

# Michigan MESSENGER

APWA  
APWU

Volume 43, Number 173  
July-August, 2014

Affiliated with: American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, APWU Postal Press Association, Michigan State AFL-CIO & Michigan Labor Press

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Solidarity.....	Page 2
Editor's Report.....	Page 3
Legislative Director .....	Page 4
Retiree Involvement.....	Page 6
Area 12 Director.....	Page 6
Veterans Report .....	Page 8
NBA Report .....	Page 9
Turney Talk .....	Page 10
Area 9 Director .....	Page 11
Contract Enforcement .....	Page 12

## President's Message



by Jesus M.  
Gonzales,  
President

# APWU 2014 National Convention

Greetings fellow Union brothers and sisters; this year's 22nd Biennial APWU National Convention in Chicago, IL was a workhorse. We rallied in front of Staples in downtown Chicago to denounce the Postmaster General's (PMG) agenda, and his attempt to further privatize USPS retail units. Educating the American public with these protests across the country should further help people understand that we are at war with corporate America, and also emphasize the importance of good paying jobs that will only help our economy grow.

With our attempt in the 2012 APWU National Convention in Los Angeles, CA we were unable to pass a resolution calling for the PMG to resign for his inability to lead. This year's convention we achieved this goal. The USPS needs a leader that will stand and face the challenges before him and find creative ways to systematically adjust to its demands. Our industry relies on our infrastructure to move letters, flats, and packages as quickly as possible within this structure, while the internet allows for this to be more visible to the delivery point. All because the consumers demand the need to track and trace their mailing items. Our fight to remain competitive in this marketplace will remain a vital role in today's global economy, and it needs a leader that has this vision as a permanent mindset. Our message to the current PMG: "Donahoe has to go", we need leadership, not a destructor!

The APWU also faced challenges. This year's delegates were tasked with the restructuring of our rank and file; i.e. (vacancies of Regional

National Business Agents ((NBA's)) and APWU HQ elected vacancies), and this took most of the convention to make the necessary changes. In 2012, the Convention body passed a resolution to allow any elected position that becomes vacant between elections to remain vacant unless the Convention body at the next Convention allows for the removal or elimination of this vacancy. (The idea was to see if this work could be consumed by other Officers or shared amongst other NBA's when possible). With our current backlog in the Central Region, we were able to stave off the elimination of this vacant position. Change is always hard to swallow, but this is where we are headed, and it is our opportunity to embrace this change and start allowing for new creative ways to cut costs.

As APWU prepares for the upcoming contract negotiations, please stay mindful that the current contract will remain in effect until a new one is bargained

for or arbitrated. Stay tuned for news and progress on contract negotiation at **APWU.ORG**.

### Election 2014

This year's mid-term election will be vital to the course of our Country, as well as the future of the labor movement. We need assistance from Congress to pass legislation that would eliminate or minimize the financial burden of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 (PAEA), or to even restrict the USPS from contracting out jobs and save or maintain the current mail processing infrastructure. This midterm election will be vital to the future of our beloved Postal Service, as well as the hopes to stave off further attacks on the labor movement. Republicans in Congress would like nothing more than to quiet the voice of the employees and make us all work for less. This isn't class warfare; this is war against the right to be heard, safe working conditions,

and fair and decent pay with benefits. Don't think for a second that the USPS gives all these collectively bargained benefits because they like us. I cannot stress the utmost importance of this year's election. Our future is at stake, and this is our opportunity to change the faces in Congress, as well as here at home, with people who care about us and the labor movement!

Lastly, we need volunteers to help canvas areas for some of our labor friendly candidates, as well as to staff the phone banks across the State. Please contact me if you have any available time between now and the November election to assist in this area. My contact information is as follows: (office) 517-337-8753 (leave a message), or mail me a letter to: PO Box 21154, Lansing, MI 48909-1154; with time frames you can be available, or send me a E-mail to: **michiganstate@apwu.org**.

Yours in Solidarity.



Stop Staples rally was a highlight of the National Convention. See articles on pages 3,6, and 12 for a variety of perspectives on the Convention.









by Paul Felton, Editor

## Editor’s Report

# THE CONVENTION: A New Direction

She is just 26 years old. She earns \$8.98/hour working for McDonald’s. As she spoke to an audience of 1900 postal workers, she was somewhat nervous. Maybe more than “somewhat.” Jessica Davis received a very warm welcome from the delegates. She is now part of the Grand Alliance the APWU is building.

The theme was “Standing Up, Fighting Back.” The National APWU Convention in Chicago, July 21-25, emphasized the direction of the new national leadership – mobilizing the rank-and-file members and building alliances.

President Mark Dimondstein made it clear that we have to go beyond the grievance procedure to fight against Staples, privatization, plant consolidations and for postal banking. And we need allies among the other postal unions, the labor movement, veterans, civil rights groups and the American people – a Grand Alliance.

One highlight in this regard was the Staples rally on Tuesday – filling the streets in front of a downtown Staples store, loudly chanting, and hearing speeches from AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and Rev Jesse Jackson. The other postal unions as well as many AFL-CIO unions have endorsed the boycott. We heard speeches during the course of the week from the heads of the NALC, Mail Handlers, and Rural Letter Carriers, as well as AFGE and CWA. We also heard from young people in the fast food workers movement (including Jessica Davis, as described in the opening paragraph) and Wal-Mart workers fighting for dignity on the job. And Connie Leak, President of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). All part of the Grand Alliance pledging to support us, just as we pledge to support them. Other high points were the remarks by Rev William Barber (leader of the Moral Mondays movement in North Carolina), commentator Jim Hightower, actor Danny Glover and Big Ed (Ed Schultz) of MSNBC.

Another highlight was a resolution calling for the removal of Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe, which passed by a rousing, standing voice vote.

### Representation

The first two days of the convention were fantastic, hearing messages of support, passing resolutions about what we want in the next contract, culminating in

the Staples rally. But a hint of what was to come occurred in an early morning 5-state caucus (MI, IL, OH, KY, IN). In light of a shrinking budget, we discussed resolutions that were scheduled to be heard later in the week about eliminating some National Business Agent (NBA) positions. NBAs handle Step 3 grievances and arbitrations. The cutbacks would put more work on fewer NBAs. One speaker after another who opposed

the cutbacks stated that “representation is what we do”; at times I got the feeling that filing grievances was being viewed as critically important, while the kind of activism the national leadership proposes was viewed as secondary. I was fortunate to get a chance to speak. I pointed out that if we lose the Staples campaign or the battle against plant closures, our membership (and budget) will shrink and we’ll have an even harder time sustaining our current structure. We need the Staples campaign and the Grand Alliance and we need to devote resources to these efforts. But at the same time we cannot leave gaping holes in the grievance-handling structure; we need to stand up and fight back on the workroom floor as well. The trick is to find the right balance so we can fight on all fronts.

### Difficult Debate

Debate over Constitutional issues, scheduled for Wednesday, took up Wednesday, Thursday and half of Friday, crowding out discussion of other important issues. It was in the Constitutional resolutions that the question of which NBA positions to downsize (the question was whether to fill positions that have become vacant through retirements, etc) was debated. The debate was vigorous. At times there was procedural wrangling that got everybody frustrated. The good news for

Michigan is we will have our vacant clerk NBA position filled.

Not so fortunate were the retirees. I attended the retiree conference on the weekend before the Convention. Our number one priority was getting a retiree technician to help the national Retiree Director handle the increasing workload of inquiries from retirees, their spouses and active members looking forward

percent to push everybody else down into poverty.

I heard some people say we had too many guest speakers at the Convention, taking time away from discussing resolutions. I started to agree, until I thought about it. If delegates regarded the speakers as little more than messages of support to make us feel good, they missed part of the point. The speakers at this Convention were essential to building the alliance we need to fight the battles that loom ahead of us. They fall into three categories. 1) Some speakers were from unions that will support us. 2) Some were young fast food and Wal-Mart workers. I’m sure they learned about postal worker issues in preparation for their talk. They’ll never forget the warm reception they got from the assembled postal workers. I expect them to be enthusiastic supporters and reliable allies in the future as we battle Staples, plant closings and whatever else postal management throws at us. 3) Some guest speakers were nationally known personalities who will be speaking out on our behalf. These speakers were not just entertainment. We built a stronger movement during the convention as these individuals and organizations cemented their ties to us.

I came away with a positive feeling; I hope the other delegates feel the same way.

*“We need to build a culture of activism.”*

### Stand Up, Fight Back

All-in-all, I give the national leadership high marks for trying to change the direction of our union. We need to build a culture of activism. We have a great untapped resource – unlike most unions, we have members in every city, town or rural area in America. Our members could be talking to their city councils, block clubs, churches, PTAs and other community groups, spreading our message. The fight to save our jobs is also a fight to save quality mail service, which is part of the broader struggle against the relentless drive of the richest one



Delegates enthusiastically embraced a call for PMG Donahoe to resign.





by Roscoe Woods,  
Legislative Director

The coming storm – An election to stem the tide of right to work as well as setting the table for meaningful and proactive postal reform.

Hello again from your MPWU State Legislative Director. I have been slowly getting acclimated to my new duties and I am trying to find the balance between the important legislative works this election season and my duties as Local President here in the 480-481 Area Local.

Most recently President Jesus Gonzales and I have been providing some support for the Bobbie McKenzie and Rudy Hobbs campaigns. These two Democrats are fighting hard in their primaries and by the time you get this I truly hope we will be preparing our strategy to assist them both in this state’s general election.

Legislative and Political Director John Marcotte working at the direction of APWU President Mark Dimondstein has been very active in getting the candidates here in Michigan the assistance of this union through our

## Legislative Report

# The Coming Storm

COPA program. I want to thank Brother Marcotte for his continued commitment to ensuring the members of this Union are represented in the halls of Congress.

**I urge you all to donate to COPA** – you can point and click your way to [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org), log in to member services and learn all you need to know about donating to COPA. The COPA fund is used to help politicians, Republicans and Democrats alike who assist this Union in its agenda to advance into Congress legislation that protects this service and our jobs.

COPA is necessary and it receives none of your dues, it is an independent fund and President Dimondstein and Director Marcotte use it to help those who have expressed their desire to help us.

Whether we like it or not money has become a part of this nation’s political structure. Until we all take a stand and demand the public financing of elections and a return to equal time on television and radio, we will be locked into a cycle having to contribute to assist politicians friendly to the APWU

get elected and then once elected keep their offices.

We cannot deny that in the end, it is usually the Democratic Party that has most often and who most frequently crafts legislation that provides positive assistance for the USPS as well as the APWU. All you have to do is review House Republican Darrel Issa’s last several shots at us to see at this point in our nation’s history the House Republicans have decided we are an agency to be parted out like a broken down Buick, not to be saved and nurtured like one of this nation’s oldest services, a service enshrined in our Constitution and a service conceived to be the protectors and facilitators of free speech across this land.

Please consider heading to [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org) and making a \$5.00 bi-weekly contribution. It ends up being \$130.00 a year but that money will be used to assist politicians at the national and state level who are helping us advance legislation that will protect jobs and protect this service.

I truly ask that you not discredit a politician when it is a single issue that

you may have a problem with. No one person or politician believes the exact same thing when it comes to all the issues we face on a daily basis. We need to support politicians who support this service and this union.

I believe we need to focus our votes and our dollars on issues that impact our ability to earn a living wage and provide the best way of life to our families. We need to elect politicians that support working families instead of corporations.

We need to elect politicians that put people ahead of entities. We need to direct our hard-earned dollars towards those progressive thinking politicians who believe truthfully that there can be no wealth in this nation without labor. And we need to support those politicians that understand that the labor that creates wealth is the true value of this nation.

COPA is a good way to help your union help you in the halls of Congress. Gary Peters, candidate for the MI Senate seat soon to be vacated by Senator Carl Levin, is a great example of a politician with an outstanding voting record when it comes to labor issues that impact us. We consistently send COPA dollars his way so we can be sure he is re-elected so he can continue his service to us all.

COPA is one way we can ensure our democracy serves us.

The MPWU will be working closely with the Metro Detroit and Michigan State AFL-CIO as we try to get out the vote here in Michigan. I encourage you all to watch your [www.mpwu.com](http://www.mpwu.com) web site as we get closer to the November general elections, we will post the endorsements as well as notices of how the races are shaping up.

The membership of this union like a lot of Americans have a historically low voter turnout in non-presidential elections. After everything we have been through the last two years with right to work here in Michigan, and being in a constant defensive posture in the House of Representatives in Washington, it is imperative that every member of this union get out the vote this November and I ask each of you to trust your union in helping you decide which candidate is best to serve us all as we continue the fight to save our Postal Service and in the process our futures.

Stay tuned and be prepared to get out the vote!

In Solidarity.

# Support Fast Food Workers

Whereas, the National Employment Law Project (NELP) did an analysis of government data and reported that the median wage for front-line fast food workers is \$8.94 per hour, and

Whereas, it used to be argued that the fast food industry employs mostly younger people just trying to make some extra money; it is now true that 88% are

20 years of age or older and depend on the work to feed their families, and

Whereas, the fast food industry includes some of the nation’s largest employers with the highest profits, best-paid CEOs, and the greatest number of low-paid workers, and

Whereas, 52% of fast food work-

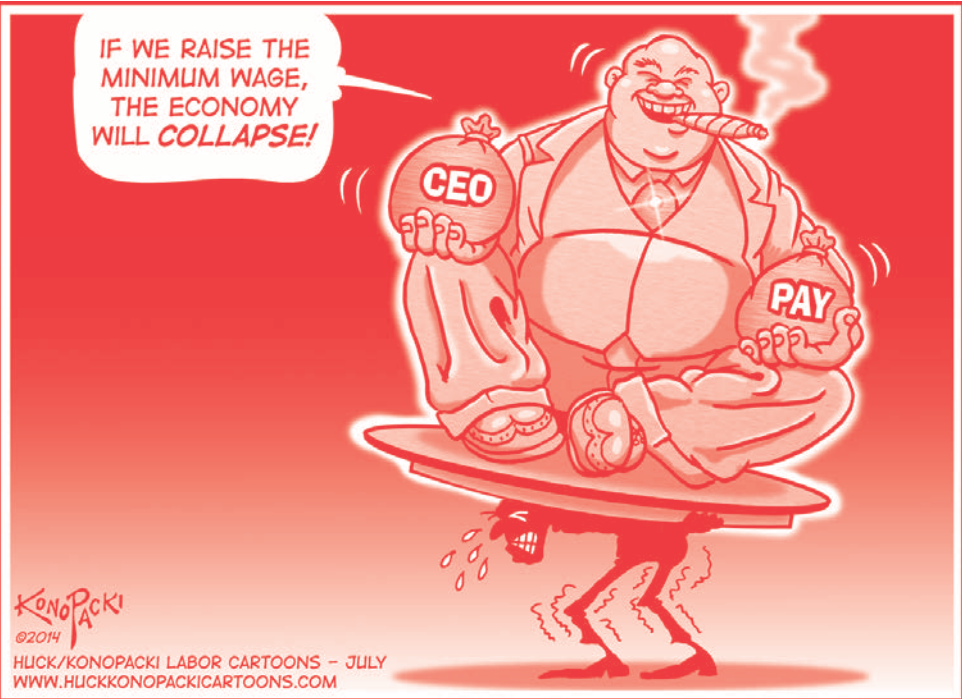
ers are receiving at least one form of government assistance, with the ten largest fast food companies costing taxpayers an estimated \$3.9 billion in government health assistance and \$1.04 billion in food assistance annually, and

Whereas, the same ten companies receiving back-door government subsidies secured profits of \$7.4 billion last year, and

Whereas, courageous fast food workers began a campaign to receive a wage of \$15 an hour and the right to have union representation, and were striking and protesting in over 60 cities at great personal risk, therefore be it

**Resolved, that the APWU support the campaign by fast food workers for decent wages and the right to organize, and be it further**

**Resolved, that the APWU will encourage its members to participate in any rallies, petition drives or other actions pursued by the campaign on behalf of fast food workers.**





# — Detroit Water Protest —

by Paul Felton

On July 18th more than a thousand people gathered in downtown Detroit in a protest rally (including retirees from three APWU Locals). Why were we protesting?

Well, imagine one day the water in your home is shut off. With no warning, no shut-off notice. You have no water to drink. You can't wash the dishes. You can't take a bath, or a shower. You can't flush the toilet. You run to a neighbor's house for relief and find the neighbor's water was shut off too.

The Detroit Water & Sewerage Department (DWSD) is shutting off water to thousands of homes every week. Check that, a private contractor is being paid over 5 million dollars to do the dirty work. Lack of water for such a large portion of the city creates a public health crisis. It



July 18th protest against water shutoffs drew over 1000 people to downtown Detroit.

can only lead to the spread of disease, not only for those without water but for anyone they come near. DWSD hasn't even followed its own procedures for giving advance notice of the shutoffs, so people can

The whole world is watching to see if Detroit's emergency manager or Mayor will do the right thing, the human thing. If not, we'll be mobilizing in the streets.

try to work out a payment plan.

It is an atrocity. Mothers have lost their children because Child Protective Services deems them unfit parents because there is no water. Curiously, the shutoffs only affect residences; businesses that owe a lot more have not experienced shutoffs.

The United Nations condemned these actions.

The APWU Convention passed a resolution on this subject, which is reprinted on this page. Meanwhile, people are standing up and fighting back. There were arrests as activists tried to block the vehicles of the private company that implements the shutoffs.

## Resolution On Detroit Water Shutoffs

**Whereas**, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department shut off the water in 45,000 homes in May, and is continuing to shut off people's water, and

**Whereas**, the DWSD has threatened to cut off water to as many as 150,000 Detroit residents, and

**Whereas**, the United Nations has condemned these actions as an affront to human rights, and

**Whereas**, Corporate entities that are way behind on their water bills have not faced water shutoffs while poor and working families have been hard hit, and

**Whereas**, the water rate for Detroit residents is double the national average, and

**Whereas**, Families whose water was turned off have had their children taken

away as they are deemed to be "unfit parents," and

**Whereas**, a private contractor is being paid 5.6 million dollars by a supposedly bankrupt city to turn off poor people's water, and

**Whereas**, The 5.6 million dollars paid to this contractor would pay for a whole lot of poor people's water bills, and

**Whereas**, these actions are truly inhumane, and

**Whereas**, the labor movement stands for fairness and justice throughout our society, and,

**Whereas**, the APWU seeks a grand alliance with the labor movement and the community, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the American Postal

Workers Union joins progressive organizations in calling for a moratorium on water shutoffs and the restoration of water service in Detroit, and be it further

**Resolved**, that copies of this resolution be sent to the AFL-CIO as well as to Detroit's Mayor, Emergency Manager, and Michigan's Governor.



Flint Local APWU Retiree Sue Hart.

**DEADLINE**  
The deadline for articles for  
the September-October  
issue of the  
*Michigan Messenger* is  
September 29, 2014





by Al LaBrecque,  
Retiree's Chapter President

*"Voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, one another, the country, and the world."*  
— Sharon Salzberg

From my perspective as the elected Central Region Retiree Delegate, and veteran of conventions since the '60's, the theme of the 2014 APWU National Convention really was; "revenue vs. representation", thus the Negative prevailed after the ceremonial opening day was consumed by the usual blather of guest speakers telling us what we wanted to hear. Having received the package of Constitution Committee Report resolutions, among other pertinent and mainly fluff resolutions that were no-brainers to support; the appointed (Cleveland Local Pres.) Chair of the Committee stated that the "litmus test" for the Committee's recommendations of concurrence, and mostly non-concurrence, were with consideration for the Union's declining membership and revenue.

That struck a chord with me before I set foot on the puddle jumper flight out of Alpena. It rang a lot like postal management's poverty plea in contract disputes attempting to get the arbitrators to consider the USPS's financial condition, contrary to the APWU position that USPS finances aren't to be weighed by the arb panel. So, not unexpectedly, our retiree initiatives were starting out with the ball on our own 5-yard line, and they had the ball! Undaunted, we'd been there before, but it placed us in a defensive mode. The 5 elected Retiree Delegates; Byron Denton, Western; Beth Bobo, Southern; Delores Young, N.E.; John Richards, Eastern; and myself, Central Region, met in Committee to discuss and develop consensus on what came down to the 5 Retirees' Dept. structuring initiatives, all earning the Constitution Committee's non-concurrences.

We were joined by Dir. Judy Beard, later by APWU President Mark Diamondstein, and Sec.-Treas. Elizabeth Powell who gave us the stark poverty pitch. Even Sister Beard's Retirees' Dept. expenditure, revenue, and surplus numbers to the APWU general fund made no impact on their adamant positions that a Retirement Technician was out of the question when several officer and NBA positions were vacant and the administration was advocating elimination of those positions. We knew going in that it was an uphill battle, but this was a mountain. Let me

Retiree Involvement

APWU National Convention: The Positive, The Negative, And The Ugly!

get right to it! We only had Four (4) Elected Retiree Delegates representing Retirees' Dept. resolutions! The elected Eastern Region Retiree Delegate, John Richards, was the appointed retiree to the Constitution Committee.

enforce that stance repeatedly on the floor mic's over the next few days, including in the pre-convention Retirees' Dept. Conference.

The Positive: The 2-day Dept.



498-499 Local delegates at the Convention.

Asked point-blank in that meeting, Richards had no compunction in boldly parroting the administration's austerity line, making it clear his priorities were to his Constitution Committee appointment by APWU Pres., not to the retiree members of the Eastern Region, or his Pittsburgh Local Chapter. He was to

Conference went well. Day #2 was devoted primarily to the (now 4 vs.1) 5 Retiree Delegates' panel debating the resolutions proposals, after which we broke down into a strategy committee, setting our priorities. The resolution proposing appointing a Retirement Technician to the Dept.

and the California resolution to elevate the Retirees' Dept. Director to the National Executive Board were compromised to be primary. During the 2-day pre-convention conferences I was privileged to address retiree initiatives with the Michigan caucus, the National President's Conference caucus, and a Central Region 5-state caucus. Michigan was unanimous in support. The NPC was a tough audience, and John Richards followed to oppose. Michigan Locals and several other presidents vigorously stepped up in our support. The 5-state caucus was generally favorable, but a mixed bag. Curiously, it seemed like Dir. Human Relations, Sue Carney, was nearly everywhere including addressing the Retirees' Dept. Conference. We were to find out Carney's agenda later. We were well aware it was a tough sell given several vacant NBA and department positions were on the block.

The "fun" began with debate and votes to either eliminate or retain NBA and other positions that were vacant. We had come into Chicago armed with the revenue figures to more than justify adopting proposals to structure the Retirees' Dept. Upon the advice of savvy Local leaders, we determined it best to base our arguments on representation, and to back off on  
*continued on page 7*



by Theresa Granquist,  
Area 12 Director

Local 498-499 extends an open invitation to all Area 12 Members-at-Large to attend their next scheduled meeting, August 17, 2014 at 12:30 Central Time in Iron Mountain, MI. The reasons you should attend are:

- 1) To have your voice heard
- 2) To get your questions answered
- 3) Your job is in danger, regardless of your craft, seniority or location.
- 4) To learn your rights.
- 5) To find out who can help you

Area 12 Director

You're Invited

- 6) To support and be supported
- 7) To learn the truth

Management likes to trick employees into believing they have your best interests at heart, but do not be deceived. The Kingsford, MI plant is scheduled to be "Amp'd" January 10, 2015. Management is converting CCA's in neighboring offices to career, moving carriers into Kingsford prior to openings becoming available – all to block our bargaining unit employees in Kingsford from keeping jobs in their home area. Brothers and sisters, if they'll do this to one they will do this to all. Filling these positions created false hope among plant employees that the plant will not be Amp'd, or they would hold these positions for them. Broth-

ers and sisters, management's concern for bargaining unit employees cannot be clearer . . . there is **none!!!** Don't wait until it's your office. We are all in this together. Join us now, because "united we stand, divided we fall." In Hancock, MI management hired a PMR as a PTF rather than a PSE from a neighboring office – another example of management protecting their own at our expense.

Management has clearly displayed their true colors so we don't have to guess what they're going to do . . . they'll kick you when you're down and then drive over you if given the chance.

I hope to see you at the Union Meeting.



# APWU National Convention: The Positive, The Negative, And The Ugly!

*continued from page 6*

the revenue the Retirees' Dept. contributes to the APWU general fund. In retrospect, that may have been a miscalculation. I stood with our Michigan and most Central Region states to retain NBA positions citing representation being the Union's primary obligation to the membership. Not unexpectedly, the mic's were covered by Constitution Committee members. Sec.-Treas. Liz Powell and Pittsburgh Retiree Chapter President, John Richards were joined at the hip on mic's #2 and #3, advocating elimination of positions. NBA's are the heart and soul of representation in my experience and view. After the dust settled, Score: Administration 3, Members: 2. The Pacific Area and Chicago Region prevailed, while we lost the Cincinnati and Wichita Region NBA's, and the Asst. Legislative/Political Director is history.

Then, Res. #14, proposing to establish a Retirement Technician came to the floor. This is where the Positive shined, and the Ugly exposed itself. I got to mic #3 right after the straight from the shoulder comments by Byron Denton on mic #2. Like Byron, I reminded the delegates that as the Mothers and Fathers who built this Union, all we ask is a small portion of what we contribute to APWU, including Retiree Involvement in the Staples campaign, legislative activity, and support of APWU initiatives, to provide critically needed expertise responding to complex retirement inquiries. In short . . . Representation! Michigan Local presidents and delegates had my back . . . literally! They stood right behind me as I delivered my position in favor. That was to be the most positive, visible support for retiree initiatives I've experienced in convention, or elsewhere. That demonstration of solidarity really touched my button.

By this time the Chair was allowing 3 speaking for, 3 against, orchestrating a Call For The Question then the delegate vote. Although Res. #14 failed to attain two-thirds, we clearly had a majority which



Jesus Gonzales applauding a speaker.

was heartening even in defeat. The Ugly, however, manifested itself during debate. The appointed retiree to the Constitution Committee a.k.a elected Eastern region Retiree Delegate and president of the Pittsburgh Local Retiree Chapter spoke forcefully in opposition to the amendment, lending credence to the administration position among Delegates. Then we were blindsided when Human Relations Director, Sue Carney, launched into a point-by-point tirade in opposition to any appointment to the Retirees' Dept. which came off as a fit of internal dissent. Shocking to say the least. Sister Judy Beard came back with an impressive, classy rebuttal to Carney's sob story, but the damage was done. Retiree Res. #12 came up on the last day, re-designating the Retirees' Department to the Retirees' Division. That too was eloquently debated by California's Bobby Donelson and the wisdom of Brother Denton offered an amendment which would have resolved the Committee's stated reason for non-concurrence.

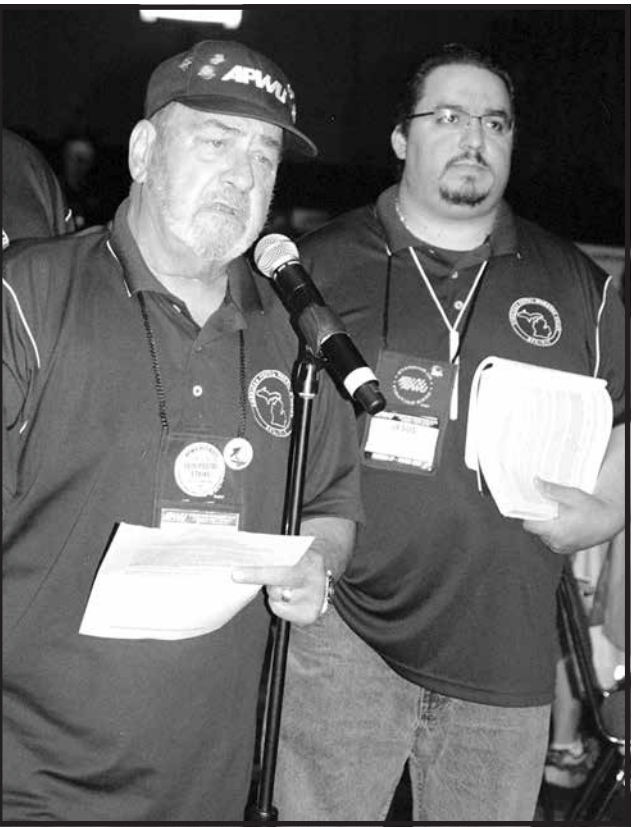
Opposition, led by Richards on the mic, resulted in another majority in favor, but failing to get the necessary two-thirds. The remaining retiree resolutions never came to the floor when it was apparent delegates had no appetite for further debate.

There you have a "brief" overview of Retiree Involvement in the 2014 National Convention. No, we didn't gain anything, and in my view took a giant leap backward. But, even after the setbacks, the incredible behavior of the elected Eastern Region Retiree Delegate, and the unexpected attack from the floor mic by the director, Human Relations, there was a consensus among the 4 Regional Retiree Delegates that while we lost this battle, we haven't lost the war. Lessons were learned. There was incredible support for retiree initiatives. Adversaries to Retiree Involvement revealed themselves. We have a much better vision of where and who our friends and adversaries are. Money being the root of all evil, we have numerous suggestions how APWU can save money by eliminating Convention frills and trinkets which would more than fund representation needs. I don't go to Convention to

be entertained, fed, or plied with free booze. I go to WORK! I assured our Michigan delegation, and several Central Region state and Local leaderships who along with California expressed solid support, that I'm no "virgin" to rejection. It took 3 Conventions, 5 years to attain the right to elect our Retirees' Dept. Director, 5 Conventions, nearly 10 years to gain retiree eligibility to vote for national officers. Al LaBrecque wouldn't be going home with his tail between his legs. God willing, I, along with Byron Denton, Beth Bobo, and Delores Young will be back for the 2016 Convention enlightened and armed with our Retiree Involvement initiatives to structure the Retirees' Dept. to best serve our 41,000 growing retiree membership, as well as APWU paramount objectives.

Future columns will address some of many facets experienced throughout the 8 days in Chicago. The mindset of the APWU leadership. The politics of committee appointments. Revelations of who and where support and opposition to retiree initiatives are. What will be primary given what occurs in the aftermath of this Convention, and further insights from my perspective. It's not sour grapes as one particularly abrasive adversary alleges. It's determination and perseverance to structure the Retirees' Dept. to best serve the membership, retired and active. We will be back!

Be Strong!



Al LaBrecque at the microphone.





by John Smeekens,  
Veterans Director

Final approval came late Thursday night, to sweeping legislation aimed at fixing the troubled Department of Veterans Affairs, **ALLOWING EVERYONE TO WORK TOGETHER.**

The legislation passed 91-3 a day after the House overwhelmingly approved the package. *It now goes to President Obama's desk.* The more than \$16 billion measure is intended help veterans avoid long waits for health care, hire more doctors and nurses to treat them, and make it easier to fire senior executives at the Veterans Affairs Department.

Earlier this week, former Procter & Gamble CEO Robert McDonald was confirmed to lead the sprawling VA agency, which provides health care to nearly 9 million enrolled veterans and disability compensation to nearly 4 million veterans. The measure approved Thursday includes \$10 billion in emergency spending to help veterans *who can't get prompt appointments* with VA doctors to obtain outside care; \$5 billion to *hire doctors, nurses and other medical staff*, and about \$1.5 billion to lease 27 new clinics across the country. The compromise measure would require the VA to pay private doctors to treat qualifying veterans who can't get prompt appointments at the VA's nearly 1,000 hospitals and outpatient clinics, or those who live at least 40 miles from one of them. **Only veterans who are enrolled in VA care as of Aug. 1 or live at least 40 miles away would be eligible to get outside care.**

Veterans' Expo

The following days and dates are for the Veterans Expos, which promise to be a one-stop shop for Veterans. **GRAND RAPIDS**, on *September 5 & 6 at The Deltaplex Arena* and in **DETROIT**, on *November 7 & 8 at Cobo Center*. The Expos will offer a one-stop shop for Veterans to learn more about valuable services and resources in areas like housing, recreational opportunities, family support and more, and will serve as an opportunity for community organizations to reach out and Honor Veterans. The VA will offer on-site health screenings, and benefits counselors will be available to help Veterans learn more about and apply for benefits that they have earned through their Military service. For more information contact the Michigan Veterans Affair Agency at 1-800-MICH-VET or visit [www.MichiganVeterans.com](http://www.MichiganVeterans.com).

# Veterans' Report

PS: for those of you in Southeast MI, there will be a Veterans Stand Down at Macomb Sports & Expo Center, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd., Building P Warren, MI, from 9a.m. to 2 p.m. on September 26, 2014. Lots of info will be available.

Burn Pit Registry

All Desert Shield/Storm veterans, and Post-9/11 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and those deployments into Djibouti are encouraged to log on to the VA's new burn pit registry to report exposures to airborne hazards such as smoke from burn pits, oil-well fires, and other pollutants or exposures encountered during deployment, as well as other health concerns. A registry is required to properly document whether such exposures harmed or caused other illnesses or diseases. VA officials acknowledge that troops may suffer from illnesses related to environmental exposures, and has established a surveillance program for service members exposed to the known carcinogen hexavalent chromium from a water treatment facility near Basra in 2003, but VA also said there is not yet enough scientific evidence to prove that exposure to burn pits causes long-term health problems. Log on to the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry at <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/index.html#page/home>.

The registry is voluntary and open to eligible Veterans and Service members who may have been exposed to airborne hazards by serving as members of the Armed Forces in one or more of the locations in the Southwest Asia theater of operations [as defined in 38CFR 3.317(e)(2)], on or after August 02, 1990, or on or after September 11, 2001. The registry will support efforts to ascertain and monitor the health effects in eligible Veterans and Service members who were possibly exposed to OPEN Burn Pits, toxic airborne chemicals and fumes, and other airborne hazards such as particulate matter (PM). Eligible Veterans and Servicemembers

do not have to be enrolled for VA Health care in order to participate in this registry. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Paul Ciminera, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420 Telephone # 202-461-1020 NOTE THIS IS NOT A TOLL FREE NUMBER!**

VA's Monthly Meetings  
In All 50 States

Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan Gibson met with the leadership of 26 Military and Veterans Service Organizations (MSOs and VSOs) to reaffirm his commitment to work together to address the unacceptable, systemic problems in accessing VA healthcare.

During the meeting, he updated the organizations' representatives on VA's work with the Office of Special Counsel to restore Veterans' trust in the system and on VA's progress in reaching out to get Veterans into clinics and off of waiting lists. He told MSO and VSO leaders that he looks forward to working with them to better serve Veterans nationwide, in communities where they live. He also shared that he has directed all VA Medical Center leadership to hold monthly meetings with VSOs and community partners. Acting Secretary Gibson thanked MSOs and VSOs for being VA's valuable partners in serving Veterans and continuing to improve the department and solicited their ideas on how VA can improve Veterans' access to care and services.

Veterans Leaving Congress

The 114th Congress, which begins in January, will be the first in 70 years lacking the experience and leadership that World War II Veterans have provided, since active duty Naval Officer George W. Andrews, was elected to the House of Representatives in 1944. There are only 2 World War II Veterans serving now, both in The House. The longest serving member of Congress since its inception, Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MICHIGAN),

who will be retiring at the end of 113th Congress, and Rep. Ralph M. Hall (R-TEXAS), who lost his bid for reelection in a primary runoff, in May. The Congressional Research Service notes that in the early 70's, more than 74% of all members of Congress were Veterans, with the majority of them being World War II Veterans. Yet in today's Congress, less than 20% are Veterans.

Vietnam Vets & High School Diploma

Are you a Vietnam Veteran who did not graduate from High School before entering Military Service? Do you need your High School Diploma? If you are an Honorably Discharged Vietnam Veteran, who served between February 28, 1961 and May 07, 1975, you can apply to your school district to obtain a High School Diploma, just like World War II and Korean war Veterans have been able to do. This new law will allow you to get that Diploma, to get an application go to; [www.michigan.gov/veterans.com](http://www.michigan.gov/veterans.com) or call 1-800-MICH-VET.

Benefit Expiration

If you or someone you know started a claim through eBenefits since early 2013, remember that those claims expire if not completed and submitted within 365 days. **As thousands of claims face expiration, GETTING HELP from a VSO is easy as %#(\*. Just contact your County Veterans Office and they will be glad to help you with your claim, ALL FREE OF CHARGE.** VA's electronic claim submission process lets veterans start a claim online with limited information, allowing 365 days to collect data, treatment records, and other related information. During that year, a veteran may add data or upload documents pertinent to the claim. At any point in that year, a veteran may click "submit" and a claim will be established. But after 365 days, any data in an incomplete claim becomes inaccessible and the initiated claim date is removed from the system.



by Angelyn Gebstadt,  
Area 4 Director

Ask around: if management has been exceeding the maximum number of hours they may work in the bargaining unit in your office, if they have been working a PMR and you are a level 15, 16, 18 office or if you have less than 3 career clerks and they are working a

## Area 4 Director

# Free Money

PSE on the window . . . those are hours you could have worked and should receive compensation for.

Are RCA's casing mail??? Putting up box??? Checking in other carriers – this is clerk work and you should be compensated for the hours worked by the RCA's – having said that – I DO

NOT HAVE A CRYSTAL BALL . . .

You have already paid for this free money with your Union dues, why not go get it?

Please contact me if these things are going on in your office – shouldn't the money be in your pocket?





by Michael  
O'Hearn,  
National  
Business Agent

## NBA Report

# Steward Confidentially

Recently, a steward reported to me that management gave her a request for information concerning her investigation on a grievance. Now, let me make this clear. I am not talking about a request for information that the steward gave management. I am talking about the opposite. Management is demanding information from the steward. This case involved a hostile work environment created by management and harassment of employees by management. The steward tried to interview the employees stationed at this office. Some did not want to be interviewed at the office

because they were fearful of retaliation. Some did not want their names disclosed to management. Management wanted the list of those employees that did not want to be interviewed at the Post Office. Management wanted those interviews that the employees did not want disclosed to management.

This is a serious problem. The union must maintain the privacy of communications from members given in confidence. A steward learns many things during an investigation of a grievance that are not used in the actual grievance procedure. The information given in confidence must never

be disclosed. This would have a chilling effect on employees' willingness to cooperate with the union in any future investigation. Stewards must protect their members from such blatant attempts by management to intimidate the bargaining unit. This action by management is a severe violation of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), Section 8(a) (1). The Local should file Labor Board charges and ask for relief under Section 10 (j) of the NLRA. Whenever stewards are acting in their capacity as stewards, they are protected from such abuses. The harm caused by such actions cannot be repaired by an eventual NLRB

cease and desist order. Cite the case *Cook Paint and Varnish Co.*, 258 NLRB 1230 (1981) in your complaint.

Therefore, if you as a steward are ever asked to give information that you gathered in confidence, do not comply with this request. Contact your Local President and the National, either your NBA or the National Director of Industrial Relations, Tony McKinnon. Make clear to your members that you will not disclose information given in confidence. Again, you may not lawfully be asked to reveal information obtained by you in the course of the performance of your duties as a steward.

# Standing Up And Fighting Back

WHEREAS, the 2015 national contract negotiations are critical to the future of postal workers, and

WHEREAS, these negotiations must demonstrate that workers are standing up and fighting back, and

WHEREAS, within APWU bargaining units there are 30,000 non-career employees with wages and benefits well below the compensation of people doing similar work and well below compensation levels sufficient to maintain a household and a reasonable standard of living, and

WHEREAS, the three tier pay structure is inherently unfair and divisive with starting salaries 27% below the old schedule and after about a dozen years of waiting still fall 8% short of the top of the old schedule, and

WHEREAS, PSE once converted to career will have to retire later in life to make up lost credit toward retirement and will have lost savings contributions into TSP and the compounding to those dollars for the remainder of their career and perhaps lifetime, and

WHEREAS, full time work is now defined as 30 hours a week, and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service is threatening the very survival of the Postal Vehicle Service and continues to expand the contracting of retail, maintenance, and IT work - even when it costs more, degrades service and threatens the survival of a public Postal Service, and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service priorities and goals are opposite to APWU goals; hostile to workers; and dismissive of its obligations to citizens:

- Cut service standards by eliminating overnight delivery and adding a day or more to the old two and three day standards
- Cut days of delivery to five or less;
- Cut retail locations and hours of operation;
- Cut door delivery;

- Cut the number of processing plants; and
  - Contract anything left
- Will leave a very small Postal Service that does nothing but contract for services; and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service refuses to set priorities and goals to launch new services like public banking despite the proven revenue generation, therefore be it

Resolved, the delegates of the 2014 (22 Biennial) Convention declare that we will stand up and we will fight back; and

Resolved, the APWU will conduct a contract campaign mobilize our members, galvanize postal workers, friends of labor and concerned citizens to oppose and change the priorities of the Postal Service; and

Resolved, that in the next round of negotiations it is a priority of the APWU to;

- **STAND UP** for conversion of PSE's to career and reliance only upon a career workforce and
- **FIGHT BACK** against any Postal Service

attempt to maintain a low paid, low benefit, mistreated non-career workforce, and

- **STAND UP** for decent wages and benefits from hire to retirement and
- **FIGHT BACK** against any Postal Service attempt to maintain or increase multi-tiered and substandard pay and benefits schemes;
- **STAND UP** for the competency, dedication and hard work of our members and
- **FIGHT BACK** against any Postal Service attempt to continue contracting or expanding contracting or continuing to have EAS employees do any work that postal employees can perform;
- **STAND UP** for full-time work and
- **FIGHT BACK** on any postal service attempt to define full-time work as less than 40 hours;
- **STAND UP** for a first-rate service, a vibrant, healthy and growing Postal Service and
- **FIGHT BACK** against any Postal Service attempts to continue to reduce service standards, close plants and post offices, reduce days of delivery, hours of retail operations and door deliveries.



Part of the Michigan delegation.





by Linda  
Turney,  
National  
Business Agent

## Turney at the Table

# Probationary Period

When you read, you empower yourself.  
When you write, you influence others.

Article 12.1.A. page 45 of the contract states:  
*“The probationary period for a new employee shall be ninety (90) calendar days. The Employer shall have the right to separate from its employ any probationary employee at any time during the probationary period and these probationary employees shall not be permitted access to the grievance procedure in relation thereto.”*

This language is quite clear. If a PSE is converted to career, they will go into a 90 day probationary period and **shall not** be allowed to file a grievance if separated during those 90 days. I remember years ago when I went through a probationary period. I was told in no uncertain terms that if I fulfilled my obligation by doing 4 things, I would have a job for life. The four items newly converted career employees must adhere to are; 1. Be regular in attendance, do not miss or be late for work; 2. Follow the instructions of your supervisor; 3. Do not steal; 4. Do not threaten or fight with anyone.

Attendance is one of the most difficult grievances to win at any step of the grievance procedure. Newly converted career employees are obligated for 90 days to have perfect attendance or they will be subject to removal without access to the grievance procedure.

In the event you have a newly converted career member who has been issued a notice of removal, you still must do your investigation. One thing you can investigate is whether or not as a PSE the employee satisfied two (2) 360 day appointments. There is language in the Clerk Craft Q & A for Filling Residual Vacancies dated 3/20/2014. Page 3 question 23 states:

*“23. Are PSE employees who are converted to career subject to a new 90-day probationary period?”*  
*Answer: Yes. However, any PSE who has successfully completed at least two (2) successive 360 day terms will not serve a probationary period when hired for a career appointment, provided such career appointment directly follows a PSE appointment.”*

Therefore, you need to investigate as to how many appointments your converted career had as a PSE. This may avoid a removal.  
Another item you need to investigate goes to the EL-312 section 584.51 Performance Evaluation Intervals which states:

**584.51 Performance Evaluation Intervals**  
*The supervisor must discuss the employee’s performance with the employee at the end of 30 days, and again at the end of 60 days. Both the supervisor and the employee must initial Form 1750 to indicate that these discussions have taken place. The final evaluation occurs at the end of 80 days, and it contains a definitive recommendation regarding whether the employee should*

*be retained or separated. This evaluation requires the signatures of both the supervisor and the employee.*

This clear language, *“must discuss employee’s performance”* makes the discussion a requirement. If management did not discuss the employee’s performance and initial the Form 1750, argue there was not ample warning to a probationary employee concerning the employee’s behavior. Put in an information request for the Form 1750. Interview the supervisor and the probationary employee about performance discussion with the probationary employee. Find out who was at the meeting and what exactly was said. Get a written statement from the probationary employee that the supervisor did not discuss performance at the end of the 30 days and again at the end of 60 days.

There are specific rules in ELM 365.32 for properly giving notice of separation to a probationary employee:  
1. The PS Form 1750 is **not** written notice.  
2. The removal notice must be in writing.  
3. The notice must be signed by the appointing official, state the effective date of action and provide the employee with the official’s conclusion about conduct or performance.  
4. The notice must be received by the employee **prior** to the end of the probationary period.

The issue that we can argue is that the USPS did not comply with Article 12.1.A in conjunction with the above rules. In your investigation, look at the dates of the 90 day probationary period and the dates of the written notice. Article 12.1.A. has no application if the separation action does not occur *within* the probationary period. This would be a precondition of the application of Article 12.1.A. The National Award of Arbitrator Das on September 10, 2001 is normally the applicable standard answer to the removal under the probationary period (Case Q98C-4Q-C 99251456).

The easiest way for probationary employees to keep their jobs is to have perfect attendance and do what the supervisor instructs them to do. Please do your best to inform converted PSEs they will need to get through their 90 day probationary period in order to guarantee them a job at the Post Office.

### Successful Convention

It started for me at the Clerk Division Counsel meeting. The first order of business was the proposed abolishment of the Clerk Craft NBA in Chicago. I

spoke at the microphone asking for my brother and sister NBAs to reinstate the position. I argued that Chicago Region is one of the largest in the country; Chicago Region has a high volume of grievances. Chicago Region has a backlog of cases waiting for arbitration. Chicago Region has a shortage of arbitrators and arbitration dates. These are the main reasons the Clerk Council voted **unanimously** to reinstate the NBA in Chicago.

At the Convention, I added to my arguments. The Joint Arbitration Scheduling System, JASS, has been a failure in Chicago Region. JASS takes NBA’s away from the Arbitration table and into the secretarial pool, doing the work that was once assigned to secretaries of the Regional Coordinator; we have to chase down USPS labor representatives who are reluctant to set and pre-arb arbitration dates.

Changes in our most recent contract are extensive. This results in additional grievances and numerous requests for assistance and information from the NBAs at levels 1 and 2. If we look at our dwindling membership alone, it does not compute to the NBA workload of today. We take phone calls, emails, arbitration scheduling, pre-arbitration and shake outs, high volume of grievances and working on the large arbitration backlog. These are all services to you and our members.

NBAs handle the last steps of our grievance procedure. We may not be able to grieve our way out of our problems but our rank and file depends on their NBAs. When members are disciplined, when supervisors do our work, when overtime is called incorrectly and when managers/supervisors violate our contract, it is the NBAs that work directly with the locals and the rank and file members. NBAs are on the front lines in Education and Legislation. NBAs are on the front lines taking on new work for our members such as arbitration scheduling and internet communications. As much as we cannot grieve our way out of our problems; we won’t solve our problems by *only* protesting. Our Union needs to fight on every front and against every foe. Our fight goes to the quality of life on the work room floor and to the real threat of service privatization.

Thanks to the delegates at our APWU National Convention, our Union will NOT go down in history as eliminating representation to the field in the Chicago Region. Thank you delegates to the APWU National Convention.

RESTORE FREEDOM’S RING

KONOPACKI

©2014

HUCK/KONOPACKI LABOR CARTOONS - AUG  
WWW.HUCKKONOPACKICARTOONS.COM

TAKE BACK LABOR DAY





by Sterling Bouier,  
Maintenance Craft Director

Hello fellow MPWU/APWU members and friends. Since my last report there has been a settlement that resolves a long-standing dispute over custodial staffing and results in the conversion

# Maintenance Craft Director’s Report

## PSE Conversions

to career of all Maintenance Craft Postal Support Employees, APWU National Maintenance Craft Director Steve Raymer has announced. This should result in the conversion of over 3150 PSE employees. It also results in modifications to the MS-47 handbook,

which governs custodial work and staffing. There are several changes and provisions that we will need to begin to get familiar with prior to implementation. I have received a few phone calls and emails from members requesting assis-

tance. I hope that all have been satisfied thus far with the responses. I try to be as helpful and thorough as I possibly can. I welcome any/all questions and offer to assist in any way that I can. In Union Solidarity.



by Lisa Borchardt,  
Area 9 Director

I just got back from the National Convention in Chicago. I have been to several National Conventions in my years as an APWU member. I will say this convention was very different. The union had to deal with many financial issues because of the diminished number of members. The union has lost members to retirement and as we know the post office is not

# Area 9 Director

## A Very Different Convention

exactly replacing those positions. I believe we passed some good resolutions to make all jobs better for our members. We also tried to clear up a lot of the language to make the PTF and PSE jobs better. On day 1 of the convention we decided that Postmaster General Donahoe has to go. He is doing nothing to save the Postal Service; in fact he seems to

be motivated to do everything he can to ruin this national treasure. On Tuesday we protested at a Staples store in downtown Chicago. Jesse Jackson and the Chicago Teachers Union joined in the protest. I truly enjoyed this and would suggest anyone who gets the opportunity to join a protest to do so. It is very motivating. Back at the Convention hall we heard

from the Wal-Mart workers who are trying to get better wages. We also discussed Postal Banking and how it would help the public and the Post Office. “Standing Up and Fighting Back” was the theme of the convention. We need to get the non-member postal workers to understand where the attacks are coming from and to join our fight! And we all need is to *fight back* when management cuts corners at work.

# Support For Walmart Workers

WHEREAS, Walmart is America’s largest employer with close to 2.2 million employees worldwide and has faced many lawsuits with regards to its abusive treatment of its workforce, and

Resolved, that the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO go on record as opposing Walmart’s abusive employment practices and low worker wages, and be it further

Resolved, that the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO salute the struggle of the Walmart Workers and pledge our full support in their struggle for decent working conditions and a better life.

WHEREAS, Walmart is an employer of low wages, poor working conditions, inadequate healthcare, forced part-time work, discrimination, and strong anti-union policies, and

WHEREAS, Walmart workers earn around 20% less than the average retail worker resulting in annual salaries that fall below the poverty line for a family of three making workers eligible for Medicaid, Food Stamps and housing assistance which leads to increases in the burden on taxpayers funded services, and

WHEREAS, courageous Walmart workers are standing up and fighting back against abusive company practices, including at “Black Friday” protests, and short strikes in the Walmart warehouse supply chain, and

WHEREAS, the NLRB found that Walmart unlawfully threatened, disciplined, and/or terminated workers who fought back and took part in demonstrations across the country to protest inadequate pay, and

WHEREAS, Walmart workers are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect while earning a living wage that enables them to take care of their basic needs and those of their families and living wages help uplift all workers and strengthen our communities, therefore be it



“Big Ed” (Ed Schultz) was one of several nationally known figures to speak to the delegates.



# — Contract Enforcement —

by Leo Persails

The lifeblood of any union is the ability to represent its members in the workplace and on the workroom floor. Contract enforcement through representation is even more important than negotiating rights in a contract. It's more important because, without contract enforcement you can't have or even keep negotiated rights. Demonstrating in the streets brings the same results, whatever gains are won from management, are only of value as long as they can be enforced for all members.

Private sector unions have a variety of enforcement avenues, such as EEO, MSPB, Labor Department, Courts, and Labor Strikes. The APWU has all of those avenues except the right to strike. The APWU final weapon is arbitration. It's unfortunate that our past 30 year history has found our leaders in Washington hiding from the weapon. The burden of representation and contract enforcement has been left to NBAs [National Business Agents], and NBAs have gone to the arbitration table on a regular basis over alleged contract rights.

This approach to our members' grievances has led to thousands of arbitration cases being arbitrated repeatedly on the same issues. Arbitration in the field by our NBAs does not set precedence on any contract issue. Precedence must be set at the Washington level and all of the real issues have been avoided at that level. How can this be and why has it happened? One of the main problems is there has only been one arbitrator at the Washington level for years. One arbitrator at the



An early morning 5-state caucus discussed strategy for Constitutional resolutions at the Convention.

Washington level didn't occur by accident; the APWU leadership didn't want precedent setting cases heard. If areas of the contract were found to be weak or useless when we had been told for years they meant something else, the real value of their negotiations and rhetoric would obviously be exposed. It was better for them to let management permit certain parts of the contract to work for certain areas and Locals. The problem with that was the other areas and Locals saw NBAs in arbitration with the same violations over and

over. When management felt like it they would expand the violations, and different NBAs would become involved with the same issues in their areas. For 30 years the APWU followed this path with nothing being arbitrated at the Washington level to put any issue to bed. This lack of action from the Washington leadership led to tens of thousands of grievances from frustrated members and stewards who believed the language was violated.

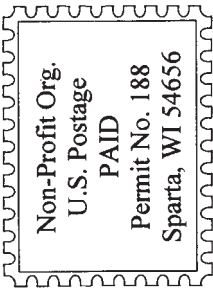
That brings us to our new APWU administration in Washington with a number of new officers. They don't get credit or blame for the present contract language. If it is challenged at the precedence level in Washington, and they win or lose, they didn't negotiate it. Will it be business as usual in the grievance arbitration procedure with the new administration? The recent National Convention saw an ef-

fort to remove some NBA positions in the field under the guise of austerity. Some of it worked and some of it didn't, but the die was cast and hopefully it isn't what it appears to be. Is this just one more step to remove the National union away from membership grievance representation? The convention report by the new Industrial Relations Director states there will be changes made and more cases to resolve issues at the Washington level will be heard. That is encouraging, but the reduction of NBAs orchestrated by the administration at the recent National Convention counters that effort, including the loss of NBAs in the Wichita and Cincinnati Divisions because of it. It also remains to be seen if the new Director of Industrial Relations has the authority to move forward in that area. The fact is, contract enforcement and membership representation needs both Washington and field NBAs. Thirty years has proven that one without the other doesn't work, and 38,000 non-members in our crafts also proves those non-members have seen the lack of union strength on the workroom floor. They also see no need to pay union dues because of it.

Time will tell if this new administration will repeat the mistakes of the past, or change the direction of contract enforcement. The recent reduction of NBAs was not a good start.



Leo Persails



Return to APWU/MPWU  
c/o Paul Felton, Editor  
P.O. Box 361342  
Grosse Pointe, MI 48236  
Address Service Requested