

# Michigan

## MESSENGER

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## President's Report



by John Marcotte,  
President

### How Far Will The USPS Managers Go?

Reading my previous articles you will notice that they tend to look at "Network Realignment" from the perspective of how it will affect all the locals collectively and rightfully so. In this article to correctly describe the extent that USPS managers will go to needlessly harass employees, alienate our customers, increase cost and drive away revenue all under the guise of Network Realignment I will look at one small processing center.

497 is a extremely rural area in rugged northern Michigan. The mail is processed at the Gaylord post office in a combination post office processing facility. Greater Michigan District management has been trying to remove mail processing from the Gaylord post office going on ten years. There have been at least three AMP studies where moving the mails from the Gaylord post office to the Traverse City P&DF. All have reported that it will not save money to process this mail in Traverse City. This is mostly due to geography. Gaylord in

located dead center in Northern Lower Michigan on I-75 (the main North south interstate) and M-32 (the main east west two lane highway).

Enter Network Realignment, which is not driven by accurate data and is not about saving money. Its sole purpose is to force the privatization of the postal service at any cost. By the time you read this, barring a miracle, 497 mails will be processed in Traverse City. The claim of the AMP study was that 3 million dollars in savings would result in this move. Lets take a look. The transportation data in the AMP was false, inaccurate and misleading. The only constant was the underreporting of the expense of trucking mail an addition 2 hours to be processed and back. If simple math errors are corrected the obvious increase in trucking expense is shown. Also there was no additional fuel expense listed. By postal magic mail will travel farther and cost less. If this is the case we should process the entire countries mail on the surface of the moon, as it would be darn near free at that distance.

The idled Gaylord employees have zero jobs within 50 miles so they will be fully paid to do nothing. The Gaylord facility by the USPS's owns measuring system is more efficient than Traverse City. It will require more employees to work 497 mails in Traverse City than in Gaylord. Long before the slow down of the mail went into effect a \$750,000.00 bulk mail account moved their delivery service to one of our competitors because the USPS could not guarantee Saturday delivery. They never would have explored this option if the USPS kept mail processing in Gaylord.

The short version is the USPS will spend money to slow down the mail, relocate employees against their will, reduce service to its customers and drastically reduce revenues. This is the death spiral where the USPS keeps cutting service to save money and losses more money by revenue loss than the service reduction saves. So why do this? Answer: To privatize a 70 billion dollar government service and turn the most profitable parts over to big corporate po-

litical donors. The cherry on top is this will make almost a half million union workers unemployed in one fell swoop. Looking at the massive losses at one very small facility in rural Michigan you can only imagine the incredible amount of money that will be spent to complete the job pre-funding retiree health care started.

The destruction of the USPS.

The House of Representatives has done nothing with S1789 and is refusing to put it up for a vote. We must not let them get away with this. There is a political price to pay for destroying the post office either by direct action or gross inaction. Every APWU member should contact their representative during the Memorial Day Recess and insist on action. Inform them that there will be a price to pay in November from the American people for what they fail to do today. This round of closers is not the end of Network Realignment it is only the beginning. The end result, if we don't stop it, will be a government without a post office and the end is near.

## Legislative Report



by Paul Felton,  
Legislative Director

### Fighting For Survival

They are trying to destroy the Postal Service. Who is? Republicans in Congress, and their allies in the highest levels of postal management, starting with Mr. Donahoe.

The APWU stands in their way.

If no action is taken by Congress, the Postal Service will change the service standards, converting next day delivery to 2-3 day delivery, and set off a chain reaction (better described as a "death spiral") that will lose us customers, causing more red ink, which will be used as justification for more cutbacks. If no action is taken right now, so much damage will be done (especially in terms of loss of customers) that we will never be able to recover.

At stake is the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of postal workers. At stake is a tremendous service provided to every

community in the country. At stake are job opportunities for the men and women coming home from Afghanistan and Iraq. At stake are some important values. And as in so many legislative issues, our opponents are spreading lies, using phrases like "taxpayer bailout" and claiming "labor costs" are causing the red ink on the USPS bottom line.

**April 10** - On April 10, I attended a meeting of MPWU officials in Flint, Michigan with Senator Debbie Stabenow. The meeting was set up by our MPWU President, John Marcotte. The discussion was very productive, and I left the meeting convinced the Senator understands our issues and supports us. Any political figure can nod their head and say they agree when we speak to them; what impressed me is that she expressed some ideas as well as we did and provided helpful suggestions about how we can spread

our message. (jumping ahead a little, a coworker who watched the Senate debate on C-Span leading up to the April 25 vote remarked that Senator Stabenow voted the right way on every vote; I just smiled).

**April 17** - On April 17 APWU members around the country handed out fliers to postal customers, many of whom were mailing their tax returns. We were joined by the Mail Handlers Union. There were eight such mobilizations in Michigan and several hundred across the country. I am proud to say the idea for the April 17 mobilization originated with an email I sent to National APWU President Guffey (with copies to MPWU President Marcotte, my own Local President Woods and Myke Reid in Washington). We handed out over 1000 fliers in Royal Oak; I have no idea how many people were reached across the country.

**April 25** - An amended version of

Senate Bill 1789 passed on April 25. This bill is far from perfect. But if it passes the House and becomes law, it will slow down the mad race to oblivion that Donahoe and the Republicans are leading. It will make it harder to close plants and small post offices and will keep the service standards (at least to a large degree). The bill also has some bad language on injured employees and opens the door to eliminating Saturday delivery 2 years from now. But at least it will stop the immediate degradation of service standards and the immediate disaster that would result.

**Republicans** - Members should take note that John McCain, the Republican who ran against Barack Obama last time around, proposed amendments that would eliminate the no-layoff clause, allow for an immediate reduction to 5-day delivery, and increase employee contributions to

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by Michael A. Long, Editor

## Editor's Report

# Thank You Sir, May I Have Another?

This line, immortalized in the 1978 Animal House Movie by Kevin Bacon is as prevalent in the Postal Service today as it was in the culture then. The only difference is now, instead of the long paddle used in the movie, we are being tortured in the media and even our Service talks; saying less service and closing the offices are a good thing. We all know better, but, just in the meantime, can we have another? While I could probably make a whole article out of sayings that represent the current state of the Postal Service and the country as a whole (the most prevalent of those is: Those who don't learn or forget history, are doomed to repeat it.) I will spare you this time.

Brothers and Sisters, we need to stand up. We need to rise up. We need to take back and show our elected leaders that we do not endorse or condone what they are doing. Corporate America has gotten what they want; the money, the power, and the "puppets" to ensure that they will continue to receive it. The Supreme Court ruling that states that a Corporation is the same as a person, didn't only put the nail in the coffin, but make it more like a Screw. Harder to undue, and in the process, we all are getting it done to us as well.

It isn't like I am asking you to take up a sign and a blow horn and go stand on a corner (if you want to, that is fine); but I am asking you to get involved. Get involved with writing letters to your representatives. Not going on-line and sending a pre-made e-Mail. I am talking about a real, genuine, pen-in-hand letter (if you need to use the computer to type it, go ahead and do so, you can always use a handwriting font...just make sure to print it out, put it in an envelope with a stamp, and mail it). It is said that one handwritten letter, carries about the same weight as 150 pre-made, just sign your name and mail it in (or click here websites) postcards/e-mails.

You don't like to write? Then contribute. We make a good salary. Would it hurt to give 25, 50 or more to your candidate. Believe it or not, while a \$10 gift, might give you bragging rights with your co-workers; it really doesn't go a long way with the person you are giving it to. However, a \$250 or so gift sometimes does make it better. However, if this is too much, every little bit does help. In addition, if you want to make that money worth even more, think about giving it to COPA. Those \$10, combined with other \$10, will then be contributed to various "friendly" politicians and those running against "unfriendly ones, to make a larger impact. Believe it or not, because of contributions like this, the APWU was brought in and advised some people with the current legislation.

If you don't like to write, or due to other financial issue, you can't contribute, then contact your local politician's office (the one that actually supports working men and women and the middle class) and volunteer. Right now it is Election season! Believe it or not, April is the start of the November election. Most people don't know this, but all that hype and hoopla with the Republican primary, really didn't do much. According to must political pundits, most American's remember things within the preceding six months of voting. Prior to that, people really don't care when it actually comes time to vote. Something that happened a year or so ago, usually is the farthest thing on someone's mind. It is what is current. Is their job stable? Is the gas prices to high? What is unemployment like? What is the home value (is it going up or down)? A whole lot of various things. But it mainly happens with the six months prior to voting. Hence . . . RIGHT NOW! Go help with a campaign. Yes . . . we are Hatched. Meaning there is some things we can't do. However, there is A LOT that we can.

We can go to a campaign and make calls for them. We can go in and help them in the office. We can help go put up signs for them along the roadside. We can also go out with them on the road and go to speaking engagements with them. Just make sure if you do, you are NOT in any Postal uniform. The main thing with being hatched...you can't speak or give the appearance that your actions are in any way looking like your agency (the USPS) is supporting this candidate. I personally believe that this makes the biggest impact. Working with the politician first hand, and when and if this person is elected, he/she will remember you. When you call him/her with a problem, who do you think will get an answer quicker? Someone that he/she doesn't know, or someone who was there for them when they needed someone.

While I would love to say do all three, I am also a realist. I know that for most people, time and money are in short supply. However, instead of watching that rerun of MASH on TV Land, take 30 minutes, and make a difference. You will be surprised what that will and can do. Right now, you can make a difference. While corporations might have the money, and the power, you also have the power to affect change. However, you have to get up, and get active and become involved.

Otherwise, you might as well . . . well, lets say . . . Thank You Sir, May I have Another once again come November 7th. Because if we leave well enough alone, the Corporations (and the Postal Service) will continue to not only screw us, but the country as a whole. (NOTE: Voting is November 6th this year)

With Memorial Day fast approaching, I am reminded of those who have fought and died to protect us and our way of lives either overseas (in war or peacetime) or close to home. Thank you!

In closing I would like to also thank you for the opportunity you have given me as your editor for these past two years and since taking the reins of this publication back in 2002. You have allowed me to grow in this job and it has been a wonderful experience.

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.

Make your voice heard on Capitol Hill.



Write your congressional representatives!



by Jason Rushing, Maintenance Craft Director

## Maintenance Craft Report

# Back To Their Old Tricks Again — Stay Informed!

I attended April 28-30, 2012 the BMC Conference in Memphis Tennessee. It was good to talk with representatives from 20 other BMC's, there are 21 BMCs in total throughout the country, to see how things were going with them. Everyone seemed to have most of the same common problems. There were a few unique problems that each BMC had due to local fact circumstances. You cannot have a snowplowing problem in Florida or a Palm tree trimming problem in Michigan-duh! I started my article with this BMC info to tell you something that you probably already know. All Postal Facilities, regardless

of what they process or where they are, have the same problems as we do, **POSTAL MANAGEMENT!** If you can get beyond that, this isn't a bad job!

Real quick, I just want to reiterate about upcoming events. We just went through the Open Season and I hope everyone did what they could testing for all jobs in their facility. With all the proposed changes going on, I want to stress a few things. Keep educating yourself on what is going on locally and nationally so you can make informed decisions. I had one individual call asking about a transfer because their plant was

possibly going to have excessing. The problem was, the facility they wanted to e-reassign to was a facility that was *already* going through excessing. Good thing they looked before they leaped! Also, **DO NOT** believe rumors on the floor unless it is signed off and on paper. Ask a Union official that may know. Call me, I usually have information if it is true. I cannot and will not go off of rumors. Contractually Management is not supposed to tell employees about a major closing or relocation unless the Union has been notified at higher levels and something in on paper.

By the time you read this, the Post Office has already stated changes that they *want* to make. Do not make any rash decisions on moving, e-reassigning etc until you know all your options. I know it is hard because we went through it here, but you get the most rights when they have to do it right! **MAKE THEM DO IT RIGHT!** Exercise your rights as a Union Postal Employee! Questions ask your representative or call me!

As always I appreciate the opportunity to represent the MPWU Maintenance members!

In Union Solidarity,.

## — Fighting For Survival —

*continued from page 1*

health benefit plans. Other Republicans introduced amendments that would eliminate the postal monopoly on access to mailboxes and eliminate collective bargaining altogether!

On the other hand, there were several Republicans who voted for 1789 and helped get it passed. However, I must add that the reason the bill is so weak is a lot of compromises had to be made to attract the Republican votes needed to reach the threshold of 60 votes.

**The House** - It will be harder to get helpful legislation through the House, where the Republicans have a majority. Just in case they are still voting on this issue by the time you read this, here are a few points you might raise to your Congressional Rep if you live in a Republican district and your rep is not ordinarily on the side of labor: 1) If they downsize the Post Office, thousands of veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq will be deprived of an opportunity for gainful employment with USPS. 2) Keeping people employed with USPS helps balance the budget, because no tax dollars are used to support the operation of the Post Office but every postal employee pays federal taxes, 3) Closing a lot of rural Post Offices will hurt a lot of predominantly Republican areas, and 4) Degrading service standards will have a harmful impact on small businesses that rely on efficient mail service.

**May 1** - On May 1st my Local President Roscoe Woods, Veterans Director John Smeekens, and MVS Craft Director Joe Wrobel met with Republican Congresswoman Candice Miller. All three of these union officials are veterans, which was part of our strategy. Later that day I was talking on the phone with Roscoe about how the meeting went when he said to hold on, he had a call coming in from Washington and he better take it

and call me back. It turns out the caller was someone from Candice Miller's office saying she was going to sign on to HR-1351 (the good bill proposed by Congressman Lynch (D-MA). Good job, gentlemen! And it goes to show, if we can be creative and flexible in our approach, we just might be able to swing enough Republicans to join with all the Democrats in passing legislation that at least serves as a stopgap to prevent the calamity that PMG Donahoe's approach would bring.

**Values** - I mentioned earlier that important values are at stake. One example

is that I believe no community should be considered too poor or too insignificant to have reliable postal service. The 3600 neighborhood Post Offices slated for closing are concentrated in two areas: small rural communities and poor urban areas. In the rural areas, the Post Office is actually more of a community center, and a lot would be lost by closing it down. In the urban areas (for example, about a half-dozen Post Offices in Detroit are on the list) the customers are less likely to have reliable transportation to get to another office miles away. Do we value universal

service? Or are we going to take away service from those areas that don't have enough clout to stop us?

The other value at stake is honesty. If Congressional Republicans were honest, they would acknowledge that Congress caused the postal deficit, and they would support reasonable measures to fix it.

I urge every reader of this article to follow events closely, write letters and make phone calls when asked to do so, and pay attention to how your representative votes. If they do not support our struggle for survival, vote the bum out of office!



by Jennifer Amos, HR/Injury Comp. Director

## HR/Injury Comp. Director Report

# Thank You!

union a lot of money.

For many reasons, I will not run for Human Relations Director again. I hope if our paths crossed in the last four years, it was a positive experience.

I have enjoyed meeting and serving the members of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, thank you for allowing me to do so.

Good luck in future endeavors.

Greetings.

I want to tell you how hard I've worked on your behalf for the last four years as Human Relations Director. I've had the pleasure of helping members get their claims approved, win appeals and helped them receive thousands of dollars in compensation when it seemed hopeless. I can't tell you the exact number of members I spoke to or helped, but it seems like it was in the hundreds.

I did all this without using any LWOP, thereby saving the state union a great deal of money. I spoke to members on the phone or emailed them as well as meeting stewards at conferences (or conventions) to help them assist their members once they got home. In this day and age, with our current technology, there wasn't any reason to travel to meet members that needed my help, again saving our state

Thanksgiving is a day when we pause to give thanks for the things we have.



Memorial Day is a day when we pause to give thanks to the people who fought for the things we have.



by Larry  
Moyer,  
Area 1  
Director

## Area 1 Director

# Rural Office Cuts

As of this writing, we have the early out incentive of \$20,000 being provided to Postmasters, targeting Level 16 and below offices. I assume the plan is to then staff the offices with a lead clerk per our National agreement. In my Area 1(480-483) post offices such as Allenton, Avoca, Harsens Island, Jeddo, Lakeville, North Street, Smiths Creek, Goodells are proposed to be cut from from 8 hours to 4 or 6 hours. Will an office that is not being considered for downgrade suddenly become a "candidate" for retail reductions if the postmaster takes the early out offer?

While this is just the latest proposal from PMG Donahoe and company; as opposed to shutting down 3,000 rural offices, this will alienate our customers. We have had an impact with our members of Congress to get them to support Senate bill (S.1789). Already this is turning into a rural vs. urban fight. Generally speaking Democrats represent large urban areas, while Republican House members represent rural areas. And as bill S.1789 works its way through the house, some Republicans House members want postal cuts in the urban areas (which the Democratic members will oppose) and leave the rural areas alone. No cuts are needed in my humble opinion.

Why can't Congress just repeal the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 (PAEA)? Admit that it was

a mistake to force on the postal service a burden that no other organization in the private sector, or government agency has the obligation to pre-fund the retirement fund. But how many members of the House and Senate who voted for PAEA will now admit they were wrong?

I am encouraged by Republicans such as Congressman Louie Gohmert (TX-01). While I disagree with his stands on most other issues, this congressman in a speech on the House floor blasted the postal managers who are proposing to close a mail processing plant in Tyler Texas. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsqp67B\\_A1s&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsqp67B_A1s&feature=youtu.be)

This Conservative member of the House spoke of what I have been saying for years. Outside of the Congressional made deficit the USPS is facing, postal management at all levels is inept and incompetent. It is defiantly a video worth watching!

**FIX THE USPS** - This issue is the future of the USPS itself. With a divided congress (House in Republican control, Senate in Democratic control) the proposals to "reform" the postal service are going nowhere despite Senate bill (S.1789). I do not see the Republican "Tea Party" members supporting S.1789. So what happens to reforming the USPS?

The larger issues for the USPS long term are a down sided operation as more people use the internet for bill payment

and communications, the future looks bleak. Young people generally come in to the post office only to mail college textbooks they sell on line. This is the future facing us folks!

We will once again be asked by the Democratic party to support candidates who will support bills such as the "Free Choice Act" and others bills of interest to organized labor. Where was Congress and President Obama to push a progressive agenda when the Democrats were in control of both the House and Senate in 2008 to 2010? Why did they not push postal reform legislation? Other than health care reform, the progressive agenda was abandoned by our "friends". We know most Republicans such as Mitt Romney support a corporate agenda and the wealthy. But do Democrats care much more about the middle class? Consequently, I have very little faith in our elected representatives to achieve RESULTS to fix the problems with the US Postal Service.

**VILLAGE POST OFFICE** - An issue for the members in my area as well as those in other rural areas around the country is the "village post office" concept. According to a recent article in the *New York Times* (March 22, 2012) the Brant, Michigan post office was closed (Southwest of Saginaw) when the postmaster retired, and a village post office was established in a local grocery store. We need to be vigilant in watching this, and challenge this as it occurs. I inquired

of Detroit District Management and as of this date only the Argyle, Michigan Post office (in the Northern part of our district, in Sanilac County, in Michigan's thumb) is being considered for conversion to a "Village Post office". If only 10-20% of the rural offices became village post offices nationwide many jobs would be eliminated.

**Staffing issues** - In many offices the staffing is so short that having a clerk call in and another leave to attend to a family emergency leaves long lines at the window and this writer was working 10.5 hours today cover the absences. I find it simply amazing that the Detroit District will not allow N/S overtime, but will work employee's penalty overtime! Would it not make more sense to staff correctly? But we are driving our customers away by not staffing correctly? As Former National Business Agent and Central Regional Coordinator Leo Persails used to say, "Management per Article 3 of the agreement has the right to "mismanage". They may drive the postal service into the ground with their decisions, but have the "right" to do so". I am paraphrasing here, this was how I remember Brother Persail's comment.

How true it is! Many of the bone-headed decisions being made by management at all levels, will destroy the what remaining support our customers have for the USPS. PMG Donahoe and his cohorts are truly the "enemy within".

Until next time.



by Robin  
Ely,  
Area 3  
Director

## Area 3 Director

# Please Enforce Article 1.6

I want to start this article with a big THANK YOU to all the union member in the 481 area that I represent. We have worked great together to get the little things settled in each office that I represent. I hope to be able to represent you in the future. If you are having any type of problem feel free to call me.

We need to make sure that we enforce Article 1.6. We need to protect our work.

**Stay Informed!  
Read your Union  
Newspaper!**



If management is performing bargaining unit work in your office they are taking work and money away from you. We need to fight this battle together. Call your steward, write your statement which should include who performed the work, how long they performed it and which clerk it affected. Did a PTF get sent home early? Was there enough clerks schedule to perform all the duties?

If carriers are performing clerk duties that is also a grievance. I have heard that in one of the offices the clerks sort the letters, flats and presorted bundles and the carrier come and get the mail themselves. The clerks do not distribute the mail. That is a grievance. Distributing mail to the carriers is clerk work. If this is happening in your office call your steward. We need to claim all of our work. We need to protect our jobs.

There is also a threat in our area of more excessing. If someone retires the jobs are not being reposted for bid. They are being abolished and the work is being

distributed to other clerks. Some jobs are over burdened. Keep track of the work that is not being performed in a timely manner. The clerk craft is shrinking. We need to make sure all jobs are being performed by a clerk.

Attention all window clerks: Make sure you record all transactions in the Pos-One. There is no way for us to protect our window jobs unless you perform all the duties in the pos-one. Make sure you are keying in every transaction. Make sure you use the other customer service button when you process all transactions that do not require scanning a product or barcode. Example: When you give directions to a customer, summons a supervisors, give a customer a passport application, vacation hold card or a moving packet and any other transaction. Get to know what your choices are and use them.

The other important function all clerks are responsible for is making sure you are punching the right function on the time clock. If you are putting up PO Box

mail make sure you are on 769. If you are in distribution you are either on 150 letters, 170 flats or 241 dumping. If you are working the window make sure you are on 568. If you are not aware of what function you should be punching to go to your supervisor and request a list of function for the clock rings. We need to make sure our time is credited to the jobs we are performing to keep our jobs.

The membership needs to be informed that if you have a 204B in your office you can file an EEO on that individual. 204B's are held to the same standard of any one in a management position.

Don't be afraid to call your steward. Don't be afraid to write your statements and file your grievances. It is your right as a union member. We need to work together to save the Post Office.

I hope everyone has a great spring/summer. I will continue to serve as your union steward. If you have a problem or you need to talk about a situation feel free to call me. I am here for you.



by Thomas Lothamer, Area 8 Director

## Area 8 Director

# Somebody Call A Cop!

The lies, deceit, lack of education and down right thievery of or jobs and our livelihoods are at stake. We have negotiated a contract and agreed to its contents and yet management on all levels is turning its back. At the lowest level, information requests seem to be bothersome and so they either take their time filling it or they don't fill it at all. I just finished recently with Department of Labor charges on an office that was either too obstinate or to damn ignorant to complete the task. Six months and a formal hearing in front of a judge later we are still waiting, this stuff is pretty simple and very clear.

Postmasters are performing bargaining unit work well beyond their limitations, instructing carriers to perform the clerk craft work because it is an "emergency", what!!! Bullshit that is the most loosely used argument that is

regularly thrown at me in the course of my job as a representative. They are like "well I had to get the mail out" yeah, and you have had months to fix this problem, district won't let them hire except for the occasional PSE and that is only because they are disposable without the same collective rights that most of us take for granted. Yes, I said take for granted, We all want to complain about the problem but so few of us do anything about it and when I do get the occasional phone call or statement from someone who is standing up for themselves and the union's negotiated rights. The Postmaster won't fill the request for information, or just continue to violate do to the "needs of the service". "I had to get the mail out, it was an emergency." See what I mean.

Then if I can get the statement and the information request filled timely, then the formality of filing a step one is initiated. I call this a "formality" because the Postmasters can't or won't resolve anything because some

jackass in labor has told them to deny the grievance and send it up. Violating the contract once again by not resolving grievances at the lowest level. The USPS is spending a lot of money and showing just how broke they are by denying grievances that are easily resolved but rather than work together with us as they have agreed in writing, they would rather scoff at our process and fill the employees with gloom and doom about our future and how grateful we are to have a job. Oh, thank you management, could you stand on a chair for me so that I can kiss your ass in an elevated place because I am not worthy to even make eye contact with you, you are so much wiser than we are, would you like me to work a little faster and off of the clock so I can make you look even more superior and help you with your budget.

I could go on for hours, even days with this but I will keep this short, similar problems exist at step two with the designee playing games with zero

integrity in the performance of our collective bargaining rights and so we have to appeal these to our National Business Agents whose work load cannot even be imagined. I know they need help as do we here in the field, if I had my druthers in this situation, I would demand more representation, canvass the field, force these managers to do their job and resolve these issues at the lowest level.

There is not enough accountability for their actions and it certainly is not fast enough to be effective. Stay in touch with your politicians, pay your Union dues and saddle up because this ride is going to be a long one. I wish we could just pick up the phone and call 911 to have the police respond and lock up these criminals with the title of USPS manager. These crooks are stealing our livelihood and we need more effective measures to deal with them. Somebody please, call a cop.

P.S. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve, I wish I could have done more.



by Gary Van Hoogstraten MPWU Advisor

## MPWU Advisor

# Drowning In Red Ink!

The Post Office recently reported a quarterly loss of \$3.2 billion and blamed Congress for blocking the agency's cost cutting efforts to offset declining mail volume and mounting cost for future retiree health benefits. From January to March of this year, the Post Office loss more than \$1 billion for the same period ;last year. The Senate passed an amended version, (S. 1789) on April 25th. This bill is flawed, and for better that the original bill, we all know that this is nothing but a bandage. The bill fails to provide the Post Office with the relief it needs to meet the challenges of the future.

I happened to watch the Senate hearings last week about the Post Office and the bills and amendments. Watching it reminded me of many cocktail parties or hospitality rooms, without drinks. All these people were walking around, mingling amongst each other, not paying attention to any of the Senators that have the microphone discussing the Post Office and business at hand. Then when it came down to a vote, which unless it a yes or no, the vote is taken by alphabetical order. I am sure they all know what letter their last name begins with. And most of the time their name had to be called again because they were no where in site or they were talking and did not hear their name called. These votes took at least 45 minutes.

In the end of the second day of sessions, they voted to put a hold on everything until the deadline of this article, May 15th. And then they said no action would take place as far as a vote until after the November elections. You know, for political reasons or someone losing any votes that they do not want people to know how they voted until after the elections. Sad isn't it? We elect these people and when we ask them for support, they have to vote by party lines, and not by what we ask them to do. They may not close all small offices,

but Brother Moyer from Troy, sent me a PDF file of all the Post Offices they will cut hours. I am sure if contacted, Larry would e-mail you the file if asked. Thanks Larry. We still have a huge fight on our hands, and as all of you know, Michigan has never backed off and will not now. I know this is the same for all APWU members and locals. I am not sure if any of you had noticed but I never said Postal Service in anything above. That's because, the Postmaster General, down to all his cronies, all they want to do is

destroy the Post Office. They don't care about budgets. If any of our Union officials ran their local or state organizations this way, they would be voted out the next election. All these people in Washington, in management, want to do is to privatize the Post Office. We can't let them do it and will continue to fight them not only on the workroom floor, but to protect the Post Office.

I will close for now, wishing all my Brother and Sister Union Members and families a safe and enjoyable summer.

## S. 1789 Voting Record On APWU Priority Amendments

We wanted to make sure you knew how your senators that represent you in Michigan voted on S. 1789. The APWU supported an "aye" vote on the following:

- Akaka Amendment #2034- to substitute damaging workers comp language in the bill with provisions of a bi-partisan bill passed in the House.
- Casey Amendment #2042- to maintain current delivery standards for market dominant products for 4 years.
- Final Passage - to pass the bill with all amendments that were approved.

SENATOR	PARTY	STATE	APWU RATING	AMENDMENT #2034 WORKERS' COMPENSATION - Senator Akaka (HI)	AMENDMENT - #2042 DELIVERY STANDARDS - Senator Casey (PA)	FINAL PASSAGE OF S.1789
Levin	D	MI	100%	Right	Right	Right
Stabenow	D	MI	100%	Right	Right	Right

The battle now moves forward to the U.S. House of Representatives.

## Veteran's Report

# Desert Shield/Storm Veterans



by John  
Smeekens,  
Veterans  
Director

The VA's War Related Injury and Study Center in East Orange, N.J., is asking all Desert Shield/Storm veterans to complete an anonymous online survey to help the VA better understand the problems and needs of first Gulf War veterans. The survey asks for demographic information, deployment experience, physical and mental health problems, and treatments or wellness practices that veterans may or may not be currently using. To complete the survey, go to [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WRIISC\\_PGW](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WRIISC_PGW). To learn more about the VA's War Related Injury and Study Centers, go to <http://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/>. This is strictly voluntary, but it may, help later on in life, if certain things are found to affect these Veterans, in regards to medical problems that may arise years after your service. Remember Agent Orange, and the fight that we Vietnam Veterans had to wage to prove our medical problems. Hell, it's still ongoing!!!

### CAMP LEJEUNE EXPOSURE

The House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, have joined forces to request that the Administration provide immediate VA healthcare to Camp Lejeune veterans and their families who were exposed to contaminated water over a 30-year period. After receiving correspondence from VA Secretary Eric Shinseki that it was "premature" to provide healthcare to these veterans, House Chairman Jeff Miller (R-Fla.), Ranking Member Bob Filner (D-Calif.), Senate Chairman Patty Murray (D-Wash.), and Ranking Member Richard Burr (R-N.C.) sent a letter to President Obama to plead their case. We will continue to monitor developments. If you or someone you know was stationed at Camp Lejeune during the time of exposure (1957-1987), let them know about this issue.

### CROSS IS BACK

The battle over a 7-foot-high war

memorial cross that wound its way from California to the Supreme Court has ended with its restoration, officials said. A settlement has been reached to return the cross to its perch atop Sunrise Rock in the Mohave Desert. Under terms of the settlement, the National Park Service will relinquish 1 acre of land encompassing Sunrise Rock to the local post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In return, Henry and Wanda Sandoz will give 5 acres of land they own to the federal government. The couple promised one of the veterans who erected the memorial 78 years ago that they would

The House VA Subcommittee on Disability and Memorial Affairs has cleared several bills out of committee. They now move to the full committee for a vote. They included: **H.R. 4142**, which would automatically adjust the cost-of-living increase for veterans to the same percentage as social security COLA, thereby eliminating the need for legislation every year.

**H.R. 2051**, which provides burials for unclaimed veteran remains identified by the Missing in America project.

For a listing of all of the bills, visit the House VA Committee website at:

to come. At a ceremony in March commemorating the 30th anniversary of the memorial's groundbreaking, the concept for the center was unveiled. The VVMF has a goal of housing within the center a "Wall of Faces" that will include a photo to go with every name on the Wall. Those who wish to contribute a photo or learn more can visit the **Education Center website** at [www.buildthecenter.org](http://www.buildthecenter.org). While a national monument to honor those who gave their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan will eventually be built in Washington, the Vietnam center includes plans to incorporate those most recent fallen heroes into its design, as well. A visit to the center will, in fact, begin with a walking history of America's wars. "Patriotism will be shown to be timeless," the center's website proclaims. And please remember, as we observed Memorial Day last month, how about we all acknowledge that every ceremony, every monument and every name etched into the Wall are all part of the same chain, forged through history, forever connecting "those who served, those who fell and those who wait at home." Let us all welcome plans for the new education center as another important link in that chain.

### BIRTH DEFECT REGISTRY: VIETNAM

Did you serve in Vietnam? Do you know someone who did? Were there any birth defects or other conditions like learning and/or attention disorders; childhood cancers; autistic spectrum disorders; immune and/or endocrine problems that affected the children of these Vietnam Veterans? The Birth Defect Research for Children is collecting data to examine the effects of service in Vietnam and potential exposure to Agent Orange on the children of Vietnam Veterans. Participation in this project includes: #1) Completing an online questionnaire which can be found at <http://www.birthdefects.org/registry/> #2) the questionnaire will ask about the child or children's disabilities; health and family history of both parents; exposures during pregnancy and occupational exposures #3) a special section will ask you about your service in Vietnam. This section was designed in collaboration with the New Jersey State Agent Orange Commission #4) collected data will be used for a study of the pattern of birth defects and disabilities that have been most frequently reported in the children of Vietnam Veterans #5) all data is confidential and your permission would be requested before any researcher would contact you. For more information you can contact **Betty Mekdeci @ 407-895-0802** or via e-mail @ [betty@birthdefects.org](mailto:betty@birthdefects.org).



take care of it after his death. Wanda Sandoz said news that the cross would be returning is thrilling. "We're just anxious to get it back where it belongs, where those veterans put it," she said. The National Park Service, which manages the Mojave National Preserve, said the site will be fenced in and a memorial erected explaining that the cross is on private land. *TO BAD THEY HAD TO GO THROUGH ALL THIS CRAP, TO BRING BACK SOMETHING THAT WAS THERE FOR SO MANY YEARS. I HAD AN EASIER WAY OF SETTLING IT, BUT THAT'S A DIFFERENT STORY.*

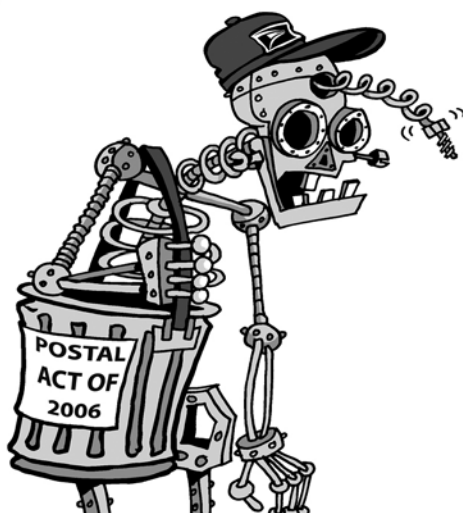
VETERANS' BILLS

<http://veterans.house.gov/markup/markup-of-hr-4114-ans-to-hr-4142-ans-to-hr-2377>

### THE WALL

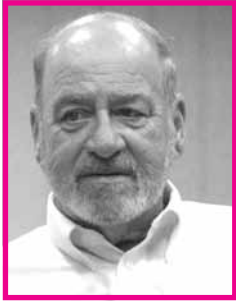
When I came home from Vietnam, back in 1969, our nation was bitterly divided. As we all know, the war was not easy, nor was it popular. When time came to honor those who had fought it, the process was likewise neither easy nor popular. Plans for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington met adversity at many turns. Maya Lin's concept for the Wall we now consider a national treasure received considerable public criticism, but dedication ceremonies took place on Nov. 13, 1982, at the culmination of a five-day "National Salute to Vietnam Veterans." Concerns over the design, location and general message of the memorial have been forgotten since then. *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has become the most visited memorial in Washington D. C.* It is a place of great solemnity, respect and honor, and continues to evolve as new generations interpret the war and its meaning. The next phase is an **Education Center at the Wall**. The center, which is meant to be a place where the lessons of the war, its impact on our country, and the bravery of those who fought it, can be shared for decades

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## Retiree Involvement



by Al LaBrecque,  
Retiree's Chapter  
President

# Respecting Retirees

"So you know, the reason there are five retiree delegates to the national convention is so we can collect their COPA money." (paraphrased) Moe Biller, APWU Pres. at '96 National Convention. (I know Moe's statement first-hand. I was there as Central Region Retiree Delegate).

And, so "it" began; the first inkling that retiree members weren't being welcomed with open arms by the parent APWU. That the ONLY reason the Retirees' Dept. was established at the '92 Convention in Detroit is because the Dept. of Labor admonished the APWU that in order for the Union to take retiree COPA contributions; Retiree's Dept. members MUST be represented at APWU National Conventions with a voice and vote. Thus the election of the first 5 National Retiree Delegates (one from each Region) to the National Convention. As one of the "original five", I quickly realized that Retirees' Dept. member's sole value to the APWU was as their COPA "cash cows". Thus the struggle began with the first retiree structuring resolutions to amend the APWU Constitution submitted at the '98 Convention. Again, I know because I authored most of them, and it hasn't been a cakewalk!

Succeeding APWU Pres. Bill Burrus (then Exec. VP), made it abundantly clear to the "original five" in a meeting at APWU Hq. that; "You are elected as Retiree Delegates to the National Convention, NOTHING MORE!" Some limited progress has been made over eight (8) conventions since, the most significant being retiree member's right to elect our own Dept. Director. That one really stuck in Burrus' craw. But, you get the picture. In spite of the anti-retiree sentiments of the leadership and convention delegates, the most contentious the 2010 Convention, Local and State Retiree Chapters and retiree members who helped build this Union, continued to contribute in excess of \$200,000. to COPA each year. Chapters and retiree members in the field answered the Union's call to Save Our Service, participating in informational picketing, legislative rallies, petitioning their Congressperson and U.S. Senators to support APWU initiatives, and have actively engaged in opposition to plant consolidations, rural post office and urban station closures.

I'm proud to say; Michigan State and Locals have been the exception in respecting their retiree Sisters and Brothers and overwhelmingly supportive of Local Chapters and this State Chapter. Once again we are asking our delegates to the MPWU State Convention, and

delegates to the APWU Convention in L.A., to support and actively promote the following two proposed amendments to the APWU Constitution. Due to the editor requesting this column be brief and to the point (yeah, right!); I'm only submitting the "Resolve" proposed language F.Y.I. However, I strongly urge delegates to thoroughly read the "Whereas" of each Resolution which explains WHY the amendment should be adopted . . . the selling points.

RESOLVED: To amend APWU Constitution; Article 3, Section 4.(d) to read: "\$36. per annum members of the APWU Retirees' Department shall be eligible to vote for the three (3) General

Officers; President, Executive Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer, and four (4) resident officers; Director and Assistant Director Legislative/Political Department, Director Human Relations Department, and Director APWU Health Plan, EXCLUDING all Local, State and National resident and Craft/Division officers not listed herein, or in any matter pertaining to National Agreement ratification, LMOU's, or proposed work stoppage."

RESOLVED: To amend APWU Constitution; Article 8. Section 11.(a)&(b) to read: "Establish a Retirees' Department Technician under the administrative direction of the department Director,

appointed by the Director subject to approval of the APWU President, and whose duties shall consist of researching and responding to inquiries relating to CSRS/FERS retirement matters, as a department liaison to OPM, USPS Human Resources Shared Services, Social Security Administration, and related agency resources; and to be compensated at the established rate commensurate with that of an APWU retirement advocate, and credited to and against the Retirees' Department budget."

Amen! More on the subject of the internal affairs of the Retirees' Dept. and these vital Resolutions in my next column. 'Til then, Be Strong!

## Meeting With Senator Stabenow



Working Roundtable with Senator Stabenow.



Group Photo with Senator Stabenow.on April 10, 2012.



by Lynn Pallas-Barber, National Business Agent

## NBA Report

# Key Points On Jobs

The economy added 115,000 net new jobs in April.

America's economy continues to add jobs, which is welcome news, but not nearly enough to put our economy back on track to full employment, shared prosperity and sustainable growth. Without the creation of good jobs, we can't restore balance to our economy.

For purely political and cynical reasons, Republicans continue to obstruct the President's jobs agenda which has left working people in a holding pattern. Meanwhile they push catastrophic budgets that threaten our economic security and break our promises to the next generation. Pursuing these tried and failed economic policies is the definition of crazy – and exactly what Mitt Romney, Paul Ryan, John Boehner and others would do.

Our leaders must show the courage and the sense to reject more of the failed policies that allow people like Mitt Romney to game the system and leave working people behind.

We must reinforce the President's efforts to revive an economy that works for working people. From investing in infrastructure, keeping jobs in America, aiding our cities and states, keeping homeowners in their homes and continuing to reform Wall Street, it's time for Congress to commit to putting America back to work.

Given the magnitude of the job losses experienced in the Great Recession and ongoing global economic weakness, we need bold solutions that are as big as the problems we face.

We have a choice. We can build an America of financial brokers and Wall Street or a real economy where we build, innovate and invest in our future.

### AFL-CIO's Six Pillars to Create Good Jobs

We must make a substantial and sustained investment in our infrastructure -- building schools, roads, bridges, transit, ports, rail, communications and energy systems worthy of the 21st century.

We need to revive U.S. manufacturing and stop exporting good jobs overseas. And that means reforming our trade poli-

cies, so we can export American-made good and service – not jobs. And we must keep the good jobs we have.

We need to help our cities and states, not cut off their federal money and cause public sector layoffs that drag down our economy and threaten essential services to communities.

We need to invest in the direct creation of millions of jobs in local communities, especially hard hit communities of color. These jobs must pay competitive wages and target distressed communities and must not replace existing jobs.

We have to help solve the massive shortfall of consumer demand by extending unemployment benefits and keeping homeowners in their homes.

We have to reform Wall Street to help Main Street create jobs.

### Points on Executive PayWatch 2012

[www.paywatch.org](http://www.paywatch.org)

The AFL-CIO recently launched the 2012 Executive PayWatch – a searchable online database of CEO pay that exposes runaway CEO pay, corporate cash hoarding and mutual fund voting records. The launch of this year's site comes on the heels of a nationwide day of action around income inequality and a tax structure that clearly benefits the 1% at the expense of everyone else.

Need another example that our economy is out of whack?

CEOs of S&P 500 Index companies received an average of \$12.9 million in pay in 2011 – a 14 percent raise. That's on top of a 23 percent raise in 2010. The ratio of CEO to worker pay widened to an astonishing 380 to 1.

In stark contrast, the average wage for workers was about \$34,000 in 2011. Median household income fell \$3,700 over the past decade. While more than 12 million workers are still without jobs, those who are employed received an average 2.8 percent raise – barely keeping up with inflation.

The widening gap between CEO-to-worker pay is bad for working people and bad for our economy. Rising pay disparities between the executive suite and the shop floor have created levels of inequality that we have not seen since the Great Depression.

Astronomical CEO pay is based on the false idea that the success of a corporation is due to one CEO megastar. In reality, all employees create value, and CEO pay levels should be more in line with how everyone else is compensated to do their essential jobs.

Thanks to "say-on-pay" votes from the Dodd-Frank Act, shareholders are starting to protest enormous pay packages. We've seen at four companies, including Citigroup, vote against pay packages so far in the 2012 annual meeting season.

But it's time for the SEC to implement another key piece of Pres. Obama's financial reform – the Dodd-Frank Act's requirement that public companies disclose their ratio of CEO-to-worker pay. Disclosing this ratio will encourage companies to consider CEO pay in the context of their entire workforce and restrain the level of CEO pay.

It's crucial that we restore balance to our economy and addressing runaway CEO pay is one key way to begin to do that.

Thanks to Tom Maier, Assistant Legislative Dir. for the above info.

### Change of Address for Grievance Appeals

As of June 1, 2012 every local should be sending their grievance appeals to the new address. The USPS will process all grievances, Step 3 Appeals and Direct Appeals, and Employee Claim Grievances to the new address:

### Collective Bargaining and Arbitration

ATTN: Appeals/ LR Service Center

United States Postal Service  
P.O. Box 25398  
Tampa, FL 33622-5398

### MEMORIAL DAY

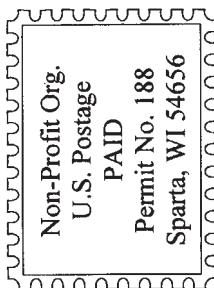
Memorial Day is always observed on the last Monday in the month of May. It commemorates US soldiers who have given their lives while in military service. It was first enacted to honor Union soldiers of the Civil War. It was extended after World War I to honor all Americans who have lost their lives in all wars. It can be celebrated in many ways. If you spend your holiday weekend shopping, at a family get-together, watching a parade, watching fireworks, or maybe going to the Indy 500, make sure that you take time to remember our fallen soldiers.

*Soldier, res! Thy warfare o'er.  
Sleep the sleep that know not breaking.*

*Dream of battle fields no more.  
Days of danger, nights of waking.*

– Sir Walter Scott

Enjoy the summer and be safe!  
Yours in Union Solidarity  
Until next time.



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