

# THE DETROIT POSTAL WORKER

APWU  
APWU

• 15

DETROIT DISTRICT AREA LOCAL AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

January-July, 2010

## The President's Report . . .

# Important Information For Our Membership



### From The President

Christopher "Chris" Ulmer  
President

Hello union brothers and sisters. It is truly wonderful to serve as your president, despite the job being far more demanding than one may think. That being said, I would like to say thank you on behalf of all the elected officers, stewards and committee members. Thank you Detroit District Area Local membership for sticking with us and being patient with us.

I apologize for this first issue being late. The delay was due to me working a schedule of six days a week and 8 to 16 hours a day since taking office.

In this issue, I am going to touch on issues that are pertinent to our membership at this time. There are so many and it is a overwhelming process, but I promise you we will get these issues resolved to the best of our ability.

### STATE OF THE UNION

I would like to talk about the State of the Union and where we intend to go from here.

We plan to follow the APWU-DDAL Constitution completely. This means you must keep us in line by asking the questions and demanding that we answer them completely and truthfully. Even if you do not we will do it to ourselves.

### GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION ISSUES

The grievances and arbitrations that were processed in the Detroit District Area Local are back in place and are being properly processed by the DDAL. The DDAL believes the USPS is not bargaining in good faith and is violating the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) on several fronts and for

various reasons. We believe these are the reasons.

1) The last administration withdrew more grievances than they arbitrated and the USPS had such a small workload of cases, they felt no need to settle anything let alone arbitrate it. I can tell you confidently, that the practice of having Arbitration Case Reviews (shake-outs), every 90 days like the past president did is over and is a thing of the past. We will give the USPS every opportunity to settle or resolve cases, but we will settle them within the confines of the grievance arbitration process outlined in the CBA. This process is Step 1, Step 1A (Mod-15), Step 2 and then Arbitration. This is the process and it will be adhered to and respected. This is the system that we are all part of and it will serve us all. Whenever you have a grievance and believe the USPS has done something or performed an act that you believe violates the CBA,

start getting to the important cases awaiting arbitration. I have predicted and still believe that USPS Detroit District management is going to yield a grievance in excess of at least one million dollars the next 3 years if they do not start doing the right thing when it comes to the employees in the Detroit District. They already gave up so much money in Ann Arbor, that the USPS got rid of the people who were handling those grievances. It will soon happen here, so make sure you file your grievances and continue to be vigilant in reporting all violations.

5) The USPS has management personnel that do not respect unions. They really never dealt with unions and believe by the time the issues get to arbitration, they will be long gone and will not be held responsible for the many contractual violations that have occurred in the Detroit District since 2007 to present.

6) Employees continue to ask me, what is the status of the grievance that was filed on behalf of the many grievance violations the USPS did in late 2008 and all of 2009? That grievance has not been ruled on yet. I did have the pleasure of asking the Arbitrator about that and he said it should be soon when he rules on that grievance. The arbitrator informed me that the grievance had about 25 different issues

*"The APWU opposes the 5-day delivery plan that the USPS has asked congress to approve. The USPS has other viable means to reduce their deficit . . ."*

make sure you ask your supervisor to be released and go to the union office and report the violation.

2) THE USPS DETROIT DISTRICT HIGHEST RANKING MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS DO NOT CARE ABOUT THE EMPLOYEES OF THE DETROIT DISTRICT or about the Grievance Arbitration procedures. If they did, they would not blatantly violate the CBA and then act as if they are not aware of the violations. If they did care, they would have given the excessed employees the proper notification and kept the relocating inconveniences to a minimum, as mandated BY article 12.4.A. The only thing they care about is their bonuses and making their last 3 years with the USPS their highest in terms of pay so they can be compensated more in retirement.

3) The Senior Plant Manager at the GWY is denying 90% of grievances at Step 2 and is clogging up the grievance procedure. The USPS is saying we are flooding the system, but in truth, the system is being delayed due to their step 2 person not settling grievances at the lowest level.

4) The Union inherited many cases that were faulty, but we will get past this point and

that he must decide on, and he must rule on each issue separately. He also informed me that the grievance has about 150 exhibits that he must go thru, and another 48 witness testimonies that he must consider. He did say he did not know how long it may take, so hopefully, it will come back in our favor and he will give the decision before the end of the summer.

### MEMBER'S RIGHTS

The past few years HAVE BEEN CHALLENGING, DISTURBING AND UNEASY for our members. The DDAL's plan is to work thru these challenges ALONG SIDE OUR MEMBERS. The DDAL cannot promise that these times will be easy or comfortable. In truth, the USPS will do it's best to make It disturbing and challenging for us. However, I promise you that this administration will continue to fight for all the rights of our members despite any of the attacks that the USPS management attempts to impose on the DDAL officers and stewards. The DDAL officers and stewards are committed to fighting tooth and nail for ALL MEMBER'S RIGHTS; this applies to all crafts, tours and facilities.

*The President's Report continued on page 11*

**Special Double Issue  
January-July, 2010**



Detroit District Area Local  
Union Officials

Christopher Ulmer	Page 1
President	
Patrick Chornoby	Page 3
Executive Vice-President	
Jane Duggan	Page 2
Secretary/Treasurer	
Stacey Carr	
Recording Secretary	
James Stevenson	Page 4
Clerk Craft Director	
Jason Rushing	Page 5
Maintenance Craft Director	
Alvin O. Branch	Page 7
MVS Craft Director	
Debbie LaMay	Page 5
BMC Facility Director	
Michael McCain	
480 Director	
Iva E. Williams	Page 6
PMC Facility Director	
Regina "Gina" Favors	Page 6
Director of Legislation	
Marcus D. Smith	
Director of Organization	
Tony Corbin	Page 7
Assistant Clerk Craft Director	
Anthony "Tony" V. Latimer	
Assist. Maint. Craft Dir.	
Raymond Allen Morgan	
Assistant MVS Craft Director	
TRUSTEES	
Clerk Craft:	MVS Craft:
Dana A. Beard & Carl Williams	Manuela R. Webster
Maintenance Craft:	Mail Handler:
Michael Griffin	Ruqayyah Bobo
SGT.-AT-ARMS	
Everett Hall	Dorothy Malone



✓ Union Printer Type Set    ✓ Union Printer Lay Out  
✓ Union Printed                ✓ Union Printer Labelled  
*United We Stand – Divided We Fall!*



Detroit Postal Worker

This newspaper is the official publication of the Detroit District Area Local, APWU, published bi-monthly, and affiliated with the Postal Press Association and the AFL-CIO. Please send all correspondence in care of: Editor, 20530 Southfield Road, Detroit, MI 48235.

Editor: Christopher Ulmer  
Associate Editor: Danny Sawicki

Opinions expressed in this paper are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editors or the Detroit District Area Local.



Associate  
Editor's Report

Danny Sawicki  
Associate Editor

I would like to thank President Ulmer and the Executive Board for allowing me to serve you as the associate editor of **YOUR** newspaper. Again, this is **YOUR** newspaper and I am taking this appointment very seriously. Please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions for our newspaper. Our next issue will have a question and answer column, "Ask the President". Also, we are going to have a "Members achievement column". Spe-



Secretary-  
Treasurer's  
Report

Jane Duggan  
Secretary-Treasurer

I imagine everyone is familiar with the idea of an inheritance. Many people look forward to receiving their inheritance . . . something a person or persons who went before us leaves behind. Usually an inheritance is something good.

Well, I'm here to tell you that's not always the case. Our current administration received on behalf of the entire local a terrible inheritance . . . debt, deceit and more debt. On the day of the two hour transition from the last secretary treasurer to the current secretary treasurer, I received a stack of unpaid bills totaling over \$78,000 and a negative balance in the check book.

Since taking office, we have been hit with an increasing number of inherited debts and we have received word from both our attorney and one of our printers that they are holding outstanding debts from last year. The printer bills are related to the 2009 election. We haven't seen what all the attorneys are billing for.

The outstanding debt on the day of the March membership meeting was well over \$100,000. That is before the printer and the attorney weigh in.

Equally serious is the fact that three of the local's bank accounts were locked out to the former secretary-treasurer. That means that although in at least one case we can see what's in the account, the current officers have no access to the money or control over the accounts.

As soon as this came to our at-

A Note From The Associate Editor  
Welcome To Your Newspaper

cial events, accolades, anniversaries, etc., will be listed along with a picture. I will post more information at your workplace at a later date.

Currently, we are facing anxious times at our workplace, but we are resilient people and we can get thru this together. Historically, we are among the leaders nationally in charitable contributions, CFC donations and volunteer work hours. No matter how bad times are, we come thru for others. That shows the type of people that we are. We are here to help you with any information you may need. I am not a steward, but I can direct you to the proper channels to answer your questions. For

those who have been forced to change crafts, there are study tools available to help you thru the exams the Post Office forces you to take.

We've had many friends and family who have been exccessed to: Des Moines, Iowa, Warrendale, Pittsburgh, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Carol Stream, Illinois and other places. If you need directions, phone numbers, contact information etc., let me know. I have been exccessed, so I know how you feel. Let's help each other get thru this crisis. United, we shall overcome!!! You can reach me by e-mail: [dsawicki@apwudetroit.org](mailto:dsawicki@apwudetroit.org) or Cell ph#: 586-943-3950.

The Inheritance

tention, we moved to gain control. We sent two written requests to the former secretary treasurer to come in and go to the bank and sign over our accounts. She did not cooperate in this matter. Therefore we had to look to other avenues to gain control of the local's money.

We are finally in control. It has been a lengthy process involving attorneys, our bank's management and legal department and action by our executive board. Needless to say this has been a very time consuming process but a necessary one to secure the local's funds.

One major factor in the ongoing financial situation is the loss of members due to retirement and down-sizing by the postal service. Our local lost 382 members from December of 2008 to December 2009. In our first 90 days in office, we have lost an additional 72 members. We do not see that fact reversing itself in the near future.

With all that being said, we are working hard to get on a sound financial footing. I have made payment agreements with two vendors where we have substantial bills. These agreements will make it possible to pay off about \$47,000 by the end of this year. I anticipate making a similar agreement with our attorneys although that may take more than a year to complete.

We are looking at every vendor and every expense and working to reduce costs. Here are some of the things we have done so far to save:

- SAVINGS from retiree officer. The local is not paying my health benefits or life insurance which amounts over \$16,000 per year.
- SAVINGS by reducing custodial maintenance from 5 days/week to 2 days/week.
- SAVINGS through no overnight stay for state training seminar.

- SAVINGS by paying receipted fuel costs, not mileage for state training.

- SAVINGS through five officers riding in one vehicle to training.

- SAVINGS through reduced costs for phones, internet, paper, etc.

- SAVINGS through designating one person to request supplies for each location and then tracking those supplies.

Any single item may not sound like much but taken collectively we are on the road to recovery. And, in some cases even one item makes a big difference. For instance, if we paid mileage for the state training trip it would have been about \$150 per car times 7 people. Instead we paid fuel costs of about \$40 per car for 3 vehicles to take 7 people. In effect, we paid less for the group to go than we would have paid in mileage for one person.

The decision to go to receipted fuel costs for this event was made by a vote of the executive board. The board's decision rested on the fact that all the new officers need training and this local will continue to make training along with representation a high priority. To become solvent and get on a strong financial footing, we have to save at every turn while carrying out our obligations to all members. Hopefully every published report will show an improved financial situation for our local.







## Vice President's Report

Patrick Chornoby  
Executive  
Vice President

Greetings Union Brothers and Sisters! I want to take this opportunity to thank the Membership for your support in electing me as your new Vice President. It is truly an honor and a privilege to be selected by your peers to serve the Local, and I promise to serve the Membership to the best of my ability during my term of office.

### THE HEAT IS ON

Recently, the Postal Service's quest for consideration from Congress to implement a five day week delivery system, and freedom to raise rates and work with the labor organizations to reduce costs is getting a lot of media attention. It also places an extreme burden on the backs of the bargaining unit employees represented by our local.

It is no secret that postal productivity is at an all time high, as the postal service continues to pride itself on their employees who are processing more mail in less time than ever before in history.

At a time when we should be viewing our outstanding performance as job security, we are worried of being excessed, our jobs being eliminated and a possible loss of our employment. It is true most of us are protected from a lay-off situation, but is that comfort if our jobs are excessed outside the state of Michigan?

It seems that when we need management to award us for our hard work and dedicated service to our country, they quickly throw us under the bus as they drive forward. Since taking office in January of this year, we have had several meetings with management. A few meetings were attended by our District Manager Nancy Rettinhouse. Time and time again she reiterated the postal service's concern for the welfare and safety of each employee during these trying times. Yet, time and time again, we see little or NO concern or assistance from management as our jobs are being eliminated, as we are being excessed, and where management is denying us our basic contract rights.

One would never guess we are outstanding postal employees with great production levels, when employees can't even get a scheduled day off to attend a doctor's appointment. Moral is at an all time low in the post office. Employees are doing the work of two and sometimes three, because units are short staffed. Supervisors are calling employees at home and asking them to come to work sick because their office is short staffed.

# — The Heat Is On —

Each time we bring these problems to our understanding employer, who has concern and highest regard for the welfare of employees, we are fed the same old line of deceit: the postal service is concerned with the welfare and safety of each employee and we place their well being as one of our highest priorities.

There is no question we as a union have a most difficult task ahead of us. It will not be an easy execution to transform management into contractually doing the right thing. It will not be easy to change their way of thinking to respect and treat employees with dignity. Yet, history has shown that it can be done.

Each one of us has to focus on doing OUR job, no one else's! By this, we must remember that we are hourly paid bargaining unit employees. We do not get paid to manage, staff units, make sure jobs are being completed and making sure everyone is on their assignment. The later part is what management if paid to do.

If we are window clerks, we work the window. If the customer line is backed out the door, it is not our job

to order other clerks to the window. We should not rush the customer through the line by taking short cuts in our transactions. Management is responsible for watching their operations. If you get an irate customer, call a supervisor to the window.

If you are a mail processing clerk, do your job as a mail processing clerk. If your coworker does not show up for work, you do not have to do their job along with yours. There is no requirement that you have to work up a sweat to get paid. A fair days work for a fair days pay is what the contract says. If your running a machine and the machine is running out of mail or the bins are overflowing, don't run up and down the machine in an unsafe manner to get the work done. You should work safely at all times. If you need help, don't let a supervisor tell you to work faster (in an unsafe manner). If you fall behind, it is managements job to staff the machine with more people to get the work done.

Often times we want to do the right thing, working faster if we are short staffed, cover for our co-workers when they may call into work

with an emergency. That may work for a while, but eventually it catches up to you with job related illness or injuries and a whole lot of stress.

We have to re-condition ourselves. When we see a supervisor doing bargaining unit work — FILE A GRIEVANCE. When you see employees crossing crafts — FILE A GRIEVANCE. If you are being harassed by a supervisor for not working faster — FILE A GRIEVANCE. If you are denied a day off you request in advance — FILE A GRIEVANCE.

One small word of advice. I have seen employees who never call in sick, who work through their breaks and jog up and down the machines to get the mail worked quickly.

I have seen employees who volunteer for every assignment and ones who go above and beyond the call of duty for the post office. Then when it comes to their job being eliminated, they go just like everyone else.

*As much as management pretends to be concerned about your welfare and well being, trust me, it is the furthest from their minds, for their loyalty is only to themselves. That's why we have a union.*

# Women Hold Up Half The Sky

Saturday, March 20th, our local POWER (Post Office Women for Equal Rights) Committee held its annual Women's History Month celebration. It was a wonderful event attended by local members, officers, Regional Coordinator Sharyn Stone, Central Region clerk craft NBA Linda Turney and National Retiree Director Judy Beard.



Seated NBA Linda Turney and Central Region Coordinator Sharyn Stone.

This year's theme was "Domestic Violence: There's No Excuse". Our guest speaker, DiaVet Hoye, is a social worker with the N.O.A.H. Project at Central United Methodist Church in downtown Detroit. She held everyone's attention throughout her presentation on the signs of domestic abuse and also the steps women need to take to protect and empower themselves if they are in abusive relationships.

The topic is certainly timely. Last summer, there was a special issue

of the NY Times Sunday magazine focusing on women written by Nicholas D. Kristof and his wife Sheryl WuDunn. Since then, their book HALF THE SKY has come out. The title comes from the Chinese saying: "Women hold up half the sky".

Kristof and WuDunn put forward the notion that just as in the 19th century, the paramount moral challenge was slavery, in this century, "it is the brutality inflicted on so many women and girls around the globe: sex trafficking, acid attacks, bride burnings and mass rape".

If you think we don't all need to give some of our attention to the issues facing women, consider some of the following statistics taken from the NY TIMES article:

A 1% of the world's landowners are women;

B 21% of young women surveyed in Ghana said their sexual initiation

was by rape;

C 5000

honor killings

take place

each year . .

. most in the

Muslim world

and

D 130 mil-

lion women around the world have been subjected to genital cutting.

More recently, the March 6th - 12th issue of the British magazine THE ECONOMIST was titled "GENDERcide: What happened to 100 million baby girls?". The issue spoke at some length about the skewed sex ratio (boys to girls) that occurs in countries where sons are given a greater value. The lopsided ratio is created when society sees daughters as having less value and so they are aborted or abandoned at birth. The two worst cases at present seem to



Women's History Month Celebration.

continued on page 9



Clerk Craft  
DirectorJames Stevenson  
Clerk Craft Director

Management is hell bent on removing Detroit District employees and positions. It is quite clear that no matter how many employees retire, how much mail is delayed, or how much overtime is utilized, management has decided to push forward with eliminating bargaining unit positions. The Postal Reorganization Act which requires "prompt and efficient" service for all customers has become a joke. Work that was being performed efficiently at GWY has been transferred to the Metroplex. Despite working 12 hours a day and 6 days a week the mail cannot be processed. I believe that it is not a coincidence that the Detroit District has been the only District in the state of Michigan to require employees to move hundreds of miles from home or out of the state. Detroit District employees were herded out of the state as if they were cattle without enough time to lock their back door.

**Fake Numbers** — Management has been manipulating data and operational figures in its attempts to justify reductions in positions. Yes, the economy is distressed, yes mail volume is down, and yes postal employees are thankful for their jobs, but the bottom line is "The work is still there." Mail that should be at the customers house waits to be rescued as it sits downtown, at the Metroplex, or looping around the state in the back of a (Contract) tractor trailer. There are not enough clerks to cover vacations, NS days, annual leave requests, normal sick leave usage, lunches, or breaks. What does management do? Instead of staffing the operation with enough clerks they have decided to violate the contract by doing bargaining unit work themselves or ordering letter carriers to distribute the mail. POS machines were strategically removed from the city stations resulting in long lines, dissatisfied customers, frustrated clerks, and the main goal (less hours on the WOS reports). The empty standby rooms are a perfect example of bad decisions to excess productive employees as most operations could not run absent these so called "Not Needed" employees. The union is challenging all of these violations in the grievance procedure and has to file labor charges because the postal service has refused to provide requested information.

**Change of Schedules** — Let us make this very clear. Form 3189

# Fake Numbers + Change Of Schedules + The Clerk Silence = Excessing

is used strictly for an employees' "personal usage." Every time an employee attempts to execute a change of schedule form so that management is able to circumvent payment of "out of schedule premium or overtime", you are helping to eliminate jobs and justify the reduction in personnel. Yes, you may enjoy coming in 2 hours early and punching out early but you are shooting yourself in the foot. I have seen clerks reporting to work 4 hours early without being paid overtime to cover another employee's vacation. This demonstrates that we do not need more clerks despite the obvious fact that the compliment of employees is deficient.

**Clerk Silence** — It is imperative that clerks inform the union and document violations of the contract. While at the Brightmoor Station (former Vice-President) Christopher Ulmer and Myself won \$90,000 for the clerks. Each clerk received a \$15,000.00 check for Thanksgiving. This was achieved by documenting the violations. The union currently has class action grievances (\$1,000 per month per clerk) in for every station but in order to be successful we need your help to continue documenting the violations. Many of the tips I receive concerning crosscraft work and supervisors' performing our work comes from individuals who are not clerks. Every time a supervisor so called (helps on the window), does the cage, performs dispatch, separates mail, unloads a truck, passes out mail, etc. you should be informing the union and documenting. When letter carriers are passing out parcels, staging DPS, dropping tubs, scanning and recording parcels, distributing mail, dropping shopwise, etc. you should be informing the union and documenting. We cannot stop management from violating the contract but just like what occurred at Brightmoor, an arbitrator can put thousands of dollars in your pocket if the case is documented. Management has become so blatant that they are admitting the violations are occurring but are instructing the supervisors not to allow the union in the building to investigate and observe the actions. We are at war people and the job you save could very well be your own.

**(Involuntary Reassignment)** Federal law under Title V of the United State Codes grant federal employees certain rights when they receive a directed assignment in excess of 50 miles (outside their commuting area). You may be eligible for a Discontinued Service Retirement (similar to an early

out) and or Severance Pay should you decline the reassignment. If you are over the age of 40 you receive an additional 10% per year. Under no circumstances should you resign if you cannot move to a new location. The postal service has to make a decision what to do with you if you decline the assignment prior to your report date. If the postal service Involuntarily Separates the employee you are still eligible for unemployment. If you simply resign, quit, or are fired you may be found ineligible for benefits. Management conveniently has not informed employees of any of these rights with hopes that if you do not decline the reassignment and you cannot report to the new location you will be fired by the gaining installation additionally saving the postal service from paying you unemployment. Be sure to decline your reassignment prior to your report date and maintain confirmation of all your correspondence. Management basically ignored many hardship letters and phone calls,

so keep proof of everything you send to management.

In closing, I would like to state that I recently visited our congressional representatives in Washington, D.C. I was armed with a letter from our President, Christopher Ulmer and informed our representatives of exactly what is occurring in the Detroit District as it relates to Customer Service and the treatment of Postal Workers. There are only three basic avenues in which postal workers can obtain justice. The federal court, congressional intervention, and the grievance procedure. Your union has gone to court, enlisted congressional help, and filed numerous grievances. We are also holding an informational rally to inform the public. Maybe if we cut back on those \$30,000 bonuses upper management received for delaying mail and cutting jobs we would not be sending employees to Pittsburgh. We have a federal requirement to provide a service to the public and that cannot be pushed under the rug.

## Retirees Department

Retirees'  
Department  
NotesAl Fouche  
Retirees' President

Hello, we had our election of Officers January, 2010 and they are: Al Fouche, President, Elisabeth 'Betty' Littsey, Vice President, Regina Favors, Legislative Director, Frank Roberts, Trustee. We are in for a busy year at the APWU Retirees National Convention held at CoBo Hall

in Detroit, Michigan.

We plan on being very busy at the National Convention supporting our National Retiree Director, Judy Beard. We will be celebrating the retirement of our National President, William Burrus. President Burrus is planning on retiring this year and will not run for re-election.

I have read 'Older People Often Do Not Recognize Stroke Signs'. Fewer than half of survey respondents, age 65 and older; could list the warning signs of a stroke, sudden numbness and/or weakness in the face or extremities, sudden confusion or trouble speaking, or sudden vision difficulty, or sudden trouble walking, loss of balance and/or coordination, and/or sudden and severe headaches. DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR.

## Retirees Meeting March 2010



Standing local officers left to right Regina Favors, Bea Leadbetter, Betty Littsey, Al Fouche, Frank Roberts, seated National Retiree Director Judy Beard.



Maintenance  
Craft  
Report  
  
Jason Rushing  
Maintenance Craft  
Director

Information about the Maintenance Craft is important, but it has to get put out to make it useful. I have a few items to talk about to keep everyone informed.

PAR forms. In the Maintenance Craft we use PAR forms to indicate what job, tour and off days we prefer within our group and level of work. The PAR form you fill out today could be filled tomorrow, next week or next year. There is no expiration date on a PAR form. If you change your mind after filling out a PAR form within limits of the

# Issues And Information

contract, you can submit another. Whatever is filled out last has to be honored. You are not supposed to put on the PAR what job you currently hold or something you don't want.

Maintenance Craft has issues with too many contractors doing our work. For Custodians at the stations, work doesn't stop because you go on vacation, are out sick or have other reasons to be off. The work still must be completed. Management should solicit other Custodial employees for overtime, or for longer absences a contract person may be appropriate, either way the work must be done. At the GWY, daily Custodial routes should be completed the day and tour they are assigned. Other routes can be done multiple days. Same idea holds, routes must do done completely, not partially and someone

puts a complete "C" on the route. 4776's are BEM and MPE side have similar issues with contracting out. Any contractor in the building needs to be brought to the Unions attention so it can be investigated. MOS clerks are a little different than others. Sometimes higher level employees do their work along with employees that are not MOS clerks.

Maintenance employees are being placed in the "standby room" supposedly because they are "excess". Management decided to make this move without any input from the APWU. When employees are moved out of the standby room to work on the floor, they should move to the appropriate operation on the time clock.

MPE and MOSC have some staffing issues going on. Employees are being made to bid involuntarily

after employees were made unassigned regulars and some employees had their jobs abolished. Management is again doing this totally without input from the APWU. These actions being done by Management are very upsetting and stressful to employees. Combing these actions of Management with many other factors in the current world conditions, create a challenging atmosphere for employees at work.

All work no matter how small needs to be documented by either work orders or PM routes. This is how you help protect our jobs. We need to get credit for all the work we do on a daily basis. This is how all of our employee staffing packages are done.

Let us keep up the good fight and we will persevere!  
In Union Solidarity.



Bulk Mail  
Center Facility  
Director  
  
Debbie LaMay  
BMC (DNDC)  
Facility Director

As you are aware, the Detroit District Area Local is under heavy attack for excessing. Employees with many years of service have been forced to uproot their families and move great distances. Employees have been excessed to Grand Rapids, Saginaw, and Cheboygan and have been sent as far as Pittsburgh. Imagine your spouse being a Mail Handler to be excessed to Lansing, and for now you are safe as a Clerk. Do you relocate with your spouse and lose 15 years of building seniority? Do they relocate alone, and have a long distance relationship with their spouse and their family? If you are a single parent, who will care for your child and your family here in the Detroit area? With the opportunity of a scholarship, how do you tell your senior in high school that you have to move to Muskegon at the start of the basketball season? Even more difficult, how do you allow your child to stay behind and finish out their senior year at a friends house?

Can you sell your house for what it's worth and have money to put down on a new one where you are relocated? Many of us have aging parents that we take care of or keep a close watch on. Do you take them with you and make them move from the neighborhood they have known for 50 years? Do you trust another family member to be the primary care-giver to your parents?

# We Are Under Heavy Attack For Excessing

What if you are their only option? If not able to make the move, do you place them in a convalescent center? Whether you realize it or not, there have been employees excessed or ones that have been identified that have been faced with these or similar questions.

If you are an employee excessed or one that has been identified to be, there are so many questions and not enough answers. Concerning excessing, the postal service has painted a perfect picture about the window of opportunity for you and your family. In my opinion, if I wanted to move my family to Des Moines, Iowa, I already would be sitting in the middle of a cornfield typing this editorial. The honest truth is the postal service doesn't care about 15 years of loyal service that you have provided to our customers and the community. All that concerns the post office is the bottom line. Whether that bottom line is accurate, honest, or if it will even work is another story.

After serving the APWU for 12 years, the USPS removed several members from the DNDC and re-assigned them to the carrier craft. Before they had time to prepare, these employees were identified to be excessed and out the door as letter carriers. These are employees that have worked inside for all or most of their postal careers, and have had no clothing allowance offered. A few members were lucky enough to know employees that had previously carried mail and borrowed the appropriate clothing. Other employees struggled with items that were not fit for the elements, but made adjustments or purchased new. Down

winter jacket \$125, insulated waterproof boots, borrowed, gloves, hats and scarves, \$60. Your first day as a letter carrier, throw a 40 lb. sack on your shoulder, carry mail on one of the coldest days of winter . . . priceless! Do you find it a coincidence that the postal service is now pushing a 5-day delivery? What will happen to the employees just recently excessed into the Carrier Craft? The NALC does not have the no lay-off protection clause. We are all aware these employees will start a new period of seniority. Just another example of how the postal service values you as an employee.

All employees should be aware of their operational codes when they are on the clock. Stand-by code 3400 represents waiting on mail as in no mail in the building, or no available work in the building. At any time, if you feel that you have been put on the 3400 code and it is not warranted, please notify a steward. 3400 code is not for down time, i.e.: mechanical problems, building transportation problems,

lack of equipment, or when mail is in the building and due to a management decision, the sorters are not running. Supervisors have been caught fraudulently logging hours on the 3400 code to save work hours. The stand-by room and the 3400 code both represent a negative and inaccurate way to measure work hours, which could possibly lead to more excessing.

A couple of years ago, there was a rumor the DNDC was going to be primarily a Mail Handler facility. Who knew that when the impact statement came out that 30 Clerks, 3 VOA's, 6 TTO's and 102 Mail Handlers would be identified to be excessed? If you think excessing won't affect you, think again. It is very clear the Postal Service doesn't know what direction they are going in, but plan to proceed at any cost, whether it be to the detriment of service, employees and or family. If you have been excessed or have been identified to be excessed, please contact your union officials so the appropriate grievances can be filed.



## The Welcome Mat

The APWU-DDAL would like to give a big round of applause to the following new members. As we all know, there is strength in numbers. We appreciate and acknowledge all who make the endeavor to become unionists. We invite you to come in and play an active role in helping this union flourish!

Kenneth Brady	Keith Jack	Sharon Murphy
Michael Kitze	Douglas Hughson	Michael Wilson
Robey Stevens	Elizabeth Cannon	Frank Altier
Daniel Smith, Sr.	Barbette Holman	John Franklin





Priority Mail  
Facility Director

Iva Williams  
PMC Facility  
Director

Hello Brothers and Sisters!

Let me start out by saying thanks to the many sisters and brothers that once again elected me to represent you. I will do my best to represent **all**. I want to thank our stewards: Larry Walker, Maria Johnson, Chester [AI] Kohlmeier, Stanley Prokop, Barbara

# In Constant Battle To Protect Our Jobs

Board, Misha Kimbrough, Jeffery Hutton, Mike Sands and Eddie Mellon. All of them have stepped up to the plate to protect our contract.

We are in a constant battle to protect our jobs. Some of our family and friends have left us to go to Pittsburgh, or to the Carrier craft. They may be gone but are not forgotten. We will continue to fight to bring back everyone. Right now bids are up for grabs, but don't be discouraged, we are going to make

sure everything gets done contractually. Speaking of the contract, **EVERY MEMBER**, needs to be well informed! When you see a supervisor doing bargaining unit work (article 1.6), don't be afraid to write a grievance. You may not be the one to get paid this time, but you may also not be the one to get shipped out of your craft because of supervisors or managers taking your work. We need to protect all our jobs.

I encourage all our members

to **GET INVOLVED**. You may not want to be a steward, but there may be a committee that you want to work on. Posted on our union board (right outside the union office), you will find bulletins of different committees needing help. **LEARN THE CONTRACT**. Remember that an informed member is a dangerous tool to management. I plan on doing a few things to help members get involved. If you want to know, **ASK ME!!!**



Legislation  
Director

Regina 'Gina' Favors  
Legislation Director

Hello Sisters and Brothers, as we

welcome in spring, it is time to once again to begin thinking about elections. Yes, I know we just finished with some elections, but now we must think about who we want to lead our great state. We will be voting for Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State and more. We need to think about what impact we can/may have in selecting the best candidates for the job. At recent meetings we have discussed holding candidates we support accountable. We must really concentrate on reading between the lines, looking beyond the rhetoric and selecting persons who genuinely care about the voter from whom they are seeking support. We should be seeking the persons who not only SAYS what they think we want to hear but who actually lives, does and show, (via their votes, bills and sponsorship) that they have OUR best interest at heart.

We also need to give a lot of consideration to the other issues that may be on the ballot come November. While I know that November is a long way off, it will be here before you know it. I say that because with all of the other things going on, State Convention, National Convention, along with the holidays, when you turn around there it is! We have already bean screening candidates for State Officers, Representatives and Senators. We are in dire times right now and we need to look at who can best represent our issues, who will support us, the workers, not the special interest corporate bigwigs and greedy CEO's who got us into this mess in the first place. We must find and support candidates who

# Legislative News & Views

will do all they can to turn Michigan around. That being said, I would ask that you all please make sure you are registered and that you DO vote in the primaries in August. Some of these are the official vote for November and in the regular elections (in November).

At our last Union meeting, a motion was made to "have a picket by the end of the month"! While I applaud what the members want and fully understand their anguish at what is happening to them, I wish they would have given a little more thought to what they asked, and the time frame they limited us to. At an AFL-CIO meeting just a few days before ours, a member called for a "Day of Solidarity" is in the planning stage. The point I am trying to make is that whatever we do, we need to make sure that it is effective and not hazardedly put on. We should not rush into something and not be fully prepared. The motion made and passed by the membership did not (in my estimation) take all of this into consideration:

1. Because it only gave us a week and a half to prepare.
2. It was to be held at a place that was not slated for any action at THAT time.
3. It was stated at the meeting that our President would be out of town (which to an outside person, would appear as though we are not even supported by our leaders.)

I would like to ask how many of

you have supported our other Union brothers and sisters when they "walk out", picket or otherwise demonstrate? It is important that we do show solidarity as there is strength in numbers! In any event, we must do all that we can to insure that this picket is successful and will be a solid lead-in for the others that follow.

I've been told that most folks do not like having long articles to read, and after the first few lines you have probably lost them. So while I try to keep this article brief, there are a couple of issues that I believe bear watching. First, the H.R.

173 (urging the Postal Service to continue providing mail delivery 6 days a week), is an important piece of legislation. You should contact your legislators and ask them to please sign on to cosponsor this bill. So, contact your legislators, have your friends and family in other cities, states do the same! Secondly, there are a lot of issues going on in our Union (as there are in ALL other

Unions), but if we are going to persevere in our struggles to maintain the quality of life that we and those that came before us fought (and sometimes died) for, a good education for our children and grandchildren, good jobs and all of those things that labor fights for, we must get active and stay involved in the process. Watch out for "right to work" activities. No, this issue is not dead and will more than likely flare up again this election cycle, probably under another name. There are also efforts to gain through zones. Two bills (S.B. 945 and H.B. 4081) have been introduced to amend 1939PA 176, to allow these right to work zones. PAY ATTENTION to this as we must keep our state from becoming a "Right to Work State". So as you can see the 'fight' is not over!

There are so many issues and struggles that we are dealing with and need to keep addressing but all cannot fit into this one issue. Therefore, in order to hold on to my intention to not make this article too long, I will end on these notes that has been uttered so many times before by so many powerful activists: we cannot stop "cause the struggle is not over" and as a notable fighter for justice, MILLIE JEFFREY often said, "You never win freedom permanently. You have to win it time after time . . . whether it is Union rights, civil rights or equality for women. We have to keep at it and at it."

In Peace and Solidarity.



## APWU Detroit District Area Local E-mail Addresses

culmer@apwudetroit.org, pres.  
pchoroby@apwudetroit.org, vice pres.  
jduggan@apwudetroit.org, sec/tres.  
jstevenson@apwudetroit.org, clerk craft dir.  
jrushing@apwudetroit.org, main. craft dir.  
abranach@apwudetroit.org, mvs director  
dlamay@apwudetroit.org, DNBC fac. dir.

iwilliams@apwudetroit.org, prior. mail dir.  
scarr@apwudetroit.org, recording dir.  
mmccain@apwudetroit.org, 480 director  
rfavors@apwudetroit.org, dir. of legislation  
msmith@apwudetroit.org, dir. of organization  
madbilla@apwudetroit.org



Greetings and salutations to all of my brothers, and sisters that are members of this great and powerful institution, referred to by us as “The American Postal Workers Union.” We are, and have always been, in the midst of tremulous times while in the performance of the various duties that we manage to accomplish for our employer, and most importantly the American public, with whom we have a sacred trust to perform these tasks as efficiently and as expeditiously as we possibly can. As this is my first communication as a newly elected officer in this union, I feel it is necessary to express to you just as the title of this article says, [“The Plain Truth”]. We as

# MVS, “The Plain Truth”

members of this union have to re-examine and re-align our priorities as union members, and I will explain each concept separately. First, re-examination: educating themselves on what rights and benefits they are entitled to in accordance with the National Agreement that governs their respective crafts, (2) don’t participate in their union, ie: attend meetings to become informed and educated by the officials that they have elected. (3) don’t read, or even possess a copy of the contractual agreement that governs their employment with the postal service. The all too common phrase that I hear is, “That’s what I pay union dues for”. These members, as well as the non-members who get the same representation without paying, are prime candidates for being hoodwinked and led astray, fed false in formation, disguised as the truth [rumors], being told to them by self-serving individuals on both sides of the fence. The word U-N-I-O-N is defined as, an organized, collective group of

working people united together for the common benefit of all involved. It does not mean that the people that you elected to represent you are the union, and that you are absolved of any responsibility other than paying membership dues, and vehemently complaining when you feel your rights have been violated. Your carefree un-involvement in your union contributes to the majority of the problems that you face on your daily assignments and no amount of a \_ \_ kissing you do, will alleviate this problem. We are stronger in numbers, united for the same goal. This is the reality and rationalization we need to adapt if we are to survive the current attack against us as employees of the United States Postal Service. Second: realignment, this is not an uncommon or unheard phrase to union members who are informed. We are experiencing the haphazard attempt of postal management to realign operations, (direct the blame of mismanagement and incompetence to some

other entity other than where it rightfully belongs). But, before we can advise them or any one else of their shortcomings, we have to re-align our own thoughts and attitudes about who, what and where we are, and what is to be expected from us as union members. This is not an easy, or welcomed process. We are by nature reluctant to changes in our normal, or abnormal routine. But nevertheless, it is going to occur as surely as day becomes night. It is the informed member who will make these changes with the least amount of difficulty, and know what course of action to take to correct any wrong doing or injustices done to them by uncaring, unfeeling, self-serving individuals, who ever they may be. It is incumbent upon every member, and non-member to become active in this struggle. We must reverse this assault upon our right to earn a decent, and meaningful wage for ourselves, and the ones that depend upon us

*continued on page 11*



Hello brothers and sisters. My first article to be submitted to the Detroit District Area Local — American Postal Workers Union Newspaper pertains to **WEINGARTEN RIGHTS**.

**EMPLOYEE’S RIGHT TO UNION REPRESENTATION**

The rights of employees to have union representation at investigatory interviews was announced by the U.S. Supreme Court in a 1975 case (NLRB vs Weingarten, Inc. 420 U.S.5188LRRM2689). These rights have become known as the Weingarten Rights.

Employees have Weingarten Rights only during investigatory interviews. A investigatory interview occurs when a supervisor questions an employee to obtain information which could be used as a basis for discipline or asks an employee to defend his/her conduct.

If an employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result from what he or she says, the employee has the right to request union representation. **Management is not required to inform the employee of his/her Wein-**

# Weingarten Rights

**garten Rights:** it is the employee’s responsibility to **know and request**.

When an employee makes a request for a union representative to be present, Management has three (3) options:

1. Stop questioning until a union representative arrives
2. Call off the interview or,
3. Inform the employee they will call off the interview unless the employee voluntarily gives up his/her rights to union representation (an option employees should always REFUSE).

Employers will often assert that the role of a union representative in a investigatory interview is to observe the discussion. However, the Supreme Court clearly acknowledges a representative’s right to assist and counsel employees during the interview.

The Supreme Court has also ruled that during an investigatory interview, Management must inform the union representative the subject of the interrogation. The representative must also be allowed to speak privately with the employee prior to the interview. During the questioning, the representative can interrupt to clarify a question or object to confusing or intimidating tactics.

While the interview is in progress, the representative can not inform the employee what to say, but may advise the employee on how to answer a question. At the end of the interview, the union representative can add information to

support the employee’s case.

On June 15, 2004, the National Labor Relations Board ruled by a 3-2 vote that employees who work in a non unionized workplace ARE NOT entitled (under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act) to have a union representative accompany them

to an interview with their employer, even if the affected employee believes the interview may result in the issuance of disciplinary action. This decision effectively reversed a July ‘2000’ decision of the Clinton Board that extended Weingarten Rights to NONUNION EMPLOYEES.

## Rights Before O.I.G. Inspectors

If questioned by an O.I.G. inspector, even if you believe you are not guilty of any wrong doing, it is suggested that you:

- Remain calm;
- Correctly identify yourself
- Do not physically resist an arrest or a search of your person or property;
- Read aloud to the O.I.G. inspector the statement below;
- Remain silent until you have consulted with your APWU representative or attorney, as appropriate.

This is not complete legal advice. Always consult with a lawyer.

### STATEMENT:

I request the presence of my APWU representative. If I am a suspect in a criminal matter, please so advise me. If so, I wish to contact my attorney.

His/Her name is \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

If I am under arrest, I request you to so advise me and to inform me of the reason or reasons.

I do not consent to a search of my person or property. If you have a search warrant, I request to see it at this time. I do not waive any of my rights, including my right to remain silent. I will not sign a waiver-of-rights form, nor admit or deny any allegation, nor make any written or oral statement unless my attorney is personally present and so advises me.

The above is APWU-301 card, Rights Before Postal Inspectors, with “Postal Inspector” changed to “O.I.G.”

**CLIP AND SAVE**



# FMLA Questions & Answers

The American Postal Workers Union and the United States Postal service have worked jointly to produce answers to the most frequently asked Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) questions. These question and answers should eliminate disputes concerning basic FMLA issues.

## SECTION 1 — WHO IS COVERED

### 1. Q. What is the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993?

A. In general, the Act entitles eligible employees to be absent for up to 12 workweeks per year for the birth or adoption of a child; to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; or when unable to work because of a serious health condition without loss of their job or health benefits. The FMLA does not provide more annual or sick leave than that which is already provided to postal service employees.

– Source: 825.100

### 2. Q. Which employees are eligible?

A. Employees who have been employed by the Postal Service for at least one year and who have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months are eligible.

– Source: 825.110, ELM 444.22.

### 3. Q. I have been a transitional employee for nine months. Am I an eligible employee under the FMLA?

A. No, because you have not worked for the Postal Service for one year. Any employee, including a TE, who has worked for the Postal Service for an accumulated total of one year and has worked a total of 1250 work hours during the previous 12 months is an eligible employee under the FMLA.

– Source: 825.110 (b)

### 4. Q. I am absent on protected leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act, and my transitional employee appointment term expires next week. How will that affect me?

A. The Family and Medical leave Act does not affect the terms of your appointment.

– Source: 825.216 (b)

### 5. Q. Do COP, OWCP, military leave and court leave count toward eligibility requirements under the FMLA?

A. COP, OWCP, court leave, and short periods of military leave count toward the 12-month eligibility requirement. However, none of the times mentioned count toward the 1250 hours worked eligibility requirement.

– Source: 825.110, ELM 444.22

### 6. Q. If both spouses work for the Postal Service, does the USPS let both take up to 12 work weeks each of pro-

### ected absences under FMLA each leave year?

A. Yes.

– Source: ELM 515.43

### 7. Q. Can an employee who is separated or divorced take a protected absence under the FMLA to care for a spouse or ex-spouse with a serious health condition?

A. For an employee to take such leave, the couple must be legally married.

– Source: 825.113

## SECTION 2 — WHAT IS COVERED

### 8. Q. My mother-in-law who lives with me is ill and requires my care. Does management have to approve my leave as a covered condition?

A. No, the FMLA only provides protected absences for covered conditions of a spouse, parent, son or daughter. Leave taken to care for anyone else would require approval under normal leave policies.

– Source: 825.112

### 9. Q. My knee problem was diagnosed during an appointment with a health care provider. He ordered three months of physical therapy treatments. Are the visits and the treatments provided by the FMLA.

A. Yes, where properly documented as a serious health condition, the absence would qualify for FMLA protection since it involves a continuing treatment under the supervision of a health care provider. The health care provider is stating that lack of treatment would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three days. Employees needing intermittent FMLA leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule must attempt to schedule their leave so as not to disrupt the employer's operations.

– Source: 825.114

(a)(2)(v), 825.117

### 10. Q. My wife's doctor said she needs almost total bed rest for the last two months of her pregnancy, and I need to stay home to care for our other children. Is this condition covered under the FMLA?

A. FMLA does not cover babysitting for the other children. However, where properly documented that the husband is needed to care for her, the wife's serious health condition would entitle the husband to a FMLA protected absence.

– Source: 825.116

### 11. Q. If I use a midwife for both my prenatal care and the delivery of my child, would my pregnancy still be a condition covered under the FMLA?

A. Yes, pregnancy is a covered condition under the FMLA. Midwives are considered health care providers if they are authorized to practice under State law and

are performing within the scope of their practice as defined under State law.

– Source: 825.118 (b)(2), 825.118 (c)

### 12. Q. An employee had a baby and took 6 weeks of leave during a period when she was not eligible under the FMLA. Now she is eligible, and the baby is still less than a year old. Can she now take the 12 workweeks of protected absences under the FMLA?

A. Yes, only the time taken when eligible under the FMLA counts toward the 12 work weeks.

– Source: 825.112

### 13. Q. Is an employee entitled to 12 workweeks of protected absences under the FMLA for placement or care of an adopted or foster child?

A. Yes.

– Source:

825.112,

825.200, 825.201

### 14. Q. I took a week of protected leave under the FMLA to care for my baby who was born 2 months ago. Now I want to take the week of July 4th off to be with my baby. Since caring for my newborn is a condition covered under the FMLA, does my supervisor have to let me off for the week of July 4th?

A. Not necessarily. You are requesting time off for the birth and care of a child on an intermittent basis. Therefore, your request for the week of July 4th is subject to your supervisor's approval in accordance with current leave policies.

– Source: 825.203

### 15. Q. Can an employee take protected leave under the FMLA to look for child care?

A. No. Of course, a supervisor can approve regular annual leave for such a purpose.

– Source: 825.112

### 16. Q. An employee has a recurrent degenerative knee condition that qualifies as a serious health condition. The certification indicates his condition may flare up 1 to 2 days per month and render him incapacitated for duty. Consequently, the employee requests covered absences under the FMLA with little or no advance notice. Does this meet the criteria or intent of the intermittent leave entitlement under the FMLA?

A. Intermittent absences due to a chronic condition which incapacitates an employee are covered by the FMLA.

– Source: 825.114, 825.117, 825.203, 825.204

### 17. Q. Is treatment for substance abuse covered under the FMLA?

A. Yes, if certified by the health care provider as a serious health condition. Absence because of the

employee's use of the substance, rather than for treatment, does not qualify as a covered condition under the FMLA.

– Source: 825.114 (d), 825.112 (g)

### 18. Q. Can the flu be considered a serious health condition under the FMLA?

A. Yes, if it complies with the definition of a serious health condition under the FMLA.

– Source: 825.114

### 19. Q. If my child is sick, can I now take sick leave to care for him?

A. Yes, under the National Agreement-Memorandum of Understanding on Sick leave for Dependent Care, employees may use up to 80 hours of their earned sick leave to care for a spouse, parent, son or daughter. Sick leave for Dependent Care is only protected under the FMLA when the illness qualifies as a serious health condition under the FMLA.

– Source: National Agreement-Memorandum of Understanding, ELM 515.2

## SECTION 3 - HOW AN ABSENCE IS COVERED

### 20. Q. How do I apply for leave under the FMLA?

A. Submit a form PS 3971, Request for or Notification of Absence, with the supporting documentation. Leave under the FMLA is not a separate category or type of leave. You may request annual leave, sick leave or LWOP for your absence under the FMLA. Just as in the past, in an emergency situation a phone call, telegram, etc. will suffice until it is possible for you to submit the necessary paperwork.

– Source: 825.302, 825.303, ELM 510

### 21. Q. Do I have to mention the Family Medical Leave Act when I request time off for a covered condition?

A. No. However, an employee must explain the reasons for the absence and give enough information to allow the employer to determine that the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. If the employee falls to explain the reasons, the leave may not be protected under the FMLA.

– Source: 825.208, 825.302, 825.303

### 22. Q. Do I have to use all of my annual leave balance before I can take LWOP for a condition covered under the FMLA?

A. No, you need not exhaust annual leave and/or sick leave before requesting leave without pay. The use of leave, paid or unpaid, is subject to management's approval consistent with the handbooks, manuals, the National Agreement and the FMLA.

– Source: 825.207, ELM, NATIONAL AGREEMENT





# “The Local Buzz”



**by Jane Duggan**  
**ACTIVITY ROUND UP**

The local office has seen a flurry of activity in recent months. Maintenance and MVS have had special meetings. Steward training was done on a Saturday. Our local Retiree Chapter has had committee meetings with some regularity.

The Legislative Committee has met several times and had a number of open meetings involving more members in the planning of a series of rallies and pickets to fight the push for five day delivery. Their work has paid off in good turn outs at every event and growing enthusiasm for the struggle.

At least one meeting was dedicated to sign making. Members brought in their own materials and showed some real creativity. More recently, sticks were prepared to make it easier to hold the signs up on windy days.

The Entertainment committee has been busy planning the annual picnic for July 18th. A lot of work goes into event planning including finding a site, picking a menu, planning activities for the day for adults and kids and a whole lot more.

April 24th, a Saturday, we held steward training from 9 til 5. Seventy

## Women Hold Up Half The Sky

*continued from page 3*  
be China and India.

These statistics can only be addressed by local, national and international attention being given to these issues and by developing and following the leadership of women directly affected by these horrible statistics.

POWER’s guest speaker made it clear that violence against women takes many forms: beatings and rape are two but denial of education, denial of health care, disparate wages, and emotional abuse are all forms of violence and all of these forms need to be recognized and addressed.

Female postal workers receive the same pay as men doing the same job but overall in Michigan, women make 71 cents on the dollar in relation to men’s wages. We need to bring our strength to bear on this issue too. We need to recognize and participate in Equal Pay Day activities in April.

There is an old saying: “Think globally. Act locally.” In the case of making full equality a reality for women, we certainly must act locally. But on a larger scale, we have to join in the struggle to fight for education, health care, equal access and pay equity on every front. We need to join international efforts to stop mass rape, trafficking and the economic conditions that force large numbers of women and girls into prostitution. The struggle needs to be built and waged long after Women’s History Month is over.

Solidarity, Jane Duggan

three people participated. The sessions were led by local officers and Special Assistant to the President, John Merritt. Many people said afterwards that it was the best steward training they’d ever attended. A number of officers and stewards participated in role playing making the information come to life.

Sunday, May 2nd, maintenance held a special meeting after the membership meeting. Fifty maintenance

members were present. They were joined by ten officers and the Special Assistant. Eleven maintenance craft stewards were introduced so the members could see them.

Two days later, the full time officers went to Monroe Michigan, on the evening of May 4th. They met from 7 til 10 PM with fifteen (15) members from the outlying offices including Temperance, Monroe, Lambertville and Luna Pier. These members got a

chance to discuss a variety of issues including clocks being altered, being ordered to falsify time scans, intimidation and more.

On Sunday, June 6th at 3 PM. MVS members met with their craft officers and the three full time officers. A wide range of subjects were covered and a lot of feelings were aired. The President made it clear that ALL MEMBERS are welcome to bring any and all concerns to him.

## Fight To Save Saturday Service Approaches Important Milestone

Postal employees and customers are approaching an important milestone in the fight to save Saturday service, as a House resolution supporting six-day mail delivery continues to gain momentum.

Close to 200 U.S. Representatives have signed on to co-sponsor House Resolution 173, which says “the U.S. Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its six-day mail delivery service.” A total of 218 votes are needed to adopt the “sense of the House resolution,” which was introduced in February 2009 by Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO).

Although adoption of the measure would not create new law, it would send a strong signal that lawmakers oppose the elimination of Saturday delivery. The USPS is seeking authority to reduce the number of delivery days from six to five, and has launched an aggressive public-relations campaign to achieve that goal. The APWU vehemently opposes the elimination of Saturday

delivery, which President William Burrus has said “would lead to the demise of the Postal Service.”

The 2010 federal appropriations bill requires the Postal Service to maintain six-day delivery; before the USPS could abolish Saturday delivery, the requirement would have to be eliminated from the 2011 appropriations bill.

“I urge APWU members to contact their U.S. Representatives and ask them to Save Saturday Service,” Burrus said. “If they are already co-sponsors of H. Res. 173, thank them. If they have not yet signed on, please encourage them to do so.”

— APWU Web News Article  
050-2010, June 3, 2010

## COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Attention: APWU Members

In accordance with the Local constitution, Article VII, Section 1(3), the following Committee appointments are listed below:

**ARCHIVIST**

Erika Field Daniels

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Debra Willis  
Alvin Hall  
Shuronda Ulmer

**LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

Jacinthia Hogans  
Johnetta Holt  
Lori Hunter  
Alvin Hall  
Jacqueline Mickens  
Shalissa Harvey  
Debbie Coles

**ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE**

Renee Sheppard  
Valerie Hairston  
Patricia Johnson  
Shuronda Ulmer

**RI-399**

Tonya Payne-Lawson

**ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE**

Debbie Chambers  
Renee Sheppard  
Michele Hamons  
Tonya Payne-Lawson  
Manuela Webster  
Carl Littlejohn  
Darren (D.J.) Hill  
Samantha Young

**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Alvin Hall  
Jacinthia Hogans  
Shalissa Harvey  
Alfreda Parker

These appointments are effective immediately. All of you will be notified of our first meeting.

In Solidarity,

It's your move -



Protect your job.  
Protect your future.  
Get involved in your  
Union!



# National News That We Need To Know

## — Finding Our Way Forward —

**by Loren Adams, District 6 Vice-President**

Everyone realizes the storm is fast approaching, but many simply ignore the obvious — perhaps as a means of survival. I remember how Grandma Emma Adams used to herd us kids down to the storm cellar every time she heard the thunder roll. She remembered the day a tornado swooped up her two aunts at Belleville, Arkansas around 1908, and she didn't want a repeat.

The APWU is fast approaching a storm — a decision day — negotiations during the time of the greatest economic strain on the Postal Ser-

vice in 80 years as well as the entire United States since the Great Depression of the 30s.

Yes, escaping by avoiding or ignoring seems to be a temporary fix. But the day of reckoning eventually catches up to those that choose retreat. There are good reasons the ostrich buries its head in the sand and turtle withdraws into its shell. But eventually the predator gets the best of them. The sense of false security goes like this, "If I just ignore the problem, it'll go away." (Somewhat like, "If we build it, they will come," but in reverse.) "Out of sight, out of mind." "No news is good news."

No war has ever been won by soldiers on retreat. By the same token, no union movement has succeeded by being led by the meek, the weak, or the inactive. The Union needs an optimistic, proactive, positive, solutions' based leadership that'll meet this challenge with unwavering determination.

Yes, we're facing crisis of Apocalyptic proportions. Yes, national leaders are dropping out like flies as they apparently watch the same storm approaching that we are. (Were officers of the Titanic first to abandon ship?)

The question remains, "But what

can we as individuals (despite national officers jumping ship) do to prepare?"

Almost every day I'm confronted by members inquiring as to what's happening on the national level, whether management is preparing to force five-day delivery down America's throat, etc. I tell them I don't have all the answers, and management seldom communicates with me — even for that which they're contractually obligated. It's as if we're peering through a tinted glass trying to ascertain the future. I sure don't have all the answers, but I have a few suggestions for the near term.

## Early Retirement Rumors: Again, APWU Says: Don't Go!

Rumors about Voluntary Early Retirement offers are once again circulating throughout the Postal Service, and employees are evaluating the possibilities.

Let me state plainly: There have been no discussions with postal management about offering new monetary incentives as an enticement for retiring.

If incentives are contemplated at some future date, the law says they must be negotiated with the union.

Any rumor that monetary incen-

tives are under consideration is false.

In recent years the Postal Service has offered Voluntary Early Retirements (VERs) — without monetary incentives — without the union's involvement. Management may do so again in the future.

The APWU has challenged these VER offers in the appropriate forums. As we noted in grievances protesting non-incentive VERs, the National Agreement requires the payment of severance pay to em-

ployees who voluntarily terminate their employment through early retirement.

We await final disposition of the dispute. In the meantime, it is very likely that postal management will pursue further reductions in the employee complement through Voluntary Early Retirement offers.

The union repeats the advice we offered regarding prior VERs without incentives: Don't Go!

William Burrus, President

The first suggestion would be to SAVE MONEY. I realize most postal employees think "This too will pass, so we can carry on as usual." But I wouldn't count on it this time. Cut expenses to bare-bones and delay big purchase items. Get your credit card debt down to ZERO. Payoff your car and home, if possible. The hard fact is we don't know how much we'll be earning this time next year. So, keep that primary thought in mind.

My second suggestion is to pick new national officers with some SPINE. And some BRAINS. Negotiations are not a walk in the park. We need a Mother Jones in these tough times to steer APWU back on course, and there are some great national leaders from which to choose. How can you discover the best? Pay attention; read online and via publications, and talk to local and state leaders in-the-know.

My third suggestion is probably the most important. Get INVOLVED in your local union. Go to meetings. Visit your coworkers when they're in the hospital. Recognize special days and dates in their lives. Back them up with witness statements when requested. Become a shoulder to cry on, or become that morale booster so desperately needed in times like these. Make your workplace a vibrant community instead of a miserable compound. There's strength in numbers; that rule never changes. The stronger the locals are, the stronger the national organization. And the only way to build strength is to show genuine concern for one another. UNION is not simply about the Contract or work issues.

"UNION" is about UNITY, and the only way to build this invaluable solidarity is to care for those around you. Be sincere about it too.

I'm reminded of the "Prayer of St. Francis" written around 900 years ago. It goes like this:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace, Where there is hatred, continued on page 11

### What Does Health Care Reform Mean For You?

We've fought to improve our health care system for decades — now we've won and health care reform is law. But what does this law mean for you and your family?

**THE FIRST TWO THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW**

1. You will continue to have the employer-sponsored health coverage you win at the bargaining table.
2. The proposed excise tax has been put off until 2018 and the dollar impact reduced by 85 percent, thanks to our work.

Here's what else the health care reform law does for you:

**HOLDS INSURANCE COMPANIES ACCOUNTABLE**

- **Ends the worst insurance company abuses** like denying coverage because of pre-existing conditions (this year for children and for everyone in 2014) and dropping coverage when someone files a claim. It eliminates lifetime limits on benefits and regulates annual caps on benefits until 2014, then eliminates them altogether.
- **Stops wasteful spending on executive salaries** by limiting how much of your insurance premium can go toward company administration and profits. An insurer that goes over the limit has to rebate the excess back to consumers.
- **Gets a handle on excessive rates**, mandating state and federal review of insurance plans that demand big premium increases.
- **Ends discrimination against women** by forcing insurance companies to stop charging more for groups with higher percentages of women, beginning in 2014.

**HOLDS EMPLOYERS ACCOUNTABLE**

- **Requires large employers to pay a penalty** if their employees have to get subsidies in the exchanges to buy their own insurance.

**LOWERS COSTS**

- **Expands the "risk pool" by covering nearly everyone and creates health insurance exchanges** that will increase competition and help lower premium costs over time for all plans.
- **Reimburses plans for early retiree costs** through a 55 billion reinsurance fund.
- **Creates the largest tax cut for health care in history** by giving tax credits and cost-sharing assistance to low- and middle-income Americans in the exchanges.
- **Gives people buying their own insurance access to lower group rates** through the insurance exchanges.
- **Limits what people have to pay for premiums and out-of-pocket costs**, using a sliding scale based on income.
- **Creates Medicare delivery and payment reforms** that

will reduce costs throughout the health care system.

**Expands Health Care Coverage to Nearly Everyone**

- **Extends coverage to 32 million more Americans** by 2019 by creating new health insurance exchanges where members of Congress will be required to get their health coverage and subsidizing coverage for those who can't afford it.
- **Helps small businesses provide their workers with insurance** through tax credits that cover 35 percent of premium costs immediately and 50 percent in 2014.
- **Enables you to get affordable insurance coverage** through insurance exchanges that start in 2014 even if changing jobs or losing a job means you lose your employer-provided coverage.
- **Helps ensure your children have health care** starting this year by barring insurance companies from denying coverage to children based on pre-existing conditions and allowing children to stay on your policy until they are 26 years old.

**LOWERS COSTS AND IMPROVES CARE FOR SENIORS**

- **Closes the Medicare Part D prescription "donut hole"** with a \$250 rebate this year, a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs in the donut hole starting next year and dosing the coverage gap completely by 2020.
- **Provides free Medicare preventive care for seniors** starting Jan. 1.
- **Ensures Medicare will be there for you when you retire** by reducing excessive payments to insurance companies through Medicare Advantage.

**INVESTS IN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS**

- **Invests in training for primary care doctors, nurses and public health professionals** to reverse the shortage of primary health care workers.
- **Enables more doctors to stick with primary care** by increasing their payment rates.
- **Encourages doctors to serve Medicaid patients** by raising Medicaid payment rates.
- **Increases funding for community health centers** to double the number of patients they can serve over the next five years.

**LOWERS THE FEDERAL DEFICIT**

- **Cuts the deficit by \$138 billion over 10 years and 51.2 trillion over the following decade**, according to the independent Congressional Budget Office.

**APWU** For More information, contact Your union, or visit [www.aflcio.org/healthcare](http://www.aflcio.org/healthcare).



## The President's Report . . .

# Important Information For Our Membership

continued from page 1

### NO! TO 5-DAY DELIVERY

The APWU opposes the 5-day delivery plan that the USPS has asked congress to approve. The USPS has other viable means to

### MVS, "The Plain Truth"

continued from page 7  
for their well being.

In closing, I wish to impart to the MVS Craft that I know you are accustomed to reading this column about what is happening in your craft, and I will gladly impart this information to you, via the Motor Vehicle Craft Report given at the monthly union meeting. Please take the time out to attend the union meetings, as every elected officer of this local does. This is the means of receiving accurate and relevant information concerning the future of your careers with the Postal Service, and effectively silencing the purveyors of ignorance and false information.

In Solidarity.

### Finding Our Way Forward

continued from page 10  
let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis' prayer has meant so much to me all my life.

We can make it through this dark night if we just stick together. For, as Benjamin Franklin so aptly put it, "Either we hang together or we hang separately." United we stand; divided we fall.



reduce their deficit, but again, the USPS would like for their employees and the U.S. public to suffer from their irrational decisions. USPS management once again would like to diminish your constitutional rights and reduce service to the public rather than stop the massive discounts given to mailers. Get more information on our national page on this issue.

### INFORMATION RALLY FACTS

The APWU-DDAL has held 3 informational rallies since April 2010 and they have been informative and productive. Many DDAL members, officers and stewards have participated and they all worked hard to arrange and conduct the rallies in a professional manner. I thank you all. It was the mind set of this administration to conduct such rallies to help keep the members and the public aware of the many different issues the USPS has been doing to hurt our service. Watch for more bulletins and make it a priority to come join us.

### THE NATIONAL CONVENTION IN DETROIT

The DDAL will be hosting the American Postal Union's Biennial National Convention in downtown Detroit at the Cobo Hall Convention Center, August 23 thru August 28, 2010. If you meet the membership requirements and want to attend, let the DDAL know so we can put you in as a convention delegate. It will be the final National Convention for APWU's National President, William Burrus. He is retiring after 53 years of dedicated service to the APWU. It was here in Detroit at the 1980 National Convention where he announced his candidacy for the position of National Executive Vice-President. It will be a spectacular ceremony honoring him on Tuesday, August 24, 2010. The tickets are \$40 per seat and \$400 per table (10 seats).

### NATIONAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The National Election of officers is this year, and all members in good standing will be receiving ballots in October to cast their vote. If you do not receive a ballot let us know and we will let you know what to do and who to contact.

Other voting information will be coming to you in the next issue. There will be directions on how to cast your vote and who the APWU DDAL supports.

### STEWART TRAINING

The first steward training of the year was held April 24th, 2010 at the Union hall. The training was well attended by 84 of the 91 stewards that have been certified by the union since January 28, 2010. Use your stewards!

### INHERITED FINANCIAL DESPAIR

Upon taking the office of president, I learned that the financial situation of the union was far more disastrous than we were led to believe. In fact, I and the membership were never told that we were in this much debt. The debt was not mentioned until two former officers sent letters to the entire membership (at a cost of about \$1,250.00 to \$2,500.00). With that being said, the new administration plans to be very open and up front with the membership with their money and all other issues.

### MEMBER DECLINE = LOSS IN REVENUE

The DDAL has lost a substantial amount of members and with this loss also comes a loss in revenue. This administration will have to make cost saving cuts. It will affect the way we conduct all affairs of the local. It will also affect our adult Christmas party, kid's Christmas and Halloween parties and the annual picnic.

We are considering the process of eliminating one full time officer. We are studying the constitution to determine if the APWU-DDAL secretary-treasurer can be changed to a part-time position. This action would save us about \$60,000 a year. I know these are drastic measures, but these moves and changes are absolutely necessary for the survival of the DDAL. If all goes well, the DDAL hopes to become deficit free by the latter part of the year. I will tell you that we (the APWU-DDAL) are here to stay!

### NO MORE LOST – TIME DOUBLE PAYING

We intend to get rid of some of the deficit by eliminating the old costly practice of DOUBLE PAYING people. Past administrations paid people lost time even though the person never lost time from work. THIS ADMINISTRATION Will STOP THIS PRACTICE. They got paid by the union and by the USPS. By stopping this practice, the Local will save about \$45,000

to \$50,000 dollars a year. We will also eliminate expensive lunches the Local paid the election committee. This will save the local a substantial amount of money, approximately \$3,000 to \$5,000 dollars. The Union will continue to compensate members for their lost time, but members will now have to actually lose time from work in order to receive this benefit. Union members will be paid for their time spent at the union office, or on official union business, but the compensation will be at a lower rate of pay than their postal wages.

### OUR PICNIC

Our picnic will be held July 18, 2010 at Lower Huron Metro Park. Keep a lookout for more information which will be coming soon. We look forward to seeing you and your family. Please come out and share in food, fun and a good time with you union brothers and sisters.

### FINAL THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

The USPS Detroit District management is doing any and everything to put employees in position for them to lose their jobs. Protect yourself by fully documenting, keeping track and taking notes of your work area, your clock rings, and the operation(s) you are working on. This is needed, because the APWU-DDAL knows that employees are working on the workroom floor, and we need the data to prove it. The data that the USPS is compiling is trying to make it look like we are not working and therefore we are not needed. The USPS uses this false data to justify excessing more employees. We know and they know that they do not have enough employees now, and we need to prove it!

In conclusion, for all your needs, I have a open door policy, so you can visit or call anytime with your concerns. I promise you, we well get these issues resolved to the best of our ability and in a timely manner. As hard as it may be, be patient and stick with us, we are all in this together! Thank you.

## Congress And Politicians Against 5-Day Delivery

Here are some phone numbers and e-mail addresses to politicians who are against 5-day delivery. Call them and tell them you support their efforts against 5-day delivery.

- Senator Susan Collins R-ME (Maine); Phone (201) 945-0417  
e-mail: [collins.senate.gov/public/continue.cfm](mailto:collins.senate.gov/public/continue.cfm)
- Senator Dick Durbin D-ILL (Illinois); Phone (312) 353-4952  
e-mail: [durbin.senate.gov/contact.cfm](mailto:durbin.senate.gov/contact.cfm)

There are many others that we will list in future issues.

APWU members are urged to contact their U.S. representatives to encourage them to co-sponsor House Resolution 173, which urges the Postal Service to continue six-day delivery.



# Meet Your Secretaries

When you call or visit the Detroit Area District Local, these are the lovely ladies receiving your calls and directing you to the proper channels to answer your questions. Next time

you call or visit, make sure you say Hi to Regina and Diana.

20530 Southfield Road  
Detroit, Michigan 48235  
(313) 532-9305



Regina Merritt



Diana Laird

## — Congratulations —

Congratulations to our DDAL Officers elected to important State positions serving the Michigan Postal Workers Union (MPWU).

Local officers elected to State Offices.

Michael McCain, Director Research and Education  
Richard Blake, Clerk Craft Director  
Jason Rushing, Maintenance Craft Director  
James Stevenson, Area 2 Director



DETROIT DISTRICT AREA LOCAL  
APWU, AFL-CIO  
20530 Southfield Road  
Detroit, Michigan 48235

Change Service Requested

## With Deepest Sympathy

The APWU offers our deepest sympathy to the family of Postal employee "Reginald Raines" who passed away April 2nd 2010.

We would like to express our condolences to the following employees on their loss of a loved one;

John Carter	Elizabeth Johnson	Phyllis Covington
Monesha Lawson	Deborah Fielder	Mamie Matthews
Chaune Fields	Sarah McGruder	Clois Foster
Trina Peters	Michele Hamons	Tommy Wade, Jr.
D.J. Hill	Samantha Young	Angela Johnson
Deborah Lloyd Bryant	Keith McGee	Denise Clark
Annette Turner	Kevin Bannister	Diane Corbett
Tammie Thomas	Curtis Cavaness	Myron Johnson
Perez Lanier	George Russell	Larry Patton
Leonard Morales	Gary Myrick	
Robert Arnold	Eric Bolen	
Chuck Garcia	Pat Chornoby	

Our condolences to the families of retired employees;

Melvin Altimus, Jr.	Benjamin Bell
Elizabeth Nevels	Shirley Thomas
Andre Turner	Loade Johnson
	Angie Fowlkes



We apologize if there are any employees that we may have overlooked. For those we have missed, please call me so we can honor them in the next issue. Danny

## Next Membership Meetings

SEPTEMBER 12, 2010

OCTOBER 3, 2010

NOVEMBER 14, 2010

1:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.



## Cari's Easy Cheesy Potatoes

by Danny Sawicki

I had to pull teeth to get this delicious recipe from my wife. She finally succumbed to the pressure. This dish is great as a side, or add burger and or bacon and you have a main course. NUM-NUM. For the next issue, let us all work to get that TACO SALAD recipe out of her.

2 – 32 oz. bags of frozen hash browns. (not shredded)  
2 large cans cream of chicken soup  
1 cup sour cream  
2 8 oz. Bags of Colby jack shredded cheese.

Mix all ingredients and bake at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 - 2 hours or until the hash browns in the center are soft.