Remember, the corporations (the ones currently running the country) are definitely making theirs known. There is an old saying that rings especially true today . . . "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything!"

## Clerk Craft Report



by Richard Blake, Clerk Craft Director

# APWU Multi-Craft Conference Information

**Multi-Craft Conference** — from 10/10 through 10/14 I attended the APWU Multi-Craft Conference in Las Vegas, in my capacity as Clerk Craft Director. This year's conference drew over two thousand participants, and included some classes specifically dealing with the new national agreement, as well as others which were more general in nature.

The morning of Tuesday 10/11 I attended the presentation on Contract Postal Units ("CPU's"); our own Central Region National Business Agent Linda Turney was one of the instructors. This class focused on the opportunities presented in the new national agreement for us to re-capture some of this lost work for our members. The issue of what was an "appropriate" CPU has changed over the years, but with the MOU in the new contract we should have a clearer understanding of what work we may be able to bring back in-house. There are over three thousand CPU's nationwide, and without a doubt some of them, including some in Michigan, could be returned to our bargaining unit if we pursue the matter properly. After discussing the language in the new MOU, the class then outlined the specific information which we need to request, the relevant contractual and handbook language, and the proper remedy.

In the afternoon, I attended the "small office issues" class presented by several National Business Agents including our own Mike O'Hearn. This class has been offered at many prior

Multi-Craft conferences, and I consider it a "must" for any Area Director or other steward who may represent small associate offices. As in prior classes, the instructors covered issues of management performing bargaining unit work, PTF maximization, crossing crafts, and reversions/abolishments. The class also spent a fair amount of time covering the "Article 1.6.B global settlement" in the new contract, as well as the current national disputes related to that settlement. In particular, 2 of the most ridiculous disputes involve totally clear and unambiguous language — the requirement that management count **all time staffing the window** against their quota of bargaining unit work, and the agreement that reducing the level of an office (such as by a "DUO", or delivery unit optimization) does **not** increase the amount of bargaining unit work that management is permitted to perform.

Wednesday 10/12 was the general session conducted by our national officers. President Guffey addressed us concerning issues such as postal finances, currently pending legislation, and declining mail volume. He stated that nearly 50,000 postal workers and supporters nationwide rallied on September 27 He discussed APWU's current advertisements, and he said he was totally amazed by the number of people who persist in thinking that the USPS still receives tax dollars. He stated that total mail volume, which peaked in 2006, declined by approximately 20% from 2006 through 2010; most of that decline, unfortunately, has come in first class mail, which is the most profitable class. Standard mail stayed relatively flat during that period, and in fact both

standard mail and parcels are **up** from 2010 to 2011. Job losses during that period, of course, have **far** surpassed the decline in mail volume. With regard to the criticism that 80% of USPS expenses go to "labor", he reminded us that figure includes **all** employees' wages and benefits, including management; in fact, only 53% actually goes to **bargaining unit** wages and benefits. He also reminded us that the reason these figures are lower for UPS and FedEx is because both companies own and maintain their own fleets of planes, which the USPS does not.

Legislative Director Myke Reid gave us a more detailed presentation concerning postal finances and legislation. He showed that without the "pre-funding" requirement put in place by the 2006 PAEA, the postal service would have actually turned a profit in 2 of the previous 4 years (even with declining volume), and would have shown a small aggregate profit during that period. He covered the awful HR 2309 in detail;

this legislation would result in the closure of more than half of remaining post offices and most processing plants, force tens of thousands of layoffs, eliminate most door-to-door delivery, and would give an unelected "control board" the right to simply void Union contracts and to reduce postal wages and benefits to a level **below** that of 1971 (when many postal workers qualified for welfare or food stamps).

The general session then proceeded to deal with the Clerk Craft resolutions which were presented to the participants, followed by presentations from our national Clerk Craft officers. This was followed by a presentation on non-traditional duty assignments. While our national officers seemed quite optimistic about the contractual language regarding these assignments, unfortunately the situation in the field (so far) does not support that optimism.

On the morning of Thursday 10/13 I was scheduled to attend a legisla-

*continued on page 4*

2011 OPEN SEASON DEADLINES		
Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)	Begins Nov. 14 - Ends Dec. 12 (11:59 p.m. ET)	
Annual Leave Exchange (ALE)	Begins Nov. 15 - Ends Dec. 15 (11:59 p.m. CT)	
Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB)	Begins Nov. 14 - Ends Dec. 13 (5 p.m. CT)	
Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)	Begins Nov. 7 - Ends Dec. 25 (5 p.m. CT)	



by Jason Rushing, Maintenance Craft Director

# Maintenance Craft Report

## Maintenance Is A Busy Craft To Be In Now

Hello Brothers and Sisters, Maintenance is a very busy craft to be in at this time. We have a new contract with some new language and agreements. In October, the APWU held a Craft Conference in Las Vegas Nevada. For Maintenance, there were the usual MS 47 classes, General Sessions, Central Breakout meeting and subcontracting classes. What was new this Craft Conference were the classes on TSP Accounts, MS-1, building side staffing packages, FSSP-facility single source provider, and ECBM

& MMOs, electronic condition based maintenance and maintenance modification orders. A few of the classes, MS-1 staffing, FSSP and ECBM, this was the first time they were taught. The classes were very good and gave attendees the opportunity to ask questions and be able to make some educated arguments for grievance upon returning home.

Besides the great classes that were given at the Craft Conference in Las Vegas Nevada, we had all the national officers speak to the delegations. Each craft had their own general session which emphasized the important things going on with their craft. The national officers all spoke to the delegation from President Cliff Guffey on down. President Guffey spoke about legislative issues continuing to go on and

his interviews and dispositions at the national level in Washington in front of congress and other committees. We also heard from the Vice President Greg Bell, Secretary Treasurer Elizabeth Powell and Legislative Director Myke Reid.

Our National Maintenance Craft officers addressed the delegates too. Craft Director Steve Raymer spoke on many of the main hot items going on in the Maintenance Craft. Items included: ECBM issues, FSSP issues, staffing issues, MS-1 staffing and getting work back from the contracted out stations. Gary Kloepfer Area A Director, Greg See Area B Director, Idowo Balogun Rep at Large all spoke on the problems in their areas of expertise.

Brothers and sisters are being exercised every-which-way, even in the

Maintenance Craft. If you have contractors, non Postal employees of any kind in your buildings and facilities, let someone know. In smaller offices the Post Office gets away with a whole lot of sub-contracting. That has to stop. Call someone. Ask someone. There are many problems with all of the changes the Postal Service wants to impose upon us, the employees. We need to stay united and keep each other informed in all ways possible. If you have information or documentation I need to see, please contact me. I will help any way I can. If there are questions or problems also, please contact me.

I wish everyone happy holiday season's, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, with family and friends!

In Unionism.



## I Knew It, I Knew It, I Knew It!!!

by Leo Persails  
Nope, I didn't write ONE AT A TIME but wish I did.

There still are some Americans that are willing to make an effort to find the truth. You won't find this message on any millionaire news network. The truth is out there, you just have to work at it because corporations spend billions to hide it from us.

### ONE AT A TIME

A physics teacher in high school, once told the students that while one grasshopper on the railroad tracks wouldn't slow a train very much, a billion of them would. With that thought in mind read the following, obviously written by a good American.

This probably sounds crazy, but just yesterday I was in WalMart looking for a wastebasket. I found some made in China for \$6.99. I didn't want to

pay that much so I asked the lady if they had any others. She took me to another department and they had some at \$2.50 made in USA. They are just as good. Same as a kitchen rug I needed. I had to look, but I found some made in the USA and they were \$3.00 cheaper. We are being brain washed that everything that comes from China and Mexico is cheaper. Not so. That is also why I don't buy cards at Hallmark anymore. They are made in China and are expensive. I buy them at Dollar Tree . . . 50 cents each and made in USA.

My favorite toothpaste Colgate is made in Mexico. Now I have switched to Crest. You have to read the labels on everything. Good idea . . . One light bulb at a time.

Check this out. I can verify this because I was in Lowe's the other day for some reason and just for the heck

of it I was looking at the hose attachments. They were all made in China. The next day I was in Ace Hardware and just for the heck of it I checked the hose attachments there. They were made in USA.

Start looking . . . In our current economic situation, every little thing we buy or do affects someone else — even their job. So, after reading this email, I think this lady is on the right track. Let's get behind her!

My grandson likes Hershey's candy. I noticed, though, that it is marked made in Mexico now. I do not buy it any more.

This past weekend I was at Kroger. I needed 60W light bulbs and Bounce dryer sheets. I was in the light bulb aisle, and right next to the GE brand I normally buy was an off-brand labeled, "Everyday Value." I picked

continued on page 11

## APWU Multi-Craft Conference Information

continued from page 3  
tive presentation by Myke Reid, but it was cancelled at the last minute, so I dropped in on the "Role of the Steward in the Information Age" class taught by Lyle Krueth. This is another class which I consider a "must" for virtually every steward regardless of office; the ability to correctly read management's reports, and to know what reports to request, is fundamentally critical to so many potential grievances. It never ceases to amaze me how many stewards (even fairly experienced ones) have no idea what reports are out there or what information they provide.

That afternoon I attended the "Retail Issues" class taught by several National

Business Agents, primarily Russ Bugary from Indiana. This was yet another class which I would consider a "must" for any steward who works in customer service, or in an associate office. This class touched on the need for retail employees to work smart when on the window: entering each transaction separately, always being on "stand-by" when away from the window, always "moving" off the retail operation code when working in the box section or on the floor, etc. For those of you who still haven't seen the training spreadsheet on this issue, I strongly urge you to review this information (I can put this information on a CD for anyone who is interested). The class also touched on the APWU "Function 4 Training" DVD

available from headquarters (at the very least, every Local should have a copy of this DVD). Other issues covered were problems with "box up" times, stand-by time, clearing accountables, relief-and-pool assignments, automated postal centers, and the new "retail customer experience".

As always, I would like to thank the members for affording me the opportunity to attend the 2011 Mutli-Craft Conference. I have already sent copies of the training materials to all Area Directors, and to some of my "regular customers"; I would be happy to send a copy of the materials (on CD) to any officer, steward, or member, so feel free to contact me if you would like them.



by Joe Wrobel, Motor Vehicle Craft Director

# Motor Vehicle Craft Report

## Wheels And Wrenches

I have been receiving calls from all over the state about the runs that are to be returning to the MVS craft. I know HQ is all excited about the returns of this work, but here in the real world it ain't happening. It does not matter where you are in this state; management is using the excuse of not having the right equipment or not having the manpower to do the work. These are all crap excuses; it is not our problem how to get the equipment or hiring qualified people. I have a few suggestions, **ONE PULL YOUR HEAD OUT OF YOUR ASS's !!!** This might help you read and understand the contract a little better. **TWO** try reading the contract that the post office signed and you might get a better understanding of it or possibly make up your own mind on the interpretation instead of acting like mind numb

robots of the USPS. It is really amazing how the post office can sign a contract and less than a month just plain ignore the words that were put to paper. What is more amazing is that the transportation department's and the VMF's in the same districts have different opinions of the contract, so management in the same district can't even agree among themselves. All of the grievances have been filed and attached to the national step 4's filed in D.C. . . Hopefully they will be heard soon and we can continue onto other things.

Remember that on Nov. 23, 2011, mandatory overtime will end for many APWU-represented employees. In accordance with our 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement, full-time regular career Motor Vehicle Craft employees who work in an installation and functional area with Non-Traditional Full-Time assignments cannot be required to work overtime (except in an emergency),

unless they are on the Overtime Desired List. Don't forget that there is no "December exception" for this mandatory overtime prohibition. In case you were wondering (you might need to explain this to your management team) that "Emergencies" are defined in Article 3 as, "An unforeseen circumstance or a combination of circumstances which calls for immediate action in a situation which is not expected to be of a recurring nature."

The following VMF'S are to get the following positions according to the contract:

				PS-8	PS-9	PS-10
Pontiac	4J	257644	2	0	2	0
Detroit	4J	252496	5	0	4	1
Ann Arbor	4J	250285	7	4	3	0
Livonia	4J	255487	2	0	2	0
G.Rapids	4J	253924	3	0	3	0

I understand that the Lansing VMF is also getting PS-9 position. Time will tell if management hires the personal or

not. According to our national and the September 7, 2011 letter to all area VP's it states the following;

In compliance with the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) collective bargaining agreement, the attached 740 vehicle maintenance positions have been authorized to post and fill in accordance with the Motor Vehicle Craft bid process. Duty assignments not filled through the bid process shall be filled through the normal hiring process. Deviations of the quantity and level of positions may not be made without approval by Headquarters."

In closing I would like to wish all APWU/MVS employees a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## If You're Not Angry, You're Not Paying Attention

by Mike Gallagher, Eastern Region Coordinator

In a couple of recently published magazine articles the subject matter should give us grave concern about next year's national elections. As it appears, the far right wing political agenda of the Republican Party has already been carried out in many states in order to seize control of the senate as well as the White House.

For example, in an article from the New Yorker magazine by Jane Mayer titled "State for Sale" she outlines how a conservative multi-millionaire has taken control of the State Senate in North Carolina.

In 2008, North Carolina turned blue by voting for President Obama over McCain. Obama only won the state by 14,000 votes, and North Carolina is identified as one of the 2012 top battleground States. Many people believe that Obama will need to carry North Carolina in 2012 if he is to remain the President of the United States.

Since that time, multi-millionaire James Arthur (Art) Pope, the chairman and CEO of Variety Wholesalers, a discount store conglomerate which has over 400 outlets in mainly poor neighborhoods, has been very active in state politics. He places his stores in neighborhoods that have a medium income of less than \$40,000 and are at least 25% African American. In these over 400 discount stores, the overwhelming majority of the employees are paid minimum wage with little or no benefits, thereby creating a workforce of over 7,000 workers making poverty level wages.

In 2010, a strategy was developed by

Republicans like Art Pope to engineer a takeover of state legislatures. This project is called "REDMAP" and their essential goal is to take over state legislatures to gain control over state laws that will benefit the Republicans in not only setting the agenda for those states, but controlling the political outcome of elections.

Since the Supreme Court decision in the Citizen's United case, the lid has been taken off of corporate influences in elections. A candidate can clearly be outspent by independent groups, and many independent groups are formulated by the super rich to get candidates elected, and to control the legislation that now is forwarded through state legislatures.

In the case of North Carolina, Art Pope was instrumental in targeting 22 races, and the Republicans won 18 of the 22 races. Pope, his family, and his family's foundation have spent more than 40 million dollars in their efforts in North Carolina and in supporting many of the efforts by the billionaire Koch brothers who also have an identical far right wing agenda for the United States.

Pope has given money to at least 27 groups supported by the Koch brothers including organizations opposing environmental regulations, tax increases, and especially opposing unions and campaign spending limits.

Many state legislatures are currently considering or have already approved limits on early voting and requiring voters to display government issued photo IDs in order to register for elections. College students, minorities, and the poor who often tend to vote Democratic

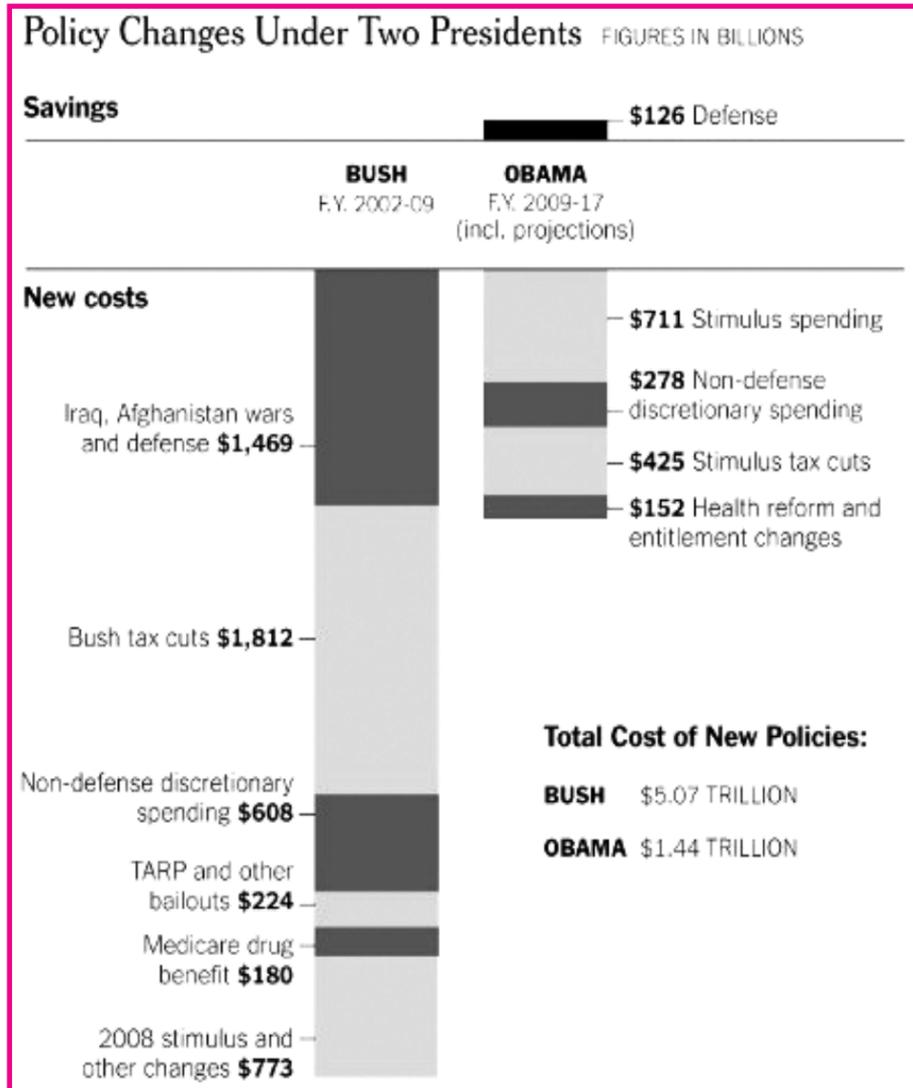
will likely be most disadvantaged.

One North Carolina progressive business man indicated that while Pope keeps the people that work in his stores working part time at minimum wage, he preys on the poorest of the poor and uses it to advance the richest of the rich. Pope argues that federal minimum wage laws

should be controlled at the state level and he doesn't believe he should be paying his workers at the current minimum wage.

### BARRIERS TO REGISTRATION

In another recent article titled, "The *continued on page 12*



# Unions From Around Michigan Standing Together . . .



Flint



Flint



Flint



Gaylord



Gaylord



Gaylord



Grand Rapids



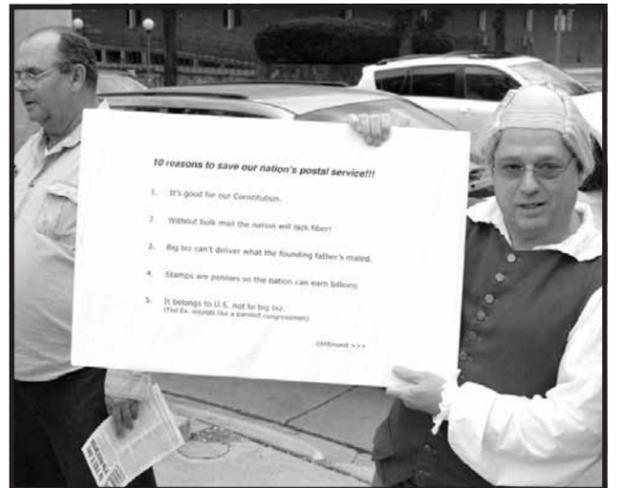
Grand Rapids



Grand Rapids



Grand Rapids



Grand Rapids



# September 27th - HR 1351 Informational Picket



Iron Mountain



Iron Mountain



Iron Mountain



Kalamazoo



Kalamazoo



Kalamazoo



Kalamazoo



Kalamazoo



Royal



Royal



Royal



Royal





by John  
Smeekens,  
Veterans  
Director

## Veteran's Report

# Beneficial Information

### MERRY CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas to you and your family. I hope it is a blessed, and safe one for you and yours. Keep safe, don't drink and drive, eat lightly, so you don't have to make up some dumb News Years resolution that you're going to lose weight. And don't forget our troops. Say a prayer, or whatever you do, for them and their families.

### NEW YEAR

Happy New Year to one and all. Ditto on the words above about being safe and not drinking and driving and those resolutions that are so far out of reach that you can't keep them. Keep our troops and their families in your prayers and thoughts.

### DARREN'S DIARY

Darren's home from Afghanistan. We picked him from the airport in August. We had our WELCOME HOME HEROES signs, and Janet was elated to see him, and so was his son Jake. Please keep him and his wife Janet in your prayers and thoughts during the Holiday's. And THANK YOU for all your prayers and thoughts while he was over there!

### THANKS JUDGE

There was a story a few months ago, about the new director of the Veterans National Cemetery in Houston. She would not allow any religious references or the word God to be used at any Veterans funeral. Naturally it was challenged by all the Veterans Organizations and quite a few families. Thanks Judge; Federal District Judge Lynn N. Hughes signed a consent decree ordering the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to:

- lift the ban on prayer and the word "God" at national cemeteries
- revoke national policies hostile to religion
- reopen the Chapel at the Houston VA National Cemetery (Its identity had been changed to a "meeting facility.")

### PROTECT OUR BENEFITS

Veterans Organizations nationwide have launched a call to action this week to counter serious threats to military and

veterans programs. Mid October, the leadership of the Senate Armed Services Committee and both House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees wrote the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to support or suggest possible ways to eliminate or further reduce military and veteran quality of life programs and benefits. While the joint House/Senate VA committee letter was short on specifics, the individual letters sent by SASC Chairman Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Ranking Member John McCain (R-

VSO from a local Veterans Organization, and file a claim and get evaluated. Get the help you deserve.

### NEW NPRC ADDRESS

The new address for the National Personnel Records Center is:  
**National Personnel Records Center  
1 Archives Drive  
St Louis, MO 63138-1002**

Cut this out and make a refrigerator magnet out of it. In fact make several copies and put them in safe places.

not everyone has a fire resistant storage box). Be sure to inform your spouse and relatives where to locate your Separation Document — and any other important papers.

### GM DISCOUNT

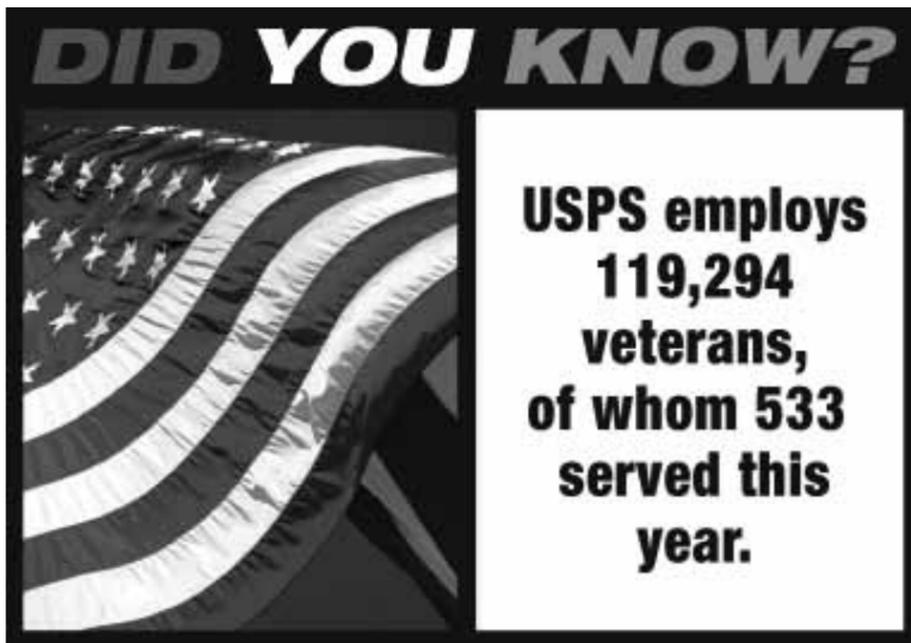
Retired military members now qualify for the GM Military Discount Program.(1) Along with Active Duty and Reserves of the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, National Guard and Coast Guard, you can save big on most 2012 and remaining 2011 Chevrolet,(2) Buick and GMC vehicles. Plus, you can combine your discount with most CURRENT INCENTIVES !!!

### COUNTY I. D.'S

Just so you know. On October 20, 2011, the Macomb County Board of Commissioners voted overwhelmingly to make Veterans I. D. Cards available for all Veterans in Macomb County. Why do you need a Veterans I. D. Card? Next time you are out shopping or getting something to eat, ask if they have Veterans Discounts available. You might be surprised how many places do have them available for the asking. But you have to prove that you are indeed a Veteran. By the time you read this, the process will already have started. You'll need a Copy of your RECORDED DD-214. There is a \$10.00 card fee. This will all take place at the clerk's office, in Macomb County, on the first floor, in the County Building. The program starts on November 10, 2011. Now, how about the rest of you Veterans' taking this to your County Commissioners Offices and see if they will come up with a program for Veterans' in your County. Or maybe we should flood Lansing and ask about a State program ??? How about something on your Drivers License ??? GOOD LUCK !!!

### UP NORTH CLINIC

I am pleased to report to you that the grand opening of the Cheboygan County Department of Veteran Affairs Health Clinic was held on Thursday November 10, 2011 at 1:00 p.m at 14540 Mackinaw Highway in Mackinaw City. It is a fitting tribute that this grand opening took place the day before Veterans Day. The public was welcome to attend. The Cheboygan Clinic is one of a number of new veterans community health clinics that will eventually open across the state. In 2008, over 4000 citizens in the Cheboygan community signed a petition asking for this clinic. In the past four years, new clinics have also opened in Alpena, Bad Axe, Clare and Cadillac. We are looking forward to the opening of a new clinic in Grayling in late 2012 or early 2013.



Ariz.) were far more ominous, because they offered more ways to cut quality of life programs. In his call to action, VFW National Commander Richard DeNoyer said "It is critical that our voices not be lost in the ongoing budget debate that seems to now equate national service and sacrifice with the size of healthcare premiums." Please contact your Representatives and ask for their support, ask them not to balance the budget on the backs of Veterans and their families.

### GULF WAR ILLNESS

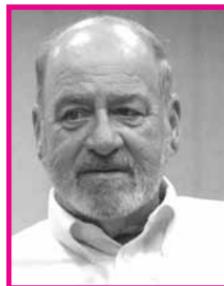
The Gulf War may be long past, but a new report says one in four veterans still suffers the devastating impact of Gulf War illness! Government officials once denied its existence . . . but today, there's no doubt that Gulf War illness is real. Its tragic impact can deny veterans the ability to work or live active lives. Many still have not received a proper diagnosis — or the help they urgently need to get on with life! The symptoms of Gulf War Illness vary widely, making it difficult to pin down. Veterans may suffer from; Fatigue, Headache, Skin rashes, Chronic pain, Memory loss, Cognitive deficits, Motor and balance problems, Impaired respiratory and cardiac function, and others. If you suffer from any of these symptoms, are a Veteran of The Gulf War, contact your County Veterans Representative, or a

As a reminder, ALL retirees and Honorably Discharged veterans should ensure that their family knows the location of their military Separation Document (DD Form 214 from 1950 to present and WD (War Department) Form 53-55 and other variations prior to 1950). Note that registering a copy at the county court house may make that document a public record. Separation Documents issued after 1969 may contain a Social Security Number which could be used for identity theft. Storing the Separation Document in a safe deposit box may make it difficult to retrieve immediately upon the death of the retiree or honorably discharged veteran. The better storage locations are:

1. Fire safe in a secure location of the house (not in the bedroom, as this is where most thieves search first). Be sure spouse/NOK knows the location and has key/combination.

2. In a watertight food container (Glad, Tupperware. etc.) in the refrigerator. Most refrigerators are fire resistant. Additionally, a refrigerator is heavy enough to fall through the floor of a building into the cooler part of the fire in the basement and better survive. Finally, a refrigerator is large enough to be easily located in the ash and rubble of a fire or other serious incident. (As a bonus, everyone has a refrigerator,





by Al  
LaBrecque,  
Retiree's Chapter  
President

## Retiree Involvement

# Put Up Or Shut Up!

*"I don't want to hear of apathy! It's your job to motivate the membership. We're the evangelists, we're the missionaries . . . We must elevate the under-standing — to stand up to the bosses."*

— Moe Biller

Put up or shut up! If you're reading this I mean you, active or retired. That's right, you, me, all of us are in a world of hurt because of the actions or inactions by Congress; Democrat, Republican and Independent, and the inconceivable proposals put forth by U.S. Postal Service management; PMG Donahoe and his minion rats right down to the discontinuation squads shuttering rural P.O.'s. If by now you think I'm angry, damned right, and if you're not . . . Why Not?! When you get hit, whether by excessing, job change, or in the pocketbook, and you did nothing to fight back, then shame on you!

Why would I take my anger out on retiree or active dues-paying Union members? For those of you who have stepped up to your Union's call to picket, to contact your Members of Congress, attend and/or speak up at USPS public hearings over consolidation, station/branch and rural P.O. closures . . . God Bless You! You should be as steamed as I am. But, if you're among the flock of sheep who just lament "woe is me", or worse, curse the Union as a convenient scapegoat, or as I've been told; "It's your job, that's what I pay dues for" . . . then I can only tell you where to find "sympathy" in the dictionary!

Unless active workers and retirees have been in an induced coma, we should all be painfully aware of the multi-faceted attack on your gainful employment, retiree pension and health benefits . . . and SERVICE to the American mailing public, the USPS's only product. APWU and Sister postal Unions, even some postal management organizations and NARFE have joined the fray. Your Union at all levels has provided us with all the information and issues talking points . . . IF that is, you take the time to attend your Union meetings, listen to the leadership, or simply read your Union materials like this "Michigan Messenger" and then act upon it.

Okay, I've vented. If this hasn't turned you off and you fall into the active or retired member category I just chastised, you can ignore it, tell me to go to hades, OR examine your conscience and do something about it. I pray it's the latter. As for myself, I used to take a measure of pride that I worked for the Postal Service, often defending the Service from its critics. No

more! I'm embarrassed to admit where I worked for 33 years for what the USPS has become. When asked where I retired from, I respond; "I forgot".

While I'm disgusted with the USPS top leadership, mealy-mouthed Members of Congress on BOTH sides of the aisle, disheartened by the assaults from all sides, and am realistic in that much of what we all face will likely happen despite our best efforts, there's no way I won't go down without a fight to the bitter end. Members of Congress . . . U.S. Reps or Senators regardless of their political stripe . . . and USPS management WILL NOT get a free pass!

**RETIREEES!** If you live in a rural community as I do, and your rural P.O. is one of the 3,700 listed for closure, attend the public meeting required to conduct by law and tell the public the true facts. If you don't know what to say; contact me. I have facts flyers I'd be happy to furnish anyone asking. Don't give these "destruction squads" a free pass either! Here's a piece of ammo: Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) stated in Committee; "If 10,000 post offices are closed, it will only amount to seven-tenths of one percent of postal costs." So, why close rural P.O.'s? In a word; PRIVATIZATION!

Postal workers and retirees are good people. But, when good people do nothing, bad things happen. Even if we think what's being proposed is inevitable or a done deal; have a little pride in self by speaking out with a Letter to the Editor,

a phone call to Members of Congress, answer your Union's call to action. Then, at least if we go down, we won't go quietly. If I've made anyone angry with this . . . Good!

**COLA, SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE:** On a more positive note; CSRS retirees and Social Security recipients will receive a 3.6% cost-of-living adjustment in their January 2012 checks. FERS retirees will receive a 2.6% COLA increase. This comes after 2 years of zero "diet" COLA's. The basic monthly premium for Medicare Part B will increase \$3.50 per month bringing the monthly premium to \$99.90. Not too bad considering. The Part B annual deductible in 2012 will be \$140., a DECREASE of \$22. The Alliance for Retired Americans said; "The lower numbers are the result of improvements made by the Affordable Care Act, and (we) hope members will remind their friends of that fact". Maybe, just maybe we'll be able to keep some of the COLA increase this time!

On a more sobering note; legislation proposed by a Senate Committee, among other disturbing proposals, would require Medicare-eligible retirees to enroll in Medicare Parts A & B and require the Postal Service to develop Medigap-like plans that offer comparable benefits within FEHBP for retirees and their dependents. Which begs the question; at what cost for the premiums, the level of coverage, particularly prescription drug benefits? This proposal

has the odor of a plan to migrate us to Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. This one bears careful watching!

As for FEHBP health insurance, I haven't seen other plan's premiums for 2012, but am told the APWU Health Plan's increase is below most other plans. APWU High Option Self & Family will be \$288.56, a modest increase of \$18.88 per month. \$18.88. Self Only monthly premium will be will be \$127.62.

**JUST GOTTA SAY IT!** I was struck by APWU Exec. V.P. Greg Bell's article in the Nov/Dec. American Postal Worker magazine titled; "The Threat of Privatization — From Within". Really?! No kidding?! What was the first clue? Members of my era may recall an article written nearly 30 years ago that circulated around the country titled; "The Enemy Within", authored by Brother Leo Persails warning of precisely what we're experiencing today. The leadership regarded Leo's vision as "far out" back then. Just wanted to remind anyone who remembers "The Enemy Within" stir in the 80's, and Leo's leadership with a vision. Too Soon Old — Too Late Smart!

**'TIS THE SEASON!** We all, and I in particular, have much to be thankful for this Turkey Day for my recouping health. And, for the opportunity to wish all my dear Sisters & Brothers A Blessed & Merry Christmas, and A Happy & Healthy 2012!

Be Strong!



by Gary  
Van  
Hoogstraten  
MPWU  
Advisor

## MPWU Advisor

# Thank You To Our Veterans And Military

I couldn't find a better day, with a chill in the air, slight drizzle, and a quiet morning at home, to write this article for the paper. As I write today I can't find enough words to express how much we owe our veterans and active military personal for what we have today. On the eve of Veterans Day, the Senate in Washington DC passed a bill to assist unemployed veterans and government contractors that includes the first, small slivers of President Obama's job agenda that he is likely to sign into law. Thursdays 95-0 vote, the bill will help protect jobs, yet will allow the lawmakers to return home for the holidays. Home to a place that is safe mainly because of our dedicated military and law enforcement officers.

There are about 240,000 unemployed veterans from war just in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are approximately 850,000 veterans overall that are out of work. There is expected to be around 1 million additional service members to return to civilian life by 2016. President Obama has said, "No veteran who fought for our nation should have to fight for a job when they come home". Before the vote was taken on Thursday, legislators received an e-mail stating "Members of Congress will have two clear options to choose from. Do something to create jobs for our returning veterans, or Do nothing at all". Here are some of the highlights from the bill:

- A tax credit of up to \$9,600, which is about double of the current amount

- New tax credit of up to \$5,600 for employees hiring veterans who have been job-hunting for at least 6 weeks, and up to \$2,400 if searching up to 4 weeks.

- Benefits for older veterans for up to a year of education or training at community colleges or technical schools.

- Mandatory career counseling and other job training for many troops leaving the military and improving the training that is being offered.

- Gives disabled veterans to begin applying for civilian jobs in the federal government before leaving the military.

- Repeals a law, due to take effect in 2013, requiring federal, state, and

*continued on page 11*





by Larry Moyer,  
Area 1  
Director

## Area 1 Director

# How Do You Feel Now?

**New Contract** — For those of you that supported the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement because we kept the COLA, received slight pay increases, and kept the no lay off clause. How do you feel now? The Postmaster General went to Congress to get the no layoff clause lifted. Who knows if this will happen? President Obama “caved” and supports the elimination of six day delivery. We have a proposal to cut approximately half of the mail processing plants.

Where with our “limits” on excessing are these employees going to go? Are you still “happy” with the lack of protections on these issues in our new 2010-2015 agreement?

**Workplace Environment** — The PMG and his minions at the headquarters, area and district levels do not care what for the unions or management organizations think. They are giving direction to lower rung managers to do what we say and don’t dare challenge us. This is the same mentality of management that led to the shooting in Royal Oak twenty years ago in 1981. My concern is that someone will get pushed too far and violence could occur again. But it

may not be a bargaining unit employee “snapping”. It could be a manager.

**Save Our Postal Service** — I participated along with our letter carrier friends at the recent rally outside Congressman Gary Peters office to those assembled. The Congressman spoke to us about his support of the Lynch bill 1351(which appears to be dead now). I was extremely disappointed with the lack of turnout by APWU members. Why?

I realize some were working but what about those who work tour I? The job you save may be your own, the regressive bills put together by Congressman Darrell Issa and our “Bi-partisan friends” in the US Senate will hurt the long term viability of the USPS.

**Postal Service Employees (PSE’s)** — The Detroit District went “full speed ahead” with hiring PSE clerks. We received one in my office. This created hard feelings among our “career” employees. I believe this was by design. We will hire PSE’s because we can. However in my office the PSE was terminated because she would not report for only two hours work in the late afternoon. Would you report for only two hours of work? This employee had another job and could make more money even at a lower hourly wage than

what PSE’s make in the USPS. Unfortunately, the clerk involved did not work enough days to have the right to file a grievance. I suggested she instead file an EEO complaint. Hypocritically, the supervisor who would not give this PSE many work hours would be outraged if her daughter would not get many work hours as a TE carrier. If the PSE’s are worked nationwide, in a very limited way and quit or get terminated, this will backfire on “growing” the APWU membership.

**Limits on Excessing** — Management are proposing in my office to excess 11 clerks and two custodial laborers. Management “found” a new home for the custodial laborers, but the staffing study is flawed and is being challenged in the grievance arbitration procedure. My understanding there is no where to place the clerks. So they have and will continue to be placed on “standby”, when will management cut the numbers of their ranks? In my office, the number of carriers still serves as 204-B’s continue because the “titled supervisors” are out on detail. And yet we wonder how and why the USPS “lost” five billion dollars in Fiscal Year 2010? Multiple this waste of money nationwide and it easy to see why the USPS is broke!

**Closing of Rural Post Offices** —

Reading my local newspaper I noticed that a small Associate Office in Northern Lapeer County is slated to close-Clifford, MI. This office was not on the “original” list. The carriers will move to another town under the DUO (Delivery Unit Optimization) and the clerks will be left scrambling for work hours. Again, this is being done despite the language of the Article 1 Section 6B limits on bargaining unit work. As stated above, “We will do what we (management) want to do! Go ahead and grieve it”.

**Area 1 Meeting with the members-at-large in August.** At this meeting, the members were asking many questions about the impact on DUO. This is a scenario where you have “winners” and “Losers”. (One that manage uses to divide employees by design). If your office losses your carriers, you do not “follow the work to the new office. However, if your offices gain carriers from another office, you could gain moiré work hours. As the meeting drew to a close, the mood was one of despair.

In closing — I wish a very happy holiday season, and remember that as Moe Biller used to say “The struggle continues”. . . Hopefully, 2012 will be a better year than 2011 was.

Until next time;  
Solidarity.



by Michael O'Hearn,  
National  
Business Agent

## NBA Report

# NTFT Or Nifty

The new contract created a new position called Non-Traditional Full-Time (NTFT), sometimes called nifty. I get a lot of questions about these new nifty positions. I thought that I could share with you some of the most common questions along with my answer.

**Question # 1.** “I am full-time regular in a plant. I have been full-time for twenty years. Now, management abolishes my job and many other full-time regulars, too. They are posting nifty jobs for us to bid with less than 40 hours per week. My supervisor tells me I better bid on one of those nifty jobs, because if I don’t and remain unassigned, I will be excessed out. Is this right?” Here is my answer, “No, this is not right. Excessing has nothing to do with whether or not you are unassigned. Excessing is by juniority. If management decides to excess, they must excess junior employees before they excess you regardless if you are in a bid job or are an unassigned employee. Don’t let them intimidate you into bidding a job you do not want. Our contract states that any full-time regular

at the signing of the contract (May 23, 2011), cannot be forced into a job with less than 40 hours per week or more than 44 hours per week. Only bid on a job if you want that job.”

**Question # 2.** “I am in a nifty job. I am scheduled 6 hours daily for five days a week with two non-scheduled days off. I was told that I can sign the Overtime Desired List. However, I was told that they cannot work me overtime. This makes no sense to me. Can you explain this to me?” Here is my answer, “Unfortunately, they are right on your scheduled work days except in an emergency. They can work you on your non-scheduled days overtime. However, on your scheduled days you would enter into out of schedule work after or before your scheduled hours, not overtime. Additionally, our contract states “These NTFT employees will normally work the number of hours (daily and/or weekly) indicated in their bid assignment, except in an emergency.”(page 190 of the flimsy contract) Therefore, on your scheduled work day of 6 hours, they cannot get you to the 8 hours of work necessary to get you to an over-

time status except in an emergency.”

**Question #3.** “I was a PTF in a level 21 office making more than 40 hours every week. I was converted to a NTFT schedule of only 30 hours per week. Why did the union negotiate a cut in work hours for me?” Here is my answer, “The union did not negotiate a cut in hours for you. The union negotiated an increase in your guaranteed hours. As a PTF you were only guaranteed 2 hours per week. As a NTFT you are guaranteed no less than 30 hours per week. Additionally, as a NTFT you have a set schedule every week. You have the right to bid any full-time regular job posted for bid in your bidding area. It was not the intent of the union to cut your hours. The truth is that management could have decided to cut your hours as a PTF at any time to as little as two hours per week. Management just took this opportunity at this time to cut work hours in your facility. If the work is still there, who is doing it? If management is doing it, have your local steward file a grievance on management performing bargaining unit work (Article 1.6). If other craft employees are

doing your work, have your local file a crossing crafts grievance (Article 7). If others in your craft are doing the work, then have your local file a grievance under Article 37.3.A.1. Here it says, ‘Every effort will be made to create desirable duty assignments from all available work hours for career employees to bid.’ Therefore, your local should argue that the hours of employees working regular overtime or a PSE working your former job, these hours should all be used to make a more desirable duty assignment for you.”

**Question # 4.** “I was a PTF in a level 21 office making 40 hours per week. Now, I am a nifty making 30 hours per week. Management hired a PSE who is doing the work I used to do and this PSE is making more hours than me. Can they do that?” Here is my answer, “No, that is wrong. Have your local steward file a grievance. Use Article 37.3.A.1. Argue that management must use those PSE hours to make a more desirable duty assignment for you.”

I hope this helps you in dealing with NTFT questions.



by Linda Turney  
National Business Agent

## Turney Talks Alternative Dispute Resolution Procedure (ADRP)

There are 7 items that have been identified to be referred to the ADRP.

1. Promotion Pay Disputes
2. FLSA Disputes
3. VERA Disputes
4. Article 12 Disputes
5. TACS Disputes
6. Non Traditional Full Time Roll (NTFT) roll out Disputes
7. Retiree Payroll Disputes

We are getting reports that managers want to make every NTFT dispute an ADRP dispute. This is simply not what the agreement states, only NTFT roll outs are processed in the ADRP. Other disputes regarding NTFT are dealt with in the grievance procedure.

The ADRP process was intended to resolve disputes speedily. It has a three step process which is local level, area/district level and national level. If the dispute has not been resolved by the parties through this process, it can then be certified for arbitration.

### PASSION

This time of year always gives way to reflection. Americans are angrier and more polarized than ever. We have the worst economy since the Great Depression. Politicians have hit an all time low with Congress receiving an 8% approval rating. The rise of the regressive right has finally inspired Occupy Wall Street, Senior Citizens, Postal Workers and others to stand up and prompt progressive protests in reaction. September 27, 2011 we marched nationwide, and successfully created a media event to inform the nation.

Yet, paradoxically, many Postal Workers have immediately lost passion. They feel they have fulfilled their obligations and duties to our Union by showing up at the rally, or filling out the post card sent by APWU Headquarters or making a phone call to Congress. The assumption that the Union is an insurance policy in which you pay your dues and expect to be covered is a misconception of Unionism. The Union is an organization that becomes what its active members do for it and within it.

We have concrete proposals offered by APWU Headquarter officers. We must find our voices in the grass-roots and inspire our members that these proposals are not yawn-inducing, but the passion that drives our Union and our nation to stand up. Article 1 Section 8 of the United States Constitution states: Congress shall have the power to establish Post Offices and Post Roads.

The average Citizen does not know about bullying postal managers, no postage stamps to sell, payments for

pre-retirement health benefits. Citizens don't know that payments to our retirement are a way to transfer USPS profits to the Federal Government debt. When the regressive right wants reductions in Government, they are talking about the USPS. Our members must spread the word of these inequities at the grass-roots level.

Going to the rally was great; thanks to all who participated. Making a phone call to Congress is important; thanks to all who called. We must continue to fight the barrage of regressive right proposals that seek

to destroy our way of life.

A passionless membership may be dangerous for APWU. Our problems will not wait. We require every member everywhere to remain active and continue to take bold action now.

Visit your Congressman and Senators; make appointments for when they are in town. Show up with your family, friends and coworkers to let them know what legislation we support and we are watching what they are doing. We want them to oppose Rep. Issa bill HR 2309 and support HR 1351. Write a letter to the editor of the local news-

paper and explain why the Post Office is running in a deficit and that the Post Office does not receive any money from tax dollars. Organize and attend local rallies disputing the closing of Post Offices and plants. If your plant or Post Office is not threatened, help your neighbor. Be vigilant on the work room floor for contract violations and stand up for your rights.

As always have a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season. I look forward to working with you, helping to teach management the correct way to apply our new contract.

## Thank You To Our Veterans And Military

*continued from page 9*  
local governments to withhold 3 percent of their payments to contractors.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont, a long time sponsor of the tax credits for vets said the bill is a win fir the economy and the right thing to for our veterans. The House is expected to approve the bill resoundingly next week and would send

it to President Obama for his signature.

As I sit here on this Veterans Day evening what an awesome display on ESPN of the first ever college basketball game on an aircraft. From the opening of the 7:00 session until the final click on the time clock, was breathtaking to say the least. The better team one that night but all showed another thing we can be thankful for

because we are the United States of America. I know Brother Smeekens can sit back and be thankful for such a wonderful event and day for our military. John has done an excellent job in this position ever since it was created and he was the first Veterans Director of the Michigan Postal Workers Union. We are all proud of him also. Until Next Time.

## I Knew It, I Knew It, I Knew It !!!

*continued from page 4*  
up both types of bulbs and compared the stats they were the same except for the price. The GE bulbs were more money than the Everyday Value brand but the thing that surprised me the most was the fact that GE was made in MEXICO and the Everyday Value brand was made in — get ready for this — the USA in a company in Cleveland, Ohio.

So throw out the myth that you cannot find products you use every day that are made right here.

So on to another aisle — Bounce Dryer Sheets . . . Yep, you guessed it, Bounce cost more money and is made in Canada . The Everyday Value brand was less money and MADE IN THE USA! I did laundry yesterday and the dryer sheets performed just like the Bounce Free I have been using for years and at almost half the price!

My challenge to you is to start reading the labels when you shop for everyday things and see what you can find that is made in the USA — the job you save may be your own or your neighbors!

If you accept the challenge, pass this on to others in your address book so we can all start buying American, one light bulb at a time! Stop buying from overseas companies! (We should have awakened a decade ago . . .)

Let's get with the program and help our fellow Americans keep their jobs and create more jobs here in the USA. I passed this on. Will you ???



# If You're Not Angry, You're Not Paying Attention

continued from page 5

GOP War on Voting", which is subtitled "In a Campaign Supported by the Koch Brothers Republicans are Working to Prevent Millions of Democrats from Voting Next Year", by Ari Berman. He outlined the legislation that has already passed in a number of states by their Republican controlled state senates in order to suppress the vote of American citizens.

In May, the GOP controlled legislature in Florida passed a law requiring anyone who signs up new voters to hand in registration forms to the State Board of Elections within 48 hours of collecting them and to comply with a barrage of onerous bureaucratic requirements. Those found to have submitted late forms would face a \$1,000.00 fine as well as possible felony convictions.

As a result, the law threatens to turn civic minded volunteers into inadvertent criminals. The League of Women Voters denounced the legislation as good old fashion voter suppression. The League of Women Voters announced that it was ending its voter registration efforts in Florida where they had been signing up new members for the past 70 years.

Rock the Vote, which helped 2.5 million voters to register in 2008 could soon

follow suit. "We are hoping not to shut down", said Heather Smith, President of Rock the Vote, "but I can't say with any certainty that we will be able to continue the work we are doing."

## CUTS TO EARLY VOTING

Nearly 30% of the electorate voted early in the year 2008 and they favored Obama over McCain by 10 percentage points.

States like Florida and Ohio that are controlled by conservative Republican governors have dramatically curtailed early voting for 2012. Next year early voting will be cut from 14 to 8 days in Florida and from 35 days to 11 days in Ohio with limited hours on weekends. In addition, both states banned voting on the Sunday before the election, a day when black churches mobilize their constituency.

## PHOTO IDS

By far the biggest change in election rules for 2012 is the number of states requiring government issued photo IDs. This is the most important tactic in the Republican war on voting. In April 2008 the Supreme Court upheld a photo ID law in Indiana even though there was no evidence of any voter

fraud that was committed; the new law is designed to prevent this non-existent voter fraud.

## SIGNATURE AND 2 YEAR EXPIRATION DATE

In Texas under emergency legislation passed by the GOP dominated legislature and signed by Governor Rick Perry, a concealed weapon permit is considered an acceptable ID but a student ID is not.

Republicans in Wisconsin meanwhile mandated that students can only vote if their IDs include a current address, birth date, signature and 2 year expiration date, requirements that no college or university ID in the state currently meets. As a result 242,000 students in Wisconsin may lack the documentation required to vote next year.

And also in Wisconsin, roughly half of all black and Hispanic residents do not have a driver's license and the state staffs barely half as many Department of Motor Vehicles as Indiana, a quarter of which are open less than one day a month. To make matters worse, Governor Scott Walker tried to shut down 16 more DMVs, many of them located in Democratic leaning areas. In one case, Walker planned to close the DMV in Fort Atkinson, a liberal stronghold, while opening a new office 30 minutes away in the conservative district of Watertown.

One of the most restricted laws requiring voter ID was passed in South Carolina. To obtain the free state ID now required to vote, the 178,000 South Carolinians who currently lack one must pay for a passport or a birth certificate. Under the new law, many elderly black residents who were born at home in the segregated South and never had a birth certificate, must now go to family court to prove their identity.

Obviously, those who have created these barriers to the voting registration and voting process are hopeful that these efforts are not put forward and these efforts and expenses are not initiated and that these individuals will not be involved in the democratic voting process.

## DISENFRANCHISING EX-CONVICTS

In Florida, Governor Rick Scott

instantly disenfranchised close to a 100,000 ex-felons who have paid their penalty to society for their non-violent crimes by prohibiting them from voting, and this law would also prohibit another 1.1 million prisoners from being allowed to vote after serving their time.

President Clinton was asked why should we disenfranchise people forever once they have paid their debt to society, his response was because most of them in Florida were African American and Hispanics and would tend to vote for Democrats, that's why.

In 2008, which saw the highest voter turnout in four decades, fewer than two-thirds of eligible voters went to the polls. And according to a study by MIT, 9 million voters were denied an opportunity to cast ballots that year because of problems with their voter registration (13%), long lines at the polls (11%), uncertainty about the location of the polling place (9%), or lack of proper ID (7%).

So, as you can see, from all of the above, the Republicans intend to control state legislatures, continue their hold on the House of Representatives, win back the senate and take over the White House by manipulation of the voting process via state legislatures. Depriving citizenry of the United States their constitutional right to vote is an absolute disgrace. We as working class citizens should be making everyone we know mindful of this intended discrimination against working people, people of color, elderly people and all those Americans who have a desire to be involved in the democratic election process.

Now is the time for us to begin to understand what regulations our respective states are putting into place and prepare our voting electorate by informing them and making them understand how to get around these impediments. We must be prepared to leap over these hurdles in order that our citizenry are properly registered and can come out with a vengeance on Election Day and show America and the politicians that we will not stand for their attempts to suppress our right to vote and deny us our democratic entitlement.

## Various Items Of Interest

continued from page 2

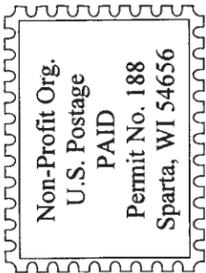
### Scholarship Information

It's time to alert you to the **\$150,000 in scholarships** available from Union Plus. Scholarships are for union members, their spouses and dependent children. If you would like to apply, you must have your applications submitted by the January 31, 2012 deadline. The application is now online only. Go to

[UnionPlus.org](http://UnionPlus.org) for more information.

### UNION PLUS MOTOR CLUB

For \$69 per year, you are covered if you need: Flat Tire Assistance, Emergency Gas, Battery Charge, Lockout Service, and/or Towing. Check out this service, offered through Union Plus at [UnionPlus.org](http://UnionPlus.org).



Time Dated Information!  
Please Expedite Delivery.



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