

# Michigan MESSENGER



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## In This Edition

Editor's Report.....	2
Legislative Director's Report .....	3
Trying to Contact Congress?.....	3
Human Relation's Report .....	4
Maintenance Craft's Report.....	4
Turney at the Table 2017 .....	5
MPWU Retiree Advisor.....	6
Retiree President.....	7
Non-Revenue Transaction and Proper Clock Rings.....	8

# Save Our Healthcare!



Michigan - Take a Stand Rally to Save the ACA on 15 January 2017.

by Kaitlin Greathouse; MSc, PgD

“Protect My Health Care!” was the shout of nearly six thousand people as they gathered on a chilly January day outside of Macomb Community College in Warren, Michigan. For many this was the last chance to publicly decry their support for the Affordable Care Act as it stands and for many their wish for improvements towards eventual universal healthcare. This was one of 70 rallies of its

kind that took place on Sunday that were arranged by Bernie Sanders, the final speaker at the rally.

Chuck Schumer, US Senate Minority Leader, came out in support of the conglomerate of Michigan congressmen and women and senators. Schumer drove home his demand for a concrete replacement plan before any move to repeal it can be made, likening current actions to burning down

an apartment building and expecting people to still live inside it.

Cecile Richards, Planned Parenthood president, stated that within the week following the election calls for a 900% increase in IUD birth control appointments. The US is at a 30 year low in unintended pregnancies and an all time low in teen *continued on page 4*

## PRESIDENT



by  
Michael  
Mize

# Call To Action

I know I have written before about the Union being about all not the few or the one. Just to be clear here is the definition of labor union “an organized association of workers, often in trade or profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests”. Organized association is an entity comprising multiple people that has a collective goal.

The common theme we have here is that it is a group of people with a common goal. There may be many things that we as individuals do not agree on. One thing that I believe we all agree on is the need for us to continue being represented and having a Union contract. I believe we should all be able to agree that we need to work

together to protect all our members, all our members.

The problem we have is that to many believe that paying Union dues is all that is required to be organized and get to the common goal we have. I will say that being a member and paying dues

**“Everyone is busy in today’s world. No one has time to give to help others and themselves? I believe that someone does have time and the driven personality for it.”**

is an absolute necessity but the Union needs more. We need involvement! We need activists! If posed in a question it may ring louder. Where would the Union be if every member just paid their dues, and did nothing more than that? From the MPWU standpoint there would be no Directors to represent, there would be no Officers to run the organization. Every Officer and Direc-

tor of the MPWU pays Union dues in addition to being an involved activist. Every Officer either currently holds a position with the USPS or did for years and has since retired and continued their Union activism. Officers all donate time that they could spend with family and friends. Why? They believe in this

Union and our members. They believe that all deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

But! Folks we are running a well-oiled machine down key parts. We have spread our Officers thin to cover vacant positions. To this point we have been able to cover everything that we need to cover. The membership has a

great group of leaders that are doing everything they can to do so. We cannot afford to continue to operate down key components in the organization. The Union is you! The Union needs every member to be involved at some level. We will only be able to thrive if we work together to reach that common goal.

We currently have three vacant positions that need to be filled in the MPWU organization. Area 7 Director has been vacant since May of last year. This is in the 490 – 491 zip codes. Area 9 Director position has been vacant for a couple months due to the unfortunate illness and passing of our Union sister Jennifer Gilbert. This is in the 493 – 494 zip codes. Area 6 Director position has been vacant for approximately a month due to the resignation of an officer that could not continue doing as much as they had on their plate. This is in the 488 – 489 zip codes.

*continued on page 2*



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EDITOR



by John Greathouse

# Alternative Facts — Realty Or The Twilight Zone

Overnight Service Standards are being restored, No more plant closing, All PSE's are being made regular and supervisors have stopped doing bargaining unit work!

It's my Alternative Facts... more like a pipe dream and with what is going on in Congress and the Whitehouse, the spinning yarns like this seem to fight right in!

When Kellyanne Conway attempted to explain away the statement from Whitehouse Press Secretary Sean Spicer, whose claim about the size of the crowd at President Donald Trump's inauguration, she set the tone for facts or fiction in the Whitehouse. (He presented a photo of the crowd taken from the Capitol but if you get to look at a high resolution copy of that photo and the one by the AP, you will see that the two images have about the same size of crowds in them, same open spaces just much harder to see as Spicer's photo).

Then only a few days later she rolled out the Bowling Green Massacre... You remember the massacre that did not happen! Yet there is nothing to be found on Google except the true story of two Iraqi nationals living in Bowling Green, Kentucky, who were arrested in 2011 for plotting to send money and weapons to al-Qaida operatives in Iraq. There was no attack, but I am guessing she was hoping everyone would over look that little fact! It was not an alternative fact but more like an outright lie! Don't get me started on the Whitehouse Press Briefing room becoming WH-QVC!

While I am not please with President Trump's election, he is the President of the United States and no matter how many times I want to wake up and wish this was all a bad dream, it will

not change this fact. We need to put behind us the outcome of the election and focus on what we need to be focused on... Securing the future of the Postal Service!

So put your personal positions aside (Pro/Anti Trump) and work with your local and state officers by contacting your Senator and Congressman. There will be an article in this paper "Trying to Contact Congress – Yes, There is an App for That!" that will walk you through each and every step and

"Save our Health Care" in Warren Michigan where we had Senators Sanders, Peters, Stabenow and Schumer along with U.S. Reps Connors & Kildee in attendance and more. There were over 5000 people there in support of saving healthcare.

This might shock you but some people voted for President Trump with the full knowledge that he would start making cuts to Obamacare and they were OK with that because they had

the Affordable Healthcare Act covering them... There are more out there that believe this than you think, so please explain it to them as

**"We need to put behind us the outcome of the election and focus on what we need to be focused on... Securing the future of the Postal Service!"**

can even provide you with a script to read from and a whole lot more.

Brother Roscoe discusses the new or recycled The Postal Service Reform Act of 2017, H.R. 756 that looks a whole lot like the one that was run in 2015 and 2016!

It is important that you follow reports on social media to stay up on this.

**Health Care**

Affordable Health Care Act or as it is called Obamacare has been under attack like never before. In late January there were "Save our Health Care" rallies all across the country.

I had the opportunity to attend the

gently as you can.

**Maximization**

I have had my first chance to use the Maximization program to convert PSE or PTF's to FTR's and it was crazy cool and saved me not just a lot of hours but days or weeks of data crunching! It took longer to upload the files to the APWU website than it took it to run and tell me how many positions need to be created.

So if you are in a smaller office with several PSE's or PTF's and you have been getting 40 hours or going into overtime often, contact your steward to have the data run and see if some of you can be converted to FTR.

In Solidarity.

## Call To Action

continued from page 1

Everyone is busy in today's world. No one has time to give to help others and themselves? I believe that someone does have time and the driven personality for it. Is it you? Is it someone you know? Is it someone

that is already involved in the Local Union and you know they are the person that could make a difference in the small offices the MPWU represents? We need you to call, get that person to call, get the Local to help you find someone. I have suggested before that we have some Areas that cover large distances and many offices. I would entertain ideas for extra help in those areas as well.

Bottom line, this is our Union. This is not my Union I can't run it alone and you as a member can't run it alone either. Together we can run the Union. Together we can work to succeed in our common goals. No one can afford to sit back and ride at this time in our Nation if we are going to succeed. Each and every member in this Union has a place. Now is the time for you to find your place and help us to succeed together. In Unity

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

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## LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR



by  
Roscoe  
Woods

# Congress Considers Sweeping Postal Reform

With chaotic national election behind us we focus on the issues that now lay in front of us.

On January 31st, 2017 I reviewed the following on the APWU National Web site located at [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org):

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee leaders introduced The Postal Service Reform Act of 2017, H.R. 756. Currently, the APWU Legislative & Political Department is reviewing the legislation with APWU leadership.

"We are encouraged by the bipartisan nature of the bill," said President Dimondstein. "Comprehensive postal legislation is critically important to our members. "We are in the process of carefully analyzing the bill," he continued. "Once our review is complete, we will post more information about the details of the legislation."

I encourage you to watch your national web page for information on this and other important pieces of legislation. Our collective bargaining agreement is only as good as the paper its written on, Congress can make sweeping changes to this agency and if they do some of those changes can amend and or eliminate some of the

items we take for granted.

Some highlights or low lights of the current proposed legislation – depending on your opinion of course:

- Curtails or eliminates door to door delivery of mail.
- Addresses the pre funding issue dogging our finances since 2006.
- Sweeping changes to the FEHB for current and retired postal employees.
- Would force current and future retirees who are eligible for Medicare into Medicare Part A or B.
- Sweeping changes to the rate setting process.
- Authorizes the USPS to provide non postal services to local and state governments and other federal agencies.
- Sweeping changes to the processes used when evaluating whether or not the need to close a local post office. It also allows for a local community to appeal to the PRC if the decision is to close a local post office.
- Increases MSPB protections to cover all non-bargaining and non-supervisory employees.

As you can see there is quite a bit to this and I have listed just a few of the provisions. What we hope is this legislation if passed does so with the pre funding provision eliminated.

While the other past regressive attacks on retirees, current employees and service have been fended off our task is that much more difficult with both branches of our government (Congress and the White House) in GOP hands.

In the past there have been attempts to amend legislation and insert regressive policies with respect to our union rights, our OWCP rights or on a national level our ability to represent and file grievances.

We need you all paying attention, we need you all watching **APWU.org** for legislative updates and when asked we need you to call your Senate and House reps and ask them to support the legislative position of your union.

#### Right to bust unions nationally

We are watching as well rumblings that this current congress may move legislation forward that institutes a national right to work (RTW) law.

I will not go into the details of how difficult that can make life for working people since we are living with the here in Michigan but if this comes up we will certainly need all of you to reach out and assist us and trying to defend the rest of the nation from the

attack on unions in general.

With a GOP congress and President Trump being on the record as supporting RTW we will have our hands full with this legislation if it comes up for a vote.

I understand many of you reading this may feel differently than me about the current political climate we live in. The election of President Trump has for the most part shook the conventional wisdom here in the US and left a lot of us wondering how we lost so completely.

I know a lot of you feel the way I do about the outcome of this election and the issues we may be facing in the near future.

That being said so as your legislative director I must find a way to keep you all abreast of legislation that may (in my opinion as your director) negatively impact you and hope that the larger picture I paint or my views in general do not have you tuning me out.

I will do my best to temper my opinion and just keep you all abreast of what's coming up. But... I am not making any promises..

In Solidarity.

## Trying To Contact Congress? There's An App For That!

by Kaitlin Greathouse; MSc, PgD

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and sunshine patriot..."[1] you get the point, politics right now are a little freaky and sometimes it feels like there is nothing you can do but sit at home and watch the country burn but that is where you would be wrong. As a former intern and letter reader, phone call answerer and all around constituent data collector for a US Senator I'm here to tell you how to best use your time to get the most impact.

What I am about to tell you will hurt but online petitions are almost useless, and so is most social media. If it does not physically exist they will look at it, make a mental note that it is a thing, but there is almost never any recourse for that. There are some exceptions to this, [whitehouse.org](http://whitehouse.org)'s petitions were once among them but I can no longer speak for their validity.

Writing letters, sending post cards and the like are the second best way to get your opinion heard. Physical existence will guarantee that your letter is read and it will be filed and cataloged so that all of the regional offices and see how many letters are being collected along the same theme. If you truly want to have your letter read send it to your

regional office, not the DC office, the staff there are assigned to handle local cases.

If you really want to ensure that your voice is heard and that your support, lack of support, complaint, etc, is logged then calls your REGIONAL office. Calling the DC office sounds great but the local offices are there for the express purpose of having a local number for you to call. Call volume is tracked, will be asked your name and address, and they have caller ID. They will collect your comments and pass them along. If you have multiple issues then I recommend you prepare a script ahead of time so that you do not forget them. If you don't know how to write a script then I have a gift for you, [5calls.org](http://5calls.org).

5Calls will break down all of the issues that are being voted on by your representatives and provide the phone numbers to call their offices. It gives you a script that includes where to insert your name, advice on how to leave a message if the office doesn't pick up. It also helps to keep you from yelling at the people who answer the phones, which happens way more often than you would think. After the script you have the option to log if you were able to call. My only complaints about 5calls is that it provides the DC phone numbers and you cannot

combine the scripts into one super script in the site but with some creative copy-paste the script would reveal itself.

What I'm trying to say is that even though it sometimes feels like you are shouting into the void but it doesn't have to. Organize your thoughts, be polite, and don't be afraid to have an unpopular opinion.

[1] Payne, Thomas American Crisis



HUMAN RELATIONS DIRECTOR



by Keith Combs

# Selection Of Physician

Greeting Brothers and Sisters, Injured Employees always have the right to choose their Treating Physician or Medical Facility.

Non-Emergency, the Employee may select a Physician or Hospital within approximately 25 miles. A Supervisor is not authorized to accompany the Employee in Non-Emergency situations.

A Chiropractor is A Physician under FECA only for Manual Manipulation of a Subluxation of the Spine demonstrated by X-ray to exist.

Emergencies are sent to the near-

est available Physician or Hospital, or to the Physician or Hospital of the Employee choice. A Supervisor may accompany the Employee in Emergent situations to ensure prompt Medical Treatment.

Animal Bites and Eye injuries are always considered Emergencies. If there is any doubt as to an Emergent nature of an Injury, it is to be treated as an Emergency. The Physician providing Emergency care is not considered the Employee's Treating Physician, unless the Employee returns for Medical Treatment for two visits or more. Treatment that exceeds two visits to a medical provider will become that Employee's Treating Physician.

The choosing of a Contract Doctor as your Treating Physician is probably not in your best inter-

est. The Contracted Doctor is more obliged to Their Employer (USPS) than to the Employee. The Employee sacrifices Doctor-Patient confidentiality. The Contracted Doctor legally can share any information with the USPS. The Employee does not have to accept the Contracted Doctor recommended course of Treatment. Employee does not have to accept the Contract doctor as their Treating Physician.

If an Employee has an Emergency and seeks Medical Treatment that goes beyond the Employee's Regular Work Hours, Employee may request through their Supervisor to leave, if the request is denied, then the Employee should request Overtime Pay.

If for whatever reason, you find yourself attached to a Contract

Physician, and what to discontinue the Treatment. The Employee can change their Treating Physician by writing to OWCP; provide the reason for the changing their Treatment, and give the Name and Address of both, the New and the Previous Physician. Referral by a Physician to a Specialist is not considered a change of Physician. However get the Referral in writing and send a copy to the Department of Workers Compensation (OWCP).

It is extremely important that the Employee request a CA-16, CA-17 and CA-20 from their employer when seeking Medical Treatment.

Until next time Brothers and Sisters remember, **Wisdom comes with experience; it is usually the painful events that hold the greatest lessons.**

MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR



by Sterling Bouier

# Attention PSEs

Hello MPWU Brothers and Sisters.

Happy New Year to everyone. Let's work together this year to make 2017 a year of change for the better for us as individuals as well as a Union.

If you are a newly converted PSE to full-time career employee, please

ensure that a request has been submitted for you to receive your clothing allowance, which is currently \$89 for custodial employees. You will be issued a uniform allowance credit card and the credit will be applied annually on your anniversary date. If you do not spend it, the credit does not roll over, you forfeit it. The funds may be used at authorized Postal Uniform shops or at online authorized websites and catalogs via the mail.

Also, I must put emphasis on staffing throughout this year. Ensure

that you only sign off assignments and routes as completed that are actually completed. Ensure you are documenting work that is not completed, especially custodial work since it is required and a violation not to perform. Ensure that you are on the proper operation. Ensure that you are challenging staffing packages that are not correct and understaffed. A fair days pay for a fair days work! Ensure that you are performing your 7.0-7.5 hours of work and not more. You are not helping out the organization by perform-

ing more work than required. You are hurting yourself and your co-workers in the process because if the postal service can get you to do two people's job by yourself, they'll never hire that second person and you will wear yourself out and injure your body in the long run.

As always feel free to contact me if there are and questions or if you are in need of my services. I am here to serve.

In Union Solidarity.

## Save Our Healthcare!

continued from page 1

pregnancies under ACA and its generous policies regarding birth control access. Under the ACA women's preventative healthcare has no co-pay and insurance companies are barred from charging women more than men for insurance. Before ACA

healthcare costs were rising 17 times faster than wages. If the ACA is removed without a comparative or greater replacement in Michigan alone an estimated two million people will be affected.

Since the movement to repeal the ACA began more than 18,000 people called the senate switchboards to announce their disapproval. It's



Sen. Bernie Sanders at the "Save Our Healthcare" Rally - Warren MI.



Sen. Gary Peters at the "Save Our Healthcare" Rally - Warren MI.



Sen. Debbie Stabenow at the "Save Our Healthcare" Rally - Warren MI.

important that your voice is heard.

Call your representatives, call your senators. The regional offices will be more available than the DC office. In the words of Debbie Stabenow

**"this is the beginning, this is standing up."**



by  
Linda  
Turney

# Turney At The Table 2017

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

## Article 13 Denial of Light Duty

Full time Regulars and Part Time Flexibles who need to be temporarily accommodated due to an illness or injury must (1) submit a written request to the installation head for light duty and (2) include a medical statement from a licensed physician or chiropractor.

Management must show (1) the Greatest Consideration for employees requiring light duty or other assignments and (2) if the request is refused, the installation head shall notify the concerned employee in writing, stating the reasons for the inability to reassign the employee.

Article 13.4 language for light duty or other assignments is some of the best language in Union history. The language continues to impose on management the obligation to find work for a career employee, even if that work means reducing the number of hours for PSEs.

Article 13.3 language gives locals an opportunity to implement established light or other assignments that are considered to be light duty within each craft. These assignments may be established from part time hours to 8 hour assignments. Locals may discuss ways to make adjustments in normal assignments so as to convert them to light duty assignments.

## The Article 13 Arbitration case

In a recent case I arbitrated with our NWIAL team, Arbitrator Jeffrey Jacobs sustained the Union's argument concerning local implementation of their LMOU regarding light duty. Approximately 4% of the clerks were on light duty. Management began withdrawing light duty assignments. There were approximately 30 clerks whose light duty assignments were reviewed and 29 whose light duty assignments were revoked as a result of management's actions.

Management stated the Union had locally agreed to "up to 2% in each craft and occupational group." The actual language in the LMOU stated "2%" not "up to" 2%, and had an additional clause that allowed for more than 2% after consultation with the Union. Management then advised the Union that "some future requests for light duty may be disapproved". Management did not tell the Union that they were going to revoke currently held light duty assignments.

Management sent letters to light

duty employees advising them their light duty assignments would not be approved and a grievance was filed.

The Union proved that there was work to do and that the employees were able to perform the functions of their jobs within their medical restrictions. Two of the employees that were affected testified at the hearing that they were working on light duty jobs when their light duty assignments were revoked.

Management's argument was based on decreasing mail volume, however the union president, Jackie Englehart, and steward, Johnny Love, testified credibly that there was plenty of work to be performed by light duty employees.

Further, the Union showed the LMOU did not limit the light duty to 2%.

Management claimed they gave the Greatest Consideration as required by Article 13.2.C. but due to the medical restrictions and the lack of volume of mail they decided to withdraw each of the 30 employee's light duty assignments and send them home.

The merits favored the Union in almost every respect.

1. Management had inadequate evidence to prove that there wasn't enough work for clerks on light duty to perform.

2. It was clear that many clerks were on light duty and performing light duty work when they were sent home.

3. Management did not assert during the grievance procedure that there wasn't work available.

4. The Union, through witnesses, testified there was plenty of work available.

5. Management's letters sent to the 30 employees were so similar in nature that it did not discuss each employee's individual restrictions.

Arbitrator Dunn (S7C3VC30706) sustained a grievance over a situation where Management revoked a light duty assignment. Dunn found that light duty work was available and the grievant was successfully performing it.

Arb. Harris (B06C1BC98268806) sustained the grievance because the Greatest Consideration means that management has a responsibility to demonstrate that it has in fact complied with Article 13. Failing to do so, as in the case above, results in a finding that the USPS has violated the CBA.

Congratulations to our team from NWIAL, who achieved justice in this grievance.

## Trump's Tax Cuts

Oligarchy: a government in which a small group exercises control especially for corrupt and selfish purposes. (Webster's Dictionary)

What is happening? Throughout Trump's campaign, he repeatedly targeted international investment bank **Goldman Sachs**. He tweeted that Ted Cruz had a financial relationship with the bank. Trump said that our candidate, Hillary, would be totally controlled by Wall Street because she gave paid speeches to Wall Street, notably **Goldman Sachs**. Trump did not limit his criticism of this bank through his rivals referring to **Goldman Sachs** in a tweet as a "global power structure that robbed our working class" (Times).

Trump's attitude toward **Goldman Sachs** has made a significant turnaround. Steve Bannon, Jay Clayton, Gary Cohn, and Steven Mnuchin have all worked for and have ties to the international investment bank, **Goldman Sachs**, have now been selected for prominent cabinet posts in Trump's administration. This is the beginning of the lies to the working-class.

Mnuchin is being appointed as Secretary of Treasury. He is from **Goldman Sachs**. **Goldman Sachs** is why the stock market went up when Trump won. **Goldman Sachs** was involved in the 2008 financial meltdown. Presently there are 3 cabinet members being appointed from **Goldman Sachs**. We have had a number of Treasury Secretaries from **Goldman Sachs**: Bob Reuben and Hank Paulsen. Hank Paulsen was in the middle of the US economy meltdown in 2008 that Obama had to repair. If Trump were serious about dealing with the economy and the problems of the working class, he would steer clear of former or current **Goldman Sachs** money men. Their policies created downward pressure on wages and the great recession. He should not have **Goldman Sachs** people at the helm of the Treasury. This belief of working class people that Trump is a populist is a joke. He is filling his cabinet with billionaires. He is not a populist; he is creating an oligarchy from **Goldman Sachs**.

Steve Mnuchin talked about his tax plan which will give big tax cuts to the biggest corporations and businesses. These tax cuts will be far larger than those of the Reagan Administration. Mnuchin is known as the Foreclosure King who helped caused the crash in 2008. Working class people do not want the keys to the Treasury handed over to this Wall Street Banker. Mnuchin stated the particular tax cuts would not be directed to or planned to benefit the richest Americans. This is odd because the tax plan provided by the Trump campaign disproportionately gave the biggest tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. Even if he does not give billionaires these tax cuts, he is giving tax cuts to corporations and big businesses which are owned by the wealthiest Americans through their stock holdings. The richest 10% of Americans own 80% of the shares

of stock on Wall Street. These tax cuts end up benefiting people who own the stock. If Trump gives major tax cuts to corporations that means higher profits, bigger profit margins and more wealth at the top. Trump's policies will entrench and enrich this oligarchy. Do not be deceived. Tax Cuts given disproportionately to corporations are based on the disastrous trickle down economic theory that has never worked for us. It will give Trump and Wall Street the biggest tax cuts which will benefit the richest stock holders and the richest Americans. Such tax cuts will further entrench the oligarchy. His appointments reveal a great deal about who Donald Trump really is and how he lied his way to the Presidency by fooling the working class.

## Trump's Plan for Government workers

Conservatives were upset by the Obama administration by an inability to shake up a government system Trump described as "waste, fraud and abuse" Now Conservatives want to enact the Holeman Rule an obscure rule that empowers Congress to single out a government employee or cut a specific program. Government workers who know about this rule are worrying about their paychecks and their Union representation. While the rule is obscure, many believe that it makes over 2 million government employees defenseless to elected officials.

Trump has a plan for government workers which include an end to automatic raises, removals for poor performers, less generous pension benefits and a ban on union business on the government's dime.

Both sides of the aisle in Congress are now gathering information about this Rule to try to understand how it works. Federal Unions and their advocates are also scrambling to learn more about the possible impact. Presently, the Trump transition team is targeting scientists who have worked on behalf of climate change, for political reasons. Congress is considering rolling back the 2.1 percent pay raise increase that Obama gave Federal Employees starting January 1. This rule could create havoc for us all. It is a way to dismantle more of our Federal government.

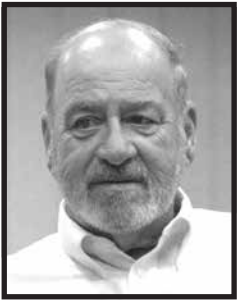
(Source *Washington Post* 1/4/17).

## Article 6

It is the intent of this Memorandum of Understanding to provide job security to each such employee during the term of this Agreement; however, in the event Congress repeals or significantly relaxes the Private Express Statutes this Memorandum shall expire upon the enactment of such legislation.

Elections have consequence. Join the resistance.

The Struggle Continues . . .



by  
Al  
LaBrecque

# Back To The Future

"We fight for workers and economic justice, we are on the right side of history." Michael Fray, UAW Rep.

**"Under-35 Young Members", Listen up!** This quote sums up the mission for APWU emerging "under-35 young members" to ascribe to. It comes from a former football player I was privileged to coach, now a "this generation" of emerging Union leadership, and of whom I'm justifiably proud. That is basically what Union Involvement means. If you agree with those tenets of organized labor, if you are a postal worker; PSE, NTFT, PTF, FTR, regardless of Craft, and you believe that "we are on the right side of history", then YOU are a candidate for office, beginning with your Local. Holding Local Union office is not entirely unselfish. Whatever you are able to accomplish by representing the membership likewise benefits you and yours.

**Representation** of the membership is primary! All else is secondary! So, how do you get involved? In today's climate that shouldn't be too difficult. Depending whether your Local elects or appoints Stewards, I don't see a lot of competition for those positions. It is, however, the best training ground for leadership. Stewards are the backbone of **representation**. My own experience of "getting my feet wet" back in '59 was getting appointed to the Local's Constitution Committee, the "guts" of the internal workings of your Local, your Local Union's governing document. That led me to serve on State Convention

Constitution Committees, and eventually successfully writing Resolutions amending the national APWU Constitution & By-Laws, the APWU's governing document. I strongly recommend that Locals assign their State Union Convention delegates to Resolutions Committees as the best hands-on training. Some Locals have requirements that you attend a set number of meetings to be eligible to run for convention delegate. Check that out in your Local's constitution. Yes, members have to take some initiative! However, that opportunity only occurs every two years. In the meantime, I strongly recommend that "young members" get appointed to their Local constitution committees as the best means of understanding the internal workings of your Local and Union. If that isn't possible, then request a copy of your Local's constitution to study thoroughly. Question any article(s) you need clarified.

**Getting Union Involved.** I can only relate from my own trial and error experience as a "young turk". Too often I've witnessed members, young and older, that get involved with a chip on their shoulder either over an officer they don't like or an issue they are unhappy with. Most often these folks are a "flash in the pan". That's not to say those items aren't good reasons to become involved. It's the manner by which you approach your involvement. To be effective and to ensure becoming accepted within your Local's current structure; you must first be self-disciplined to put your issues on the back burner until you **listen, learn, and respect the advice of your more seasoned leadership**. That's not to say you should abandon your issues and concerns for becoming involved. You might discover that some, or all, the reasons for your con-

cerns have reasonable explanations if you give it a chance.

Discontent is not the only reason to become Union Involved. I would venture to say it is the least of reasons if you as a "young member" should consider getting active in your Union. It **should be** to serve honorably to represent your membership first, your Local, and the APWU. That doesn't mean to accept everything lock, stock, and barrel. Its okay to question. It's okay to take an opposing stance at times. And, when you come out on the short end (which you will as often as not), learn from it and move forward. If you really have that fire in the belly, you won't quit. That's where I've seen those "hot to trot" flashes in the pan to drop out, even quitting the Union. Accept that your position isn't always going to prevail. In that regard, from my own experience, even in my 'last hurrah' as a National Retiree Delegate to the 2014 APWU National Convention in Chicago; my positions on retiree resolutions were soundly defeated. That not only didn't discourage, but prompted me to live to fight another day. I'm still standing! And, in fact, I authored the ONLY retiree Resolution to amend the APWU Constitution adopted by the Orlando 2016 APWU National Convention! If you get knocked down, get up by the 8-count!

### Personal Incentives & Tips.

There's so much I would like to impart to "young members" getting their feet wet from my own experiences. I can't say it often enough; **respect** current leadership, even those with whom you disagree. More importantly, there are numerous personal items to consider when becoming involved. If you're single you have a lot of leeway with your time. Married and married with children can be somewhat more tricky. In that regard; your commitment to Union Involvement must be tempered with **Family comes first!** That covers a lot of "sins". #1 is that your spouse is on board with your commitment. Spouses necessarily become your support for what you do. Remember; they didn't sign on for your involvement, you did! Neither did your children. It's critically important that you are involved with your kid's activities from the time they're tots to adulthood. Whether it's to attend parent-teacher conferences, a play, band, sports, whatever the activity because it's important to THEM. When we miss those growing up years events in our kid's lives, they're gone forever. Believe me, your children grow up before you know it. That said; involve your kids. Explain from the youngest age of understanding that what you do is for their best interests to make life better for them. In my own case, I used to justify being a "missing Dad" for my dedication to my Union, a regret that I can never change.

You may have aging parents who need your attention, even if it's a regu-

lar phone call. (Some of my own kids do this on the pretense to just chat, but I know what they're doing is to check on their old Dad. That's love!). If you're fortunate enough to have your parents still living, no matter your relationship over the years, they too will be gone before you know it. Family events, holiday gatherings, family reunions, whatever the occasion, are important to maintain. In many cases you may be required to care for an ailing parent.

In this effort to mentor "young members", or ANY member regardless of age or seniority, I'm citing some of my own mistakes, regrets, and errors so that you go into it with eyes wide open. What I cite in my fumbling effort to mentor will be from the human aspect of my own 57 years of Union and Retiree Involvement. If I can guide "young members" to avoid some of the landmines I stepped on during my career, then this effort will be worthwhile. I do have a serious concern, however! The "Michigan Messenger" is my best means of communicating. In this age of texting, twitter, electronic communication; **does this generation of "young" postal workers, potential Union leadership, READ THE PRINTED WORD?!** I talk with people in their 20's or even 30's that can neither read nor write in cursive! My own middle-aged children and grandchildren simply cannot "live" without their electronic devices! Social graces have become a lost art except among old duffers like me. What can we learn together, from one another, to effectively communicate?

Finally, this first attempt to convey the word of experience to our APWU "young members" that I refer to as this generation of postal worker and leadership, will hopefully be helpful. I'm presently in contact with our own **Central Region Young Member Committee Representative, Joshua Gray, (WMAL Exec. V.P.)** who has invited me to participate in a teleconference with the Committee members about 2 hours from this writing. I'm looking forward, not to put in my "2-cents", but to listen and learn what they have to say. I want to learn what their specific issues and perspectives are so my own idea of mentoring can be effective. I can't begin to express my delight that these young emerging APWU leaders are willing to include this jaded old guy.

**The Trump Effect!** Every morning when I turn the TV to news channels it's another "Breaking News" day of craziness from our new President and administration. I see his nasty face, hear his hateful voice, and can barely stand it! **I Listen, I Watch, I Pay Attention** just long enough to absorb what it's all about and switch to ESPN Sports channels to clear my mind, to settle my nerves. Over the past 3 weeks, I've taken copious notes intended to write in this column. But they're so many, and

*continued on page 7*

## 2017 MPWU Educational Convention

by Mike Mize

We have had quite the ride trying to get the Educational Convention scheduled.

With the regeneration of Downtown Detroit it was difficult to be in downtown. We will be holding it at the Hilton in Southfield which is a 20-25 minute drive to downtown.

We are setting up for the week before Memorial Day. The dates are Wednesday May 24 through Friday May 26. We will start at 8am on Wednesday with speakers and do our best to leave Q&A for the last thing on Friday.

Registration is set for \$100 and we would like to have preregistration for everyone so we can be certain our room assignments are adequate.

Rooms are \$99. per night with one breakfast voucher per room. This was a better deal than any of the other offers we had.

More information will be coming.

In Unity.

**RETIREE PRESIDENT**

by  
Paul  
Browning

# Hard Times Comin'



Three days into his Presidency, Donald Trump announced a hiring freeze on Federal employees. As I write this it is still unclear whether this will affect USPS employees or not. The hiring freeze comes despite the actual fact (not an alternative one) that the Federal workforce is already at its lowest number of workers since the 1980's. Likewise the Post Office has lost tens of thousands of employees in the last twenty years due to automation, contracting out of jobs, and just plain attrition where employees have not been replaced and the remaining workers are just supposed to "pick up the slack".

(I can remember supervisors saying things like "in your spare time I want you to..." Duh! What spare time?



I already had an eight hour a day job.) So we have delivery standards lowered and the Service in Postal Service downplayed by so-called Postal managers from Washington D.C. to the workroom floor supervisors. The APWU, which at one time represented over 300,000 bargaining unit employees, is now down to around 200,000. Any Presidential order that entails further cutting of the USPS workforce is a blueprint for failure of the Post Office to exist as we know it today. And make no mistake about it-if the Postal structure goes down it will take current and retired employees down with it. That money for postal retirees annuities just doesn't come out of the blue. A large part of our monthly check and Health and Life Insurance is financed by the viable operation of the USPS.

And there are more ripple effects to retirees from a hiring freeze. The number of workers at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Social Security Administration

(SSA) will decrease. Anybody who has ever tried to make a phone call to OPM knows that the chances of NOT getting a busy signal and actually getting through to talk to someone are about as likely as succeeding as winning free concert tickets on one of those radio call-in promotions. And at my local SSA office, its an hours long wait to talk to someone. (I did call and make an appointment one time and was given a date a month in the future.) Trump's hiring freeze will only make things worse.

In Congress, Speaker of the House Republican Paul Ryan continues to push for what he calls a "Premium support plan" to replace Medicare. That's also known as a voucher. What that means is instead of paying \$105.00 a month for Medicare coverage, individuals would get a fixed amount of dollars to buy a supplemental private insurance plan. Um, how much exactly do you think over 65 people-the most prone to expensive health care costs-are going to have to pay

for said supplemental private insurance? Just a guess on my part is it would be more than \$105.00 a month and Ryan's plan wouldn't give you the money to purchase coverage equal to Medicare. Of course the talk is always about "grandfathering" these things in. Translation-the foot is in the door and only going to push it open more. "Grandfathering in" also makes a nice excuse for a generational war, more divide and conquer tactics by the GOP just like the city and rural dwellers, Union and nonunion workers, Christian and non-christian, different race, different gender, etc. etc. You get the idea I hope.

Additionally, Trump and Republicans want to pass legislation ELIMINATING Federal employee Unions. Vice President Pence, Newt Gingrich, and Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, the guy who busted State Government Unions in Wisconsin, are all on board advising Trump on ways to do this. Its a return to the nostalgia days  
*continued on page 8*

## — Back To The Future —

*continued from page 6*

with more coming almost daily, that I decided to simply note that it is the most disturbing transition of power I've witnessed in my lifetime. Trump's stepping on President Obama's last days in office for a president-elect was disrespectful. The disconnect between incoming and outgoing transition teams was deeply troubling and a sign of things to come. We learned that some outright lies are now "alternative facts" according to the tRump mouthpiece Kelly Ann Conway.

I have every reason to believe tRump's obsession with how many people attended his inauguration as opposed to Obama's '09 inauguration, and the claim that 3-5 million illegals voted in the election, is a smokescreen for a real issue of concern; that being the Russian Connection of the proven hacking into the election to favor tRump. When is the last time that has been in the news?! Manufactured crap to cover far more sinister intentions. I'm embarrassed for Michigan being cited as one of 3 states responsible for tRump's election. I'm embarrassed that tRump's

Cabinet selection for Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, the antithesis of public education is from Michigan. I'm embarrassed for our country for the actions taken by this guy in just these 2 short weeks. The sick part of it is his base; people of faith, a gaggle of middle-aged white woman interviewed on TV who "love" him and what he's done so far! Ye gods! What have we come to?!

The Sunday prior to inauguration, our priest asked during Mass to pray for this President. The next Sunday I included a note in a sealed envelope along with my offertory envelope in the Sunday collection. The note said;"Dear Father Bob: Last Sunday you asked me (us) to pray for the President. I cannot, in good conscience pray for this blatant amoral, bigot, denigrator of women, the disabled and disadvantaged. Please DO NOT ask me to pray for him. I pray for our nation. I will discuss if you so choose. Typed and signed my name". The next week Fr. Bob called me, not knowing who I am, and asked if I could meet at 9 am

the next day. I said it would be difficult, can't we discuss it now over the phone. We did. He came from a position of being prayerful, etc., in the fatherly way expected of a pastor, a good man and good priest. I was not so diplomatic. I asked how to pray for a man who lies with impunity or say and act as he did throughout his campaign and as president? That he's the opposite of the principles of our faith? Fr. Bob finally admitted he couldn't vote for either candidate, to which I told him that he, in effect, voted for tRump. We came to an understanding that he would ask that we pray for elected government leaders in the Mass Intentions. He said he understood where I'm coming from. Last Sunday there was no mention of praying for the President OR our government officials. Now, enough of tRump and all the B.S. we're being inundated with! I will continue to subscribe to what an unknown author wrote, in part; ". . . Be aware, make no mistake about it, every single thing that goes wrong in this country from this day forward is now Trump's fault just as much as they thought it was

Obama's. I find it unreasonable for them to expect from me what they were entirely unwilling to give."

**To Our Retired Members:** Apologies! I intended to write about the changes to Medicare premiums for seniors. About H. Res. 31 to restore service standards. To write our 2 U.S. Senators to "Just Vote NO" on tRump's nominee to the Supreme Court regardless of who it is or their credentials, just like the GOP refused to even give President Obama's nominee a hearing for 10 months. To, For Pete's Sake, vigorously oppose Betsy DeVos's confirmation if you value public education! To reveal that our labor and APWU "hero" Ed Schultz is now on RTV . . . that's Russian TV, and now singing a 'different' song. But, alas, even I know when I've taken up too much space with this column. Maybe I will try to find a little balance in my fervor to mentor, and to report vital legislation affecting seniors and workers, among other pearls of wisdom I find between bi-monthly issues.

Solidarity Forever!

# Non-Revenue Transactions And Proper Clock Rings

by James Stevenson

It is imperative for the SSA's to hit the NON-REVENUE transaction key when you are retrieving accountables, parcels, vacation holds, looking up certifieds, or performing any service for a window customer which may not be reflected in your transactions. If a customer is simply standing at your window and asking you

questions hit the NON-REVENUE transaction key. Failure to utilize the NON-REVENUE transaction key will give a false WOS reading at the end of the day showing that the clerk was doing absolutely nothing for 15 minutes when in fact you were looking up a certified. Clerks who run from the window, to the cage, to the box section, to the hot case, and to the flat

case without identifying properly on the clock are only asking for your job to be eliminated. A lot of clerks are working their tails off but the records will never show it because the reports show that the mail came in and was distributed by a ghost. I hear so many clerks say "I do not have time to move on the clock." Clerks, you are at work. All you have is time until you go home. Proper clock rings are crucial in this era of downsizing and realigning.

to improperly scan the Box section as complete at 9:30am when in fact you did not complete the work until 10:30am is because they want the official reports to indicate that the work was done utilizing less hours and that they met their goals. Every time you as a clerk make a fraudulent scan you are helping to eliminate your job. If management themselves are making the fraudulent scans grievances should be filed.

## Hard Times Comin'

continued from page 7

of the 1950's whether you're a government worker, woman, old person, any one in the 99%. I'm not writing propaganda here folks. Google any of these subjects and look at what authoritative-not some website group you never heard of-news sources have to say. And please, don't let Trump's attempts at trying to discredit the news media influence you. Here in the USA we get more than just government approved news unlike Russia or North Korea.

So, what to do? The many Women's Marches across the country and world were a good start. I participated in Traverse City and there was a turnout of 3,000, pretty good for a small populated area in Northern Michi-

gan. We need to unite the millions of people out there who didn't vote for Trump. Remember, he didn't get the majority of the popular vote. I know this is old advice, but call, write, email your Congressional representatives and Senators on the issues. Go down to their local office and complain. Tie up those people who staff their offices. Make it a lot of work for these alleged representatives of the people to flat out screw you out of what you worked a lifetime for. Join a group of like minded people-your local Democratic Party, Veterans organization, Retirees, Union members, whatever. We need not just a Grand Alliance on paper but people active whenever and wherever possible. Just don't take getting ripped off lying down!

I know that right now we are somewhat in this kind of lull on excessing and closures and to many it may be giving a false sense of security. All of that can change with the stroke of a pen and a directive. It is imperative that we are always in job protection mode. The reports that management utilizes to cut clerk jobs such as WOS reports and Customer Service Variance Reports (CSV), are nothing more than Garbage if the right information is not being inputted.

Union officials in particular at Stations and Branches should always have current copies of what is referred to as the "1994" scheduler for Function 4 operations. This is an official schedule which indicates which operations are being covered by which clerks by labor distribution code (LDC). A big problem that I had to address in Detroit was that after 2:00pm there would sometimes only be one (1) window clerk in a station. If the window clerk is on the window from 2:00 to 5:00pm then who is clearing the carriers and performing the dispatch?

There are two things that I have noticed that has sent my blood pressure through the roof. One is when I see supervisors at the window utilizing these "Hand-held credit card readers or the technical name MPOS [Mobile Point of Sale Device]" to perform financial transactions. The other is the clerks who work side by side with the supervisors and they do not report anything that the supervisor is doing. I call this unwillingness of clerks to protect their jobs the "Silence of the Lambs." I say this because we are sitting there silent waiting for the day our job is eliminated.

**THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN A SUPERVISOR UTILIZING A HANDHELD CREDIT CARD DEVICE (MPOS) AND THAT SUPERVISOR HAVING AN ACTUAL TILL. THAT SUPERVISOR IS PERFORMING FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS WHICH IS EXCLUSIVE WORK OF THE CLERK CRAFT.**

Fraudulent inter-office scans are also important. This is extremely important as it relates to scanning the completion of distribution and the scanning of completion of the Box section. The reason why management is instructing you

There are supervisors who spend almost their entire day working at the window obtaining mail with customer 3849s (parcels, CODs, express mail, certifieds, registered, vacation holds, etc.). All of this is clerk work. When a customer comes to the window with a 3849 to pick up mail we should not be turning around and giving the 3849 to the supervisor to go pick-up. What you as a clerk should be doing is hitting the "Non-Revenue transaction" key and then obtain the mail. Failure to do so over a period of time costs us valuable work hours and will eventually effect staffing if it has not already done so.

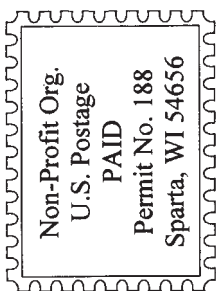
If a clerk is throwing mail at the hot case or flat case you should be on that operation. If a clerk is distributing Box mail you should be on that operation. If a clerk is operating the accountable cage you should be on that operation. If a clerk is dropping tubs or trays you should be on that operation. If a clerk is performing dispatch you should be on that operation.

I get it, many of you just want to come to work and do a good job, but if your default ring is the window operation and you have performed all of these other functions throughout the entire day than you have just "flat-lined" on all the other labor distribution codes and a "Ghost" has performed the work resulting in a report showing that mail was processed with zero work hours.

The union cannot be everywhere at all times so it is imperative that the employees and our valued members assist in protecting our much needed jobs. I am not asking that you challenge management as an employee when you see violations but I am asking that at a minimum that you report it to your union representative.

In Solidarity.

**DEADLINE**  
The deadline for articles for the March-April issue of the Michigan Messenger is April 1st



Return to APWU/MPWU  
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