



by
Michael
Mize

PRESIDENT

— GREAT JOB —

Having had the honor and good fortune to be your State President for almost 10 years, I must take a moment to thank you all for our success.

Coming to the event this year I planned to take a more back seat roll in running the event. Mike Long was appointed to the Treasurer position and immediately stepped in to lend his hand with everything. Wendy Kempke as the Research and Education Director took over running the event. Eric Chornoby stepped up last minute to run a class. It would be a huge understatement to say they succeeded. They made it happen

while I made copies and other office duties that often they would handle. Thank you to them as leaders for the excellent job they did.

We also thank our National Officers and other instructors. Our NBA's for coming in and teaching a class, taking the craft breakouts to discuss current issues or teach an important current class. Central Region Safety representative Vaughn for teaching on Safety concerns. All the other National officers that traveled to the beautiful Upper Peninsula. Your time and effort were greatly appreciated, we understand getting there was a challenge.

Let's talk about COPA. I have to thank my friend and Brother Roscoe Woods for being willing to join in the fun to make COPA efforts and unity a priority. Our help this year at the COPA

and registration table. Robin Ely from 480-481 Area Local as always got it done. Karen Walker and Tammy Mize for donating their time to assist made this the best year ever. All kinds of tickets to sell and records to keep track of. Your help makes us all look good. With your help the state raised \$9,000.00 for COPA. Legislative Director and Michigander Judy Beard is very happy with our success.

The hotel worked with us and made changes on the fly. While we were not close to other things they helped to make things happen and be successful for all.

Each and every delegate, none of this is possible without you. You came and sit through class to gain knowledge for assisting the membership. You and your locals made donations to

the COPA drawings that make things possible. You come in and spend your hard-earned money and participate. You come together a one State and make us shine. You are all the life blood of these events and you are awesome.

To say that I am proud would be an understatement. Each of you at the State event did your part to make it what it is. You are all part of something that we should be very proud of. We are the great State of Michigan.

Finally, to each member in the State, we thank you for making this possible. We learn and become better able to serve you with each of you being a member.

Thank you everyone for your part, I am humbly honored to be your President.



by
Eric
Chornoby

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Farewell To A Living Legend

the event went from my perspective: An MPWU Officer and Instructor.

Setting the Stage

In the lead up to the Educational Assembly I volunteered to teach Investigative Interviews. Along the way I discovered NBA James Stevenson wanted to teach, and I gave up my slot so he could be the lead instructor and I would co-instruct with him. I made the decision to step back out of respect for NBA Stevenson, and I felt it was the right thing to do.

I was honestly disappointed. At the time I gave up my slot I already had a

PowerPoint prepared, dozens of accompanying documents, and practiced the training on APWU Stewards, Non – APWU Stewards, and a Non – Postal Employee to ensure I could take anyone, of any skill level, and improve their ability to represent the membership. But events like this are not about the instructors or those running it. These events are about giving the best training possible to all attendees.

Putting aside my normal training preparation, I dove head first into helping set up the Assembly itself. MPWU President Mize, and MPWU Director of Education Kempke did an amazing job working with the venue in Gladstone Michigan to secure as much space as possible to cover as many classes as possible. The mentality was that we wanted something for everyone at all times.

In the lead up to the event itself: I made the MPWU Educational Assembly book; sent invite letters to all National Officers; sent invite letters to normal guests such as the IPWU President and Auxiliary; and made the Flash Drives we

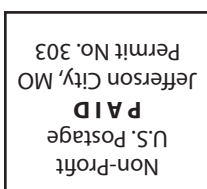


Lynn Pallas-Barber

would give out. Those Flash Drives were an experience I do not want to relive.

For a few weeks I combed through all the files and material I personally owned to put together a Flash Drive to give to attendees. I used a template from former Executive Secretary Mike Long and built on it. Dozens of hours were spent going through everything I had and piecing together what I wanted to be 'the best thing since sliced bread.' Things I added were the Grievance Guide I made, real Grievance templates for issues like Harassment, Over a dozen Arbitration Textbooks, Copies of previous National APWU Training, trainings I have conducted, etc. When all was said and done I had a 19 GB

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Change of Service Guaranteed

Return to APWU/MPWU
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Farewell To A Living Legend

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Flash Drive ready to go. It was massive.

We waited as long as possible to receive material to put on the Flash Drives from instructors, guests and the National. At approximately two weeks out, I could no longer wait I began copying the information to each Flash Drive. Each drive took between 30 minutes and 2 hours. At one point I had three computers and my laptop going, with adapters to do 5 drives at once. Despite working for hours after work, and all weekend, I did not finish by time I had to drive nearly 7 hours to Gladstone.

Chaos Erupts

The day I drove up was long. I stopped at the Flint Local to grab some of the MPWU materials and supplies

along the way and by time I arrived and settled down I resumed the Flash Drives. I was offered help, former Executive Secretary Mike Long would arrive early and help if needed. Luckily I did finish, but Mike became an essential element to the event.

President Mize appointed Mike Long to be Secretary Treasurer and he immediately jumped in to help us set up and prepare. Unfortunately multiple instructors had things they wanted us to do, such as print material or add information to the Flash Drives. We got as much done as possible, but it was hectic as we were also prepping the venue, preparing bags, etc.

Unfortunately the chaos began when NBA James Stevenson called

me, between 6 and 7 PM the night before the Assembly began, and told me he was stuck in an Arbitration and could not attend. He asked if I could teach the material I already had. While I immediately said yes, the daunting task ahead of me quickly set in. James was doing what he had to do and did best, representing members in Arbitration. We understood, but it did put me on a time crunch. I had to re-review my tight 5 hour training, but I also had to make dozens of copies of all of my material. Normally we would have a printer handle such volume due to cost and

someone would help me finish. Luckily for me President Mize took over making copies, and stapling material together.

Secretary Treasurer Mike Long filled in for me as I was teaching ensuring the event ran well and technical issues were addressed. Director Kempke and Secretary Treasurer Long both filled in President Mize while he was covering for me. It was an all hands on deck moment.

Teaching Isn't Easy

The problem with teaching 'boring' material is people don't pay attention and lose interest. To keep everyone

ed to us by President John F Kennedy. By far this was the most comprehensive training on the subject I have ever seen, not to toot my own horn. Included were multiple exercises, some side bar Q and A, and I even gave out candy after lunch I purchased to ensure everyone was alert and paying attention.

What made my gut drop several times is when I saw National APWU Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy become animated in the back of the room. Soon her hand would shoot up and I expected the worst. But the best happened, Debby usually put her hand down after I finished

my sentence or she agreed with what I said and emphasized the importance.

After I wrapped up, precisely at 3:59, a group of people

came to the front to thank me, shake my hand, etc. It felt absolutely amazing. The real fun began when talking to Local Presidents, National Officers and NBAs about the training. One NBA asked me for a copy of my Flash Drive and told me, 'I probably shouldn't say this, but I have learned more today than I have in the APWU. Could I have your Flash Drive?' Executive Vice President Szeredy was extremely complementarity and said, 'we should be teaching this everywhere.' I rode that satisfaction the rest of the event.

The Next Day

The following day I was tapped in to help National APWU Director of Organi-
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"The most remarkable part of the legend Lynn is, Lynn never asked for credit. Never wanted the spotlight, and didn't even want the commemorative dinner. Lynn just always did what was right for her family, and if she represented you, you were her family."

time, but all we had was the evening.

I immediately took an MPWU printer, a case of paper, and all the spare ink we had to my room and began printing and stapling my material. By 11 PM, I ran out of ink and drove out to buy more at a Meijer. I purchased the single HP black cartridge they had, bought the single Meijer black cartridge they had, and bought an all in one pack. By midnight I was back in my room making copies.

At 6 AM, I finally decided to take an hour nap before jumping back into it until I ran out of ink again. By 8:15 I was back in the MPWU Meeting room making more copies on another printer. Despite my best effort and nearly sleepless night, I could not finish on time. I did prioritize what I would cover first, so I had time if

engaged, I had to make boring information interesting. To make matters worse, I had 90 copies of my material prepared and by the end of my class all 90 were given out. The Assembly only had 119 attendees, but unfortunately, or fortunately, depending how you look at it, people had left other classes to join mine.

That wasn't enough pressure. In the back of the room I had multiple National Officers, NBAs, and Presidents attending. Something to know about our National Officers, if you make a mistake they will correct you. That means I had to be perfect.

The class started well. I covered examples of good representation, our legal rights under Weingarten, our legal rights under the Constitution, and rights grant-

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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:

Battle Creek	Gaylord
Central MI	Great Lakes Area
Detroit District	Mail Haulers
Farmington	Jackson
Flint	Muskegon
480-481	Southwest MI
486-487	Traverse City
498-499	Western MI

The MICHIGAN MESSENGER is published six times yearly, and is the official publication of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, also affiliated with the APWU Postal Press Association. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, the APWU or the Postal Press. Articles and correspondence to the Editor may be sent to MPWU - Michigan Messenger, Dustin Hume - Editor, PO Box 27303, Lansing, MI 48909-7303. Articles must be signed to be printed (your name may be withheld upon request). Articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

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





by
Wendy
Kempke

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

And That's A Wrap!

Thank you to all of you that attended the MPWU 2025 Educational Conference in Gladstone. A Heartfelt Thank You to Michelle Yuhasey, and local SFC 498-499 for finding us such a beautiful location and hosting a wonderful, beautiful retirement dinner for our own, Lynn Pallas-Barber. A well deserved new chapter for Lynn.

The local put on a great hospitality for all to enjoy and unwind. Thank you, again for all you did.

We were filled with wonderful speakers, some very informative training, and I know we all left knowing more about how to keeping fighting the issues we've had with management, along with new ones that are being brought to us daily. I enjoyed seeing the interaction going on, the exchanging of issues, of contacts and the ultimate goal of fighting the biggest fight we've ever faced. Thank you so much, to all the speakers and

trainers, that gave us their time and came to the UP for us.

Of course, no event is complete without COPA! Oh how I love COPA! First, thank you to Robin Ely, Tammie Mize and Karen Walker for manning the table with all the COPA tickets and ducks! As we saw, that's a busy, non stop event. And new ideas are always coming up, I've got a few new ideas for next year. Also, I'd like to thank the retirees for their contribution to COPA with the pizza night and their own raffles that they donated all to COPA. With that being said, in our short, 3

day Conference, we raised \$9000 for COPA. Truly Amazing!! As we know, it's needed more now, than ever before. I want to personally thank each of you that supported the raffles, and let's not forget our ducks, Mike Mize and Roscoe Woods, for always being such good sports with whatever I throw at them. They make it fun!!

This was my first Educational Conference as the Director of Research and Education, thanks to all that attended, I believe we had a very successful conference.

Keep on fighting. In Solidarity.

Farewell To A Living Legend

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zation Anna Smith to cover Young Members during her Organizing Training. As a member of the National Young Member Committee (YMC) and Chairperson of the 480-481 Area Local's YMC, it made sense. I walked the class through what a YMC does, how we built a YMC in my Local, and eventually pivoted to writing Proposals and Motions to have a Local Create a YMC.

The attendees asked if the State could make a chapter, and I sprang into action. I spent time speaking to allies such as Retirees, President Mize, Secretary Treasurer Long, etc to drum up support and verify what the Stat would require to make it happen. At the end of the class I came back and told the body that the State would require a Constitutional Amendment, but can host zooms as needed and would offer assistance for any Local looking to create a Committee. We wrapped up by working on a Constitutional Amendment template.

This was a historic step, and I believe our State is the first to make movements towards a State Level YMC. Anna did an excellent job, as always. I attempted to tie in the fact that empowering Young Members is organizing at its root level. The more engaged Young Members are the more powerful the APWU is, and you only engage these members by Organizing. I think we made one heck of a team nailing that point.

The rest of my time was spent ensuring the instructors and attendees were taken care of, and everything went well. The MPWU was operating like a fine tuned machine. When I had to step away, two Officers stepped up to cover for me. When I could jump back in, they immediately pivoted to helping elsewhere. While it required each of us to be 'working' for 10 plus hours a day, it paid off.

A Bittersweet Farewell

As the Assembly came to an end, the 498-499 Area Local held a commemorative 'Retirement' dinner for National Assistant Clerk Craft Director Lynn Pallas-Barber. For anyone who doesn't know Lynn, you should. Lynn was President of the 498-499 Area Local, a National Busi-

ness Agent, and finally National Assistant Clerk Craft Director. Several speakers, including myself, spoke favorably of Lynn.

I will share the spirit of what I said. I called Lynn the 'Guardian Angel' of Michigan. Those of us with our ear to the ground when rumors arise out of National USPS initiatives knows that Lynn has always kept a special place in her heart for Michigan and Illinois. When closings or consolidations would be proposed, she always pushed back for us – even when it wasn't her job to do so. When excessing would be proposed, she would work tirelessly to save our jobs.

The most remarkable part of the legend Lynn is, Lynn never asked for credit. Never wanted the spotlight, and didn't even want the commemorative dinner. Lynn just always did what was right for her family, and if she represented you, you were her family.

A short story I shared was that I grew up in the APWU. I attended many APWU and MPWU events since I could walk. I vaguely knew Lynn. Or, when I first met her, President Pallas-Barber. Then NBA Pallas-Barber. It is still weird to call her Lynn. I remember when Lynn was running for National Business Agent and she came to the Detroit District Area Locals picnic to hand out material.

Never, in my wildest dreams, would I expect Lynn to remember me. It wasn't until I became a Steward and Lynn called my then President, Roscoe Woods, and essentially said, 'I heard Eric Chornoby is one of your Stewards now, and he is pretty good. Let's keep it that way.' If you know Lynn, that is as much words of encouragement as it is a threat!

Fast forward years later and I finally saw Lynn in person while attending the first Young Member Conference in 2023. I walked up to Lynn and she immediately said,

"Eric! Great job on your articles, keep it up!" At that point I had maybe written five articles for the MPWU and my own Local. Not a lot. I was not the Editor. But Lynn knew. That's because Lynn read everything that came out of Michigan and Illinois. Lynn treated all of us like family. And Lynn would never stop looking out for us, even if it cost her everything. I may have teared up a bit, but Lynn is one of the few living legends the APWU has, and no one wants to lose her.

The bittersweet was disheartening. While we don't want to see her go, we understand Lynn has more than given herself to the APWU and its members. NBA James Stevenson zoomed in to commemorate her. NBA Devendra "D" Rathore spoke. National Officers Smith and Szeredy spoke highly of Lynn. Multiple Presidents and former Presidents spoke. I spoke about her impact on me. Regional Coordinator Amy Puhlaski spoke. As did Illinois Postal Workers Union (IPWU) President George Bates. President Bates gave Lynn a commemorative plaque and also bestowed upon her a lifetime membership to the IPWU. It was an in not only well deserved, but incredibly touching.

Unfortunately not everyone felt the same. One National Business Agent stood up and left with their spouse as soon as the speeches began. It was shocking. The audacity it took to leave early. To bring a guest without asking, to eat food provided by Lynn's home Local, and to leave before the speeches finished left the room temporarily silent. Especially as Lynn's family was in attendance as was Lynn's home local.

But the night was saved by Lynn, as

usual. When Lynn gave her own speech she went around thanking every officer who spoke, she went to the Business Agents chair to thank them for attending, and upon seeing the seats empty, said, 'oh, I guess they are not here.' She immediately moved on. As that's the Lynn we all know and love. She took major disrespect in stride and did not let it dampen her evening.

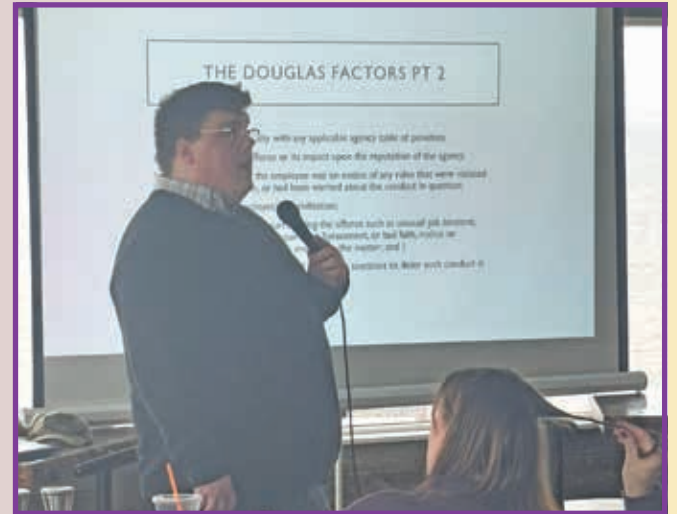
Fond Memories

If you made it this far, I thank you. I had to cut a lot. A lot of behind the scenes work. Greasing of wheels, working with staff, and putting out fires. The venue we were at allowed us to close down their restaurant to hold classes there, gave us the run of the place, and even let us meet in their lobby as needed. Every effort was made to allow people to speak who wanted to, while also providing the best training possible.

As an Officer and Instructor, I would not trade the experience for the world. Michigan has always been a tight knit family. From the UP all the way to North Canada, we tend to have each other's backs. We are family. I was extremely happy to teach and provide attendees the training I wish I had when I started. I was also elated to have the IPWU join us at an MPWU Assembly. The nearly sleepless night was worth it. I hope every attendee walked away knowing more than when they walked in the door, and I hope the entire MPWU knows that their elected officials strive for the best and genuinely care about them. After all, we all believe what Lynn believed and at the end of the day, we are family.



2025 MPWU Educational Ass



Assembly, Gladstone, Michigan





by
Dustin
Hume

EDITOR

A Beautifully Chilly Educational Assembly

The drive up to Gladstone from Lansing for the MPWU Educational Assembly was full of beautiful scenery. When the sun was not blinding as it set, the view through the trees and over the water was amazing. It was the first time that I remember crossing the Bridge. Being out-of-season made it feel as if we were driving through a ghost town. All the dining and gas stations were closed from the bridge until we neared Escanaba.

Not only was the setting a great

choice, so was the variety of classes. I got to hear updates and news from members of National like Mark Dimondstein, Liz Powell, Judy Beard, Debby Szeredy, and many others as well as the person of the hour: Lynn Pallas-Barber. I am thankful for the wisdom and updates these seasoned officers shared with us all.

I was able to attend a wonderfully informative class on Investigative Interviews and Pre-Disciplinary Interviews by our own Eric Chornoby. Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy's class taught me some valuable Union history

followed by ideas for organizing that I believe can help me in my local and state. Stephanie Logan held a class that heavily discussed Line H and Eagle Clean. I know that Eagle Clean is something a lot of custodians are concerned about, and I know all of us who attended the class will be better prepared when the rollout comes. One of my favorite classes was by Steve Vaughn on safety which included some hilarious OSHA violations that, while we can laugh at them now, were terribly unsafe and endangered our fellow workers.

The entire list of classes available was interesting and valuable. I wish that I was able to attend all the classes that were held over the Educational Assembly, but, unfortunately, that would be impossible. Luckily, I drove up with three other members of my local. We were able to attend all of the classes separately and will be able to share all of that knowledge with anyone interested.

"Hands off the rights of the People and that means hands off the Postal Service too!"

— Mark Dimondstein

Legislative Director



by
Roscoe
Woods

Dangerous Legislation

With the incoming administration making move to reduce the size of our government the USPS is not immune to those efforts. With the recent retirements we are seeing wholesale reductions in full time assignments. Whatever side of the political aisle you may find yourselves I hope we can all agree that we need to protect our abilities to earn not only a paycheck but a decent retirement.

Below is an update on the current activities in the House that if passed will do serious damage to the long term health of all postal employees. While we may be somewhat insulated since we are an independent agency within the federal government Congress can greatly impact the benefits we have through the government.

We all need to pay close attention and we are asking all of our members to take ownership of your future and if like millions of other Federal Employees you oppose these attacks on our way of life make the call to 844-402-1001 and tell your representatives in congress hands off our benefits and hands of the postal service.

Update from the apwu.org website.

On April 30, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform approved a number of significant cuts to the retirement benefits of postal and federal workers. Passed by a slim margin of 22-21, this measure will now be included in the full reconciliation package which Republican leadership is aiming to hold a full House vote on sometime this month. The retirement cuts would have devastating implications for APWU members, including:

Eliminating the FERS Social Se-

curity supplement, which allows workers who have earned their retirement the ability to retire before their Social Security benefits begin; Increasing the FERS annuity contribution rates for all active employees to 4.4%;

(For contrast, I am retired, my supplement is approximately \$1,600.00 a month, it represents about 50% of my overall retirement payment, I never could have retired if the supplement was not available, RW)

Replacing the High-3 FERS annuity calculation with a High-5 calculation, resulting in a reduc-

tion in annuity payments.

Also included in the passed were egregious attacks on federal employees, such as:

Charging a filing fee for Merit Systems Protection Board Claims and Appeals (this will impact our disabled veterans who in addition to our grievance procedure have the right to appeal through MSPB - RW), and forcing new hires in the federal workforce to choose between at-will employment or paying an increased FERS contribution rate of 9.4%.

While this specific proposal does not currently apply to all postal work-

ers, it is a dangerous change to eliminate job security and protections from government service.

Call the Legislative Hotline at 1-844-402-1001 now to speak to your House Representative and urge them to **OPPOSE** any cuts to federal and postal pensions.

Stay tuned, there is a lot of activity in Congress that can directly impact us all. Stay up to date with all of these issues by either pointing and clicking your way to <https://apwu.org/legislative-and-political> or you can sign up for legislative text message updates. We suggest you do both.

In Solidarity.

— Contract Update —

We are now six months past the expiration of our agreement that expired on September 20th, 2024. I do want to remind everybody that while we're struggling for a new contract, all our rights and benefits, our contractual gains remain in place, outside of when our next general wage increase will be and when our COLA will be.

But everything else is in place and that's a very good thing for all of us.

Look, negotiations are always difficult. They're always complicated. They always have been, and they always will be. We've had some unique complications, in this round of bargaining. One is we have internal changes at the post office with the changes in the PMG. We had a change in presidential administrations. While we're in the middle of collective bargaining, that certainly has an impact. We now have a change in the leadership of the postal service with PMG DeJoy resigning. We've had a situation where the NALC, our sister union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, took

a very long time for whatever their reasons to reach a new agreement.

First, a tentative agreement that was rejected by the members. Now a mediation arbitration award that's come out. All of that had an impact on the pace of our negotiations and had an impact that we're still in the process. So, here's where we are. We're still meeting, in fact as we're recording this podcast, when I'm done, we're going to have meetings with the top management, officials that are responsible for negotiations on their side.

But here's the deal. Negotiations have gotten more difficult in a period where the federal unions and the postal unions are under severe assault and threat from this administration. But having said that, and understanding that we need and really need to secure a good contract that protects all the great gains of generations of struggle, and we need to get that contract signed. We're still in the process. We're going to keep you posted. Obviously, the NALC

contract will have an impact on the parameters of what we're able to negotiate, but we're going to do the very best we can and we're going to have to bring it to a head soon.

It's either going to be a voluntary agreement where you will all as members have a final vote on whether it's acceptable to you, given the times and given the challenges, or whether we go to what's called an interest arbitration process, where our wages, rights, and benefits going forward will be determined by one arbitrator. Obviously, it's better if we can control our own destiny and you'll be the final decision makers on whether that contract meets our needs the best we can, going forward.

So that's where we're at. We're going to continue to keep you posted. We're going to continue to push forward, and we should have some news one way or the other, the fork in the road that we're getting close to on whether we're going to reach an agreement or whether we're going to enter the arbitration process.



AREA 7 DIRECTOR



by
Dana
Mclean

SOLIDARITY IN ACTION:

How COPA And Convention Build Union Power

Conventions: Where Brotherhood Becomes Action

I recently had the privilege of attending the Michigan Postal Workers Convention. It was an incredibly valuable experience that gave me a deeper understanding of union work, contract enforcement, and the responsibilities we have as stewards and union members. One of the most informative classes I attended was a Due Process class taught by Roscoe Woods, where we focused on the responsibilities management has when issuing discipline and how to recognize when those responsibilities are being violated. I learned that before any discipline is issued, it must be signed off on by someone higher up in management — not just the immediate supervisor. The discipline itself must be properly documented and signed, and stewards should always request a Key Indicator Report to see if the data supports the charge — something I had not heard of before this class. We also discussed that management cannot begin to discipline an employee for one issue and then try to add additional charges after the fact and combine them — that's considered going down two lanes, which is improper. Each issue must be handled on its own merit and timeline. We also discussed that if discipline is issued immediately after an investigative interview, without a real opportunity for consideration or review, then it was likely predetermined, which is a violation of due process. Finally, we reviewed that denying a steward's right to represent or advocate for the grievant violates Weingarten Rights, and it's essential to be alert to these kinds of oversteps. This class gave me a much stronger foundation in understanding what to look for — and what to push back on — when discipline is issued.

I also took a class on Investigative Interviews taught by Eric Chernoby, which really helped me understand the distinction between an investigative interview and a pre-disciplinary (pre-D) discussion. I used to think they were essentially the same thing, just with different names. But I learned that they're very different in both purpose and procedure. In an investigative interview, management may ask things like "I heard this happened — can you explain?" or "I was told you did this — what's your side of the story?" They're gathering facts and have not made a final decision. On the other hand, a pre-D is held when management has already determined that discipline will be issued. It's more about informing the employee and offering a chance to respond before the final action is taken. Another important clarification I learned from Eric's class is that union reps cannot just walk into an investiga-

tive interview uninvited — the employee must request union representation. That's a crucial point for both stewards and employees to understand when navigating these situations.

We also took time at the convention to honor and celebrate Lynn Pallas-Barber for her many years of dedicated service — not only to Michigan but to the American Postal Workers Union as a whole. Lynn has been a mentor to many of us, and her leadership, strength, and unwavering commitment to the membership have left a lasting impact. She will always be a force to be reckoned with, and her contributions to the labor movement will continue to inspire future generations of union activists. Not only did we have great learning seminars, but we were also fortunate to hear from several inspiring speakers, including our National Business Agents from Chicago. We also had the opportunity to listen to APWU President Mark Diamondstein via Zoom, who shared key updates and motivating words that energized the room. As always, some of the best insight came from simply connecting with fellow union brothers and sisters from across the state — sharing stories, strategies, and solidarity. The entire convention reinforced the importance of education, engagement, and advocacy in our union work. I returned with new knowledge, more confidence, and a stronger commitment to representing and protecting my fellow workers.

Why COPA Matters More Than Ever

At the recent Michigan Postal Workers Union Convention, delegates came

together not only to learn, network, and build solidarity — but also to support something bigger than ourselves: COPA, the Committee on Political Action.

Thanks to the generosity of our members, we raised funds to help protect the rights and benefits we've all fought so hard to earn. It wasn't just a fundraiser — it was an act of defense. Because in today's political climate, union workers are under constant attack, and COPA is one of our strongest lines of defense.

What Is COPA?

COPA is the APWU's political action committee. It allows postal workers, retirees, and their families to voluntarily contribute to a fund used to support lawmakers who stand with working people. This money cannot come from union dues — federal law prohibits it. That's why voluntary giving is so important.

What Does COPA Do? With COPA, we can:

- **Support pro-labor candidates** at the federal level, regardless of party affiliation.
- **Defend the Postal Service** from privatization efforts and budget cuts.
- **Fight for our rights** on Capitol Hill, like protecting six-day delivery, opposing plant consolidations, and advocating for better working conditions.
- **Shape legislation** that impacts everything from retirement security to healthcare and union protections. Every dollar donated helps amplify our voice where it matters most — in Congress.

Ducks, Laughter, and Solidarity

We can always count on our union

brothers Mike Mize and Roscoe Woods to bring both dedication and good humor to the fight. As they've done so many times before, they helped raise COPA donations in their own unforgettable way — by dressing up as ducks and quacking around the outside of the fountain at the convention venue.

It's this kind of fun, solidarity, and commitment that makes our union family strong. When we come together with purpose — and sometimes with feathers — we make a difference.

Why Give Now? We are facing one of the most anti-worker climates in recent history. Legislators have introduced bills that would slash postal jobs, undermine collective bargaining rights, and erode public trust in the Postal Service. Some want to privatize it altogether. Without a seat at the table, we'll be on the menu.

COPA ensures that postal workers are not ignored. It helps us build relationships with decision-makers and hold them accountable to the people who deliver America — us.

Let's Keep the Momentum Going

The energy and generosity we showed at the Michigan convention shouldn't stop when we go home. If you haven't signed up to give to COPA through payroll deduction or one-time donation, now is the time. It's not just about politics — it's about survival, strength, and standing up for one another.

Let's keep fighting the good fight — on the workroom floor, in our communities, and in Washington.

In Solidarity.

Area 9 Director

Overview Of Education Assembly

by Brittany Thompson,
Area 9 Director

Dearest Brothers and Sisters.

I firstly would like to thank the WMAL #281 for sending me to the Education Assembly in Escanaba. It was a great experience and the education that we were provided was fantastic. I just wanted to touch on some things I heard while at this educational assembly.

I attended Anna Smith & Eric Chernoby's Organizing class, and I found that many people didn't believe the class was available to them, because it also said that it was going to be helpful to organizing young members. However, you didn't have to be considered part of the young member specifications to go to this class. It also gives great ways to start conver-

sations with non-members. If you are wanting to get more involved in your union, organizing non-members is a fantastic way!

The words of Anna, and Eric are the main reason why another steward and I have asked to start a young members committee, in our local. We will be working towards getting our non-members educated so they know what we are up against. We would like to take time in the factory on different tours and have a table set up with pamphlets, etc, and try to sign up as many non-members as possible.

I believe that if all locals in the state work to get some sort of committee set up, even an organizational committee would benefit greatly. Having our members go out and standing

face to face with the people they work with asking them to simply "Join us" is something we can offer. It may feel like it's an endless battle that some won't join, and that isn't our choice. It is theirs, however you let them know, if they aren't standing with us, then they must be against us.

Now is the time where we should be doing whatever we have the ability for when it comes to organizing. We are losing a lot of our members to retirement, and while I appreciate hearing a lot will continue to pay dues into their retirement. I also hear how we will be losing our union members, which means our voice needs to be louder in the absence of the retirees.

So PLEASE, I urge you to step up, step out, and show up for our Union.

A Cold Day In March

by Eric Chornoby, Executive Secretary

On March 20th the APWU held a Day of Action. The intent was to inform local communities of the threat their Postal Service was under and to give a call to action to the people we serve. Per the National Zoom's on this issue, this was not to get a huge photo op, but to let communities know we were under attack and what they can do. Your Michigan Postal Workers Union was out in force.

Mother Nature's Vengeance

My home local is the 480-481 Area Local. We held three events in Warren, Troy, and Dearborn Heights. As the Chairperson of our Local Young Member Committee, I was assigned to the location the Young Members volunteered to be at – Dearborn Heights. I was the first to arrive, and the last to leave except NBA James Stevenson.

In the lead up to the event the 480 Young Members and Retirees made signs to prepare for the event. I personally made seven signs, heavily glued and taped reinforced foam boards attached to yard stick handles. These things were sturdy. I have been in many picket lines and strikes in my life and thought I was an expert. I used a little Super Glue in key areas, E6000 adhesive to bind the sticks to the boards, spray adhesive glue to fix posters to foam board and finally duct tape to ensure that even if all three glue points failed the signs would last. They held up – at first. But Mother Nature had a different idea.

When I pulled up the Dearborn Heights Post Office the wind immediately yanked the signs in multiple directions. I could not carry all seven at once due to the wind. From 9:45 AM until about 2:10, we stood in rain, sleet, the occasional snow, and high winds. Several attendees quickly had issues with sore arms from combatting the wind, and resorted to putting the sticks for their signs in their jackets.

Slowly, sign by sign was destroyed. Constant wind, rain, and sleet ripped chunks out the sides of signs. Signs became completely waterlogged and although they stayed affixed to their sticks, broke in half. The signs from the National were no better – waterlogged, disintegrating, and tearing in multiple parts.

A Metaphor for Perseverance

This is a lot about signs. But the signs are a metaphor. Each sign was held by a person. We were joined by Postal Employees whose shifts ended, from allies from other Unions, from spouses of Postal Workers. We handed out hundreds of flyers. I brought 800 flyers with me and I left with a small handful of soaked, destroyed flyers.

Over the four hours allies rotated in and out. Young Members took short breaks in their cards to warm up. Young Members Jalen Solomon and Nick Isby came after work, and stayed until about 1:15. They were drenched, cold, and exhausted. Young Member LaQuise "Q" Gillespie came after her tour ended and by time she left her olive green jacket was dark green and she was shivering. Young Member Shana Hardwick Holmes wore a thin APWU Activist Jacket and quickly lost feeling in her fingers. Young Member Alison Schlang was the last Young Member left at the end with me. She was shivering, soaked, and smiling holding a creative 'DOGE' sign.

We were not alone. At the beginning we were joined by 480 – 481 Area Local President Steve Wood and Executive Vice President John who en-

sured we were set up and handed out flyers before moving onto another location. Through the course of the day NBA James Stevenson and Central Region Coordinator Amy Puhalski came by to show solidarity and demonstrate together.

Amy told me I was drenched as my hair was stuck to my head like a teenager who just discovered hair gel in the 90's. I take some creative liberty for visual effect, but I was a mess. The water, wind, sleet and snow had permeated my jacket, my zip up and my t-shirt. My jeans were shades darker. My socks were and shoes were beyond soaked. The rain was so bad I could not see with my glasses on. I did not take a break for the entire four plus hours.

Making a Statement

I could not do it alone. For many of the Young Members this was their first ever picket or demonstration. They were not around for the Stop Staples movement. They did not grow up in the Labor Movement like I have. Joining Casino Workers, the UAW, or marching on the Governor's Office are things I have done. You expect cold, misery, and people to be angry at you.

But those Young Members, those National Officers, those community allies, and those Postal

A few customers asked if the Post Office was open, and when they left expressed that they were Union Members and would never cross a picket line! I spoke to each customer with kindness, appreciation, even when they were rude. They pay my paycheck, even if they hate doing it. It is not tax dollars, as several signs clearly expressed, but the fact they used the Postal Service.

State Wide Solidarity

Dearborn Heights may have had the longest coverage that I was aware of. By time I left at about 2:15, NBA James Stevenson returned after a short break to grab gloves and hot chocolate to hand out. He wanted to come back as the foot traffic was excellent. I went to my car, and realized I was running late. I turned my heat to high, and began a 30 plus minute drive to the Detroit GWY.

Reports trickled in and my phone was constantly buzzing all day. MPWU Officers and Representatives Wendy Kempke, Marti Jablonski, and Dana McLean drove great distances to attend multiple events including 480-481 Area Local Events and the Detroit District Area Local's GWY event. State President Mize attended an event in Saginaw before his home Local's event in Flint.

I arrived after a large group picture at the GWY and people began leaving. Ironically, I saw everyone walking away as I turned the corner to park. The bristling wind from the Great Lakes made it incredibly cold, especially when you were soaking wet. The Detroit District Area Local's Legislative Director, Gina Favors, apologized for not being able to attend the 480-481 Area Local events. I spoke to several Detroit District Area Local Officers who were happy to have the support.

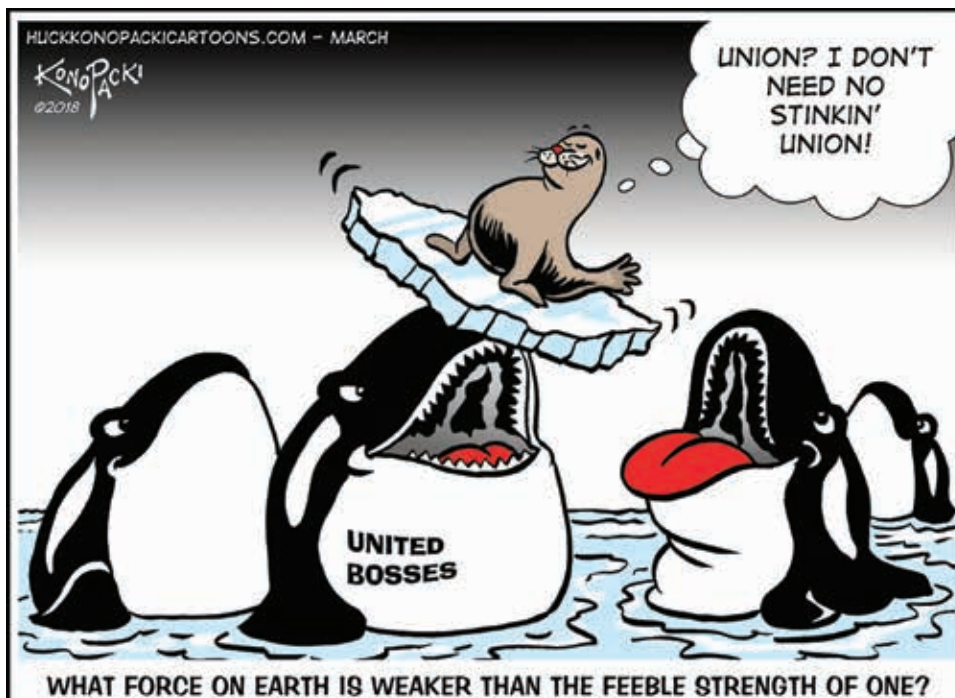
Unfortunately I would not make it to Flint, despite planning to. I was delayed as Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib arrived to the event at the GWY and two news stations came to interview her. Several of us lined up behind her to show solidarity, hold signs, and express that the USPS is a Public Service that the

American People deserve.

On Sunday the 23rd I joined the Traverse City Area Local showing solidarity alongside the NALC and NRLCA. This joint event was an example of real solidarity between our Postal Unions. It was a long four hour each way of driving, but all attendees were more than appreciative and welcoming with my surprise visit. I am especially appreciative to Traverse Cities own Joe Threet and Vince Nichols who offered refreshments and spent a lot of time talking shop with me. This is what Unions do, we support each other.

The Michigan Postal Workers Union, Postal Workers from several APWU locals across the state, and uncounted allies including customers and advocates came together on a cold, rainy, snowy and windy Michigan Thursday to tell the people we serve that we are under attack and need their help. We may not appear in the news, on the National APWU's Website, or on Social Media. But those who participated alongside me told hundreds of customers we need their help to continue to provide the American People the last, true, free public service. I firmly believe we have gained hundreds of new allies from our little event in Dearborn Heights and we were not alone.

Thank you for everyone who stepped up to save the USPS. I apologize to anyone I missed. We did good work on a cold day in March.



Workers who saw the misery we were in and still joined us – that empowered me to continue. Out of the hundreds of flyers I handed out, and customers I spoke to, even the rudest was shocked.

One customer asked if we were paid protesters, and when I said no, he said, 'Then you guys are just crazy!?' I wouldn't be out here! He quickly ran to his car and sped off. Another customer yelled that he is a Veteran and doesn't speak to anyone! That is, until, he aggressively marched past us to pick up a white plastic bag that all Clerks and Carriers would recognize as prescription medication. He would not make eye contact on his way out after his aggression was met with a kind, "Thank you for your service and using the USPS!"

99% of people had no idea that the Post Office was under attack. They were supportive. They took flyers. Those who did not like us, or disagreed, still respected us. They would never demonstrate for something they believed in, but we did. For hours.

We were kind. We educated. We explained how easy it was to help by scanning a simple QR code. Customers took flyers that drove G – Wagons, Hooties and Mini Vans. More than once I saw an older couple trying to drop off mail in a collection box abruptly stop in front of us, have a clearly heated conversation, only to then unroll their window and ask what was going on. Once it was explained, they asked for a flyer.