



Michigan Messenger

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

Volume 33, Issue 130

May / June 2007 Issue

In Remembrance



Percy Harrison, Jr

National Business Agent—Clerk Craft
Central Region—Chicago District

The Executive Board of the Michigan Postal Workers Union would like to express its condolences to the family of Percy Harrison on their recent loss.

Percy Harrison Jr., a Central Region National Business Agent since the early 1990s, died suddenly on June 18. "We were shocked and saddened to learn of Percy's passing," said APWU President William Burrus. "Percy was an outspoken advocate for postal workers, and he will be sorely missed." MPWU President Gary VanHoogstraten said: "Percy was a great friend to Michigan and every postal worker. His insight into the contract and the way he conveyed and taught each of us showed his love of the fight. When he was at our Educational Convention only two weeks ago, his vigor and drive were apparent while teaching Article 37 issues to the packed class. While he was most known for his in-depth teaching of the Postal Inspection (OIG) class, those who have taken any of his classes can and will attest that you came away from his class with a fresh perspective and a renewed sense." This Michigan Messenger is dedicated to Percy, his memory, and his family.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Lily Harrison and Family, 124 Arizona Ave, Joliet, IL 60433.



President's Report

Gary VanHoogstraten
President

Michigan AFL-CIO Convention

We arrived at the registration desk on the first day of the Michigan State AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention knowing that we had to meet to finish with our assigned committees. I was assigned to the rules committee and Dennis Barber was assigned to the credentials committee. The rules committee met a week earlier in Lansing to start going over them. As we left breakfast, I was approached by a member of the State Federation and she asked me if I would sit on the Constitution Committee. Being the rules are the first order of business I accepted. I immediately went to this room that they had set aside for the committee. We met for a couple hours and were ready for the convention. The general session started at 9:30 sharp. As of the first day there were 217 delegates in attendance, along with some keynote speakers: Sandra Williams (President Metro Detroit AFL-CIO), Joe Peters (Director UAW Region 1), Anthony Adams (Deputy Mayor of Detroit), Mike Langford (Utility Workers of America), and Ron Gettlefinger (President International Union UAW). These speakers gave us all something to think about, with the job situation in Michigan. At lunch we were addressed by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka. Richard is one of the most inspiring speakers I have ever heard. Again, he stressed job losses, our political leaders, and how important it is to get our members to the polls in any election and for our members to keep in contact with their elected officials. Also addressing us during the day was one of our favorite and a huge backer of the APWU, Senator Debbie Stabenow. As always, she was full of smiles and let us know where the Senate is and what's coming up in the future. The two day convention went by real fast. We had to deal with resolutions as we do at our convention. At the close of the convention, re-elected to the office of President was Mark Gaffney, and to the Secretary-Treasurer position, Tina Abbott.

Michigan Educational Convention

A year ago last November, former Director of Education Mark Hart and I left the District meeting in Traverse City. We drove across the Mackinac Bridge to Sault Ste Marie and the Kewadin Casino

and Convention Center. We did a site inspection with members from the staff and returned home. Last March I received and signed the contract for this year's convention. As Mark and myself discussed the package and went over all the details, we both agreed that this is where we were going to host the 2007 educational convention. As you all know by now, the convention has passed and this time, the American plan was best fit for our needs. I know all of the members were not thrilled with this package, but looking at the cost of rooms being more and other things we would have had to pay for, it was in the best interest of the Michigan Postal Workers Union. And what a convention it was. Yes, there were some classes offered that we have had before but with the addition of the Veterans and the Computer classes, we opened the door for the future. Mike McCain, myself, along with other State officers went over the sheets that Mike passed out to the members rating the convention. I can say, that all in all, people were mostly satisfied. We are going to take any suggestions which you provided and try and tailor future education for you. I would like to thank Mark Hart and Mike McCain for their roles in the planning of this convention and especially Mike McCain for his work in pulling this off and making his first convention a resounding success.

We now have an "Official" Auxiliary

As promised when we left the convention last year in Detroit, we do now have an active State Auxiliary. Elected as President: Kelly Willinski; Vice President: Debbie Brand; Secretary: Tim Willinski; and Treasurer Dennis Barber. Now it is up to all of you to get your locals auxiliary up and running. The auxiliary can do so much for us, like the retiree chapter. If you don't have a retiree chapter in your local, lets get it up and running!



At the Educational Convention, Kelly along with National Legislative Aide/Editor Kathy Danek put on an outstanding children's program. I sat in on the kids a couple times and they were having a good time, while also learning about Unions. They negotiated a contract and at the Saturday evening dinner, they performed a short skit on their accomplishments and what they learned. They did a great job! We are proud of you.

COPA

The final figures are not in as of yet, but I do know we collected some \$525.00 on Saturday for COPA through the Auxiliary. Pat Comben, President of the Farmington Local, along with some hard work from his wife, they designed a shirt that was dedicated to Bob Maloney, with the proceeds going towards COPA. I can say that these shirts came out great and we sold around 50 of them. Pat, thanks to you and your wife for a wonderful job. This year we dedicated the Educational convention book to Bob Maloney. Bob was honored at the dinner Saturday night and was presented with a clock/plaque from our members. As always, Bob had his limelight with sometimes tearful, but then again some laughter, he managed to keep us amused. Bob as we all know was a great leader for the Michigan Postal Workers Union and we do know also, that he is there for us only a phone call away.

Speaking of COPA.. We all know that we have a new collective bargaining agreement. In this agreement, there were raises, step increases and cost of living adjustments. President Burrus has challenged each of us to give, at a minimum - \$8.00 per year to COPA. I know all of you out there can afford this amount and should give. Not a time goes by that COPA isn't used to "reach" our congressperson and/or Senator. So let's all do our share. Let's make Michigan reach our goal and show the country we can lead.

In closing, the next District Meeting is being planned for sometime this fall. The next Constitutional MPWU State Convention is signed and sealed for Grand Rapids on May 15 - 17, 2008. It will be at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. There will be additional information posted on the website and in the Michigan Messenger.

Until Next Time,



Education at Work

Michael McCain
Director of Education

Hello, Brothers and Sisters

The 2007 Educational Conference is now history. I personally felt that it went well, and the feedback that we received from the attendees also support this. I hope each of you that attended came away with something new. The State has tried to address the needs across the state with the classes we have chosen. With the contract being ratified, consolidation looming, and Locals new stewards and officers we had to take all these things into consideration when selecting classes.

In Michigan we feel the crunch financially and mentally. Financially we feel it at the gas pump, heating bills, and water bills. Mentally we feel it also, when a friend or a loved one has lost his/or hers job. We have the best contract I believe in the world a **NO LAY OFF CLAUSE** gives the protection like no other company can offer.

We must become more politically active because, we have the power to help so many that need it now. Union membership across the country is declining because politicians and Big Corporations have told the public it is the Unions fault for all the short-comings in the business world today. Why not work and support a local mayor who has Labors best interest in mind, such as a living wage for workers, benefits to take care of a family. These are the issues we fight daily as unionist now it is time for action.

The issues that all most divided the AFL-CIO was whether or not to put monies in educating the country in the beliefs and benefits of unions, or put monies directly in the politicians hands to vote on issues we believe in or need. Both of these issues are an important part of the picture but, we can help all our brothers and sisters across the country and the AFL-CIO's burden by learning how to work with-in the **HATCH ACT** to make the largest work force in the world say we want to help and we will make a difference.

I hope to in the near future try to put a class together with the State AFL-CIO on how Federal workers can participate in Local election, State elections, and National elections. We the United States Postal Service is the largest work force in the world besides the Armed Forces.





The Long and Short of It

Michael A. Long
Editor

The Messenger is now 100% Union

It is said that in life, one thing that you know for certain is that things will change. Nothing stays the same. In your postal life, that holds true, and for me, it also holds true in union activities. Since the last issue to the Messenger, an issue was brought to my attention concerning how the Messenger was mailed out to all of the membership. Prior to this edition, the Messenger was printed by a union printer in Grand Rapids and then sent on for the address and barcode to be sprayed on. Unfortunately, there are no union mailers in Grand Rapids so a local business was used. This is now not the case. As of this edition, the paper is 100% union. It is fully typed/placed/created by me, sent to a union printer, who is now also a union mailer (who will have the addresses and barcode sprayed on). It is then taken to the local post office to be mailed out and delivered to you. 100% Union from Start to Finish. Thanks to everyone for their support, direction, and advice in this endeavor.

Website's New Look

If you haven't looked at the website in a while, go check it out. It has a new feel and from the feedback I have received is even easier to navigate. Let me know what you think.

MPWU Educational Convention

At the time of this writing, we are about to head up to the Educational Convention in Sault Ste Marie. The paper will go to press right after we return to insure that if any new information is shared at this convention from either the guests or the trainers, that it is put in this edition, and you receive it expeditiously. If the paper arrives a little later than usual because of this, I hope you understand the reason behind it.

Summer and Discounts

Well, the summer has arrived, and most of us will be traveling somewhere, even at \$3.50 a gallon for gas. However, as I have stated in the past, make sure you take your Postal ID with you. You never know where you might end up spending the night, and they might just offer a

Government discount. So, while you might be spending more on gas, you might be able to save some by asking if they have a discount and by showing your card/ID.

Speaking of saving some money, these last two months you have definitely saved some. I have received at least 20 e-Mails from members around the state requesting the 15% Alltel discount. If you have Alltel service and haven't started to save, please contact me and let's remedy this oversight. Like Ben Franklin said..."A penny saved is a penny earned." Remember, this is a savings only for MPWU members. The Postal Service does not have an arrangement with Alltel.

A Long Summer and EAP

Well as I said above, summer has arrived, and with it... Prime Time. I don't know about your office specifically, but more than likely, it means...more hours. Please keep in mind that during these long days of summer, if you become frustrated, either at home, work, or wherever, and just need to talk to someone...remember....1-800-EAP-4-You. It might be the smartest phone call you could make.

In closing, I do wish each of you the best summer. When you can, make sure you get out there and enjoy it. Be safe, as I always look forward to seeing you at an upcoming conference or meeting.

Yours in Solidarity,

Michael Long

*Any and all
submissions for the
July / August 2007
Edition of the
Michigan Messenger
is due to the Editor
Not Later Than
July 15, 2007*



Legislative Report

Regina Favors
Legislative Director

Summer is finally here and I for one am really ready for some warmer weather even though our winter was one of the mildest I have ever experienced; however I am now looking forward to those wonderful picnics and barbecue holidays. By the time you read this Independence Day will have come and gone and I trust you had a very safe and happy one.

Now down to business, I recently was given the opportunity to attend the Presidents Conference due to this particular conference having a legislative agenda. This is the first time I have ever been to a Presidents Conference and it was a very informative as well as fascinating event. I was also very glad to see other local presidents from around Michigan in attendance also. Jennifer Amos (WMAL President) was there and I found out that she did have appointments made with her elected officials. The day on the hill was the last day of the conference. At the beginning of the conference we were told about the changing of ownership of the hotel and we were asked to wear stickers in support of the workers who were being asked or at least it was proposed to lower their wages while adding more to their jobs and have fewer people doing those jobs. A motion was made and passed to send a letter of support for the hotel workers.

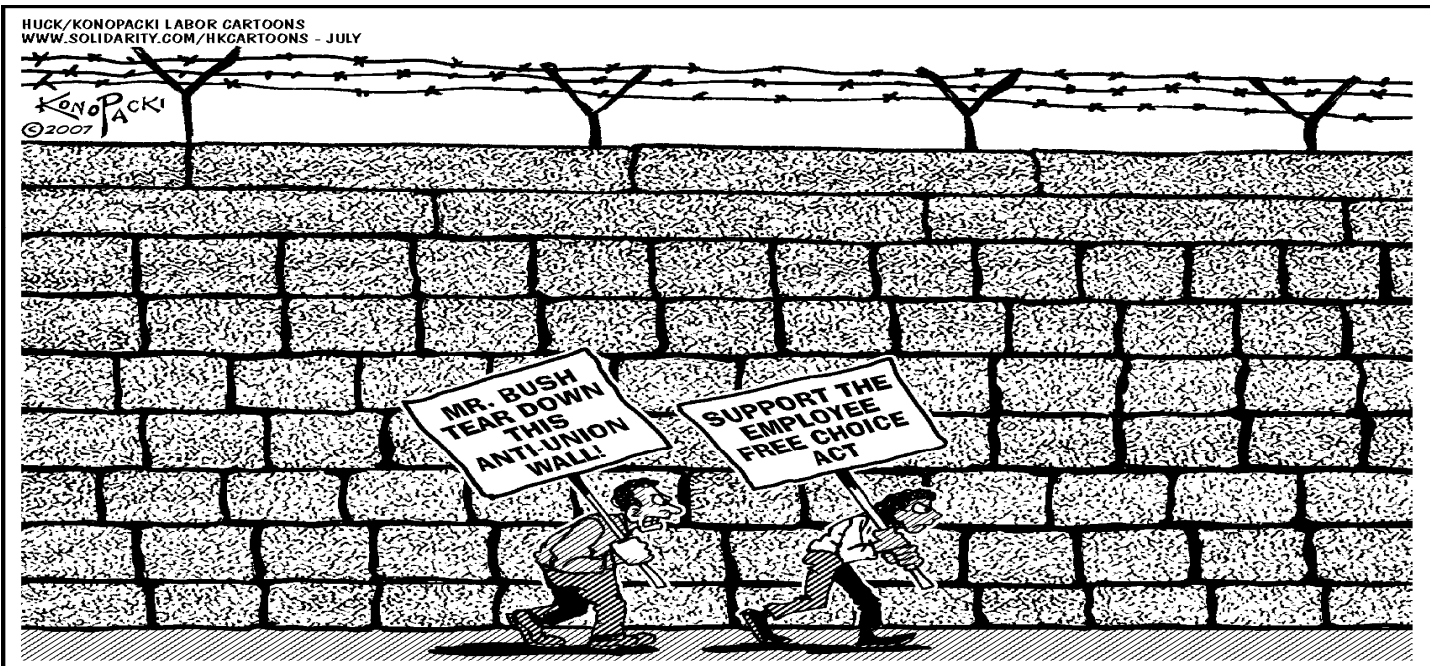
Next, we had a history of the Presidents Conference from its inception in 1975. We heard from President Bill Burrus, Sec-Treas. Terry Stapleton, Legislative Director Myke Reid, and Asst. Director Steve Albanese, Retiree Director Doug Holbrook, and (at the end) Industrial Relations Greg Bell. There was a laundry list of items for discussion beginning with NPC issues, (talking points with Legislators, for one), Internal Issues, such as labor 2008, closing/consolidating APWU-NBA Offices etc. and National Agreement Issues (which include deployment of FSS, management compliance, window training, retirement counseling) just to name a few and National Negotiation Issues (updates on contract issues, casuals, clerk casuals scheduling {heated debate} and so on).

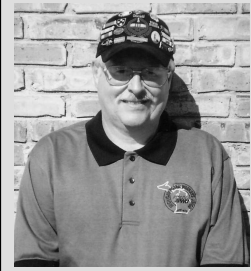
For the legislative training we received a list of priorities for the APWU. The Employee Free Choice Act tops the list, with Retiree Healthcare Premium Conversion, The GPO. and WEP following. I will have this information with me at the convention, but if you would like a copy of it or need more info please as always feel free to contact me. Once again I am urging you to stay informed, stay committed and keep the union(s) alive.

Peace and Solidarity,

Gina

P.S. For those of you who have been praying for my granddaughter, she is home and doing very well, getting stronger everyday, and wishing she could come with me. She still has a long way to go but not nearly as far as she has come. Bless you all. Thanks!





Veteran's Report

John Smeekeens
Veterans Director

RETIREMENT/MONEY

I knew those two words would get your attention, so here's what I'm talking about. Dave Winters, lead auto technician on Tour III at the Royal Oak V.M.F., recently got an e-mail that brought up some interesting information about Social Security and Veterans. So after spending a Friday afternoon with the retirement counselor at the Social Security office in downtown Mt. Clemens, here's the information I was given. On January 1, 1968, a law took effect that directed all the branches of military service to report all wages earned by military personnel to the Social Security Administration. It seems as though some were reported, while some weren't. This could affect your parents or grandparents as well. If you know a Veteran who is retired and collecting Social Security, they need to take a copy of their DD-214 down to the SSA office and verify if their military income was credited to their account. It has to be done in person, and you need your DD-214. All the way up to the above mentioned date, it might not have been reported. And in some cases, it may not have been reported even after the above mentioned date. All they will credit you with is INCOME. THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH QUARTERS OF TIME. IT IS ONLY FOR INCOME. And remember when you do retire, if you file for Social Security; take your DD-214 to prove your military experience. And Thank You Mr. Winters.

BACKLOG

Have you been wondering why your claim to the V.A. has been taking so long? Well as of March 3, 2007 the V.A. had almost 401,000 pending claims cases for disability compensation with almost 115,000 of those languishing for more than six months. The VA problems are unrelated to the recent news reports about the Defense Department and the ongoing situation at Walter Reed Medical Center. But remember, it's a time thing. Don't get frustrated or give up. Keep hanging in there. You've come this far, don't give up.

GULF WAR ILLNESS

Veterans of the 1991 Persian Gulf War who have disabilities from undiagnosed illnesses will continue to qualify for VA benefits and health care until December 31, 2011.

Don't hesitate to contact your County Veterans Representative to take advantage of your benefits before they expire. **DO IT NOW!**

AWARD

The MSPB has recently come out with a new ruling that affects all Postal Service employees that are presently working, and also those that are retired. You must have been a Military Reservists who worked at the United States Postal Service between the years 1980 and 2000. This has to do with your Military Leave that you used when attending meetings and/or summer encampments. The USPS had incorrectly applied the leave policy forcing members to include their non-scheduled days as part of their 15 days of Military Leave. From what I've heard so far, is that retired employees are eligible for a cash settlement and current employees would receive a settlement in the form of annual leave being credited to their account. The Law firm handling this case is doing so at no cost to the member, they get paid if they win a settlement for the member from the MSPB and receive nothing if they lose. Presently their win rate is at or over 90%. Here is their link; www.fedattorney.com. **PLEASE LET YOUR RETIREE'S KNOW ABOUT THIS, AND SPREAD THE WORDS AMONGST YOUR VETERANS'.**

U. V. A.

No, it's not the stuff they put on your glasses that helps to protect your eyes from the damaging effects of the sun's rays.

What it is, is the Union Veterans Association. It's a new organization being formed right here in Michigan. It is an organization formed for Veterans, to benefit and educate our Union brothers and sisters and their families and reverse the trend of reducing Veterans rights and benefits. This country owes its very existence to our Veterans, and its standard of living to our Unions. Veterans and Union members are two of the largest groups in the country and we take advantage of the right to vote. Yet with all this power, our rights and privileges have diminished significantly over the last two decades. Veterans are coming back from war without the protections and benefits we all once knew. Health care and rehabilitation programs are being cut significantly. Federal and State governments are reducing Veterans benefits. Well here's your chance to do something about it. Go to the following web site to get more information www.unionvets.org. Don't have access to a computer? Write to them at *Union Veterans Association, P. O. Box 44707, Detroit, MI 48244-0707*. Request

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information from them about their association. Join up today! Be in on the ground floor! Make a difference and let your voice be heard!

HONOR FLIGHT MICHIGAN

Honor Flight Michigan Inc. is a non-profit organization formed to raise funds to send all World War II Veterans, to see their monument free of charge. A CBS news report called "In Their Honor" was about a North Carolina man who took WWII Veterans to see their monument in Washington DC. One of the Veterans, Lt. Joseph Collins, recalled his last day in Stalag Luft 3 in what is now Zagen, Poland. "I was looking into the city and I could see the German swastika up there. It started coming down and our flag, the flag of the United States of America, went up. And then Patton came in, standing in his jeep, he came right in. Now that was something." Dave and Carole Cameron were watching the special at their home in West Bloomfield, when they both agreed that something like that could be done right here in Royal Oak. Dave, a longtime businessman from Royal Oak, started "Honor Flight Michigan Inc." Dave is now heading up a state-wide effort to take as many WWII veterans as he can on a one day, all expenses paid trip to the Capital to see their Monument. He is working close with American Legion Post 253 of Royal Oak. Bud Wease from the American Legion said some of their members wept when they heard about the goal. Many WWII Veterans don't have the funds to travel or they are not in good enough health to travel alone. The Memorial didn't open to the public until 2004 when the youngest of WWII Veterans was pushing 76 years of age. Today only 3 million of the 16 million who served are still alive, and they are dying at the rate of 1200 to 1500 per day. These Veterans have waited over 60 years for a memorial they might never see. In another 5 to 10 years, almost all of our WWII Veterans will be gone. Time is running out to pay them one last tribute and treat them like HEROES again, even if it is only for that one day. For more information on how to help this group succeed, please visit www.honorflightmichigan.com. For those who fight for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.

DIGNIFIED TRANSPORT

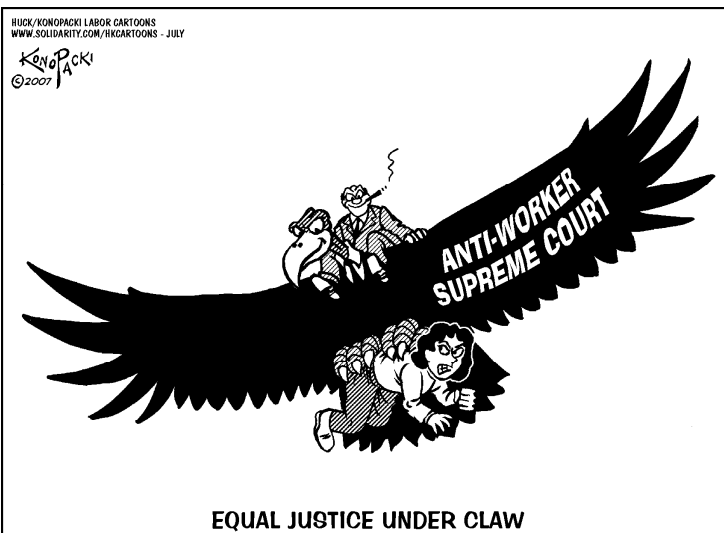
A new law took effect on January 1, 2007 that changes the way the remains of service members killed in combat are transported and handled. The 2007 National Defense Authorization Act states that the primary mode of transportation for remains of service members being returned to the United States is military aircraft or military-contracted aircraft. Previously, commercial aircraft

was used to transport remains of fallen troops. Air Force Colonel Michael Pachuta said "every service member who dies in a theater of combat is transported to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, for processing and burial preparation." The law changes the way the remains are transported from Dover to their place of burial. The law also directs that an honor guard escort the service members remains from Dover to their final resting place. Next of kin can request that commercial transport be used and that no honor guard escort the remains. Also, honor covers will be used on top of the airlines standard coffin tray. The honor cover is a reinforced waterproof cardboard cover. It is embossed with an American flag, and the Defense Department seal on both ends. The idea for the covers came from feedback from family members and military members who had escorted remains. Pachuta said "Our intent certainly is to make sure that those handling the remains along the way understand that this is a fallen service member and certainly should be handled expeditiously but also with respect." The covers are not used more than once. When the remains reach their final destination, the honor cover is removed and an American flag is placed over the coffin.

USS GERALD FORD

The United States Navy has announced that its next aircraft carrier will be named the USS GERALD R. FORD. Susan Ford Bales said of her father "There is nothing, absolutely nothing that would have made Dad prouder." Mr. Ford served in the U. S. Navy during World War II. The 1092 foot long aircraft carrier with capacity for a crew of 4,660 is the first in a new line of ships and is expected to be commissioned in the next seven to eight years.

John



EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER CLAW



Maintenance Memo

Jane Duggan
Maintenance Director

I'm looking forward to our biennial educational seminar in June. It's always good to get a chance to meet with a larger group of members from around the state. Our Division Director, Steve Raymer, and our NBA, Troy Rorman will be coming in and teaching two of the sessions. It will be a great opportunity for all of us to be updated on the MS-47 issues and the new CBA. Bring your questions and situations.

eReassign

A number of things have come up in recent weeks that I would like to touch on briefly. First of all is the issue of eReassign. I went into our local shared services office today to see if they had accepted an employee's written request for a change of craft into maintenance. I was told that all custodial jobs are being handled through eReassign now, not the conventional request for change of craft.

I know there is a mandate from many area offices that vacancies are posted to eReassign for 30 days. If the positions are not filled, offices may open in-service registers. Employees get into eReassign from the liteblue page and Postal ease. eReassign is handled on a "first come/first served" basis. The introduction of eReassign does not alter our CBA and the established pecking order.

New to Installation - Transfer

Another related "hiring" issue came up when someone transferred into a new installation and tried to exercise his/her right to apply within 30 days in a new installation for a position the person had not previously gotten a rating for. (This is one of the four opportunities afforded maintenance craft employees to apply for positions.) The receiving office tried to turn down the "application" because the employee's file reflected that s/he had abandoned for this position in the old office.

This was not justifiable ground to deny someone's application. ABANDON is an action – not a result. In other words, when the employee abandoned the MSS process in the original office, an ABANDON notice was issued. No rating is given following abandonment. If the employee had completed the MSS process but been scored *Ineligible*, s/he would not be eligible to apply in the new office since

Ineligible is a rating. When the local union pursued a grievance in this matter, the employee's right to apply in the new office was honored.

Transfer versus In-service Register

Another issue that comes up when employees try to move is the question of transfer requests versus utilizing the local In-service register. Article 38.5.B.7 makes it clear in the pecking order for filling maintenance vacancies that local management may consider transfer requests **BEFORE** or **AFTER** going to the In-service register. In this instance, it is a local management decision which order to use. Generally, management will honor a transfer request if the person is already trained on equipment in the receiving office.

Wearing Shorts

Lastly, spring is finally here – although somewhat hesitant, it seems. The question of wearing shorts inevitably comes up with warm weather. This is an item to be negotiated locally. It could be part of your LMOU or can be negotiated by the Maintenance Craft Director or chief steward and your local management. Handbook EL-803/Employee Guide to Safety allows the local negotiation of this item.

Troy Rorman recently emailed copies of settlements in some locals. When you discuss this item, you have to be very mindful about safety and the fact that some jobs may allow for safe wearing of shorts while others might preclude that.

In Minneapolis, a 60-day trial period was negotiated one year with a number of stipulations. If you have a local settlement that allows the wearing of shorts, please email it to me. This is one of those issues that may ride largely on your relationship with local management. It comes up annually so I wish all locals trying to negotiate a policy success.

Solidarity,

Jane





Area 7 Report

Thomas Lothamer
Area 7 Director

Enemy

“The enemy of my enemy is my friend”, when I Googled this often heard expression to properly cite the author I was curious as to how many times it had been used in the past. I never did figure out who had said it but I did reflect on its meaning and what it could and should mean to all of us as one union.

In Associate Offices where things are done at a different sort of pace than the bigger offices and depending on the Postmaster different enforcement or even interpretation of not only what the contract says but also what the DMM, IMM, postal bulletin, etc... It amazes me as to what friggin jackasses some of these PMs can be when it comes to a simple thing like reading black and white. These Managers seem to be more focused on what kind of havoc they can create to pit craft employee against craft employee so that we can be manipulated easier. If we are pissed at each other we are seemingly less likely to respect each other's seniority and knowledge. Some of us as we go along throughout our postal career accept the fact that working seven days a week borrowing ourselves to carry mail, cut the grass, even work in another Associate Office just to maybe get something that resembles a living wage of 30 to 40 hours a week and in an AO this form of hoop jumping can take ten years maybe a whole career.

Maybe it is frustration in looking down to the end of the tunnel and not seeing daylight that causes us to sell ourselves short. To sell our co-workers out for a smiling nod that perhaps will lead to that “favor” of a schedule without a split, or duties more suited to our liking. It may lead to an opportunity of becoming a 204b. This compared to being a clerk in an AO appears to have a better long-term opportunity. I have noticed over the years more AO clerks performing 204b than I have PTFs becoming Regular. It makes you think as to why would this person who seems to have a grip on life who is seemingly normal in most regards would place themselves into a position where they would have to sell themselves a little more every day and along the way sell out their co-workers for the “opportunity” of advancing themselves until there

comes a day that they no longer are recognizable to their peers and even themselves.

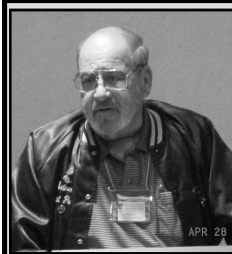
Looking at this scenario I can see how some would say “why isn't the Union working harder about making regulars in post offices”, I want to but in order to become a regular in the contract you have to work eight hours within ten over the same five days (Monday-Friday-exp.) over a six month period of time. Now over six months it doesn't have to be clerk one that does this schedule it can be a combination of clerk one, two, three, etc...All this must fall into place and if a manager manipulates the schedule enough to prevent this from happening then it can seem pretty hopeless to EVER make regular in an AO.

This brings me to the title of my article and to the message I am trying to convey to all of you who read these words. Shortcuts through the system for the ability to put bread on our tables for our families seems a small price to pay for the days that we are doing it but we sell a little of ourselves everyday until we become some maniacal drone of the corporate machine. We work for the big corporation but we are small town folks and we should not lose touch with these concepts as we step through our postal careers.

Find another way, don't change who you are and don't let them change you. When you are working beside your brothers and sisters of the APWU don't sell them out and yourselves for a small favor from a middle manager that could not make it or didn't want to make by means of the long road and paying their dues. Most of them took the short cut and look at how they are now. Insecure, Tyrannical, Manipulating bullies who I am sure are not the same people they were when they started. We may not always like our co-workers but if we don't stick together even during the times of indifference then we will be forever doomed for the fate that lies before us. We are not the problem, we do a good job, we know our customers and they know us, we want to do a good job but sometimes the managers of the postal service get it all wrong and lose focus on everything but their bonuses or incentive pay or whatever the hell they are calling it now.

Do this brother a favor and try to stick to the long road, keep me informed and I will try to do the same for you. Together we can make a difference even if we don't care for one another all of the time or ever for that matter. The alternative costs you your morality and maybe even your soul. “Enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

Thomas



Retiree Involvement

Al LaBrecque
MPWU Retirees President

From The Retirees Department: Director Doug Holbrook advises that the APWU National Executive Board approved a resolution that provides free Retirees Dept. membership to members who retire during 2007 as a way of thanking them for their years as a member of the APWU. Retired members will receive a letter from the national Union offering this free one-year membership. All they need to do to receive this one-year free membership is to complete the card enclosed with the letter. This card will not be processed until the expiration of one year. After one year their membership dues will be \$2.00 per month deducted from their annuity check. If after one year a retired member does not wish to continue their membership, all they need to do is notify the Retirees' Department and their membership will be terminated.

It would appear that this organizing strategy is on a trial basis for those retiring in 2007. Local and State Chapters will not receive dues rebates for the year of free membership. That is a bone of contention in some quarters. In my view, this one year free membership offer should be extended to ANY retired member who joins the Retirees' Department. This may well be an agenda item for the Retirees' Department Conference in Las Vegas, November 5-6, 2007.

Retirees' Department Conference. Dir. Holbrook has requested Local and State Retiree Chapters to submit agenda items as soon as possible. We have a long-standing list of unresolved proposals to submit, but not limited to, as follows:

- ⇒ Retirees' Dept. Staffing: Absolutely necessary to fully staff at least two (2) full-time OPEIU secretaries, and a technician to promptly provide necessary information and guidance to the volume of member inquiries to properly service the needs of retired members and/or their survivors. This technician to establish communications contacts with OPM and the new Shared Services. One Director and one secretary cannot adequately service the department whose mail and phone volume is second only to the Secretary-Treasurer Department.
- ⇒ Communications: As a service to Dept. members; develop a quarterly APWU Retirees' Dept Newsletter to inform members of CSRS/FERS C.O.L.A. updates, Leg-

islative and Political action, and issues pertinent to APWU retired members. (It should be noted that communications have vastly improved under Dir. Holbrook. However, those mailings only go to the presidents of Local and State Chapters).

- ⇒ APWU News Service Bulletin: Ensure that the NSB is furnished to every Local and State Retiree Chapter and the five (5) elected National Retiree Delegates to the APWU National Convention.
- ⇒ Promoting The APWU Retirees' Department: Advertisement! Utilize the APWU PPA editor's mailing list. Furnish PPA editors of APWU Local and State Union publications a Retirees' Dept. Ad similar to those of the ABA and Auxiliary. Numerous APWU Local and State publications give space to NARFE, but make no mention of our own APWU Retirees' Dept. Develop a Retirees' Dept. logo.
- ⇒ Local & State Chapter Lists: Furnish annually, updated listings of Local and State Retiree Chapters with contact officers' names and addresses, and the names and addresses of the five (5) elected Retiree Delegates to the National Convention, to each Local and State Retiree Chapter.
- ⇒ Legislative & Political Action: Coordinate efforts between the APWU Legislative Dept. and Retirees' Dept. on priority retiree legislation. Utilize the abilities and expertise of the Retirees' Dept. Director to actively lobby and provide testimony before Members of Congress. (The Retirees' Dept. has partnered with the Alliance for Retired Americans and the APWU Legislative Dept. The APWU has developed a brochure of "legislative priorities" which includes; Premium Conversion S.773 and H.R.1110, and repeal of WEP/GPO H.R.82 and S.206). Reestablish the Legislative Rally strategy when priority legislation reaches a critical stage. Automatically furnish each Local & State Chapter and Retiree Delegates an up-to-date APWU Legislative Directory.
- ⇒ Education: Conduct seminars geared to the informational needs of the already retired dues-paying members. Such as: Wills & Trusts, Long-term health care, procedures and information for annuitant's survivors, Final expenses, Social Security & Medicare benefits, How to contact and deal with OPM, Legislative & Political action, Utilization of community services organizations, to list a few sub-

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jects. Conducting retirement seminars for the active APWU members planning retirement and training retirement counselors, is a vital function of the Dept. At least equal time and effort needs to be devoted to the already retired dues-paying membership, Local and State Chapters.

- ⇒ Greater Utilization of the Five (5) Elected National Retiree Delegates: The APWU leadership position that they are 'elected as Retiree Delegates to the APWU National Convention and nothing more' is to be wasting a valuable resource in the field, and diminishes the incentive of dedicated and qualified candidates to run for the position. These delegates can be, and in some instances are, valuable contact persons in the field for retired members, Local and State Chapters. Assign to organize Chapters in their respective Regions, assign to a Retirees' Dept. booth at official APWU functions such as the APWU Presidents' Conference when held in their Region, train as retirement counselors and/or retirement seminar instructors, to fully equip the delegates to be able to service retired members in the field, and to fairly compensate at least the rate of L-5, S-O for each day of their assignment with necessary expenses, including the National Convention, Retirees' Dept Conference, and APWU Health Plan Seminar. It should be noted that the Retirees' Dept. is financially self-sustaining without any subsidization from the parent APWU general fund.
- ⇒ Organizing: Develop an organizing strategy in conjunction with the resources of the APWU Organizing Dept. for signing new and long-time retired APWU members, and organizing Local and State Chapters. (The new 2007 program to offer one-year free membership to new retirees is a promising move in the right direction). Potential retiree members need to be offered more tangible benefits of belonging to the APWU Retirees' Dept. than just a bimonthly magazine with limited information pertinent to retired members, a \$5,000. Accidental Death & Dismemberment policy, and the perception that retirees' sole value to the APWU is as the most prolific contributors to COPA.

These items are among those I intend to poll candidate's for Retirees' Dept. Director for their positions in the upcoming National APWU elections.

Press Release: House Panel Approves Stupak Flag Bill. (H.R.692). Washington - The U.S. House of Representa-

tives Committee on the Judiciary marked-up and reported legislation authored by Congressman Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) aimed at ensuring that federal agencies lower their flags to half-staff when a governor proclaims this honor for fallen soldiers.

"Those who make the ultimate sacrifice for our country deserve our nation's ultimate respect," Stupak said. "I am pleased that the House Judiciary Committee has moved forward to approve this legislation and I will look forward to its consideration on the House floor."

Stupak's bill, the "Army Specialist Joseph P. Micks Federal Flag Code Amendment Act of 2007," would require all federal government agencies in a state to comply with a governor's proclamation to fly the national flag at half-staff in honor of those who lose their lives serving their country.

Recently in Michigan's 1st Congressional District, fallen service members were honored with lowered flags in their hometowns and at the sites of their memorial services, but not in surrounding communities. While federal facilities in the hometown and at the site of the memorial services lowered their flags, some federal facilities in neighboring communities did not, creating an uneven display of respect. The bill is named after Joseph P. Micks, a soldier from Rapid River, MI who was killed in Iraq last July.

"This is a problem that must be addressed," Stupak noted. "I raised this issue by writing President Bush last year when the problem came to my attention. Sadly, since then, there have been yet more unfortunate instances in which federal facilities have not shown the proper respect for our fallen heroes."

The Judiciary Committee approved the bill unanimously. "Clearing the Judiciary Committee is an important step in moving this legislation towards enactment," Stupak said. "I will continue working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to move this legislation to the House floor for consideration."

Twenty of Stupak's colleagues in the House, including Reps. (Dale) Kildee (D-MI), Kilpatrick (D-MI) and Rogers (R-MI) have co-sponsored the legislation. An identical companion bill (S.720) has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Carl Levin (D-MI). Michigan Governor Jennifer M. Granholm (D) commented on the importance of Stupak's bill.

"The practice of lowering the flag for a fallen service member calls attention to the extraordinary service these

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Retiree Involvement Continued

young men and women provide our nation", said Gov. Granholm. "This legislation will be a much needed step to ensure that we are all consistently honoring their sacrifices on behalf of the American people."

Rep. Bart Stupak has been a consistent friend of postal workers and the APWU. His recent intervention on the AMP studies of the Gaylord, MI mail processing facility, in concert with Gaylord APWU Local President, John Marcotte's long battle to preserve mail processing in Gaylord is expressed in the following press releases (in part):

5/1/07 Rep. Bart Stupak. "The hiring of twenty career employees at the Gaylord postal facility is great news not only for the Gaylord area, but for all northern Michigan residents who depend on the Gaylord mail processing facility for timely mail delivery." "In meetings and through repeated correspondence to the United States Postal Service, I expressed my concerns that the Gaylord facility was being allowed to fall way below its authorized level and that temporary employees were being used for extended periods instead of career employees. I am pleased that the United States Postal Service will hire twenty career employees and I will continue to monitor the Gaylord facility to make sure the promised personnel are hired and the necessary equipment is installed so northern Michigan postal customers receive the highest quality of service."

"I am hopeful that today's announcement will be followed by the discontinuation of the Area Mail Processing (AMP) study, which has threatened the viability of the mail processing facility at Gaylord. The Gaylord postal employees do excellent work, and the Gaylord facility is a key component of our northern Michigan mail delivery system."

5/15/07. Washington - Congressman Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) was informed today by the U.S. Postal Service that the agency is canceling the "Area Mail Processing" (AMP) study of the Gaylord postal facility. The following statement may be attributed to Stupak: "Cancellation of the AMP study is excellent news for the Gaylord area, for local postal employees, and for all northern Michigan residents who depend on the Gaylord mail processing facility for timely mail delivery."

"I repeatedly expressed my concerns that the Gaylord AMP study, which had been dragged on for far too long and was being conducted in a manner unfair to the Gaylord postal office. I am please the U.S. Postal Service heard my concerns and discontinued this study. The

workers of the Gaylord postal facility do exceptional work and provide important service to northern Michigan." "The discontinuation of the AMP study bolsters the previous action by the Postal Service to add twenty new career employees to the Gaylord postal facility".

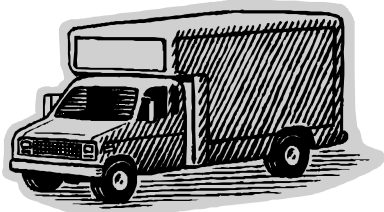
Note: This is a significant victory! I'm personally proud of MY 1st District Congressman! Thank You Rep. Stupak, and Congratulations to Gaylord Local Pres. John Marcotte, officers and members! Sometimes the 'little guy' still does win!

Who WAS Jack Love?? There's still a few of us who remember Brother Love, at least here in his home state. Jack Love died November 20, 2006 at age 90 (re: Jan./Feb., 2007 issue of the Michigan Messenger, page 15). I carefully scanned the Jan./Feb. '07 issue of the APWU official national publication; The American Postal Worker....there was no mention of Jack's passing. Okay, maybe his family didn't think to notify APWU Hq. Subsequently, I had occasion to speak with a national officer in D.C., asking if they had been notified of Jack's death. They had, and commented that the APWU "Communications Service Manager" had no clue as to WHO Jack Love WAS?! So, yes, APWU Hq. was aware. Then comes the Mar./April issue of our national magazine and I zero in on every page, cover to cover. Maybe I missed it in the Jan./Feb. issue. No. Surely a memoriam to Brother Love will be in the May/June issue. NOT a peep! NOT on the APWU Secretary-Treasurer's page, NOT on the APWU Health Plan Director's page....NOT on ANY page! Absolutely incredible!

Oh, by the way; Jack Love was the former APWU Secretary-Treasurer, and founding architect of the APWU Health Plan. That's all, "just" a retired national officer from the Jackson, MI Local who rose through the Union ranks (NFPOC, UFPC & APWU) to the #3 APWU E-Board position. Now, I want to know WHY NOT?! Some years ago I heard that Jack changed to another FEHBP health plan for whatever his reasons were. So, is this a deliberate snub or just another "inadvertent omission"? Preferring to apply my long-held Union credo that; 'every member deserves the benefit of doubt' (including national officers), I pray it's the latter. It would be shamefully 'small' if it's the former. Maybe it will be in the July/Aug. issue.....?

Be Strong!

AI



Wheels & Wrenches

By: Joe Wrobel
480-481 Area Local

Article 39 of the National Agreement is our craft specific article covering all Transportation employees, Vehicle maintenance employees, Driver safety instructors, and in some cases V.O.A.'s. VOMA's on the other hand are multi-craft positions and the successful bidder retains the craft that they come from. In other words if a clerk, carrier, maintenance, or mail handler gets the bid their craft remains the same. Too many times other crafts get the position and then feel that they are MVS craft employees. Driver Safety Instructor positions are also multi-craft positions, however the successful bidder then becomes a MVS craft employee. We wonder why the same does not happen in the VOMA positions, and the answer is pretty clear. Postal Management didn't think things through when they change the descriptions and duties of the VOMA's. What else is new? Another brilliant move of theirs was to drop the shuttling of vehicles from all position descriptions. I believe this was done because postal management's hidden agenda was to contract the shuttling of all postal vehicles. This would allow management to eliminate some of our positions and give more of our jobs to lower paying contractors. I'm glad to report that this plan of theirs is not working out so well. We in the MVS Craft need to be diligent in the way that our work is so easily contracted out to any one who owns a garage and a couple of wrenches. Management has an obligation to check out the contractor and their work before awarding the contract work. We also have the right to review the contract and as vehicle mechanics if you notice that the contractors work is substandard by all means report it. We need to start taking serious the work that is arbitrarily contracted out. How do we do this? Filing a grievance that's how, writing down dates, requesting information and by getting involved in the process and not just sitting there and watching others do it for us. Remember that a VOMA's job has it limits, just like any other job in the post office. An example is that a VOMA 's can do simple maintenance repair not requiring VMF support. They can change a light bulb; they can not repair the wiring harness that goes to the light. It is not the VOMA's job to troubleshoot a vehicle, it is the VOMA's job to make sure that the repair of the vehicle gets done. If you see any other contractor or postal employee doing our work we need to file a grievance and bring the work back to our craft and stop giving others the chance to steal our jobs. If we see another craft transporting our mail (except express) we

should report it to your union representative so that the proper action can be taken to try to stop this and allow our transportation drivers to transport the mail. Too many times I have witnessed mail handlers and other crafts in my area transporting bulk mail from place to place. I file the grievance and the practice usually stops until the next manager comes along from where ever they come from and tries it again. That is why I say that we have to be on the look out 24/7 and the union can not be every where at all times so we MVS craft members need to help ourselves first. If you feel that your VMF is contracting out too many services or repairs let your elected APWU representative know so action can be taken and the situation can be looked into. Just remember that not every gripe turns into a grievance, and some times things appear different that what they really are. I recently had an issue arise about full time flexes and a residual vacancy. I knew that I was reading the contract right and after a lot of research and a few phone calls it turned out that I was wrong on this particular issue. It took the National Assistant MVS Craft director to show me the different language covering this issue. I tell you this so that you realize that your union rep reads and interrupts the national agreement, as should you. We may not always agree or be right, so it is important to keep that open dialog with your craft representatives. We are a small but proud craft and it is my opinion that with out us the mail would not be transported and the carrier vehicles would not be repaired properly. We may not be the craft that is bragged about all the time but we are every bit as important. We are a proud craft in a proud union and we must protect our jobs for our future as well as others.

Thank you and have a very safe and happy summer.

Joe Wrobel



Percy teaching the OIG/Postal Inspector's Class at the Area 7, 8, & 9 District Meeting - March 3, 2007 in Kalamazoo, MI



1300 L Street NW, Washington DC 20005

Dear Rector:

On behalf of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, I would like to congratulate you on your retirement from the U.S. Postal Service. Please accept this Retirement Commendation signed by President William Burrus and Secretary-Treasurer Terry R. Supleton as our thanks for your many years of service. We would like to see you stay with the union because we know that APWU can continue to help throughout your retirement years just as we helped while you were working. That's why we are delighted to offer you this opportunity to continue your membership in our great union. We have two categories of membership:

As a member of the APWU Retirees Department you'll have access to other... information on: Community Services, Training as Retirement Counselors, educational, social, organizational, new political activities, and much more. As a member of the Retirees Department, you'll be eligible to participate in the Union's Voluntary Benefits Plan and the great APWU Health Plan. Those members that have the APWU Health and Benefit Plans must remain members of the APWU in order to retain these benefits.

May 6, 1862

Douglas C. Holtzrak

Convention: a Learning Experience

By Paul Felton
480-481 Area Local

Michigan AFL-CIO Convention

Along with MPWU President Gary Van Hoogstraten and Area 12 Director Dennis Barber, I attended the Michigan State AFL-CIO Convention in Troy on May 14-15. Also present were about 300 people from 25 different unions.

I noticed a big difference between this gathering and APWU Conventions I've attended in the past. Unlike APWU gatherings, passing of resolutions seems to be secondary, and listening and learning from guest speakers is primary. We did pass 18 resolutions, around subjects like trade policy, Employee Free Choice Act, Health Care, the state budget, and a very interesting resolution entitled "Marshall Plan for Auto." There was little debate on any of these, or on the Constitutional changes proposed and adopted at this Convention.

The mood was upbeat. Unions played a major role in the Congressional victories last November that leave the Democratic Party with a majority in both the U.S. House and Senate, and in one chamber of Michigan's state legislature. This has stopped the right-wing anti-labor momentum in Washington, and the delegates were determined to put a friend of labor in the White House in November 2008.

Senator Debbie Stabenow spoke along these lines, saying that the discussions in Congress have changed with the Democrats in a majority. Now we can talk about raising the minimum wage, stopping the tax breaks being given to big oil companies that are gauging us at the pump, and fighting privatization. But since it takes 60 votes to close debate in the Senate, it's hard to pass any progressive measure with the slim Democratic majority. With Bush in charge, the GNP is up, profits are up, but real wages for workers are way down. We'll need to vote the Republicans out in both the White House and a number of Senate and House seats.

National AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka had a similar theme. He stated that George Bush has stacked every federal agency with "pro-corporate thugs," with the result that labor law is not enforced, schools and the country's infrastructure is neglected, and your average CEO now makes 400 times what the average worker makes. Bush has driven up the deficit, and given tax breaks to the wealthy. Brother Trumka called Bush "the biggest job destroyer in the history of our country."

Trumka said in the next election, we should not only work like never before to put a Democrat in the White House, but we should make demands of that candidate once he/she gets into office. Just as Bush put corporate cronies into decision-making positions in one agency after another, labor should demand to be made a full partner in the decision-making process after we help elect the candidate of our choice.

Another well-known and timely speaker was UAW President Ron Gettelfinger. As he spoke, the news was just breaking that the firm Cerberus Capital Management would be taking over Chrysler. Brother Gettelfinger's time slot had to be adjusted because of a conference call dealing with this matter. When he spoke, he sounded upbeat about the future for Chrysler workers and he indicated that Cerberus offered more of a commitment to keeping Chrysler running than other potential buyers. Yet I had a feeling a lot was left unsaid, and there are real concerns for Chrysler's UAW members in the future. In the same speech, Brother Gettelfinger blasted the management of Delphi Corporation for going into bankruptcy in order to break a union contract. He called Delphi management, "swine dining at the trough of corporate greed." He stated, "Everyone can understand if a company is in bankruptcy because it has to be, but a mechanical bankruptcy is totally wrong."

There were many other speakers from the Democratic Party and the labor movement, but I'll just mention one more. Her name is Heba F. El Shazli and she works for the Solidarity Center for the AFL-CIO. She talked about conditions of workers in Columbia (where union members are routinely murdered), Iraq (where a labor movement is rebuilding in the midst of chaotic conditions), and a number of countries in the Middle East and North Africa (her area of specialty). Heba stated it is important for the labor movement here to lend support to struggling labor movements around the world as part of our strategy on the midst of globalization. When we "raise the floor" on wages worldwide, we not only help people who desperately need our help, we also discourage the export of American jobs.

One piece of legislation that was mentioned over and over is the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). Under current labor law, if the workforce at any place of employment wants to unionize, they first have to get a majority to sign cards (that's the easy part), and then have to hold an election a few months later. The problem is, during the time period leading up to the election, employers terrorize the workforce, firing union sympathizers, threatening to close

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the plant if the union wins the election, holding intimidating closed door meetings, etc. The EFCA would say once a majority signs a union card, you have a union. The EFCA also says if management doesn't want to bargain on a first contract within a few months, there will be binding arbitration. This is the most important piece of labor legislation to come along in a long time. It has passed the House, but not the Senate as of this writing, and will be vetoed by President Bush in any event (just one more reason to get him and his party out of office in 2008).

Another issue that got some attention was universal health care. I went to the microphone to speak in favor of a resolution calling for a single payer system. Our country's health care system is the most expensive in the world, but the quality of care is 37th. That's right, we rank behind rich countries and poor countries alike. A lot of the money we give to insurance companies goes to administrative costs, CEO salaries, huge profits, and even lobbying to prevent a single-payer system. The Big 3 auto companies are in trouble, in part because they are competing with cars made in Japan or European countries that all have national health care systems – while the cost of health care adds something like \$1500 to the price of an American-made car. The absence of a national health care plan is one of the reasons why Michigan's economy is in such bad shape.

I also learned from some of the speeches that there is a real chance that there will be a ballot initiative in Michigan next year to make it a "right-to-work" state. Don't be fooled by this terminology. "Right-to-work" legislation would make it illegal for any employer in the state to have a contract that made it mandatory that all workers in the bargaining unit belong to a union. We all know as APWU union members how annoying it is to be working alongside scabs, and we've always wanted legislation that makes it mandatory to join APWU. This ballot initiative would take workplaces where unions have it better than we do, and wipe out those gains.

I'll say again that much of what I learned at this Convention came not from resolution discussions, but from listening to all of the labor and political speakers. I am really happy that I got to attend this function, and I left the final session feeling better educated, and energized to become even more deeply involved in the labor movement.

Paul

Letter to the Editor Retiree Issues

"Where we are now, there you shall one day be," is an often quote used from MPWU Retiree Chapter President Al LaBrecque's many writings. I know of no Postal Service employee that one day does not wish to retire. So why don't still employed postal workers help those already retired with retiree issues and problem? We active retirees pave the way, every day, toward YOUR retirement! Why don't you help? Why don't EVERY union local, having 10 or more retirees, help its retirees and others by forming local retiree chapters? Why?? Really NO excuse! Benefits available for APWU retirees in a local retiree chapter are much greater than those retirees who face the many retiree problems out there "alone", outside a local chapter. The wealth of knowledge shared among chapter members at their meetings plus the added resources more available through local chapters is priceless! Most errors made by retirees, at least after retirement, are often rectified through local chapter efforts because of its more available resources. So union locals, "What is your excuse?" Your local union retired members built your union! Helping them form a local retiree chapter is the least you can do. Forming a local retiree chapter involves little to no cost to the local union and the local chapter, once formed, functions on its own funds received from the APWU National office through quarterly rebates to the chapter once charted by the APWU.

Another issue is most union members are so "blissfully" ignorant of who and what controls their everyday lives! Remember the phrase, "Congress giveth, Congress also taketh away?" Legislators at local, state, and national actually request your input on issues, including the ones that you wish to address. So why are people, particularly union people, so apathetic in trying to "hang on to," let alone request for needed changes to be made, to protect what they now have and may lose. Legislative columns are few and far between in most union publications. Regina Favors (MPWU Legislative Director) writes the best legislative columns in a union publication that I know of. She writes about issues that are current as well as historic and is always "right on the money!" For us, COPA alone for postal workers don't cut it. Frequent contacts with those who are our leaders are far more likely to get results, we all need. Why do you let others do what you should be doing? If not you, then who? "Gentle, persistent persuasion" of your legislators is a term I often use. It works!

George W. Hendricks
VP MPWU Retirees Chapter

The 3 Biggest mistakes to avoid while filling out college financial aid forms. Mistakes which costs families thousands of dollars in college financial aid.

By: Mike Humann

As a postal worker you work hard for your money and want the best for your children. If you have a high school age child going to college, maybe you've been wondering how you're going to pay for their college education. Michigan schools have raised their tuition by 37% over the past 4 years. That's equivalent to an 8.20% increase each year. The problem is your salary has probably not gone up at the same rate. The fact is state schools in Michigan currently cost around \$17,000 per year and rising. This means that in 4 more years the average cost of college could be \$23,343 per year. That's why you should pay attention to these 3 mistakes that many of your friends may have made when they applied for college financial aid, and they don't even know they made them. During audits conducted by the US Department of Education, over 60% of families made mistakes on the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA). These mistakes can cause a family to lose out on aid. Pay attention, here are the top 3:

1. Putting assets on the form that do not have to be included! A question on the form asks you the value of your investments. I have a client that had started to fill out the FAFSA but put his 401k investments in the form! BAD MOVE. I caught it and changed it but that mistake could have cost him \$7,500/year. Don't include money in retirement accounts as an asset.
2. Missing deadlines. Know the deadline to submit all forms to the school your child wants to attend. I just had a person come into my office who had not filled out the financial aid forms by the school's priority deadline. The financial aid system is a first come first serve system. Know the priority deadline for each school your child wants to attend. If you miss the priority deadline, you will cost yourself money.
3. Not reviewing the form before submitting it. Have someone else you trust look over the form before submitting it. You would be surprised what they might find. Many times people make simple mistakes like transposing their salary. Yes it's true this does happen. Instead of putting \$39,852 on the form somebody put \$93,852.

Mike Humann is the owner of The College Planning Coach. He conducts FREE College planning seminars in and around the Detroit Metro Area. You can find out more information by going to www.collegeplanningcoach.com/usps. Mike can be reached at 1-888-290-0080 x 616.

Editor's Note: Mike's information has been used in various union publications around Metro Detroit and Michigan. Some of the officers of the MPWU met with Mike to discuss putting this information out for you and decided to allow it to be included in the Michigan Messenger; however, the MPWU will not be held liable for any transaction with Mike Humann after the free seminar. This is only provided as a courtesy to ensure that you receive as much information as possible to make an educated choice for your children's educational future..



Percy instilling his knowledge with attendees at the 2007 MPWU Educational Convention—Art 37 Class (June 7, 2007)



Crime and Punishment

Joe Steward and the New CBA
By John Clark
Union Member and National Business Agent
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Joe Steward serves as a union steward in an area local, representing clerks in both large and small offices. He has all the qualities that make an excellent union rep, including knowledge, experience and passion. Joe has won the vast majority of the 500 grievances he's handled over the past 15 years. He was well-liked by his co-workers. And they trusted his judgment on contractual matters.

When he received the 2006 - 2010 Tentative Agreement in the mail, Joe dutifully read it thoroughly. He also carefully read the summaries provided by President Burrus and the Rank & File Bargaining Advisory Committee (R&FBAC).

Although not entirely pleased with all of its terms and conditions, Joe voted to accept the new Agreement. He reasoned that on balance, it likely was a better result than would be achieved through interest arbitration. He also was influenced by the strong glowing recommendations of President Burrus, the National Executive Board, the R&FBAC, as well as his own Local President and Local Executive Board. Such unanimous approval from so many astute union officers surely provided further justification to support this Tentative Agreement.

On 1/12/07 it was announced that the new CBA was overwhelmingly approved by more than 87% of the members who voted. Initially pleased with this result, Joe soon was troubled as his co-workers became increasingly hostile with him.

For example, Sally approached Joe the other day, clearly agitated. "What's this Joe? I voted for the new CBA because you told me I would have consecutive days off. What happened?"

"Well Sally, apparently the parties agreed that only career clerk craft employees "working in a mail processing environment" in 200 man year installations will have consecutive days off."

"Joe, the APWU News Service Bulletin, the January/February 2007 APWU magazine and the information sent with my ballot, all said: "In offices of 200 man-years or more in the regular work force, career Clerk Craft employees will have consecutive scheduled days off, unless otherwise agreed to by the local parties." Did you agree locally to keep my split days off?"

"No Sally. That information sent out by the APWU wasn't precisely accurate. You see, the actual MOU stated that consecutive days off only pertained to career clerks in "P&DC's" that have 200 or more man years of employment."

"What do you mean the information sent out by the APWU wasn't "precisely" accurate? Is there any other kind of accurate? It looks to me like they lied. And I don't appreciate being lied to by anybody, especially my Union."

"Sally, Sally, Sally, calm down. A 'lie' is to make an untrue statement with intent to deceive. They didn't lie and they didn't intend to deceive. They simply didn't precisely describe that the actual consecutive days off agreement pertained to clerks "who work in a mail processing environment."

"I thought you said the actual MOU stated it applied to clerks in "P&DC's?"

"That's right Sally, but you can't believe everything you read. The MOU also said these were just "general principles."

"Where does it say that career clerks working in a "mail processing environment" will have consecutive days off?"

"In a cute little Q & A booklet, dated 3/02/07."

"How can you have Q & A's when the actual contract language hasn't been agreed to yet?"

"You don't need contract language to ask and answer questions. I'm answering your questions right now without relying upon any contract language."

"Isn't that ass backwards?"

"Sally, there's no reason to be talking about my body parts. It is what it is. And besides, the contract was finally signed on 3/29/07."

"Well it's about f #%&*ing time! Can you get me a copy?"

"No. It's currently being proofread."

"It's currently being proofread? Isn't that a,a,a,butt backwards to proofread a contract 'after' it's been signed?"

"Sally, you're being too technical. We're only talking about a binding legal contract that specifies the terms and conditions of your employment. And it's only a signature. Lord knows, the parties can change the contract at any time."

"Joe, even though we'll need divine intervention to interpret this mess, there's no reason to bring-up the Lord's name. And what do you mean they can change the contract at any time?"

"That's just what I said."

"Do you mean to tell me they can change the contract after it's been ratified by the members?"

"Yep, the APWU and USPS have a long history of doing so."

"Well what's the point in voting on a contract that isn't finalized and can be changed at any time?"

"Geez, I don't know Sally. You may as well ask me what's the meaning of life?"

"Well in any event, at least I'll get my consecutive days off."

"Who told you that?"

"You did! I'm a Sales, Service & Distribution Associate in a 200 man year office and I work in a "mail processing environment" every day before I go on the window. I thought you said the consecutive n/s day language applied to clerks who work in a mail processing environment."

"Sally, Sally, Sally, I never said that. I said the cute little Q & A booklet stated

that clerks working in a mail processing environment in 200 man year installations will have consecutive days off."

"Joe, you also said the actual agreement says that."

"Sally, are you calling me a liar? I didn't say that. I haven't seen the actual agreement, so I couldn't possibly know what it says."

"So I'm not going to get consecutive days off?"

"No Sally. As a Sales, Service & Distribution Associate you work on the customer service side of the house. The new consecutive days off language doesn't apply to you. But don't feel bad. If it did apply, your duty assignment would have to be reposted for bid. And with your seniority you'd probably end up back on nights."

"Well Joe, it's a sad day when the Union induces its members with false information to vote in favor of a new CBA that could be changing right now as we speak."

"Sally, there you go again. Nobody said the information was "false." It simply wasn't precisely accurate."

"Perhaps you're right Joe. And you know what? I assure you I'll be precisely accurate when I send in the next Union ballot I receive."

John



Mass Amnesia Makes Americans Forget the Story Behind May Day

By Rudolph J. Vecoli
The Times Argus

May Day: The holiday of the workers. In days gone by, when men, women and children often worked 10 or more hours a day, seven days a week, May Day was an assertion on the part of wage-slaves that they were sovereign human beings with control over their own lives and destinies. They celebrated the day with marches of tens and hundreds of thousands throughout the world.

May Day was an expression of the international solidarity of the working class. "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains," was not just a slogan. It was a battle cry in the war between classes. Their marches and rallies, with fiery speeches, impassioned poetry and stirring anthems, gave them a sense of their collective strength. It was an act of defiance of the combined forces of employers and public authorities. Often their gatherings were brutally attacked by police or thugs with clubs and guns.

Many of us have grandparents or great-grandparents who participated in these observances. Few of us acknowledge or are even aware of this inspiring part of our family histories. We Americans suffer from mass amnesia of the remarkable and some times glorious history of workers' struggles for liberty of expression and social justice. Who now remembers May Day?

Although not often taught in American history classes, May Day originated in the United States during the campaign for an eight-hour day. The Knights of Labor, the nascent American Federation of Labor and various anarchist groups designated May 1, 1886, for nationwide demonstrations for the eight-hour goal. An incident which occurred several days later in Chicago made this the beginning of a global workers' movement. Following a clash between strikers and police in which several workers were killed, a protest meeting was held in Haymarket Square.

When police attacked the gathering, a bomb was thrown, killing several officers. In the trial of anarchists (who were not accused of the bombing, but for advocating violence) which followed, eight were found guilty and four subsequently executed. These "Haymarket martyrs" quickly became revered heroes of labor movements throughout the world.

With this tragic episode in the class war in mind, the International Socialist Congress meeting in Paris in 1889 designated May 1, 1890, as an eight-hour holiday to be

observed by workers in all countries. An increasingly conservative Samuel Gompers and AF of L had by the mid-1890s distanced themselves from May Day and embraced the legally sanctioned Labor Day, which was observed the first Monday in September. Coming from radical backgrounds, Finns, Slavs, East European Jews, Italians and other immigrants found their cherished May Day opposed not only by capitalists but often by American workers as well. Despite being denounced as "foreign born reds," they kept the torch of May Day idealism burning for another generation.

The response of the "bosses," political and economic, was twofold: to allay the anger of the workers, measures were taken to ameliorate the worst abuses of the capitalist system; while extreme repression was used to silence the most vocal and active labor advocates. The case of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two Italian anarchist immigrants, electrocuted on Aug. 23, 1927, following a blatantly biased trial, is the most heinous example of the latter.

However, the ideal of May Day had already been shattered by the collision of international solidarity of the "proletariat" with the fervid nationalism resulting from World War I. Patriotism trumped class consciousness, and millions of workers killed each other in the name of the fatherland. Meanwhile, the Bolshevik Revolution which appeared to fulfill the vision of a collective republic turned out to be a Trojan horse in the socialist camp. The Leninist-Stalinist regime proved to be a ruthless dictatorship presiding over state capitalism. Among the earliest and most passionate opponents of Communist Russia were socialists and anarchists whose comrades were being liquidated by the Bolsheviks.

The aspiration for the unity of workers was shattered by these developments.

In the United States, the Great Depression of the 1930s did not usher in communism but the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt, which saved capitalism and laid the basis for a welfare state.

May Day was hijacked by the Soviet Union with its displays of military prowess in Red Square. The association of May Day with Soviet Communism has given it a bad name to this day.

(Continued on page 21)

In this age of globalization, when workers are pitted against each other, across oceans and continents, we have returned to conditions of pitiless exploitation of human beings. If greed ever was constrained by patriotism, it certainly is not today. The quest for profits knows no inhibitions by national ideologies or loyalties. Yes, we are involved in a class war, a war of oil companies, the military-industrial complex, the corrupted political institutions, against the workers and consumers.

We, the American working people, remain beguiled by symbols, the flag, the Fourth of July, the Thanksgiving turkey. It is time to revisit May Day in the spirit in which it was conceived over a hundred years ago. Only an international labor movement can hope to match the prowess of the amoral trans-national capitalist system. Freeing ourselves from the sordid history which stained the banner of May Day, we need to raise a cleansed, purified standard on which is emblazoned once again: "Workers of the World Unite!"

Rudolph J. Vecoli is professor emeritus of history and former director of the Immigration History Research Center University of Minnesota -Twin Cities. He lives in St. Paul , Minnesota .

Percy addressing the delegates at the 2006 MPWU Constitutional Convention in Detroit.



I AM A UNION MEMBER

I am not Black or White.

I am not Male or Female

I am not Well-to-Do, or Poor.

I am not a Genius, or Ignorant.

I am not Senior or Junior.

I am not a Clerk, Mail Handler, Carrier, Maintenance or Motor Vehicle Employee!

What I AM, is a POSTAL WORKER and a UNION MEMBER, just like you! I am but one of thousands of Brothers and Sisters who are your co-workers, seeking the same goals of maintaining a livelihood, seeking security, and demanding dignity on the job.

The sooner we all realize WHO we are, and WHAT we are, along with the fact that it is MANAGEMENT who is our common adversary binding us all together as working Brothers and Sisters....the sooner we can put assigned our childish differences and the stronger we will be in pursuit of our common goals.

—Author Unknown

Reprinted from the Union Informer – April 2007 Edition

Candidates Nominated For APWU Election of National Officers

Editor's Note: National Elections for your union is right around the corner. Below is a list of the candidates that will be vying for your vote. Please, I know that we are all busy, but your vote will decide which way the union proceeds into the next decade. Take time to look at each candidate and make an informed vote. I have reduced the list to only those names that we in Michigan will be voting on.

Secretary-Treasurer Terry Stapleton has announced that the following union members have been certified as candidates for election to national office by referendum balloting, as mandated by the APWU Constitution and Bylaws. Each candidate in this unofficial listing has secured the necessary petitions required for nomination. The official list will be announced after the drawing for position on the ballot is held. Incumbent officers are listed first and identified by (I) after their names. Where more than one non-incumbent candidate has been certified, they are listed in alphabetical order. (A list of uncontested national offices appears after the contested races.)

General and Departments

President

William Burrus (I), Cleveland Area Local (OH)
Richard D. Cornell, Citrus Center Area Local (FL)

Health Plan Director

William "Bill" Kaczor (I), Buffalo Local (NY)
Terry Finnerty, Southern New York Area Local
Cherli "Cheryl" A. Montgomery, Fox Valley Local (IL)

Maintenance Division

Director

Steven G. "Steve" Raymer (I), Madison Area Local (WI)
Joseph "Joey" Cataldi, Charlottesville Area Local (VA)

Motor Vehicle Service Division

National Business Agents - Central Region

Merlie H. Bell (I), Chicago Local (IL)
John "Big Cy" Cychosz, Northwest Illinois Area Local

Retirees Department

Director

Judy Beard
John F. Deeley
Ronald M. DeLeon

For your information, the following is a list of Uncontested National Offices

General and Departments

Executive Vice President

Cliff Guffey (I), Oklahoma City Area Local (OK)

Secretary-Treasurer

Terry Stapleton (I), Houston Area Local (TX)

Industrial Relations Director

Greg Bell (I), Philadelphia Area Local (PA)

Legislative Director

Myke Reid (I), Norfolk Local (VA)

Assistant Legislative Director

Stephen A. Albanese (I), Boston Metro Area Local (MA)

Organization Director

Frank A. Romero (I), Dallas Area Local (TX)

Research and Education Director

Joyce B. Robinson (I), Richmond Area Local (VA)

Human Relations Director

Susan M. "Sue" Carney (I), South Jersey Area Local (NJ)

Regional Coordinators

Central Region

Sharyn M. Stone (I), Indianapolis Area Local (IN)

Clerk Division

Director

James P. McCarthy (I), Boston Metro Area Local (MA)

Assistant Director (A)

Patricia "Pat" Williams (I), Greater Los Angeles Area Local (CA)

Assistant Director (B)

Mike Morris (I), Birmingham Area Local (AL)

Assistant Director (C)

Rob Strunk (I), Phoenix Metro Area Local (AZ)

National Business Agents, Central Region

Chicago Region (A)

Percy Harrison Jr. (I), Chicago BMC Area Local (IL)

Chicago Region (B)

John Clark (I), Northwest Illinois Area Local

Chicago Region (C)

Lynn Pallas-Barber (I), 498-499 Area Local (MI)

Maintenance Division

Assistant Director (A)

Gary Kloopfer (I), Tri-County Ohio Area Local

Assistant Director (B)

Gregory "Greg" See (I), Mansfield Area Local (OH)

National Representative-At-Large

Idowu Balogun (I), Greater Los Angeles Area Local (CA)

National Business Agents

Central Region (C)

Troy Rorman (I), Minneapolis Area Local (MN)

Motor Vehicle Service Division

Director

Robert C. "Bob" Pritchard (I), Trenton Metro Area Local (NJ)

Assistant Director

Michael O. Foster (I), Detroit District Area Local (MI)

Support Services Division

Bill Manley, Wilkes-Barre PDC Local (PA)

Retiree National Convention Delegates

Central Region

Beverly M. Shealy (I)

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

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, or anyone in particular. Any correspondence to the Editor may be sent to: Michael Long, Editor, PO Box 280, Sheridan, MI 48884-0280; fax to: 616-776-1536; or e-Mail to: mpwueditor@yahoo.com

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

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



The Michigan Postal Workers Union proudly represents the Members at Large within the Great State of Michigan. The following locals have also affiliated with the MPWU for training, education and information sharing between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

Alpena	Battle Creek
Central MI	Detroit
Farmington	Flint
480-481	498-499
Gaylord	Hillsdale
Jackson	Ludington
Manistee	Muskegon
Petoskey	Pontiac
Roger City	Saginaw
Sault Ste Marie	Traverse City
Southwest Michigan	Troy Local
Western Michigan	

Upcoming Events to Plan For:

August 1 - 4, 2007 - National Postal Press Convention; Reno, NV

Area 1, 2, & 3 District Meeting - Currently being planned for Fall 2007

November 5 - 8, 2007 - National Multi-Craft Convention, Las Vegas, NV

Spring 2008 - Area 4, 5, & 6 District Meeting

May 15 - 17, 2008 - MPWU State Convention, Grand Rapids, MI



Congratulations Gaylord

The APWU has been notified that studies of the consolidation of some mail-processing operations at the Gaylord (MI) Main Post Office and at Beaumont (TX) P&DF have been brought to a close and the proposed consolidations will not take place.

"After review, it has been determined that there are currently no significant opportunities to improve efficiency and/or service through consolidation of mail processing operations at the Gaylord, MI MPO," the Postal Service wrote to the APWU on May 14. "Therefore, no significant changes will be made at this time." The study to consider moving sortation 60 miles away to Traverse City, MI, was announced Dec. 19, 2005.

The proposal would have meant the relocation of as many as 80 APWU-represented employees. On May 3, Rep. Bart Stupak (D), who represents constituents in northern Michigan and its Upper Peninsula, introduced a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that would establish firm deadlines for Area Mail Processing surveys and would prohibit the USPS from removing equipment or reducing the workforce in affected facilities during AMP studies.

The bill, H.R. 2177, would require the Postal Service to complete AMP studies within 180 days. Extensions of 60 days would be permitted only if "persons likely to be affected" are notified prior to the expiration of the original deadline.

Congressman Bart Stupak issued the following statement on May 1, 2007

WASHINGTON – The following statement regarding news that the United States Postal Service is hiring twenty career employees at the Gaylord postal facility may be attributed to Congressman Bart Stupak (D-Menominee):

"The hiring of twenty career employees at the Gaylord postal facility is great news not only for the Gaylord area, but for all northern Michigan residents who depend on the Gaylord mail processing facility for timely mail delivery."

"In meetings and through repeated correspondence to the United States Postal Service, I expressed my concerns that the Gaylord facility was being allowed to fall way below its authorized level and that temporary employees were being used for extended periods instead of career employees. I am pleased the United States Postal Service will hire twenty career employees and I will continue to monitor the Gaylord facility to make sure the promised personnel are hired and the necessary equipment is installed so northern Michigan postal customers receive the highest possible quality of service.

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