

# Michigan MESSENGER



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## PRESIDENT



by  
**Michael  
Mize**

# Educational Assemblies – MPWU Preparing

### PREPARING

Educational Assemblies like the MPWU just had in Southfield is our way of PREPARING. This gives us an opportunity to get updated training and information to deal with the current issues we face as a Union. Every Craft has their current issue that is paramount to their members. One of the factors that always ties these issues together is positions. By positions I mean the membership and the Union desires to get more work and create the necessary positions to do this work in a timely fashion for our customers and Managements desire to reduce staffing at any cost.

As the MPWU President there are many things that must be done to get the event running and keep everything running smoothly. For that reason, I am unable to sit through a whole training class. I did however drop in to each class for at least a few minutes. I always learn something when I go to these trainings and even just dropping in picking up information was easy. The following is what I found the most compelling information that I heard this time, in relation to the membership that the MPWU directly represents. Not to diminish any other training, craft or issue.

Management has a new tool that they are using to go after Clerk positions. This tool is "Dashboard". The idea is that Management will only staff to what the earned complement is in each office. So, if their dashboard report shows that they earn 2 Clerks and they have 3 Clerks they are over staffed. I'm certain there would be argument that the reverse would be true also, but I would ask, when is the last time that Management came out with a new tool that showed they require additional positions. We all know the numbers they show do not reflect the true picture in an office. We had some excellent training on how to address this issue and I am certain that we will be tackling this head on in the Locals and the MPWU. So, yes, we are prepared.

What can you do to help? The first thing I would say is do not panic! If you

hear something and want to discuss it with a Union representative, please call your Area Director. Make sure you are getting credit for everything you do. Make certain that you are on the correct operation when you do that work. If you see Management doing your work when they shouldn't or more than they are allowed, report it. When you have non-revenue transactions at the window, record that transaction in the system. As another officer, recently said "don't cut corners". Fair days' work for fairs days' pay. Believe me when I say the position you save could be your own. In addition to saving positions we as a Union are concerned about the effect this has on our customer. In my opinion, every position we lose is a hit to our customer in service, which drives customers away and we risk more positions going away. The time to allow Management room and give is gone. Sisters and Brothers, it is the time to stand up and fight for what is your right and the service to our customers.

### Michigan Postal Workers Union Educational Assembly

#### THANKS

Conventions and Educational Assemblies are quite a task to get together and it takes a great deal of work from many people. There are so many people that I would like to thank for their part in making this a successful event. I know there is no way I would remember everyone as it takes so many. So, from my heart a sincere thank you to all that participated in the event. Special thanks to all the Officers that taught and those that took time to address the delegates. Kudos to the Detroit District Area Local on such a great job of hosting. Thanks to the Retirees for putting on the COPA pizza night and all who ran fundraisers for COPA. Our COPA fundraising was outstanding and all should congratulate themselves on that. Again, I thank everyone for their help in having a successful week.

When we were in Washington do-

ing our job representing the interest of the APWU and the members here in Michigan we were lucky enough to get photos taken by the APWU communications department. It is an honor for me to be on the cover of the APWU magazine and with a great group of Michigan representatives. That would have been plenty for me. But, I must also take this chance to thank National APWU for surprising me and the other Michigan attendees to the NPC in Washington. National had a very nice memento made with the cover of the magazine in it for us and presented each of us with one at the Assembly. It is my honor to serve this Union and humbling at times. This was one of those times and I thank those that took part in the memento development, making and presentation. Additionally, a thank you to the membership for the honor in representing you and you affording us the ability to do so.

In Unity.



MPWU members attending the Educational Conference.



**EDITOR**

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND FAKE NEWS**

**Pay Attention And Don't Believe Everything You Read!**



by **John Greathouse**

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

With so many things going on around us in the world today we all need to stop for a moment, take a collective deep breath, let it out slowly and remember just why we do what we do.

Most everyone can agree that when they became employed with the Post Office, it was a way to support and care for your family and have a good middle class lifestyle with a decent retirement to look forward to at the end of your years of service to our customers. Over the past 10 years this goal or dream seems to have been getting chipped away at little by little until this year when it feels like someone came in with a wrecking ball and started to smash the hell out of the whole place!

**HR 756**

House Bill HR 756 that will put all post retirees on to Medicare regardless if they want to or not as their primary healthcare provider. It does concern me in several ways, If you listen to the GOP and the President, they want to cut anything and everything that will help anyone who is not part of the 1% and this includes Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, Food Stamps and more! So why would our National Unions support this bill? To push their current and former members on to a health plan that might be cut? I am at a loss to explain it or understand this motivation but I will be asking just this very question at the PPA conference during our Press Conference with APWU President Mark Dimondstein with the hope that he can explain it to our members.

investigate employees and their social media activities. Mind you they just don't go and troll you but if there is a tip from management, they can be put on the case to dig through your profile and find the dirt on you. So be smart and think before you post anything on the internet.

**Fake News**

Have any of you ever give it a thought as to what is "fake news"? There really is fake news and it has been around forever! But that "fake news" was disinformation that was being leaked to foreign governments and such as well as the filtered news that was at times given to the American people as it related to events that have happened where to give the complete unfiltered story could place some people's lives in harm's way.

**Social Media**

I am going to keep this short and to the point folks . . . **ANYTHING YOU POST ON THE INTERNET IS PUBLIC!** Did everyone get that? You post something on Facebook and your settings are private to only your friends, well if they show it to someone and it get reported to someone, it can and will come back to haunt you!

The past 2 years "Fake News" is being thrown about like the Sunday paper! From what I have been able to gather, most of this "Fake News" is basically news that this person/group just did not want to hear or wanted to discredit it so called it "Fake News". So now anytime something does not fit their agenda, it is Fake, Fake News! WOW, I just wish it was that simple to whitewash the truth away so easy!

There have been a few cases going on where employees were in a leave status other than annual and have made a post that through totally innocent events those post came into the hands of a postal manager, the employee was disciplined for this action. Don't think it can't happen to you!

With everything coming out of DC in the past 6 months, yes I said 6 months, it seems a lot longer, I just wish the news agency's would better fact check their stories before going to air with them. But everyone is so in a hurry to get the scoop on everyone else that corners are cut and that ends up making you look like a fool in front of the whole world! And yes the world is watch what is said and done in this country and the comments that are being made should concern everyone about how our government is conducting business now.

**Summer**

Did you know that the OIG had a "Special" social media group who does nothing else but

On a lighter subject, everyone needs to take a little time for friends and family, get away for a little fun and excitement and relax. It is reported that those people who can take up to 13 days of vacation a year are more productive and less stressed and lord knows this jobs is nothing but STRESS and Bull by products!

Enjoy your summer, be safe and enjoy this beautiful country we live in!

In Solidarity.

*Stay Informed!  
Attend Your  
Union Meetings!*



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**APWU Asst Clerk Craft Director, Lynn Pallas-Barber gives some insight during James Stevenson's Class.**

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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M·A·I·N·T·E·N·A·N·C·E·C·R·A·F·T·D·I·R·E·C·T·O·R



by  
**Sterling  
Bouier**

# MPWU Educational Assembly

Hello MPWU Brothers and Sisters, I attended the Michigan Postal Workers Union Educational Assembly May 23-26, 2017. It was held in Southfield, Michigan and hosted by the American Postal Workers Union Detroit District Area Local. I had a wonderful time and received valuable training as well.

The maintenance craft focused mainly on the Line H agreement recently signed on May 12, 2017, which provides clarity on the agreement between the Union and USPS management. We also spent extensive time learning how to prepare and compile subcontracting grievances. It is very important to protect our work for the bargaining unit and ensure the postal service is penalized when they choose to violate the guidelines stipulated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

This excellent training was instructed by our National Business Agent, Mr. Curtis Walker. I would like to thank him for sharing his knowledge and expertise. It allows us to grow stronger and stronger daily as a whole. My only wish was that every maintenance steward in the state would have been able to attend. It was good to be able to communicate and participate in discussion of maintenance issues that affected all areas and other issues that were area specific. It allows

you to understand and hear what others throughout the state are going through and discuss what has been successful in obtaining a resolve.

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. I can be reached at 313 965-1398 or at [sbouier@apwudetroit.org](mailto:sbouier@apwudetroit.org).

In Union Solidarity.

H·U·M·A·N·R·E·L·A·T·I·O·N·S·D·I·R·E·C·T·O·R



by  
**Keith  
Combs**

# Keeping Our Members Updated

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

As your State Human Relations Director it is important to keep our members updated on the status of settlements as it pertains to claimants. There have been many questions regarding the ongoing Class Action lawsuit filed on behalf of claimants

named in the Pittman Class Action.

At this point all appeals have been exhausted, the settlement process will now move forward. The Class Counsel thanks all for their patience.

The Pittman class action is a spinoff of the Glover Class Action, settled in 2003, which also involved permanent rehabilitation employees. Most of the claimants in Pittman are the same class members who received payouts in the Glover class.

At the time the Glover settlement was negotiated, the Agency refused to add the issue of denial of overtime for permanent rehabilitation employees. Because the Agency refused to include the overtime issue as part of the Glover Settlement, Class Counsel brought the Walker class action regarding this one issue. The Walker Class was later renamed the Pittman Class.

The settlement amount for the Pittman class action is said to be in the millions. The class action will make

payment to about 11,272 participants.

It is anticipated that the distribution of the settlement funds will begin around June 30, 2017. If you would like to read the total settlement or to view questions and answers pertaining to the settlement, please refer to <https://www.pittmanclass.com>.

I would like my Brothers and Sisters to remember this. If you have an opportunity to listen take it. You might be amazed at what you'll hear.

A·R·E·A·2·D·I·R·E·C·T·O·R



by  
**Patrick  
Chornoby**

# MPWU Education Assembly

Greetings Brothers and Sisters:

The 2017 Michigan Postal Workers Union Education Assembly was held in Southfield, Michigan May 23rd through the 26th this year. It was a pleasure for me to assist our National Business Agent, Linda Turney, as she conducted an educational training course on MDAT (Maximization and Desirable Duty Assignment Tool). Actually, Linda **did** all of the work, I just helped with handing out information pertaining to the class itself and under her direction. Michigan Postal Workers Union Area Director 1, Brother Steve Wood from the 480 — 481 Area Local and Brother Ron Krumrie from Traverse City also assisted in getting the information to the class attendees. We did make a good team I must admit!

Again, NBA Linda Turney did all of the work, and was well prepared with a power point presentation and numerous articles of documentation and support tools for those present. It now becomes our job to move forward in the fight of protecting craft jobs and doing

everything as a Union to stop management's reversion of every job that becomes vacant in our facilities. Linda did a great job and put a lot of work in the training which we Michigan Postal Workers Union members are grateful for. Clerk Craft Business Agents James Stevenson and Mike O'Hearn continued the training on Article 37 issues, due process, small office issues and due process during the following days. We as postal employees must always be on the defense when protecting our postal jobs and the jobs for the next generations of postal workers. Considering our current political make-up of

the postal office and our government, we can never let our guard down. Jobs were available for us when we entered employment at the post office, let's continue that trend my Brothers and Sisters.

I tried to visit all of the training classes during the Assembly from the retirees department, where we had several delegates from the Detroit Local including Retiree President Alton Fouche, to the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Craft educational presentations. I truly hope everyone enjoyed their visit to Southfield and gained a lot of informa-

tion from the meeting. A special thanks goes out to Michigan Postal Workers Union President Mike Mize, Executive Secretary Michael A. Long, Secretary Treasurer Darren Joyce and Director of Research and Education Lucy A. Morton along with the entire MPWU Executive Board for pulling the Assembly all together. I found it to be a lot of hard work and they all did a great job. I also need to thank Local Detroit District Area Local President Keith M. Combs and Secretary Treasurer (and MPWU POWER Coordinator) for their work on the Assembly and hospitality room. Until next time, stay safe this summer.



Mike Long, Exe. Sec. MPWU helping as the sign language interpreter for the retiree seminar.



# The Enemy Within

Turning the Postal Service over to private industry isn't a new idea. It's been supported for years by people outside our ranks. The Republican Party has been in power for 17 of the last 21 years. Former President Reagan formulated a committee specifically designed to investigate and report on the Postal Service. It didn't come as any shock when the main report of that committee recommended that private industry take over the Postal Service. The fact that the Republican Party is still trying to give the Postal Service to private industry under the present Bush (senior) Administration is also obvious. The changes made in the last year, and projections for the near future, show a trend to change us to a private concept that could easily result in a private takeover.

There are many old Postal people who will say taking over the USPS isn't possible, simply based on history. It's true that we are unique in that we serve every hamlet and village throughout this great land. It's true that our postage rate is the lowest in the world. It's true our production rate and volume of handling are higher than those of the rest of the world. In fact, we are probably the only major business that other countries can't do cheaper.

Other companies, like GM, Ford, or Chrysler may reap great profits by building cars with cheap labor in Korea, Mexico, or other countries, but that can't be duplicated with mail. Those countries, and others like them, can't move their own mail as cheaply as we move ours. Nothing beats a 25 cent stamp when you compare it with the cost of postage around the world. In addition, nothing compares to a 25 cent stamp when you compare it to the cost of anything else. You can't buy anything for 25 cents anymore, and it doesn't matter what you want or where you are. A candy bar from a machine starts at 50 cents and everything goes up from there. A 25 cent stamp will send a message from one side of this country to another and hand deliver it to its destination. It's a plain and simple fact; You can't beat the value of a 25 cent stamp.

We know all of that's true, and most of the public would also, if they took the

time to consider it. The fact that it's true won't save us, because the people who want to own the Postal Service don't care about the service it provides or the money it saves the public. They care about one thing; the profit that can be made if the government turns over the Postal Service. The 25 cent stamp will be gone with the \$3000 and \$4000 car. It will be a thing of the past, like the \$10 phone bill, and the \$100 plane ride. "They have tried to get us before," some say, "and they never have. What makes you think they can do it now?" The answer to that is simple. They no longer are attacking us from the outside. THE ENEMY IS WITHIN.

They couldn't destroy the USPS as long as we provided the great service at the rate we do. They realize that in order to destroy the USPS, all they had to do was destroy the service. They had to enter with decision-making people who would destroy the service-- people who would structure and mold us into something that duplicated private industry. The reason for that also, was simple. If we resembled private industry, then private industry would be able to take over. If the service were destroyed, the public would obviously support private industry taking over.

To accomplish this, someone had to be put in charge to promote and accomplish their goals. There would have to be members put on the board of governors who supported their goals. That was easy to do, because the governors are appointed and the Republicans were in office for 17 years. They next needed a Postmaster General who would destroy us from within. That too, was easy. The PMG is appointed by the board of governors.

It admittedly took them a while, because every PMG they appointed was impressed with the dedication and effort of our tradition. That converted a lot of PMG's to support the USPS and its employees. These PMGs found, as all before them had, that the employees are the service. The great tradition of the USPS had been handed down from employee to employee, and therefore the service and tradition still existed. They learned that, in order to destroy

the USPS, it would be necessary to destroy its employees and tradition. A plan was devised and finally a PMG was appointed to do just that. It's also possible he may have designed the plan himself, but regardless of where it came from, it's in effect.

Our survival as the USPS is being put to the test. Employees are being fired at the fastest rate in our history. Excessing and cuts in hours are happening everywhere. Consolidation of MSCs and elimination of jobs, both management and bargaining unit are being ordered, while our work is given away. Job security is a thing of the past for everyone, including management. These people even eat their own.

The greatest threat to all this is the employees of small offices throughout this land. Small offices are the backbone of the USPS. Small offices provide service to every American regardless of profit, plain and simple, they keep private industry out.

The Postmaster General is ordering attacks on postal employees. He is demanding personnel cuts, both in management and in the bargaining unit. He is purchasing equipment and machinery at a blinding pace. A recent purchase request for \$800 million worth of bar code readers demonstrates his push for automation. That is three times the number of other letter sorting machines currently operating nationwide.

Don't confuse bar code readers with LSMs. Bar code readers don't require operators like LSMs do. Bar code readers can also sort mail so it eliminates carriers sort time as well as clerk sort time. Management -- at least at the top -- also has programs in the works to supply the necessary knowledge to businesses so they can bar code their own mail. It's like pre-sort mail is now, going directly to the carrier, only this type of pre-sort will increase by the thousands.

I know some will say that this is only automation, which has always increased jobs before. You must understand that under this PMG, employment has to be reduced. The plan requires a cut in hours every time equipment is purchased. A dollar-for-dollar savings must be demonstrated to this PMG -- or else.

A perfect example of that arose at a recent meeting in the Central Region.

We were advised that 280 window clerk hours would be eliminated during the fiscal year. I asked if they were aware that Sears wasn't playing Post Office anymore, and would that cause the number to be reevaluated. I was told by one of their experts on automation that contracting-out had no bearing on the reduction. I asked what did, and was told that the cost of the IRTs caused the reduction. I explained that the IRTs don't replace window clerks. IRTs might assist clerks in providing better service, but they don't replace them. I was then advised that the cost had to be made up,

regardless. That type of mentality makes this use of automation different from any before it. This automation isn't designed or supplied to improve service. It is supplied to ELIMINATE EMPLOYEES.

Their plan is obvious if you know their goals. They want to buy machines under the guise of improved production and lower labor costs. But they have to justify the cost, especially for amounts like \$800 million. So, jobs are eliminated. When employees are eliminated, particularly on a large scale, so is service. Management's goal is to eliminate small offices, establish mail factories that can't work, and replace people who provide service with machines that don't. If the USPS emerges as 100 mail factories that can't provide service, private industry can do no worse. It doesn't matter whether it works or not. If it did, they wouldn't change it in the first place.

The enemy is no longer on the outside, the enemy is within. The enemy is destroying the best postal service in the world, intentionally and from the inside. There can be no other reason for asking Sears and others to do our work. We can't control the service others would perform. So obviously we are giving away work without control of service.

It's true Sears has nationally withdrawn from this job offer by the USPS, but the PMG will give it to anyone who will take it, and he is still trying. What business gives away its work without control of the service unless it doesn't care about the service? You should also be aware that postal officials are seeking to change next-day delivery requirements, yet another attack on service.

The current leaders have turned the Postal Service into a runaway locomotive, and a lot of unsuspecting people are adding fuel without knowing it. They do it either because they are afraid for their jobs, or because they think they will be taken care of if only they shut up. I have news for them, if the service goes, so will their jobs. If the clerk craft and other APWU crafts are eliminated, how many supervisors will it take to supervise machines? If the supervisors are eliminated, how many managers will it take to manage nobody?

It doesn't matter about the mail handlers either. If there are no clerk jobs to get, their union will have nothing to do. And if the carriers think they are the only ones left, that is the biggest joke of all. Who will they drink coffee with during EI meetings? And what will be done with the excess carriers when case time is no longer required? Do they think cluster boxes and other schemes for mail pick up by the public haven't been considered? If not, they will be when you're the last ones left and the enemy comes for you.

THE ENEMY IS WITHIN, and we had all better realize it and prepare to fight. If they destroy the service, private industry will pick up the pieces, and 700,000 of us

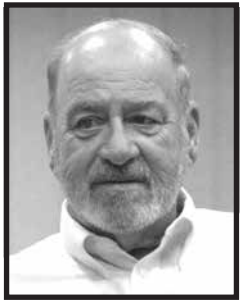
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Roscoe Woods, MPWU Legislative Director & 480-481 Local President discussing an issue with West MI Local President Amy Puhalski.



## M·P·W·U·R·E·T·I·R·E·E·A·D·V·I·S·O·R



by  
Al  
LaBrecque

# Back To The Future

"Management's goal is to eliminate small offices, establish mail factories that don't work, and replace people who provide service with machines that don't." Leo F. Persails, "The Enemy Within" 1989.

I refer you to the reprint of "The Enemy Within" printed elsewhere in this issue that was written by then APWU Chicago Region, Clerk Div. NBA Leo Persails in December of 1989. It was first printed in the "Flint Facts" under the heading "The Lion's Den". Leo's almost heretical, disparaging of a postal management doing the unthinkable was a shot heard around the APWU, spreading like wildfire through the APWU Postal Press Assn. Leo was both lauded for his bold foresight, and vilified by APWU establishment as an extremist. Proven to be 'extreme' for sure, and right on target!

"The Enemy Within" should be required reading for every Union officer! There's lessons to be learned in every paragraph. It requires a second reading, and then a paragraph at a time, reflecting on its wisdom if not for its prophetic vision. Although, in my view, the best feature article written in a PPA publication; it never received its proper recognition, probably because it was never submitted for consideration. Nevertheless, in 1990, James Key, editor of the "Alabama Flash" presented Leo a plaque for "Article of the Year".

I'll let "The Enemy Within" speak for itself. Go back, if you will or can, 28 years before automation; knee deep in mail, manual operations, SCF's. Before consolidations, mass excessing and humongous automated mail processing factories like the Metroplex that sucked the life out of facilities throughout southeast Michigan, and thus formerly strong medium sized APWU Locals. We were still in our heyday and didn't want to heed the warning signs of things to come. Leo's stark vision shook us out of our comfort zone.

This is what I penned on the back of a copy of the reprint of Leo's article: "Where is a 2017; John L. Lewis, a Walter (Victor & Roy) Reuther, a George Meany, E.C. "Roy" Hallbeck, Gus Sholle, and Yes! A Leo Persails, when we need them to lead us? I often think; "What kind of Union would we be had Leo been elected president?" I had the great fortune to have lived the years of those legendary labor leaders, even met some. Hell, I remember Persails as a new hire and was a first-hand witness to his growth as a strong, principled, real-

istic, postal labor leader. I firmly believe, nay, KNOW he was viewed as a threat to the APWU establishment. All that said; while I still marvel at Leo's insights, he will be the first to agree that we occasionally disagree, believe it or not!

The point of all this is to read, then dissect **The Enemy Within** from your perspective. Old timers who remember how it was in '89, and the under-35 emerging APWU leadership to apply. There's a legacy to uphold, recognizing that it's 2017. The battles may have changed, but our time-honored Union principles **must prevail** if we are to survive.

**HR 756 Postal Reform.** With all the chaos going on in the White House, Congress, investigations and hearings galore; chances that this legislation that's created such an internal uproar will see the light of day are slim. However, APWU Legislative/Political Director, Judy Beard, reported that HR 756 has been marked up and scored. It still has a very long way to go. Now, it's wait and see. As the 'work days' for this 1st Session of the 115th Congress dwindle, so does Postal Reform's chances. That can be viewed as either a good thing, or not. The question then is; Where do we go from here? Working members and retirees alike have a huge stake in the answer to that critical question.

**Moving On!** There are, in my view, two primary retiree initiatives that we must concentrate on. One is a resolve to attain **proportionate retiree delegate REPRESENTATION in Convention**. After all; APWU leadership at every level lobbied bailing out USPS on the backs of an estimated (in one report) 40,000 APWU retired members who chose not to enroll in Medicare at age 65. It's not my place to judge the wisdom of not enrolling in Medicare, being one of the 80% who did. Every time I have to present my Medicare card I say; "God Bless Medicare and LBJ!" which usually gets one of those deadpan smiles. I don't care. It's for anyone within ear shot. Ironically, I'm hearing that there are some of the 20% who didn't enroll and regret their choice, actually relieved to have a second chance without penalty and a 3-year subsidized premium payment.

Regardless; it has been vividly demonstrated that HR 756 remains a bailout of the USPS with retirees and Medicare as the centerpiece of that legislation. If leadership's active support of legislation designed to "save" the USPS from financial collapse, never mind how it got there, to virtually "save" worker's very jobs; then how dare delegates to the 2018 APWU National Convention deny a Resolution for a modest increase in retiree voice and vote in Convention?!

**Promises Unfulfilled.** This is "the other" primary internal primary issue to be addressed which may ruffle some feathers. Some will say; Al, get off it! To which I respond; Nope. The more I'm stonewalled, the more resolved I become! The question of APWU bargaining unit retirees enrolled in the APWU Health Plan as \$35. Associate Members continues to fester. Seriously consider this: If when employed in one of the APWU bargaining unit crafts or divisions you choose to enroll in the APWU Health Plan, **you must** be a dues-paying member of the APWU. Right? It follows then, that for an APWU bargaining unit retiree to be eligible to enroll in the APWU Health Plan, they **must** be either a full dues-paying APWU member, or a member of the APWU Retirees' Dept. as a condition of eligibility. Right?

Further consider that if HR 756 is "fair" to active/working employees **and retirees** as sold by the leadership, forcing 76,000 postal retirees into Medicare Part B or lose eligibility to enroll in a FEHBP health insurance plan, or that active/working APWU bargaining unit employees **MUST** belong to the Union to enroll in our health plan, it's no less harsh to enforce the membership requirement on those who are \$35. Associate Members who minimally should be members of the APWU Retirees Dept. for only \$1. more per year, and thus attain all the benefits of belonging. Those who fail to comply lose their eligibility to be enrolled in the APWU health plan. APWU trumpets that one of the benefits of belonging is eligibility to enroll in the APWU Health Plan. Right? So, let's enforce it!

What's the problem?! Plain and simple; **belong or be gone!** Further consider that Associate Membership may well be a haven for former scab retirees. This needs to finally get cleaned up and then closely monitored. If any APWU Health Plan Associate Member declines belonging to the APWU, then there should be no problem declining them eligibility in our Union health plan benefits. Could reluctance to enforce be a matter of revenue over principle?

**Al's Shorts.** It may be seen as nit-picking by some. I read PPA publications from across the country where Local Unions organizing Local Retiree Chapters refer to them as "Locals". Locals are Unions. Retiree Chapters are not "Unions" or "Locals". We are, like it or not, subordinate bodies to our parent APWU. True, we are a Department of APWU at the national level. All too often I've seen where an APWU Local appears more interested in a Local Retiree Chapter's dues rebate revenue than a Chapter's purpose.

Deeply concerning are those Lo-

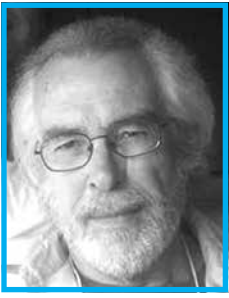
cal Unions who deny access of their Local Retiree Chapter from the Union office and equipment, administrating the Chapter's finances, or in any way cooperating with Chapter officers. True, there's that rare instance where Chapter leadership brings it upon themselves. That's truly unfortunate. It's up to Chapter members to change such an atmosphere at the ballot box, or live with it.

**Organizing Chapters.** There's just some APWU Locals who simply don't like retirees! Although alleged during my tenure as State Chapter president of failing to organize local retiree chapters in Michigan, an allegations I dispute; I've had more than one Local tell me flat out that they don't want past, now retired officers, organizing a Chapter giving them a platform to interfere in the Local's business. Knowing some of the actors involved, without taking sides, I understand that reluctance. However, a Local's Constitution and By-Laws, if properly written and enforced, and Local meetings if properly conducted, can prevent those concerns.

**From Out Of The Blue!** I recently got a surprise phone call from a dear friend and former MPWU State Auxiliary president, **Sue Griffith**. Sue called to ask what she should do with some historical materials she has. Sue reports that now retired hubby, **George**, is doing well. Sue reminds me of when the APWU Auxiliary and its predecessors was the legislative strong arm of the Union when we were seriously hamstrung by the Hatch Act. Past powerful Auxiliary leaders like **Maggie Reiman, Loraine Dahlman, Phyllis Love**, and Auxiliary officers like Sue Griffith, led our legislative and political agenda when we couldn't by law. It was a real treat reconnecting with Sue. This should stir some old-timer's fond memories, ending this column on a warm, positive note.

Solidarity Forever!

**DEADLINE**  
The deadline for  
articles for the  
July-August  
issue of the  
*Michigan*  
*Messenger*  
is Aug 11, 2017

**R·E·T·I·R·E·E·P·R·E·S·I·D·E·N·T**

by  
**Paul  
Browning**

## Retirement Health Benefit Charges???

Recently a bill-H.R. 756-was introduced and passed out of the House Ways and Means Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Bill, which has bi-partisan support, would force all postal retirees into Medicare at age 65 (including Medicare Part D) and establish a separate postal employee health benefit plan as opposed to the present system wherein postal employees are included with all federal retirees. Sound confusing? It does to me too but I will try to provide the pros and cons as I see them and have been explained to me by various people with different opinions.

Now, almost 70,000 postal retirees have reached age 65 and chosen to not participate in Medicare Part B thus saving themselves anywhere from \$105 a month to upwards of \$150 plus not having to pay the same amount for a spouse if they have one. Medicare Part A is automatic, costs nothing and covers hospitalization. Part B covers everything else, minus deductibles and exempting prescription drugs, Doctor fees, lab tests, ER visits, etc. Part C is a back-up plan for the deductible costs (which can be quite expensive) and Part D is partial prescription drug cover-

age with the infamous donut hole. The donut hole means Part D provides drug coverage up to a certain amount then there is a gap of some thousands of dollars where the enrollee pays and when a certain ceiling amount is reached, Part D coverage kicks in again. Most postal retirees don't have Part C or D because our Federal Employees Health Benefit Plans (FEHBP), for example APWU Health Plan, Federal Blue Cross/Blue Shield etc., covers those costs associated with them. Evidently some postal retirees roll the dice and abstain from optional Medicare Part B coverage to save money and bet their medical deductibles under their FEHBP over time won't be more expensive than yearly Medicare premiums.

H.R. 756 means those retirees not in Medicare Part B would have to join and pay the premium which would be partially subsidized for three years. And all postal retirees would now be in Part D. But hold the phone on the donut-hole costs.

Postal retirees would have what's called wrap around coverage paying that donut hole cost from the big postal employee benefit plans. We can still participate in the present options we have under the FEHB which means you can keep your plan if you like it. (Does that sound familiar?) So except for that almost 70,000 that I mentioned earlier, nothing is supposed

to change and good for me and other retirees who are already in Medicare. And one big ouch money-wise to the 70,000. In return the 30 billion dollars that USPS has defaulted on under the 2006 PAEA which required the Postal Service to pre-fund retiree health care benefits 75 years into the future will not be forgiven but instead the debt will be paid off over a period of 40 years into the future. One hopes USPS can manage those payments and no further changes in retirement benefits are required. That last sentence is the fly in the ointment. Once the door is opened on changing benefits for ALREADY retired postal employees it's a slippery slope to possible more changes. No Grandfather clause here. Can retirees be sure of anything in the way of their benefits?

I get it though. As I wrote in a previous MM article, with a Republican dominated Congress and Republican President, all Federal employee benefits are fair game when it comes to cutting government costs. H.R. 756 would at least take the heat off USPS, the 30 billion dollar debt ruckus, and even more regressive Republican sponsored legislation against retirees. All four Postal Unions have endorsed H.R. 756 as it is presently written barring future changes although right now it appears the bill is stalled in Congress as bigger issues presently occupy our Legislative and Executive branches of government.



**Paul Browning, MI State Retiree Chapter President.**

Stay tuned for further information and keep an eye on the APWU website. And cross your fingers . . .

Also KUDOS to Lucy Morton, MPWU Education Director, The Detroit District Area Local and DDAL President Keith Combs for hosting a most excellent Education Assembly the last week in May in Southfield MI. A big thank you to everyone there.

**A·R·E·A·4·D·I·R·E·C·T·O·R**

## Bidding Or eReassign?

by **Angelynn Gebstadt**

I have receive a number of inquiries lately demonstrating some of you are confused as to what eReassign actually is.

For all of you PTF's and PSE's--you cannot bid to another office. Bidding, without getting into the vagaries associated with Best Qualified positions, is an inner office process normally involving regulars (fulltime or NTFT) where the awardee of the position is the senior person that bid on the job.

### eReassign

eReassign is submitting for a transfer which is processed on a first in first out basis, by craft. For example clerks by the order in which they are received will take precedence over carriers when putting into transfer to a clerk position.

You must have 18 months in your current facility before you can apply to eReassign. Your request is good for 1 year. Towards the end of the year you can put in for a 3 month extension.

How eReassign works — you go in and put in a request for any city

you want — even in Hawaii — select a craft and wait . . . if a job for the city you want goes up on Reassign and you are among the top couple of people they will notify you and ask you if you want it. You can also look and place a request for what's open right now — but odds are there are already

people on the list. — Which shouldn't deter you. Put you name in anyway if it is somewhere you want to go. Just because someone on the list for that city or job has their name on the list before you doesn't mean they will get the job. Management looks at safety (accidents), sick leave and what your

postmaster has to say about you in making their determination.

Look at the cities around where you want to go. If you want to go to for example Grand Rapids — don't just look at Grand Rapids — get a map out and look at the cities around Grand Rapids too.

## The Enemy Within

*continued from page 4*  
will be looking for work. The headhunters the PMG is using had better realize that their heads will roll too.

The APWU has always led the way in battling these problems, and we obviously will here also. We have no choice. Nobody else is, and our jobs are at stake. We are first on the firing line, and as usual, our crafts will receive the most cuts. Some management jobs are being cut, with more of the same planned for carriers and mail handlers. Top management even plans to pit office against office to keep work.

They tell us that low productions and grievances cause problems with the "decision gods." They use fear of

excessing, and they pit craft against craft, as well as office against office. The choice is clear: We can either lie down and take what they give us, or stand up and have some chance of stopping them. I say we STAND UP. If the USPS is destroyed, I don't want to be part of helping it happen. Stopping a runaway locomotive won't be easy, but lying down won't even slow it.

We need all crafts and managers who really care about our jobs, and the USPS itself, to get involved before it's too late. The enemy is within, and if we are to prevail, everyone has to be involved. The USPS leadership has to be exposed for what they are doing, and for what is happening inside. They can't be helped in reaching their goal of destroying

employees and the USPS itself. We all have to stand together in this fight, and we have to do it now.

The service cuts have to be exposed, and any inside information on that has to reach Congress and the public. The APWU can't fight this battle alone, and we shouldn't. If the tradition of the USPS is going to survive, if our children and others will ever find a career in the USPS, and if someone will remain to support our retirement the battle has to start now, and it needs every one of us.

The current leaders in Washington are on a self-destruct path. They are a new breed of management, and they require managers to blindly follow, or else. No-  
*continued on page 7*



## VETERANS' DIRECTOR

## Veterans' News



by  
**John P.  
Smeekens**

**Memorial Day**

Monday, May 29th, 2017 we will be celebrating Memorial Day. Hopefully you will have received this issue before the Celebration begins. That's the day we set aside, to honor and remember our Veterans' who have made the Ultimate Sacrifice. Please take a moment to bow your head in honored respect for those heroes. They kept this country free, and gave us the ultimate freedom to pursue the lifestyles and choices that we have chosen. Many of those freedoms were earned with Blood, Sweat, and Tears. I know it's the start of summer, and with thoughts of your upcoming vacations, family reunions, graduations, golf, pool parties, cook outs, etc., please try to set aside a minute with your family, with your friends, or by yourself, to bow your head in honored reverence and silence and say a prayer, or whatever you do, for those special Men & Women who made the Ultimate Sacrifice for all of us. Have a GREAT, and SAFE, summer!

**Veteran Of The Day**

Today's VETERAN OF THE DAY is Navy Veteran. After graduating from high school in New York, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served for two years during World War II on the motor torpedo boat tender USS Cyrene as a seaman first class. He sailed on the USS Cyrene through the Panama Canal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and San Francisco. He had said of one deployment, "It was so hot and humid, the crew rotted." He was honorably discharged in 1946. After the war, he became one of comedy's most famous funny men. He got his big break when his insult comedy began getting him some attention from the "Chairman of the Board," Frank Sinatra. He connected with Sinatra by chiding him during a show and eventually became

the go-to comic of the Rat Pack stars. His career took off when he began making appearances on the late-night shows. He was a frequent guest on "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson" and "Late Show with David Letterman." For more than 55 years, he appeared in top showrooms and concert halls throughout the U.S. and internationally.

DON RICKLES passed away, April 6, 2017.

**Million Veterans Program**

The Million Veteran Program is a voluntary research program led by the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a better understanding of how genetics affect overall health. Veterans who use VA facilities are welcome to participate in the study. This data is stored anonymously and is used for research in areas such as cancer and post-traumatic stress disorder. **The study is currently lacking female veteran participants, and VA is urging more women to participate. PLEASE LADIES, sign up to make your voices heard!!! You served, you deserve!!!**

**New D. C. Memorial**

Veterans of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm will soon have their own memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., thanks to legislation signed by the president. President Trump signed **Senate Joint Resolution 1**, a joint resolution approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield. The resolution was sponsored by Indiana Sen. Joe Donnelly and Arkansas Sen. John Boozman and designates the location of the memorial on the National Mall. The legislation was introduced and passed by Congress, and signed in the White House by the president. The National Desert Storm War Memorial will honor those Veterans who served in the Gulf War in

1990 and 1991. Now that legislation to create the memorial has been approved, the memorial's sponsors will **begin the process of fundraising and working with** the National Capital Planning Commission to select a location on the National Mall and a final design. Funds for the construction of the memorial will be raised privately by the **National Desert Storm War Memorial Association.**

**The Wall That Heals**

THE WALL THAT HEALS has started its 2017 season. It will visit more than 40 communities this year. When the traveling exhibit comes to town, it brings along a 250 Foot Replica of The Wall along with a mobile Education Center which includes digital displays of photos of service members whose names are on The Wall, letters and memorabilia left at The Wall in D. C, a map of Vietnam, and a timeline of the Vietnam War. **GRAND RAPIDS BE READY BECAUSE IT WILL BE THERE ON SEPTEMBER 21 THROUGH THE 24!!!**

For schedule updates and the latest information, please go to [www.thewallthatheals.org](http://www.thewallthatheals.org)

**Veterans Choice Act Extended**

Recently, President Donald Trump extended the Veterans Choice Act, to set the stage for a push in Congress to expand the program and allow more access to private care for veterans.

Flanked by veterans at an Oval Office ceremony, the president signed the bill to extend the Choice program, which was to expire on Aug. 7, and allow the expenditure of the remaining \$950 million in the program. The Choice Card program allowed vets facing lengthy wait times at Veterans Administration facilities or living more than 40 miles from the nearest VA to seek care in the private sector. Those already in the program will not need to re-apply under the bill signed by Trump, VA officials said. The new bill, the Veterans Choice Improvement Act,

addressed a major complaint of veterans' service organizations by directing the VA to cover co-pays and deductibles directly for private care rather than reimbursing veterans for paying up front.

Trump used the signing ceremony to renew many of the pledges he made on the campaign trail to reform the VA. POTUS said, "So this is called the Choice Program Improvement Act. It speaks for itself. This bill will extend and improve the Veterans Choice Program so that more veterans can see the doctor of their choice — you got it? The doctor of their choice — and you don't have to wait and travel long distances for VA care." VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin, the only holdover in the Obama administration in the Trump Cabinet and the only cabinet member to win unanimous confirmation in the Senate, said at the signing ceremony that the Choice extension was a precursor of "the great things that are to come to fulfill the president's commitments that he made to veterans." Shulkin has said that he will present to Congress, this fall, proposals to overhaul the Choice program to give veterans more options for private care and better integrate the VA with the private sector.

**Ingham County Veterans**

Veteran photo identification cards are now available, upon request, at the Main Office in the Mason Historical Courthouse located at 341 S. Jefferson St., Mason, Michigan 48854, between the hours of 8:00AM to 5:00PM Monday through Friday. This service is only available at this location due to equipment location!!! To get the card, you must file your original discharge papers, **DD-214**, with the aforementioned office. You will need the **DD-214**, picture I.D. (driver's license or State I.D.), and pay a \$10.00 fee. Considering many business's offer Veterans' discounts, you'll make that back in no time at all. These I.D. Cards will be your proof, as to being a Veteran.

**The Enemy Within**

*continued from page 6*

body is safe under their leadership, and that includes all of us. Because you do a good job or suck up won't stop them. That's proven in their MSC consolidations. Everyone in the way was hit by that steamroller, and the after-effects are still coming down. Those driving the steamroller may have thought it was fun, but we will see what they think when they become the targets. This battle can't be won by retirement either. Someone has to pay into that fund to keep payments coming. Everyone is in this battle, and they better get involved. We're not only fighting private hawks and Republican politicians on the outside. The enemy is within, and is destroying the USPS. We all have to get involved, and we have to do it now.

**Editor's Note:** The preceding article

first appeared in the Michigan Postal Workers Union publication in 1989 & 2009. I recently noticed that it is still being circulated and reprinted in various publications around the nation and felt that it needs to be republished once again in our own Messenger. Joe Foster from the Charlotte Area Local and Editor of the "Perspectives" said this in his reprint of this article: "The first and only time I met the author of the article was at a PPA editor's conference in Milwaukee, WI. This much I know about Leo Persails: He is highly regarded by my PPA counterparts. His views are based on long years of harsh experience, and he has written perhaps the scariest analysis of current postal events that I've seen yet. It has been lightly edited for technical reasons — punctuation, sentence structure, etc. Read it, then pass it along to someone else— like your supervisor, or that non-

member at the next case who thinks a few bucks for union dues are too much. The war is on, the stakes are high, and if we are to save the Postal Service as an institution of, by, and for the people,

we will have to do it ourselves. Ignore Persails at your own risk. You could end up unemployed." — *reprint Originally published in 1989 by Leo F Persails Flint Michigan Area Local*



**Wendy Kempke, Area 8 Director enjoying a brief break during the educational conference.**



## NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT



by  
Linda  
Turney

# Turney At The Table 2017

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

Often in arbitration concerning discipline, credibility of the Grievant(s) and management's witness(s) is crucial to the outcome. For example: if there is a quarrel or altercation on the work room floor between employees, and there are no witnesses and no confession; or if one person's story is completely different than another person's story, and both employees appear credible. The Union would assert that the evidence is a "draw" and the benefit of the doubt must be given to the accused. The USPS under these types of situations would then fail to meet its burden proving that the dispute should have resulted in discipline.

The Union should point out that the evidence is, "She said, He said" and the benefit of the doubt must be given to the accused. Arbitrator John

Fletcher in a case where management claimed the Grievant intentionally pushed the cart into him and the Grievant claimed it was not intentional

the individuals involved testified that the contact was intentional. The other testified that it was accidental. Their testimony was consistent with that re-

The Union should argue that management failed to prove that the grievant did anything wrong. We should note that there were no witnesses to the incident, and asserting that just because management says it occurred does not make it so.

If the Grievant, on the other hand, has been warned of conduct issues in the past and has a record of behavior on file, the strength of evidence may be lessened by the absence of direct corroboration or a "draw". Letter of Warning and subsequent suspensions for threats and the behavior of a Grievant may result in job loss whether or direct corroboration.

The Union could also argue the circumstances including actions and reactions at the relevant time. We can argue the consistency of one version of the story over another as well as other factors bearing on credibility including witness demeanor, the existence (or nonexistence) of bias or a consistent proven or written statement (such as the supervisor constantly harassed me). These arguments would add to intention rather than what was actually said at the time. If a worker feels that the Supervisor or coworker was constantly harassing him/her, a written record of prior events which is given to both Union and Management to show that this had been reported at an earlier stage could sway the version of the incident.

The Union should maintain that that the police were not called, the threat assessment team was not involved. Argue there was no **IMMEDIATE** off duty status. The Grievant was not treated as though she/he was dangerous at the time. If necessary argue METS, which is often known as the reasonable person standard. Consideration of the following evidentiary factors is often used in deciding whether an employee threatened his/her supervisor or co-workers:

(1) The listener's reactions;(2) The listener's apprehension of harm;(3) The speaker's intent;(4) Any conditional nature of the statements; and (5) The attendant circumstances.

Postal Workers arguing and threatening co-workers and supervisors are a guaranteed journey to see your fate decided by an arbitrator. While we cannot control emotional outbursts on the workroom floor, as Unionists, we need to constantly remind our members, especially PSEs, that emotional upset should not result in altercations of any kind. In the event that an altercation does occur, our obligation is to argue past behavior, intentions of the parties involved, actions and reactions at the relevant time and, always, just cause.



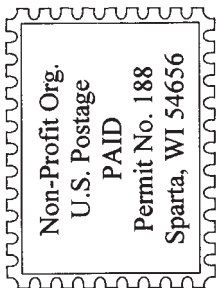
NBA's Mike O'Hearn and Linda Turney assist June Affron from the Battle Creek Local.

and that it was an accident opined:

*In this record, there is no other credible evidence to substantiate or disprove either version. This is the scenario facing the Arbitrator. One of*

*recorded by the Police Officer and that recorded by the Inspection Service. Who is to be believed and who is to be disbelieved? Either one could be telling the truth. Either one could also be lying. Moreover, one could be telling the truth, while the other could be mistaken. But, importantly, both could harbor strong beliefs that they are being completely truthful. The testimony of the parties supporting witnesses does not resolve this dilemma. Carefully considered, the totality of this witness testimony does not tilt the matter in favor of either Grievant or Supervisor, because none actually witnessed the event and their testimony, while falling short of corroboration, is replete with extraneous and immaterial history and opinion. And, the evidence of "bad blood" between the two is also of no help - this history could have motivated Grievant to intentionally bump Supervisor, or this history could have motivated Supervisor to seize upon inadvertent physical contact to allege an assault.*

*Therefore, because the evidence results in a "draw," the suspension cannot be sustained. This is a discipline matter and the burden is on Management, as a minimum, to establish with a preponderance of the evidence that it was justified in placing Grievant on emergency suspension. The test of that standard has not been met in this record. Accordingly, the grievance will be sustained. All reference to placement of Grievant on emergency suspension will be removed from her records. Grievant is awarded pay for all time lost, including missed overtime opportunities, with full fringe benefits. Interest is awarded on back-pay as contemplated in the MOU in the National Agreement.*



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Change of Service Requested