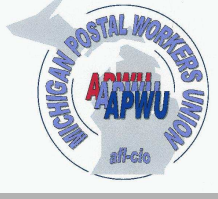


MICHIGAN MESSENGER



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March/April 2004 Issue



President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten
President

At the time of this writing, I have just returned from what I considered a very productive District Meeting in the Grand Rapids area. It is hard to put it into words how well we were treated during our stay there at the Best Western Midway Hotel. Discussions throughout the weekend with a lot of members echoed these feelings as well. On March 25th, I plan on attending the AFL-CIO meeting in Lansing, afterwards the Working Families National Bus tour.

The AFL-CIO, with Working America, has planned a bus tour that will feature 51 people, one representative from every State and the District of Columbia, who will travel to eight states and 14 cities to tell their stories about the true state of the economy. From March 24th to March 31st, the bus tour will hit the road to educate policy makers, the media, and the general public about the effects that joblessness, as well as low-wage, no benefit work, has on workers, their families and their communities. This trip will culminate in a major event in Washington D.C. on March 31st, taking this message straight to the White House. One of the stops will be on Sunday, March 28 at Greenville High

School. I know I discussed this briefly at the District Meeting, but not all MPWU members attended.

At the district meeting I stressed the importance of getting our members registered to vote. In Michigan alone, we have some 1,800 APWU Union members who are not yet registered to vote. If you are one of them, go out and get registered. In this upcoming election, we need to get people to the polls. Your vote can make a difference. Here are just some of the issues that we must see how we can correct. In the past three years in Michigan, 121,487 have become unemployed. Michigan's unemployment rate has increased dramatically. Over 130,000 Michigan manufacturing jobs have been lost. In the case of the plant in Greenville, they are losing 2,700 Union jobs; but the members have been told not to worry -- Wal-Mart is coming to town. I don't believe that by putting a Wal-Mart in Greenville and employing 500 workers will make it any easier on these people whose jobs are going to Mexico. There are more things that we must think about when we decide who to vote for. What about the seniors in Michigan having to pay more



for medical prescription drug plan? What about the situation the school system is in by losing funding for their schools? These are just a few of the things we must look at on election day. I say for you to read your newspapers, listen to the media, or even search online. Become informed, and cast your ballot to reflect who you think will make a change for the better. Above all though -- VOTE VOTE VOTE.

The next function for the MPWU will be the Constitutional Convention in Lansing on April 29th - May 1st. The convention call is in this edition of the Messenger. Remember to get your resolutions in as soon as possible.

Following this, the next district meeting will be held in November 5 & 6 in Traverse City at the Waterford Resort. The meetings have been set up by Steve Duede and the Traverse City Area Local. We have held other District meetings and a State Convention at this location in the past and I know it will be an informative meeting. Keep an eye out in the Michigan Messenger for more details and the web site.

The end of March I will be attending

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Secretary's Writings

Harold Juhl
Executive Secretary

The State Convention is right around the corner. By now all Presidents should have received the Convention Call Letter and the State Officers their letter about the Officer's reports that are due for the Convention book. Everything is set up at the Holiday Inn South in Lansing, MI. and the CMAL members are ready for everyone to come and have a good Convention and share our hospitality with you. Remember to bring your credential cards with you for registration. There will be some sort of entertainment every night in the Hospitality Room. When everyone checks in at the Hotel you will receive your meal tickets which will be included with your room charge. Also, there will be an eight dollar charge for the morning and afternoon breaks included on your bill. I believe we will have a great Convention this year and I hope to see everyone there.

In Solidarity,

Harold



*Make your voice
heard on Capitol Hill.
Write your
congressional
representatives!*



Treasurer Report

Darren Joyce
Treasurer

In this article, I am going to focus on a Legislative Drive currently underway in the Flint Area local; which hopefully will expound to other locals around the state and the nation.

In light of the Presidential Commission on the Postal Service, we started sending postcards and letters to our Senators and Representatives at the State and National levels. Thus far, we have sent over 2,800 postcards and countless letters. This is only a beginning since we still have more cards, and we are still processing them as fast as they are turned in. The amount that we have accomplished has made each of us proud in how we have all worked together. Since the Flint local has 419 members, we had our members sign the cards themselves, take some to family, friends, and neighbors. By getting everyone involved, it has put this issue paramount in the minds of the community. All told, we had a participation rate of 93% at the Flint Main Post Office and stations. This is teamwork at its greatest.

I strongly believe if every local around the country would make the same effort in writing to our Representatives and Senators, there would be such an uprising from the public that all of the proposals the President's Commission suggested would finally be put to rest. If any other local around the country wish to take this as a challenge, so be it. I welcome any local to put forth the same concerted effort, and if any of them need any help, please let us know and we will assist you in any way we can.

On a personal note, I would encourage each individual to write letters to each of their Representatives and Senators. I have sent a personalized letter to each of the Senators and Representatives in Michigan. In the letters, I explain to each of them, which offices in their district would be affected by possible closing. In addition to the offices in their district, I provided a list of the entire 493 Post Offices throughout Michigan that could be affected in the proposed changes heading toward Congress.

After that, I sent a letter to all 31 Senators on the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, the 45 Representatives on the House Government Reform Committee, and the 14

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Education at Work

Lynn Pallas-Barber
Director of Research & Education



The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long
Editor

POLITICAL CLIMATE

This will be one of the most political years we have seen in a long time. Whether we like it or not, we will have to make some difficult decisions in the near future. Our future depends on it as postal workers. During his last election campaign, George W. Bush promised to unite and not divide and to place high priorities on the concerns of working families. He has not followed through with any of those promises. We are now once again, being bombarded with the same empty promises.

Listed below is the 10 most recent anti-worker actions taken by the Bush administration:

1. According to *The Washington Post*, the Bush administration threatened to fire Medicare's chief actuary if he revealed to Congress that the administration's own cost estimates for the Medicare prescription drug legislation were more than \$100 billion higher than the figure provided to Congress. In June 2003, five months before Congress approved the bill, the then-Medicare Director told the chief actuary of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid that he would be fired if he revealed the administration's estimates to Congress. In January 2004, the Bush administration admitted the drug bill would be at least \$534 billion. The final bill creates a huge gap in coverage for beneficiaries, will cost many seniors more in premiums and other fees and forbids the government from negotiating lower prices for pharmaceutical drugs.
2. The Bush administration is attempting to exempt industrial laundries from EPA requirements. Businesses in the US make about 3.8 billion contaminated shop towels filled with toxic chemicals. Manufacturers and printers use these towels to clean machinery and pick up chemical spills. The exemption would allow companies to profit from policies that endanger workers and the environment.
3. The Bush Administration is attempting to classify fast food workers as manufacturing jobs. The Presidential Commission would like to compare us to other manu-

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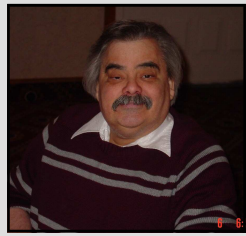
The Show Us The Jobs tour recently came to Greenville on March 28th. It was one of the most moving experiences that I have seen in quite some time. To listen to the stories of how the Bush Administration is hurting the workers of the United States, and their faith and determination in what we must do was nothing more than inspirational. I have included some pictures in this edition the Messenger for you to look at. As you can see, there was a good turn out. Even though the news about Greenville has only been about the Electrolux factory leaving for Mexico, it hasn't included the ripple effect from its suppliers, local economy, or others that will now follow suit. And Greenville isn't alone. In the last two years, other appliance manufacturers have done the same. In Grand Rapids, Bissell, the makers of Floor cleaners (to include Vacuums) moved its manufacturing operation to Mexico, while Maytag has also followed suit. Even recently Johnson Controls has said they will move over 800 jobs to Mexico. This trend has only one culprit behind it—GREED. Until we get out of NAFTA, and get rid of President Bush, this will continue. I know that there are Republicans in the midst of our union, and I would never ask that you vote against your conscience. However, I ask you to look at what has happened in the last three years. Read Page 19 in this edition of the Michigan Messenger and learn what is really happening here in Michigan and we are not alone.

In this edition of the Messenger, and compiled by our Treasurer, Darren Joyce, is a list of offices that could be closed under the recommendations of the Presidential Commission. I believe this is a list of all Level 15 (H) and below offices in the state. If you or one of your friends or family will be affected, make sure you act. Write Now!

I would like to thank Jennifer Amos for the redesign to our MPWU logo. You will see this new redesign in this edition of the Messenger and on the website. In addition, the new design will be used on the satchels for the upcoming 19th Biennial Convention convening on April 29th in Lansing. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Until Next time,

Mike



Clerk Craft Report

Bob Maloney
Clerk Craft Director

The State Union recently held a district meeting in Grand Rapids and as a State Officer I duly attended. District meetings are always good to recharge the batteries, so to speak. A chance to attend classes, which this meeting had some good ones, and talk to National Officers to find out what is going on in Washington. It also gives you a chance to discuss things with fellow State and local officers from all over Michigan. Usually we end up in the hospitality room in the evening and talk about the problems we are all having in each others' Post Offices. Most of the time, whether you are from the U.P. or West, South or East of the state, we all have the same problems. However, this time it was also about the apathy of our membership. There was six of us guys sitting there and we all had the same problem of trying to get members to attend union meetings and to become stewards. We all agreed how this has become a real problem over the last five or ten years. We talked about why newer members were not stepping up to the plate but how much they do complain about the Union and the offices that they elected to run it. We talked about how hard it is to just try to get ten percent of your membership to a monthly meeting. In fact, my last local union meeting, we had only eight people show up, and of that, five of them were local officers. Most of the other locals are having the same problem too. Yes, we have all heard the same excuses: "the meetings are in the evening, or they are in the day time, or they are on the weekend, or they are too far to drive, or just, I am too busy to attend." We have all heard the same excuses over the years. While the six of us were discussing this problem, I was reminded that one of the people attending was retired, two of us could retire whenever we wanted to, one had a little over a year left, and the other two had less than five years before they are eligible to retire. This means none of us are spring chickens. Where are all the 20, 30, and 40 years old that should be coming behind us old timers. Do they think we will always be here to do the work? Have we done too good of a job in Michigan representing the members, filing grievances, and fighting the good fight? Have we, as officers, stayed to long at the dance? I don't know. But I do know if more members don't stand up and be counted when us old dudes are gone, that the apathy will put you at the mercy of Postal Management, and that is something they have in short supply.

Bob



Injury Comp Report

Ron Krumrie
Human Relations/Injury Comp. Dir

Repetitive Strain Injury

Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI) are injuries involving damage to muscles, tendons and nerves caused by overuse. RSI is a progressive condition that begins with mild pain or weariness of the hands, wrists, elbows, arms, shoulders, back or neck.

RSI generally begins in the dominant wrist, hand or arm of an individual. Symptoms may start after periods of intense and prolonged activity.

At onset, this condition may only be noticeable during working hours. Eventually, these symptoms become persistent and very painful. Individuals who have RSI frequently massage the afflicted area and complain of chronic pain. Many people that suffer from RSI are unable to sleep at night due to the severe pain it causes.

RSI should be treated as soon as possible to prevent permanent damage to the affected areas. If the condition remains untreated, the pain from RSI becomes intolerable and crippling.

Reporting a Repetitive Strain Injury

Repetitive Strain Injuries develop slowly over time, more than one day or shift. We call these type of injuries an occupational disease or illness, and we should use a CA-2 (Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation) to report this injury.

Along with the CA-2 we should be given the appropriate CA-35(a - h). These eight checklists will assist us in preparing our required statement, along with getting a complete medical report.

Medical Evidence

Medical evidence plays a crucial role in establishing initial eligibility for disability benefits (and also plays a key role in assuring the continuation of benefits). A claim will be denied unless it can be established through reasoned medical evidence, that the disability claimed is related to the

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Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan
Maintenance Director

So many things happen between issues. I will try to hit on some of those that stand out for me – especially based on discussions I've had with maintenance members recently.

Mileage rates have increased. This particularly affects those of us who go to Oklahoma. These rates should be reflected in the F-12 and F-15.

- 1 Privately Owned auto 37.5
- 2 Privately Owned motorcycle 28.5
- 3 Privately Owned Airplane 99.5

The Bush administration has launched a major attack against overtime. Many unionists are joining in the fight against this legislation that would take overtime from 8 million workers. This law will erode the 40-hour work-week and encourage use of overtime.

Many of our members have built a budget around overtime. While as unionists we must take the position that there should be full employment before anyone works overtime, we must lend our full weight to fighting this attack. You can join the fight by signing an online petition at www.saveovertimepay.org and then forwarding the site to all your family and friends. It's better if someone gets the message twice rather than not at all.

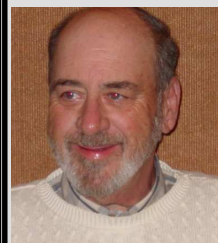
I have had some jurisdictional questions on the use of BEMs versus AMT/AMSs. We recently got an arbitration award that speaks to this issue. BEMs are primarily responsible for building equipment rather than postal equipment in larger facilities that are maintenance capable.

AMT/AMSs on the other hand are responsible for maintaining postal equipment and some minor building equipment repairs in offices that are not maintenance capable.

These disputes can arise in areas that have both BEMs and AMT/AMSs as well as in areas that only have one of these occupational groups. If you aren't sure, contact me and I will forward the newest arbitration award.

Another area where both large and small offices seem to have a lot of questions is the PAR/PER. I am working on a

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Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque
MPWU Retiree's Chapter Dir.

State Retiree Chapter Convention Call is in this issue. Local Retiree Chapters and retiree Members-At-Large are urged to send, or be delegates. Local Chapters are entitled to one delegate for every 25 members, or fraction thereof. M.A.L. delegates are entitled to one full vote. State Retiree Chapter election of officers will occur on Friday, April 30th. Nominations last order of business before lunch recess. Voting by secret ballot at 3:00 PM. Officers to be elected: President. Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and three (3) Trustees.

Unless business carries us into Saturday, the Chapter Convention will convene on Friday, April 30th at 9:00 AM and adjourn by 5:00 PM. Delegates are advised to submit items for discussion; resolutions, motions or constitution amendments. Two questions to be decided will be if we will send a delegate(s) to the 2-day pre-convention Retirees Dept. Conference in L.A., or to an anticipated APWU Legislative Rally in Wash., D.C. Time permitting, we will conduct a legislation letter-writing workshop. APWU Legislative Dir., Roy Braunstein has been assigned to the State Convention.

Retiree members who can commute the distance to Lansing for the day of the convention will be given credentials and seated as delegates. There will be no registration fee for one-day attendees, and they will have to furnish their own meals. Let's make this second biennial Convention of the MPWU Retirees Chapter productive and memorable.

Trustee, George Beattie resigned his Chapter office for health reasons. Brother Beattie graciously submitted his resignation prior to the convention, stating; *"Please be at liberty to appoint a suitable Brother or Sister to fill my term of office."* A real class act! With approval of the remaining E-Board, I have asked Lynn C. Walker to assume the vacant Trustee position. As a retired State Chapter M.A.L., past MPWU State President, MPWU Area 10 Dir., and President, Traverse City Area Local, Bro. Lynn will be the only officer who doesn't belong to a Local Chapter.

I thank Brother George Beattie for his service as State Retiree Chapter Trustee and a charter E-Board member. This goes along with our Warmest Best Wishes and prayers for

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President's Report Continued

another Town Hall meetings in Petoskey. The response that has come out of these town hall meetings has been nothing but positive. We are providing these towns and residents with information that we need to combat this Presidential Commission that intends on destroying the Postal Service and for some, their towns identity. We are trying to hold as many of these meetings as possible. Information is power; and the more people we can include in our fight, the stronger we will be. If there are any other Locals or Area Directors that wish to do this also, please let me know. Mike Wekwert has taken on this challenge in the northern areas of Michigan, but nothing is holding us back from forming these meetings throughout the entire state of Michigan. If you need any information on these meetings or the structure of them, you can contact Mike or Al LaBrecque or myself and we will give you all the information you may need.

I will close for now with one major thought to remember. No one has a right to complain on who runs this country unless they vote for themselves. Remember, vote and vote often.

Until Next Time,



Gary Van Hoogstraten
President
Michigan Postal Workers Union

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Education at Work Continued

- facturing jobs. They would like to reduce our wages down to the same thing as a burger flipper.
4. Rod Paige, Secretary of Education, in the Bush administration on Feb. 23, 2004 called the NEA a "terrorist organization". The Bush administration had failed to adequately fund the *No Child Left Behind* education reform act.
 5. For the second time, George W. had bypassed the Senate and appointed a judge to a federal court. On Feb. 20, the president made a recess appointment to avoid a Senate confirmation vote and placed ultraconservative Judge Pryor on the U.S. Court of Appeals.
 6. The Bush administration's Dept. of Health and Human Services altered a report to downplay findings about the differences in health care services the nation's minorities receive.
 7. President Bush and his administration officials acknowledged previous job growth claims are unrealistic. Since Bush took office, 2.9 million private-sector jobs have disappeared, including 2.8 million manufacturing jobs.
 8. The Bush administration is backing moves to outsource more U.S. jobs. The number of long-term jobless workers has been 2 million for months; long-term unemployment has been at its highest rate since 1983.
 9. This one really hits close to home. The Bush administration failed to alert postal employees, in November 2003, of ricin being in the mail. The November incident did not come to light until February after it was discovered that ricin had been

sent to the office of a Republican senator.

10. The Bush FY 2005 budget proposal shortchanges America's workers, while cutting taxes for the nation's super rich.

It will be imperative that we all vote in the election this fall. What is most upsetting is that a tremendous amount of our membership is not even registered to vote. The choice can be ours.

**APWU PRESIDENT'S
CONFERENCE**

The last NPC was held in beautiful Connecticut. A number of agenda items were submitted and discussed in length. A report from the NPC Committee for APWU restructuring passed recommendations for 4 year terms of our national officers. The NPC delegates upheld the current two year scheduling of national conventions. I was somewhat disappointed that there was not a lot of controversy over the proposed reduction in resident positions in our national E-board.

A moving speech was given by Bill Lewis, President of the Trenton Metro Area Local, APWU. Our brothers and sisters in New Jersey are still living the nightmare of anthrax. We are all potential victims of chemical/biological agents in the mail. It is through communication and education that we must protect ourselves.

**POWDER SPILL IN UPMPC,
KINGSFORD**

Yes, even though we are not anywhere near a close proximity of Washington, DC, or Trenton, NJ and incident can happen here and did happen here in the UP of Michigan.

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Education at Work Continued

Of course, management reacted instead of taking charge. They failed to follow through with any of the steps as set forth in the Emergency Action Plan. The 204-b on duty took some actions that could have potentially deadly. He ran his bare fingers in the spilled substance and raised them to his face. He failed to collect a sufficient amount of the substance and a testing could therefore not be performed.

The employee directly involved in this had to take initiative on her own and called the local authorities. She first called Poison Control and then the local police. It is believed that the substance is not hazardous, but we will never know for sure.

A complaint was filed by the local president with OSHA. On March 18 and 19, 2004 OSHA conducted an investigation into the incident. Unfortunately OSHA does not have specific standards when it comes to chemicals in the mail. The investigation determined that the local emergency plan had to be updated. It was recommended that education and training has to be provided to management and employees. The investigator also strongly recommended that employees use the gloves and be instructed to do so. At the exit meeting it was proposed that management may be cited and fined. The final determination is yet to be decided by the Regional Director of OSHA.

VOICE OF THE EMPLOYEE (VOE)

In the Lakeland District management, in our neck of the woods, has implemented a VOE action plan. Supposedly district personnel are in the field conducting spot checks and questioning employees. Their plan is be a collaborative effort of ALL employees.

Their plan states that strategies must be specific and measurable. Management in the UPMPC Kingsford even attempted to form a VOE committee comprised of supervisors and volunteers off the work room floor. The APWU is the exclusive bargaining representative and voice of the employee. Can you imagine having scabs discussing your working conditions?

Participation in the VOE surveys is on a voluntary basis ONLY. You do not have to participate and you do not have to be exposed to intimidation or harassment if you choose not to participate. In Kingsford employees were told that if they chose not to participate that the manager of mail processing would like to talk to them. If you are being forced to participate against your will, it is imperative that you contact the Union.

APRIL 28, 2004

Once again this year, let us not forget those brothers and sisters who have been killed or injured on the job. The first Workers Memorial Day was observed in 1989. April 28 was chosen because it is the anniversary of OSHA. Each year more than 60,000 workers dies from job injuries and illnesses and another 6 million are injured. The struggle for improvements continue.

MPWU STATE CONVENTION

Hope to see many of you in Lansing at our state convention. Being a delegate is a privilege of your union membership. A voice in your union is a voice in your future. Let your voice be heard!

Until next time,
In Solidarity,

Lynn

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Retiree Involvement Continued

improved health and contentment.

Unbelievable! I'm reading the APWU Election Committee Rules in the Mar./April "American Postal Worker", and there on page 40 under II. C. 2. was: "**Constitution Committee Report Resolution # 68**", and the long-omitted constitutional language adopted by the 2000 National Convention whereby a Retirees Dept. member residing outside the zip code jurisdiction of their home APWU Local they retired from, the option of assigning their Local Retiree Chapter membership and 40% annual dues rebate to their home Local Retiree Chapter. VIOLA! Acknowledgement at long last! Does this mean this language will now be properly inserted into the APWU Constitution?! Ironically, I just wrote newly appointed Secretary-Treasurer, Terry Stapelton with yet another of numerous appeals to APWU Hq. the past two years to correct omission of this duly adopted constitutional amendment (regardless of who doesn't like it). On this item; it isn't over until it's printed in the APWU Constitution & By-Laws!

Ostrich Syndrome...In spite of all the published warnings over the threat posed by the recommendations of the President's Commission for postal "reform", incredibly there are postal workers out there who are in abject denial that Congress will attempt to enact legislation designed to eliminate post offices, six-day delivery, universal service at uniform rates, or outsource their jobs! I find this most prevalent in small and rural Associate P.O.'s. I have friends who are customers at offices in Atlanta (MI) and Oscoda post offices who say they are made to feel like aliens when mentioning this threat to employees. Could it be they have been admonished not to discuss it with customers?

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Retiree Involvement Continued

Rural and small A.O. postmasters approached on this issue adamantly deny and dismiss the question as "Union propaganda". Can they really be THAT stupid?! Oh Yeah! One rural A.O. postmaster smugly told me; *"This office will never close. The postal service owns the building!"* Apparently he doesn't know that part of the plan is that USPS real estate vacated due to closings which cannot be sold, will be deeded over to local governments or communities. In my neck of the woods, where communities have suffered due to military base closings, why would anyone doubt the vulnerability of their so-called "low volume", "unprofitable" small P.O.? Or, PMG Potter's "Transformation Plan" aimed at wiping out mail processing plants like Flint.

On the Flip Side: there's been a tremendous effort going on in our state to educate and mobilize the membership and mailing public on the commission's proposals to Congress. My home Flint MI Area Local and Retiree Chapter went all out to lobby their 3 Congresspersons and two Senators with a deluge of over 2800 letters and postcards opposing legislation which would adopt any of the drastic recommendations, and they're not done yet!

MPWU Sec.-Treas, **Darren Joyce** has done a Herculean job representing our State Union with an outstanding composed letter to all 15 members of the Michigan congressional delegation and 2 Senators, listing post offices likely to be targeted for closure in each county in their districts. Darren didn't stop there, writing every Senator on the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, the 42 members of the House Government Reform Committee, and 14 members of the House Subcommittee

on Transportation, Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government, on behalf of the 10,000 MPWU represented postal workers. And, MPWU President **Gary Van** wrote and received a supportive response from Democratic Presidential candidate, John Kerry.

Area 11 Dir., **Mike Wekwert**, has conducted "Town Hall" meetings for postal workers and community civic leaders around N.E. Michigan...twice in Alpena, with additional meetings planned for Petoskey and hopefully, Gaylord. It was at the first Alpena meeting at which Pres. Gary Van and I participated, that **Richard Hosking**, Montmorency County Dem Party Vice-Chair, proposed a coordinated mailing to his county Party members. Hosking, a retired educator, put forth a fantastic effort, including a mailing with labels and postage affixed to postcards to some 90 of his Party members. He worked closely with Mike and me to obtain info materials and postcards, and took our message to the Iosco Dem Party (Oscoda/Tawas area) who are likewise doing a congressional mailing and submitting a Letter to the Editor in their weekly county press. He also addressed the N.E. Mich. UAW Retiree Chapter of over 100 in attendance, reporting solid support. Then, he had 1st Congressional District Chair, **Kay Chase** print and furnish all the labels for the mailings. Chase also printed an article informing 1st District Dem Party members in the quarterly "Northern Notes" newsletter. Richard met with the conservative editor of the conservative "Montmorency County Tribune", furnishing APWU info materials, resulting in an excellent editorial. Wekwert and Hosking have accounted for more than 1,000 postcard and letter mailings to Members of Congress so far, and the effort continues.

I had the opportunity to address and distribute info materials and postcards labeled and postage affixed to my

NARFE Thunder Bay Chapter #1487 and my Sportsman Assn. for another 120 mailings to our legislators. I can't say enough for the retired members who have answered the call to write opposing reform proposals. If every Local and State Union was as committed, I'd be a lot more comfortable that we will prevail in Congress!

APWU Legislative Dir., Roy Braunstein, advises that legislation on postal reform will be introduced in the U.S. House in early April with the U.S. Senate version due a couple weeks later. PMG Potter, Sec. of Treasury Snow are among major proponents of reform scheduled to testify before Congress. Roy advises further that this proposed legislation will be put on the 'fast track', and NOW is the prime time to be contacting our Members of Congress.

Notes: Maybe I missed a notice in this or another publication, but it was sad news to me upon learning that retired past MPWU Area 12 Dir., **Andy Anderson**, passed away in Oct., '03. "Yoooper" Andy organized and represented the Western U.P. He not only was a pioneer of the MPWU in his remote district, but a dedicated advocate for the representation of his members and a genuinely good guy. "May Perpetual Light shine upon him."

TWO, and only **two** retiree resolutions are being submitted to the State Convention proposing amendments to the APWU Constitution: 1)-Establish the Position of Director, APWU Retirees Department As An Elected Office., and; 2)-Eligibility For Retirees Department Members To Vote For Certain Resident APWU National Officers. Hopefully, delegates in Lansing will adopt both these paramount retiree resolutions for submission to the National Convention.

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Injury Comp Report Continued

employee's employment.

Two terms are repeatedly used by OWCP in the evaluation of medical evidence: 1) probative value, and 2) weight of the evidence.

"Probative value" means value in serving to prove a particular fact or contention. A medical report containing the physician's opinion as to whether the disability is employment-related with medical reasons for that opinion has more "probative value" than a report which contains an opinion but does not contain any supporting medical reasons.

"Weight of the evidence" does not refer to the quantity of evidence, but refers to quality. Thus, a medical report from an appropriate medical specialist has more "weight" or value than a report from a general practitioner.

Medical evidence must be based on an accurate history of injury in traumatic injury cases and an accurate description of the conditions of employment in occupational disease cases.

It must also include the results of all tests, X-rays, etc., a medical diagnosis; the physicians opinion as to whether the injury or disease is employment-related; and the physician's reasons for the opinion.

Opinions which contain the words "might be," "may be," or "could be", are almost worthless because they lack probative value, and are considered to be speculation or conjecture.

It is important to remember that an employee who files a claim has the **burden of proof** and **MUST** furnish essential medical evidence to substantiate an employment-related medical condition and/or disability.

May all your grievances be winners and your claims approved.

In Union Solidarity,

Ron

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Maintenance Memo Continued

pamphlet on this topic.. Here are some of the basic principles.

- 1 The PAR is exercised first in filling vacancies. This allows those already in an occupational group to move to preferred shift/off days/location.
- 2 PARs stay in effect until you file a new one or you get your first choice assignment.
- 3 Remaining and/or residual vacancies are filled from the PER according to the rules set down in the EL-304 and Article 38.
- 4 The "pecking order" addresses how to bring people into the craft and into the service while filling vacancies.

Special attention must be paid to those positions which are filled by the "senior qualified" employee from a specific lower lever (e.g. the ET-11 vacancy is filled by the senior MPE-8 on the PER and the MPE8 is filled by the senior MM5 on the PER).

Please forward any questions you have on this topic to me. I hope to have the pamphlet complete before our State Convention. Although this is a constitutional convention, it is a great opportunity for me to share this resource with more locals.

I will be glad to make the pamphlet available to all who want a copy and then you can adapt it to your local by adding the names of your local officers/stewards and telephone numbers or email addresses. I want to prepare something that could be easily mailed or distributed hand to hand and that people will keep handy as a reference.

This past week I settled several big money cases. It reminds me to remind you that **IT ALWAYS PAYS TO BELONG. SOME DAYS PAY BETTER THAN OTHERS.**

Solidarity,

Jane

(Continued from page 8)

Retiree Involvement Cont.

Thank You to those thoughtful Sisters and Brothers who have sent a card, phoned or e-mailed their "Get Well" wishes and prayers. Your goodwill must have worked! My rehab for the total hip replacement surgery has been a 'piece of cake' ! Haven't felt this good in many a moon!

Last Call: It's "Crunch Time" for all postal workers and retirees as Congress proceeds to determine the fate of the U.S. Postal Service, and it's time to step up your lobbying efforts! As for those small and rural Associate Office APWU represented employees who remain in the darkness of denial, putting more faith in their forked tongued postmaster's line of bull, it's time to **WAKE UP** and act, or suffer the consequences of your stubborn refusal to trust in your Union!

Be sure you are **REGISTERED TO VOTE** in this critical 2004 election year!

Be Strong!

Al LaBrecque

(Continued from page 2)

Treasurer Report Continued

Representatives on the House Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government.

I have received responses on the phone from Representative Carolyn Kilpatrick (D) MI, and Representative Dan Burton (R) IN, and Henry Waxman (D), CA. All of whom have expressed their concerns about the proposed legislation and said that they would forward the information throughout each of their Committees.

There was a conference call between myself, Tiffany Flynn (Congressman Kildee's Chief of Staff in Flint), and Sam (Congressman Kildee's office in Washington DC). I expressed our concerns and asked questions about some of the proposed changes in retirement commitments for the USPS. I was told that they would get information to us on our issues. Dale (Congressman Kildee) has always been behind our cause, and will continue to be a huge ally in all of our battles.

In addition to Congressman Kildee, I also received letters from Senator Mark Pryor (D), Arkansas, and Congressman Bart Stupak (D), Michigan. They all express their concerns also with the changes and promised to fight to protect universal service and protection for postal employees. I am continuing to contact the Senators and Representative from around the country to let them know what our position on all of these issues are.

As I mentioned earlier, there are 493 offices in Michigan that were under consideration for closing. A list of these offices are included in this edition of the Michigan Messenger. I have also I have broken these down by County throughout the state.

Additionally, if anyone decides to

write their Congressional Leaders, I have listed the ones in the Committees that deal with Postal Reform Legislation.

1. Senate Governmental Affairs Committee

Republican

Susan Collins (ME), Chair
Ted Stevens (AK)
George Voinovich (OH)
Norm Coleman (MN)
Arlen Specter (PA)
Robert Bennett (UT)
Peter Fitzgerald (IL)
Richard Shelby (AL)
John Sununu (NH)

Democrats

Joseph Lieberman (CT)
Carl Levin (MI)
Daniel Akaka (HI)
Richard Durbin (IL)
Thomas Carper (DE)
Mark Dayton (MN)
Frank Lautenberg (NJ)
Mark Prior (AR)

2. House Government Reform Committee

Republican

Tom Davis (VA), Chair
Dan Burton (IN)
Christopher Shays (CT)
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL)
John McHugh (NY)
John Mica (FL)
Mark Souder (IN)
Steven LaTourette (OH)
Doug Ose (CA)
Ron Lewis (KY)
Jo Ann Davis (VA)
Todd Platts (PA)
Chris Cannon (UT)
Adam Putnam (FL)
Edward Schrock (VA)
John Duncan, Jr. (TN)
John Sullivan (OK)
Nathan Deal (GA)
Candice Miller (MI)
Michael Turner (OH)
John Carter (TX)
Marshall Blackburn (TN)

Democrats

Henry Waxman (CA)
Tom Lantos (CA)

Major Owens (NY)
Edolphus Towns (NY)
Paul Kanjorski (PA)
Carolyn Maloney (NY)
Elijah Cummings (MD)
Dennis Kucinich (OH)
Danny Davis (IL)
John Tierney (MA)
William Lacy Clay (MO)
Diane Watson (CA)
Stephen Lynch (MA)
Chris VanHollen (MD)
Linda Sanchez (CA)
C A Ruppberger (MD)
Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC)
Jim Cooper (TN)
Chris Bell (TX)

Independent

Bernard Sanders (VT)

3. House Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government

Republicans

Ernest Istook, Jr. (OK), Chair
Frank Wolf (VA)
Jerry Lewis (CA)
Harold Rogers (KY)
Todd Tiahrt (KS)
Anne Northrup (KY)
Robert Aderholt (AL)
John Sweeney (NY)
John Culberson (TX)

Democrats

John Olver (MA)
Ed Pastor (AZ)
Carolyn Kilpatrick (MI)
James Clyburn (SC)
Steven Rothman (NJ)

4. House Special Panel on Postal Reform

Republicans

John McHugh (NY), Chair
Dan Burton (IN)
Tim Murphy (PA)
Ed Schrock (VA)
Candice Miller (MI)
Marshall Blackburn (TN)

Democrats

Danny Davis (IL)
Major Owens (NY)
Ed Towns (NY)
Carolyn Maloney (NY)
William Lacy Clay (MO)



CONVENTION CALL

The 19th Biennial Convention of the Michigan Postal Workers Union will convene on April 29, 2004 at 9:30 a.m. at the Holiday Inn South Conference Center in Lansing, Michigan and will last until May 1st, 2004

Costs:	<i>Standard Room Rates</i>	<i>American Package (2 nights)</i>	<i>American Package (3 Nights)</i>
Single	\$83.25	\$293.73	\$415.47
Double	\$94.35	\$443.16	\$614.49
Triple	\$105.45	\$592.59	\$813.51
Quad	\$116.55	\$742.02	\$1012.53

Make reservations by calling the hotel directly at (517) 694-8123

Registration: \$50.00 per delegate, plus an additional \$8.00 per delegate to cover breaks

Article 7 of the MPWU Constitution states: "Time of the Convention and Election of Officers"

Section 1: The Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, shall convene the same year as the National Convention of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, on any Thursday, Friday, and Saturday in April or May. In any week except that which precedes Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Mothers Day, or Memorial Day.

Section 2: It shall be the sole responsibility for the State Union to plan and expedite the proceedings of the Convention, including suitable and ample accommodations for delegates. It shall further be the responsibility of the State President to appoint two (2) members of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, and the President of the State Convention Committee to work with any Local who represents the Convention location as voted under Article 7, Section 5. The financial responsibility of the State Convention shall be solely that of the MPWU.

Section 3: The Convention shall convene at 9:30 a.m. on the first day and recess at 11:30 a.m., immediately after the committee assignments and reconvene at 3:00 p.m. This time is to be utilized for official use by the committees. The Convention shall remain in session until completed.

Section 4: Nominators for, all candidates for Executive Board positions shall be the last order of business, Friday of the Convention. No candidate shall be allowed to run for more than one (1) office. Any nominee must accept or decline a nomination for office prior to the closing of nominations. Convention Delegates as well as the Convention City shall be the first order of business on Saturday, 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. shall be reserved exclusively for purpose of caucus.

Section 5: The election of Officers will take place at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday of the Convention. A President, Secretary Treasurer, Executive Secretary, Director of Education, Human Relations/Compensation Director, Legislative Director, Editor, (3) Craft Directors, Area directors, Convention Delegates, plus Convention City, will be elected at this time, by secret ballot.

Section 6: [A] The three (3) Craft Directors shall be elected by secret ballot in accordance with Section 5 above, but Craft Directors shall be elected from delegates from their Craft only. [B] Area Directors shall be elected by secret ballot from delegates, present from their Area only. If a Craft or Area Director is not represented by at least one delegate to the Convention, or if there are no candidates from a specific Craft or Area, for the position of Craft or area Director, then the President shall appoint a member of that Craft or Area to that position, with the advise and consent of a majority of the Executive Board. [C] If after three (3) ballots have been cast, a tie exists, a toss of a coin will break the tie.

Section 7: All terms of office shall be from the date of the certification by Election Committee, until the conclusions of the elections, at the next scheduled MPWU State Convention.

Section 8: any retired member, who is paying full dues to their Local Union, may hold office in this Union. Any retired member who retires from State Office, can at the discretion of the Present, be used in an advisory capacity.

In addition, **Article 10 (Representation), Section 1**, states: Each Local Union or Area local affiliated with the MPWU shall be entitled to representation in the State Convention on the following basis: All locals shall receive one delegate for each twenty (20) members or any portion thereof. To be computed on the basis of the previous twenty-four (24) month's average paid membership. In addition, no Local may pay more than three (3) months back dues at one time, prior to the State Convention. Unit rule shall prevail.

2004 CONVENTION CALL - MPWU STATE RETIREE CHAPTER

The 2nd Biennial MPWU State Retiree Chapter Convention will coincide with the MPWU State Convention; April 29 - May 1, 2004, at Lansing, MI. The State Chapter Convention will convene on Friday, April 30th at 9:00 AM for a one-day convention unless official business requires a Saturday morning session.

HOST: Central Michigan Area Local

PLACE: Holiday Inn-South
6820 South Cedar St.
Lansing, MI 48911

RESERVATIONS: 1-517-694-8123

ROOMS: \$85.00 Standard Single (Incl. Tax)
\$95.35 Standard Double (Incl Tax) Delegates responsible for making their own
\$105.45 Standard Triple (Incl. Tax) reservations, including State Chapter officers.

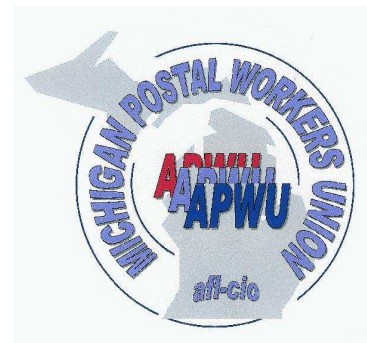
CONVENTION REGISTRATION: Wednesday, April 28th 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Thursday, April 29th 8:00 AM- 5:00 PM
Friday, April 30th 8:00 AM-10:00 AM

REGISTRATION FEE: Will Be Paid By State Chapter. Delegates must be issued Credentials to be seated.

CREDENTIALS: Local Chapter and M.A.L. delegates can obtain credentials by contacting Al LaBrecque at: 3550 Wilson St; Spruce, MI 48762, or by calling: 989-736-8173

DELEGATES: Local Retiree Chapters allowed one (1) delegate for each twenty-five (25) members, or fraction thereof. M.A.L.'s carry one (1) delegate vote. Local Retiree Chapters must furnish the latest dues rebate printout to verify membership total.

NOMINATIONS & ELECTION OF OFFICERS: President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and three (3) Trustees. Nominations last order of business prior to lunch break, Friday, April 30th. Election by secret ballot at 3:00 PM, Friday, April 30th afternoon session.



The following list of 493 Michigan Post Offices are ones that could be closed under the Presidential Commission Recommendation. This list is done by County and alphabetically.

<u>County</u>	<u>Cities</u>					
Alcona	Barton City Lincoln	Black River Mikado	Curran Spruce	Glennie	Greenbush	Harrisville
Alger	Au Train Limestone Wetmore	Chatham Munishing	Christmas Rumely	Deerton Shingleton	Eben Junction Traunik	Grand Marais Trenary
Allegan	Bradley Moline	Burnips Pullman	Douglas Shelbyville	Glenn	Hopkins	Martin
Alpena	Herron	Hubbard Lake	Lachine	Ossineke		
Antrim	Alba Kewadin	Alden	Central Lake	Eastport	Elk Rapids	Ellsworth
Arenac	Alger	Omer	Sterling	Turner	Twining	
Baraga	Baraga	Covington	Keweenaw Bay	Lanse	Skanee	Walton
Barry	Cloverdale	Dowling	Hickory Corners		Woodland	
Bay	Munger					
Benzie	Benzonia	Beulah	Elberta	Honor	Lake Ann	Thompsonville
Berrien	Baroda New Troy	Berrien Center Riverside	Eau Clair Sawyer	Galien Soudus	Harbert Union Pier	Lakeside Webberville
Branch	Sherwood					
Calhoun	Athens	Bedford	Burlington	Ceresco	East Leroy	Tekonsha
Cass	Jones	Vandalia				
Charlevoix	Beaver Island	Boyne Falls	St. James	Walloon Lake		
Cheboygan	Afton Wolverine	Burt Lake	Mackinaw City	Mullett Lake	Topinabee	Tower
Chippewa	Barbeau Goetzille Trout Lake	Brimely Hulbert	Dafter Kinross	Detour Village Paradise	Drummond Isle Pickford	Eckerman Rudyard
Clare	Lake George					
Clinton	Bath Westphalia	Eagle	Elsie	Eureka	Fowler	Maple Rapids

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Crawford	Frederic					
Delta	Bark River Hardwood Wells	Brampton Nahma	Cornell Perkins	Escanaba Rapid River	Garden Rock	Gladstone Schaffer
Dickinson	Channing Norway	Felch Quinnesec	Foster City Ralph	Iron Mountain Sagda	Kingsford Vulcan	Loretto
Eaton	Mulliken	Olivet	Potterville	Sunfield	Vermontville	
Emmet	Alanson Oden	Brutus Pellston	Carp Lake	Conway	Cross Village	Levering
Genesee	Atlas Lennon	Flushing Otisville	Gaines	Genesee	Goodrich	Grand Blanc
Gladwin	Rhodes					
Gogebic	Bessemer Watersmart	Ironwood	Marenisco	Merriweather	Ramsay	Wakefield
Grand Traverse	Acme	Grawn	Matfield	Old Mission		
Gratiot	Ashley North Star	Bannister Perrinton	Breckenridge Pompeii	Elm Hall Riverdale	Elwell Sumner	Middleton Wheeler
Houghton	Atlantic Mine Gay Lake Linden Tiovola	Calumet Hancock Nisula	Chassell Hubbell Painesdale	Copper City Houghton Pelkie	Dodgeville Kearsarge Sidnaw	Dollar Bay Larium South Range
Huron	Bayport Port Hope	Elkton Ruth	Filion Uby	Kinde	Owendale	Port Austin
Ingham	Dansville	Haslett				
Ionia	Clarksville	Hubbardston	Lyons	Muir	Orleans	Pewamo
Iosco	Long Lake	National City	Whittemore			
Iron	Alpha Iron River	Amasa Stambaugh	Beechwood	Caspian	Crystal Falls	Gaastra
Isabella	Blanchard	Rosebush	Winn			
Kalamazoo	Augusta Scotts	Climax	Comstock	Fulton	Nazareth	Oshtemo
Kalkaska	Fife Lake	Rapid City	South Boardman			

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Kent	Cannonsubrg	Gowen	Grandville			
Keweenaw	Ahmeek	Allouez	Copper Harbor	Eagle Harbor	Eagle River	Mohawk
Lake	Chase	Idlewild	Irons	Luther		
Lapeer	Attica	Clifford	Columbiaville	Dryden	Hadley	Otter Lake
Leelanau	Cedar Northport	Empire Omena	Glen Arbor	Lake Leelanau	Leland	Maple City
Livingston	Cohoctah	Gregory	Hamburg	Lakeland		
Luce	McMillan	Newberry				
Mackinac	Cedarville Moran	Curtis Naubinway	Engadine Pointe Aux Pins	Gould City	Hessel	Mackinac Island
Macomb	Center Line	Fraser				
Manistee	Arcadia Kaleva	Bear Lake Onkama	Brethren Wellston	Copemish	Eastlake	Filer City
Marquette	Arnold Marquette Skandia	Big Bay Michigamme	Champion National Mine	Gwinn Palmer	Ishpheming Princeton	Little Lake Republic
Mason	Branch	Custer	Fountain	Free Soil	Walhalla	
Mecosta	Barryton Rodney	Chippewa Lake	Mecosta	Morely	Paris	Remus
Menominee	Carney Nadeau Wilson	Daggett Perronville	Harris Powers	Hermansville Spalding	Ingalis Stephson	Menominee Wallace
Midland	Edenville	Hope				
Missaukee	Falmouth	McBain	Merritt			
Monroe	Ida	Samaria	South Rockwood			
Montcalm	Carson City McBrides Vestaburg	Cedar Lake Pierson	Coral Sheridan	Crystal Sidney	Edmore Six Lakes	Fenwick Trufant
Muskegon	Bailey	Casnovia	Freeport	Holton		
Newaygo	Bitely	Brohman				
Oakland	Drayton Plains	Keego Harbor	Lakeville	Leonard	Union Lake	Waterford

(Continued on page 16)

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Oceana	Mears	New Era	Rothbury	Walkerville		
Ogemaw	Lupton	Rose City	South Branch			
Ontonagon	Bergland Rockland	Bruce Crossing Trout Creek	Ewew White Pine	Greenland	Mass City	Ontonagon
Osceloa	Hersey	Leroy	Marion	Sears	Tustin	
Otsego	Elmira	Johannesburg	Vanderbilt	Waters		
Ottawa	Conklin Nunica	Ferrysburg	Jamestown	Lamont	Macatawa	Marne
Presque Isle	Hawks	Millersburg	Posen	Presque Island		
Roscommon	Higgins Lake	Houghton Lake Heights				
Saginaw	Burt	Brant	Carrollton	Merrill	Oakley	
Saint Clair	Allenton Harsens Island	Anchorville Jeddo	Avoca Marysville	Capac Mephis	Emmet North Street	Goodells Smith Creek
Saint Josph	Burr Oak	Centerville	Colon	Leonidas	Mendon	Nottawa
Sannilac	Applegate Forestville	Argyle Minden City	Brown City Peck	Carsonville Port Sanilac	Decker Snover	Deckerville Melvin
Schoolcraft	Cooks	Germfask	Gulliver	Manistique	Thompson	Seney
Shawassee	Bancroft Vernon	Byron	Corunna	Henderson	Morrice	New Lothrop
Tuscola	Akron Kingston	Deford Reese	Fairgrove Richville	Fostoria Silverwood	Gagetown Unionville	Gilford
Van Buren	Bloomington Lawrence	Breedsville	Covert	Grand Junction	Kendall	Lacota
Washtenaw	Whittaker	Willis				
Wayne	Romulus					
Wexford	Boon	Bukley	Harrieta	Mesick		

Don't Let this happen to your Office and become a statistic. Make your voice heard— Contact Your Representative today and let them know that your office is more than just a name on a piece of paper.



*Area 7 & 9 District and
Editor's Meeting
Grand Rapids, Michigan
March 5-6, 2004*



*Show Us The Jobs
National Bus Tour*

*March 28, 2004
Greenville, Michigan*



The Michigan Jobs Crisis

AMERICA'S JOBS CRISIS is Michigan's crisis too. Like all Americans, Michiganders are looking for good jobs, affordable health care and wages that support their families. But what they are seeing are corporations and CEOs shipping good jobs overseas, drug companies and HMOs ratcheting up health costs and prices rising faster than wages.

For Michiganders, the chinks in the nation's economic armor mean too few jobs, too many jobless workers, shrinking health coverage, lower incomes, greater poverty and more bankruptcies.

Too few good jobs: Since January 2001, Michigan has lost 219,300 jobs. Sectors that traditionally provide good jobs with solid benefits—manufacturing and information services—have shed 128,300 and 5,200 jobs, respectively.

Michigan is losing jobs, in part, because of unfair trade rules and because corporations here, as around the United States, are shipping good jobs overseas. In 2003, the U.S. Department of Labor announced that at least 60 Michigan companies slashed jobs from their payrolls due to trade. These cuts affected an estimated 11,614 workers. **National Steel Corp, Robert Bosch Fuel Systems and Steel Case, Inc. alone cut an estimated 5,610 jobs.** NAFTA has cost Michigan 51,466 jobs.

Meanwhile, Michigan's new jobs aren't as good as those it is losing. **Average wages in the state's growing industries are 26.2 percent lower—\$12,920 less—than those in the industries that are shedding jobs.**

Too many workers unemployed:

In January, **335,868 Michiganders were unemployed**, a whopping 40.1 percent more than in January 2001. Workers unemployed the longest suffer most. In January, **13,479 Michiganders reached the end of eligibility for unemployment benefits** but still could not find jobs.

Because the president and allies in Congress have refused to renew the emergency unemployment program, 6,087 of these workers, along with those exhausting benefits since January, have no federal benefits to fall back on for basic support.

Declining health coverage: Job loss and exploding health costs have shrunk the rolls of Michiganders with job-based health coverage and swelled the ranks of the uninsured. Between 2000 and 2002, the number of Michiganders with employer-provided health care fell by 342,000, a 5.1 percent drop. In 2002, **1,158,000 Michiganders were uninsured**, an increase of 176,000—17.9 percent—in just two years.

Lower incomes, greater poverty and more bankruptcies: Michiganders are struggling to get by with less. Between 2001 and 2002, **incomes for typical households fell \$2,406**, to \$44,239. More Michiganders slipped into poverty: In 2002, **1,152,000 Michiganders were poor**—185,000 more than in 2000. And **personal bankruptcies rose 52.9 percent**, from 35,835 in 2000 to 54,805 in 2002.

Sources: American Bankruptcy Institute, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Economic Policy Institute, Public Citizen, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor. For further information on sources and methodology, see www.showusthejobs.com.

What Every American Needs to Know!

The owners of one of American's premiere retail corporations, Wal-Mart, are comprised of five of the ten richest people in the world, all from the same family. Their personal wealth eclipses \$100 billion dollars. Last year, the company's CEO was paid a cool \$11.5 million, more than the annual salaries of 765 of his employees combined. The company's profits are over \$7 billion annually. In these difficult economic times, how do they do it?

Here's how:

- This company runs ads featuring the United States flag and Proclaims "We Buy American." In 2001, they moved their worldwide purchasing headquarters to China, and is the largest importer of Chinese goods in the US, purchasing over \$10 billion of Chinese-made products annually. Products made mostly by women and children working in labor hellholes China is famous for.
- Their average employee working in the US makes \$15,000 a year -- that is \$7.22 per hour.
- These employees gross \$11,000 a year.
- The company brags that 70% of their employees are full time, but fails to disclose that they count anyone working 28 hours a week or more as full time
- Wal-Mart refuses to stock emergency contraception at its pharmacies.
- There are no health care benefits unless you have worked for the company for at least two years.
- With a turnover rate averaging above 50% per year, only 38% of their 1.3 million employees have health care coverage.
- In California alone, it is estimated that the taxpayers pay over \$20 million annual to subsidize health care benefits for these employees who get none from this behemoth corporation.
- According to a report by PBS's "Now with Bill Moyer," their managers are trained in what government social programs are available for these "employees" to take advantage of so that the company can pass on those costs to you and me. It allows them to not only keep their \$7 billion in annual profits, but to do so by substituting benefits they refuse to provide with benefits paid for with taxpayer dollars.
- This company holds the record for the most suits filed against it by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. A lawyer from Business Week (not exactly the bastion for supporting labor!) said, "I have never seen this kind of blatant disregard for the law."
- Wal-Mart had to pay \$750,000 in Arizona for blatant Discrimination against the disabled. The judge in the case was so incensed that he also ordered Wal-Mart to run commercials admitting their egregious guilt.
- The National Labor Relations Board has issued over 40 formal complaints against the corporations in 25 different states in just the past five years. The NLRB's top lawyer believed that their labor violations, such as illegal spying on employees, fraudulent record keeping, falsifying time cards to avoid paying overtime, treats, illegal firings for union organizing, etc., were so widespread that he was looking into filing a very rare national complaint against the company.
- Nearly 1 MILLION women are involved in the largest class-action suit ever filed against a corporation. Although women make up over 65% of this corporation's work force only 10% of them are managers. The women who have become store managers make \$16,400 a year, LESS than the men.
- The corporation took out nearly 350,000 life insurance policies on their employees. They did not tell the employees and then named the corporation as the beneficiary. They are now being sued by numerous employees, and although the corporation has stopped this practice of purchasing what is known as "Dead Peasant Policies," a company spokesperson stated: "The company feels it acted properly and legally in doing this."

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What Every American Needs to Know Continued

- Wal-Mart forces its employees to work after ordering them to punch out. In Texas alone, this practice of "wage theft" is estimated to have cost employees \$30 million per year. Wage theft or "off-the-clock" lawsuits are pending in 25 states. In New Mexico, Wal-Mart had to pay \$400,000 in one suit, and in Colorado, they had to pay \$50 MILLION to settle one class-action case brought against them.
- In Oregon, a jury found them guilty of locking employees in the building and of forcing unpaid overtime.
- With 4,400 stores, they practice "predatory pricing." Wal-Mart will come into a community and sell their goods at below cost until they drive local business under. Once they have captured the market, the prices go up.
- Locally owned and operated business put virtually all of their money back into the community, which helps the local economies vibrant. This corporation sucks the money out of the local community, decreases wage and benefits, and ships the profits out of the state.
- Wal-Mart doesn't buy locally or bank locally. They replace three decent paying jobs in a community with two poorly paid "part-timers."
- In Kirksville, Missouri, when this company came to town, four clothing stores four grocery stores, a stationary store, a fabric store, and a lawn-and-garden store all went under. Eleven businesses are now gone.

(This information can be found in *Thieves in High Places*, by James Hightower, the Penguin Group, New York, NY, 2003 p. 166-193.)

Now you know why they can claim "Always low prices."

Wal-Mart is the largest corporation in the world, larger than General Motors and Exxon Mobil.

Wal-Mart will reap over 250 billion in sales in 2003, which is larger then the entire gross national products if Israel and Ireland combined.

It has over 1.3 million employees.

It sells more groceries, jewelry, photo processing, dog food, and vitamins than any other chain in the world.

Wal-Mart will never see a dime from my wallet; and I sincerely hope not from yours either.

Ken Horner

(Continued from page 24)

What is Taco Bell Feeding You continued

- ⇒ Withy the leverage that comes from being the largest purchaser of Florida tomatoes, Taco Bell has the power to improve no only wages, but also benefits, living conditions, organizing rights, and physical safety for farm workers.

What Can You Do?

Taco Bell can not operate without consum-

ers. We can let them know that human rights and dignity of labor also enter into our thinking when we decide where to spend our money. Here is what you can do?

- ⇒ Boycott Taco Bell and tell everyone
⇒ Call, Fax or Write Taco Bell

Article written from excerpts from the pamphlet entitled "What is Taco Bell Feeding You?"

***THE DEADLINE
FOR SUBMITTING
ARTICLES
for the May/June
2004 Edition of the
MICHIGAN
MESSENGER
is May 15, 2004***

Just for the Fun of It

The following was sent via the Greater Grand Rapids Fax Tribune.

Signs you are going to Spend the Rest of Your Life Single:

- ⇒ Klingon, unfortunately, is not a very romantic language.
- ⇒ You'll master the art of meeting women as soon as they make a PlayStation game about it.
- ⇒ None of your 23 cats "ever" likes your boyfriend.
- ⇒ Although you know the batting average of every new York Yankee, you can't remember the color of your girlfriends' eyes...or her name.
- ⇒ Let's put it this way: In the "Mr. Hairy Back" pageant, you didn't have to settle for the congeniality award.
- ⇒ The makers of "Frozen Meals for One" made you their "Customer of the Year" – Again.
- ⇒ In the world, nothing says "I love you" like a hairy butt.
- ⇒ Who has time for dating when you're building a life-size Spock out of Legos?

Deep Thought: It is lucky for us that our universe was born in the "Big Bang." All the other universes would probably laugh at us if we had come from the "Big Quack" or the "Big Bonk."

Songs for Parents

- * Shake, Rattle and Rattle
- * La Bam Bi
- * Having a Potty
- * Wipe Up
- * Let It Pee
- * Stairway to Bedtime
- * Johnny, Be Good

Perks for Working for the Donald:

- ◆ When you lick his boots, they taste like fruity gumdrops.
- ◆ Learning how to sabotage your coworkers while maintaining an innocent smile may come in handy.
- ◆ The comfort of knowing that even on a "Bad" hair day, yours looks better than his.
- ◆ Ivana got a nice separation package after her tenure ended.
- ◆ Being fired by Trump looks better on a resume than still living in your parents' basement.
- ◆ Everybody at the International Subordinate Convention admires your victory in the Brown-Nosing-The-Filthy-Rich Contest.

Difference Between Working at a Fast-Food Restaurant and Working at Microsoft:

- One is only interested in getting product to the customer quickly without regard to quality. The other sells hamburgers.
- McDonald's: Runs a promotional game based on Monopoly. Microsoft: Runs a monopoly.
- Wendy's "Do you want to Biggie Size that for an extra 59 cents." Microsoft: "Upgrade now for \$129 or your software will stop working."
- Microsoft: Blue Screen of Death. Burger King: Blank Face of Teen Apathy.
- Fast-Food customers won't put up with bugs in their product.

Perfumes Named by Cowboys:

- ◇ Guess – Who Had Beans for Super
- ◇ Chapped
- ◇ Hugo Trail boss
- ◇ Tommy Sidewinder
- ◇ Vera Wayne
- ◇ Hormone Derange
- ◇ Chawlie
- ◇ The Perfume With No Name
- ◇ L'eau Down Polecat

Ironic Corporate Demises:

- ⇒ Hertz: Driven into bankruptcy
- ⇒ Polaroid: New business fails to develop.
- ⇒ Boeing: CEO kicked out of airport for carrying nail clippers.
- ⇒ Kimberly-Clark: Bled the company dry.
- ⇒ Starbucks: CFO sleeps through afternoon, misses filing deadline.
- ⇒ Parker Pen: Too much red ink.

Deep Thoughts: I wonder how many injuries the guess who invented the external combustion engine had before they decided to go with the internal idea.

"It's Fashion week here in New York City. As a result, the entire city is on lavender alert" - *David Letterman*

"Tennis star John McEnroe has stated that he unknowingly was being given horse steroids while he was playing. He became suspicious when he lost the U.S. Open, but won the Kentucky Derby." - *Conan O'Brien*



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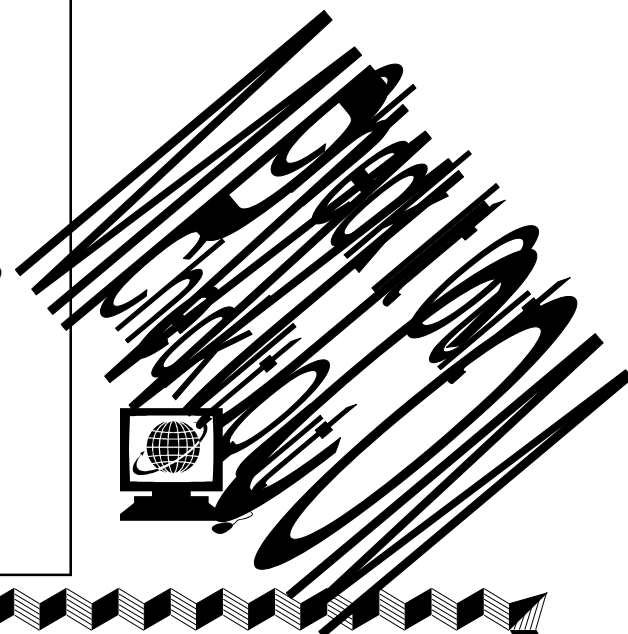


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Your articles are welcome! They must be signed to be printed, but your name will be withheld upon request. Articles sent via electronic media will be treated as being signed. Be aware that articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

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



UPCOMING EVENTS TO PLAN FOR:

April 29 - May 1, 2004 - 19th Biennial MPWU Constitutional Convention, Holiday Inn South & Convention Center, Lansing, MI

August 19 - 27, 2004 - APWU Biennial Convention, Los Angeles, CA

November 5—6 2004 - District Meeting, Waterfront Inn, Traverse City, MI

May 2005 - MPWU Educational Convention, Radisson Hotel, Kalamazoo, MI



What is Taco Bell Feeding You?

Are you aware that the American Postal Workers Union has established a boycott of Taco Bells in the United States?

Taco Bell, in its "clever marketing" schemes, does not mention that the farm workers who supply the tomatoes it uses are subject to extreme forms of exploitation—sweatshops conditions in the fields, debt bondage, and modern day slavery.

When asked wither Taco Bell could guarantee to its customers that the tomatoes in their products were not picked by forced labor, Taco Bell had no response. In fact, Taco Bell executive refused to even meet with the farm workers and with national religious leaders seeking to intervene on the farm workers' behalf.

Who Picks the Tomatoes?

- ⇒ Taco Bell's tomatoes are picked by workers on agricultural farms in Florida.
- ⇒ The farm worker community is split, roughly, along the following ethnic lines: Mexican (50%), Guatemalan (30%), Haitian (10%) and other nationalities (mostly African-American (10%).
- ⇒ Many are not simply "illegal immi-

grants." A large percentage of workers are either legally documented, or have citizenship.

- ⇒ Despite their cultural diversity, all these farm workers share one key characteristic that farm workers look for - They are all from society's lowest stratus of deeply impoverished and easily exploited human beings.

Agricultural workers are explicitly excluded from the National Labor Relations Act. They receive none of the benefits protected under that law, to include:

- ⇒ No Overtime Pay
- ⇒ No Health Insurance
- ⇒ No Sick Leave
- ⇒ No Paid Holiday Leave or Vacation
- ⇒ No Pension
- ⇒ No right to organize or form unions
- ⇒ No right to engage in dialogue with employees.

Worker's Demands:

- ⇒ Convene a three-part dialogue—bringing together representatives of

Taco Bell, their Florida tomato supplies, and representative of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers—to discuss solutions to the problems farm workers face in Florida's fields

- ⇒ Contribute to an immediate increase in farm worker wages through a raise in the per pound rate Taco Bell pays for tomatoes from its Florida supplies.
- ⇒ Join with CIW and tomato industry representatives in drafting strict wage and working condition standards to be required of all Taco Bell tomato suppliers. Such standards would require respect for pickers' fundamental labor right, including the right to a living wage and overtime and the right to organize without fear of retaliation.

What Can Taco Bell Do?

- ⇒ Taco Bell could nearly double the picking piece rate paid to farm workers by agreeing to pay just one penny more per pound for the tomatoes it buys from Florida growers.

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