



MICHIGAN MESSENGER

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

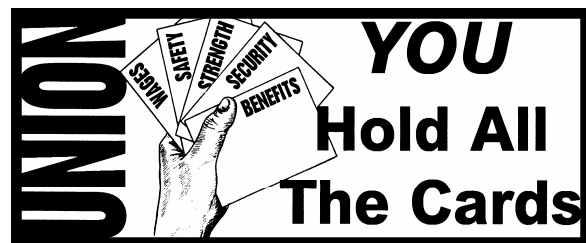
Volume 31, Issue 120

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President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten
President



As I sit here on this Labor Day, I am reminded to take a moment to say "Thank You" in honor of all America's working men and women. My State Representative Dale Kildee is one of the cosponsors of the Employee Free Choice Act. Fifty-seven million workers in America say they would join a union tomorrow if they could, but you know the kind of war workers face when they try to form Unions. One of the major enemies is Wal-Mart. I could go on forever with that subject, but there are too many issues I would like to address. I just wanted to reflect and thank each of you for making the right choice by joining the Union.

In August, I attended the Multi-craft conference. As I arrived at the airport in Las Vegas on a warm sunny morning, it should have given me pause to know that this was the start of a week which would only be characterized by only one statement: "MASS CONFUSION." Due to the impending Northwest Airlines strike, it took over an hour to get our bags off of our flight, and this was just the beginning. Luckily, I had hotel reservations at a different hotel, thus I avoided the 2+ hour wait to get a ho-

tel room; however, when I walked over to the conference registration desk at the hotel that evening there was a CLOSED sign and gave the times for registration in the morning. After breakfast the next morning, I went back to register. The lines were so long with attendees trying to check in, it was worse than the lines to get Piston playoff tickets. While some of the attendees were to blame since they did not pre-register, which added to the wait, for those who did (pre-register) the wait was still insurmountable. It was so bad, the opening session needed to be postpone to allow many of those standing in line the chance to get to the session. Due to the general session being changed from Wednesday to Monday, this did not allow for a proper headcount, which was evident as people entered the conference center and realized that there was not going to be enough seating for all the delegates. Usually we have a general session on the last day of the craft conferences, but not this time. Another embarrassing moment was as we arrived at the General Session, there was a huge APWU banner on the main stage welcoming all to the Clerk Conference, with no mention of our Union sisters and

brothers from the Maintenance craft and Motor Vehicle crafts. I am not sure who lacked the brains to realize that this was a mufti-conference, not just the clerk craft, and then people wonder why the other crafts were upset. Next on our agenda I think we had History 101 of the APWU presented by President Burrus. While I am the first to admit that we must remember what we have been through so we don't repeat the mistakes of the past and grow as a union, he went on and on about the APWU, putting many of the delegates to sleep. After this history class he then explained to all of us how great this contract extension was. Many of the National Officers shared the same feelings of this extension in their address to the delegates. After all the talk and three days of training, came the sad news that one of the AMF airport facilities in Boston was going to close. As most of us know, here in Michigan we have one in Detroit. I am hoping that this one is not on the chopping block. I can assure you that President Pat Chornoby and his Board and Union members will fight like hell for this not to happen to them. Overall, this was a definite learning experience for all, being it was the first multi-

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Secretary's Writings

Harold Juhl
Executive Secretary

To start I want to apologize for missing the last Messenger. It has been a very hectic summer. I know that there is no good excuse, but it's the one I'm sticking to.

Just a quick note on the National Contract. As you all know by now the contract has been extended. It was voted up by a 7 to 1 margin. It's very sad though, that only around 79,000 members out of 278,000+ even sent in their ballots. I would think that the members would have more concern on what happens to their jobs and their future.

I want to speak on the issue of the upcoming State Convention in Detroit. As the Exec. Secretary I am responsible for getting all of the resolutions typed and ready for the convention's resolution book. It's not too early for you to start thinking about getting those resolutions together. Also, when submitting them it would be helpful if they were placed on a floppy disk along with a hard copy. This will make it more convenient when getting them in order for the resolution book. I know this is early and I will be sending out letters of reminder in the near future, but it can't hurt to start thinking about it now.

I attended the Multi-Craft Conference as a delegate from my local, and I thought that overall it was a pretty good conference. The classes were well presented and the material is going to be very helpful to our stewards and officers when representing our members rights under the National Contract. I, personally think we need to go back to separate craft conferences, just because there was a little confusion and disorganization at the beginning of the conference. I think that the other crafts also felt like they would prefer having their own conferences again.

To all State Officers, I will be ordering paper and envelopes to bring to the convention in Detroit, so if you need any supplies please do so. I look forward to seeing everyone in either at the upcoming District Meeting or at the Convention in Detroit. I hope everyone has had a great summer and now enjoys a great fall.

In Solidarity,

Harold



Education at Work

Mark Hart
Director of Research and Education

As stated in the last edition of the Messenger, the contract extension was approved by a huge margin. Myself and my own local were very much opposed to this extension. I personally felt that now was a better time to negotiate instead of waiting until next year; however the membership has spoken and as always we will do the best we can with what our National union and our members give us. For the life of me though, I cannot understand how a 1.6% wage increase is all we deserve.

The Area 4-5-6 District Meeting will be held on November 4, 5, & 6 at the Bay City Doubletree Hotel. While more information is printed elsewhere in this edition of the messenger, the classes which have been selected for this meeting will include: Basic and Advanced stewards training, Small Office Issues (Article 1.6b) and Maintenance issues. Continue to check the website for more information; and I look forward to seeing everyone possible there.

A few issues ago I asked if anyone had any suggestions as to what class(es) they would like or believe we should be addressing. To this date, I have not received any responses; I can only assume that the classes we are providing are satisfactory for what we need to do. A lot of thought goes into deciding what classes are put on. As a local president, I have always felt that the state union puts on excellent classes to give each local and steward the training and information to handle just about every type of problem that can come up. While it is impossible to cover every type of issue, I personally would ask for your input as to what other type of classes you would like to see. Keep in mind that Area/District Meetings are to meet the needs of the area in which the meeting is being held, along with training union officials with current skills and information. Please let me know what you need, so when we come to your area, we can address it.

Until next time,

Mark



The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long
Editor

Well, it is long overdue, but finally everyone should be receiving the Michigan Messenger. The membership list was finally sent by the National office before the last issue so if you know of anyone that is not receiving the Messenger and you believe they should be; please contact me or your local or state officers so we can look into this issue.

As I stated last edition, the Dental Plan open season is now upon us. By the time you receive this issue of the Messenger, the new rates should be posted on the website. Information is always on the mpwu.com website in regards to coverage, links to who is an in-network provider, etc. If you have any questions, please feel free to get a hold of me. If your local provides Dental coverage, I would ask that you please check with them; however, if they don't, please feel free to check out what we have to offer. Please note that we are no way affiliated with the National plan; if you choose to join that plan, feel free, however, unfortunately, I can not answer your questions; please direct them to the 800# listed for Voluntary Benefits.

In this edition of the Messenger, I have included photos from the latest Multi-craft and the PPA National Conferences. I would strongly encourage you to look at photos on-line at the mpwu.com website. Unfortunately, I am limited to the amount of photos I can publish; while I can post as many photos as I want on the website.

If you haven't noticed, I am trying to get you to go to the website! With the Michigan Messenger being published only bi-monthly, information can not be easily disseminated to our members in a timely fashion; however, on the website, it can be updated immediately when need be. The information is fresh, timely, and can be a very good tool when needed. If you haven't done so, check it out.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Paul Felton and the entire 480-481 area local on their three awards this year at the Postal Press Conference. Also, congratulations go to Jennifer Amos (WMAL) for her outstanding website. I will address more on the conference in the next issue.

Until Next Time,

Mike



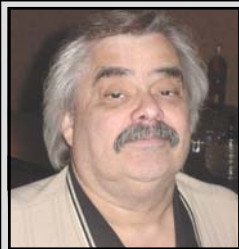
Legislative Report

Regina Favors
Legislative Director

Hello again sisters and brothers, and WOW, what a difference a day (or week) makes! When I began this article I was just back from our POWER convention in New Orleans, LA. I still tremble when I think that if the convention were scheduled a week later or if Katrina had hit a week earlier...and I am in constant prayer for all of the many families, individuals, pets and all who in any way whatsoever was touched by that devastating hurricane. I know that while we are all doing what we can big or small, donating or providing shelter, food or clothing we must continue to be mindful that we all have much to be thankful for. We must also realize that what happened there (even though it) was a natural disaster was handled very badly by this administration. Now to make matters even worse, this President who could not even interrupt his vacation (or shorten it) has his closest officials (pals, whatever) trying to lay all of the blame on the Governor and Mayor of New Orleans. How pathetic is that? Add to this, the fact that there are still places in Mississippi, Alabama, and I believe Louisiana that still even to this day (Sept. 12) are awaiting some type of help, food, relief or anything at all. Of course these places are all smaller (mostly African-American) communities. If you didn't get the picture before, are you getting it now? What kind of leadership do we have? Who are the people he (the President) is really in office for? It certainly does not appear to be us. To think they wanted to impeach President Clinton over one infidelity indiscretion...hmmm something is wrong with this picture (to me). My brothers and my sisters, if this is not a wake up call I don't know what is. That being said, I must say that I am so very proud of our state and cities that have taken in and embraced warmly and wholeheartedly those who survived so horrible an ordeal. I wish them all the best! As I said at the beginning, we were in New Orleans for the POWER (Post Office Women for Equal Rights) Convention. Thanks to the New Orleans APWU Local, and Joyce Robinson, our National Research and Education Director for a wonderful and completely successful event. Sisters we need more of you to come out and join us. P O W E R is a wonderful group and I am sure you will gain from being involved.

On August 6, I also went to Atlanta, Ga. to participate in the voters renewal act march put on by Rev. Jesse Jackson

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Clerk Craft Report

Bob Maloney
Clerk Craft Director

As the State's Clerk Craft Director, I recently attended the National Clerk Craft Conference portion in Las Vegas. However, unlike previous conference, this was a multi-craft convention so there were brothers and sisters from the Motor Vehicle craft as well as Maintenance craft in attendance. In fact, there were so many people there, it felt like a small National Convention. The first day was a general session which of course much talk was about the new National Contract Extension. The voting on the extension went something like 79,000 votes for and less than 7,000 votes against. An overwhelming vote for ratification. President Burrus spoke on the pluses of this extension which I knew he would since it was his baby. Before I talk about what Bill had to say, I must preface my remarks with the fact that I voted against the extension. One of things that I do not understand was that this was not a negotiation as we are used to. It was not US sitting across the table from THEM banging on the desk saying what we want and them telling us what they want to take away from the Union. No, as an extension of the Contract, they did not get to ask to change anything in the contract. It was us who brought the items we wanted improved in our current contract. This is what President Burrus did a "great job" explaining to us. How the things we want added to the contract were either OK with Postal Management or not. If not, it wasn't added to the extension. The good part is everything that is in our contract stays in the extension and what we didn't get will be part of the next National negotiation next year. As I told you, I voted against the extension, not because of the size of the pay raise or the number of the COLA increases, but because there was no upgrade of window clerks. I feel that being a window clerk is one of the hardest jobs in the Post office. With all the information you much know, plus a supervisor watching your every move as well as the Mystery shopper program, dealing with the public and their attitudes and the abuse they give, to name a few, I was not happy to see that there was no upgrade for them in the extension, but Bill did a good job explaining that they did ask for that, but the Postal Service turned it down. There were a few upgrades for clerks and some for both the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle craft. The one thing Bill made clear was that there will be more of a fight for upgrades in the next National Contract. I have spoken to

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Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan
Maintenance Director

Convention Report

The "first ever" all-craft (Multi-craft) conference was held in Las Vegas August 8-10. There was a lot of rumbling and grumbling initially about long lines to register, etc; however, in light of Hurricane Katrina's devastation, I think most members would rescind their complaints. It did seem to be the feeling of the masses, however, that the joint conference wasn't the best idea. Enough about form, you want to know the contents.

The main thing I noticed was that this was a very low-key conference. Usually the maintenance craft meetings are very feisty and always the best meeting of the year as far as I am concerned. This time, no secrets were revealed, no surprises unveiled. Instead, it was an orderly couple of days.

Excellent training was presented and each conference participant got all the training CDs for all three crafts. This will make it possible to view the information provided in the classes I could not attend.

Only seven resolutions were submitted prior to the meeting. As always there were resolutions regarding seniority and the grandfather clause. These were voted down. We did vote in favor of (1) additional work clothes allowance, (2) increased maintenance support clerk staffing to reflect the number of supervisors/managers in a local department supported by the MOS clerks, (3) fighting for position upgrades for AMS/AMT, and (4) returning the control of the craft conference to the respective division directors.

Each of the resolutions presented got thoughtful discussion and in some instances heated debate. I believe that the fact that President Burrus announced that the one-year contract extension was adopted prior to the opening of the conference had a big impact. Since we all knew no one was going to the negotiating table, it minimized the debate.

Contract Extension

Speaking of the contract extension, I am sure you are all aware that a number of maintenance positions will be up-

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MVS on the Move

Scott Larabel
MVS Craft Director

It has been quite awhile since I have written an article, and I apologize for that. I could give you excuses such as I don't like writing reports (which I don't) or I'm so busy with grievances and other union business that it's hard to find the time (which it is), but you don't want to hear excuses, you want to be kept informed about issues affecting our craft. You deserve it and I will make a concerted effort to do so.

As you know the motor vehicle craft is constantly being scrutinized in attempts to contract out all or parts of vehicle maintenance and transportation operations. We have seen the trend at VMFs to contract out transmission and engine rebuilding and certain repairs on tractors, trailers and straight trucks.

Some of the excuses from around the state and country that management uses in its attempts to justify their actions range from: we're behind and our numbers are bad; we don't have to give overtime; overtime isn't helping anyway; it's personnel's fault; we can't get vacant positions filled; we're not authorized additional positions; we don't have the right equipment or tools; there's only one mechanic that works on the heavy trucks and he can't keep up; it's new work of the type not done here before so we don't have to start now; And my favorite is: "the mechanics don't want to do that kind of work anyway"

On the transportation side, reasons for contracting out are plentiful also, such as: it's cheaper to have a contractor do it; we don't have enough drivers or equipment so we have to contract it out; we're not authorized any additional drivers; it's just temporary work, the mail volumes will be dropping and then we'll have to let drivers go; it's now clerk or mail handler work; express is not MVS work; those are star routes, A.O.'s, or HCR runs and we can't go there; it's not gutting, the HCA's are already going there anyway. Heard enough? I'm sure you have heard other excuses as well.

The increase use of non- MVS craft personnel and supervision running mail not only to city stations but also to A.O.'s on a daily basis has been a major problem. It has become so common place that they aren't even trying to

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Retiree Involvement

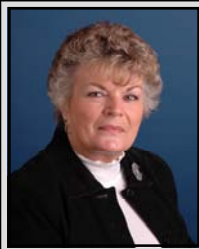
Al LaBrecque
MPWU Retirees President

Your read it here first! My nearly 5-year rant over the "inadvertent omission" of the 2000 National Convention adopted constitutional amendment to Article 16. Section 2 (h); "Local Retiree Chapter Membership Jurisdiction" is over! The APWU Constitution & Bylaws as amended August 27, 2004, **finally** corrected the "inadvertent omission" by properly including it on page 43, under Sec. 2(i), second paragraph; ***"There will be an establishment of membership jurisdiction procedures which allows for a retired member residing outside the zip code representation jurisdiction of their home APWU Local from which they retired, the option of assigning their Local Retiree Chapter membership and forty percent (40%) annual dues rebate to their home Local Retiree Chapter"***.

There's little doubt that had we not kept the issue before the membership and APWU leadership, that language would not be in the APWU Constitution today! Had it not appeared in this edition of the Constitution, there would have been no recourse but to refer it to the Dept. of Labor as a violation of Article 22; Amendments, something I certainly didn't want to have to resort to. As it is, it's a sorry commentary that so much time and effort had to be spent, not to mention the frustration of the constant stonewalling, in getting our national office to admit and correct their "error".

That being said (and I learned that one); what exactly does this constitutional provision mean? It means that IF you live **outside** the representation jurisdiction of the Local Union you retired from, and IF your home Local has a Local Retiree Chapter, you have the **option** of notifying the National APWU that you can request that your retiree chapter membership and 40% dues rebate be assigned to your home Local Retiree Chapter. **For example:** Say you retired from the Saginaw 486-487 Area Local and now you live in the 497 zip code area, which is outside your home Local's jurisdiction. You have every right to exercise your option to assign your membership to the Saginaw 486-487 Area Local Retiree Chapter. The same applies wherever your primary residence happens to be, including out-of-state. This would apply equally to northern states' "snowbirds" who retire to warmer climates, either full or part-time, IF they have a home Local Retiree Chapter.

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NBA Report

Lynn Pallas-Barber
NBA - Clerk Div. - Chicago

WOMEN IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Florence Luscomb

Florence Hope Luscomb was born on February 6, 1887. She died October 27, 1985 and spent the majority of her 98 years fighting for women's rights. During her life she fought for causes from woman suffrage to civil liberties. She was only 33 years old when the 19th Amendment was passed. In the 1960s and 1970s she was still active in the feminism movement.

She was born in Lowell, MA in 1887. She moved to Boston with her mother, who was also an active supporter of suffrage and other causes. When she was only 5 years old, she went with her mother to hear Susan B. Anthony speak.

Florence Luscomb graduated from M.I.T. with a degree in architecture. From 1909 until 1917 she was a partner in a woman-owned firm in Boston. She was still active in the suffrage movement. She assisted in organizing a number of rallies. In 1915, she logged more than 220 speeches in 14 weeks during the campaign for an amendment to the State Constitution. During the building slump in WWI, she left architecture and became executive secretary of the Boston Equal Suffrage Association. She then helped organize and was the president of the Boston local of the United Office and Professional Workers of America. She also became involved in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and organizations concerned with prison reform and factory safety.

In the 1920s, she became active in civil rights, civil liberties and other liberal organizations. Some of the organizations in which she was active were the NAACP and the MA Civil Liberties Union. Her husband died in 1933 leaving her financially independent, thus she became a full-time social and political activist.

She ran for public office four times. In 1922 she lost a race for the Boston City Council by less than one percent. She ran for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1936 and again in 1950. Her campaigns were meant to educate voters and expand the two-party system. In 1952, she ran for the governorship of the State of Massachusetts on the Pro-

gressive Party ticket.

She fought against McCarthyism and was called upon to defend herself before a committee of the MA legislature. She continued to be active in the 1960s. She wrote the first anti-Vietnam War leaflet. In the 1970s, she remained active in the labor movement and encouraged labor unions to reach out to include poor women and women of color. She worked almost her entire life for the labor movement and women's rights. Information and research taken from <http://www.mfh.org/specialprojects/shwlp/site/honorees/luscomb.html>

ALL CRAFT CONFERENCE – APWU

The crafts of Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle, and Support Services all met in Las Vegas at the Riveria Hotel August 8-10, 2005. The general session of the combined crafts was addressed by President Burrus and the main topic was the contract extension.

The Clerk Craft held its general session on Monday, August 8, 2005. The general session was addressed by each of the resident Clerk Craft officers with their reports. There were no resolutions submitted from the Clerk Craft at this conference. It is my understanding that two of the other crafts are happy with the joint conference and that resolutions may have been passed in their general business sessions. I guess that the next National APWU Convention will determine the future of this joint conference.

This was my first craft conference as a NBA. I was given the opportunity to participate in the training and the enjoyed the experience very much. I assisted in the presentation that was titled "What Happened To that Job?" It was a very rewarding experience to work with other NBAs, Willie Mellen, Marie Robbins and Morline Guillory. My part of the presentation addressed the principal assignment area (PAA) and other duties as assigned. Per the provisions of Article 37 the principal assignment is a key element of every duty assignment and is necessary to protect the integrity of our bidding procedure. Management is required to post a PAA on every clerk craft duty assignment. Clear and proper PAAs will depend on each individual local. Overtime provisions, local grievances, LMOUs and disputes regarding daily operations and work should be used to determine PAAs.

POWER

August 18 – 21, 2005 I attended the APWU POWER (Post Office Women for Equal Rights) convention in New Or-

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One SOB's Opinion

By: Eric J. Laverty (Clerk Craft Director, Jackson Area Local)

When one of our clerks was finally browbeaten into resigning as a steward by his 'friends,' he had to hand over to me all the documents and property of the Local.

In that collection of documents was a letter from a DBCS clerk, one asking about 'no lunch' reschedules and why the Union won't sign off on them in the first part and then asking why the Union wasn't pursuing some thing more important, like trying to keep jobs in the office and filling ones that are unoccupied.

I'd like to address the first part about the reschedules and then deal with the job question.

First and foremost, the Union cannot prevent management from rescheduling you. The union can, however, make management pay you for being 'out of schedule.' That is working you outside or instead of the scheduled that is part of your bid assignment.

Throughout the National Agreement and the ELM and numerous other handbooks and manuals, Full Time Regulars are referred to as having a regular schedule, 5 days within a pay week and 8 hours within 10 per scheduled work day, in many cases 8 within 9.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to "Make sure the employees clock in and out according to their assigned schedules" (manual F-21 114.1.b). As a Full-time Regular, your assigned schedule is what is on your current bid job and many of the above mentioned books echo this sentiment of working the schedule as it appears on your bid assignment. You are obligated to work that assigned schedule most of the time. If you don't, you are due out-of-schedule pay or due pay for guaranteed time, the time that is listed on your bid assignment. Unless you reschedule for personal reasons.

Rescheduling is not a right, it is a privilege and management can refuse pretty much any time they want to. The Union can refuse to sign off on it pretty much whenever it wants to, also.

One of the reasons the Union likes to have some idea why you want to reschedule is to prevent management from turning Full-time regulars into Full-time flexies. When the Union signs off on a 3189 they are saying that they will not file a grievance over the schedule change. If they feel that something is wrong with the individual reschedule or a group of reschedules they have an obligation not to sign off on them because they may have an overriding obligation to file a grievance instead.

Now with that in mind, I would like to address the other issue that was brought up in this particular letter, which was why the Union isn't trying to fill jobs and keep jobs that we are losing. We are!

If you were hitting yourself with a hammer and asked some one to stop the pain, would you complain if they first took the hammer away from you?

In stopping the incredible excess of 'no lunch' reschedules we are trying to first take the hammer away. Why would management want to fill a position when they can get 8 current employees to work through their lunch and not have to hire someone to fill those 4 work hours. 16 no lunches equals a full-time job.

When one of the DBCS jobs was reverted, I had to grieve to get it back. At that particular time the supervisors agreed with me that we needed more people on the machines and helped convince upper management to repost a job to replace the reverted one. We dodged a bullet so to speak. If they had not agreed with us we would have had one hell of a time getting that job back.

What's going to happen when management decides they don't need to get more people over at the machines because they have enough misguided people working through their lunches that they don't need to fill a job. No lunches allow them to under-represent the number of people they need.

If I take a grievance to an arbitrator and ask them to make management reinstate jobs they had reverted, the arbitrator has to have a reason and management gets to argue against me. If they can show that a third of the shift leaves early day-after-day-after-day, why would the arbitrator see a need for more jobs.

You see, we can't make the pain go away until you stop hitting yourselves with the hammer.

There is an old saying that God answers all prayers, just not always the way we would like him to. Well, certainly the Union can't be compared to God, but it definitely is trying to represent you as best they can, even if it isn't quite the way you would like.

No lunches is a giant step backwards!!

All of us, not just the Union representatives, have an obligation to the jobs we hold. We don't own these jobs. We are simply caretakers. Those people who came before us tried to improve these jobs and make things better for us, including lunch breaks, which weren't always a part of Postal jobs. The best way to show our thanks is to do the same for those who will come after us. Years ago, employees lost their jobs trying to make things better for us in the future. Some of those people didn't get their jobs back. Some of those people lost everything. This is not a sacrifice that I would blithely ignore.

Your Michigan Attendees/Delegates to the
2005 Multi-Craft Conferences
August 8 - 10, 2005
Rivera Hotel & Conference Center; Las Vegas, Nevada



Attendees to the
2005 National Postal Press Association Convention
August 10 - 13, 2005
Reno Hilton; Reno Nevada



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President's Report Continued

craft; however, I have already heard that there will be constitutional changes to change it back to the way it was.

I am in the final stages of my 1.6b surveys that John Clark assigned to me. There are some 15 of us in the State of Michigan performing these surveys in the small offices assigned to us. While I will not list everyone, since I would be too afraid to leave someone out I wish to thank each of you send a great deal of appreciation to all of you. I know that you are taking time out of your regular schedules to do these surveys and you should be commended for this. Among the surveyors are some retirees. Once again, as always the retirees stepped forward to join in on this project. We are hoping to complete these surveys by the end of the month. I have a positive feeling that we will. I have given out 8 or 9 1187 so far for new members to join. I know that all the packets that John sent out have 1187's in them and I feel good that we will increase our membership from this.

In closing I would like to thank all of you for the e-mails, phone calls, and letters about my family being in the middle of the Katrina disaster. For those of you that do not know, my son and his family live just outside New Orleans. His office is right downtown New Orleans. They did lose power, but thankful that this is all the damage they had. We should all take a moment and pray for all of those in need. Due to CFC regulations, we are not allowed to put canisters to collect for this disaster; however that doesn't stop you from giving your time, money, or old clothing to the effort through numerous charitable organization.

In closing, with fall rearing its ugly head, I hope all had a safe and enjoyable summer. Now we have the rest of the seasons just around the corner.

Until Next Time,



Gary Van Hoogstraten
President

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Retiree Involvement Continued

Address your request to: Terry Stapelton, APWU Secretary-Treasurer; 1300 "L" Street, N.W.; Washington, D.C. 20005, with a copy c.c.'d to: Douglas C. Holbrook, Director, APWU Retirees Department; 1300 "L" Street, N.W.; Washington, D.C. 20005. Simply state: *"Under the provisions of the APWU Constitution & ByLaws; Article 16. Section 2(i), paragraph 2., "Local Retiree Chapter Membership Jurisdiction", it is respectfully requested that my APWU Local Retiree Chapter membership and 40% dues rebate be assigned to the home Local Retiree Chapter that I retired from. I currently reside in the (***-***) zip code. My home Local Retiree Chapter is the (name the home Local and Local Retiree Chapter you retired from and its zip code)." Be sure to include your Social Security Number and CSA number for identification purposes, and your current mailing address. Make a copy for your personal file.*

Legislative Report Card: This is our latest information regarding the Michigan Members of Congress who have, or have not, cosponsored our retiree priority proposed legislation; House Bills: H.R.147 Windfall Elimination Provision/Government Pension Offset, and H.R.994 Premium Conversion, and Senate Bills: S.619 WEP/GPO and S.484 Premium Conversion.

District Congressperson (NO** indicates they cosponsored that legislation in the last session of the 108th Congress)

H.R.147 H.R.994

1 Bart Stupak-D	No**	Yes
2 Peter Hoekstra-R	No	No
3 Vernon Ehlers-R	No**	No
4 Dave Camp-R	No**	No
5 Dale Kildee-D	Yes	Yes
6 Fred Upton-R	No	Yes
7 Joseph Schwartz-R	No	No
8 Mike Rogers-R	No	No
9 Joe Knollenberg-R	No	No**
10 Candice Miller-R	No**	No**
11 Thaddeus McCotter-R	Yes	Yes
12 Sandy Levin-D	No	No
13 Carolyn Kilpatrick-D	Yes	Yes
14 John Conyers-D	Yes	No**
15 John Dingell-D	Yes	Yes
	<u>S.619</u>	<u>S.484</u>
Senator Carl Levin-D	No	Yes
Senator Debbie Stabenow-D	Yes	No**

(Continued from page 10)

Retiree Involvement Continued

Write your Congressperson and Senators! It's still the most effective method of contacting them. Thank them if they are a cosponsor of one or both bills. If they are a "No" on one or both bills, respectfully request that they sign on as a cosponsor. If they are a "No**", remind them that they were a cosponsor in the previous session of the 108th Congress, and request that they renew their support. This effort is the most important project that our retired members can engage in at this time!

Due to the fact that all mail addressed to Members of Congress in Washington, D.C. undergo an irradiation process, your letters should be addressed to your legislator's district office.

Write On!!

Old Glory: I found the article in the last issue of the "Messenger" on how to show respect to the flag interesting and timely. One item I'd like to add which a Brother brought to my attention when flying the flag at half-staff; run it briskly to the top and then down slowly to half-mast.

Which brings me to a recent disturbing incident. On Aug. 17th it was published in the local press, and announced on radio and TV, that Gov. Granholm ordered all flags in the state to be flown at half-staff on Thurs., Aug. 18th in honor of a Michigan soldier killed in Iraq who was being buried on that day. This has been a regular practice for the Governor on the day of burial of our service people who have died in service to their country. In my travels through Alcona and Alpena counties on the 18th I noted that precious few flags were at half-staff, most notably 3 U.S. Post Offices whose flags were at full staff. Actually, they never do when the Gov. makes her request. So I de-

cided to register a complaint at one of those P.O.'s. The postmaster's retort was; "I don't take orders from the Governor, this is a federal facility, I'm a federal employee!" To which I responded; that as a veteran I'm insulted, and as a retired postal worker I'm embarrassed!

It's not about the Governor, politics, federal vs. state, or anyone's position on the war in Iraq. It's about honoring a Michigan serviceman's supreme sacrifice and respect for the family who lost their son! Some flags were at half-mast, including the Alpena McDonald's fast food stores, but NOT those of the U.S. Postal Service! It seems that this is a USPS 'policy', shameful as it is. The USPS is in every city, village, and hamlet throughout Michigan as the most visible government agency. It would seem the USPS would be proud to set the standard for honoring our fallen military men and women on their day of burial regardless of who orders Old Glory to be lowered to half-staff. Perhaps if the USPS would set the example, citizens, businesses, churches, schools, VFW's, D.A.V.'s, Township offices, (who all failed to comply) would become aware and follow suit.

It's pretty small of any postmaster who would take offense to a complaint for their abject failure to lower the flag on their facility for one day to honor our military men and women who died in service to our country. As a result of that postmaster's haughty attitude, I promptly called the USPS customer service hotline 1-800-275-8777 registering my complaint complete with the PM's name, office and complete scenario. They gave me a case number. In the meantime I visited Rep. Bart Stupak's office and registered the complaint with his aide who promptly faxed it to the Congressman. But, I wasn't done!

When I got home I had a message to

call the Saginaw POOM on her cell phone, but in the meantime the Regional Mgr. for Senator Levin called on the legislation I outlined above, so I ran it all by him, and he forwarded it to Levin's D.C. office. The POOM and I had a long, lively conversation, upon which she promised to take it up with District management. Then I contacted Senator Stabenow's Regional Mgr. who forwarded it to the Senator. Since, the POOM got back with me, as promised, telling me that the 'new' District Human Resources guy in Grand Rapids is "reluctant" to order postmasters to comply with the Governor's requests, but that local PM's could use their own discretion especially if the soldier being buried is from their area. NOT GOOD ENOUGH! I just received a response from Senator Debbie Stabenow with a copy of a letter to District Manager, Chuck Howe, outlining my complaint and requesting USPS protocol for the American Flag, requesting he review the information and to advise her of his findings. Sen. Stabenow states she will let me know of the findings of the manager of the USPS Greater Michigan District.

I've neither a 'flag waver', nor do I wear my patriotism on my sleeve. Never have. The POOM told me that it's USPS 'policy' to only lower the flag for heads of state. My response to that was; who's more important, a head of state like the Saudi prince shown holding hands with George Bush, or a U.S. soldier who dies in service to their country?! To date, the results have been entirely unsatisfactory! I do, however, fully intend to pursue this issue to a satisfactory conclusion. If this is, indeed, the 'policy' of the United States Postal Service, it's shameful! Postmaster General John Potter should be admonished if it is!

Postal workers, retirees, or your fam-

(Continued on page 12)

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Retiree Involvement Continued

ily members, take note of the U.S. Flag flown at your postal facility on the day of burial for a Michigan serviceperson when ordered by Gov. Jennifer Granholm to lower the flag. If you see it as I do, register your complaint to the USPS customer service number, your Congressperson and Senators Levin and Stabenow. ALL Michigan post offices should be REQUIRED to fly their flags at half-staff as a sign of RESPECT for our fallen military on the day of their burial. What possibly would be the USPS management's reason for not doing so?!

Be Strong!

Al LaBrecque

(Continued from page 6)

NBA Report Continued

leans, LA. It was the 12th Biennial National Convention. POWER was first established in 1979 for a common purpose. The intent of POWER is to establish a viable communications network for APWU women throughout the country to exchange ideas, issues, problems and solutions; and to initiate and also support educational programs. POWER is to encourage the involvement and participation of all women in the APWU. Every woman on the workroom floor, who is an APWU member, is a member of POWER. POWER is to assist in the organization of the unorganized workers in our work place. It is also intended to promote affirmative action programs in the APWU and to assist women in achieving leadership roles. POWER is also joined and fully involved in the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW).

I once again had the opportunity to assist in the workshops at this convention. I along with NBA Shirley

Taylor taught a power point presentation on Article 12 and excessing. We were assisted by Regional Coordinators, Liz Powell and Sharyn Stone. The program was well received and I believe that our presentation was a success.

I want to add that I really enjoyed the POWER Convention. It was truly a rewarding experience to see women from all over our country working together with common goals. The delegates at the convention passed resolutions which dealt with diversity, boycotting Wal-Mart, and the privatization of Social Security.

COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN (CLUW)

September 14-17, 2005 I attended the 13th Biennial Convention of CLUW. It was a really rewarding experience to meet women from all the different unions from all over the county and Canada. The convention was titled "Union Women Building the Movement". This organization was founded in March of 1974. There were four original goals of this group: to organize the unorganized; promote affirmative action; increase women's participation in their unions; and increase women's participation in political and legislative activities.

A workshop on the global economy was held the first day. The global economy and free trade acts are not working for the millions of men and women in our country in trade jobs. Free trade policies send decent paying jobs offshore and weaken the economic stability of working American families. The recent passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) was another assault on American workers.

This convention also dealt with a number of resolutions concerning issues affecting working families in our

country. Resolutions were passed in support of the privatization of Social Security, proposed changes to FMLA, health care costs and a number of issues facing the labor movement. Some of the other unions represented were AFGE, UAW, AFT, CWA, IAM, IFPTE, IBT, OPEIU, AFSCME, SEIU, IBEW, USW, and UNITE-HERE. There was a total of 334 union delegates, 92 chapter delegates, 8 alternate union delegates, 7 chapter alternate delegates, 90 observers for a total of 531 participants. Sister Judy Beard was reelected as the national treasurer and represents the APWU on the national executive board. APWU had approximately 25 total delegates.

It definitely was a rewarding experience to spend three days with union women from through out our country. A WOMEN'S PLACE IS IN HER UNION!!

DIRECT APPEALS REVIEW

On June 13, 2005 a memo was jointly signed by APWU and USPS adding joint reviews by the parties on Direct Appeals to Arbitration. This once again gives us, the NBAs an opportunity to review and discuss these grievances with management. It is hoped that this review process will help us assist the locals in fine tuning grievance appeals. I can only STRESS that all grievances need to be properly developed and documented. One brief paragraph is not a proper and complete development of a case. Supporting documents such as TACS clock rings need to be summarized.

In closing I would like to remind everyone about our brothers and sisters who were displaced during Hurricane Katrina. They need all our help.

Until next time,

Lynn

(Continued from page 4)

Clerk Craft Report Continued

members that think that they have not received an upgrade in their jobs because some how they are not liked by the National Officers or they just don't care. Nothing is further from the truth. After hearing President Burrus speak, I now believe he is dedicated to seeing that ALL APWU positions are upgraded.

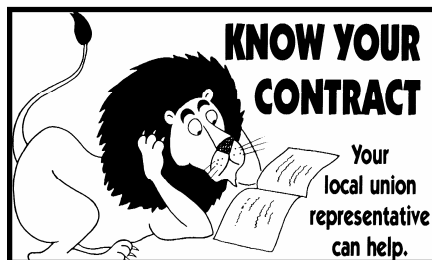
Another thing Bill spoke on was regarding the largest COLA increase in 25 years that you have just seen in your recent check. He spoke on how, with that increase, a Level 5, at the highest step will be making over \$46k a year. He spoke on how people with college degrees that don't make that amount of salary in a year. He was very proud that this is the direct result of the Union's fight over these many years. This was something that made me curious since most of the Postal workers I know are high school grads or have a year or two of college. When I got back home, I called a close friend of mine who is a grade school teacher in the system I live in. I asked her how much schooling she had and how much said made. She told me she held a master's degree in education and that she made a little over \$42k last year.

There were also many classes offered, such as Arbitrability of Grievances, Stewards in the Information Age, TACS, Casual in Lieu of, and my favorite: Life after Das. Das was the National Arbitrator who ruled on Article 1.6B case in Washington DC. This had to do with a big problem of Management doing clerk work in Small Associate Offices. This has been a problem in our State for a long time. When I was an Area Director, half of all the grievances I filed were this type. To sum it up, Das decision is that management can only do clerk work in an Associate

Office where they have historically done it. In other words, what management has always done in that office is all they can do; they can not add more clerk work to what they have always done there. For example, if they have unloaded the truck in the morning, and then worked the window at lunch for years, they can not start doing more of our work. Now the problem is going to prove what management has historically done in your office. To do this, surveyors have been sent to offices to document how much work postmasters and supervisors have done.

One of the problems I remember having in small Associate Offices was employees being afraid to come forward with information against the Postmaster or a supervisor in their Post Office. Afraid of what the Postmaster will do to them or their hours once the Union guy is gone out off their office or afraid of the reprisals against them. We can't stop them or win a grievance in your office without your help. If you want us to make things better for you in your office, it can't be done without your help. So remember this when that steward or Area director comes to your office to get information. We have the tools to do it, but we still need you to make this a reality.

Bob



(Continued from page 5)

MVS Report Continued

hide it. The ones being used to transport are doing it so often that they think its part of their job!

We have been quite successful in winning these type grievances as long as we have the proper documentation to substantiate the violation and fellow members are willing to report them to a steward. What makes it difficult is that many members like getting out of the office to run mail around and you don't think about the harm it causes your fellow union members. To those valued concerned members that share in our

Of course, the *scabs* could care less about anybody but themselves and they are often recruited for these "missions". These leeches are reaping the benefits that the union has fought so hard for. They think the service just gave us everything out of the kindness of their heart. They are the worst backstabbers. Through diligent efforts by the union to increase staffing and force the service to fill vacancies, we were able to get these **Bottom Feeders** a higher paying, more secure job and better benefits for their families than they had before or had hoped for. We do the work and they sit back ungrateful and expect us to be all buddy-buddy with them. It's hard, but we will continue to negotiate during this contract year to preserve what we have gained and try our hardest to keep from having to take concessions and give backs with the support of those who care and are grateful for what the union has done for them.

I'm looking forward to the upcoming meetings and hope to share information and to keep abreast of the issues affecting our craft and the union as a whole.

In solidarity,

Scott

(Continued from page 4)

Maintenance Report Continued

graded effective March 18, 2006. Although several (plumber, painter, carpenter, welder and electrician) are jobs being phased out and replaced by the BEM 8, there will be a significant number (about 5000) upgraded from MM5 to MM6. These, along with the Letter Box Mechanics, will provide more lasting gains.

When questioned, President Burrus, once a Maintenance Support Clerk himself, said the APWU will continue to pursue upgrading all positions. Maintenance Support was one mentioned directly. Burrus talked about doing what's best for the whole at the same time as vigorously pursuing upgrades and other benefits for specific groups within the workforce.

As I write, there are just below 30,000 maintenance craft employees. This number continues to decrease. We were at our high, I believe, in 2002 with over 43,000 workers in maintenance.

Katrina Victims

If you have victims of Hurricane Katrina transfer into your office, I would like to suggest organizing to share our work clothes allotments with these co-workers who will arrive without any work clothes. Coming from a warm climate, they will be shocked by our Michigan winters.

Jane

APWU
APWU

(Continued from page 3)

Legislative Report Continued

and the Rainbow/Push Coalition. What a beautiful site it was. There were busloads of marchers from the NAACP, UAW, SEIU and many other unions and organizations. I only wish there had been busloads of APWU members. There were speakers, performers and congressional leaders all in support of this important act being renewed. There were people from all over and a lot of them who actually had been around and personally involved when we did not have the right to vote at all. I wish you could have been there! I took my grandchildren and to them it was just fun walking (until they got really tired and too hot) and talking about all the people around us. It really did not hit home to them though until that night in the hotel room when they saw it on the news and yelled "NANA, look at all those people, I can't even see us in there!"

Well, Congress is back from recess and you know even in the midst of the confirmation hearings, they will again be turning their focus on the postal reform bills and us. Pay close attention to S-662, which I am sure they will take up right away. We may need to take some action, so stay tuned and be ready. Also I know that the social security issue will rise again. Just recently I was sitting in the parking lot at a social security office and I was just looking at the people who went in, and it was not just old(er) folks who are retired and most people seem to think. There were young, old, mothers with babies/tots/young teens (who have lost their daddies), fathers with babies/tots/ young teens (who have lost their moms), people (with people) with disabilities (who were probably their brothers, sisters and/or caregivers) etc., and you know they were not all there just to get social security cards. What would these people have if so-

cial security were privatized and/or placed in the hands of some risky stocks or whatever. So please continue to urge your Senators and Representatives to tell Bush NO when it comes to messing with social security. Well, this may be getting lengthy so I will say so long for this issue and ask as always that you stay tuned, stay alert and please stay ready for any call to action that may be necessary.

Regina



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the Next Michigan
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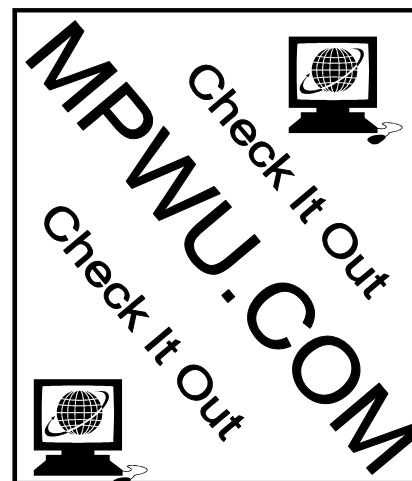


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Your articles are welcome! They must be signed to be printed, but your name will be withheld upon request. Articles sent via electronic media will be treated as being signed. Be aware that articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

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 that are most happy when finding errors in others.



Upcoming Events to Plan For:

October 2005 - Deaf/Hard of Hearing Conference - Reno, NV

November 4 - 6, 2005 - Area 4, 5, 6 District Meeting; Bay City, MI

April 27 - 29, 2006 - MPWU Biennial Convention, Detroit, MI

August 2006 - APWU National Convention, Philadelphia, PA



Area 4, 5, & 6 District Meeting

When: November 4 - 6, 2005

Where: Doubletree Hotel Bay City—Riverfront
1 Wenonah Park Place, Bay City, Michigan

Room Costs: \$85.00 (plus tax) / night

Registration: \$50.00

Classes to be offered:

Basic Stewards Training
Advanced Stewards Training
Maintenance Issues
Article 1.6B (also discussing Small Office (Associate Office) problems).

In addition to this, a Local President's meeting is planned.



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