

# Michigan MESSENGER



Volume 45, Number 185  
July-August, 2016

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

### In This Edition

Legislative's Director Report.....	2
Editor's Report.....	3
Maintenance Craft's Report.....	3
Back To The Future .....	4
Retiree President's Report .....	5
It's Convention Time .....	6
Veteran's News.....	6
Will State House Lawmakers Ever Stand Up For Flint?.....	8

## PRESIDENT



by  
Michael  
Mize

# New Contract

We have a new contract. There are always good and bad in a contract as it happens one of two ways. We either negotiate a contract which has give and take as Management has many things they want or we get an Arbitrated Contract as this one is. In an arbitrated contract the arbitrator decides on the disputed issues which can go either way.

Now I believe most of us would have liked to see a little more for us in some areas, but that is normal no

matter how much we got or gave. All in all this contract made some good ground in some areas and in my opinion is a good, fair contract. You have to look at what we got, what we wanted and what Management wanted to make comparisons.

We all got a raise which is important to most. The raise is more than Management proposed and less than the Union proposal. The Arbitrator used what the settlement with the rural carriers was to weigh the decision and gave us the same. Except, we were able to get extra for the PSE employees. This is in fact related to testimony from PSE's at the arbitration. Closing

the gap for the wages is important and this is a big step the right direction.

We were not able to eliminate the two tier wage system for career employees, but Management wanted to add an additional lower tier for new employees and that did not happen. So we can look at it as a loss, win or push. It really is all in perspective. I choose to look at it as a win if we didn't lose ground.

I could go on about the Contract and each issue but there is plenty out there already on it, I only wanted to touch on it and ask that everyone think of both sides of the issue prior to making

a judgment. We can't get everything we want in a contract and the other side is always wanting to take away something we have.

Getting this contract at this time has set us up for a very busy fall. We have the National Convention in August and then go to Local Negotiations from September to November. The only way the Union knows the issues you want changed in Local negotiations is by you as a member informing the Officers of those issues. Just like everything else we do, we need you the membership to keep us informed.

In Unity,

## Gov. Snyder Refuses To Return +\$550,000



Court rule – 3% taken from Teachers was against the law and ordered to return it, Governor keeps filing appeals with the courts.

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Trump - I Reject Everyone's Reality & Substitute One I Just Made Up!



by Roscoe Woods

Hello sisters and Brothers!

After last issues article on who we need to vote for this November I thought I might share the article below with you all. It is important to remember that we need to get away from electing people who propose to run this nation like a business or corporation. I read the piece below at: www.eclectablog.com point and click your way on over for the best up to date progressive news.

In my opinion, America is not a business nor should our government be run like one. If we fail we cannot just default on our obligations, file for bankruptcy and move on. When corporations do those things it is the little people who get hurt, lose jobs, lose pensions, lives are destroyed. Those who destroy the business get their golden parachutes while the rest of us try to figure out how to pay our bills.

Chris Savage does a great job dissecting why Trump would not only be horrible for America but specifically he would be devastating for Michigan. Hope you find the article below as interesting as I did.

REMINDER: Donald Trump thinks Detroit autoworkers make too much money and their companies should have gone bankrupt.

August 8th, 2016 from Chris Savage at Eclectablog - Chris Savage is the owner and publisher of Eclectablog, your one-stop shop for progressive state & national political news & commentary.

Donald Trump is in Michigan today,

cause those guys are going to want their jobs back even if it is less," Trump said. "We can do the rotation in the United States - it doesn't have to be in Mexico."

He said that after Michigan "loses a couple of plants - all of sudden you'll make good deals in your own area."

This economic sage appears to think that unionized autoworkers work for less in one part of the country than they do anywhere else. But the fact that he doesn't have a clue about how the labor market works isn't the most amazing part of this. The most amazing part is that the man that wants to "make America great again"

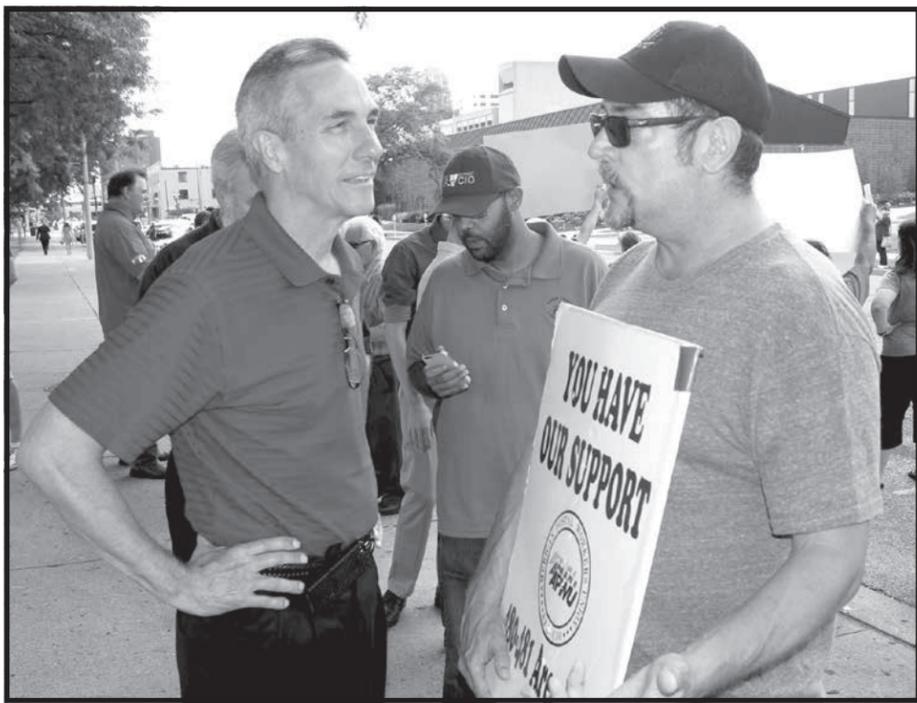
thinks Detroit autoworkers ought to be pushed so far to the brink that they will crawl back to the auto companies on their hands and knees, begging for their jobs back at whatever pay these corporations feel like paying them. GREAT!

Here's another fun fact about Donald Trump: Like Mitt Romney during the 2014, Trump thinks it might have been just fine if America's domestic automakers had been left to go bankrupt:

Asked if President Obama showed leadership in the 2008/2009 bailout of the major auto companies, Trump meandered through an answer that left him without a position. "You could have let it go, and rebuilt itself, through the free enterprise system," said Trump. "You could have let it go bankrupt, frankly, and rebuilt itself, and a lot of people felt it should happen. Or you could have done it the way it went. I could have done it either way. Either way would have been acceptable. I think you would have wound up in the same place."

He told The Detroit News that "it would have been a free-market deal."

Of course this is all, to quote Vice continued on page 5



MEA Rally - Roscoe with Michigan AFL-CIO President Ron Bieber

sharing his two-dimensional worldview at the Detroit Economic Club. As Trump returns to the Motor City, it's worth recalling just how little he thinks of Detroit, Michigan autoworkers, and the companies that employ them.

First, who can forget what Trump said the last time he was here. He essentially told Michigan autoworkers, "You make too much money":

He said U.S. automakers could shift production away from Michigan to communities where autoworkers would make less. "You can go to different parts of the United States and then ultimately you'd do full-circle - you'll come back to Michigan be-

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:

Table with 4 columns: Local Name, Local Number, Local Name, Local Name. Includes Battle Creek, Central MI, Cheboygan, Detroit District, Farmington, Flint, Jackson, Ludington, Muskegon, Roger City, Sault Ste Marie, Southwest MI, Stevensville, Traverse City, Troy Local, Western MI.

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

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, the APWU or the Postal Press. Articles and correspondence to the Editor may be sent to MPWU - Michigan Messenger, John Greathouse - Editor, PO Box 27303, Lansing, MI 48909-7303. 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.



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EDITOR



by John Greathouse

# It Seems Like We Are - Always Wanting More . . . Well #justkeepsmiling!

Well here we are, the beginning of August, summer is winding down, kids are getting their last bit of fun and adventures in before school starts up after the Labor Day weekend.

Then there are the folks over here at the PO! You know us, your brothers and sisters that you work with, some for many years and other are fairly new but we all have one thing in common . . . our union family the APWU! You know the group who just was awarded a fairly good contract from the arbitrator that could have been a train wreck but end up being rather generous in several ways. While not perfect, it is a step in the right direction to getting us back on track to where we were prior to our last contract where we just about gave away the farm!

Looking at all of the things we got in this contract for our families this is where our focus should be, on our

families, not our work. Yes we need to focus on work but I am going to tell you a story about a young lady who waged a battle that most of us will never have to engage in . . . a battle for her life!

I had the opportunity to meet a

too worried about me, everyone, because I'll do okay," said Sami into the camera. "I'll make sure that I do fine."

Here is a 10 year old girl, having just survived brain surgery, chemo and radiation and was going through physi-

through each of those months, each and every day, she would keep moving forward, keep smiling and never giving up! If all of us just gave it our all too, would keep smiling, never give up and keep moving forward, this world would be a much better place.

**"Looking at all of the things we got in this contract for our families this is where our focus should be, on our families, not our work."**

fantastic young lady who was wiser than her years! She was 10 years old when the doctors told her she had Anaplastic Astrocytoma Brain Cancer! Now this was not your normal, run of the mill brain cancer, this was extremely rare, like 1/100,000!

From the time she was told to the point where she was being released from the hospital after surgery, radiation and chemo over just a month, while being interviewed by a television station, she said, "Thank you for my stuffed animals, but I hope you're not

cal therapy to use her left arm and leg plus learn to walk telling everyone "not worry about her because she do okay" & "I'll make sure that I do fine!"

She would give talks to groups about cancer, living and how it felt to be dying. She by no means wanted to be knew that it was a chance and was fighting every step of the way! It did not matter how bad the news was, she always had a smile on her face and push on.

Sami only made it 19 month, but



MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR



by Sterling Bouier

# We Have A New Contract!!!

2016. This handbook will effect BEM staffing. The union and management are in dispute over this handbook. Idowu Balogun is the case officer for this dispute. Please address all input and inquiries on the handbook to [MaintStaffing@apwu.org](mailto:MaintStaffing@apwu.org). There is also a planned discussion during the National Convention on this subject. Read and familiarize yourselves with

this handbook, especially if you hold a BEM-09 position.

at 313 965-1398 (maintenance office @GWY Detroit) or by email at

**"Maintenance PSEs converted to Career."**

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

[sbouier@apwudetroit.org](mailto:sbouier@apwudetroit.org). Thank you all for allowing me to serve.

In Union Solidarity.

Hello MPWU Brothers and Sisters, As everyone should be aware by now, as of July 8th, we have a new contract. Highlights that affect maintenance craft are as follows:

- 1. 3.8% pay increases over life of agreement.
- 2. 10% clothing allowance increase over life of agreement.
- 3. All maintenance PSEs converted to career and the PSE category eliminated within 60 days.
- 4. New pecking order placing APWU bargaining unit employees ahead of non-APWU employees for in-service register selections.

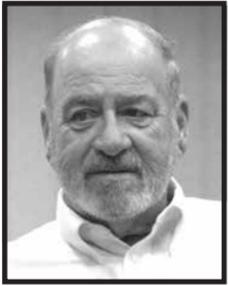
I would like to thank our National APWU representatives and our members who played a part in obtaining this arbitration award. I feel that we achieved a lot of good and positive things will reward and benefit our members in the long run.

Also, the new MS-1 Handbook is now effective and the APWU was provided a copy of it as of June 21st,



MPWU Legislate Dir. Roscoe Woods joins teachers from the Lapeer School District at the MEA Rally in Lansing, MI.

## BACK TO THE FUTURE



by  
Al  
LaBrecque

# Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely!

### TOMBSTONE –

In the afterglow of the State Union and Chapter Conventions, my intent for this column to mentor temporarily clouded my vision as to what was really occurring around me. Events since the conventions have knocked some of the shine off the afterglow by which I was being dazzled. That of my Michigan Sisters and Brothers was unquestionably genuine and heartfelt. However, that of our visiting leadership from the “City on a Shining Hill” may have been celebrating for an entirely different reason. Excuse me, albeit a little slow on the uptake, if I recognize it for what it was; being baffled by condensed B.Sc.! I know, not very gracious, Al! But, here’s why:

A couple I’ve known for years recently relocated “up north”, who through Democratic Party affiliations, are likewise friends with a MPWU State officer and president of an APWU Local. So, she says to me; “Well Al, I hear you got quite a send-off.” Later, I kept thinking about the term; “sendoff”, when the light bulb finally came on. That’s what that was! Send this guy off with glowing terms, a pat on the back, and this large, lovely 3.5 lb. glass trophy-like piece, laser engraved with “APWU” at the top, then my name (actually spelled right this time), then the blah, blather, of what a great guy I “was”. It suddenly became crystal clear to me. It WAS a sendoff, a good-bye and good riddance celebration of getting me out of the picture, a burial. That’s when it also came to me that this engraved trophy looks like, and IS my “tombstone”! We even have had some good laughs over it. The glass door-

stopper is now, and forever known as my “tombstone”. But, not so fast my friends!

### RETIREE RESOLUTIONS -

We offered 4 retiree resolutions to amend Articles of the APWU Constitution. Those Res. were approved by the delegates to the MPWU State Convention and forwarded to national. The 15 member APWU Constitution Committee non-concurred on all four, plus 3 offered by the Southwest Coastal Area Local (CA) APWU, authored by Bobby Donelson. They didn’t even throw us the proverbial bone this time. Brother Browning and up to 3 National Retiree Delegates, plus Bro. Donelson will be our primary advocates in Convention.

So, Listen Up All DELEGATES to the 2016 National Convention; whether from Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, or any of the 13-states in the Central Region, and delegates from our 50 Great States, Puerto Rico (who had a member on the Committee), and Territories; what follows are the 4 Res. submitted by the Michigan Postal Workers Union and brief reasons why they should be adopted. Let’s start with the first, and arguably the most controversial:

REPRESENTATION - Constitution; Art. 6. Sec. 6. Resolved: “. . . references to ; “National Convention; Local, State, regional affiliates, or organizations voting 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.”

(I’m not including the Committee’s lame reasons for non-concurrence. You will read them in the report) This Res. goes directly to increasing Retirees Dept. member participation in Convention. Realistically, few Chapters could

afford to send more than one or two delegates given the slim dues rebate money Chapters operate on. Whether a delegate is a full-dues or \$36. paying member is irrelevant. Retirees paid full dues for decades. Calculating an estimated 40,000 Retirees Dept. members of just 25 years, equates to a million years of full dues-paying. Most retirees simply can’t afford to pay full dues. Currently, there are a token five (5) National Retiree Delegates elected, with an average voting strength/representation of 1 for 8,000.

Next, and I consider this to be a paramount retiree Resolution. Constitution; Art. 11. Sec. 2(i) second paragraph. After the sentence ending with; “. . . The five (5) Retiree National Retiree Delegates shall be paid necessary expenses to attend the National Convention (Add: “. . .and the All-Craft APWU Retirees Department Conference.”). Non-concurred by the Committee! It only makes good sense to include the 5 Regional Retiree Delegates for both the educational opportunity, and especially for the purpose of debate on deliberations for Resolutions to be developed for the next national Convention. It’s imperative to include the 5 Retiree Delegates so they can intelligently address retiree Resolutions, pro or con, thus adequately representing the Retirees Dept. in Convention. That’s what the Craft Divisions do. It should be noted that the 5 Retiree Delegates WERE authorized to attend the All-Craft Conferences in 2013 (to attend the officer’s installation), and in 2015 after a lot of haggling with our top national officers who eventually relented. And please; don’t cite costs when our Retirees’ Dept. is completely self-sustained while contributing generously to the APWU general fund.

A Resolution to increase the APWU Health Plan Associate Member fee from \$35 to \$40. Research reveals that there an undetermined number of APWU retirees who are enrolled in the Union Health Plan paying the \$35. Associate Member fee when for \$36, they can receive the benefits of APWU membership AND eligibility to belong to the APWU Health Plan. This has been a long-standing issue pursued by the Retirees Dept. to identify those members. Raising the Associate Member fee to \$40 will be an incentive for those retirees to more properly be members of the APWU Retirees Dept. I further suggest that if any APWU retiree rejects membership, then in my humble opinion, they can also shop for FEHB coverage elsewhere. In my Local we called them scabs. The Committee suggested this Res. was inaccurate and misleading. All information contained herein was either obtained

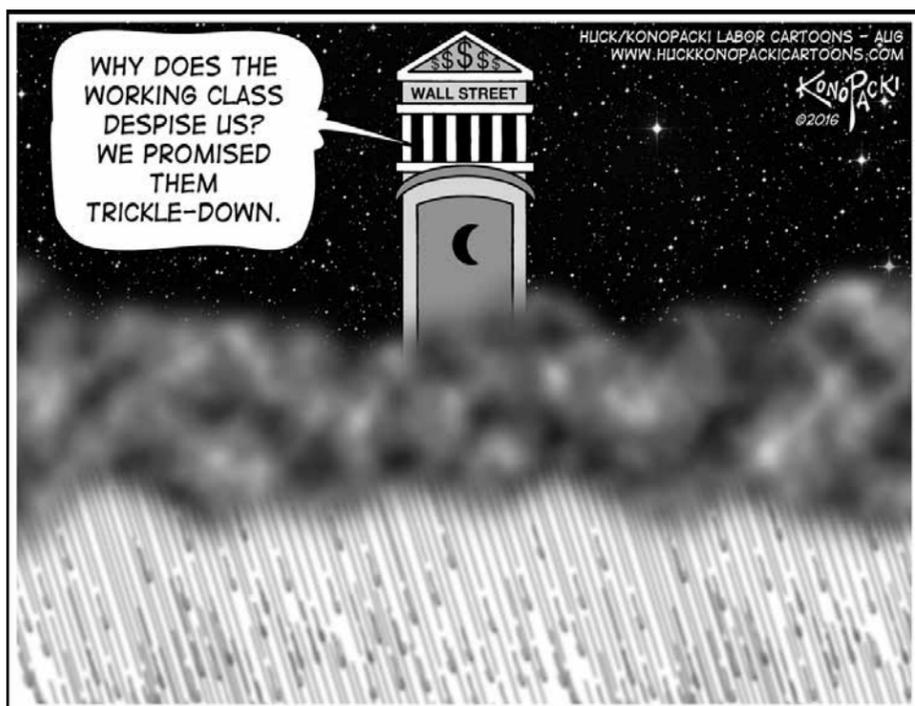
from the former Dir., or from the official 2015 OPM Publication RI 71-004.

Resolution: Constitution; Art. 13. Sec.1. Paragraph 4 amended to read: The National Executive Board, the Director of the Health Plan, AND DIRECTOR OF THE RETIREES DEPARTMENT shall be the Board of Directors of the Health Plan.” (new language in caps for emphasis).

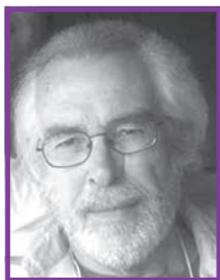
While I’m not especially passionate about this, it only makes good sense. Estimates ranging from a majority to 40% of APWU Health Plan enrollees are retirees, Why Not the Retirees Dept. Director on the Board? When the Support Services Div. Director is on the Board?! With an estimated 40,000 Retirees Dept. members, except for the Clerk Div., the Dept. Director represents more members than the Maintenance, MVS, and Support Services combined. This should be a complete no-brainer. A zero cost factor! So, why non-concur? Maybe just because we proposed it. Why else?!

So, there it is. Our initiatives in Resolutions to the Convention, including three from California. As this is being written, a scheduled conference call by the Retirees Dept. Director and 5 Retiree Delegates is being conducted to discuss these Resolutions. Both Brothers Paul Browning and Byron Denton requested that the makers of these Res. be included in the call. The answer was a very firm; ‘absolutely not’! Oh yeah? What’s with the attitude? We’re not the enemy. In fact, we’re the builders of this Department. Also in fact, I count 7 sections of the APWU Constitution authored by yours truly, including electing our own Director and the right to vote. I resent being dissed to apparently let one and all know whose boss! Then, I look across from my laptop and see “the tombstone”. “Okay, here’s the deal. I know it takes time to know who to trust. It took our first elected Director time to learn to trust the word and motives of both Byron Denton, Western Region Retiree Rep., and Al LaBrecque. When Judy understood we were as good as our word; we were able to accomplish more than anyone ever expected, including yours truly. And yes, I’m proud of that. But, for anyone mistakenly believing now that I’m not “seen”, I should no longer be “heard”, they don’t know me. Attempts to gag me only serves to increase my resolve. I don’t need recognition other than from my leadership to respect that Al has been engaged in building the Retirees Dept. from its foundation. That Al has no ulterior motives for personal gain. That what I am proposing is for the advancement of OUR Retirees Dept. and its betterment to represent the retiree membership. Nothing more!

And the road goes ever on . . .



RETIREE PRESIDENT



by Paul Browning

# Retiree Thoughts From Experience

A big shout out to all my fellow APWU members on finally having a new contract even if it isn't, strictly speaking, a Collective Bargaining Agreement. As someone who worked through several arbitrated contracts and spent a number of years as an Arbitration Advocate with a couple of cases a month, I know the Arbitrator giveth and the Arbitrator taketh.

Whether this is a good contract or not, only time and the members on the workroom floor will be able to tell.

Everyone always wants money. But aside from the paycheck every two weeks, there is day to day life on

the job. While the money is a sure deal, the only way the rest of the contract language can be guaranteed is through enforcement in the Grievance/ Arbitration procedure. Without vigilant members, effective and well trained stewards (the most important Union job in my opinion) and capable National Officers all working together, the contract isn't worth the paper it's written on. Though Unions have always worked for beneficial societal change and a better life for all, their #1 duty is representation of the membership. The "Grand Alliance" is wonderful and a noble concept which must continue to be pursued – but it

didn't get us a negotiated contract.

As a retiree who spent 32 years at the Post Office working on good days

Officers whether it be through education, training, or Regional Business Agents and National Headquarters Officers. So, good luck to all and as a

late friend of mine used to write- May all your grievances be winners.

**"The "Grand Alliance" is wonderful and a noble concept which must continue to be pursued – but it didn't get us a negotiated contract."**

and miserable days, I wish my Union brothers and sisters all the best in getting Postal management to abide by the contract. Remember, a contract is just agreement between two parties. Your stewards and officers are not policemen who can "arrest" managers for violations. They must file a grievance-in effect a contractual lawsuit-and have the full backing of the membership and our National

And on the Retiree news front, I am deferring in this paper's issue to MPWU Retiree Chapter President Emeritus aka Mr. Union-Al LaBrecque. One other note-hopefully I will have a new pic next to my article as a very good friend advised me the previous one was terrible. And since he has a face like a bummed out bulldog I am listening to him if my editor can change in time. Thanks.

## Trump – I Reject Everyone's Reality & Substitute One I Just Made Up!

*continued from page 2*  
President Joe Biden, malarkey. Justin Hyde, writing for Yahoo! Auto during the last cycle, explains why letting Detroit automakers go bankrupt would have been a catastrophe and the idea that they would have been fine is absurd:

[Romney:] "The president tells us that without his intervention things in Detroit would be worse. I believe that without his intervention things there would be better."

The crux of Romney's argument: If Obama had not acted, private companies would have stepped in and run a "managed bankruptcy." What this ignores is that in the fall of 2008, before Obama was even sworn in, no one on Wall Street or anywhere else was willing to lend GM and Chrysler a penny — let alone the \$81 billion they and their financial arms eventually needed. Both companies' bankruptcies required money on a scale not seen in legal history. Unlike airlines, which can keep running with much smaller short-term loans while they restructure, automakers need massive amounts of up-front capital to pay suppliers and workers while they build cars; their finance companies need even more to keep making car loans that can bring in revenues. The potential damage wasn't just layoffs; Chrysler executives testified on the first day of bankruptcy that without immediate cash the company risked destroying hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of equipment. Even after Obama took office, GM and Chrysler searched frantically for paths to avoid bankruptcy, including

a possible merger. Chrysler held a one-week garage sale of its assets in February 2009, inviting anyone with enough money to bid for parts of the company. No one bit.

It's not just Donald Trump who is clueless about the economic implosion that was avoided thanks to the efforts of the Obama administration. Trump's running mate Mike Pence

**"Trump thinks Autoworkers make too much money"**

voted against the loans that kept GM and Chrysler afloat. Here's what Pence told the audience at the Detroit Economic Club in November of 2010:

[E]ven though I am proud of the American automotive tradition and Indiana's ongoing role it, I even opposed bailing out GM and Chrysler. While the administration has been busy making the point that GM is on the rebound and taxpayers are being repaid, most Americans know that it still would have been better if GM had gone through an orderly reorganization bankruptcy without taxpayer support. Taxpayer funded bailouts are no substitute for economic policies that will create real consumer demand. I have no doubt that American automakers and autoworkers can compete and win in a growing American economy.

Pence is as clueless as Trump when it comes to the economic reali-

ties that led to the automaker bailout. U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow has a few choice words for Donald Trump as he spends the day in Michigan:

Donald Trump talks a good game, but if you look at his actual record, he's proven to be terrible for Michigan families and businesses. Instead of making and growing things in this country, Trump chose to make his ties

in China and his suits in Mexico. He would have let the auto industry go bankrupt, said wages are 'too high,' and even failed to pay small business owners who provided goods and services to his casinos.

People in Michigan deserve better. Hillary Clinton stood with us to support the American auto industry and her 100-days Jobs Plan looks like it was written for Michigan! She is laser-focused on strengthening manufacturing, small business growth, clean energy innovation and rebuilding our infrastructure. All of which will create good-paying jobs in Michigan!

Congressman Dan Kildee has a message for Trump, as well:

Donald Trump does not represent Michigan values or the interests of our hardworking people. Trump may say a lot of things that sound nice, but if you look at his actual record, he has

never been on the side of Michigan families. Trump has always put Trump first — at the expense of working class people. While Trump claims he wants to 'make America great', he bet against American workers and made his own clothing line overseas in China. If Trump had his way, he would have also let the auto industry go bankrupt, which would have cost our state hundreds of thousands of jobs. With such a disastrous failed business record, it is no wonder that a vast majority of Michiganders see him as unfit to be president.

Detroit is a town that's been down on its luck for a long time. But, thanks to the efforts of the Obama administration, working in partnership with Gov. Jennifer Granholm, the automotive industry here did not collapse and is now highly profitable once again, employing Michiganders and autoworkers across the country.

Donald Trump may want autoworkers groveling for their jobs, begging to work for any wage but Michigan workers are better than that and have more dignity than Trump gives them credit for.

And no amount of Donald Trump bullying will ever change that.

In Solidarity.

**Attend your Union Meetings**

# It's Convention Time

by Leo F. Persails

It's convention time, and there are a lot of them. In the short time-frame of a few weeks the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, and the American Postal Workers Union will all hold their conventions. At the time of this writing the republicans have just completed theirs and the Democrats were about ready to start. Trump ran the republican convention and used his family, except for his first two wives, to speak and showcase the convention. The speakers were different than any prior. Trump himself made numerous promises if elected. Many of the promises were ironic and obviously opposite of the Republican Party and past Republican Congress positions. The ones most obvious were the free trade agreements and gay rights. The republicans have consistently block voted those issues for years. He obviously has a way out, because he can't produce his

party's votes, which produces an automatic failure beyond his control. Trump even contradicted himself about supporting Veterans which conflicted with his prior opinion of captured Veterans not being heroes. The most surprising thing was his lack of addressing Social Security and Medicare entitlements. It's apparent he doesn't disagree with

decades have retained the right of our members to elect their officers and rejected replacement of them with appointments. The last convention saw changes in that position when numerous elected positions were removed. The delegates attending this convention still don't know how many replacement appointments, and their cost to the union, were made for those

the membership, and should have been separated and taken from the General Fund.

Republicans and the APWU Administration doing this, gave birth to a self created financial problem. Instead of correcting the self created problem, the APWU leadership and the republicans, now want

***“Will attempts be made at this convention to eliminate more elected positions for possible appointed staff?”***

the republican plan to end what they deem as expensive entitlements for millions of Americans.

The Democratic Party convention is next and their past positions and actions will be far more representative of their speeches. Unlike the republicans, they won't promise support of programs and things they have openly opposed for decades. They will support retirement promises of Social Security being kept, and those reelected will again vote to stop republican changes. They will again support universal health care for ALL Americans. They will also make protection of Medicare a priority, and the whole party will support it. Hillary will define exactly how she will improve America instead of a lot of empty promises. She is a strong lady and still stands after two years and billions of dollars spent trying to make her look worse than Trump. The republicans had to do that to have a chance, because Trump couldn't be made to look better.

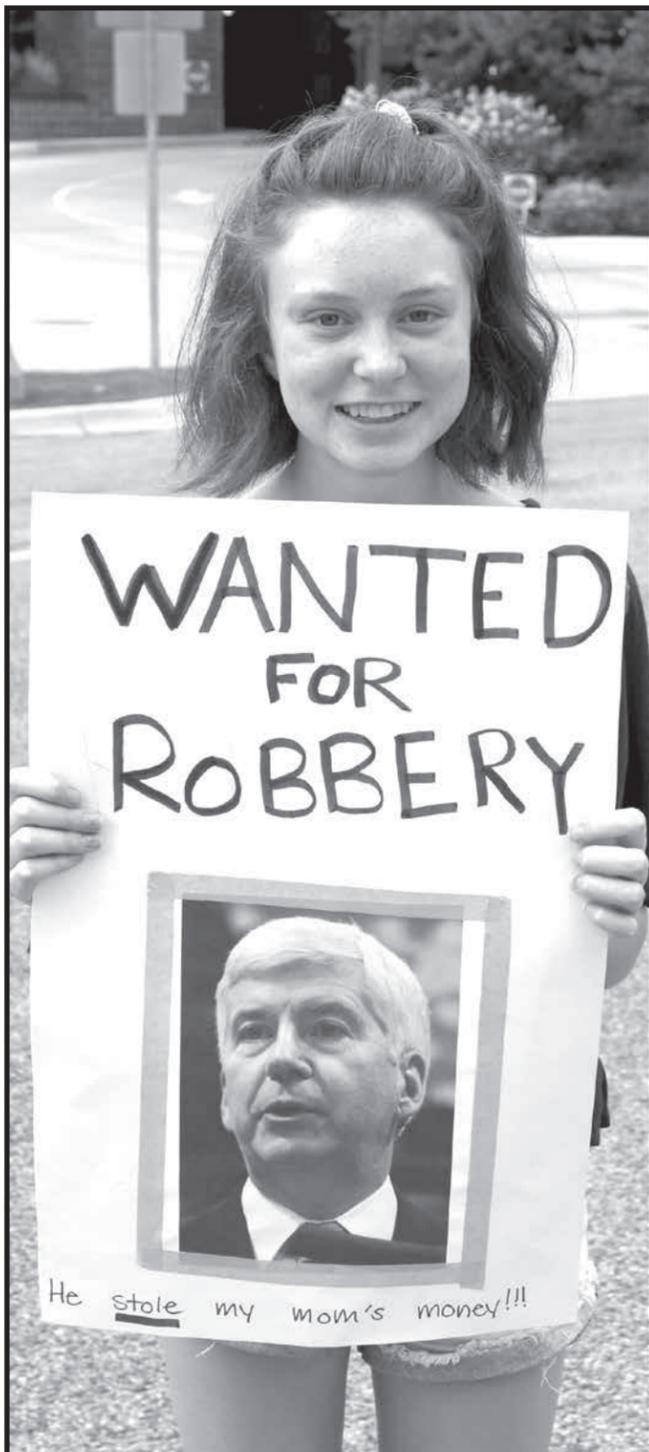
Last but not least is the APWU convention. This convention is just as important to Postal Workers and maybe more so then years past. For years APWU conventions entertained battles of elected positions versus appointed positions. The delegates for de-

eliminated positions. Will attempts be made at this convention to eliminate more elected positions for possible appointed staff? Are we really saving money for things other than representation, or are we switching power from the membership? Will our members still be able to bid on APWU positions or will they see appointments similar to management appointment of friends, contrary to the National Agreement.

There are a lot more similarities to these three conventions then just being held a few weeks apart. The issue about America's retirement plans of Civil Service, Social Security entitlements, and the APWU Officers Retirement Plan, has a common thread. Like the republicans and the Democrats, the APWU has broken into camps over this issue involving their own plan for Officers. While Social Security was designed to be a retirement plan and was created by FDR and the Democrats. The republicans saw a pile of money and came up with ways to raid it. They found numerous ways to spend from the fund. They added disabled, handicapped and several other government funded programs to the Social Security RETIREMENT PLAN. Most of those groups are worthy of government assistance, but not from the Civil Service or Social Security RETIREMENT PLANS. Funding for these other programs should have come from the General fund, but not by raiding the Retirement Funds. This republican raid freed up General Fund money for tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy. How does this compare to the APWU? Well there are a lot of similarities, just like the Democrats are trying to protect your retirement the APWU should be protecting their Officer Retirement Plan just as they promised in decades past. Instead they have added self appointed staff and some Local Officers to the Plan without Executive Board approval. This was done at a great expense to the Plan. If any additional APWU Retirement Plan was needed, it should have been added to the Constitution and approved by

to change and eliminate the plans. The APWU oddly enough has taken a page from the republican playbook and are HEADED IN THE SAME DIRECTION. Preparations for this APWU convention have already been made by the APWU administration. APWU leadership appointments to the Constitution Committee have already voted to eliminate the Officers Retirement Plan. They have also presented that position to the Local Presidents Conference. They will now bring it to the APWU Convention floor to recommend and argue support. That effort will be led by a former Officer that didn't have enough years to qualify for the Plan. This attack may not affect all of the present Officers that are eligible to retire. That may be why several are supporting it. What it will affect without a doubt, will be future National Officers. Those of you, our future leaders, will be union PSEs forever by APWU rules, if it passes.

It will be an interesting but drastically different convention in relationship to APWU history. First its Executive Board endorsed and supported a Presidential candidate that was not a Democrat, something that had NEVER happened in the history of the APWU. Now in a similar vein, some have taken a position SIMILAR to the republicans, and are trying to eliminate the APWU Officers Retirement Plan. This convention will actually see the APWU take a republican anti retirement and worker benefit plan position. That position will be directly opposite of the Democratic Party position on protecting Civil Service and Social Security. At the same time they will be cloning the Republican Party's attack on America's Retirement Plan for all citizens. That will also be good ammunition for management when they come after your retirement with the republicans later on. After all they can claim they are on the same page as the APWU if this attack is successful. Hopefully this APWU convention will have enough Democrats to stop this republican style attack on unions and officer benefits.



Children of MEA Teachers understand the issues and join with their parents in this fight.

## VETERAN'S DIRECTOR

## Veterans' News



by  
John P.  
Smeekens

## BURN PITS

Were you exposed to burn pits while deployed? Did you serve in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn, Djibouti, Africa, Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm or the Southeast Asia Theater of operations after August, 1990? Do you think you may have been exposed to burn pits and other airborne hazards? Some Veterans have reported respiratory symptoms and health conditions that may be related to exposure to burn pits. The long-term health effects of exposure to burn pits and other airborne hazards are not fully understood (sounds like an Agent Orange Story). In an effort to better understand these health effects, VA has launched the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry for Veterans and Service members. The Registry gives participants an opportunity to document any concerns they may have about deployment-related exposures and provides an opportunity to obtain a free health evaluation by a VA or DOD provider. The evaluation can identify and document any problems potentially related to the exposures and ensure ongoing follow up for any existing health conditions or any additional conditions that could emerge down the road. A common misunderstanding about the registry is that participation is required to obtain disability compensation benefits. This is not true. The burn pit registry and all other VA registries are unrelated to the disability compensation rating process. While a Registry note in your medical record summarizing your exposure concerns and related medical treatment may serve as evidence to support a claim, it is not a necessary document or step in the claims process.

The registry is open to anyone who served in: Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn, Djibouti, and Africa on or after Sept. 11, 2001 Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm, Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after Aug. 2, 1990.

The Burn Pit Registry is a nice way for Veterans to get their foot in the door at the VA and to explore the services, benefits and resources available to them through VA health care.

Learn more at: <http://www.va.gov/HEALTH/NewsFeatures/2016/March/Were-you-exposed-to-burn-pits-while-deployed.asp#sthash.8zAnET0l.dpuf>

## HOME STATE HERO

Retired Lt. Col. Charles "Chuck" Kettles received the Medal of Honor

from President Obama during a July 18 White House ceremony for flying his helicopter into a hot landing zone to rescue dozens of soldiers under heavy enemy fire during the Vietnam War. The event was attended by Kettles' wife, eight of his 10 children, three of his grandchildren, and several Army colleagues who were involved in that battle 49 years ago. The



White House ceremony was the culmination of a multiyear effort by William Vollano, a volunteer with the Veterans History Project under the Library of Congress. Vollano interviewed Kettles and subsequently launched an effort to have Kettles be awarded the Medal

of Honor. Kettles deployed to Vietnam in early 1967 as a platoon leader and aircraft commander with the 176th Aviation Company, part of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion in the Americal Division. Kettles made several trips under continuous fire to bring in ammunition and reinforcements and evacuate a total of 44 wounded soldiers.

When Kettles made his final trip back to base, mechanics counted almost 40 bullet and shrapnel holes in his helicopter. President Obama said that the Army's warrior ethos "is based on a simple principle: A soldier never leaves his comrades behind. Chuck Kettles honored that creed not with a single act of heroism, but over and over and over. And because of that heroism, 44 American soldiers made it out that day." He sees his new honor as recognition for everyone who fought that day in Vietnam. **Lt. Col. Kettles currently lives in Ypsilanti, Michigan, with his wife Ann.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!  
WELCOME HOME BROTHER!!!**

## UNITED STATE OF WOMEN

Recently, more than 5,000 women in Washington, D.C., for the first ever White House Summit on The United State of Women. In attendance at the event were President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, House Democratic Leader Nancy

Pelosi, Attorney General Loretta Lynch, Oprah Winfrey, Amy Poehler and many more. During the event, panel discussions were held on important topics for women, including health care, education, violence against women and **Women In The Military**. Dr. Jill Biden, who was not able to attend, recorded a video discussing women in the military, issues they come across and the amazing things they do for our country. Following her video, Gen. Lori Robinson, commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, made remarks to the crowd regarding her experiences and pride toward females who serve our country.

To learn more about the summit, visit: <http://www.theunitedstateofwomen.org/>.

To watch Gen. Robinson's remarks, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQpi2BpvcIw>.

## IMPROVE V. A. HEALTH CARE

Politicians, pundits and politically-motivated organizations are using the national crisis in access to care at the Department of Veterans Affairs as justification to dismantle and privatize the

VA health care system, with some even proposing that veterans be charged for their service-connected care. **We Veterans say NO!!!** Contact your members of Congress and let them know that VA

health care reform must be based on the needs and preferences of veterans, not political rhetoric: <http://capwiz.com/vfw/issues/alert/?alertid=72925626>.

## NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

Friday September 16, 2016 will be National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Please take a moment to think about these Veterans who are still Missing.

## ON LINE HEALTH CARE APPLICATION

Providing health care to our Nation's Veterans is a vital service of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Through the MyVA transformation, VA is rebuilding trust with Veterans; modernizing service delivery; and setting the course for long-term, VA excellence, all while continuing to expand access to high-quality care. With improved efforts, many of the steps Veterans must take to receive health care, have been reviewed. It's been found that enhancements were necessary in the initial application to better the Veteran experience by removing barriers that hinder access. Veterans now applying for health care will be directed to the health care application on [www.vets.gov](http://www.vets.gov). Veterans will still have access to VA Form 10-10EZ, which was originally available through the Veterans On-line Application; however, going forward, those applying for health care eligibility will use the online application or call 877-222-VETS (8387).

**To learn more about applying for health benefits, please visit VA's Health Benefits webpage.**

## What To Do If You Are Being Investigated By A Postal Inspector Or OIG Agent

Many employees are petrified by the thought of talking to a postal inspector. Often times, employees become unnerved and rattled, forgetting their basic rights in the process.

If questioned by a postal inspector, even if you believe that you are not guilty of any wrongdoing, you should:

- Remain calm.
- Correctly identify yourself.
- Request a steward, a union representative or an attorney as appropriate.
- Remain silent until you have consulted with your steward or attorney.

Do not physically resist arrest or search of your person or property. However, request to see a search warrant. If they do not have one, inform them that you do not consent to the search.

Don't sign any papers waiving your rights without consulting with your steward or attorney.

Do not deny or admit to any allegations without consulting with your steward or attorney.

Do not sign any type written statements or make oral remarks without consulting with your steward or attorney.

Remember that the postal inspector will not inform the employee of his or her right to have a union representative or attorney present; **YOU MUST REQUEST ONE!**

Beware of the good guy, bad guy inspector routine. One inspector acts as the bad guy; the other acts as the good guy and tries to con the employee into believing they are trying to help them.

Never fall into the inspectors' trap and to refuse to answer questions unless a steward and/or an attorney is present.

What you say will definitely be used against you! — *The Jayhawk Fed*

- G U E S T P O S T -

# Will State House Lawmakers Ever Stand Up For Flint?

Originally published by *Eclectablog.com*

The following post was written by Sean McBrearty, Campaigns Organizer for Clean Water Action.

Flint Rising, the coalition of community groups who have been combating the water crisis, has officially launched its website, **FlintRising.com**. The site is packed with stories from Flint residents and continues the great work that local activists have been doing on the ground to meet the needs of the community.

It was a dark, cold January day, shortly after the state had finally admitted that the people of Flint had been exposed to poisoned water running through their taps. We drove from Lansing to St Michael's Church in Flint for an organizing meeting. Local activists on the ground in Flint were there along with people from the non-profit community. Even experts who had run door-to-door canvasses in response to Hurricane Sandy were there to do something about the water crisis that is still



Last week, we had the opportunity to partner with Flint community activists to deliver constituent letters from Clean Water Action members across the state with a clear and resounding message; the people of Michigan stand with Flint. That it is a moral obligation to restore clean drinking water regardless of the cost. That even if their constituents weren't directly impacted, we will still hold our lawmakers accountable.

being ignored by our state government.

It is hard for me to write about what

happened in Flint. The most important voices of this tragedy are those that have for so long gone unheard; the voices of those who have the least access in our society and always seem to be the first impacted by things like the Flint water crisis. I don't live there and my daughter wasn't exposed to lead poisoning. But I have listened to people who live there and heard their stories. I've canvassed neighborhoods with Flint Rising and have seen some of the effects. Every door you knock on in Flint seems to be opened by a person standing in front of a mountain of bottled water. It's not just for drinking. It's for bathing, washing dishes, washing clothes, cooking, and all the other things that the rest of us do in our homes without thinking twice.

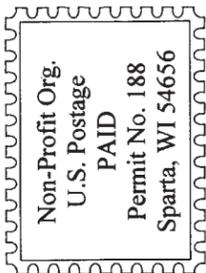
Some people I've met in Flint don't have bottled water. I've met seniors who insisted that bottled water should go to younger people and have persisted in drinking the poisoned tap water. I've met young pregnant mothers, home with children, without reliable transportation, who had to ride busses to the firehouse where bottled water is distributed, with three little kids in tow, to carry as much water as she could back home. She made this trek multiple times a day in the dead of winter. People in Flint have been living with poisoned water for over two years. Many still get skin rashes and have hair falling out from exposure to the water. Nobody has a clear picture yet on how many children have been poisoned.

As of this post, 239 days have passed since Governor Snyder first

acknowledged that the people of Flint are living with poisoned water. 239 days, and the state has done nothing to solve this problem, or mitigate this disaster. The State of Michigan is responsible for the Flint water crisis. They've tried blaming local government, but Flint was under the control of a state appointed emergency manager. Snyder also tried to blame the Environmental Protection Agency, and though the EPA should have forced the state to act sooner, it was an emergency manager who gave the order, and state DEQ officials who failed to enforce Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

Clean Water Action has been talking to our members across the state about the Flint crisis for months. Our field canvass went out through the dead of winter and on into the spring, gathering over 5,500 letters from Clean Water Action members in 44 State House districts calling on their representatives to fund replacing the lead service lines in the city of Flint. Our phone canvass called our members and over 1,500 members emailed their representatives in 85 out of 110 state house districts in Michigan. In Flint local activists came together and kept the pressure on, leading the fight for the restoration of clean water to their city.

**DEADLINE**  
for articles for the  
next issue of the  
*Michigan Messenger*  
is Sept. 9, 2016



Return to APWU/MPWU  
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