

Michigan

MESSENGER

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editor's Report Page 2
Scary Words..... Page 3
Money and Politics Page 3
Michigan State AFL-CIO Election
Endorsed Candidates Page 4

**SPECIAL
ELECTION
ISSUE**

President's Report



by John
Marcotte,
President

The Election Edition

today. I welcome all of you to go to MPWU.COM to read it in full.

In this issue, I want to talk about some of the emotional issues special interests will attempt to distract you with to keep you from voting for your job and your family's security.

Over the last number of years special interests have been very successful in getting Americans to cast their ballots for "fringe" issues that, while quite emotional and polarizing, will never create legislation or be debated or be voted on by the US Congress. To vote considering these issues is throwing your vote away at best, and most likely will get you to vote for candidates whose election platform states they wish to lower your wages and/or eliminate your job, increase your contribution to our retirement system to 5 times what it is now, freeze your pay, lower your retirement benefits, weaken Social Security and reduce Medicare. Make no mistake, there is a war to exterminate the middle class. A portion of the middle class has been tricked into voting on emotion and not to protect their jobs and their way of life from this systematic ongoing at-

tack. Please indulge me to discuss a couple emotional election issues as an example.

The US Supreme Court has recently ruled that an individual's right to bear arms is guaranteed by the second amendment. In my lifetime I cannot remember a bill to take away the right of individuals to own guns ever seeing the floor of Congress. Yet come election time you constantly hear this or that candidate will "take your guns." To change the second amendment would take a 2/3 vote of congress, signature of the President and ratification by 3/4 of the states! What do you think the chances of western and southern states doing that? Or Michigan with over 1,000,000 registered hunters?

Roe v Wade made abortion legal in all the 50 states when I was a child and in all the time since then Congress has debated a bill to legalize or outlaw abortion exactly zero times. None of the candidates you vote for this election will address this issue this Congress, period. The Supreme Court does not take up cases that cause it to review one of its decisions until a long time has passed since the initial deci-

sion. The goal of candidates making firm stands on emotional issues is to dupe the American people to ignore facts surrounding the real issues and to vote on emotional issues.

This election is all about the middle class. Our wages have been lowered, our portion of the taxes sent to Washington have gone up, our pensions have been lowered or eliminated, our medical benefits cut or taken away and our jobs have been sent overseas. At the same time the super rich have had their taxes lowered to all time lows and their incomes have exploded to levels never seen before. That is why billionaires are spending *hundreds of millions of dollars* in an attempt to trick voters to support their fleecing of America. They didn't get to be billionaires by being silly with their money. They are spending a king's ransom because it has worked for them in the past and they think it will work this time. The super rich are buying politicians and getting income tax breaks and tax credits for moving jobs overseas all paid for by the middle class. **Do not be deceived! Vote for your Job. Vote for your family. Vote your future.**

— Obama Cares —

by Paul Felton, Editor

In 2010 Congress passed the Affordable Care Act, which political opponents refer to derisively as "Obamacare." These folks won't talk about the positive benefits of the new law, such as:

- You cannot be denied health insurance due to a pre-existing condition. This applies to children immediately and adults as of 2014.
- Insurance companies cannot place a lifetime limit on your health coverage (this is effective immediately) and starting in 2014, they cannot place an annual cap on your coverage.

- Young adults can stay on their parents' health plan until age 26.
- The law puts an end to the discriminatory practice of charging higher rates for women. And the ban on denying coverage for pre-existing conditions puts an end to the insurance industry practice of punishing women due to breast cancer, pregnancy, or domestic abuse.
- The law provides \$5 billion to employers who continue to cover early retirees.
- Starting in 2014, the law prohibits denying coverage or charging more based on a person's medical history.

- The law prevents insurance companies from dropping you because you become sick.
- Insurance companies have to spend at least 80 percent of your premium payments on actually providing health care. If they spend more than 20 percent on administrative costs, advertising, executive salaries, etc., they have to pay a refund.

Perhaps instead of ridiculing "Obama-care" we should be glad that Obama Cares. Learn more about the Affordable Care Act before you vote for a candidate who wants to repeal it.

Please Vote November 6th, 2012



Vice President Joe Biden speaking in Detroit on Labor Day.



PresidentJohn Marcotte
 U&C (989) 619-1741
 e-Mail: John.L.Marcotte@gmail.com

Executive SecretaryMichael Long
 U: (616) 977-1050; C: (616) 302-1409
 e-Mail: mdlblong@gmail.com

Secretary-Treasurer Darren Joyce
 W: (810) 257-1530; U: (810) 239-0931;
 FAX: (810) 239-6879
 e-Mail: fmail11@comcast.net

Dir. of Edca. & Research Lucy Morton
 U: (248) 543-3262; C: (248) 660-3139
 e-Mail: lucyapwu56@hotmail.com

EditorPaul Felton
 U: (248) 543-3262; W: (248) 758-5786
 e-Mail: pdf111@comcast.net

Legislative Director Jesus Gonzales
 W: (517) 337-8753; C: (517) 953-0580
 e-Mail: cmalprez300@yahoo.com

HR/Injury Comp. Director Ron Krumrie
 W: (231) 946-9616;
 e-Mail: Olcubman@aol.com

Clerk Craft Director..... Steve Wood
 U: (248) 543-3262 (Ferndale)
 U: (248) 758-5786 (Metroplex)
 e-Mail: Swood@apwu480.org

Maintenance Craft DirectorJason Rushing
 C: (736) 634-9294; H: (736) 953-0581
 e-Mail: jaysdeals@att.net

Motor Vehicle Service Craft Dir.Joe Wrobel
 U: (248) 543-3262; W: (248) 546-7146
 e-Mail: yrubnu@hotmail.com

Veterans DirectorJohn 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: fmail11@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) 980-6125
 e-Mail: mpwurea6director@yahoo.com

Area 7 Director (490/491)Thomas Lothamer
 U: (517) 677-6198; H: (517) 639-4873
 e-Mail: tlothamer@msn.com

Area 8 Director (492).....Wendy Kempke
 W: (517) 263-5809; C: (419) 377-4595
 e-Mail: kempke.wk@gmail.com

Area 9 Director (493/494)Jennifer Adkins
 C: (231) 830-7140; W: (231) 722-1414
 e-Mail: jadkins1978@hotmail.com

Area 10 Director (496)Ron Brown
 W: (231) 933-1020; C: (231) 357-2618
 e-Mail: Area10Director@yahoo.com

Area 11 Director (497) Vacant

Area 12 Director (498/499)..... Theresa Granquist
 U: (906) 774-6303; C: (906) 396-6103
 e-Mail: tgranquist@att.net

P.O.W.E.R. Rep Karen Hodges
 H: (616) 453-7091; W/U: (616) 776-1489
 e-Mail: kjhodmich@aol.com

State Retiree Chpt. PresidentAl LaBrecque
 H: (989) 736-8173
 e-Mail: allab@sisna.com

MPWU Aux. President Vacant

MPWU Historian..... Vacant

MPWU Advisor..... Gary VanHoogstraten
 H: (989) 894-2656
 e-Mail: hystreet@att.net w



by Paul Felton, Editor

Editor's Report

Punish Your Enemies In November

Would you reward someone who's trying to destroy you? Would you vote for someone who wants to reduce the Postal Service to a skeleton, laying off some of us and cutting a chunk out of the remaining people's wages and benefits?

The future of the Postal Service will be decided this November. The Republican Party wants to destroy us. The Democratic Party supports viable solutions to the USPS' financial problems.

Postal workers who've been paying attention have gotten a civics lesson this year. Congress debated several different proposals. Republicans proposed closing massive numbers of plant closings and post offices. Republicans proposed a commission that could tear up our contract and slash our wages and benefits. Republicans proposed legislation making our No Lay-off clause illegal. Republicans proposed a law that would cause any postal worker behind on their taxes to be fired!

A Democratic proposal – HR-1351 – that addressed these issues intelligently never made it to the House floor for a vote. Why? Republicans controlled the Committee that sends postal legislation to the floor, and they made sure it never got there. It would've passed too.

Why did Republicans control the Committee? Because they have a majority in the House. If the House had a Democratic majority, there would be a Democratic Committee Chair and a Democratic majority on every Committee.

Today's Republican Party

The Republican Party has changed in the last few years. It used to be that the Republicans were unfriendly to labor but mainly concentrated on other issues. They did not threaten our very existence.

Today, the Republican Party is **out to destroy unions**. That is a central part of their strategy. Especially, unions repre-

senting public employees, like us.

I got my hands on a Republican Party fundraising appeal dated March 18, 2011. The battle of Wisconsin was going strong. The fundraising appeal outlined the Republican strategy: **"If we can break the unions' back in 2011, the Democrats will be on life support to begin 2012."**

The fundraising appeal talked about the Republicans' heroic struggle to weaken the unions and drive down wages, benefits, and workers' rights in Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida, Idaho, Michigan, Indiana, New Hampshire, Kansas, Tennessee, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Washington. The fundraising appeal asks people to give generously so the Republicans can continue the fight to destroy unions and attack public employees.

After the 2010 elections, Republicans moved with lightning speed to attack unions in the above-mentioned states. In Michigan they passed dozens of laws to weaken the unions: capping benefits, removing job security for teachers, imposing a mandatory wage cut of 5 percent, limiting subjects that are subject to collective bargaining – and my favorite – SB 938 – "prohibits public employers from allowing payroll deduction for dues of labor organizations." Did you get that? They're forcing concessions on the unions – a move that is bound to make the members unhappy – then they're mak-

ing the union officials try to collect dues from the disgruntled members every two weeks! This isn't about the budget or fiscal responsibility. This is a calculated plan to destroy the unions! The real motive? They want to weaken the base of support of the Democrats so Republicans can dominate the elections.

A Matter of Days

At our National Convention, APWU President Cliff Guffey put it best: "If the Republican Party gains control of both houses of Congress and the White House, it won't be a matter of years, it will be a matter of days before we lose our collective bargaining rights."

Vote for the Republicans and you're voting for more plant and post office closures. Vote for the Republicans and you're voting to get rid of our No Layoff clause – and you're voting that the layoffs don't have to be the junior people either! Vote for the Republicans and you're voting to cut your wages by who-knows-how-much, while you pay more for health coverage under the federal health program.

On the state level, voting for Republicans is voting to continue the attack on government workers in Michigan.

I don't know what else to say, except to repeat: Would you reward someone who is trying to destroy you? Do the right thing on November 6th.

Important Reminder

It is critically important that we all remember to vote the **non-partisan** portion of the ballot. This includes six state-wide ballot proposals (and depending on where you live, some local ballot proposals) as well as three candidates for the Michigan Supreme Court. For other race, the candidate

will be identified by political party.

If you just vote for the partisan races – or if you check the box indicating you wish to vote a complete ballot for a particular party – you will have missed an important section of the ballot.

The AFL-CIO considers proposals 1 and 2 to be crucial – the recommendation is NO on Prop 1 (Emergency Manager) and YES on Prop 2 (Collective Bargaining Rights).

For Supreme Court, the AFL-CIO is supporting Connie Marie Kelley, Shelia Johnson, and Bridget Mary McCormack. Remember: **Before you hand your ballot back, vote Johnson, Kelley, McCormack!**

For more information go to www.miaflcio.org.

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. Articles and correspondence to the Editor may be sent to Paul Felton, PO Box 361342, Grosse Pointe, MI 48236. Articles must be signed to be printed (your name may be withheld upon request). Articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

— Scary Words —

by Travis Erwin,
Amarillo, Texas APWU

“The dire financial circumstances of the Postal Service require dramatic restructuring. In a world of rapidly advancing telecommunications, mail delivery from the era of the Pony Express cannot long survive. We call on Congress to restructure the Service to ensure the continuance of its essential function of delivering mail while preparing for the downsizing made inevitable by the advance of internet communication. In light of the Postal Service’s seriously underfunded pension system, Congress should explore a greater role for private enterprise in appropriate aspects of the mail-processing system.”

Did you read those words? Did they piss you off? Scare you? Or did you laugh at the absurdity and outright lies contained within the statement?

I might have been inclined to fall into the third category – laughing at the absurdity – if this statement wasn’t from such a prominent place. Any guesses where I gathered that statement?

These words come directly from the platform of the Republican Party.

A Redneck’s View

I’m what many folks would describe as a good ol’ boy. I’ve even been called a redneck on occasion, and some of you longer tenured employees might recall the days when more people than not called me by the nickname “Big Country.”

But country as I am, I’ve never ridden a horse to work, nor used one in any way to perform my duties as a postal employee. So the GOP saying that nothing has changed within the Postal Service since the Pony Express days is absolutely ludicrous.

And regarding the USPS pension system there has been some doubt cast on the OIG’s findings that the Postal Service overpaid as much as \$75 Billion into the fund, but **no** audit suggests or even hints that the pension fund is underfunded.

But it is the last line of the GOP platform that poses the greatest danger: *“Congress should explore a greater role for private enterprise in appropriate aspects of the mail-processing system.”*

Private enterprise – If any of y’all believe privatization is going to be good for us, our customers, or this country

as a whole, then you might as well put down this newsletter and stroll away because you’re not going to like a damned thing you’re going to read in these pages. But don’t take my word for it. Hop on Google and do some research about how well privatizing the public utilities worked out in California and a few other places. Or the rail service in Britain for that matter.

I know many of you are Republicans. Not too long ago I considered myself one as well. And there are many other issues out there. Who we vote for often comes down to a tough decision as we weigh everything that is vital in our lives. Such as moral beliefs, fiscal philosophies, inalienable rights.

If you are like me, no one party covers my stance on these things. That being said, the ability to pay for the roof over my family’s head and the groceries to fill our bellies is a very real need, so I am not voting for any candidate that proudly calls the GOP platform (containing language that attacks my livelihood) his own.

I won’t tell you who to vote for, but I will say if you need this job to provide for yourself or your family and you vote for Mitt Romney, you are slitting your own throat. — reprinted from *The Thumbstall*

Money And Politics

A recent Supreme Court decision (Citizens United) gave corporations unlimited rights to pour money into election campaigns. This makes it all the more urgent for postal workers to vote for our interests, and to organize our coworkers, friends and neighbors to do the same. The following excerpts are taken from Robert F Kennedy’s introduction to Greg Palast’s book, “Billionaires and Ballot Bandits.”

American democracy is under assault. In one super-PAC alone, Karl Rove and the Enron grafter Ed Gillespie, have assembled \$200 million from big polluters and Wall Street moguls to buy the 2012 election. Two of the Koch Brothers, Charles and David, pledged \$130 million to elect candidates who favor unrestrained corporate profiteering. The Senators and Congressmen they fund and elect are not representing the United States – they are representing Koch and its oil industry cronies, Big Pharma, and the Wall Street banksters currently mounting a hostile takeover of our government.

Those who have the most money now have the loudest voices in our democracy. And the money is talking; in 97 percent of federal elections over the past two decades, the best-funded candidates were victorious . . .

When I was a boy traveling in Latin America I saw colonial societies that were essentially police states ruled by outsiders in cahoots with a few wealthy families. These homegrown oligarchs controlled the land and resources and

traded the presidency among themselves. Maintaining such power required these cohorts to build propaganda machines to deceive the public, control the press, fix elections, break unions, and maintain a brutal police state in the name of national security.

America today is looking more and more like a colonial economy, with a system increasingly tilted towards enriching the wealthy one percent and serving the needs of multinational corporations with little allegiance to our country. These radical forces already dominate the national press, with Fox news and talk radio snugly in the pocket of the corporate Right. This is the first time in American history that corporate and media interests have been so clearly and perilously aligned . . .

At a projected \$3 billion, the 2012 contest could be twice as costly as any election in American history. Billionaires are shoveling greenbacks into the campaign, not because they are patriots, but because they want to dismantle everything that Americans believe in and love about our country (including the *Post Office – ed.*), and all of the ideals that make us proud to be American . . .

These contributions are their down payment on our democracy, which they hope to own outright. Our campaign finance

system has become legalized bribery. Corporate contributions grease the skids for politicians who mean to privatize the commons: to steal the air, the water, the wildlife, the fisheries and the public lands for their private profit. Oil, coal, gas and nuclear lobbies now rig the rules that govern our energy policy to reward the dirtiest, filthiest, most poisonous and addictive fuels from Hell, rather than the cheap, clean, green, wholesome, abundant, and patriotic fuels from Heaven. Meanwhile, Wall Street is an unregulated and under-taxed casino where the public investors routinely lose their money in a

rigged game that enriches the banksters.

For my part, I have no problem characterizing these corporate-centric super-PACs as treasonous. They are designed to subvert American democracy and turn our country over to the moneyed aristocracy. Their aspirations are apostasy to the notion of democratic governance that our Founders intended. We are now in a free fall toward old-fashioned oligarchy – that noxious, thieving, tyrannical, oppressive species of government that America’s original settlers fled Europe to escape . . .



Senator Debbie Stabenow expressing support for the labor movement in Detroit on Labor Day.

Michigan State AFL-CIO 2012 General Election Endorsed Candidates For Michigan House Of Representatives

DISTRICT	CANDIDATE	DISTRICT	CANDIDATE	DISTRICT	CANDIDATE	DISTRICT	CANDIDATE
1	Brian Banks	32	Sheri Smith	63	Bill Farmer	87	Sherry Anderson
2	Alberta Tinsley-Talabi	33	Martha O’Kray	64	Barb Shelton	88	No Recommendation
3	John Olumba	34	Woodrow Stanley	65	Bonnie Johnson	89	Don Bergman
4	Rose Mary C. Robinson	35	Rudy Hobbs	66	Richard Rajkovich	90	No Recommendation
5	Fred Durhal Jr.	36	Robert Murphy	67	Tom Cochran	91	Collene LaMonte
6	Rashida Tlaib	37	Vicki Barnett	68	Andy Schor	92	Marcia Hovey-Wright
7	Tom Stallworth III	38	Chuck Tindall	69	Sam Singh	93	Paul Silva
8	David Nathan	39	Pam Jackson	70	Mike Huckleberry	94	Judith Lincoln
9	Harvey Santana	40	Dorian Coston	71	Theresa Abed	95	Stacy Erwin-Oakes
10	Phil Cavanagh	41	Mary Kerwin	72	Scott Urbanowski	96	Charlie Brunner
11	David Knezek	42	Shanda Willis	73	Scott Schuiling	97	Chris Breznau
12	Doug Geiss	43	Neil Billington	74	Richard Erdman	98	Joan Brausch
13	Andrew Kandrevas	44	Tom Crawford	75	Brandon Dillon	99	Adam Lawrence
14	Paul Clemente	45	Joanna VanRaaphorst	76	Winnie Brinks	100	Ida De Haas
15	George Darany	46	Daniel Sargent	77	Scott Barton	101	Allen O’Shea
16	Robert Kosowski	47	Shawn Lowe-Desai	78	Jack Arbanas	102	Brendan Maturen
17	Bill LaVoy	48	Pam Faris	79	Jim Hahn	103	Lon Johnson
18	Sarah Roberts	49	Jim Ananich	80	Stuart Peet	104	Betsy Coffia
19	Richard Tannous	50	Charles Smiley	81	Patrick Phelan	105	William Wieske
20	Tim Roraback	51	Steve Losey	82	John Nugent	106	Kenneth Hubbard
21	Dian Slavens	52	Gretchen Driskell	83	Carol Campbell	107	Suzanne Shumway
22	Harold Haugh	53	Jeff Irwin	84	Terry Brown	108	Sharon Gray
23	Tom Boritzki	54	David Rutledge	85	Paul Ray	109	John Kivela
24	Phillip Kurczewski	55	Adam Zemke	86	Brian Bosak	110	Scott Dianda
25	Henry Yanez	56	Larry Crider				
26	Jim Townsend	57	Jim Berryman				
27	Ellen Cogen-Lipton	58	Amaryllis Thomas				
28	Jon Switalski	59	Mike Moroz				
29	Tim Greimel	60	Sean McCann				
30	Joseph Bogdan	61	Michael E. Martin				
31	Marilyn Lane	62	Kate Segal				

Candidates For U.S. Congress

DISTRICT	CANDIDATE	DISTRICT	CANDIDATE
1	Gary McDowell	8	Lance Enderle
2	No Recommendation	9	Sander Levin
3	Steve Pestka	10	Referred to MI AFL-CIO Executive Council
4	Debra Freidell Wirth	11	Syed Taj
5	Dan Kildee	12	John Dingell
6	Mike O’Brien	13	John Conyers Jr.
7	Referred to MI AFL-CIO Executive Council	14	Gary Peters

Candidates For State Education Board

BOARD	CANDIDATE
State Board of Education	Lupe Ramos-Montigny Michelle Fecteau
University of Michigan Board of Regents	Mark Bernstein Shauna Ryder Diggs
Wayne State University	Sandra Hughes O’Brien Kim Trent
Michigan State University	Joel Ferguson Brian Mosallam

Candidates For State Supreme Court

Candidate for Michigan Supreme Court

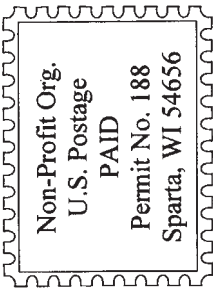
- Sheila Johnson
- Connie Marie Kelley
- Bridget Mary McCormack

“Before you give your ballot back, vote Kelley, Johnson, and McCormack!”

Endorsed Ballot Proposals

BALLOT PLACEMENT	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	VOTE
1	“Stand Up For Democracy”	NO
2	“Protect Working Families”	YES!
3	“Michigan Energy, Michigan Jobs”	*see below
4	“Citizens For Quality Healthcare”	YES
5	“Michigan Alliance for Prosperity”	
	(2/3 approval)	NO
6	“The People Should Decide” (Bridge)	NO

*Ballot Proposal 3 has been referred to the MI AFL-CIO Executive Council for decision.



SPECIAL ELECTION ISSUE

Return to APWU/MPWU
c/o Paul Felton, Editor
P.O. Box 361342
Grosse Pointe, MI 48236

Address Service Requested

