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## President's Message



by Michael  
Mize,  
President

# — A Busy Year —

There are many things going on this year that are very important to us as Postal Workers. You have already been seeing plenty in the news and in the Union publications concerning some of it in the Presidential Primaries. Other things are not as much in your face but still happening and very important.

Our Contract that ran out last year is now in Arbitration. There have been several meetings in front of the Arbitrator and the Union is presenting a good case as far as I can ascertain. Many of the members we represent are new to the Postal Service with the POSTPlan award and the last contract created multiple tier wages that we as a Union would like to get rid of. I understand there was some great testimony concerning the effects of two tier wages and how they do not work. The Union also brought in members and employees from the work floor to testify. While I wish we could have negotiated a contract it is clear that our National negotiation team is putting up a good fight and using everything they can to prove our case to the neutral Arbitrator. With any luck we will have a good new contract this summer.

Another thing that is still going on is the discussions at the National level. It is great to see that even during the Arbitration there are agreements coming out that settle disputes for us across the nation. Other articles address some of the recent agreements. The last contract and through today has been a great deal about our work. The recent settlements still show that same drive. I know some of the members may not like some of the settlements or work. But remember it is about the work. We want the work and we want our Union to do the work. This comes down to keeping jobs and a future for our Union and the younger members. We just ask that the APWU keep pushing!!!

The elections are obviously in full swing for President of the United

States. I have seen an involvement from the younger crowd that has not been evident in some time. There has already been plenty of opinion out there on who everyone should support. We have already had our Primary in Michigan which was interesting to say the least. As we move towards the election I would ask that everyone think hard about their choices on the ballot. This goes for every position from the top to the bottom. There are many out there that would like to see the Postal Service privatized and Unions shut down. The people and all of us need both to stick around. Anyone living in small town anywhere will suffer from the demise of the Postal Service and believe me without the Union it will become much easier to chop up the Service. Don't let a politi-

cal choice take away your livelihood and the Service that every American deserves.

One other thing happening this year is the National Union elections. There

***“Don't let a political choice take away your livelihood and the Service that every American deserves.”***

are already a few names popping up that are running for a National position. It is still early and I am sure there will be more to come, but be watching your mail. Every member will get a ballot and should educate themselves the best they can to vote accordingly. We will also be conducting elections at the State Convention for the MPWU positions. Make sure the delegates from your area

know what your positions are.

On a different subject. When I took this position several months back I hoped to see an improvement in communication. This needs to happen at all levels. The MPWU is your Union.

If there are issues or things that you think need to be changed we need to hear about it. We are working towards more person to person contact, but it is tough as we represent such a large area.

If we are to win the battles across the State it will take everyone. By everyone I mean every Officer and every member. As a member in the office you are our best asset and source of information. Please work with your Area Directors to force Management to follow our Contract.

In Unity.



by Joe  
Wrobel,  
MVS  
Director

## MVS Director's Report

# Wheels And Wrenches

One thing that you can say about our craft is that there is never a dull moment. Throughout the craft/state we have challenged the article 32 issues that keep on coming up. We have filed the grievances for the violations that we know about, if the craft members have issues that need to be looked into please contact your stewards as soon as possible. I can't stress the importance of contacting the right people as soon as you are able; the contract only gives us 14 days from the date of the violation to file. We also need to be informed when you see a new contractor in your post office. The post office is contracting from areas outside of the district and the state. National has filed a step 4 dispute and I am hoping that it will eventually take care of this problem. Seems like at the local level we are being provided one

form of the contract and then at the national level they are being given a different contract for the same runs with different expiration dates and cost.

If you don't know by now all of the VMF's are now under control of the national and no longer district employees. This doesn't mean a whole lot to us other than it adds another layer of crap that we have to go through to get anything done. The hiring of auto techs has started in the Detroit district; of course we have heard this before and it never went anywhere. We are going to keep an eye out to make sure that we do everything in our power to get this done and our VMF's fully staffed. That being said

we are having problems staffing our drivers as well. The schedules and pay just aren't worth it for a lot of people. Sooner or later management has to figure this out. A couple VMF's that I have been to in the last 6 months have been experiencing the same problem with the SEAM system. All I can recommend is that you use the comment section of the work orders and write down what was done. Some managers keep trying to use the ERT times against the Technicians; remember that these are estimated repair times only and cannot be used against you (national settlement). We need to be proactive, document any problems that you have with the computers and the SEAM program so that they can be addressed.



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# Paul Versus Leo

by Leo Persails

There was a sitcom some years ago called “Welcome Back Kotter.” It involved Mr. Kotter, a school teacher, and four characters in the classroom. The lead character was John Travolta, but the funniest was named Horshack. Every time Mr. Kotter would speak Horshack would think of something to say, and pump his hand into the air repeatedly. At the same time his hand was waving. Horshack would call out, “Ooh, ooh, ooh, Mr. Kotter, Mr. Kotter.” I had forgotten the sitcom until I saw the debates between Hillary and Bernie. In the debates, every time Hillary would get her turn to speak, Bernie would raise his hand immediately and want back in. I watched it a number of times and suddenly remembered where I had seen it before. All that was lacking was “Ooh, ooh, ooh, Mr. Kotter, Mr. Kotter”.

Well I got to take two trips down memory lane thanks to Bernie, and Paul, the MPWU state editor. It seems that Bernie and Paul have the same problem with other people having an opinion and a chance to speak. In the November/ December issue of the state paper, Paul’s editorship filled the paper with Bernie Sanders endorsements and accolades. I am a Hillary supporter and wrote an article saying so for the next paper. Apparently Paul remembering Horshack, called out to Mr. Kotter and wrote a rebuttal. It was a full page attack on my right to an opinion. It was a good imitation of Horshack but in bad taste for an editor.

I’m not going to add any credence to his attack on Hillary and the Democratic Party by responding to his ravings against them and myself. I will simply say the following about it. Well, Paul if you are going to use the state paper as your private opportunity to deny state members an opportunity to speak their opinions without your interruption, have fun with this one also.

### The “Establishment”

Bernie Sanders claims that he does not believe in attacking Hillary but then states she is part of the “establishment.”

He did it in their Democratic debate and if his prepared speeches run true, he will continue to do so. The intent of “establishment” to Bernie and his supporters has a very definite meaning that is not normal to the regular meaning of “establishment.” Republican candidate Donald Trump has also relied heavily on the word “establishment.” He claims he is NOT part of the “establishment.” Trump has continually separated himself from other republican candidates he claims are part of it. In both Sanders and Trump’s references to “establishment,” it’s meant to discredit their opponents and raise themselves to a higher level. How is the word “establishment” really defined as it relates to the United States of America? Are Sanders and Trump right in their referring to it as something bad? Is the news media helping to present that image?

Word meanings haven’t changed over the years, but their use to define something has. For example, republicans are still referred to as “conservative” and they love to flaunt themselves to its recognized definition. Is a political party that starts three wars over oil really “conservative,” or do they meet the definition of “liberal,” a recognized definition of the Democratic Party? Does the political party that ended the three wars really fit the definition of “liberal”? Wouldn’t that party fit the definition of “conservative”? That same question could be raised about the party that supports corporations versus the party that supports working Americans and their unions. Once again does it apply to the party that ruined the economy, or the party that brought it back? Should “conservative” and “liberal” define either political party by their FORMER ACTIONS or are they defined by what they do today? A closer look at the modern day actions of the parties indicate those LABELS no longer fit, yet why do millions accept them? It’s the news media and others that we let form our opinions, they repeatedly coin phrases and present them over and over until it becomes accepted normally.

Back to Bernie and Trump and the “establishment.” Bernie may need a

lesson in American government before he points the finger at Hillary over that word. The same applies to Trump and his finger pointing at other republican candidates. Who votes in or out the leaders of our country? In the United States of America, the people are the “establishment.” The people have now, and always have had the power of our government. It may be true that they can make a mistake and be fooled by politicians, but politicians are not the “establishment.” If Hillary supports the “establishment” she is supporting the American people and their right to vote, and elect anyone they chose. I don’t know about Bernie’s personal meaning of socialist, but maybe it doesn’t include a voting “establishment.” Maybe Trump has the same impression.

A member of the voting “establishment,”  
 Leo F. Persails  
 Retired Former, President Flint Michigan Area Local, President Michigan Postal Workers Union, National Business Agent Chicago Division Clerk Craft, APWU Central Region Coordinator

**Editor’s Response:** I had hoped that a sincere difference of opinion wouldn’t become personal, but apparently Leo feels otherwise. I will simply respond to the charges of abuse of my role as Editor. The Nov-Dec issue ran two articles *“tied to actual newsworthy events”*: the NEB’s and the 480-481 Area Local’s endorsement of Bernie. The first article was a reprint from **apwu.org**; the bulk of the second article was the text of the resolution my Local passed. At that time, no dissenting opinions had been received. In the January-February issue I ran two articles with dissenting opinions (Leo’s and Al LaBrecque’s) along with my own opinion as a response. (By the way, I received several compliments on both Leo’s article and my response). If you’re keeping score, that’s three articles backing the APWU position and two dissenting articles – not an unreasonable balance. It is simply not true that my article was “a full page attack on my right to an opinion,” as Leo claims. Disagreeing with an opinion is not the same as attacking your right to an opinion. I just didn’t think it should be the **only** opinion in the last issue of the *Messenger* before the Michigan primary. Especially given the position of the NEB, which for the time being is the APWU position. And my article wasn’t a full page. As I stated in that article, I intend to vote for the Democratic Party nominee, whoever it is. I think I can assume Leo feels the same way. We may have more in common than it appears.

In solidarity,  
 Paul Felton

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:

Battle Creek	480-481	Ludington	Stevensville
Central MI	498-499	Muskegon	Traverse City
Cheboygan	Gaylord	Roger City	Troy Local
Detroit District	Great Lakes Area	486-487	Western MI
Farmington	Mail Haulers	Sault Ste Marie	
Flint	Jackson	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.



## Editor's Report



by Paul Felton,  
Editor

# Staples, Snyder And Trump

**Did the APWU boycott of Staples save your job?** Sometimes we accomplish something through the grievance procedure or other legalistic channels. Sometimes it's through activism. Sometimes it's a combination of the two, as in our campaign against Staples.

In the legal proceedings before the NLRB, a secret document came to light. Dated March 26, 2012, the document reveals that the USPS was considering eliminating "the majority of standard volume locations" (as opposed to the high volume locations) if they could find other retail chains to implement a deal similar to the Staples deal. In other words, a lot of Associate Offices would be replaced by "full service Post Offices" inside other stores, staffed by poorly trained non-postal employees. But our boycott of Staples apparently scared off other retail chains. Our activism may have thwarted these plans, and saved the jobs of many readers of this publication.

Meanwhile, APWU's intervention may have blocked the planned merger of Staples and Office Depot/Office Max. After APWU testified before the Federal Trade Commission, the FTC voted to challenge the proposed merger. There will be a court hearing shortly.

It hasn't been a good year for Staples. Stock prices dropped 41 percent and Staples recently announced plans to close 50 more stores. All of this misfortune couldn't happen to a more deserving company.

**What did Snyder know about Flint's water and when did he know it?** In late February, a new batch of emails were released which show that people very close to Snyder were aware of the situation long before any action was taken. It is almost inconceivable that Snyder was unaware of the poisoning of Flint's water.

Several of Rick Snyder's top lawyers were aware of the problem as early as October 14, 2014. Valerie Brader, deputy legal counsel and senior policy advisor to Snyder, sent an email on that date to the Governor's chief of staff Dennis Muchmore and other top Snyder aides. It said Flint should return to Detroit's water system and called it "an urgent matter to fix." She cited bacterial contamination and reduced quality that caused a GM plant to stop using Flint's water

due to rusted parts on its new vehicles. Imagine! It was rusting parts on new vehicles but it was okay for human consumption?

Michael Gadola, who was the Governor's legal counsel, responded within 12 minutes, calling the use of the Flint River for drinking water "downright scary." He said "Flint should try to get back on the Detroit system as a stopgap ASAP before this thing gets too far out of control."

*"All of this misfortune couldn't happen to a more deserving company."*

Snyder's chief of staff Muchmore, who now works at a law firm, confirmed to the Detroit Free Press that *these concerns were discussed with Snyder. This was in 2014! For at least another year Flint residents were being told the water was safe to drink! And they were being poisoned!*

I don't know whether it can be proven that Snyder violated the law. I don't know if we can prove what he knew, even though we know that he knew. We do know that he stole democracy from Flint – and from the Detroit schools – and both situations got worse under the Emergency Dictators (excuse me, Emergency Managers) he appointed. The Emergency Manager Law needs to be repealed. And I believe there's a special place in hell reserved for Mr. Snyder.



by Sterling Bouier,  
Maintenance Craft Director

Hello MPWU Brothers and Sisters,

2016 has been a very busy year indeed! I have had the pleasure of being elected the Detroit District Area Local Maintenance Craft Director as of January 01, 2016. I would like to thank Mr. Jason Rushing, my predecessor, for all his guidance and assistance for preparing me over the years for the task at hand.

In the maintenance craft there is a lot going on in Michigan and across the country. I recently attended training for the CTC (custodial team training) and the process is currently being implemented in Detroit at the P&DC.

**Trump is Dangerous.** In some respects, I personally like Trump's positions better than the other Republicans. Trade for example. Or the Iraq war. And he recognizes that Planned Parenthood does some good work regarding women's health, although he disagrees with abortion (which is a very small portion of what Planned Parenthood does, and no federal funds go towards abortions). But his positions on these issues are beside the point.

You cannot believe a word he says. He fans the flames of racism and intolerance and then halfheartedly claims to disavow what he said. Like with David Duke and the KKK. His hesitation, claiming not to know anything about David Duke and white supremacist groups, is all the encouragement they need. He encourages violence and cruelty towards protesters – "Get 'em out," "Don't give them their coats," "I'd like to punch them in the mouth," "It used to be that they would leave on a stretcher," "I'll pay your legal fees," etc. In some cases silent peaceful protesters have been ejected. Like a group of African-American students who were just *assumed* to be unfriendly. In one highly publicized case, an African-American man was sucker punched by an older white man, who was quoted as saying "next time I might have to

kill him." Instead of denouncing this cowardly act, in an interview two days later, Trump claimed not to be aware of the details but said he would consider paying the older white man's legal fees. He said he believes this man loves America and might have been provoked (but he claimed he hadn't watched the video – which was shown over and over again on multiple channels).

His campaign consists of slogans (Make America Great Again), insults, racism (towards African-Americans, Mexicans, and Muslims), and a cowboy-style super nationalism that has even our allies nervous. He whips his audience into a frenzy of emotion, with little substance to back it up. More than any other candidate, he relies on the cult of personality. He is truly dangerous.

He appeals to a segment of the white population that is feeling squeezed out, but who are confused about who the enemy is. In some ways, Bernie appeals to the same people, but Bernie points to the real enemy, the top one percent. And Bernie denounces all forms of prejudice. Trump gives a wink and a nod to those of his supporters that are racist. And his solution is simply that people should trust him because he is a successful businessman so he can negotiate good deals for America.

I remember another politician who got elected and who ran government like a business. His name is Rick Snyder. How did that work out?

## Maintenance Craft Director's Report

# Staying Busy

It will be followed by the NDC and Michigan Metroplex as well. It is scheduled to be implemented everywhere across the country by the end of 2016. This team cleaning concept is designed to reduce custodial staffing. It includes new equipment, supplies, and cleaning methods. It was agreed nationally that this reduction will take place through attrition. There have been various problems from day one including equipment failures, lack of supplies, and employees unable to wear the vacuum on their back. We are dealing with and addressing issues as they occur.

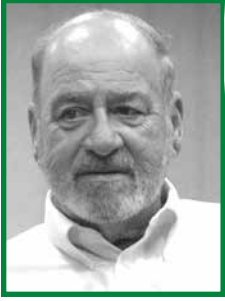
The Postal Service is also in the process of performing new inventories

for the Building Equipment Mechanics (BEM) and implementing the new changes to the MS-1. We are monitoring this process and ensuring that the changes are done properly since it is expected to create staffing changes.

There are numerous other issues at hand and too much to put in this article. As always feel free to contact me if there are any questions or if you are in need of my services. I am here to serve. I can be contacted at 313 965-1398 (maintenance office at the GWY Detroit) or by email at [sbouier@apwudetroit.org](mailto:sbouier@apwudetroit.org). Thank you all for allowing me to serve.

In Union Solidarity,

## Retiree Involvement



by Al  
LaBrecque,  
Retiree's Chapter  
President

*"The older you get, the more good-byes you're saying."* Mike Singletary, All-Pro LB, '85 Champion Chicago Bears.

**Swan Song.** There may be more profound ways to state that I will not be seeking re-election as MPWU State Retiree Chapter president. I considered Chief Joseph's of the Nez Perce Tribe in defeat as the last Native American's to surrender; "...I will fight no more forever". I can't promise that! Or; "All good things must come to an end". Whatever cliché applies, the dreaded inevitable has arrived as I knew it must. It doesn't make it any easier to admit, or do. Health issues, primarily mobility, makes travel and hotel life difficult, if not concerning to be so far away from health care providers that includes primary caregiver; my wife Michelle, who has always had my back through thick and thin. In that regard I'm blessed. Just as when I hung up my coach's whistle for the last time; I promised that when I could no longer do the whole job it's time to go.

This is at least as difficult as when I finally had to hang it up after 28 years as a head football coach, the other passion in my life. I cried like a baby that day. The journey in the postal labor movement which began within a week after my 1-24-59 hire-in date, a span of 57 years, has been far more rewarding than I would have ever imagined. The offices I've held, conferences and conventions across the state and country, resolutions I've authored that made an impact, some found in the APWU Constitution; but far and away the most treasured are the countless acquaintances and lifelong friendships made along the way. Oh sure, there's been adversaries too; mostly postal management and a few within the Union house. To the latter; I offer my hand in Brotherhood asking forgiveness for the excessive passion for my positions. I've no doubt there are some out there who may greet this announcement with glee. But hey, I grew up on the North End and East Side of Flint, son of a UAW Pioneer '36-'37 Sit-Down Striker, and a strong-willed Mom. What else would you expect?! Not that I could ever compare to their life struggles or courage, but ever mindful that I had to honor the legacy they handed me.

So it is I conclude that I've paid my debt to my Union. I don't owe the APWU anything, and the APWU

doesn't owe me anything. Truth be told; the memories, the friendships, the satisfaction of having given a full measure to Union and retiree offices held, maybe having made life a little better for those members I've had the privilege of serving; my side of the ledger has the greater balance. For that I am eternally grateful. I'm not going to promise that I won't chime in now and then, because I've always something to say. At the pleasure of the State Retiree Chapter; I offer to remain available in an advisory capacity. However, the job isn't finished just yet. I remain the 13-state Central Region Retiree Representative (aka Delegate) until the August 2016 APWU National Convention in Orlando, FL, and most importantly; the MPWU State and Retiree Chapter Convention in Lansing, May 19-20.

*"The journey in the postal labor movement which began within a week after my 1-24-59 hire-in date, a span of 57 years, has been far more rewarding than I would have ever imagined."*

**State Chapter Convention.** May 20, 2016; the 8th Biennial Convention of the MPWU State Retiree Chapter will convene. Election of officers will be paramount, along with the regular order of business. Unfortunately, APWU Retirees Dept. Dir. Judy Beard has a previous commitment on the west coast. There will, however, be numerous national officers in attendance, including our own Michigan "favorite son" APWU Legislative/Political Dir., John Marcotte.

It is my sincere hope that the five Michigan Local Retiree Chapters send as many delegates as possible. I firmly believe that if it comes down to finances permitting; attending the State Retiree Chapter Convention are funds better spent than for the more expensive national conferences. I will be furnishing each Local Chapter the delegate complement number allowed (1-20 or fraction thereof). Local Chapters are urged to review the Convention Call for specifics. Review the State Chapter Constitution carefully. It is a living document subject to change. Prepare and submit Resolutions to amend the Chapter Constitution & By-Laws, if any.

**Pizza for COPA.** Once again, the State Retiree Chapter is sponsoring the highly successful "Pizza for COPA" hospitality night on THURSDAY, MAY 19th. I'm in the process of contacting a Lansing favorite pizza joint to provide a variety of pizzas, salad and bread sticks. Delegates and guests are invited to enjoy a slice or two with condiments. "Entry fee" are your dollars for COPA!

I specifically invite Central Michigan Area Local members of the APWU Retirees Dept. to join us for an evening of camaraderie.

**Resolutions.** As those of you who have been around a while can attest, resolution writing has been my forte. This Convention will be no exception. So far, two Resolutions to amend the APWU Constitution, requiring a majority approval to submit to the National Convention where it will take a two-thirds majority to adopt, have been submitted through the State Union, my home Flint Area Local, and others. I'll spare the editor the lists of "Whereas's" and go right to the "Resolved":

**RESOLVED:** APWU Constitution & By-Laws; Article 11. Section 2. (m)

(Second Paragraph) be amended with the addition to read: "Retirees shall elect the Retirees Department Director and five (5) delegates to the National Convention. The Retirees Department Director and each Retiree National Convention Delegate will have a voice and one (1) vote at the National Convention. The five (5) Retiree National Convention Delegates shall be paid necessary expenses to attend the National Convention **and the All-Craft APWU Retirees Department Conference** (the proposed added language in bold/ital).

**RESOLVED:** To amend APWU Constitution & By-Laws; Article 6. REPRESENTATION; Adding a new Section 6. (Change present Section 6. to Section 7.) to read: "WHEREVER IN ARTICLE 6. SECTIONS 1. THROUGH 5. REFERENCES TO; "National Convention; Local, State, regional affiliates, or organizations voting strength/representation"; **such provisions will apply to chartered APWU state and local retiree chapters with the exception that retiree chapters' voting strength/representation will be one (1) for one hundred (100) or fraction thereof**" (Added language in bold/ital).

A couple more Resolutions are still being contemplated. Re-designating the APWU Retirees "Department" as a "Division" which stirred controversy at the 2014 confab may be resurrected. Then, propose to increase the APWU Health Plan Associate Member annual fee of \$35 to \$40. There's an anomaly of retired APWU members belonging to the Union's Health Plan paying the \$35

Associate Member fee instead of one dollar more a year to belong to the Retirees Dept. AND APWU Health Plan. Active employees MUST belong to APWU to be eligible to belong to the APWU Health Plan. Why not retired APWU members required to belong to the Retirees Dept.? The \$35 Associate Member fee for those not eligible belong to APWU (i.e. federal & other postal employees & retirees) has been in place since the beginning of time. I'm advised the Mail Handler Health Plan Assoc. Member fee is \$42 per year. An increase of \$5 per year is intended to be an "incentive" for retired APWU members to properly belong to their Union Retirees Dept. for only \$36 per year.

**\$56M Settlement Snafu.** Letters from MPWU president, Mike Mize, went out to APWU represented retirees who were eligible to share in the \$56M settlement advising that they would be receiving a dollar amount around Christmas. Not to my surprise, the CORRECT list the Union worked from has been ROYALLY screwed up by postal management! As a result,

I've received inquiries from retired recipients of that letter who have not received the check owed them. MPWU President Mize and APWU Asst. Clerk Division Dir., Lamont Brooks, advise that this is a monstrous issue at the national level with no immediate resolution in sight. It is my advice to retirees from Associate POs in receipt of the letter to contact President Mize if you haven't received your check. Also, double-check with the last postal installation where you worked. This shouldn't have happened, but I won't apologize for postal management's incompetence. I wouldn't put it past them that it's deliberate given the huge \$56M arb award in favor of the Union. Don't blame the Union. Management owns this mess! The APWU at national is working to correct the situation, but Asst. Dir. Brooks cautions it may not be anytime soon. Don't spend it until you get it into your hot little hand.

**The End, My Friends!** This is my final Retiree Involvement column as your State Chapter president. Before the editor gives a sigh of relief, it will not be my last column. I will be further informing members, and particularly delegates to the National Convention, on the reasons or selling points if you will, for retiree Resolutions being submitted to the 2016 APWU National Convention, and any other pertinent retiree information as your Central Region Retiree Representative.

There will be no good-bye's just yet. How about; see you later, and until then . . .

Be Strong!



## Veterans' Report



by John P.  
Smeekens,  
Veterans  
Director

### Grand Rapids Home for Veterans

The Grand Rapids Home for Veterans has been in operation since 1886. It is very sad, how our Veterans are being treated at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. I recently received a copy of The OAG (Office of The Auditor General) Report about the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. It is in e-mail form, so if you would like to have me send you a copy, please feel free to contact me and I will get it out to you.

### Grand Traverse VA Clinic

An additional VA clinic was scheduled to open on March 7, 2016, in Traverse City, to specifically provide Mental Health, Physical Therapy, and Home Based Primary Care Services. The clinic is named the Grand Traverse VA Clinic and this will be an extension to the already existing Traverse City VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic. This additional VA clinic in Traverse City was necessary to allow for needed space due to workload and expanded programs. The Grand Traverse VA Clinic will be a temporary clinic, until such time a new larger Traverse City VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic is opened. The brand new clinic will offer over 22,000 square feet. The new clinic's location and phone are as follows; Grand Traverse VA Clinic, 880 Munson Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan, 231-932-9720 or 800-406-5143, Extension 11412.

### The Warthog Lives

The telltale "brrrrrr" of the A-10 Thunderbolt II ground attack aircraft, affectionately known as the Warthog, will continue to be a welcome sound for soldiers. The ugly, old and slow aircraft that the Air Force had hoped to retire in 2011 as its ground support mission was filled by the F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighter has survived in the 2017 budget and could remain in the active fleet until 2022.

### Choice Program Billing Issues

The VA has established a phone number, 877-881-7618, for veterans to call if their credit has been adversely impacted by private sector health care providers improperly billing them for care VA is required to pay. Any veterans being pursued by collection agencies are urged to seek VA's assistance. However, veterans who were sent a bill from a Choice Program provider should contact the Choice Program call center, 866-606-8198, to determine if VA is liable for the cost of the care.

### Discharge Upgrades Possible for PTSD

On September 3, 2014, then Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel issued a memo instructing Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NR) to grant "liberal consideration" to requests for discharge upgrades from veterans who may have been suffering from PTSD before it was a recognized diagnosis. Previously, those upgrade requests would have been denied, because veterans had no way of proving they had PTSD while still in service. The policy change was

those who survived the war – but later died as a result of their service – are not. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund acknowledges their service and sacrifice through an online "In Memory" Honor Roll. Causes of death that fit the criteria for inclusion in the program include exposure to Agent Orange, PTSD-related illnesses/events, cancer, diabetes, heart attacks, etc. The program is free and the application process is simple. To honor a loved one, you only need to submit the veteran's DD214 to show their proof of service in the Vietnam War, a copy of

### Old Warrior Camp

Do you know a returning vet that needs some time to unwind and relax? In the Upper Peninsula of Michigan there is a camp where fishing, hunting, riding, etc., are all available for free. For more information go to <http://oldwarriorcamp.com>

### Medal of Honor

Navy SEAL, Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Edwards Byers Jr., has been awarded the nation's highest military honor, The Medal of Honor. On February 29, 2016, at the Ceremony held at the White House, President Barack Obama called Byers a "consummate, quiet professional," and a "special breed of warrior." Byers is the first living, active duty member of the Navy to receive the Medal of Honor in over four decades.

### Purple Heart Wine

Purple Heart Wines ([purpleheartwines.com](http://purpleheartwines.com)), a new label created in tribute to men and women of the U.S. military, is pleased to announce their inaugural release – the 2013 Purple Heart red blend, produced by C. Mondavi & Family. The wine is priced at \$19.99 and the winery makes a generous annual donation to the Purple Heart Foundation. Set to launch nationally in March, this limited production 'purple-hearted' blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon is created using fruit grown in the Napa Valley. Purple Heart wines will host an official launch reception for media at The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum on April 19th in New York City.

*"It is very sad, how our Veterans are being treated at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans."*

especially helpful for Vietnam veterans, whose post-service PTSD diagnoses had not been recognized by the BCM/NR up to that point. *Unfortunately, the memo did not explicitly allow veterans who had been denied under the old rules to reapply under the new rules.* To correct this error, DOD issued a memo on February 24, 2016, clarifying that those veterans may reapply under the new policy. It also waives the statute of limitations in those cases. If you or someone you know wishes to apply for a discharge upgrade under this policy, visit: <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/adrb-ptsd.cfm>.

### Vietnam Wall "Memory Program"

More than 58,000 names meet the Defense Department's criteria to be etched into the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, but

their death certificate, and a photograph. For information or to submit applications, go to: <http://www.vvmf.org/InMemory-Program>.

### Veterans' Aid & Assistance

Are you taking care of a veteran? Have a veteran in a nursing home? Have the spouse of a veteran in a nursing home or taking care of at home? A little known program of the VA might be able to help. VA Program S-38 might be able to supply you with financial assistance toward the care of a veteran or spouse, or widow of a veteran. Naturally there are qualifications to meet, more than can be covered here. Details on this program and assistance on how to apply can be found at [www.veteranaid.org/index.php](http://www.veteranaid.org/index.php)

## Area 4 Director

# Cleaning Small Offices

by Angelynn Gebstadt,  
Area 4 Director

The National Union has held town hall meetings where you as a member can call in and listen to the officers telling you where we are in regards to the Contract – the last one was held on Feb 9th. (still available to listen to on [WWW.APWU.org](http://WWW.APWU.org) after you sign in as a member).

From now until the Arbitrator's decision they will continue to work on getting Memorandums or settlements between the National Union and Upper Management. Recently there were 4 in the Clerk Craft. The one I would like to talk about today is: Cleaning in offices where there is less than 2 hours of custodial work **where there isn't a custodian**. The Regular, NTFT, PTF or PSE assigned to that office will perform the custodial duties — that just doesn't mean cleaning . . . Got snow?? Who will not

perform these duties in the absence of a custodial position? Carriers, rural carriers and management. Yes, some of you may think this sucks, but it increases your hours and keeps the job from being contracted out. Our goal is to create, if possible, an actual custodian to perform the work. Will you receive OSHA training?? Yes based on what you are being asked to do. Will you do it between customers **NO!!!** Will you punch on a non clerk maintenance operation either by time clock or paper card? Yes — and the Biggy — Will the time used be part of your normal hours??? **NO!** Any hours used for the purpose of carrying out the custodial duties will be in addition to your bid hours or the hours you normally work if you do not have a bid. The number of hours will be based upon the time allotted in line H of the 4852.

Or so says the Memorandum of Understanding . . . In Area 4 we have

sent an e-mail to the POOM on Feb 18 asking when all this is going to take place – he in turn sent it to the District Manager of Maintenance Mike Brown. We have yet to hear anything back.

So yes — if you have a contract custodian in your office you very well may have to start emptying the trash, sweeping the floor, cleaning the windows . . . if you are a NTFT until they re-issue your bid it will be out of schedule pay. For PTF's and PSE's in will be additional hours to what you are already working — **IT IS NOT TO BE DURING YOUR NORMAL SHIFT** — these are additional hours. It is very important when you perform any portion of the custodial duties that you make sure you are clocked on the maintenance operation and not a clerk operation. Let me know if you have any management related problems with this.



by Michael  
O'Hearn,  
National  
Business Agent

## NBA Report

# Travel Pay For Loaners

I often get asked by loaner clerks if they are entitled to travel time pay and mileage. The simple answer is "Yes." Of course, it is a little more complicated than that. These clerks are usually calling me because the Postmaster in their home office or the Postmaster in the loaner office is telling them they are not entitled to this compensation. Sometimes the managers are telling them they can have either travel time or mileage, but not both. This is wrong. If you are eligible for one, you are eligible for the other. The loaner clerks usually want to know where it says this so they can show the Postmasters. So, here it is.

First, we go to the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) on page 271. Here it states:

20. Do part-time flexible clerks receive payment for travel time and/or mileage when required to travel to other offices?

Response: It depends on the circumstances. Whether a part-time flexible clerk who is required to work outside his/her home office is entitled to compensable travel time or mileage is determined by applying the applicable provisions of Section 438 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) and Chapter 7 of Handbook F-15.

This refers us to ELM 438, where it states:

438.1 Pay During Travel

438.11 Definitions

Definitions relevant to pay during travel or training include the following:

*a. Travel time* — time spent by an employee moving from one location to another during which no productive work is performed and excluding the normal mealtime if it occurs during the period of travel.

*b. Local commuting area* — the suburban area immediately surrounding the employee's official duty station and within a radius of 50 miles.

The important language here is the subsection "b" where the local commuting area is defined. Please note that two conditions are required to define the local commuting area. First, is the language that states it is the suburban area immediately surrounding the employee's official duty station. Second is the language that states it is within a radius of 50 miles. Since these two conditions are connected with an "and" both statements must be satisfied to make the travel within the local commuting area. If the statements were connected with

an "or" then if either statement were true, the travel would be within the local commuting area. This is important to remember as we go to another section of the ELM on this subject.

Next, let us look at ELM 438.133. Here it states:

438.133 One-Day Assignment Outside the Local Commuting Area

The following applies to 1-day assignments outside the local commuting area:

*a. Rule.* Except as stated in the next sentence, time spent at any time during a single service day by an eligible employee who is traveling on Postal Service business to one or more locations outside of the local commuting

area and back to the home community is compensable. Time spent commuting in either direction between home and an airport, bus terminal, or railroad station within the local commuting area, if it occurs outside of established hours of service on a scheduled workday, and the usual mealtime, must be deducted from compensable travel time.

*b. Eligibility.* This type of travel time is compensable for all employees during their established hours of service on a scheduled workday. At all other times, this type of travel time is compensable only for bargaining unit and nonexempt nonbargaining unit employees.

As we see here, travel outside the local commuting area is compensable.

This means the time spent traveling and the mileage. In most incidents, the loaners are not traveling in the immediate suburban area. For instance, if you are traveling from Aurora, IL to Bedford Park, IL, this is travel outside the local commuting area. This is so because Aurora is not a suburb of Bedford Park and Bedford Park is not a suburb of Aurora. Both are suburbs of Chicago, but they are not suburbs of each other. This logic is widely accepted by our Arbitrators. They routinely decided cases on this issue in our favor. Therefore, when Postmaster asks where it says you get travel time pay and mileage, show them the language in the JCIM and the ELM above. If they still don't agree, contact your steward and file a grievance.



by Lisa  
Borchardt,  
Area 9  
Director

This is my first term as Area 9 Director and I wanted to thank the members for their patience with me. I have enjoyed being your representative and have learned a lot myself these past 2 years.

This past November I got a chance to visit each office I represent. It was nice to finally put a face with a name and meet each of you. Some of you had never had any contact with the union. I encourage you to call me anytime with any questions you may have about the union. We are there to represent you and hopefully make your work more enjoyable.

I had the opportunity to let a few of you know what your portion of the \$56 million payout was going to be. It was nice to give some good news to you.

I did discover a few things when visiting the offices. One was in a 4 hour office that opens in the afternoon. I learned that a rural carrier put up the box mail because a clerk is not in the building. I am grieving this issue.

This is clerk work. When the PMRs left these offices the work was supposed to be returned to the clerk craft. If this is happening in your office please contact your Area Director.

Hopefully our contract will be settled soon. That will give us the opportunity to negotiate local agreements with each

## Area 9 Director

# Thank You

office. The items available to negotiate are in Article 30 of the national agreement. I have talked to a few of you in my area about this. Some of you are fine with how things are handled now and some of you

are not. I will contact you again after the National Contract is settled to see what each office would like to do.

Yours in Solidarity.

**WE JUST WANT  
TO MAKE A LIVING  
OUR BOSSES  
ARE MAKING A KILLING**

**WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY  
APRIL 28**

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# Then And Now

by Peggy Whitney,  
Minneapolis Local APWU

As our Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Postal Service begins the final phase of binding arbitration, my article takes a look back at what the wages, benefits and working conditions were for Bargaining Unit employees represented by the APWU. The Postal Strike of 1970 was the birth of Collective Bargaining Rights for Postal employees and established the foundation of our Contract. A fundamental element recognized and protected in every Contract is the provision of Seniority as the primary basis for administering many articles of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Seniority dictates the awarding of positions, vacation time, overtime work and holiday work. Seniority is acquired from the date you are hired as a career employee and continues as long as you remain within the Craft and Installation. Most employees have a goal of obtaining 30 to 35 years of Seniority and look forward to the benefits of retirement. Occasionally, an employee will achieve 40 or more years of Seniority, but it is uncommon. And, in exceptional instances an employee will achieve 45 years of Seniority. Recently, one of our Minneapolis Area Local APWU members surpassed 45 years of Seniority!

Clerk Gary Earl Lofgren was hired on June 20th, 1970 and recently retired in February 2016 after 45½ years of Service at the Minneapolis Main Post office as a Clerk!

I am quite sure that some of you reading this article may not even be 45 years old, much less imagine working 45 years for the USPS!

Gary Earl Lofgren has experienced many changes with the Postal Service during his 45 years of service. He spoke with me about the many improvements that have been achieved in wages, benefits and working conditions during the dozens of Contracts negotiated by the APWU since he was hired in June of 1970.

The starting wage for entry level clerks in June 1970 was \$3.25 an hour. Entry level clerks were called “Subs” – short for substitute as they were scheduled to substitute for regular clerks absent or on leave. Six day work weeks were the practice and the “subs” would place their name on the weekly calendar for their desired one day off for the week – Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, until the

available slots for the day were filled.

The majority of the workforce was white males with most females working on the 4th floor in administrative functions. The 4th floor of the Minneapolis PO was commonly referred

**“The starting wage for entry level clerks in June 1970 was \$3.25 an hour.”**

to as “mahogany row” due to the desks in the offices where administrative and higher level managers worked. Most of the mail was worked manually as few mechanized mail sorting machines existed at that time. Employees were expected to maintain a clean and neat appearance with hair cut above the ears and collar, no tennis shoes, or jeans and most wore white shirts with a collar.

Postal management used a building wide PA intercom system to make announcements regarding mail arrival, mail departures and to round up the subs for work assignments or dismiss them for the day. Workers were allowed to smoke on the clock and had small metal clip-on ashtrays attached to their mail case so they could smoke while sorting the mail.

Additionally, the Minneapolis Post Office had a Gun Range located in the basement which was available for employees who were members of the Gun Club to shoot their guns for target practice. Postal employees also formed softball, broomball and bowling leagues and developed a strong bond as friends and co-workers.

Prior to the expansion of the building, parking space was extremely limited and awarded based on seniority, as it is today. However, parking was limited to 8 hours in order to provide the next tour of employees a parking spot, so groups of employees would scramble to move their cars out of the ramp and onto the street if overtime was called.

Gary cites the inclusion of the Cost of Living into pay and retirement as a significant benefit obtained in contract negotiations by the APWU. He also mentioned the improvements in Safety on the work floor and the establishment of a work clothing allowance for certain positions as important achievements in our Contract. The ability to work a holiday to earn annual leave and Christmas premium pay for working your designated Christmas holiday and not just on December 25th are also enhancements achieved in our Contract since Gary was hired in 1970.

Gary also has served as an elected Officer for the Minneapolis Area Local for more than 25 years! He has been our most important fiduciary officer, serving as Treasurer and ensuring financial integrity and compliance for our Local and the Membership.

Gary indicates he may also be retiring from his elected position as Treasurer as the new term for elected Officers approaches and if so, his skill, experience and dedication will be greatly missed!

Gary retires from his Postal employment as a level 7 clerk at the top step of the APWU negotiated pay scale – \$27.87 per hour – an increase

of \$24.62 per hour since he was hired!

Gary states Clerks now earn as much in one hour as he often made working an entire shift as a Sub! Obviously, 45 years is a long time, but it is also a testament to the incremental and continuous improvements achieved by the APWU each time a Contract was negotiated.

Gary gave this message for the current members of the APWU: “You aren’t really working for the Postal Service; you are working for the Customer who has mailed a letter or package that is important to them, and it should be important to you. Pay attention to what is going on in our Union and get involved. It’s a privilege to be in the APWU and be a part of the decisions and direction of your future and the future of others.”

— reprinted from *the Northern Light*

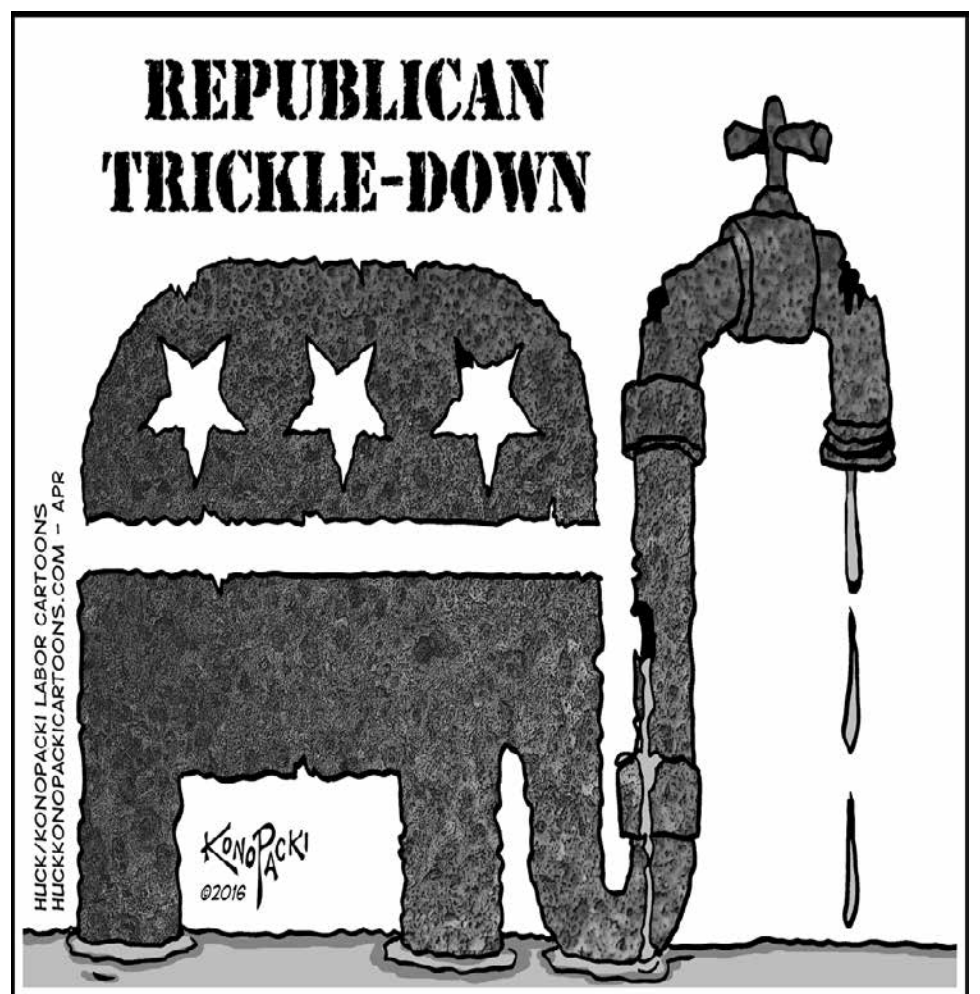
## Farewell

This is my last issue as Editor of the *Michigan Messenger*. The upcoming MPWU Convention will elect a new Editor and I do not plan to have my name placed in nomination. I have enjoyed my two terms in the position and hopefully the members have enjoyed it too, and learned from the articles printed there. But the time has come to move on. I want to thank all of the people who have written for the *Messenger*; especial-

ly those who write regularly – there wouldn’t be much of a paper without your contributions. I also want to thank everyone who reads the *Messenger* – you are the reason I work on the paper. And I wish the best of luck to my successor, whoever that may be.

In Solidarity,

Paul Felton







by Linda Turney, National Business Agent

## Turney at the Table

*When you read, you empower yourself. When you write, you influence others.*

### Article 1.6: Supervisors doing craft work

Any work done by supervisors or managers, which is part of the clerk bargaining unit job description, is prohibited, except in limited situations as described in Article 1, Section 6:

### Article 1 Section 6. Performance of Bargaining Unit Work

A. Supervisors are prohibited from performing bargaining unit work at post offices with 100 or more bargaining unit employees, except:

1. in an emergency;
  2. for the purpose of training or instruction of employees;
  3. to assure the proper operation of equipment;
  4. to protect the safety of employees;
- or
5. to protect the property of the USPS.

B. In offices with less than 100 bargaining unit employees, supervisors are prohibited from performing bargaining unit work except as enumerated in Section 6.A.1 through 5 above or when the duties are included in the supervisor's position description.

Whenever Supervisors or Postmasters work our jobs, clerks are losing hours and money. In order to be successful at these grievances the Steward needs at least one witness, more if possible. Witness statements should be specific.

For example: "On Friday, March 18, 2016 (when), I saw supervisor Smith (who) sorting the parcels (what) from 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. (how long) which is a total of 2 hours." Or "On Saturday, March 19, 2016, I witnessed supervisor Jones checking in the carriers at the cage unit on and off from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. Supervisor Jones was working the cage area for 1 and 1/2 hours." These statements are needed in order to win these grievances. The Union should ask for a make whole remedy which requires the payment (at the appropriate rate) to

the available and qualified employee(s). Please include the Names in your grievance file.

In small offices that were affected by the Global Settlement the Union has to check whether postmasters or supervisors are circumventing our new language. Arbitrator Das stated that:

*All time the supervisor or Postmaster*

our Members to keep an eye on postmasters and supervisors who are doing our work. Members should alert their Stewards when they are observing these violations. Our jobs depend on it.

### \$56 Million and The USPS made over 1600 ERRORS

Every day I hear from a steward or member concerning the pay outs from the \$56 million remedy for supervisors doing our work. The USPS made **HUGE** mistakes regarding paying our members. The Postal Service made over 1600 errors. They have only two people assigned to correcting the situation.

Union members should go to APWU.ORG, then MEMBERS ONLY and put in their Employee Identification Number (EIN). This will show them how much they should expect to get. If the EIN is not found and the member still feels they should be getting the money, their stewards should call our office (312) 986-8650, (only Chicago District). We will need proof of the office level, the Member's form 50s and the Payment Request Form. These members have not been forgotten. Everyone who is qualified under the national dispute will get paid. You do NOT have to file a grievance at the local level.

Both the Michigan and Illinois Conventions are on the same weekend this year. I am planning to be in attendance in Lansing, MI the first day of your Convention. I look forward to seeing you and discussing your grievances with you.

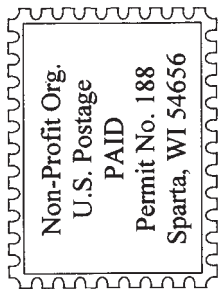
Thank you.

**"Whenever Supervisors or Postmasters work our jobs, clerks are losing hours and money."**

*spends staffing the window during the day will be counted towards the permissible bargaining unit work limits.*

ALL hours that postmasters and supervisors, while working alone, is considered time spent staffing the window. When Postmasters or supervisors work simultaneously with a clerk, they will be charged for all time spent from the moment they are doing window work or log into POS. Postmasters in level 18 offices may not work more than 15 hours per week. APWU has established the 1260A forms that can be reviewed in the Members Only section at APWU.ORG by Presidents who represent small offices. The forms assist to guard against supervisors doing our work. However, it is good practice to stop by the small offices and check on the clerk to make sure the 1260A is being recorded properly.

It is important that all employees guard against supervisors doing our work. Our struggle is to protect clerk work. I suggest that all local Presidents and Stewards encourage



Return to APWU/MPWU  
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John Greathouse (Central Michigan Area Local) and MPWU Legislative Director Roscoe Woods with Melissa Gilbert, candidate for Congress in the 8th District.