

Volume 29, Issue 109

September/October 2003



MICHIGAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION,
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION (AFL-CIO)

Michigan Messenger

Could this Happen? Is Your Job Worth It?

Dear Member,

President Bush announced yesterday, that, following the interim recommendations of the Presidential Commission on the Postal Service and in the interest of National Security, all Postal Worker Collective Bargaining rights are immediately suspended. Furthermore, the President announced that 300,000 USPS jobs, most coming from the Clerk craft, should be put up for competitive bid by private sector corporations. Beginning immediately 75,000 Postal Workers are to be laid off, as the Commission has found that the pay and benefits of Postal Workers "significantly exceeds that of comparable workers in the private sector." Additionally, as further funds are needed to fund Homeland Security, salaries will be adjusted downward to "no more than \$15 per hour." The President announced that these changes would be accomplished by Executive Order and that more changes would follow the Commissions' final recommendations.

How many more jobs will be lost before you take action? Like it or not, money greases the wheel. Congressmen and Senators approached for assistance have been known to directly ask, "How much did you give me?" Since we have few friends in the current administration, our best hope for job preservation is to buy some. That is what COPA is for. COPA, short for Committee on Political Action, is APWU Political action fund. Our contributions to COPA, have, frankly, been pathetic. You wouldn't send soldiers to war without the weapons to win that war. COPA is where the front lines are, right now.

Giving money to COPA will not guarantee anything. But ignoring this and failing to do anything is a sure death sentence.

If you are scared about losing your job, you ought to be. This article is absolutely meant to scare you and wake you up. The scenario in the first paragraph, while hasn't yet happened, is a very *REAL possibility*. Something very much like this has already happened to hundreds of thousands of Federal Workers. It would be a mistake to think it couldn't happen to us.

The APWU is doing everything possible to save YOUR job. Contributions are voluntary, but your action is needed now, BEFORE the President makes this nightmare a reality.

Is your job worth \$1 a week? Please fill out the form on Page 25 in this edition of the Michigan Messenger or use Postal Ease. More details can be found in the July/August edition of The American Postal Workers.



President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten
President

I am not going to take a lot of time on this most important subject, I only hope that all of you did your homework on one of the issues that we, as Postal Workers, are facing. The Presidential Commission has completed its study and now we wait to see the outcome. I have read the Commission's report and I can say that I have read a lot of horror stories in my life, and believe me this is the scariest one I have ever read. I can only see this as a tool that would completely destroy Collective Bargaining. Hopefully, by the time this goes to press I will have met with Senator Carl Levin to discuss this with him. I did have a meeting set up, and at this time, I am waiting for it to be finalized. There have been many letters circulated for the members to contact their representatives, and I hope that the 37 cents will be well spent by you.

I attended a Michigan State AFL-CIO Board meeting recently in Petoskey. As we concluded, we went to a local hospital where the nurses have been on strike for some nine months. The major issue in this dispute is the right to organize. The members at this meeting marched down the street by the hospital to show our support for the nurses. The hospital members have not even sat down once to negotiate any agreement with the Union Officials. They have given them a final proposal and that is where they stand. If any of you are in that area, stop by and give the strikers your support if you can.

I have also come across an article in the local newspaper. The headlines from this paper was "Labor dispute divides parish!" In a town in Texas, a rare attempt to unionize by Roman Catholic workers has resulted in a nasty dispute. The church employees from several parishes voted to form a union. Immediately, a priest responded by firing four of the workers in June. The workers got their jobs back, through the court system, but then were quickly put on paid leave. Such a dispute is unusual for the church, possibly the first in the United States. A spokesperson for the church suggested that the conflict goes beyond a labor dispute. I will continue to keep an eye on this as much as I can.

It has been a busy couple of months for me. I have contacted numerous hotels/resorts and conference centers for upcoming events. Jennifer Gilbert, Mike Long and I have met with hotels to plan for the District Meeting in February. I have also contacted hotels in Kalamazoo for the 2005 Educational Convention. I always like to have these conventions booked a year in advance for our members to plan accordingly. Currently, I am working with the Holiday Inn in Lansing for the upcoming State Constitutional Convention in May. While it is going slowly with the hotel, I am positive that I will have details for you soon.

Keep an eye on your Michigan Messenger for details for these meetings



I trust all of you had a safe and enjoyable summer. We now enter the fall season and still have a lot of work to do. As I stated in the opening of my article, we are in trouble times with this Commission. I hope and pray that the outcome will be a victory for all of us Members of the American Postal Workers Union.

Until next time,

Gary Van Hoogstraten
President





Secretary's Writings

Harold Juhl
Executive Secretary



Education at Work

Lynn Pallas-Barber
Director of Research & Education

Is Your Job Secure?

The President's Commission Report is out and the future looks very dismal for the Post Office and our jobs. The report has recommendations, which will change our lives, as we know it today, if it makes it through the House and Congress. The report is 208 pages long and addresses issues such as pay and benefit cuts, downsizing, consolidation of plants, reducing retirement benefits, and the list goes on. To fight the battle against the Commission's recommendations, we, the members, have to stand up and voice our concerns. This means you have to contact your Congressmen and Senators and let them know how these changes would affect not only the service to the public, but your livelihood as well. We need to talk to our friends and neighbors and let them know how these changes will affect the way they receive mail. Small Offices (15 and below) could possibly be shut down and customers would have to drive longer distances to get any services that they may require from the Post Office. You the members can also fight this by making a donation to COPA, so we can go to our friends in Congress and try to make them see the light and shoot down the recommendations from this hand picked (by President Bush) panel. Is your job worth the 37 cents a pay period! Now is the time to take some kind of action, writing campaigns, phone calls, e-mails, and etc; Check with your Local president's, Area Directors for sample letters which will make it easy for you to put some pressure on those in Congress. Do not take this issue lightly, it's for real and if it passes we are all in a world of ____!

**ACT NOW! DON'T HESITATE!
MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD!**

Harold



Make sure you get out and see the Changing of the Leaves and all this season has to offer.

IT'S NOW OR NEVER

It's time for every member to get involved. Our jobs are at stake. The Presidential Commission on the USPS has attacked every aspect of our employment with the Postal Service. The final recommendations of the Workforce Subcommittee addressed eleven (11) key issues. They recommended the downsizing of the workforce. They have attacked our collective bargaining process. They recommended giving the Postal Regulatory Board the authority to make pay comparability. This comparability could enforce a cap on the salary of new employees and reduce the salary of current employees. They also recommended pay-for-performance. Should your postmaster or supervisor have the authority to determine your pay rate based on their evaluation of your work ethics?

They have also attacked our grievance process. These recommendations will have a huge impact on the bargaining unit employees, our retirees and our veterans. This Subcommittee is undermining us in every way.

The Commission also recommended the outsourcing of clerk craft jobs. Their recommendations attack mail processing and retail sales. The only aspect of the Postal Service they intend to maintain was delivery of the mail. The Commission also recommended a process for closing facilities that circumvents congressional and community involvement.

The time has come for all postal workers to join together and inform our leaders on Capitol Hill that the report of this Commission is bad for all, not only for us as postal workers but also for the American public.

Letters to your congressional leaders area a must. Let your contributions to COPA be your second voice.

IT'S NOW OR NEVER!

ATTACK ON OVERTIME PAY

Also promoted by the Bush administration is an attack on overtime pay. Lower pay, longer hours and unpredictable schedules are some of the changes working families could

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The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long
Editor

If you are like me, you are probably looking at this edition of the Michigan Messenger and saying...WOW—This edition is huge! Since the last edition of the Messenger came out, there has been a lot of information circulated, particularly concerning the Presidential Commission.

In case you are wondering, the article on the Front Page is ONLY a possibility. It has not happened as of yet. When I first read this article at the Saginaw Picnic, it freaked me out; afterwards, I asked permission to use it in this edition. I believe it puts a lot of things into perspective. It is a wake-up call for those that need one. On Page 20 and 21, you will find two letters for you to copy, sign, and mail to the Senators. Please do so. Do NOT, rip out the page, and send it in; make a copy of it first. In addition, on Page 26, you will find a list of all Congressional Representatives for the state. If you don't know what district you are in, please contact our Legislative Director or the current office of Democratic Party to find out. When you write to your Representative, Senator, and even the President, let them know how the Commission report if enacted would effect you, your community, etc. Make it personal!

PPA Convention

I would like to thank you for sending me to this year's Postal Press Association Convention. I believe the classes offered were designed around the release of the Commission report. A lot of effort was given in respect to Media relations, and how to use the Media and other avenues to get your word out. I have already used some of the information in this edition of the newsletter, along with personally in my home local. It was good to see old and new friends alike and find out that problems that are happening here in Michigan, are happening everywhere also. Thank You again!

Employee Assistance Program

On Page 18 and 19, there is information concerning the Employee Assistance Program. Before you ask, why a management tool is in a union newsletter, I would like to let you know that EAP is NOT a management tool. It is a service for all US Postal Service employees and their dependents to help them cope with the stress of everyday liv-

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Legislative Update

Cynthia Hardison
Legislative Director

Brothers and Sisters,

This article was sent to the AFL-CIO Affiliate Political Directors and Activists, from Denise Cadreau, Political Director, regarding Bush's Polling Numbers.

I found this article to be an interesting read.

War, Peace, and Taxes: Is There a Chink in the President's Armor?

By John Zogby

In my last national poll, the President's overall job performance rating stood at 58% (1012 likely voters, June 6-10, +/-3.2%). While still a high number, it was 3 points lower than April's 61% rating. Mr. Bush maintains a stunning 90% rating among Republicans, but Democrats and Independents have moved past the Iraq victory and are giving him lower numbers.

I suspect that the President's performance rating will go down even further and that very shortly we will again see the nearly 50-50 figure that we saw right before the September 11, 2001 attacks, and the 54-45 he achieved on the eve of the bombing of Baghdad. Why? The main reason is that Mr. Bush still has not cultivated a majority governing coalition and has no majority consensus on domestic issues. When a new president comes to office, he is required to build a majority coalition in support of a program. This President did not. In fact, he made it clear that he would interpret his ascendance to the White House as a conservative mandate and he would govern from the right. He immediately froze foreign aid spending for family planning because beneficiary agencies included abortion in the services. Shortly thereafter, he rescinded some late Clinton administration executive orders that tightened up arsenic levels in drinking water and carbon dioxide emission in the air. By September 1, 2001, his job performance stood at 49% positive, and 50% negative. Translated, Mr. Bush had barely moved from the 48% that he achieved when he was elected.

His two domestic successes in that first year were in a truly

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Clerk Craft Report

Bob Maloney
Clerk Craft Director

Well, here we go again, time to gird our loins for war. Our friendly employer the USPS along with our Republican President have put us Postal workers and our jobs back into their sights.

I don't know how many years you have in the Postal Service, but if it is more than five years, you must remember the big picket of 1998, when we marched in front of many Post Offices to save our service (a.k.a. SOS as the National Union called it). Do you remember? Over the years the Republicans and the Postal Service have trotted out this same pig, they put on it a new sun dress and lipstick and try to make you think it is something new. This time, they call her a Presidential Commission on the US Postal Service. But over the last 28 years that I have been with the Service, they have hung names on her such as: outsourcing, subcontracting, privatization, and job sharing; not to mention Postal Reform or Postal Reorganization. All sound familiar? But when all is said and done it is still the same fat ugly hairy pig. The Postal Service always wants us to embrace it with both arms wrapped around it. It is the same story each time it makes a new appearance, cut back on the number of employees, cut pay, do away with COLA, and the no-layoff clause or like now do away with collective bargaining process. In other words bust the Unions. Make no mistakes Republicans hate Unions, period! So now that they have a Republican President and a Republican House and Senate, the sky is the limit. No longer do they have to creep up on us to try an attack from the flank; no, now they can come at us head on with guns blazing. The intent of this commission is to gut the Post Office. This will be done by destroying the unions by doing away with collective bargaining, and make the American public angry with the Postal Service by closing small offices. Why? To make it easier for big business to come in and tell the people that they can do all this service for you, you don't need that outdated Postal Service any more. And they will end up with what they have been wanting all along; all that revenue that we produce—that almighty dollar. The only thing that Republicans really love.

So what do we as Postal Workers and Union members do? Well for one, you all should have received a letter or postcard from the National Union telling you about the special

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Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan
Maintenance Director

OPEN SEASON AFTERMATH

Contractual open season ended August 29th. This is one of your four opportunities to test In-craft. The contract stipulates a 150-day timeframe and human resources sends out a timeline at the beginning of open season.

In Michigan, it appears that only three districts participated in open season: Detroit, Grand Rapids and Royal Oak. As of September 15th, none of these have a completed open season. Therefore, no one's results have been printed.

No results print until everyone in the particular office/district prints. This is good in that it protects your seniority rights. All successful applicants get scores at the same time and all Promotion Eligibility Registers (PERs) are updated. Thus the correct person gets promoted if there are openings.

Offices that are not complete should file grievances asking that anyone promoted as a result of open season will have his/her position seniority date backdated to September 2003 with appropriate higher level and out of schedule premium where applicable.

Our outstanding applicants appear to be: Detroit 12/53, Grand Rapids 10/21 and Royal Oak 7/13. There also seems to be a serious discrepancy in one office where open season applications were taken but never sent to the National Test Administration Center (NTAC). In all these cases, both individual and class action grievances are appropriate. Any steward or office needing help with these grievances should contact me by email or phone and I will gladly assist you.

Jane



Injury Comp Report

Ron Krumrie
Human Relations/Injury Comp. Dir



Area 2 Report

Tony Friday
Area 2 Director

Knowledge Is Power

As a Federal Employee we all have rights and responsibilities if injured at work under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. Being aware of these rights and responsibilities under this Federal Law is the key to a successful claim.

Unfortunately most of us rely on Management to inform us of our rights and responsibilities. This would seem logical since the Federal Employees' Compensation Act along with Management's own handbooks and manuals require them to do this.

It seems that Management refuses to do the things required of them by Federal Law, and even their own handbooks and manuals.

The handbooks and manuals that I am referring to are things that the union and Management have agreed upon during negotiations throughout the years. They don't abide by most things that are in our contract so why would they start now.

Management is required by law to provide us with the proper forms. Yet they fail to do so. Why?

Management is required by their own handbooks and manuals to explain Continuation of Pay (COP) to employee's who suffer a Traumatic Injury. Yet they fail to do so. Why?

Management tells employee's to fill out the wrong form. Why?

Management fails to provide all the information required of them by the Department of Labor such as what our wages are at the time of our injury. Why?

The answer to these questions and many more is simple. Management does not want your claim accepted and will do everything they can to ensure it is denied by the Department of Labor. When they fail to get our claim denied then the next step is to try and delay any benefits we are entitled

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Hello, Brother and Sisters,

I hope everyone had a good summer. Here in Detroit, we just had the Day of Action Rally in front of the Main Post Office (GWY), followed by a march downtown to the Labor Legacy Monument.

I am so proud to live in a labor city with a spirit that is still going strong. To see and talk with the many other members from other Unions that came to march and support our struggle was a very rewarding experience. I learned that they are facing some of the same attacks that the APWU is facing. It is very clear that Organized Labor is under attack. I am so proud of the many members who took the time to come out and march and raise the awareness signs.

The purpose of the September 17, 2003 (Day of Action March) was to show that this Union is not going to sit idly by while the draconian proposals recommended by the Presidential Bush Postal Commission are implemented. Proposals that, if enacted, would do irreparable harm to Postal Workers and the Public who depend on them.

We marched to raise the Public's awareness that this Union is not going to sit by without protest, while despite an 80% Public approval rating, service is being cut, and offices are being closed. All of these will have a profound effect on both the Public and Postal workers.

The members of the APWU need to know that the threat is real, and their very livelihoods are at stake. I urge each and every member to get informed, see a steward and get a copy of the report, get involved, attend your Union meetings. This is not the time for complacency, or wishful thinking, and just hope things work out.

The APWU has faced many challenges in the past, and prevailed, and it is my belief that this has given some members a false sense of security.

It is our job to sound the ALARM! Yes, we are under attack and its high time for our members not to stand up and take ACTION, not to sit back and wait on SOMEONE

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Area 3 Report

Richard Blake
Area 3 Director

MPWU Educational Convention - it was a pleasure and a privilege to have been given the opportunity to serve as co-instructor of Beginning Steward's Training at the State Educational Convention, along with Area 5 Director and Saginaw Area Local President Joan Norton. I'd like to express my appreciation to MPWU Director of Education Lynn Pallas-Barber, as well as MPWU President Gary VanHoogstraten, for giving me this opportunity once again. It's always an "eye-opener" for those of us from larger offices to hear the stories from smaller offices, especially those offices where the Union has not been active for years; words like "bizarre" and "incomprehensible" come to mind when hearing these stories (maybe we could interest Bill Cosby in doing a TV show called "Managers Say The Darndest Things!"). The enthusiasm and attentiveness of the people in the class was inspiring; the true test of our effectiveness as instructors will be the degree to which the students are able to go back to their offices and effect positive changes in their workplaces. That's what it's all about!

Moe Biller - I heard about former President Biller's passing just as I was preparing to leave for a week of vacation, which was an appropriate opportunity to reflect on his legacy, and specifically his tremendous contribution to our standard of living as postal workers. Would we even *have* such a thing as "annual leave" if not for the efforts of people like Moe? Would I have been able to even *consider* staying at a \$95-per-night hotel on my wages as a postal worker? Postal management (and Bush's commission) would be perfectly happy if we were all casuals - *we don't have the wages and benefits to which we have grown accustomed due to the kindness of their hearts!* I did have one brief opportunity to spend some time with Moe back in the mid 90's, and I marveled at the energy and commitment of this man who, by that point, surely had nothing left to prove. We should all consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have been led by a Unionist of his caliber for so many years.

Limited duty employees - Lately we have been seeing an all-out war against limited-duty employees, the likes of which I have never seen. Management is making a concerted effort to make these people *so miserable* that they take a medical retirement, or better yet just resign. I truly

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Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque
MPWU Retiree's Chapter Dir.

Encouraging news for a change! Amid the doom and gloom of the disastrous recommendations of the Bush Commission on the Postal Service, comes a glimmer of hope for CSRS/FERS retirees.

In mid-July, the U.S. House of Government Reform Subcommittee on Civil Service and Agency Organizations approved H.R. 1231, a bill to amend the IRS Code to change FEHBP insurance premiums of CSRS/FERS retirees and active military duty employees to pre-tax income. If enacted, this legislation would amount to a real tax cut for postal/federal retirees. It is estimated this legislation will save the average retiree \$430.00 per year. That is not peanuts, given those premiums have spiraled upwards over 10% the last five years.

Active postal/federal employees have been able to use this pre-tax income to pay for their health plan premiums for nearly three years. It makes no sense that retirees who make the least should pay the most.

Congressman Tom Davis, R-VA, Chairman of the House Government Reform Committee introduced H.R. 1231, and whose leadership position gives this bill a fair chance to get it to the floor this session. Senator John Warner, R-VA, sponsored a similar bill in the US Senate; S.623.

Also known as the "Premium Conversion" legislation, in as much as it was introduced by GOP House and Senate leadership, it stands a fair chance. Now it is up to US to write, phone, fax, e-mail, or visit our Congresspersons and Senators in their District offices. I know; "Yeah, yeah, I have heard this spiel before." Okay, if you, as a retiree, are independently wealthy, blow it off and do nothing! But, if you are like most of us, you will take the time and effort to tell your Congressperson to co-sponsor H.R. 1231, no if's and's or butt's about it! Ditto the Senate bill S623 to Senators Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin, D-MI. They wanted our support to get elected, so why be shy about expecting their support for our bread and butter issues.

May I be so bold as to suggest that we all, active and retired postal workers, have become complacent over the past 30 years because collective bargaining gains spoiled

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NBA Report

Jerome "Jerry" Martin
NBA - Clerk Div. - Chicago

Say it Aint' So!

Former National Officers, Moe Biller and Patrick J. Nilan passed away within 2 days of each other. These storied gentlemen each served the APWU and former Unions for many years. Moe, former President of the Manhattan-Bronx Postal Union and Pat, former President of the Minneapolis Local, each matriculated to Washington, D.C. after jump-starting in their Locals. Moe, as APWU President and Pat, as Legislative Director of the Federation and then APWU after the merger.

I knew Pat personally for at least 15 years before I met Moe. As Michigan State Executive Secretary, I was also the State Legislative Director. In the 60's, Postal Workers had to beg Congress for a few cents raise. We had many legislative rallies and trips to D.C. to meet with our congressional delegations. Pat was always on top of the legislative activity. Beside, I always had a standing bet with Pat, \$10.00 a game between the Minnesota Vikings and the Detroit Lions. I think the Lions were swept 15 straight games at one stretch. All of the money went to COPA of course.

I met Moe after the merger. Leo Persails and I would travel to D.C. with Vice President, Frank Kowal, Jr. to attend Executive Board Meetings. Moe, Kowal, Tommy McDonald, Kenny Wilson, Bucky Walters, Don Johnson and a few other always sat together in one corner of the room, the "no" corner. If President Filbey said yes, their corner was "no" and vice versa.

Both Moe and Pat were great Unionists and always battled for the Rank and File. They also battled each other because of the differences caused in the 50's when the NPU split away from the Federation. Pat was supposed to lead Minneapolis out of the Boston Convention with Moe and others. Moe and the Manhattan-Bronx Postal Union walked. Pat and Minneapolis Local stood with the Federation. After the split Moe and Pat became mortal enemies. At least now they both have time to get over their differences. I would hate to think that they are immortal enemies.

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Rep. Miller named to Special Panel on Postal Reform

Washington - Congresswoman Candice Miller today announced her membership on the bipartisan Special Panel on Postal Reform and Oversight, which will focus on reforming the current postal service. Miller is certainly no stranger to reform. Her career includes transforming offices at the local level of government, the county level of government and the state level of government. She released the following statement:

"Over the August recess, the President's Commission on the U.S. Postal Service released its report on the state of our postal system. I'm looking forward to serving on this special panel and working with the commission to find a way to reform the postal system while also giving it the flexibility and resources it needs to be profitable well into the 21st Century.

"While the Special Panel on Postal Reform has been tasked with finding a more cost-effective and efficient manner to maintain postal operations, we must not sacrifice its core elements such as six-day and universal service. Even though tough decisions must be made for true reform, the functions and services that citizens and businesses rely on must not be compromised.

"The postal service is a \$900 billion industry, and whether you are an individual user or a catalogue like Land's End or Time Magazine, postal rates have a huge impact on our economy and our ability to communicate.

"When I took office as Secretary of State in 1995, the Department of State was a malfunctioning bureaucracy that did not provide quality customer service. Through the use of technology and training with a commitment to customer service, were able to reform the department so much that it has become a leader in how to deliver effective government services. We faced tough choices, but decisions were made to change things for the benefit of all Michigianians.

"I look forward to bringing my experience as a reformer to the federal level of government to turn the Postal Service into a model of efficiency. I will work with the other members of the special panel to develop reform that works."

Editor's Note:

Now is the time for all Michigianians to fight the reform. Candice Miller serves in the House of Representative for District 10 (which serves the Huron, Lapeer, St. Clair, Salinac counties and part of Macomb County.) I implore everyone that lives within her district to write, call, or e-Mail her to let her know of your position in regards to Postal Reform. Your voice can make a difference in this time of need.

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Education at Work Continued

face. The Bush administration has proposed to loosen the rules that determine the types of employees not entitled to overtime pay after 40 hours.

Under the Bush proposal, workers, including police officers, nurses, store supervisors and many others would face unpredictable work schedules and reduced pay because of an increased demand for extra hours for which employers would not have to compensate workers. Here again it is important that every worker contacts his or her congressional leaders.

DELIVERY PILOT PROGRAM IN THE UPPER PENINSULA

It is now over a year after the implementation of the Delivery Pilot program in Marquette, Ishpeming, and Negaunee, Michigan. This program was to be a yearlong program. Well, the year was up on August 10, 2003. The customers in the three towns named are still receiving second-rate service. It's time to ____ or get off the pot! The Postal Service must make a decision and issue a final report. The union and the public deserve an answer. The future of quality mail service in the UP of Michigan is dependent on the end of this bogus program.

A CHANGE IN THE SEASON

Fall is in the air. The cool crispness in the air is a welcome comfort to me. I think fall is my favorite time of the year. I especially enjoy the beautiful color that comes with the fall season. These are difficult days facing us. I hope that the beautiful colors of fall bring some enjoyment to you as well.

Until next time,
In Solidarity,

Lynn

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Legislative Update Continued

bipartisan education bill and in a massive tax cut. But neither of these offered him the majority support he needed to pursue his domestic agenda into a domestic program. In fact, the only time he has used his popularity to push through legislation has been in obtaining new tax cuts - something which the majority of voters, as well as moderates of both political parties, and a consensus of economists are cool towards. Thus, his job performance numbers became a bell-shaped curve. Just before the war in Iraq, his performance was only rated at 54% positive and 45% negative. They soared again into the 70% range during the war, but they again are in the high fifties - and I am convinced that they are headed down even further.

While the President received a 66% positive rating for his handling of the war against terrorism, his performance numbers are much lower on handling the economy (28%), which voters rate the most important issue, 32% on health care, and 29% on environment. Perhaps of greatest significance, he receives only 45% positive rating (and a negative of 53%) on taxes - the foundation of his domestic agenda.

Less than half (49%) feel that the President deserves to be reelected - not necessarily putting him in the danger zone but potentially problematic for him for two reasons. First, after a victory in war and a job performance of 58%, American are still not sure of him. Second, it only represents one point higher than the 48% of the vote he received in 2000. If his performance numbers go down further, as a result of some Democrats and Independents abandoning the war victory coalition, his re-elect might

sink too.

Finally, when the President is matched against a generic Democrat, he now leads 44% to 37%. Those are anemic numbers for Mr. Bush. But they are not very encouraging for the Democrats either. If the Democrats can come up with a candidate and a domestic message, 2004 can be a very competitive election. But currently, the Democrats are engaged in a bitter family feud - the traditional wing that favors liberal spending programs and a populist message vs. the centrist Democratic Leadership Council that favors experimenting with some Republican-type solutions.

Two parties, two vulnerabilities.

Cynthia

We're on the Web
http://
www.mpwu.com

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***THE DEADLINE***  
***FOR SUBMITTING***  
***ARTICLES***  
***for the November/***  
***December 2003 Edition***  
***of the MICHIGAN***  
***MESSENGER***  
***is November 15, 2003***  
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Clerk Craft Report Continued

dues assessment that is to be used in a medial campaign to fight the Presidential Commission report. This will be one area we will fight in; another will be the information pickets as well as letter writing to our members of Congress as well as our Editors of our local town newspaper. Probably anyone else that can help us in this fight. That means that YOU will have to take an active role in this fight this time. You can not leave it up to your officers to do it this time, we ALL will need to be in the battle this time. If not, it may not be the last battle of our Postal careers.

Bob

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Injury Comp Report continued

to.

Management's refusal to do what is required of them by Federal Laws and their own handbooks and manuals is blatant fraud, along with unacceptable labor relations.

If we cannot rely on Management to do what is required of them then what can we do to ensure our rights are not violated?

First we must learn all we can about the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. This is easier said than done as this law is fairly complicated. This is not to say that all of us should attempt to learn as much as we can just because the law is complicated and confusing at times.

If the law is complicated and confusing then we should know who we can go to and get clarification and help. Someone who is looking out for us and who will help us. That person

should be our union representatives.

Not long ago an individual who was in Management and had a job title as an Injury Compensation Specialist (I use this term lightly and only because they have given themselves this title, my experience is none of them are specialist) told an employee that they were that individual's representative.

This is simply not true, they represent Management and not the employee. If they would simply read the law they would know that they cannot be considered your representative. You see the law is very specific as to who can represent you.

A federal employee may act as a representative only on behalf of immediate family members, defined as a spouse, children, parents, and siblings of the representative, provided no fee or gratuity is charged; or while acting as a union representative, defined as any officially sanctioned union official, and no fee or gratuity is charged.

I am not aware of anyone calling me for help who has been related to one of these so called Injury Compensation Specialist (once again I use this term very lightly). I am also certain none of these individuals are officially sanctioned union officials.

I believe this individual knew that but was simply confusing the issue and denying that employee the right to have their representative involved, who by the way was me. Management must be afraid of me. Hey Management don't fear me, just work with me and do what is required of you.

Remember Knowledge Is Power, Use It, Share It.

WHAT FORM SHOULD I FILE?

As I stated earlier Management will tell us to file the wrong form. They do this with one purpose in mind and that is to make sure our claim is denied. This happens many times when they tell us to file a CA-2a for a recurrence when in fact we should be filing a CA-1(for a traumatic injury), or a CA-2(for a occupational disease or illness).

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act defines a recurrence as an inability to work, when the inability is caused by a spontaneous change in a medical condition which had resulted from a previous injury or illness *without an intervening injury or new exposure to the work environment that caused the illness.*

This term also means an inability to work that occurs when a limited-duty assignment made specifically to accommodate an employee's physical restriction due to his or her work-related injury or illness is withdrawn. Finally, it means an inability to work that occurs when the physical requirements of such a limited-duty assignment are changed so that exceed an employee's established medical restrictions.

This is not my definition of a recurrence, this is what the law says constitutes as a recurrence. Management should be held accountable when they advice employee's to file the wrong form, after all they what to call themselves specialist now don't they. They proclaim themselves as experts yet they continue to give wrong advice, which I believe is done solely as a method to assist them in getting your claim denied, which is their number one goal.

I've stated that Management should

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Injury Comp Report Continued

be held accountable for their actions and you are asking yourself just how can we do this. This is a very good question when it seems that Management will do whatever they want, whenever they want.

There are a few things that we do that can hold Management accountable for their actions. The first and most important is for us to learn what our rights and responsibilities. Don't rely on Management to inform us them because they simple won't.

We must also ensure that our union representatives have a better knowledge about OWCP laws and how our contract protects our rights under the law. We, as a union, should be filing more grievances and even unfair labor charges when needed to protect our rights.

Finally we must rely on our congressional representatives to help us. Each of our representatives have individuals who work for them (they really work for us) that handle problems with OWCP. Remember that these individuals work for us, they are there to represent us, but they can only help if we let them know what the problem is.

Remember Knowledge Is Power, Use It, and Share It.

May all your grievances be winners and your claims approved.

Ron

(Continued from page 7)

Area 3 Report Continued

believe that some managers are actually saying, "let's see, what would really make Joe miserable...how 'bout we put him on Tour 1, with Tuesday and Friday as non-scheduled days? Who cares that he's been on Tour 2, with Sunday-Monday off, for 8 years? After all, he's a limited duty employee, so *we can do whatever the hell we want with him!*" Repeated and unwarranted schedule changes is one of their tactics; constant arguing about the employee's restrictions is another ("your restrictions say 'no repetitive bending at the waist'...we don't consider 3 times per minute to be *repetitive*..."). This latest round of incredibly mean-spirited attacks on injured employees is at least partly a result of management's recent decision to include the injured employees as part of an office's "Function Four complement" (i.e., their Clerk workforce), instead of categorizing them separately from the rest of the Clerks. In one of the MAL offices in the Detroit District, fully half of the Clerk workforce is limited duty employees - leaving all of the heavier work in that office to be done by half of the employees, which is virtually impossible. These employees don't like doing heavy work *all day, every day*, and they don't want to work mandatory overtime either - so when one of the managers (or one of the rural carriers, etc.) "helps out", they *don't* call the Union to complain.

Postal Commission report - I'm sure there will be much discussion of the President's Commission and its disastrous recommendations elsewhere in this issue of the *Messenger*, so it isn't necessary to discuss the report in detail in this article. I do want to add my voice to those who are telling people that *this is by far the most serious threat to our jobs, our standard of living, and our retirement, since the creation of the Postal Service.* I'd

also like to offer a personal note of "thanks" to our co-workers who voted Republican in the 2000 election - as if this wasn't an *entirely predictable consequence of having a Republican-controlled government!* Do those of you who voted Republican really believe that when push comes to shove, they'll be saying "be sure not to cut the wages or eliminate the jobs of those good, loyal, postal workers who voted Republican in 2000?" If that's what you think, then I have some land to sell you. I hope that you'll have a warm, fuzzy feeling knowing that your elected representatives hold the "right" views on gun control, or crime, or abortion...while you're stocking shelves at Wal-Mart, with no pension or benefits, wondering what ever happened to that Postal Service job that you thought you'd retire from.

Richard

(Continued from page 7)

Retiree Involvement continued

us. Our legislative lobbying skills have deteriorated because wages, benefits, and working conditions no longer depended on it. Well, I am here to tell you that active and retired postal workers had better get back to the basics of legislative action and politics. Like it or not, that is the arena we are in!

Okay, for those of you convinced to WRITE your US Rep and Senators, this advice: Address your letters and envelopes to federal legislator's District office in your area. District office staff will fax your letters to the Washington DC offices. Due to heightened security of all mail to Washington D.C, it is possible that your letter, if addressed to the Washington office, could be delayed several weeks.

(Continued on page 12)

PARAMOUNT! Now that the details of the President's Commission on the US Postal Service report is on the table for the Congress to debate postal "reform", it is the most critical issue facing the active membership, the APWU, and the American mailing public...and that's US too! There is speculation that congress could consider reform legislation as early as this October! We must take the initiative now! This is no crying wolf. Consider what this Administration has done to weaken labor and to wipe out labor's gains for working people. The so-called Homeland Security 'Patriot Act' did for certain federal employees by eliminating their Union representation rights. How about the continuing attempts to pass an "overtime bill" which would eliminate overtime pay for hundreds of thousands of employees deemed to be "professional." This is an anti-worker Administration, and now YOU'RE IN ITS CROSSHAIRS!

I have taken the liberty to mail all our MPWU affiliated Local Presidents, Local Retiree Chapter Presidents, and certain State officers; a letter proposing that MPWU Locals mobilize their retired members to oppose the Commission's recommendations to Congress. I suggested that Local Retiree chapters coordinate this effort with their parent APWU Locals, and further proposed that Locals where there is no local retiree chapter, to reach out to their retired members to join this battle for survival.

RETIRED MEMBERS: I am challenging you to reach out to your parent Local to offer your service at their direction. Active Locals have "action kits," and now updated ma-

terials to express opposition to our commission's drastic proposals for postal "reform" legislation based on its report. Locals can furnish "talking points" and facts sheets developed by national APWU to guide you in writing, or otherwise contacting your US Rep and Senators. If you don't have access to a Local, please contact me and I will provide you whatever materials you need or want.

This is OUR battle too! If nothing else moves you, know that we stand to lose as postal customers. Let me remind you, if Congress can adopt the proposed postal reform, retiree COLA's, health benefits, and premiums can be just as vulnerable. The Union we helped build is in serious jeopardy. I believe we retired members have the know-how of our past struggles via legislative lobbying, and an obligation to our active Brothers and Sisters to participate in the effort to preserve the Postal Service, and to protect their jobs and benefits. This commission seeks to wipe out much of the gains we won through the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, when we laid it all on the line! That burns me up, and should you too! So, PLEASE...step up now!

I can't imagine any APWU craft represented postal worker not so much as lifting a finger to write or contact their Congressperson or two US Senators, participate in informational pickets or demonstrations, or whatever action Local Union leadership request to oppose this position train wreck. Say YOU DO CARE! Make it a topic of discussion with co-workers by stating the facts. Talk it up! This assault by the Bush Administration can be overcome, but to win this war will take a concerted effort by active and retired postal workers and the support of the American mailing

public.

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE... gained from many past legislative struggles. Back in the late '50's through 60's, when Union dues was under \$5 per month, members and even scabs to supervisors would kick in a few bucks to finance regular treks to Washington to pound the Halls of Congress for our meager pay increases. Often Local and State District meetings would be devoted to writing letters to Members of Congress on our issues. That collective spirit needs to be revived. It can't just be left to the leadership to do. This has to be a grassroots effort; it has to be about solidarity in this fight! It was my experience that members would say; "I don't know what to write." You write it for me and I will sign it." Active members had better study the facts and quickly and learn how to write those letters, because if they don't, they may have to learn how to write a job resume!

Short of a personal visit, the individual letter in your own words, typed or handwritten, faxed or e-mailed, has the greatest impact on Members of Congress. Form letters or postcards are least effective. Letters don't have to be detailed or eloquent. Just write it like you would say it...But, for Pete's Sake...WRITE IT!

NEWSPAPER COMMENTARY, articles and editorials in support of the Bush Commission's proposed postal reform are popping up in large and small, daily and weekly publications. One caught my attention, in praise of postal reform, appeared in the Petoskey News Review on August 6th. Locals and members need to counter these and other propaganda articles being fed to the American mailing public in

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Retiree Involvement continued

the printed media with our own news releases or Letters to the Editor, or risk losing public support.

MORE SUGGESTIONS: APWU leadership called for "coalitions" to be formed in our communities to oppose the proposed reform legislation. NARFE Chapters can be enlisted. I was successful in getting the support of my County Democratic Party and 1st Congressional District Dem Party to sign resolutions opposing the commission's recommendations. A retired Brother from the Flint MI Area local wrote: "Why not a letter writing campaign to all the labor locals nationwide, if necessary, to inform them of this dastardly deed that not only threatens postal workers and retirees, but the general public as well." Sounds like a plan to me!

GREAT INQUIRY: Bro. Bob Maloney, Pres., Pontiac Local referred a question by a member contemplating retirement which may be helpful for other members:

Q: Does a retired APWU members have to be a \$24 per year dues paying member of the APWU Retirees Department to retain their APWU Health Plan eligibility?

A: The simple answer is YES. Actually there are three ways to retain APWU Health Plan enrollment eligibility as a retiree: (1) Remain a full dues-paying member of the APWU. (2) Join the APWU Retirees Department by completing a Retiree Form 1187 authorizing \$2 per month dues deduction from your annuity. And (3) Pay a \$35.00 per year fee as an Associate Member.

Paying full Local and National per capita dues is commendable, and the retiree retains full membership rights. Most retirees find this cost prohibitive. Joining the APWU Retiree Dept for \$24 per year makes the most sense of members wishing to retain their APWU Health Plan eligibility. Associate Membership for a \$35 annual fee provides no membership rights, and is usually required for postal/federal employees/retirees, supervisory, and non-APWU bargaining unit employees not eligible to belong to the APWU. This option makes no sense at all for the APWU retiree.

WELCOME BROTHER! Recently retired from the Postal Service, MPWU President Gary Van, in addition to being a full dues-paying member, has joined the APWU Retirees Department, thus becoming a member of the Saginaw 486-487 Area Local Retirees Chapter.

NOTE: MPWU State Retiree Chapter officers Jerry Clairmont and Charlie Kolhoff, both officers in their Saginaw Area Local Retirees Chapter, advise that they have written their US Senators and US Congressman opposing the Bush Commission proposed postal "reform." HAVE YOU WRITTEN YET?

REQUIEM: An era has passed! As this is being written, I just received word that retired APWU President Emeritus, Moe Biller and retired APWU Legislative Director Patrick J. Nilan passed away on September 5th & 6th 2003, respectively. May their souls and all the souls of our departed Brothers and Sisters rest in peace...Amen.

Be Strong

Al

(Continued from page 8)
NBA Report Continued

Early Outs

For some, not all! Clerks are all eligible for the Voluntary Early Retirement (V.E.R.), but hang on if you are PS-6 and above in the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Crafts. You ain't going nowhere. OPM regulations do not permit any agency to have a V.E.R. for employees who must be replaced. Perhaps, President Burris thought he had an agreement with the USPS but any "negotiated" agreement cannot violate Federal law. In fact, when we had the 1992 Runyon early outs, Maintenance employees were prohibited from retirements. The APWU went to arbitration on the issue and lost. Can we win now - No! Re Judicata.

Good news for some. However, there will be early outs for Mail handlers and some bosses (Supervisor of Distribution Operations). This is just a further indication of threatened "consolidations" since SDO's are only in mail processing facilities.

Contract Ratification Exposed

Okay, we got it, a few bucks for a few years. No lay off for a few more years. But, then the USPS lagged in the entire early out V.E.R. fiasco. Notification of plant consolidations - say what? This is another fallacy that we fell for. The Union still has not been officially notified of any consolidations or closings. Someone fell for another line of bull. If employees had been notified that their facility was closing many more may have went for V.E.R.

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NBA Report continued

The only thing the delay in the consolidation notification has done was to halt excessing beyond 50 miles. But it hasn't stopped excessing and withholdings. Springfield, Illinois has a withholding for 20 clerks within a 100 mile radius. Fort Wayne, Indiana has a withholding for 50 clerks within a 250 mile radius. The CFS units for both Flint, Michigan and Royal Oak, Michigan have been notified of possible excessing and consolidations.. There are also many small Associate Offices in Michigan slated to lose 1 clerk each. Obviously, the EAS 15 Postmasters will be doing more clerk work. Although the initial Chicago withholding was for 172 clerks, we now have one for 400 clerks and the withholding area is up to 350 miles.

Jobs

There ain't no stinkin' jobs at least in the United States. The State of Michigan has lost over 100,000 manufacturing jobs in the last 2 years. Gateway computers is going to lay off hundreds of employees and contract the work out—Mexico get ready for the black and white cow. Seimans in Grand Rapids is laying off hundreds. Eaton manufacturing in Marshall, Michigan may close and lay off 500 employees. The beat goes on.

Hey, bag your own groceries. Where could a high school age guy get a job pumping gas? Now all gas stations are self serve. Well, then you could be a bagger at the grocery store, now scan and bag your own. The Chicago Tribune even had an editorial praising this self bagging scam. It isn't any faster, it just eliminates jobs, Union jobs - since all large supermarkets are unionized except Wal-Mart.

The big problem for all unionized shops is health care. The cost for current and retired workers is enormous. That's just another excuse to ship our jobs to Mexico and Asia. Thanks NAFTA and the WTO.

WTC Steel Gone to Malaysia

In a strange twist of fate, WTC scrap metal from New York is being melted down and recycled. Much of this recycled steel is being resold back in the United States. The New Jersey Company that sold the scrap to mega steel also sold to other countries in addition to Malaysia. The total was over 250,000 tons of WTC metal.

Window Clerks Should Scan This Article

Okay, I realize that window clerks (sales associates) will **not** scan this article. Especially, since many are not scanning the products coming across their windows. Unit accountability relieved our window clerks of individual shortages. But, then someone thought they had the best idea in the whole wide world. Don't scan, or scan and error correct, then the money is yours. Sure, that works once in a while. But, the Postal Inspection Service (P.I.S.) IS out and about. The cameras are rolling and by gosh window clerks are getting nabbed by the busload by the P.I.S. We are losing too many window clerks for not performing their jobs within regulations. Scan the products. Just pretend that every customer is a P.I.S because they very well may be one. Oh, and by the way, when the P.I.S. interviews you **don't**, I repeat, **don't** ask for a Union Steward. Then when you write out your statement and promise to never do it again, your Steward won't have to witness your admission of guilt.

We have had window clerks shopped by 5 and even up to 8 different postal inspectors. Don't worry about the "questions" just scan when you can.

Union Brother Losses

In addition to Moe Biller and Pat Nilan, former Special Delivery Business Agent, Manny Tenenbaum from Brooklyn, New York passed away September 3, James "Jim" Sweeney former State Special Delivery Director and Western Michigan Area Local Recording Secretary died of a heart attack at age 42.

LeRoy Hughes from York Penna passed away on September 11th. LeRoy was a union activist and participated in union functions in the old Federation and APWU for the past 40 years. Even after retirement LeRoy remained a concerned member.

God Bless Moe, Pat, Manny, Jim and LeRoy. I'm sure they have already formed a new local union. Moe wants to be the President and Pat, the Treasurer.

Sports & Stuff

The Cubs and Sox seasons will be over by the time this article hits the streets. The Cubs will make the play-offs. The Sox don't have players to step up. Atlanta will knock off the Yankees in 7 games for the World Series.

The Bears will have a worse record than the Lions. The Lions will end up 6 - 10, the Bears 3 - 13. Super Bowl will be the left coast - Oakland and San Francisco.

In college, who can beat Michigan? Miami will be the national champi-

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ons, tho',

Fall and Early Winter Flicks

Kill Bill: Volume one - No, this isn't the maintenance and motor vehicle craft employees who couldn't get a V.E.R. trying to get Bill Burrus. This is a Q.T. (Quentin Tarantino) two part film. Uma Thurman is a bad luck bride who was left for dead by Bill, David Carradine, and his gang. I can't wait for volume two!

Intolerable cruelty - No, this Joel and Ethan Coen (Fargo) flick isn't about your favorite MDO or Postmaster. This stars George Clooney, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Cedric the Entertainer and Billy Bob Thornton in a real funny divorce flick. Divorces are always funny. Sorry, there is not one wood chipper in sight although they are cheaper than a divorce.

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World - No, this isn't Bob Tunstall and Jim McCarthy on a fact finding mission to Iraq.. This is a British Navy historical epic. Since the movie only cost \$135 million, plan on eating lots of popcorn at this one to pay for Russell Crowe's salary.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King - No, this isn't a movie regarding Bill Burrus' inauguration. This is the long awaited finale of the ring epics. At last, now we can start watching some good flicks.

Matchstick Men - No, this isn't a movie about the APWU National Executive Board. This one concerns Nicolas Cage as an obsessive-compulsive drifter. Well, maybe the N.E.B. does fit.

Elf - With Ed Asner as Santa. How can Will Ferrell go wrong looking for his parents in New York City.

Scary Movie 3 - Without the Wayans Brothers. Save your money.

Runaway Jury - With Gene Hackman and Dustin Hoffman as opposing Attorney's fighting over gun control. John Cusak is a juror looking for a big payday. He should have checked out the concession stand first.

Taking Sides - Harvey Keitel, 'nuff said. Harvey has never made a bad one.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre - Why remake a classic? Just give us the originals "Director's Cut."

Mystic River - Clint Eastwood directs Sean Penn, Tim Robins and Kevin Bacon in an investigation of a 25 year old murder.

Out of Time - No, this isn't the USPS timetable to notify the Union of plant consolidations, this features Denzel Washington on the run.

So with all of these good and bad flicks coming out, see them early and often and eat lots of popcorn with fake healthy "butter" and a few M&M's too! Enjoy!

And now for some good eating:

Super "Hot" Venison Chili

1 lb. Venison Burger
1 clove garlic, minced
6 jalapeno peppers
1 (16-oz.) can chili beans
1 large onion, chopped
2 large tomatoes, chopped
1 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 can beer
1 (16-oz.) can tomato juice
1 tsp. chili powder

Brown burger in skillet with chopped onions. When browned, mix all ingredients into soup pot and simmer over medium heat for 2 hours. Use water to get desired thickness.

Deer Hunter's Breakfast

1 lb. deer burger
1 T. Butter
1 large potatoes, sliced
Salt and pepper
3 eggs, beaten

Heat skillet and melt butter. Crumble deer burger in skillet over medium heat for 5 minutes. Place sliced potatoes in skillet and mix; cover and cook until potatoes are done. Pour beaten eggs into burger and potatoes. Stir for 2 minutes and serve with hot buttered toast or rolls.

Yum Yum Cake

2 cups sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1 20-ounce van crushed pineapple, undrained
1 cup oil
2 cups plain flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
Pinch of salt

Mix ingredients together in order listed and bake in greased and light floured 9 X 13-inch pan at 350 degrees for 40 to 45 minutes.

Frosting: Mix together 1 stick margarine, 1 cup sugar, 1 cup coconut, 3/4 cup evaporated milk, 1 cup nuts and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Cook in sauce pan for 5 minutes. Put on cake while still warm.

Jerry



Get Out and Enjoy the Fall and All It has to offer

ELSE to fight our fight.

The Unions is not just the National President and Officers, nor the State and Local Presidents and Officers, it is each and every member of the APWU. We are the Union and a fight against one is a fight against all.

When you see on your Union Board, the National Officers state they need us to give money to COPA to help fight these challenges. Do not depend on someone else to give, The depend on someone else to fight my fight attitude is the surest way to defeat. The I ride on the train and let someone else help pull the train, spirit is the main reason we have over 70 thousand non dues paying members (SCABS). Who are helping in the attack against us by doing nothing to help the Union, but sit on the sidelines and complain about the union? The same ones who would not rally, march, or fight for the struggle of a just wage and benefits, but would happily put down this Union to the detriment of all.

Let's sound the Alarm, enlist those who are not onboard, unite and fight. In closing, I would like to give thanks and special mention to some but surely not all who made the Day of Action march a resounding success.

1. State Representative, Morris Hood, who is cosponsoring a bill in support of Postal Worker. Mr. Hood stated that "When Detroit Local President Duron Marshall told him of the challenges we are facing his response was just tell me what you need and he would try and do." He is a real friend of Postal Workers.

2. MVS, National Assistant Director, Michael Foster delivered a very powerful speech about the importance of COPA and the seriousness of the current threats we are facing.

3. Detroit AFL-CIO President, Donald Boggs, delivered a truly uplifting speech and shared some fresh ideals on ways to respond to the new wave of attacks against labor unions.

4. Detroit Local President, Duron Marshall, who's leadership, commitment, and dedication ensured the success of the rally.

5. Michigan Postal Workers Union, President Gary Van Hoogstraten is a true unionist who has always been on the forefront. If there is a fight, he's there.

6. Coalition of Labor Union Women, (CLUW) President, Millie Hall, delivered a rousing speech and gave her support of our cause and stated that CLUW stands with us.

7. City Councilman & Women, Ken Cockrel, Jr., Sharon McPhail, Marianne Mahaffey, all stated their commitment to our fight.

8. Unions that marched with us were, UNITE, TEAMSTERS, PACE, UAW, CLWU, AFGE, VETERANS, and a host of friends and supporters.

The APWU gives a sincere thanks to all of you we shall not forget, the struggle continues.

In Solidarity,

Tony



Area 7 & 9 District Meeting along with an Editors' Meeting

February 20 - 21, 2004
Best Western Midway Hotel
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Rates: \$65 - Single/\$75 - Double

Plans are underway for the next district meeting. If you would like to see something of special interest that hasn't been covered in a while, please let either Lynn Pallas-Barber or one of the above Area Directors know. Currently an Article 12 class is in the works; along with classes dealing with Associate Office issues.

For the Editors, with the upcoming National Elections for the APWU, along with the Political elections, Tony Carobine, National PPA President, has agreed to be on hand to present a class dealing with Federal Elections and Your Union Publication. Please make every effort to attend.

Contact the Best Western Midway Hotel Directly by calling: 616-942-2550 (or 1-888-280-0081). We must have reservations made for this event prior to January 1, 2004.

If rooms aren't available, overflow will be handled at the Comfort Inn (next door (across the Parking Lot)). Contact them directly at 616-957-2080 (or 800-638-7949).

Please tell them you are with the Michigan Postal Workers Union to receive the negotiated rate.

*Area 10, 11, 12 District Meeting
September 12-13, 2003
Gaylord Michigan*



Employee Assistance Program (E.A.P.)



come visit us at www.EAP4you.com...
A wealth of information is waiting for you
...free of charge!

Help is just a click away...
for the problems you and your family face every day!
EAP4you.com features the latest trends in health & wellness for you
and your family!
You will discover pertinent topics for virtually every walk of life.
The U.S. Postal Service Employee Assistance Program...We Deliver!!!

Topics include:

Family, Children & Teens: Single parenting, elder care, blended families & more
Workplace Issues: Balancing Home and Work, Job Burnout, Time Management & more
Substance Abuse & Other Addictions: Dealing with Co-Dependency, Drugs & Teens & more
Coping with Traumatic Events: Earthquake Aftermath, Preparing for Emergencies & more
Mental Health Issues: Depression, Dealing with Grief, Stress Management & more
Health Issues: Smoking Cessation, Getting a Better Nights Sleep & more
Education: Helping Preschools Prepare, Promoting Good Study Habits, Back-to-School & more

To visit the US Postal Service E.A.P. Website
Type www.EAP4YOU.com in the address line of your computer browser (or click
the picture above)

Click new user or Anonymous
Enter toll-free number: 800-327-4968 & click continue
On next screen, scroll to continue unregistered and lick...you're there!

US Postal Service Employee Assistance Program
Living Healthy, Working Well

Call us 24-Hours A Day, Seven Days A Week at 1-800-EAP-4-You.



E.A.P.

Employee Assistance Program

Greater Michigan District

EAP Questions and Answers

WHEN YOU HAVE TROUBLES...

- ⇒ If you have problems at work, or personal problems, call the Employees Assistance Program (E-A-P). It's FREE, voluntary and confidential counseling for postal employees and their immediate family members. Most employees refer themselves because of individual or family issues. Your supervisor can also refer you to the E-A-P through a Formal or Informal Referral. Employees can decline a management referral. Years ago, E-A-P was only for drug/alcohol problems. Now E-A-P provides information and short-term counseling for any situation that causes emotional upset for employees and their immediate family members.

CONFIDENTIALITY...

- ⇒ E-A-P short-term counseling is provided by licensed mental health professionals who follow state and federal confidentiality guidelines. E-A-P counselors are not postal employees and will not talk about your case to anyone inside or outside the Postal Service without your written permission.
- CONFIDENTIALITY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PILLAR OF THE EAP PROGRAM.**

SERVICES...

- ⇒ **Who is eligible?...**
E-A-P services are provided to USPS employees and their immediate family members (family members living within the home of the USPS employee or legal dependents.)
- ⇒ **How are sessions determined?...**
E-A-P provides counseling services, which are short-term in nature and deemed clinically necessary as determined by the E-A-P case manager. If the issue is long-term in nature, referrals to resources that accept your insurance or other community programs would be made.
- ⇒ **What can I expect from E-A-P?...**
E-A-P provides assessment and brief short-term focused services. Employees may be referred to resources for long-term counseling needs.
- ⇒ **What about Inpatient care?...**
If there is a need for inpatient treatment (for substance abuse or mental health issues) E-A-P can help you contact a treatment program in your area that accepts your insurance.
- ⇒ **Referrals for Medical Services...**
The E-A-P program does not provide medical services, but it can make referrals to appropriate medical personnel if necessary. E-A-P clients can seek medication from their family physician while in counseling.

ON THE CLOCK APPOINTMENT...

- ⇒ Your first counseling session can be on the clock at your supervisor's discretion.

WORKPLACE STRESS...

- ⇒ E-A-P can help employees who feel that they are experiencing emotional stressors due to workplace issues.

EASY ACCESS WITH NO VOICE MAIL OR MENUS

- ⇒ When calling the E-A-P at 1-800-EAP-4-YOU (1-800-327-4968) or TTY 1-877-492-7341, it is not your standard menu after menu. The 800 number is staffed with a live person 24/7 to provide immediate service to the caller. If you need to speak with someone right away, there are licensed counselors available otherwise, you will be provided with the name and phone number of a counselor near you.
- ⇒ You can also access information about the E-A-P from any computer through the website: www.eap4you.com

Make the Call

Make the Call

October 15, 2003

The Honorable Carl Levin
United States Senate
269 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510-2202

RE: Presidential Commission on the USPS

Dear Senator Levin,

As a postal worker and a citizen that resides in your state, I am writing to express my concerns about several potentially drastic changes that the President's Commission on the Postal Service has recommended in their final report, which was completed on July 31, 2003. The report endorses a drastic overhaul of the nation's mail system. The recommendations intend only to service the needs of big advertising mailers at the expense of the American public.

The report proposes giving the Postal Service unfettered authority to close 'low activity' post offices without first seeking citizen involvement. This power/authority would be a disaster for small business, the elderly and rural America.

This commission also proposes to give broad authority to politically-appointed Postal Regulatory Board to set postage rates, define the scope of universal service, amend the Private Express Statute, set wages and benefits, and review and act on complaints. The commission has recommended giving this board unprecedented authority, with no accountability.

The Postal Service's mission has always been to bind the nation together by providing service and access to all communities at uniform rates. Undermining that mission would be detrimental to the elderly, rural and inner-city residents who don't live in areas deemed profitable by the Postal Service, to the poor, and millions of other citizens who depend on not only affordability, but a secure service as well.

If presented as a legislative package, I would ask you to vote against these proposals.

Thank you for your interest and consideration.

Sincerely,

October 15, 2003

The Honorable Debbie A. Stabenow
United States Senate
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510-2204

RE: Presidential Commission on the USPS

Dear Senator Stabenow,

As a postal worker and a citizen that resides in your state, I am writing to express my concerns about several potentially drastic changes that the President's Commission on the Postal Service has recommended in their final report, which was completed on July 31, 2003. The report endorses a drastic overhaul of the nation's mail system. The recommendations intend only to service the needs of big advertising mailers at the expense of the American public.

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If presented as a legislative package, I would ask you to vote against these proposals.

Thank you for your interest and consideration.

Sincerely,

Editor's Note: By now, most, if not all, have heard of the Presidential Commission's recommendations. On these two pages, you will be able to read parts of the report that the union finds objectionable and why we must fight. Please take time to read these and familiarize yourself with them. When you write your congressman and Senators, you can utilize this information. Mike.

The APWU Opposes

1. **Commission-recommended changes in Collective Bargaining.** The newly created "Postal Regulatory Board" would set employee compensation. The commission also recommends reductions in health and retirement benefits and Worker's Compensation (OWCP) benefits for both current and future employees.

[Excerpts from the Commission's report appear within quotation marks]

"While the commission strongly supports total compensation and comparability, it recommends that this commitment be appropriately and clearly measured by an independent entity - the Postal Regulatory Board - and used as a ceiling in collective bargaining. While the clear intent of the comparability standard is to ensure wages do not lag behind the private sector, expert witnesses made the case to the Commission that a premium may exist today. Appearing to support these claims is the low turnover rate and the fact that new hires, on average, receive a 28.4% pay increase when they join the Postal Service."

"In the arenas of benefits, the contract is even more pronounced. While health care benefits are part of the collective bargaining process, employees have access to the full range of generous plans available to Federal employees. They also contribute only slightly more than half (16.5% of total premium) of what private-sector workers contribute (about 31.5% of the total premium) and what other Federal workers pay (about 28% of the total premium) for health care coverage."

"Retirement benefits are even more generous, rising with inflation (a rare provision among private plans). The Postal Service, like the Federal Government overall, permits employees to retire as early as 55 (under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)) and as early as 57 (under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)) with a full pension. and, while fewer private companies today offer retiree health care benefits (and many more are shifting a greater percentage of the costs to recipients), these benefits remain a mainstay at the Postal Service."

"In sum, these benefits accounted for just under \$20 billion of the \$51.5 billion the Postal Service spent on its employees in Fiscal year 2002 - almost \$1 out of every \$3 the Postal Service spent in that fiscal year. A lack of negotiating authority with respect to these costs would be intolerable in most private-sector companies. They should be brought within the collective bargaining process at the business-oriented Postal Service, as well."

"...As an employer, the Postal Service shall achieve and maintain compensation for its officers and employees comparable to the total rates and type of compensation paid in the private sector of the economy of the United States. The term 'total rates and type of compensation' shall include wages, holidays, leave, insurance, pensions, medical and hospital benefits, the continuity and stability of employment and all other benefits received."

"...the Commission recommends that the Postal Service Regulatory Board be tasked with making an impartial determination as to whether there exists a compensation premium over the private sector. If the Postal Regulatory Board determines that a premium exists, then it should be authorized to make immediate binding and corrective action for prospective new hires, once the comparability analysis is complete. The Postal Regulatory Board also should establish a reasonable timeline for corrective action for existing employees, which management and the postal union would be required to achieve over time in their collective bargaining and arbitration proceedings."

2. Work sharing Discounts - The Commission recommends that no NEW discounts exceed costs avoided. Without saying so, the commission tacitly endorses existing discounts that exceed costs avoided. These discounts rob the Postal Service of billions of dollars a year, and all discounts that exceed costs avoided should be eliminated.

"The Postal Service needs greater flexibility to pursue these [work sharing] partnerships. This will require transitioning from the cumbersome ratemaking process imposed on the discounts today. The Commission believes such a move could occur while enhancing oversight by specifically requiring that no new work sharing discounts for a non-competitive product should exceed costs saved (including the present value of projected future costs saved) and that the Postal Regulatory Board should have the authority to conduct an expedited, after-the-fact review upon written complaint that such a discount is excessive."

3. Closing plants using a procedure similar to a military base-closing commission that limits congressional involvement, or closing post offices without citizen involvement - The Commission recommends a process for closing facilities that circumvents congressional and community involvement, permitting input only after decisions have been made. Congress would be unable to modify the recommendations of the Commission.

"...the Commission envisions a comprehensive postal network realignment that is facilitated by an independent process, much like that governing military base closures in the mid-1990's, for consolidating and closing processing and other back-end postal facilities; asking communities to play a more prominent role in the disposition of post offices that are unnecessary for the fulfillment of universal service; promoting a greater use of private partnerships to ease the Postal Service's fixed infrastructure burden; and pursuing end-to-end standardization of the postal network to reduce the uneven nature of many postal processes that combine to add billions of dollars in unnecessary costs into the system each year."

"...Once the President approves the plan, it should be sent to Congress with the stipulation that the plan is final unless congress passes a joint resolution disapproving the plan in its entirety within 45 days."

4. Establishing a Regulatory Board with board authority to set policies that should be set by Congress or the Board of Governors - The Commission would let a three-member Board appointed by the President change the meaning of universal service, change the scope of the postal monopoly, and set service standards of the USPS.

"The new Postal Regulatory Board should have authority to: review and refine the scope of the Postal Services' universal service obligation; clarify and refine the scope of the postal monopoly; regulate rates for non-competitive products and services; establish limits on the accumulated earning by the Postal Service; ensure financial transparency; obtain information from the Postal Service, if need be, through the use of new subpoena power; and review and act on complaints filed by those who believe the Postal Service has exceeded its authority. The new Postal Regulatory Board should be comprised of three members who are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, and no more than two should be members of the same political party."

(Continued from page 4)
Long and Short of It Continued

ing. The National APWU Human Relations Director, Sue Carney, along with members of the NALC, and the Postal Service, have established an EAP Advisory Board at the National level. With that, local ones have been also been established in each District. On that board, there are two active representatives from the APWU, NALC, and Management, along with two alternates. If you would like to see something added or need information concerning EAP please let them know.

Upcoming District Meeting

The next District Meeting will be held February 21 – 22, 2004 in Grand Rapids, Michigan at the Best Western Midway on 28th Street. This hotel has so far bent over backwards to accommodate every request we have made of them. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this event.

Constitutional Convention

April 29th – May 1st is the date, and the Lansing Holiday Inn is the place for the Michigan Postal Workers Biennial State Convention. Please begin to think about your resolutions now.

Discounts and Gas Prices

With the fall now beginning and winter just around the corner, it is time to crank up that old furnace and begin to warm our houses. In case you haven't been keeping up, natural gas prices have doubled since last year, and propane isn't far behind. Make sure your house is air tight to keep your costs down.

Also, for those of you that haven't checked out the discounts that are being offered for being a US Postal employee, you are missing out. Whether you use a cell phone, need maintenance done on your vehicle, need cleaning material, tools, etc., or just want a magazine to read when it is cold, you need to check out the discounts being offered. You can look at all the discounts on the state's website at MPWU.com.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that you need to write your Legislator about the Commission's report. We can't do it alone. We need YOUR help. This is one time that your union representative can't do it alone. We are only few, but you are many. Your voices carry a much greater impact than your officers and stewards can do alone.

Until Next Time, Yours in Solidarity,

Mike

Former APWU President Moe Biller Dies at 87

Our union's third national president, Morris Biller, who preferred to be called "Moe," led the APWU for more than 20 years died September 5th in New York. He was 87.



"Moe was the hero of the U.S. postal workers movement," said William Burrus, Biller's successor. "From his first job as a part-time clerk he devoted himself to the labor movement. During his rise to the top he worked tirelessly not just for the workers he represented, but for all those who deserved economic justice."

Moe Biller was born Nov. 15, 1915, in New York City. His postal career began in 1937, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, at what is now known as Knickerbocker Station. He earned 65 cents an hour and received no vacation benefits or sick pay. If he wanted to use a bathroom, he had to leave the building. Except for war-time service in the Army, Moe continued his employment with the Post Office, and always worked not just at his job, but to improve the lot of those around him.

A unionist from the beginning, he held numerous local positions, including chairman of the Membership Committee, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Executive Vice President. He was elected president of the Manhattan-Bronx Postal Workers Union (now called New York Metro APWU) in 1959. He was still at the helm in 1970 when the Great Postal Strike began with Post Office employees in New York City walking off the job.

Mr. Biller served on the committee that brought about the merger in 1971 of the five postal unions that now comprise the APWU.

Moe was a long-time member of the New York City Central Labor Council, the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, the labor federation's Public Employee Department, and the Executive Committee of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (now known as Union Network International).

He also served on the boards of several charitable and civic organizations. He also served on the Advisory Board of Cornell University's Trade Union Women's Studies Program. He was a member of the Federal Thrift Advisory Council, a member of the Federal Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health, and on the National Board of the A. Philip Randolph Institute. He was also a long-time member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the NAACP.

*This Tribute was found on APWU.org and was edited for space.
Editors Note: Moe, Thank You for Everything. You will be missed.*

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Who Do You Need to Contact?

A Guide to Your Legislator



District	Congressperson	Washington DC Address	Main District/Michigan Office
1	Representative Bart Stupak (D)	2352 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2201	200 Division St., Emmet County Bldg Petoskey, MI 49770
2	Representative Peter Hoekstra (R)	2234 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2202	184 S. River Ave Holland, MI 49423
3	Representative Vernon Ehlers (R)	1714 Longworth House Office Bldg Washington DC 20515-2203	110 Michigan Ave #166 Grand Rapids, MI 49503
4	Representative Dave Camp (R)	137 Cannon House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2204	135 Ashman Drive Midland, MI 48640
5	Representative Dale Kildee (D)	2107 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2205	432 N. Saginaw #410 Flint, MI 48502
6	Representative Fred Upton (R)	2161 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2206	157 S. Kalamazoo Mall #180 Kalamazoo MI 49007
7	Representative Nick Smith (R)	2305 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2207	110 First St., Ste A Jackson, MI 49201
8	Representative Michael Rogers (R)	133 Cannon House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2208	1327 E. Michigan Ave Lansing, MI 48912
9	Representative Joseph Knollenberg (R)	2349 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2209	30833 Northwestern Hwy #100 Farmington Hills, MI 48334
10	Representative Candice Miller (R)	508 Cannon House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2210	48653 Van Dyke Ave Shelby Twp, MI 48317
11	Representative Thaddeus McCotter (R)	415 Cannon House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2211	17197 North Laurel Park Dr, Ste 161 Livonia, MI 48152
12	Representative Sander Levin (D)	2300 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2212	27085 Gratiot Ave Roseville, MI 48066
13	Representative Carolyn Kilpatrick (D)	1610 Longworth House Office Bldg Washington DC 20515-2213	1274 Library, Ste 1B Detroit, MI 48226
14	Representative John Conyers Jr. (D)	2426 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515-2214	231 W. Lafayette Blvd 669 Fed Bldg Detroit, MI 48226
15	Representative John Dingell (D)	2328 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515	19855 W. Outer Dr., Ste 103-E Dearborn, MI 48124
Senator	Carl Levin (D)	269 Russell Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510-2202	477 Michigan Ave., Ste 1860 Detroit, MI 48226
Senator	Debbie Stabenow (D)	702 Hart Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510-2204	280 E. Saginaw Highway East Lansing, MI 48823
President	George Bush (R)	1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW Washington DC 20500	

MPWU OFFICERS/EXECUTIVE BOARD

President, Gary VanHoogstraten

H: 989-714-8436; e-Mail: MIPREZ1@Chartermi.net

Executive Secretary, Harold Juhl

W: 517-337-8753; H: 517-651-7115; FAX: 517-332-4391; e-Mail: Juhl1Gems@hotmail.com

Secretary-Treasurer, Darren Joyce

W: 810-257-1530; U: 810-239-0931; H: 810-732-7459; FAX: 810-239-6879

Director of Education & Research, Lynn Pallas-Barber

W: 906-776-2000; U: 906-774-6303; H: 906-774-2083; FAX: 906-774-7353; e-Mail: APWU@uplogon.com

Editor, Michael Long

W: 616-776-1485; H: 616-225-0846; U: 616-776-1489; Cell: 616-302-1409; Fax: 419-781-7160; e-Mail: MPWUEditor@yahoo.com

Legislative Dir., Cynthia Hardison

W: 313-964-1100; FAX: 313-964-5629

Clerk Craft Director, Bob Maloney

W: 248-454-2423; H: 248-373-8433

HR/Injury Comp Dir, Ron Krumrie

W: 231-933-1020; U: 231-933-4525; FAX: 231-933-4821; H: 231-946-7796

Motor Vehicle Service Craft

Director, Gary K. Myrick

W: 313-961-4834; U: 313-532-9305; H: 313-342-8699; e-mail: APWU7@bignet.net

Maintenance Craft Director,

Jane Duggan

W: (313) 234-8839; H: (313) 868-0006 e-Mail: mpwumaint@yahoo.com

Area 1 Director, Larry Moyer

W: 248-619-1590; H: 810-793-1872; e-Mail: APWU6723@bignet.net

Area 2 Director, Tony Friday

H: 313-835-7413; W: 313-937-2145; e-Mail: LA3079@aol.com

Area 3 Director, Richard Blake

H: 734-433-5461; U: 313-532-9305; W: 734-665-1107; e-Mail: Rwb139@aol.com

Area 4 Director, Jim Beauchamp

W: 810-257-1567; U: 810-239-0931; H: 810-235-7297

Area 5 Director, Joan Norton

W: 989-771-5718; H: 989-686-6257; U: 989-793-8080; e-Mail: JMNorton14@aol.com

Area 6 Director, Mary Stephenson

W: 517-337-8767; U: 517-337-8753; H: 517-627-2608

Area 7 Director, George Corneail

W: 269-353-5067; U: 269-353-1888

Area 8 Director, Harold Smith

W: 517-789-2400; H: 517-782-8036; e-Mail: Harold@modempool.com

Area 9 Director, Jennifer Gilbert

W: 616-776-1535; U: 616-776-1489; H: 616-364-6010; e-Mail: Jenilee6@aol.com

Area 10 Director, Terry Nelson

W: 231-933-1020; H: 231-883-1014; e-Mail: Area10Dir@hotmail.com

Area 11 Director, Mike Wekwert

W: 989-354-2520; H: 989-356-2302; e-Mail: Wekwertm@chartermi.net

Area 12 Director, Dan Watts

W: 906-776-2017; U: 906-774-6303; H: 906-779-0687; e-Mail: Dwatts@uplogon.com

P.O.W.E.R. Rep, Patricia Johnson

W: 313-964-1100; FAX: 313-964-5629

State Retiree Chapter President,

Al LaBrecque

H: 989-736-8173; e-Mail:

allab@deepnet.com

MPWU Auxiliary Liaison,

Position is Currently Vacant

MPWU Historian, Debbie Brand

H: 269-729-9374

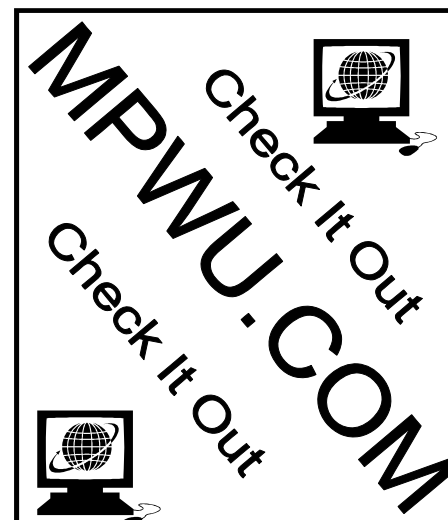


The MICHIGAN MESSENGER is published six times yearly, and is the official publication of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, also affiliated with the APWU Postal Press Association.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, or anyone in particular. Any correspondence to the Editor may be sent to: Michael Long, Editor, PO Box 280, Sheridan, MI 48884-0280; fax to: 419-781-7160; or e-Mail to: MPWUEditor@yahoo.com.

Your articles are welcome! They must be signed to be printed, but your name will be withheld upon request. Articles sent via electronic media will be treated as being signed. Be aware that articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

In addition, this paper is designed with everyone in mind, please be aware that all mistakes are intentional for the express purpose of keeping those happy that are most happy when finding errors in others.



Upcoming Events to Plan For:

Oct 26 - 29, 2003 - Clerk Craft Conf., Rivera Hotel, Las Vegas, NV

Feb 20 - 21, 2004 - Area 7 & 9 District and Editors' Meeting,

Best Western Midway Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI

April 29 - May 1, 2004 - Constitutional Convention, Lansing, MI

July 2004 - APWU Biennial Convention, Los Angeles, CA

May/June 2005 - MPWU Educational Convention, Kalamazoo, MI



AFFILIATED WITH: AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO, APWU POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION, MICHIGAN STATE AFL-CIO

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO Legislative Fact Sheet

RE: Presidential Commission on USPS

In November, 2002, President Bush issued Executive Order 13273, which established the President's Commission on the U.S. Postal Service. On July 31, 2003, the Presidential Commission on the U.S. Postal Service issued their report, a culmination of a seven-month study of the nation's postal system. Of the many recommendation, APWU find five of them most troubling, including:

- ⇒ *We oppose the commission-recommended changes to collective bargaining. Most notable is a recommendation that would give control of postal wages to a three-member Postal Regulatory Board appointed by the President and approved by the Senate. The board would decide whether postal compensation exceeds that of the private sector and, if so, require management to reduce wages and benefits for both new and current employees. Collective bargaining would be a sham under this system. We reject commission recommendations that would reduce health, retirement, and workers' compensation benefits for current and future employees. Included are proposals to sever postal workers from these federal programs and to require bargaining over the benefits, which are currently guaranteed by law.*
- ⇒ *We want an end to the below-cost discounts that starve the Postal Service of the revenue it needs. The commission recommended against giving any NEW discounts that exceed cost avoided, but tacitly endorsed the existing discounts.*
- ⇒ *We oppose proposal to close plants using an approach modeled on the military base closing procedures of the 1980s and 1990s as well as recommendations to close post offices without citizen involvement. These proposals would be a disaster for small businesses and rural America.*
- ⇒ *We object to the level of power granted the new Postal Regulatory Board. In addition to setting wages and benefits, this politically-appointed board would have the power to set postage rates, define the scope of mail monopoly, redefine the universal service obligation, and review and act on complaints. The commission would give the board unprecedented authority.*

A Postal Task Force, established within the House Committee on Government Reform has tentatively scheduled hearing on the Commission report in October 2003. Please urge your Representative and both Senators to oppose legislation which seeks to enact provision of the President's Commission on the U.S. Postal Service.

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Return to APWU/MPWU
c/o Michael Long, Editor
P.O. Box 280
Sheridan, MI 48884-0280
Address Service Requested

