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by John
Marcotte,
President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Finally, We Have A Contract

This is a critical and exciting time to be a member of a union. The APWU has led the way in proving that the collective bargaining system works. Through perseverance and resolve management and labor met across the table for over six months to negotiate a contract that *preserves* workers rights and sets the course for the future of the postal service. No intervention was needed by those outside the postal service to create financial relief for the USPS and maintain a decent standard of living for its employees. While I can not say that I support this tentative contract I am in full support of a negotiated solution and not leaving our futures in an arbitrator's hands. Only when the full contractual language is released and we have had time to study its content can we decide if ratification of this tentative agreement is warranted. **This is democracy at its best!** Your elected officials negotiated on your behalf and arrived at new contractual language. Still this is only a tentative contract. Only you the members by voting in a majority can make this a binding contract between the parties. I look forward to discussing and debating with you on these

issues during this process.

The MPWU has a continuing lobbying effort on your behalf and I wish to make it stronger. We need to present more of a presence in our communities and create relationships with our elected representatives that control so much of our work-life. I am searching for members willing to be a legislative

I was encouraged by the support for postal workers on both sides of the aisle. However one thing was clear. Education of these members of Congress and their staffs is essential. Misconceptions run rampant on postal issues on the hill. Legislative advocates will ensure that postal issues are crystal clear and ever present in the halls of congress.

“Make no mistake, workers rights are under attack all over this country. Only you can stop it. Only by taking action will you stop it.”

advocate working in these efforts. These advocates would be charged with trying to attend the town hall meetings and events in your district for Congressman and Senators. If we are always in attendance we will build a working relationship with them. Further advocates will regularly visit the local offices of these officials and encourage and direct the local members to do the same. In my opinion this is the most important thing we can do to secure a viable postal service in the future. In recent meetings with our congressional delegation

I am happy to announce Lucy Morton is the new Education Director for the MPWU. I know she will be a great asset to the state. I also had to regrettably take the resignation of Area 8 Director Theresa Cowan so she could devote time to her family. We wish Theresa the best and thank her for her long and dedicated service to the MPWU. Tom Lothamer has been selected to assume the duties of Area Director. I have no doubt Area 8 is in good hands with Tom.

Mike Long and I represented the MPWU at the protest in Lansing over

the emergency powers that now allow our governor to replace locally elected officials with people of his choosing and dissolve binding union contracts. This is an unprecedented power grab by the governor's office and is simply not right. This was a wonderful event and had an amazing turn out. Make no mistake, workers rights are under attack all over this country. Only you can stop it. Only by taking action will you stop it.

Finally I was able to attend a teleconference with AFL-CIO President Trunka, Vice President Biden and Secretary of Labor Solis. They were completely against this assault on unions and the working people they defend. Vice President Biden clearly stated that unions benefit all working people union and non union alike. We improve working conditions for all. We create a prevailing wage for all. We fight for the poor, young and elderly even though they are not our members. We are all that is left of the battered middle class and if we lose this fight the working men and women of this country will lose all that stands between them and poverty.

It's a very busy and critical time and I thank you all for your support and the honor to represent you in this fight.

Yours in solidarity and friendship,

Legislative Report



by Paul
Felton,
Legislative
Director

War Has Been Declared!

War has been declared – in Wisconsin! As I write these words in early March, the battle continues daily, as the new Republican Governor and State Legislature seek to strike a death blow to the labor movement. The unions and much of the population are fighting back – taking over the Capitol, holding mass marches, and organizing support nationwide. While teachers march, high school students leave class to march with them, while 14 Democrats strategically hide in another state. Farmers are planning to drive their tractors to the capital to join the protest.

Off duty policemen have even joined in support the demonstrators. The reason I submit this article is simple: their battle is our battle.

Let's look at the legislation pending in Wisconsin. Public employee unions would be barred from negotiating about any issue other than wages – and even that right would be limited. Any pay raise exceeding the Consumer Price Index would have to be approved by the voters. Meanwhile, Governor Walker's



plan would require public employees to contribute more to their pension and health

insurance plans, which amounts to an 8 percent pay cut. But the economic concessions aren't the worst of it. The legislation would end dues check off, so public unions would have no money coming

in. Unions would have to hold a recertification (or decertification) election once a year. The strategy behind this is obvious – they hope to cripple union power

so the members lose confidence in their own organization and vote to decertify.

And let's take another look at the restrictions on bargaining. Yes, wages are important, but other items are also critical – like safety, the grievance procedure, and work rules. Under this law, teachers would no longer be able to fight for smaller class size, and nurses couldn't fight for a nurse/patient ratio that allows them to give quality care. Here's a very important point: when you attack public employees, you are attacking the communities that depend on our services. Maybe that's why the protests in Madison are so large.

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War Has Been Declared!

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Governor Scott Walker claims these measures are necessary because there’s a deficit. Yet two weeks after he assumed office as Governor, he pushed through \$117 million in tax breaks for businesses. The Governor is being dishonest. His real purpose isn’t to balance the budget – he is using a phony budget crisis as an excuse to bust the unions. *(Late flash: just before I submitted this article to the Editor, the Wisconsin legislature passed this union busting legislation using a procedure of doubtful legality, They will be challenged in the courts and in the streets).*

REPUBLICAN STRATEGY

Last November, the Republican Party gained control of the House of Representatives and took over a number of state governments. They are using their new power to launch a nationwide attack on public employees. I’ll give you one startling statistic that explains a lot. In the private sector, only 6.9% of workers are unionized. In the public sector, 36% of the workforce is unionized. If you bust the public sector unions, you cripple the labor movement. And make no mistake, that is the national strategy of the Republican Party.

Somehow, the Republicans who appealed to voters on a platform of “limited government” (which many took to mean keep government from interfering in our lives) turned that slogan around to mean limiting the pay and democratic rights of government employees. Their real motivation is to destroy one of the strongest areas of support for the Democratic Party and at the same time aid millionaire businessmen like the Koch brothers. If they succeed we will have come a long way towards a one-party state – with that one party dead-set on destroying the middle class – including postal workers.

Legislation attacking public workers has been introduced in Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, New Jersey and about a dozen other states. The Republican strategy was expressed plainly by Senator DeMint of South Carolina. He said “I don’t think collective bargaining has any place in

representative government.” He added his partisan motivation: “without the unions, the Democratic Party fades away.” What the Republican Party is seeking is a *historic shift in the balance of power*, both between labor and business (by crippling the labor movement) and between Democrats and Republicans. The implications for our democracy and for workers’ standard of living are frightening.



MICHIGAN

In Michigan, there are proposals in the legislature to repeal the Michigan Health and Safety Act, and prohibit ergonomic regulations at the workplace. There is a “right-to-work” bill in the legislature that would make it illegal to have a workplace where workers automatically belong to the union. There is legislation that would require school districts to outsource all work other than the teaching. The most startling measure would allow the state to take over city governments and school districts that are in the red – leaving one person (an appointed financial manager) dictating policies to elected councils and school boards and even voiding existing union contracts. Let me repeat that. One person could dictate to elected city councils and school boards and could unilaterally void union contracts. This person could dissolve your elected city council and nullify laws that they passed. He or she could unilaterally write a new labor contract that would be in force for five years (without ratification by the union or by the city government). This shows that the Republican claim to favor “limited government” is phony – they only want to

limit those aspects of the government that help the poor, the workers and the middle class.

All this is on top of their economic proposals to cut public employee wages and tax pensions, while giving tax breaks to business. They want to balance the budget on the backs of ordinary people, even senior citizens. And I’ve just learned that Governor Snyder declared he will stop deducting union dues for home based child care workers represented by AFC-SME and the UAW. This has nothing to do with budget concerns, it is out-and-out union busting.

POSTAL ISSUES

This same ideology is apparent in the Republicans who control the Congressional committees that deal with postal issues. It has been well publicized that Congressman Darrell Issa of California thinks we are overpaid, we should be forced to grant concessions, there are too many Post Offices and too many postal workers, and many of us should be laid off. Because the Republicans have a majority in the House of Representatives, it will be difficult to get legislation passed that straightens out the economic difficulties forced upon USPS by provisions of the postal “reform” legislation passed under the Bush Administration.

A CALL TO REPUBLICAN MEMBERS

I am calling out to our Republican members. Most of you vote Republican for reasons that have nothing to do with labor issues. If you write to your Republican Party representatives, or the Governor, as a Republican, and tell them that you don’t want your party to engage in union-busting, they will pay more attention to you than they will to me. I encourage you to do so.

A CALL TO ALL

Regardless of party affiliation, when you see or hear of a rally of public employees, join the struggle. There undoubtedly will be major developments between the writing of this article and the time you read it. If the occupation and mass demonstrations are still taking place in Madison, WI when you read this, show your support (even if it’s only looking up the nearest Pizza Hut or Kentucky Fried to the Wisconsin state capitol and ordering some food to be delivered to the demonstrators). Talk it up on the workroom floor – there is a battle for the survival of the labor movement and every one of our coworkers should be aware of it. Visit the website of the Michigan AFL-CIO (www.miaflcio.org) to find out the latest news and possibly take part in upcoming rallies near you. Everyone should be involved, everyone should be angry at the attacks on our rights, our movement, and our ability to organize. War has been declared. The question is, will you stand up and fight back?

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	Flint	Muskegon	Stevensville
Battle Creek	480-481	Pontiac	Traverse City
Central MI	498-499	Roger City	Troy Local
Cheboygan	Gaylord	486-487	Western MI
Detroit District	Jackson	Sault Ste Marie	
Farmington	Ludington	Southwest MI	

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, the APWU or the Postal Press. Any and all 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.

Lastly, 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.



by Michael A. Long,
Editor

Editor's Report

We Have Lost Sight

As I sit down to put this article to paper this month, I am reminded of just how screwed (I actually wanted to use a different word here) we have become, not only as Postal Workers, but a nation as well. In my opinion we have lost sight of what we are, who we are, and what we are suppose to be; we have instead have taken the view of "As long as it doesn't affect me, I am okay with it." What happened to the time when we were "our brother's keeper" and looked out for each other. When we cared more about the old, elderly, infirmed, and poor, instead of trying to figure out a way so that the local business now the street no longer has to pay any taxes to support them? When we worried about not only our children's future, but that of our children's children? Those days are now long gone, and I fear unless we regain some of these values once again, we will see our cities, state, and nation falter.

Two cases in point: 1. Michigan's New Governor and his actions; 2. Our new tentative contract. In the first case, if you have not heard, Michigan's Governor "Slick" Rick Snyder has proposed raising taxes, but not on the wealthy or upper middle class, but on the poor and elderly (by eliminating Earned Income Credit, and taxing Pensions). However, you would think this would be to close the proposed deficit; and you would be wrong. It is to allow Slick Rick to give more tax breaks to corporations, which would also add to the state's deficit. Projections are that the raise in taxes would raise 1.6 billion in new funding; however, the tax breaks would equate to 1.7 billion; putting Michigan over a million dollars in the hole more. Where will he get the money to cover this shortage . . . by asking Public Sector Workers to foot the bill and pay more. Where is Robin Hood when you need him?

As for our new contract, I give kudos to our National Bargaining team for our proposed contract; and with our new contract, those of us on the roles will continue to receive what we have already and gain some . . . but what about those who are coming in behind us? As I said earlier, aren't we our Brother's keeper and shouldn't we, especially as a union, be looking out for not only our current membership, but also those down the road. Yes, the new "casuals" or PSE, or NSA (whatever name you want to use on any given day) may and hopefully will become union members and will receive leave and health care and will generally make more than the casuals of yesterday, as well as the new hires of tomorrow, but at what cost? And is that cost too much? I guess we

will all have to wait and see. I for one foresee the new contract being ratified without any problem; and as I have stated, in the past with previous ratifications, I truly believe that it really doesn't matter what the vote says (either we will get it through ratification, or through Arbitration).

Educational Convention. This year's convention will take place, in a city familiar with the Michigan Postal Workers Union . . . Bay City, Michigan. Not only familiar by having conferences there before, but also home to our former State President Gary Van-Hoogstraten. For those who have never attended a Convention (Educational

or Constitutional) before, we dedicate each convention to an individual who has in the past been affiliated with the state union during his/her career. Normally, this dedication is kept secret until the actual convention; however, due to an Executive Board motion, this year's book has been dedicated to Gary for all of his years of service and sacrifice to the union. Congratulations Gary on this honor. It is actually pretty nice to be able to give kudos to someone before the convention, instead of afterwards.

Please make plans to attend this year's convention. A list of classes (we are still waiting on actual confirmations

from national guests before firming up the times as of the printing of the *Messenger*) as well as cost information is printed in this edition of the *Michigan Messenger*. More information, as the time approaches, will be published on the website.

In closing, now that the weather has turned the corner into Spring and hopefully warmer weather, I would like to wish each of you the best that this time has to offer. Please get out and enjoy the splendor of Michigan. Remember, millions of people come to visit Michigan every year to see and enjoy what we are privileged to do each and every day.

Highlights Of The New Collective Bargaining Agreement

Below are key components of the tentative agreement between the U.S. Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union for the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement. The four-and-half year contract, which will expire at midnight on May 20, 2015, must be ratified by members of the APWU.

WAGES

There will be across-the-board pay increases of 3.5 percent over the life of the contract.

- Nov. 17, 2012 – 1% increase
- Nov. 16, 2013 – 1.5% increase
- Nov. 15, 2014 – 1% increase

COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS

Cost-of-living increases will continue and will be "back-loaded." COLAs for 2011 were waived, and COLAs for 2012 are deferred until 2013.

- A March 2012 COLA will become effective in March 2013, together with a March 2013 COLA.
- A September 2012 COLA will become effective in September 2013, together with a September 2013 COLA.
- Cost-of-Living Adjustments will be made in March and September 2013.
- Cost-of-Living Adjustments will be made in March and September 2014.
- A Cost-of-Living Adjustment will be made in March 2015.

NEW ENTRY-LEVEL STEPS

Additional steps will be added to the pay scale for new employees in Levels 3 through 8, with lower starting salaries. Future employees will progress through the new steps onto the current pay scale, but will not be eligible to progress to the current top step.

HEALTH BENEFITS

There will be no changes to the healthcare benefits of APWU members in 2012. Each year from 2013 through 2016 there will be a slight shift in employees' share of contributions toward healthcare coverage. This will amount to an increase of several dollars per pay period each year. (Similar changes were made in the last contract.)

LIMITS ON EXCESSING

- The agreement limits excessing outside of an installation or craft to no more than 40 miles from the installation in most cases and to no more than 50 miles in any case. If management cannot place employees within 50 miles, the parties will jointly determine what steps may be taken.

- Employees will not be required to retreat to crafts they were excessed from if the crafts are represented by the APWU.
- There will be designated "moving days" no more frequently than once every three months for excessing from postal installations. This will strengthen seniority when excessing occurs in multiple installations within a geographic area.

JOBS AND JOB SECURITY

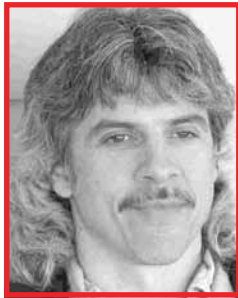
- Protection against layoffs continues for all career employees who were on the rolls as of Nov. 20, 2010. The language of Article 6, which governs layoffs and reductions-in-force, remains unchanged.
- New provisions on subcontracting give the APWU the opportunity to develop proposals to compete with subcontractors for work, and stipulate that if APWU-represented employees can perform the work less expensively than the subcontractors, the work must be performed by APWU-represented employees.
- The tentative agreement protects jobs with a provision that stipulates that the APWU will retain jurisdiction if the duties of union members are moved to facilities that are not currently represented by the APWU.

JOBS IN THE CLERK CRAFT

- No fewer than 1,100 Call Center jobs that had been contracted out will be returned to the APWU bargaining unit. The Call Center locations will become part of the installation of the nearest Processing & Distribution Center, so that APWU members can bid on these positions.
- A minimum of 800 positions will be created in the Clerk Craft to perform administrative and technical duties that are currently performed by EAS personnel.
- Lead Clerk, PS-7, positions will be created in mail processing and in retail to perform administrative duties.
 - At least one Lead Clerk position will be established in any office where there is no supervisor.
 - At least one Lead Clerk position will be established in any Customer Service office with five or more Clerk Craft employees.
 - Ratios for the establishment of Lead Clerk

# Clerks	# Lead Clerks
5-49	1
50-99	2
100-199	3
200-499	4
500 or more	5, plus one for each 100 clerks

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by Richard
Blake,
Clerk Craft
Director

Clerk Craft Report

“Dis-Assembling”

“Dis-assembling” higher-level duty assignments — in 2009 USPS Headquarters came up with what they called the “Targeted Allied and Indirect Positions” program. This program became management’s marching orders to target virtually every Level 7 Clerk craft duty assignment, such as General Expediter, Review Clerk, Lead Sales and Service Associate, etc. While the initial result of this program was the summary abolishment of many of these duty assignments, there’s been another equally troubling result in cases where management knew they couldn’t completely do away with a particular job — that is, what I refer to as “dis-assembling” such duty assignments.

Here’s how this new tactic works, using a fairly simple example. Let’s say you work in a medium-sized Associate Office or city station which has a Level 7 Lead Sales and Service Associate duty assignment. Management decides that the Lead Sales and Service Associate should be required to “move” to the same operation used by the SSA’s and SSDA’s every time he or she works on the window; they tell the employee it’s just for the sake of “properly recording the work hours”, and the employee doesn’t see a problem with it. After all, Lead Sales and Service Associates have always worked the window when

needed, and working the window is one of the duties listed on the Standard Position Description of Lead SSA. The problem is, after a few weeks or months management will review the Lead SSA’s clock rings, **with the explicit intention of arguing that “geez, our Lead Sales and Service Associate averages around 15 hours of working the window every week, which is Level 6 work, so I guess we don’t really need a full-time Lead Sales and Service Associate”**. They’ll claim that these clock rings “prove” that your office’s Lead SSA duty assignment “isn’t an eight-hour job”, and they’ll then attempt to use this as a pretext to abolish (or at least revert) that duty assignment, to be replaced with a Level 6 SSA or SSDA who is only detailed to Level 7 “when needed” (which is usually some arbitrary number of hours dictated by district management).

There are some very strong arguments that can be made when management tries this tactic. In the first place, virtually **no** higher-level Clerk craft duty assignment is an “eight-hour job”, in that the overwhelming majority of employees encumbered in these duty assignments perform *some* “lower level” duties at least occasionally, if not daily — but so what? “Lower-level” duties are **included** on virtually every single higher-level Standard Position Description; “Level 6” duties such as distribution and retail

service are listed on the Standard Position Description of Lead SSA, for example. This begs the question, *if the act of performing such duties “demonstrates” that a particular duty assignment “isn’t needed”, then why in the hell would such duties have ever been listed on the position description?* Furthermore, just exactly where does it state that in order for a higher-level duty assignment to exist, the incumbent in that duty assignment **must** perform **exclusively** higher-level duties every minute of every day? Well, it doesn’t say any such thing. The answer to this question is found in Section 233 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual: *Regularly Scheduled to Two Positions on a Daily Basis*. “When a full-time employee is scheduled every workday to perform the work of two separately defined positions in two different grades, the employee is placed in the position of the higher grade. The duties of the lower grade position, while included in the work assignment, represent extra duties in relation to the official position and do not affect the pay grade of the employee”.

To repeat, “. . .the employee is placed in the position of the **higher grade. The duties of the lower grade position, while included in the work assignment . . . do not affect the pay grade of the employee**”. Doesn’t it seem like this language contradicts the notion that every incumbent in every

higher-level duty assignment must perform exclusively higher-level duties all day? This language is your strongest argument, and your best defense against management “dis-assembling” your higher-level duty assignments. We’ve got to be extremely vigilant in protecting these higher-level jobs, which are some of the best duty assignments in our offices; don’t let management get away with arguing that any of these duty assignments “isn’t an eight-hour job”.

Is it “separation”, or “break-down”, or “distribution”? — with the recent changes in mail processing operations around the state, we’ve been seeing a lot of more complicated handling of outgoing mail in many offices. Offices where a few years ago the outgoing mail was only separated by *type or characteristic*, such as “letters”, “flats”, and “parcels” are now breaking down the outgoing mail to a much greater degree, and it’s critical that we understand the terminology used to describe such handling as well as insuring that **Clerk craft work** remains within the jurisdiction of our craft as opposed to allowing Letter Carriers or Mail Handlers to steal our work. This issue is discussed in Handbook M-32, where the term “distribution” is defined. “Distribution” of outgoing mail involves “separating” that mail *by destination* (i.e., by country, by zip code, by sectional center, by state, etc.), as opposed to separating mail *by type or characteristic* (letter or flat, machineable or non-machineable, etc.), and this is important because distribution is clearly Clerk craft work. In 1987 the Postal Service signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Joint Bargaining Committee, **which at the time included the NALC**; that Memorandum stated that the “separation” of mail *by destination* constitutes “distribution”, **and that this “distribution” is Clerk craft work**. This definition was further reinforced in the 1988 Step 4 settlement of H7C-1G-C-82, which stated “the number of separations is not necessarily the determining factor on whether or not an operation is distribution or separation. If the work being performed primarily distributes the mail for zones . . . then the craft assigned should be clerks”. If your office is “separating”, or “breaking down” mail *by destination* (some countries and/or states to the Metroplex, others to the PMC, etc.) then that work is *distribution* work, and it’s Clerk craft work. Let’s protect the duties which are clearly within the jurisdiction of our craft, rather than allowing Letter Carriers or Mail Handlers to encroach on our work.

In Solidarity.

APWU P.O.W.E.R.

by Karen Hodges,
MPWU POWER Chairperson

March is Women’s history month and with that we will be sending out ribbons to the local presidents and these are to be worn the whole month.

Just what is APWU POWER?

APWU POWER (Post Office Women for Equal Rights) is the women’s committee within the American Postal Workers Union. It unites women, with their special concerns, yet works within the framework of the national APWU organization.

When Was It Founded?

POWER was founded in St. Louis, Missouri on April 28, 1979. The APWU National Constitution was amended to include POWER at the American Postal Union’s National Convention in Detroit, Michigan in August of 1980.

Why is APWU POWER Necessary?

In the United States, women make up nearly 50 percent of the

workforce. In the Postal Service, they constitute approximately 48 percent of the workforce. The same percentage describes the membership in the American Postal Workers Union. Paralleling the women’s movement in our country, the women of the APWU recognized that their involvement and active participation had not kept pace with their membership. In the late 1970’s a women’s movement in the APWU developed, designed to raise consciousness among the rank and file women of the union. Out of the movement came POWER.

Statement of Purpose

The following is the Statement of Purpose adopted at the founding conference of POWER:

- To establish an APWU national Women’s committee, to be incorporated within the structure of one of the present APWU national departments.
- To establish APWU local and state women’s committees.
- To establish a viable communications network for APWU women

throughout the country to exchange ideas, issues, problems and solutions; and to initiate and support educational programs.

- To encourage the involvement and participation of all women in the APWU.
- To organize the unorganized workers in our workplace.
- To promote affirmative action programs in the APWU; to assist women in achieving leadership roles with the ultimate goal of equalizing participation in leadership positions.
- To join and become fully involved in the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW).
- To enhance harmony within the realm of the National APWU Executive Board.
- To work in cooperation with other groups and individuals where possible and appropriate to pro-

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by Jason
Rushing,
Maintenance
Craft Director

Maintenance Craft Report

Maintenance Happenings

Don't give away your job. All levels in maintenance have a good set of skills. The Post Office pays quite a bit of money every year to train employees. Whether you have hazwhopper training or CIOSS machine training, it all costs the Post Office hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions every year. Don't let them tell you, we can't do the work. That goes for cleaning carpet to moving a piece of equipment. We have done almost everything. If you have contractors doing anything in your building or workplace, let a steward or craft director know.

Don't hurt yourself or work yourself to death. You are only one person doing

the job of one person. Don't let management run you around and assign work like you are two or more people. Not only does it make you stressed out but it creates more of an opportunity to get hurt. We are only required to do a fair days work for a fair days pay. Be safe so you can enjoy retirement when it gets here. If the job needs 2 employees to be safe, ask for help. Some jobs by their nature require more than 1 person, e.g. confined space, isolated work areas like some basement jobs, battery shops, etc.

Make yourself a viable employee. If training or other educational opportunities arise, take advantage of them. The open season for maintenance employees is March 2012. Before that though, there may be an opportunity to take a test opened up for a special

circumstance. The Post Office may be short Building Custodians, Mail Processing Mechanics or other groups or levels of maintenance employees. The Service could open a particular test up in an installation or district, in-craft or in-service. Other local training may be available also for the choosing.

Nobody likes your money more than you! It pays, literally, to stay on top of your check stub. A certain individual went for training in Norman Oklahoma recently. It was a two week course. The person didn't check his pay stub until he was looking on Liteblue for another reason the next month. The e-payroll on Liteblue is a handy site tool. It's found under employee apps. He discovered that someone, accidentally, put him in for 40 hours of annual leave while he

was in official training in Norman Oklahoma. It's nice down there, but not like that! Yeah it was me. Liteblue is a good place to keep track of leave, work hours, all that good stuff. Check is often, don't wait to ask questions about something months after wrong leave shows up or LWOP.

The new contract looks to have some very interesting verbiage. If there is training or a seminar on the new contract and language in it, take time to check it out. It can only help you out. It has good looking language on contracting out, custodial staffing and other good maintenance stuff. I can't wait to get my fingers on it!

As always, be a Union member and participate!

In Union Solidarity.

Highlights Of The New Collective Bargaining Agreement

continued from page 3

- positions in mail processing will be as follows :
- 204Bs will be eliminated from offices with supervisors, except to fill absences of 14 days or more and vacant assignments of 14 days or more, not to exceed 90 days.
- The Part-Time Regular job title will be replaced with Non-Traditional Full-Time Employee. With this change will come expanded opportunities for these workers.

JOB IN THE MAINTENANCE CRAFT

- There will be a joint audit of maintenance work currently performed by contractors to identify duties that can be assigned to the Maintenance Craft where it is cost effective.
- Custodial staffing will be established on an installation-wide basis rather than on a facility-wide basis.
- Initially 1,500 custodial positions that were contracted out will be returned to the bargaining unit.
- Help Desk positions at the MTSC (Maintenance Technical Support Center) in Norman, OK, will be assigned to the bargaining unit.
- There will be an audit of EAS positions to determine if non-supervisory duties are being performed. Bargaining unit duties derived from the audit will be returned to the bargaining unit and a minimum of 60 bargaining unit positions will be established.
- All in-craft promotions will be on the basis of installation seniority within a "banded" score.

JOB IN THE MOTOR VEHICLE CRAFT

- Approximately 740 Vehicle Maintenance Facility positions will be created to perform work that is currently performed by subcontractors. The jobs will be created as follows:
219 Level 8 Technicians
459 Level 9 Lead Technicians
62 Level 10 Lead Technicians
- A minimum of 600 Highway Contract Routes (HCRs) will be converted to Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) routes, with a minimum of 25% of

- the duty assignments given to career employees
- The APWU will have the opportunity to review approximately 8,000 additional HCRs, and will have the opportunity to submit proposals for the work.
- There will be an audit of EAS positions to determine if non-supervisory duties are being performed. Bargaining unit duties derived from the audit will be returned to the bargaining unit and a minimum of 60 bargaining unit positions will be established.
- Part-Time Flexible and Part-Time Regular positions will be eliminated from the MVS Craft.

NEW, NON-TRADITIONAL POSITIONS

- The tentative agreement changes the definition of "full-time" in a way that gives the Postal Service and our members greater flexibility.
 - The "full-time" designation will apply to any position of 30 or more hours per week and to any position of 48 hours or less per week
 - No current employees can be forced into a full-time position of less than 40 hours per week or more than 44 hours per week.
 - These provisions will allow for the creation of many non-traditional full-time schedules, including four 10-hour days, three 12-hour days, and four 11-hour days.
 - There will be no mandatory overtime for employees in non-traditional assignments or in functional areas that utilize non-traditional full-time assignments.
- To provide the USPS with flexibility, the parties agreed to create a new position for Non-Career Assistants, who will comprise up to 20 percent of the workforce in most functional areas of the Clerk Craft and up to 10 percent in both the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Crafts. These employees will be paid lower wages than career employees, but higher wages than Transitional Employees and Casuals. They will be part of the APWU bargaining unit and will receive raises, health benefits, and leave. Non-Career Assistants

will have access to the grievance procedure, and they will have the opportunity to join the ranks of the permanent, career workforce by seniority.

- Transitional Employees and Casuals will be eliminated as workforce categories. Employees who are currently serving as TEs or Casuals will be eligible for conversion to Non-Career Assistants if they have passed the appropriate tests.

SMALL OFFICES

- There will be no Part-Time Flexibles in Level 21 and above offices. Positions will be staffed with Full-Time Regulars (including non-traditional assignments) and Non-Career Assistants.
- In Level 20 and below offices, wherever the union can demonstrate the existence of 30-hour duty assignments, management must create them.
- Restrictions will be placed on the amount of bargaining unit work that may be performed by supervisory personnel in small offices. The formula is as follows:
- Level 20 offices and above - No bargaining work by supervisors allowed
- Level 18 offices - 15 hours per week
- Level 15 and 16 offices - 25 hours per week
- Many Contract Postal Units (CPUs) will be returned to the APWU bargaining unit; others will be closed, and a system will be established to evaluate additional CPUs for return to the bargaining unit or closure.

BIDDING

Employees will enjoy unlimited bidding on jobs that do not require training or a deferment period. Such bids will not count toward an employee's allowed number of bids.

LIGHT & LIMITED DUTY

The union's proposals regarding light- and limited-duty positions will proceed to arbitration. Our proposals are intended to protect seniority rights and to provide fair opportunities for accommodation for employees that need it.



by John Smeekens, Veterans Director

Veteran's Report

Bringing Our Brothers Home

WELCOME HOME BROTHERS

Air Force Major Robert Tucci of Detroit and Air Force Colonel James E Dennany of Kalamazoo, were laid to rest, with full military honors, on Friday, January 14, 2011. They were flying an F-4D jet, one of three in their formation, during a night strike in Laos on November 12, 1969. It is believed that their plane was hit by enemy anti-aircraft artillery. There were no radio transmissions and no parachutes were seen deployed. Military researchers began collecting evidence in the 1990's. In 1999, U. S. officials were given remains and soldier paraphernalia found near the sight of the attack. More than 10 years of research was conducted to conclude the remains were those of Tucci and Dennany. There still remain 1,702 soldiers and officers that remain missing from the Vietnam War. WELCOME HOME BROTHERS AND GOD BLESS!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

On February 01, 2011, the last known living World War I Veteran from the United States of America celebrated his 110th birthday. Mr. Frank Buckles, resides in West Virginia. Do you realize that more Americans died in World War I, than in Korea and Vietnam combined!

DAV MEMORIAL

Ground has been broken for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, D. C. The 2.4 acre triangular site will pay tribute to the nation's more than 3 million living disabled Veterans.

GULF WAR AILMENTS

The VA has announced that two more Persian Gulf War related conditions qualify for service connected benefits and health care. Irritable bowel syndrome and functional dyspepsia are now considered to have been caused by service in the 1991 War. Gulf War Veterans filing claims *do not have to prove* the two conditions were directly caused by their military service. As always, contact your County Veterans Representative, or a VSO from one of the many Veterans' organizations out there.

NOT WELCOME ? ? ?

The national commander of the VFW, is upset over the recent treatment of a combat-wounded Veteran, who is a student, by Columbia University students during a town-hall meeting on whether ROTC should be allowed back on the campus. He called their actions "banal and juvenile" following their

recent verbal harassment of Anthony Maschek, a Columbia freshman and former Army staff sergeant. Maschek was awarded the Purple Heart after being shot multiple times during a firefight in Iraq in 2008. "The disrespect and shoddy treatment of an American hero by the students is a direct insult to not only the veteran community but also to all members of the nation's armed forces," said Richard L. Eubank, national commander of the VFW, the nation's largest organization of combat veterans. "Their recent actions are representative of the University's overall long-standing anti-military environment that fosters contempt and condescension for the military services. It is, in fact, a question of leadership and governing that allows this type of childish behavior and is far removed from the ethics and values of the American mainstream. Lifting the ban on ROTC

at Columbia is a decision that should be made by University leadership and not left to the whim of students. The faculty and the parents of the students who participated in the harassment of Mr. Maschek, need to be reminded that all the freedoms we enjoy as Americans have been earned by generations of patriots such as Anthony who were willing to fight to protect the liberties we, as Americans, enjoy." This is particularly true when considering the current war on terrorism is a direct result of the devastating attacks that occurred ten years ago in Columbia's neighborhood.

DID YOU KNOW

An American army officer serving in war-torn Afghanistan won the chance to play with Tiger Woods in the Dubai Desert Classic pro-am. Lt. Col. Michael Rowells, who has a nine handicap and is deployed currently with the 401st Army Field Support Brigade, beat 16,000 other amateur golfers in a draw ahead of the tournament's traditional curtain raiser at the Emirates Golf Club. Rowells said he was "thrilled" to be playing with the former No. 1 golfer and called it "a dream come true." *Woods' father Earl did two tours during the Vietnam War as a member of the U.S. Army Special Forces, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. He named Tiger after a South*

Vietnamese army colleague whom he fought alongside.

CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is increasing its support to caregivers with a new, toll-free telephone line for the caregivers of Veterans of all eras. "The families and loved ones who care for severely injured Veterans deserve the highest level of support," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "At VA, we consider them important partners in our efforts to care for and rehabilitate our nation's heroes." The National Caregiver Support Line — 1-855-260-3274 — will serve as the primary resource and referral center to assist caregivers, Veterans and others seeking caregiver information. The line unofficially started Feb. 1, and in its first week logged nearly 600 calls,

including 134 referrals to local VA caregiver support coordinators and 233 calls from caregivers themselves. "VA has been providing support for the caregivers of Veterans for more than seven decades," Shinseki added. "We already have more than two dozen successful programs, policies and services that support the caregivers of Veterans of all ages." The support line will provide information regarding new caregiver benefits, referrals to local caregiver support coordinators as well as emotional support to those concerned with their ability to provide care to loved ones who are Veterans. The National Caregiver Support Line will be open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., Eastern time; and Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Eastern time. Licensed VA social workers and health technicians will staff the support line. Local caregiver support coordinators are available to assist Veterans and their caregivers to understand and apply for VA's many caregiver benefits. VA also features a Web page, www.caregiver.va.gov, with general information on other caregiver support programs available through VA and the community. Access to the National Caregiver Support Line was also identified as a significant need in a November 2010 study on caregivers

of Veterans published by the National Alliance for Care giving.

MEMORIAL DAY

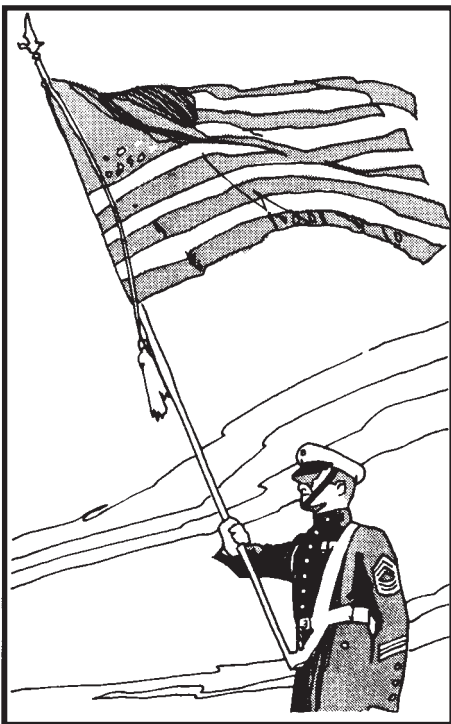
I've been doing these articles for several years now, and I hope that they've been informative, heartwarming, or whimsical. I have noticed that with the deadlines for these articles, that I may sometimes have to address an issue before it becomes late for the next deadline. If you understood that, great. If not, see me later for an explanation!

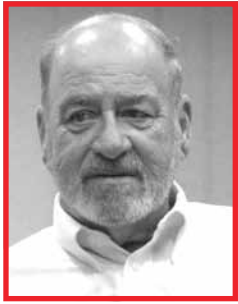
Don't forget that Monday May 30, 2011 is Memorial Day. This is the day we set aside to honor and remember our Veterans' who have made the Ultimate Sacrifice. Please take a moment to bow your head in honored respect for these heroes. They have kept this country free, and have given us the ultimate freedom to pursue the lifestyles and choices that we have chosen. I know it's the start of summer, with thoughts of your upcoming vacations, BBQ's, family reunions, graduations, baseball games, picnics, etc. But don't forget that these freedoms were all earned with blood, sweat, and tears. So make time, to take a minute with your family, with your friends, or by yourself, to bow your head in honored reverence and silence and say Thank You to those special Men & Women who have made the Ultimate Sacrifice for all of us. It will only take a minute. Have a great, happy, and safe Memorial Day.

SAD NEWS

Washington, February 28, 2011 - Frank Woodruff Buckles, who lied about his age to enlist in the Army in 1917 and became the last known U.S. veteran of World War I, died on February 27, 2011 at the age of 110. "We have lost a living link to an important era in our nation's history," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "But we have also lost a man of quiet dignity, who dedicated his final years to ensuring the sacrifices of his fellow 'Doughboys' are appropriately commemorated." Burial with full military honors will be held at Arlington National Cemetery. Details about the funeral are expected to be released soon. A long-time resident of Charles Town, West Virginia, where he had a farm, Buckles was born in Bethany, Missouri. He enlisted shortly after his 16th birthday and served in France and Germany. At the start of World War II, he was a civilian working with a steamship company in the Philippines. He was imprisoned in a Japanese prisoner of war camp for three and a half years. In his later years, Buckles became an advocate for the expansion of a little-known memorial to World War I

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by Al
LaBrecque,
Retiree's Chapter
President

Retiree Involvement

Ideological Warfare

"In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, as 'Right-to-Work'. It provides no 'rights' and no 'works'. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining . . . We demand this fraud be stopped." Martin Luther King, Jr. (1961)

Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, the Middle East...Wisconsin! Revolution is in the air! Michigan and 'Rust Belt' states are squarely in the crosshairs of the conservative element who were swept into office in the Nov. elections. We've all heard the phrase; 'elections have consequences'. I've related this story before, but it bears repeating.

In the mid-'60's when my kids were little and I was a young Union hotshot feeling my oats, I can see clearly in my mind's eye as if it was yesterday, my Mom telling me; "Your generation had better take care of things, because if you don't, you won't suffer but your children will." Then she predicted; "And if you don't take care of things, there will be another revolution. It may not be bloody, but it WILL be a revolution." Then Dad chimed in; "Yes, but the working man has got to suffer first. And I don't mean a little bit, I mean really suffer!" This coming from the wisdom earned in truly hard times as Great Depression era people, who were active participants in the '36-'37 Flint Great Sitdown Strike, which was their version of a revolution. At the time, I thought they were overstating things. If they were here today, I'd get down on my knees and apologize for ignoring their wisdom of experience and foresight. As a consequence, my generation, spoiled by their generation's sacrifices and our own golden era of unprecedented gains for the working middle class, didn't take care of things. So, here we are. Our children and grandkids are feeling the pain, and to a degree, so are we! When will we ever learn?!

The tip of the iceberg of revolt in our Sister State of Wisconsin is a preview of things coming to Michigan. The anti-union, anti-worker, anti-retiree GOP forces funded and elected by the people last Nov. are seizing the moment to bust organized labor. Here in the Wolverine State, there's legislation proposed to create 'Right-to-Work' zones. Translation: "Union-Free Zones"! What do we have to do to understand that this is a concerted assault, bought and paid for by the likes of the Koch Bros., on organized labor in the public sector?! As in the Badger State, public employee Unions and state governments negotiated wages, benefits and working condi-

tions in good faith. The GOP Governors and GOP majority legislatures, emboldened by landslide elections, aren't content to allow good faith collective bargaining over proposed concessions. It's a blatant assault to render Unions impotent by destroying public employee rights to collective bargaining.

Closer to our own pocketbooks, our self-described nerd Gov. Snyder (a.k.a. Snidely), has initiated a virtual blitzkrieg on the working and retired

good people do nothing.

Then there's the outcry from CSRS/FERS annuitants blindsided by the unexpected hike in IRS federal income tax withholding deducted from the Feb. payment, and since. Most became aware of this upon receiving the OPM Notice of Annuity Adjustment in late Jan. (if they read it), or when annuity checks or direct deposits came up \$30.-\$60. short. The OPM notice explanations were misleading, if not pathetically lacking.



middle class with draconian proposals to balance the budget. Postal/federal, state and local public sector retired annuitants are a significant part of Snyder's proposed final solution to fix Michigan's financial woes. Our annuities/pensions are currently exempt from state income tax. Snyder proposes to eliminate that exemption by taxing those public sector pensions and our annuities at 4.35%. In the '80's, NARFE activist Paul Davis filed suit to exempt federal annuities from state income taxation as was afforded to state and local public retiree pensions. In a celebrated case that was decided by the Michigan Supreme Court, our federal annuities were ruled exempt. That is now in serious danger of being negated by the GOP legislature. So much for their phony hue and cry against taxation!

How did we get to this sad state of affairs? Let's have an examination of conscience. How did you vote last Fall? Or, did you fail to vote at all? Yes, elections DO have consequences, and we're likely to reap the pain where it hurts the most; right in our fixed income! Will we remember this harsh lesson in the next election cycle? In the interim, are you willing to walk like an Egyptian, or take to the streets as our Brothers and Sisters in Wisconsin to protest state government picking our pockets? Bad things happen when

As for the unwelcome IRS withholding increase, it's obvious this anomaly occurred as a result of the late Dec. lame duck 111th Congress' bipartisan vote to extend the Bush tax cuts in 2011 for ALL Americans, including the wealthiest 2%. They failed to mention the Making Work Pay tax credit expired on Dec. 31, 2010, which allegedly changed the IRS withholding tables, but not the annual tax rate. In short, Congress AND the Obama Administration blew it on the Making Work Pay tax credit which was part of the stimulus package in 2009 and 2010, by letting it expire on Dec. 31st, while catering to the GOP element who were hell bent on protecting their wealthy benefactor's millions with the tax cut extension.

For us peons, this means that the federal tax increase will remain in our annuity payments for at least 2011. There have been numerous versions of what and why this anomaly happened, some factual, some not. The best I can ascertain is that 40 million low-waged workers and retiree's with incomes below \$35,000., and that includes most of our CSRS/FERS annuitants, are the tax extension deal's biggest losers. The most comprehensive explanation I've read to date was published by the Center for Economic Policy Research, thanks to being pointed to that report by retired Maintenance NBA,

Don Foley. I've furnished a copy to our Local Retiree Chapters and State Chapter E-Board officers, and will furnish a copy to interested members upon request. This report doesn't hold the White House or their advisors blameless since they were warned of the anomaly on Dec. 6th, 2010, the President said: "There is no reason that ordinary Americans should see their taxes go up next year." Apparently the Administration staff found a reason!

An informed source who's expertise I trust explicitly advises; your tax will be calculated at the end of the year under the extension of the tax relief. We will simply get a bigger refund at the end of the year. Being no tax expert by any stretch, that makes some sense since OPM official explanations have said that although the withholding tables changed due to the expiration of the MWP tax credit, the annual IRS tax rates did not change. Guess we'll have to wait until we file our 2011 taxes next year. In the meantime, tighten your belts.

CHAA-CHINNG-G! During the Feb. Retiree's Dept. teleconference, Retiree Chapter officers were informed that APWU retirees exceeded the COPA Committee's 2010 goal with \$235,000 in COPA contributions, nearly one-fourth of the total for the year? Do I hear 'moo-oo'? Need I say more?

NARFE RESPONDS: As previously reported in this column, attempts to get NARFE Hq. to acknowledge our written and verbal objections to the "Save A Stamp, Renew Online" statement on the NARFE membership renewal application were ignored until newly elected NARFE Pres., Joseph Beaudoin, responded in part; ". . . I understand your sensitivity to the statement on the NARFE Dues Renewal Notice, "Save a stamp! Renew online!" It was certainly not intended to alienate any segment of our membership. It is my goal to serve the interests of all NARFE members. With that in mind, on the revised Dues Renewal Notice, the statement will be changed to read, 'For your convenience, renew online'." Okay . . . while no reference to online renewal would have been preferable, when our own APWU generated materials advertise online communications, it would be hypocritical to object further.

SO MUCH MORE . . . I intended to report, but priorities limits what I can do this issue. Basically, retiree members are alerted of the June MPWU Education Convention where we plan to offer classes pertinent to retiree members, a Retirement seminar, and Open Forum featuring Retirees' Dept. Dir., Judy Beard. Retired members and Local Chapters

continued on page 8

Already Second Guessing The Governor

by Gary VanHoogstraten,
Advisor MPWU

I watched the inauguration and sat through the State of the State address from our new Governor. At that time I was going to give him the benefit of the doubt, that when he said he wanted to turn this state around. After he submitted his proposed budget I am already starting to second guess him. The number one thing that comes to mind is for him to place a tax on retirees pensions. What he fails to remember, the retirees got us to where we are now, looking back for example the great Sit-Down-Strike in 1936-1937 in Flint. These

members made it possible for decent wages, hours of work, vacation, health benefits, just to mention a few. These retirees do not get raises, bonuses, and most of the time no C.O.L.A. So they must have a plan to live on what they get on a monthly basis. Most of us know that the retirees are the most giving to any political funds and also who do you think are the first ones at the polls on election day.

Look at some of the other budget items that affect what I consider middle or lower class residents. Taxpayers will see their individual tax rate drop from 4.35% to 4.25%, then it will be frozen

at the level. The earned income tax will be eliminated. Homestead Income Tax Credit would be reduced to 80% of the difference between property taxes and 3.5% of income for most home owners. Then the schools will be receiving \$470 less per pupil. Most of the above cuts will not effect those in the triple digit figures and don't forget the phasing out the \$3,700 personal income tax deductions, starting in 2013 for those making \$75,000 (single) or \$150,000 (couples (married filed jointly)). We know damn well this is not any of us Union members or middle class residents. He said in his campaign that there would be no tax

increases. Then all of the sudden the budget comes out. Some people will be getting special treatments and everyone in Michigan will have to sacrifice for it.

Look at the mess we have in Wisconsin with their collective bargaining. If you look at the attack the governor plans for senior citizens, makes you wonder why the governor picked this fight. His program of taxes and budgetary reforms puts a premium on self-denial and self-discipline with no immediate pay off. And by the way he is not the sacrificial lamb he claims to be. Outgoing Governor Grandhom also took the same salary of \$1 as he claims to be doing. One other thing, he sat down with an actor from Michigan, Jeff Daniels and spoke of the film industry. After he saw the budget, Jeff Daniels was quoted by saying the Governor lied to him. Is the Governor doing the same to the residents of Michigan? I didn't just get these numbers out of a hat. I received all this information from the Detroit Newspaper February 25/26 issues. I hate to beat a dead horse, but we have to make sure this tax on retirees pensions does not go through. For some day, and hopefully soon for many of you, all of you will be a retiree down the road.

Until Next Time.

Ideological Warfare

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need to plan to attend! May is OLDER AMERICANS MONTH. Michigan Locals are urged to consider an event to honor their retired members and their spouses like with a nice luncheon and program acknowledging retiree's contributions in a meaningful way (maybe door prizes, etc). Active Locals with organized Retiree Chapters have the structure to invite your retirees. I have a Retirees' Dept member mailing list for every Local in the state. Ask and you shall receive! Then, this final thought . . . When enrolling in the APWU Health Plan during Open Season, it occurred to me that for an APWU retiree to be eligible to enroll in the APWU Health Plan, you must be a \$36. per year member of the APWU Retiree's Dept. Why is it then, that any non-member postal (scab), federal retiree, including retired postal and federal management, can enroll as an "Associate Member" for an annual \$35. fee? That's the \$35. question!

BELATED CONDOLENCES are extended to State Chapter Trustee, Brother Charles "Charlie" Kolhoff and Family on the tragic loss of his son, Jay. May our Union Family keep Charlie, one of the truly 'good guys', in our warm thoughts and prayers. "Eternal rest grant unto Jay Kolhoff, 'O Lord, and let Perpetual Light shine upon him. Amen." Be Strong!

Make the Call!

1-800-327-4968

TTY: 1-877-492-7341

www.EAP4YOU.com

April 2011

April is EAP Awareness Month

Visit the Employee Assistance program on-line at www.EAP4YOU.com . . .
wealth of information is waiting for you.

The Employee Assistance Program, provided by Magellan Health Service . . .
We Deliver for You !!!

Topics Include:

- **Money Management:** resources to help you manage your money in a difficult economy.
- **Retirement Resources:** a successful retirement begins with preparation and planning.
- **Military & Veterans Resources:** from pre-deployment to returning home.
- **Family, Children & Teens:** single parenting, elder care, blended families and more.
- **Workplace Issues:** balancing home and work, job burnout, time management and more.
- **Job Changes:** coping with stress, our job search, think positively and more.
- **Substance Abuse & Other Addictions:** dealing with codependency, teens and more.
- **Coping with Traumatic Events:** earthquake aftermath, preparing for emergencies and more.
- **Mental Health Issues:** depression, dealing with grief, stress management and more.
- **Health Issues:** smoking cessation, getting a better night's sleep and more.

To access: click the Library & Resources menu at top of EAP4YOU.com and go to the corresponding letter (e.g. Job Changes = "J")

To visit the EAP Website . . . Type www.EAP4YOU.com in the address line of your computer browser . . . At "Enter Member Website" click the "Enter" tab . . . Wait for the system to take you to the EAP page . . . Enjoy!

Call us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-800-EAP-4-YOU as well

For more information regarding the above, check out the website or Make the Call!

GREATER MICHIGAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



New CBA

by: Lynn Pallas-Barber,
NBA

By the time that this article is printed, it is hoped that our new CBA will be ratified by the rank and file membership. These were difficult times for our negotiators. Despite the decline in revenue and mail volume we have a new contract. That in of itself is a great accomplishment, despite the troubled times for working families in our country and the current state of the economy our negotiating team pulled it off. The main theme of our negotiating team was “We want our work back”. It appears that thousands of jobs will be returned to the bargaining unit. Work is to be returned from EAS positions, postmasters, 204-Bs and administrative and technical positions. Initially 4,000 jobs will be returned from contractors, the telephone call centers, CPUs, HCR routes, vehicle maintenance and subcontracted custodial services in the field.

There are significant changes in this contract. The contract is for 4½ years and will now expire in May 2015. There is a general wage increase of 3½% for the next three years. The COLA was preserved and remains uncapped. Article 6 – no lay off protection was extended. Casuals have been eliminated but replaced with Non-Career Assistants (NCAs). The PMRs are eliminated in the Level 15 and above post offices. POAs are eliminated and those clerk hours will not go to the new Lead Clerk position.

The Clerk Craft and MVS will see significant changes with the elimination of PMRs and the creation of the new Non-Traditional Full-Time (NTFT) assignments. These assignments will be more or less than 5 days and these employees may work between 30 and 48 hours a week, limited to between 4 to 12 hours a day with limited flexibility and split shifts. PTRs were not entitled to out-of-schedule pay (OOSP) where these new bid assignments will now be paid if worked outside of their bid schedule. These NTFT bid assignment employees will be able to sign the ODL. They get overtime after 40 hours in a week. If their work day is beyond 8 hours they are paid at the straight time rate.

Excessing is now limited to a 40 mile radius outside of the installation with a max of 50 miles. At the 90 day regional meeting a complete list of withheld residuals should be presented. Post excessing the Comparative Work Hour Report is now mandatory. There will be only “one” moving day in any 90 day period. The 60 day notice is now reduced to 30 days if within the 50 mile radius. Employees excessed within the installation into other APWU crafts may now elect to stay in that craft. Prior is the excessing was within the installation a senior employee could not go senior in lieu of, well now they can. eReassign will now be used to allow clerks in impacted offices transfers within the District and/or 100 miles with seniority to posted duty assignments before they

become withheld residual vacancies. WOW! These are some of the highlights. It certainly will be interesting to see how all these new changes will be implemented in the field.

It is imperative for both parties to understand what this contract really says. Too many times in the past it has taken the USPS to long to recognize what the contract states and of course it is another story getting them to comply ! ! !

ATTACK ON WORKERS’ RIGHTS

The attack on workers’ rights and the middle class is not just happening in Wisconsin and Ohio. It’s happening in our home states of Michigan and Illinois. In Michigan, Governor Rick Snyder who really is not just a nerd from Ann Arbor got the House and Senate to pass bills giving him “Emergency Management” powers to appoint a corporation or a CEO who could dissolve town governments or school boards, fire the elected officials that you voted for, and nullify any local law and run your local government. He has proposed giving bid business a 86% tax cut while raising personal taxes by 31%. Much of that 31% would shouldered by senior citizens and the poor. His budget proposes a \$1.8 billion tax cut for business and a \$1.75 billion tax increase for the working families, seniors and poor of our state. He, together with the legislature has introduced 40 anti-labor bills in the first few months in session.

If the Republicans thought they elected a new and inspiring leader were they ever mistaken. This guy will drive our battered state right into the ground. Much attention has been paid to Wisconsin these days and rightly so, our neighbor to the west. Well

Rick Snyder and Scott Walker are chasing their steroids with the same lake water!

In Metropolis, IL United Steel Workers Local 7-669 has been locked out for 249 days from their plant. These employees work in a uranium processing plant run by Honeywell. Honeywell’s CEO David Cote is attempting to break the union. Cote has hired multimillion dollar union busting firms and he refuses to sit down and bargain in good faith. The Honeywell fight is not about money any more than the battles in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. It’s about destroying union. Honeywell has spent about \$48.8 million in union busting instead of giving these union workers the health benefits and retirement benefits which are worth about \$20 million over three years. It’s not about working people, it’s all about taking rights away from working people, union working members.

APW ACCIDENT BENEFIT ASSOCIATION

One of the hats that I wear is that of the Area 5 Director for the ABA. The ABA continues to be an organization that continues to live up to its objectives. It is a fraternal association for the benefit of its members and their beneficiaries. It was not established for profit, but to make provisions for the payment of benefits to its members and their beneficiaries in case of accidental death, or disability because of a covered accident. Its purpose is to promote close relationships among its members and to aid and assist the officers and members of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO.

It certainly is a good feeling to sit on a board of directors which is composed of all

UNION members. We wear a different hat on this board as we all share in fiduciary responsibilities. I’d like to report that all the members on this board wear two (2) hats, the first being our UNION hat.

There are other disability insurances available to our membership. Our membership should feel comfortable that the APW ABA works for the UNION members.

DOCUMENTING AND DEVELOPING

The new contract will be giving the NBAs an opportunity to write a Letter of Additions and Corrections at Step 3. It has to be clearly understood by the locals that the language of Article 15, Section 2, Step 2 (d) still will require the local parties to make a full and detailed statement of the facts, the contractual provisions involved and the appropriate remedy sought. The parties at the local level are still required to exchange all documents. It becomes ever more important that grievances are properly developed and documented by the local. Management has become increasingly skilled and their advocates continually object to argument raised and evidence presented for the first time in arbitration.

As stewards, we are expected to be in compliance with Article 15, Section 2, Step 2.d of our CBA. This contractual provision is a requirement that both parties shall cooperate fully in an effort to develop all necessary facts, including the exchange of copies of all relevant papers or documents in accordance with Article 31 and the contractual provisions relied upon. It is extremely important that the contractual

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Southeast Michigan District Is One Of Seven Closing Nationwide

Current Functions to be Absorbed by Detroit District

Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe today announced a newly redesigned Postal Service, one that is better positioned for growth, reflects further alignment within the organization to achieve core business strategies and, when fully implemented, will help realize approximately \$750 million of annual cost savings. As part of the redesign, the Southeast MI District will be closed and its functions absorbed by the Detroit District. District offices house only administrative functions and do not affect customer service, mail delivery, Post Office operations or ZIP codes.

The decision impacts positions within the Southeast MI District Office. A Voluntary Early Retirement and financial incentive programs will be offered to eligible employees. Employees must be

50 years old, with at least 20 years of service; or any age with at least 25 years of service to qualify for the incentive. Employees who accept the VER offer or already meet existing retirement qualifications will receive \$20,000 paid over two fiscal years to separate from the Postal Service. Detroit District Manager Chuck Howe will assume responsibility for the Southeast MI District and District Manager Charley Miller will be acting District Manager, Greater Michigan effective Monday, March 28. The two will be meeting over the next few days to discuss the transition.

More details of how the transition will take place and how it impacts field operations will be announced over the coming days. In the meantime, District Manager Charley Miller encouraged everyone to “keep moving forward, and keep processing and delivering the

mail.” The six other district offices that are closing are Columbus, Northern Illinois, South East New England, South Georgia, Big Sky and Albuquerque.

“It’s critical that we adjust our workforce to match America’s changing communications trends as mail volumes continue to decline,” Donahoe said. “At every step and with every change, our focus remains on our customers and continuing to provide outstanding customer service.” Today’s announcement focused on the administrative and executive corps. Additional staff reductions will occur as the Postal Service makes necessary changes to its network and retail operations. About 7,500 positions will be eliminated across the organization through the redesign. The full scope and financial impact of these personnel actions should be realized in one calendar year – March 2012.

Military Buyback: *Should I Pay the Money?*

A Federal employee with prior military service has the option of making a deposit into the retirement fund, in order to receive credit for this service in his annuity. This is known as a “buyback.” The process is deceptively straightforward: just multiply the employee’s military earnings by 0.03*, and then add interest beginning with two years after his entry-on-duty date as a civilian. However, there is a complication.

The interest is compounded annually in accordance with the varying interest rate announced by the Treasury Department each year. What really makes it complicated is that, by law, the interest charged to the employee every twelve months is a composite of the two adjacent years. For example: if the employee’s anniversary date is, say, May 22, then for each 12-month interest period you would add (218/360) * previous year interest rate to (142/360) * the current year rate (public law requires use of a 360-day year). Do this for all the years until the year he makes the deposit. It is helpful if you have a computer program for this part!

What are the cost/ benefit factors? Is it worthwhile for the employee to make the deposit?

Examples

Let’s take a look at two examples.

First, the employee served a 3-year enlistment during which his earnings were \$168,000. His entry-on-duty date is August 18, 2002. In this case his cost will be (0.03 * 168000) + interest for six years, or \$6,463.20. Payment of this deposit will add 3% of his final high-three to his annuity. If his final high three is, say, \$81,000 then the \$6,463.20 payment will increase his annuity by \$2,430 per year, or \$202.50 per month.

In less than three years, then, he will recover his \$6,463.20 “investment.”

Here is a second example.

Seven years service, earnings \$400,000, \$55,846 high three, and entry-on-duty Oct 13, 1999. In this case, the employee owes \$17,778 and if he pays, he will see his annuity increase \$3,909.22 annually, or \$325.76 per month. The one-time payment will be recouped in 4.5 years.

Retired Military Personnel

How about retired military? Can they make the deposit?

Yes, they can, and it is calculated the same way, but the numbers are larger. And the decision has an additional element: the military pension must be waived in order to have the larger civil-

ian annuity. Let’s do another example. Twenty years retirement. Total salary = \$1.2 million. High three \$108,442. Start date: March 20, 2003. In this case, the deposit would be \$44,528. This payment would generate an annuity increase of \$21,688.40 per year, or \$1,807.36 monthly. In just over two years, he would get his money back. But he would also have to waive his military pension. It seems that when there is a pension to lose, it is less likely to be worth the “investment.” But this is just a generalization – you need to run the numbers.

The above examples are illustrative, intended to show how the process works.

(The author developed the software at www.fedbens.us)

* For earnings in 1999 there is an additional 0.25%, rising to 0.4% in 2000, then back to 3%. Also, above deposit amounts are for on/before the anniversary date; after this date, one

more year’s interest is charged.

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Editor’s Note: Robert Benson is starting to market a new computer program. it calculates exactly how much the employee owes for his buy-back – a daunting task if done manually – and it calculates the amount the employee’s annuity will be increased as a result of making the deposit. Both of these software functions are unique, he believes. In addition, he sells a program for precise calculation of the individual FERS annuity supplement. This, too, is available nowhere else. If you would like to contact Robert Benson, his web page is above.

reprint — by Robert F. Benson
February 8, 2011 URL: <http://www.fedsmith.com/article/2739/military-buyback-should-i-pay-money.html>

APWU P.O.W.E.R.

continued from page 4

mote women’s rights and advance the labor movement.

We espouse “a woman’s place is in her union,” and will constantly endeavor to make the above quotation a reality.

How is APWU POWER Structured?

POWER committees exist on four levels – local, state, regional and national. A National Steering Committee consisting of one coordinator from each of the five regions assists in local, state and regional committee operations and communications.

How Do I Join APWU POWER?

If you are a female member of APWU, you are automatically a member of POWER.

How Do We Form a Local POWER Committee?

If you’re interested in forming a local POWER committee, first contact your local union president for assistance. Then contact your regional POWER coordinator, who will provide further assistance and material.

Where Do APWU POWER Committees Obtain Funds?

Your local may assist your POWER committee, as it does any other APWU committee. In addition, funds can be raised by various means, such as: dinners, bus rides, sales of items, (bumper stickers, buttons, t-shirts, etc.), garage and yard sales and raffles. Ideas on profitable fund-raising activities can be obtained through your POWER coordinator.

How Do We Plan Meetings?

First, set a convenient meeting place, time and date. Remember, many members have family and union responsibilities; make arrangements for child care. Provide a sign –in sheet at the meeting. Let members introduce themselves. Circulate a questionnaire that will elicit insight into members’ interests. Plan educational programs that encourage member participation, based on results of the questionnaires. Display POWER posters, literatures and related materials. Invite interesting speakers.

Join!

The POWER Steering committee – and all the members of POWER – invite you to join them in our rewarding and productive action-oriented program. Together we can help improve the working climate not only for APWU member but for all working people.

How Do I Obtain Additional Information?

To obtain additional information contact the POWER coordinator in your region.

The POWER coordinator for the Central Region is:

Carolyn Watson, Chicago Area
Home phone number (708) 478-1539
Cell number (708) 307-0655

Or you can contact me:

Karen Hodges,
MPWU POWER Chairperson
Work 616 776-1542 Tour one (2300-0750) Cell 616 745-6234

In solidarity.

Bringing Our Brothers Home

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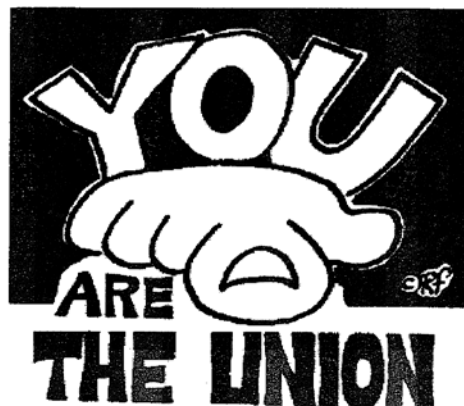
Veterans from the District of Columbia into a national memorial. More than 4,700,000 Americans served in the military during World War I. About 53,000 died of combat-related causes, while another 63,000 deaths were listed as non-combat.

(I received this e-mail notice from the Department of Veterans Affairs on Monday February 28, 2011 @ 9:58:32 AM, EST. As you see above, Mr. Buckles had just celebrated his 110th Birthday.)

AGENT ORANGE & KOREA

Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Korea will have an easier path to access quality health care and benefits under a Department of Veterans Affairs final regulation. The new rules expand the dates when

illnesses caused by herbicide exposure can be presumed to be related to Agent Orange. Under the final rule, VA will presume herbicide exposure for any veteran who served between April 1, 1968, and Aug. 31, 1971, in a unit determined by VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) to have operated in an area in or near the Korean DMZ in which herbicides were applied. Previously, VA recognized that Agent Orange exposure could only be conceded to veterans who served in certain units along the Korean DMZ between April 1968 and July 1969. In practical terms, eligible Veterans who have specific illnesses VA presumes to be associated with herbicide exposure do not have to prove an association between their illness and their military service. This “presumption” simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits and ensures that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve. If you are, or know, veterans with covered service in Korea who have medical conditions that may be related to Agent Orange, tell them to contact their nearest County Veterans Service Representative or local VSO of a Veterans Organization, for assistance with claims for access to VA health care and compensation as soon as possible.



Detroit News - Online

American Ills Not Caused By Unions

The 19th-century robber baron Jay Gould once said, "I can hire half the working class to shoot the other half." Gould's vision of class warfare is being played out today in the shameful attacks on public employees. These attacks are secretly financed and planned by modern-day Jay Goulds who aim to keep their own taxes low. Some vastly powerful corporations and billionaires want to cripple all unions and turn America into a low-wage banana republic.

They're succeeding. Across the country, new governors and new legislatures are demanding cuts to jobs, pensions and concessions from public employee unions. Their demands are nothing more than payback for the billions of dollars that the ultra-rich have poured into political campaigns.

Scapegoating public employees has almost become a sport. In New York City, a city councilman accused sanitation workers of a deliberate slowdown in removing snow during the Christmas blizzard. It turned out that slow snow removal was actually caused by the layoffs of 400 workers and the failure to call a snow emergency quickly enough. (That's why actress Julianna Margulies thanked the Teamsters for digging out New York in her acceptance speech for a SAG award.) In Ohio, Gov. John Kasich wants to ban collective bargaining for public employee unions and get rid of the prevailing wage. In Wisconsin, Scott Walker suggests banishing unions for government workers. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said he won cooperation from unions because he threatened "to take a bat out and hit you."

Christie's threat isn't funny to anyone who remembers the Memphis sanitation strike in 1968. All the workers wanted was to earn above-starvation wages and to be respected as human beings. Peaceful workers were gassed, dragged, arrested and threatened by armed National Guardsmen in tanks.

Only after the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed while in Memphis supporting the struggle did city officials come to their senses and recognize Local 1733 of AFSCME as the bargaining representative for the sanitation workers. Just think where those workers would be today without a union.

It's time for a reality check. Government employees did not blow a hole in any state budget, including Michigan. Economist Dean Baker points out that shortfalls were almost entirely caused by the recession. "If revenue had increased in step with normal growth (2.4 percent real growth, plus inflation), state and local governments would have had an additional \$290 billion since the start of the downturn," Baker notes.

Public employees didn't create a huge housing bubble. Wall Street did

that. And public employees didn't cause the Great Recession through reckless speculation. Wall Street did that, too.

State governments didn't get \$3 trillion dollars in loans from the Federal Reserve and profit from those loans by relending them. Again, that was Wall Street.

It's also important to remember,

as economist Robert Reich points out, that the typical public employee's pension is only \$19,000 a year.

These attacks on working families and government workers are nothing more than divide-and-conquer tactics aimed at weakening or eliminating all unions.

I hope my brothers and sisters

in private-sector unions don't fall for them. Because after they've finished with government workers, they'll be coming after you, too.

James P. Hoffa is president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. E-mail comments to letters@detnews.com

Postal Service Needs Fewer Supervisors And More Workers

Posted By -UnBylined- On February 17, 2011 (8:15 pm) In Contributors, Opinion

I was appalled to hear on the news that there is any discussion about closing our nation's post offices. There is no civilized nation in the world without postal service.

In fact, in his misguided war in Iraq, one of the first things George W. Bush did in rebuilding the country was to rebuild its postal service. If the greatest country in the world can do this for our enemy, why then is it declaring war on its own citizens in this manner?

It may seem as if this is a cost-saving thing to do, but how does the government expect the poor who don't have the Internet or cars to get to a neighboring town? In all likelihood, they do not have enough money to have bank accounts and rely on postal orders to pay their bills. Just walk into a poor area at the first of the month to see how many are there just buying postal orders.

The real problem is the mismanagement of the system as a whole and the individual post offices themselves, with too few workers and with supervisors who blatantly leave the premises. Whether they get paid for this time off-site I do not know, but I do know how often there is no supervisor on-site to see that the workers are properly supervised and their concerns

answered (such as how to perform a function they were not trained to do). Luckily, my local post office is an exception to this, but as I travel the state, I have found this to be too true an event.

Similarly, our last postmaster general was allowed to give himself \$100,000 raises yearly for the last three years he worked, thereby raising his lifetime pension. Where was Congress then overseeing this, especially when it was well known that the Postal Service was in a decline?

cut the drones who actually move the mail and leave unscathed the supervisors who do little but collect salaries far beyond their services rendered. It makes me think of when I was an elementary school principal and had a sign that described the phases of a project and ended with "punish-ment for the innocent."

What we need is fewer supervisors, especially as the work force has been so diminished, and that money put into hiring more workers.

If, indeed, the Postal Service is

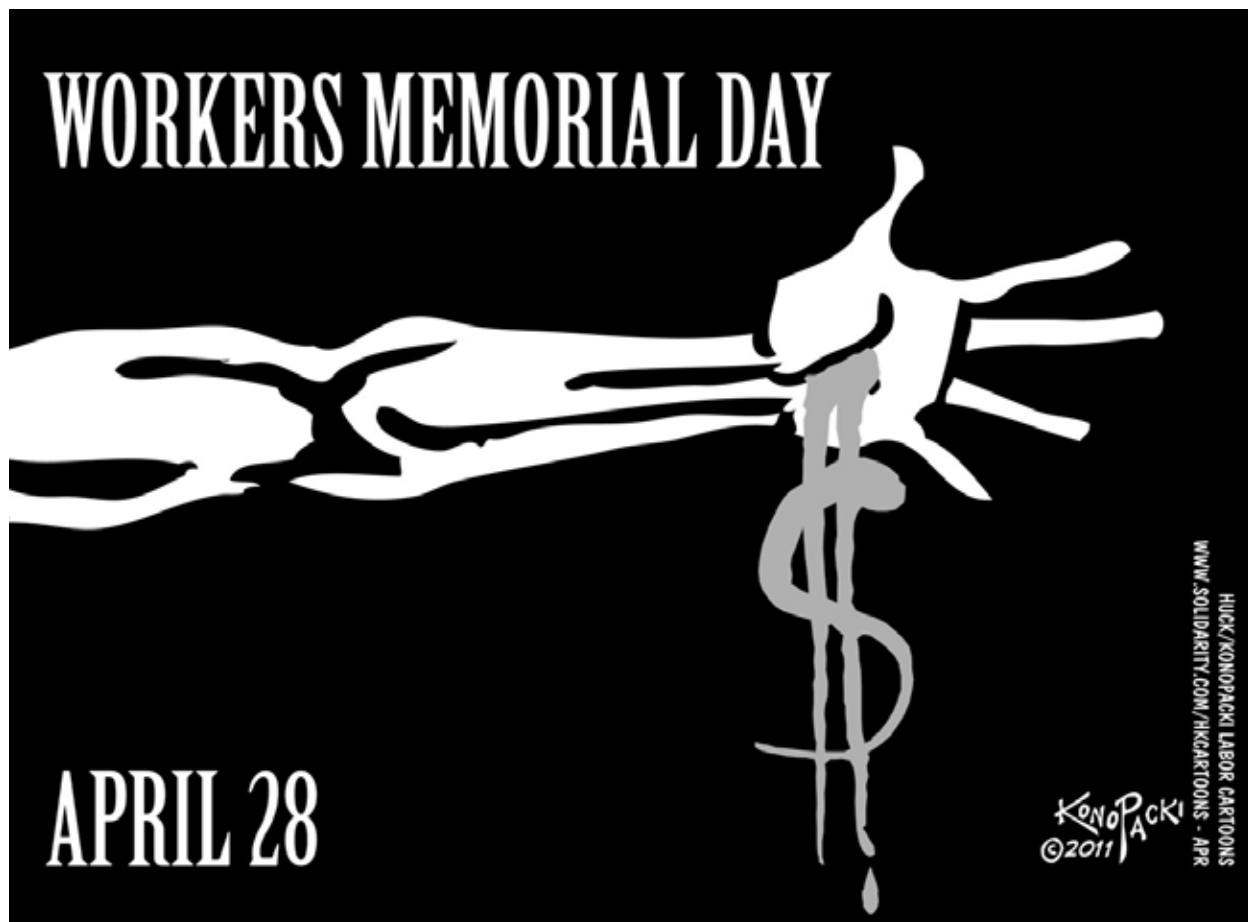
looking to close down the less-efficiently functioning branches, is it going to fire the supervisors who are responsible for this lack of efficiency or just punish the residents of the town and the carriers and clerks who have to fight to try to do their jobs effectively? How many of these workers are ex-military and are instilled with a work ethic not seen in many places?

Once again, the rich benefit and the poor and elderly are being assaulted by their own country. What a reputation for a nation to have.

It is time for this nation to set its priorities right. Once again, Congress has left a business (the Postal Service) to self-regulation, and once again, we see the result — greed and deception and the common man left to fend for him- or herself.

Congress must step up to the plate to save the Postal Service.

David Berg of Searsport is a retired elementary school principal. Article taken from Bangor Daily News - <http://new.bangordailynews.com>



New CBA

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provision relied upon be incorporated in the body of the Step 2 appeal. It has occurred in arbitration, when the articles of the contract are not developed in the written Step 2 appeal and only testified to in arbitration, that new argument has now been established.

Documents relied upon by the Union must be exchanged with management and should be exchanged at the Step 2 meeting. Often times documents are placed in the file by a steward and when they are relied upon in arbitration management objects as they have never seen the document previously. This can be very difficult for the advocate. Should an important document be discovered after an appeal to Step 3 or Direct Appeal to Arbitration, the steward should notify the NBA in the file and should provide a copy to the USPS regional office to include in their file. Remember an advocate can only present in arbitration the case that was developed and documented at the local level.

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

In the early 19th century, women were considered second class citizens. Women were considered subservient to their husbands. After marriage women

did not have the right to own property, maintain wages, sign a contract, much less vote. Women were expected to be obedient wives, never to have a thought or opinion different of their husbands. It was improper for women to travel alone or to speak in public.

The Women's suffrage movement was formally set into motion in 1848 with the first Women's Right Convention in Seneca Falls, NY. The catalyst for this convention was the World Anti-Slavery Convention held in London in 1840. An American delegation of women was in attendance. These delegates were forced to sit in the galleries as observers because they were women. This poor treatment of these women brought about the convention in Seneca Falls, NY.

During the Civil War, women's suffrage was shadowed by the war and the abolition of slavery. Women's activists Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony petitioned the government for the emancipation of slaves with the belief that, once the war was over, women and slaves would be granted the same rights as the white men. At the end of the war, the suffrage of women and the abolishment of slavery were two separate issues. The government decided that the Negro male vote would produce the im-

mediate political gain in the South that the women's vote could not.

Susan B. Anthony was arrested in 1872 for attempting to vote in the presidential election. Six years later, in 1878, a Woman's Suffrage Amendment was introduced to Congress. With the formation of various women's groups in the 1890's and early 1900's, the women's movement gained a full head of steam. During World War I women pitched in for the war effort. In 1919, after years of petitioning, picketing and protest parades, the Nineteenth Amendment was passed and in 1920 was ratified with the signature of President Woodrow Wilson.

Women fought for years for a voice and a vote. It is certainly sad that often times our brothers and sisters fail to exercise that right. It is extremely important that we vote no matter what type of election. It's your voice.

Once again I would like to mention that it was a pleasure to attend the Women's History Month Program hosted by POWER of the Detroit District Area Local. They are the only group that never forgets.

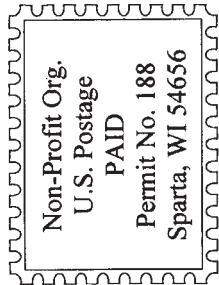
WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

Each April 28, since 1989, unions of the AFL-CIO observe Workers Memorial

Day. This is a day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job. April 28 was chosen because it is the anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the day of similar remembrance in Canada. Every year, employees in hundreds of communities and worksites recognize workers who have been killed or injured on the job. Trade unionists around the world now recognize April 28 as an International Day of Mourning. As we remember those who have died in the workplace because of violence, suffered disease and death because of exposure to toxic substances or have been injured because of dangerous conditions, we should rededicate ourselves to the fight for a safe workplace.

As postal workers, we have seen violence take the lives of our co-workers. We have seen the death of fellow workers because of anthrax in the mail. We have seen hundreds of our members injured because of ergonomic strain on the workroom floor. The struggle continues for each and every one of us to be involved in safety on the workroom floor. Our membership is often reluctant to use a PS Form 1767. We all have an obligation to be safety conscious !!!

Looking forward to SPRING !!! Yours in Union Solidarity Until next time.



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2011 MPWU Educational Convention

When: June 9 – 11, 2011
Where: Doubletree Hotel – Bay City Riverfront
1 Wenonah Park Place
Bay City, MI 48708
(989) 891-6000

Costs: Rooms: \$99.00 per night (plus applicable taxes)
Registration: \$75.00

Tentative Classes scheduled to be offered:

General Session / Legislative Training/Issues
Basic Stewards
Special Services
Maintenance Staffing
Article 12

Maintenance Issues (New contract)
Department of Labor (Trustee Training)

VMF Issues (New Contract);
Fiscal Responsibilities;
Advanced Stewards Training;
OWCP/Workman's Compensation

Clerk Issues (New Contract);
Retirement Training/Issues

*As always, updated information regarding this, and all educational opportunities is available on the **MPWU.com** website.*