

# THE DETROIT POSTAL WORKER



• 15

DETROIT DISTRICT AREA LOCAL AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

June, 2011

## The President's Report . . .

# Thank You DDAL Members



### From The President

Christopher "Chris" Ulmer  
President

If you have any issues or concerns please do not hesitate to contact your President, Executive Vice President, Craft Director or any other Officer or Union Rep to help you with your issue(s).

#### FINANCIALLY SPEAKING

The elected and appointed officers of the DDAL have been trying to do all we can to work our way out of the financial hole that we inherited. I must say the people that you elected into office has done a tremendous job in getting the Union out of the financial hole, especially considering the limited resources the Union has. I must inform you that the DDAL is not completely out of its financial crisis yet, nor are we near the point that we need to be near for this Union to remain financially solvent for years to come. The leadership

watch over. I vow to the Officers, Stewards and the Entire Membership of the DDAL that I will never lose sight of them and that I will always fight for every **right, privilege, opportunity, and benefit** that the members are entitled too, even the ones nobody knows about yet. I thank you so much and I know I am truly blessed to be the President of such relentless people (fighters) who are well informed and who have dedicated leaders (fighters) fighting for them and their rights.

#### DETROIT DISTRICT LABOR RELATIONS A FAILURE?

The DDAL has attempted to meet with DDLR on a number of issues and to no avail has labor relations resolved know violations. I believe that the managers of Labor Relations should be investigated by the OIG for allowing the managers and supervisors of the Detroit District to Lie, Cheat, Steal from the U S Citizens of the Detroit District without doing anything to stop their waste and abuse of the financial resources of the USPS.

It did not come as a surprise when I heard that the managers and su-

pervisors of Motor Vehicle Services (MVS) were indicted on fraud charges. The real problem I have with the whole indictment is that the OIG and the USPIS did not investigate these crooks when the DDAL MVS craft brought all these same issues to the USPS District Managers, HR Managers, In Plant Managers, Sr. Plant Managers and Labor Relations Managers years ago, and numerous times since then. The sad part of this story is that the OIG & USPS know that most of any stealing going on comes from higher up while the low person (the craft employee) is usually the one pressured into give a statement that the USPS, OIG and USPIS uses against them 99.9% of the time.

I call out Labor Relations because they know the wrong things that Managers and Supervisors are doing but are not doing anything to stop them or the financial strain that their actions cost the USPS Detroit District down the road. I believe the Manager of Labor Relations condones these vial and illicit acts by USPS Managers and Supervisors. I know these USPS Managers and Supervisors seek input from Labor Relations. Labor Relations are often in the meeting and discussions about the numerous things the USPS Managers and Supervisors are doing in violation of the ELM, CBA and other Handbooks & Manuals of the USPS but the right thing is never done so we grieve it, like we should.

*continued on page 2*

It is always an honor to come before you and I must begin by saying Thank You, especially to all the APWU-DDAL Members that took the time and exercised their right to vote and be heard.

#### THANK YOU DDAL MEMBERS

I must let you know that the New Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) is truly ground breaking and puts the APWU on the forefront of leadership. I express this feeling because it take true courage, guts, and love for your membership to change the rules of the game when everyone is looking at you,

counting you out, and the only thing left for the naysayers is how much are you going to lose, before you are eventually eliminated? I have always believed in the DDAL membership and their knowledge of current events. THE DDAL MEMBERSHIP ROCK !!!

#### HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

In February of 2011 the DDAL was inundated with complaints from our members of USPS Supervisors and Managers abusive nature toward craft employees and that these same Supervisors and Managers were creating a hostile work environment. On March 24, the DDAL held an Informational Picket outside the Main Post Office in Detroit about the Abusive Nature and the Hostile Environment that the DDAL believed the USPS Detroit District was fostering. This Picket led to the DDAL president meeting with the District Manager (DM) to resolve this issue and other issues closely related. This meeting with the DM has lead to a mutual agreement to have a monthly meeting with the DDAL President, the Mailhandler President, the Sr. Plant Manager of the GWY, the HR Manager, the Sr. Plant Manager of the DNDC and the District Manager to discuss and resolve issues both sides may have. Since the original meeting on April 8, 2011 I can proudly report that the issues discussed at these monthly meeting are getting resolved and the issues that are brought to my attention. I am making the DM aware of them and they seem to be dissipating.

*"The leadership of this Union will be looking at a lot of different ways to get this Local to the point that it needs to be at to ensure its financial solvency for many years to come."*

of this Union will be looking at a lot of different ways to get this Local to the point that it needs to be at to ensure its financial solvency for many years to come. Therefore it is necessary for the DDAL to amend or change it's constitution to ensure the solvency of this proud and great Local. I will be asking anyone interested in serving on the constitution committee to donate their time and help the DDAL set the course for our foot prints to remain in the sand and for our Local to become more financially solvent and relevant now and far into the future. "We are not where we want to be but we are very much on our way, keep the course".

#### THANKFUL I AM

I must express to all the APWU-DDAL membership and to the Officers of the APWU-DDAL my deepest and truest, Thank You !!! I have always enjoyed helping people, even when the world sometimes make us think negatively. The ones that love you and appreciate you somehow show up and make our irrational thoughts disappear and lay the foundation for us to carry on. This job is tough and never ending. I am truly thankful to God, the DDAL membership, the Officers and Stewards (former & present) that have followed my lead and has provided valuable input to me during the entire time that I have been allowed to serve you. I call myself the humble President simply because I Love the membership that God has put me in position to





### Vice President's Report

Patrick Chornoby  
Executive  
Vice President

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,  
Many changes are occurring within our Union and in the postal service as pressures build on the bargaining unit to process more work with fewer employees and all in shorter periods of time. Back in days when the postal service was abundantly prosperous, employees had more relaxed freedoms. Leave was easier to schedule, summer time vacations were readily available, and managements concept of a fair days work for a fair days pay was the base contract language used to determine work standards.

Now, as postal managers have orders to work with less employees, the bargaining unit has been overloaded with additional work, picking up the work of employees who have been excessed, or for employees who have retired or bidded to other work locations.

As usual with postal management, the bargaining unit employees get blamed for all the problems within the system, even though management never listens to our suggestions in running the company, they quickly blame us for all of their downfalls. Taking a day off now seems nearly impossible, again blaming bargaining unit employees for their shortage of help.

Regardless of our current circumstances, there is no one to blame for the status of the postal service today than the people who have been running the organization itself — MANAGEMENT.

When the postal service had huge surpluses in revenue, what did they do? They created all sorts of jobs in management, they wasted millions of dollars in purchasing homes for their top executives, they purchased millions of dollars in out dated processing equipment and signed life long leases on many of the post office buildings they utilize across the country. The leasing part is such a waste of money as the post office is paying ten times the purchase price of the buildings they are leasing (probably to friends or relatives).

In other words, when the times were good, the postal service should have been investing their revenue surpluses, or banking the money for a rainy day. That rainy day has come and the USPS is acting like it is our fault that they have no money to fall back on! Again, it goes to mismanagement in the finance department at the headquarter level, the regional level and at the local levels of the post office.

# Will Postal Management Be Up To The Challenge?

When I look at the new managerial recruits coming up in their ranks, I can see that the post office will be no better off in ten or twenty years than they are today. Basically because they have an unusual way of promoting from within the ranks. The managerial jobs don't always go to the most qualified candidate. It's more like . . . "who can follow orders the quickest", (like "jump", "sit", "fetch" and "go fire that employee").

This may be why the post office negotiated our new contract with an abundance of language returning supervisory duties back to the bargaining unit, and paying them

a higher level of pay for doing it. Does management finally realize that the bargaining unit employees are more efficient, smarter and can adapt more quickly to processing than their own supervisors?

Many years ago, management began to take away bargaining unit functions and added the duties onto supervisors jobs. Assignments like timekeeping, attendance control, personnel functions like bids, processing personnel actions, filing, making assignments, general clerk duties, etc. These jobs were craft jobs that were absorbed into supervisor duties.

After years of enormous costs and many failures with a lack of efficiency, contract negotiators want the bargaining unit employees to take their work back. I happen to agree with them. In fact, we tried to tell management several years ago that the bargaining unit employees can do the jobs better and more efficiently, but again, they didn't listen.

I believe postal management could learn a lot about the processing of mail, the delivery of mail and the maintenance of it's equipment from the bargaining unit employees. If they would only listen. Don't you agree?



### Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Jane Duggan  
Secretary-Treasurer

#### FIRST QUARTER OVER

As we are going to press, we've just closed the first quarter for the local's fiscal year. We seem to be doing well. We started the year with about \$40,000 of debt and we have eliminated about 75% of that. Twice a year the union has three pay days in one month. March is one of those months so we took advantage of that edge to reduce the large bills that we carried over from 2010.

I know that \$40,000 sounds like a lot and it is a lot. However, you have to remember that last year we inherited over \$100,000 in debt from the prior administration. We continue to practice fiscal restraint and have been fortunate that many members have volunteered time and energy to save the local money in a variety of ways all of which add up to help us move forward.

I will now be reviewing the quarter overall with our budget controller to see where we are line item by line item in relation to our budget.

#### THANK YOU

I would especially like to thank former president, Roger Holbrook, for recently working on our gate. The gate is very old and has been quite problematic this winter. Replacement cost is over \$2300. A working gate is one part of guaranteeing the safety of all who work/meet here and also protecting our building. Previously, Roger had come in to install two thermostats

## Moving Forward

for us. These generous donations of time and talent are greatly appreciated.

Another person who deserves a big "thank you" is certified interpreter, Jeff Oliasz. Jeff has agreed to interpret once a month for our deaf, retiree members on a volunteer basis. This allows our deaf members to participate fully in the monthly retiree chapter meetings held at Kerby's Koney Island the third Saturday of every month. Jeff's "gift" is worth over \$800 a year to the retiree chapter.

#### ACTIVITY CORNER: "The buzz"

##### • P.O.W.E.R.'s WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

March 26th was POWER's annual Women's History Month Celebration. In a break with tradition, this year featured CHILI AND A MOVIE. Over forty people attended a showing of IRON JAWED ANGELS about the women's suffrage movement. You could have heard a pin drop. Guests presented the local with declarations from the City of Detroit and the City of Southfield. Sandra Carey, POWER Coordinator, was also honored with a proclamation.

##### • SOAR BREAKFAST

The local had a sizeable contingent at S.O.A.R.'s 28th Annual Congressional Breakfast on April 10th. Save Our Annuity Retirement (S.O.A.R.) Coalition meets monthly in our basement hall to plan activities including the annual breakfast.

##### • NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST

April 13th was declared a national day of protest. Fifty people representing our local went to Lansing for a rally at the state capital. Some media sources say that 10,000 workers attended. The volume that day would seem

to indicate this is not an overestimate.

We had a bus depart from our office and at least 18 more went by car and van. Our new signs looked great and made us easy to spot in the huge crowd. Special thanks to everyone on the bus who helped make things go smoothly.

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

We promised an emphasis this year on **education** and we have set about making good on our word. We will be sending delegates to several conferences/seminars/conventions:

• **BMC CONFERENCE** – MAY 15-16, 2011, GREENSBORO, NC.

• **MPWU EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR** – JUNE 9-11, 2011 IN BAY CITY, MI

• **POWER CONVENTION** – JULY 13-17, 2011, SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

• **ALL CRAFT CONFERENCE** – OCTOBER 10-13, 2011 LAS VEGAS, NV

#### ALL WORK AND NO PLAY . . .

Lest we be charged with being "all work", we already have plans underway for the ANNUAL PICNIC – JULY 16, 2011 at METRO BEACH. Details will be coming out soon. Your Entertainment Committee has been hard at work on the details for this annual family fun day.





# The DDAL Will Not Be Intimidated, And We Will Not Sell The Membership Short

The New Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) is what we needed and it is good news for the members. The new CBA puts a stop to excess over 40 miles and the disparaging impact to the employees of the Detroit Bid Cluster and the DNDC (Detroit Network Distribution Center). It is an issue the DDAL is still actively pursuing on behalf of all the members of the DDAL who have been exceeded and impacted in the negative and discriminating way that the employees of the Detroit Bid Cluster and the DNDC were then District Manager (N R). In May of 2011, the DDAL lawyers were in court pursuing this very issue and I want all of you to know that the DDAL leadership has not forgotten about the many DDAL members that were sent other places; we remain committed to our vow to bring you all home.

I was recently informed by a reliable source that Detroit Labor Relations is instructing and teaching supervisors how to try and fire employees for falsifying PS Form 3971, about no lunches. I am tell-

ing all employees to be careful, check to make sure that all PS Form 3971's are filled out correctly before submitting it to your supervisor or manager. I am also instructing you to have them sign it and return it to you before you leave them. Detroit Labor Relations is not trustworthy and lacks integrity, so be sure to check everything before you submit it. Detroit Labor Relations will take an honest mistake and try to fire a craft employee while allowing USPS Management to commit fraud, steal credit cards, money, stamps and bring guns on USPS property and everything else. Be careful !!!

Is USPS managements #1 rule to disrespect and intimidate Craft employees? I ask this question because it seems like it is their #1 rule. The USPS knows that the craft employees are dedicated and have a lot vested into their employment, with USPS Management knowing this, they believe that they have the right to speak and approach employees anyway they chose. FALSE !!! I recall being at a Town Hall meeting where the Sr. Plant Manager instructed the supervisors to make sure all employees attended. During the Town Hall meeting an employee asked a simple question of the Sr.

Plant Manager which he could not and did not answer. When the employee told the Sr. Plant Manager that he did not answer his question the Sr. Plant Manager told the employee "if you do not like what I am saying, there is the door". I quickly and openly confronted the Sr. Plant Manager during this meeting, telling him "you have absolutely no right to disrespect any employee in that manner" and I told him that "he had just demonstrated what employees are saying about him on the workroom floor". The DDAL has addressed this issue and others and this type of behavior by all of USPS Management has subsided.

Now let's talk about another form of abusive and intimidation by USPS Management and Detroit Labor Relations. USPS Management and Detroit District Labor Relations have demonstrated how they are using and abusing the Postal Police as a tool to deny employees union representation and to try intimidate union officials. On March 29, 2011, I was representing an employee during a Pre-D investigation. I was representing the employee and asking questions of the USPS management official conducting the investigation (the Tour I lead MDO) when the Tour II MDO tried to jump in and start

asking questions because he did not like the way things were going. I kindly and politely told the Tour II Lead MDO that he was not conducting the investigation as demonstrated by the MDO from Tour I and his own words at the beginning of the investigation. The Tour II MDO got so mad at me that he called Postal Police to escort me out of the building because I had a Bluetooth with a dead battery in my ear. I am sure the Tour II Lead MDO did this in an effort to get the employee alone to finish the Pre-D but that did not happen. The investigation ended when the Postal Police came and we all agreed the investigation was over. I did not hear the exact words that the Tour II lead MDO said, but with the quick response time, and the number of Postal Police (3) that responded, I can only imagine what he must have said to them "CODE RED !!! THIS IS THE TOUR II LEAD MDO AND I NEED BACK UP. UNION OFFICIAL WITH BLUETOOTH, POSTAL POLICE GIVE ME EVERYTHING YOU GOT". It would be nice if the Postal Police gave the same rapid response to abused employees as they do to "dead battery Bluetooth devices". I guess if employees are really in trouble and cannot get USPS Management off their backs or if you are in danger put a Bluetooth in your ear then USPS Management will call Postal Police on you and the Postal Police will come running. I took this as another attempt by Detroit District Labor Relations and USPS Management to try and intimidate the union because it is no secret that USPS Management has resorted to attacks on Union Officials and Stewards due to the aggressive and dedicated representation we have given the membership. USPS Management and Labor Relations has gone after the Unions Presidents wife because they cannot get to him; they have targeted the Executive Vice President, Stewards from Tours I, II, III and myself because we are doing our job and we are not selling out our membership for the USPS causes. Their attempts have not worked and we have fought back all their futile attempts to intimidate the APWU-DDAL in all ways possible. These futile attempts by USPS Management have only made us stronger and more determined to represent this membership more aggressively and unlike ever before.

These are trying times brothers and sisters but as your representative the APWU-DDAL will not be deterred, disrespected or intimidated. The APWU-DDAL will continue to fight for your rights in the face of all adversities. Do not hesitate to call us. We fight for you so you do not have to.

## Informational Picket Held On March 24 At Main Post Office

In Detroit (GWY) protesting the abusive management style of the USPS and the hostile work environment of USPS Management.



Patty, John and Tony marching in solidarity for the employees to be respected.



James Stevenson holding picket signs doing double duty as usual.



Tina the steward from Saline came to Detroit to support the rally along with the Mail-handers.



Andrea as always supporting and fighting for the membership.

Pictured to the right Aloha (retiree) came out to support and she walked with Pat Chornoby (Executive Vice President).





Maintenance Craft Report

Jason Rushing Maintenance Craft Director

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

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

# Maintenance Happenings

e.g. confined space, isolated work areas like some basement jobs, battery shops, etc.

Make yourself a viable employee. If training or other educational opportunities arise, take advantage of them. The open season for maintenance employees is March 2012. Before that though, there may be an opportunity to take a test opened up for a special circumstance. The Post Office may be short Building Custodians, Mail Processing Mechanics or other groups or levels of maintenance employees. The Service could open a particular test up in an installation or district, in-craft or in-service. Other local training may be available also for the choosing.

Nobody likes your money more than you! It pays, literally, to stay on top of your check stub. A certain individual went for training in Norman, Oklahoma recently. It was a two week course. The person didn't check his pay stub until he was looking on lite blue for another reason the next month. The e-payroll on lite blue is a handy site tool. Its found under employee apps. He discovered that someone, accidentally, put him in for 40 hours of annual leave while he was in official training in Norman, Oklahoma. Its nice down there, but not like that! Yeah it was me. Lite blue is a good place to keep track of leave, work hours, all that good stuff. Check often, don't wait to ask questions about something months after

wrong leave shows up or LWOP.

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

Stay on top of your eOPF file. You

can find it on [www.liteblue.usps.gov](http://www.liteblue.usps.gov). You have to use internet explorer to view it. I have had many people tell me that their seniority date for retirement was incorrect or changed recently. The only way they saw it was checking out lite blue. If its incorrect for some reason don't delay call shared services in Greensboro and find out why! 1-877-477-3273.

As always, be a Union member and participate! In Union Solidarity.



## 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!

We would also like to acknowledge those that signed the new brothers and sisters. Remember, any member can sign a new member and it's \$20 in your pocket!

- Maranette Fields .....Signee..... M. Smith
- John Kirvale .....Signee..... L. Roe
- Irene Kruze .....Signee..... M. Abdilla
- Sandra Runkle .....Signee..... M. Walsh
- David Stroshein .....Signee..... C. Mingas

If your address has changed, please notify the union and the Post Office of your address change. If you do not, the Post Office will continue to send your paper to the old address.

# — Steward Talk —

by Danny Sawicki, Associate Editor

In this issue, we are featuring John Merritt from GWY facility in Detroit.

John is not only a union steward, he is also "The Special Assistant to the President."

**1. Hi, John, we all know what stewards are responsible for. Tell me about some of the duties of the "The Special Assistant to the President".**

In truth, Danny, I'm not sure that the rank and file membership actually does know what stewards are responsible for. Serving as a steward is much more involved, and requires a degree of responsibility, that most members do not appreciate. We have had many members express a desire to "Be a Steward", but after attending orientation or training they find that they'd rather not. Furthermore, many members who have served as stewards decide to set aside the heavy responsibility that the position entails. I respect those members who have considered volunteering for steward, but who have decided upon mature reflection that the job is not for them. Equally I do respect those stewards who have decided to set aside

the heavy responsibility of the position, having "done their hitch" to serve the membership.

Danny, I appreciate your indulgence; since I don't often get a chance to publicly recognize our stewards in a forum where the whole membership can see it.

As regards the main question, the position as written in the Local Constitution is called "Special Assistant", not actually, "Special Assistant to the President". Early on the position title picked up the "President" part among the stewards and officers, so that when abbreviated into an acronym it became Special Assistant to the President, or "SAP", which was a fun title to tease the position-holder with.

As originally conceived, back in the 1990's during the Holbrook administration, the Special Assistant was intended to partially restore the duties of the Industrial Relations Director to a named officer, and the position was added by a changed Constitution back then. The Industrial Relations Director position, which is reflect-



John Merritt

ed on the National APWU Executive Board, and which formerly was a position on the Detroit District Area Local Executive Board, was eliminated for a number of reasons in the early 1980's,

with its duties split between the local secretary-treasurer and the local vice-president. It was hoped that establishment of a Special Assistant would to some degree replace the lost Industrial Relations Director.

The duties are similar. In addition to working on special projects for the President, the Special Assistant assists the Vice President with training of stewards and identifying areas which need improvement. In practice, President Ulmer has made it known that I am everybody's Special Assistant, a policy with which I am entirely in agreement. Also in practice, historically, the Special Assistant has been used as a trouble-shooter for targeted problems or installations which need, well, special attention. I consider myself available to assist all officers and stewards, in all crafts, with any matters of con-

cern or grievance handling. This Local has a cadre of extremely experienced people whose knowledge must be passed on to the younger officers and stewards who are coming on, and I personally want to make sure that the knowledge and experience is not lost.

**2. In your union duties do you spend more time as a steward or assisting the President?**

In the first place, as a steward you are always assisting the President by serving the membership. I don't mean this as a trite sentiment; stewards are appointed by, and serve at the behest of the President of the Local, whomever the President may be, and the first and primary function of a steward is to enforce the National Agreement and protect the membership. Thus as "SA" I am first a steward, and all the "assisting" I do derives from that particular calling. But yes, the Special Assistant should be a person who can handle "special" projects beyond "routine" grievance handling. As SA I already handle grievances at all levels of the grievance procedure. I sit on several other committees as representative for the  
continued on page 7



Director of Human Relations

Keith Combs  
Director of Human Relations

# Information On The National Reassessment Process Program

Hello again my Brothers and Sisters,

The Postal Service has just released its 2007 fiscal year report regarding OWCP (Office of Workers Compensation Programs) and in the report there was 35,000 claims filed. The report said that 90% of those claims were Traumatic and 60% of Occupational disease

claim were accepted, at a cost of \$924 million. This is a major reason for the Postal service NRP program. Early last year the Government Accountability Office (GAO) presented a 46-page report on the Postal Service National Reassessment Process (NRP) to Congress, but failed to address many glaring problems, including many issues raised by APWU representatives. As evidenced by the report, the GAO fails to fully grasp the NRP, and apparently has been duped by the Postal Service regarding the program's intentions and value. The GAO simply doesn't seem to understand the unnecessary em-

ployee hardship being cause by the program. The GAO appears to be more concerned about substantiating its previously stated position that Postal Service employee's compensation and benefits should be reduced considerably, than it is about the cost of discriminating against injured workers. Fortunately for our employee's the APWU has filed numerous Grievances against the NRP program, and on 12/20/10 Director of Industrial Relation Mike Morris released a report stating that the local and regional level grievances regarding the National Reassessment Process (NRP) should be held in obedience

pending the outcome of step 4 disputes at the National level. In a December 16, 2010, memo to APWU regional coordinators and national business agents, Morris outlined three issues related to the NRP that are pending arbitration. Cases that address these issues should await the outcome of the national-level grievance. As I am putting information together, we at the local level are still filing grievances against NRP and the hardships it is causing our members. Lets all hope we can stop this Postal greed from hurting any more of our members. Until next time remember to Live, Laugh and Love.



Director of Organization

Marcus D. Smith  
Dir. of Organization

# Standing Together Through Hardships

Greeting, Brothers and Sisters, I want to thank you for allowing me to serve you as your Director of Organization. Our Local is very unique and special despite all the excessing we're enduring on a constant basis. Regardless, we must continue to encourage one another to stand together through these

almost unbearable hardships. I am extremely proud to inform my fellow Brothers and Sisters that our Local is approximately 92% organized. Let's continue to work together to achieve 100% organization. If you are knowledgeable of any fellow co-worker(s) that are not currently a member of the American Postal

Workers Union please encourage them to become a part of this well renown organization. In addition, any union member that recruits a non-member shall be compensated with a twenty dollar (\$20.00) check for their effort. Remember, together we can achieve our goal. Thank you all once again.

# National Day Of Protest Lansing, MI, April 13, 2011



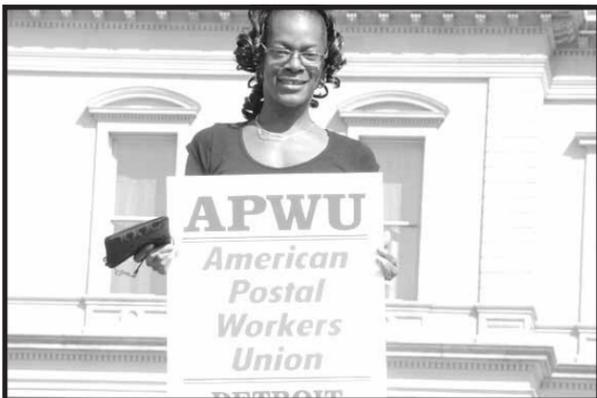
Christopher Ulmer DDAL President came with his Wife and kids making it a family affair.



Iva, Carolin and Sandra listens to the speakers at the rally.



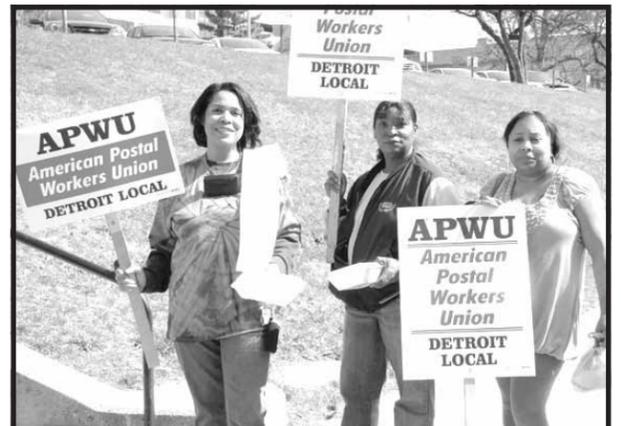
Group Photo.



Ms. White supported the cause and made the trip for her APWU-DDAL.



Craig patiently looks on and listens.



The Ladies For Legislation.



MVS Director

Alvin O. Branch  
MVS Director

Greetings brothers and sisters, I hope this communication finds you, and your family in good health, and spirits. To get straight to the point, we have been experiencing a lot of changes happening within the postal service, and a lot of our members find it very difficult to make the

# MVS The Plain Truth

necessary adjustments. We have to endeavor to return to the roots that formed the unions, and invented the middle class in this country.

We have become complacent, entitled, and in some cases just plain lazy when it comes to protecting our livelihoods, and the livelihoods of our fellow workers. We report to work everyday and witness management performing bargaining unit work, and do nothing to correct these contractual violations that occur on a daily basis. These types of contractual violations lead to the erosion of bargaining unit positions, and given the bean counters at cor-

porate headquarters the impression that they can accomplish the daily task of moving the mail with the employees that they have on the rolls. This also leads to the attendance problems that we are experiencing at several locations throughout the service because of the excessive amount of overtime hours needed to accomplish the delivery standards expected, couple this with the fact that the workforce is aging, and the older you get the more recuperative time our aging bodies need to perform our daily duties. We are working ourselves into bad health for unappreciative, ungrateful task-

master who's only concern is the bottom line, and not the people that help them achieve the goal they seek to obtain. We have to stand up for our feelings of self worth, our self respect, our fellow workers, and our rights as human beings.

We as a union, and the middle class of this country are under attack from corporate America, they have forgotten what it is, and who it is that contributes to the success of their companies, and they need to come to the realization that as your workforce suffers so to, will the company that employs that workforce suffer.



DNDC Facility Director

Debbie LaMay  
DNDC Facility Director

It appears that there is a Double Standard between management and craft, defined as any code or set of principles containing different provisions for one group of people than for another. The Zero Tolerance Policy and the Joint Statement of Violence in the Workplace were written for ALL members of the United States Postal Service not just craft. The fore mentioned policies were written to protect employee's from bullying, harassment and intimidation from any of their coworkers . . . whether it be management to craft or craft to management. This is not a new policy. In February of 1992, the Postal Service, with many employee organizations, initiated the Joint Statement of Violence and Behavior in the Workplace in the after math of the Royal Oak tragedy. The Postal Service acknowledged that in some places there is an unacceptable level of stress in the workplace: that there is no excuse for and will be no tolerance or any threats of violence by anyone at any level of the Postal Service; there is no excuse for, and will be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats or bullying by anyone. Everyone has the basic right to come to work in a safe environment and be given the ability to excel at their job at all levels.

Currently within several levels of the Detroit District, managers are in positions where they are abusing their authority by ignoring basic life skills . . . Basically things you were taught when you were about 5 years old. In elementary school you just knew that you didn't take someone's lunch money or bullied someone on the playground because you could. Even at 5 years

# Double Standards Run Rampart At Postal Service

old most of us knew that we had to treat others how we wanted to be treated or consequences might follow. There were rules in place that made you think about your actions and what the out come might be. Unfortunately within this district several managers have forgotten these basic life skills they were taught and it appears there are no consequences for many of them. Well its time for the Detroit District to start adhering to the same rules that the rest of the Postal Service is governed by. Which means . . . you can't threaten . . . you cant bully . . . you can't intimidate or harass any employee of the United States Postal Service EVER. The Royal Oak tragedy cannot be that far off in the distance that we have forgotten the events that took place . . .

In May 1997 on a sample form of the Zero Tolerance Policy sample 1 it states "No one should have to work in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. To those of you who question our commitment, judge us not on our words but on our actions. It is our intention to make our work locations a place where inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated." Well, as requested I am judging on your actions and from what I can see no action has been taken . . . Currently, we have a manager at the GWY who has returned from a detail due to bringing fire arms in the building . . . no action taken. Currently we have a manager at the GWY who has allegations of sexual harassment . . . no action taken. Currently at the DNDC we have a manager that has been documented exiting the building only to return to follow, intimidate and harass another employee. Currently, we have managers at both the GWY and the DNDC who fraudulently delete time entries for pay purposes in order to intimidate and harass sick employees . . . no action taken. The double standard

comes in as we had an employee walked out of the building and put on emergency placement because he made a supervisor feel uncomfortable. Management at the DNDC took 21 days to notify the inspection service and this employee was out for a total of 8 weeks. Although the United States Postal Service just paid out a \$6900 settlement, imagine the hardship this employee had to endure during this time in a non pay status. Another example of this one way street and abuse of power is an employee from the GWY was walked out for being on his cell phone on the work room floor. So if I'm understanding this correctly, I cant look at management the wrong way or be on my cell phone on the workroom floor . . . but management can bring fire arms to work . . . sexually harass . . . commit fraud . . . reenter the building to follow harass, intimidate and bully a craft employee while off the clock ? ? ? I'm sure any postal officials that implemented and or signed any of these policies regarding zero tolerance would be ashamed of the current Detroit District . . . as I am.

Everyone knows the statistics

on bullies: Whatever happened to the managers in question regarding their past they need to put it to rest. Perhaps they got beat up in high school . . . no prom date . . . didn't make the sports teams or maybe currently their spouse or significant other bullies them ? ? ? Whatever their personal issues are . . . please leave them at the door as craft employees are required to do. EAP . . . as often suggested to craft is also available to management

1800 EAP-4-YOU.

A safe work environment is everyone's basic right.

1. Workplace violence is the second leading cause of death in the workplace . . .

2. Three people are murdered on the job in America every working day . . .

3. Men are victims in three out of four workplace homicides . . .

4. Homicide is the leading cause of death for women in the workplace and or threats, please contact your union and they can assist you. A management official should be made aware as well and if no one is available to assist you the Inspection Service hotline is 800-654-8896.

## — Steward Talk —

*continued from page 5*  
APWU, and upon direction I have represented the President at various meetings with postal management. I have also "assisted" the Legislative Director in organizing pickets; I have "assisted" the Vice President in organizing steward training meetings. I consider myself responsible to "assist" in other circumstances as needed.

**3. Do you actually sit in on contract talks, negotiations, arbitration, etc.?**

*I have sat in on local negotiations twice, active in the actual negotiations with (at the time) Presi-*

*dent Roger Holbrook, and then writing the appeals to Impasse Arbitration when we did not reach agreement [1994] and the actual changes to language when we did reach agreement [1998]. Actual national contractual negotiations, of course are conducted in Washington. I stand ready to serve on the local negotiation team when we go to local negotiations later this year, now that the 2010 National Agreement has been ratified by the membership. I have been presenting cases at arbitration since 1991, I have no idea how*  
*continued on page 9*



Priority Mail  
Facility Director

Iva Williams  
PMC Facility  
Director

Hello Brothers and Sisters!  
The Priority Mail Center is still

# Still Going Strong

standing albeit with tremendously less people. We are processing originating priority mail while the NDC has the responsibility of processing the designating mail. Although these past weeks have been a bit trying we still manage (with overtime) to get the mail done. Because we have been short we have seen an uprising in management performing bargaining unit

work. Now why would we get rid of employees and allow management to do **OUR JOB ? ? ?** That is why I have been stressing the importance of filing grievances on that very thing. Some people may take the attitude of 'let them work' or 'I don't want to be targeted' but the very next time someone is ex-cised out, it might be YOU! Help bring our jobs back !!!

Recently you have seen flyers posted about different informational pickets and rallies. If you are available, please come participate. Remember today it may be someone else and tomorrow it could be YOU !!! Join the fight !!! We are experiencing difficult times. It is always good to see other unions rallying together.

There is strength in numbers!  
In Solidarity.



Legislation  
Director

Regina 'Gina' Favors  
Legislation Director

Well brothers and sisters, we are now past the one hundred and twenty day mark of the newly elected Governor and his regime. What we felt would be the agenda has come to pass, but on an even greater scale than we feared. Never before has a "new" legislature acted so swiftly and in such a destructive, divisive and demoralizing manner. WE ARE UNDER ATTACK !!! Yes right now the attack is on the public sector workers but make no mistake about it, we will be next! The Republican controlled legislative branch has a vicious agenda set forth and aimed totally at union busting. Beginning with their second day in office, a number of bills were crafted, the next day discussed, the next week sent to committee and the next week voted on. They are on the fast track and in some cases are placing similar bills in both houses at the same time. This is happening not only in Michigan, but Nationwide in

# Legislative News & Views

states where the Republicans have total or majority control. Brothers and sisters, this is about so much more than union busting. This is about preserving our rights which are being systematically wiped out. They say it is about the budget, but if you truly and honestly examine it closely you will see it is about more greed and more money for the already wealthy. Whenever the point is raised about why the Republicans want to take more away from public sector workers, the answer I always hear is "well, if not there then where else will you take it from"? We all know that belts have to be tightened and cuts have to be made, but why are workers the only ones to suffer while business continues to receive big tax breaks?

In the interest of keeping this article as short as possible I just want to point out what has already happened in just five months: Nearly 20,000 AFSCME members lost their collective bargaining rights; legislation is pending which would **PROHIBIT** subsidized independent childcare providers from organizing under Michigan's Public Employees

Relations Act; the item pricing law has been repealed (eliminating jobs) and takes effect September 1st; SB 20 prohibits any state rules on ergonomics (already signed by Governor); HB 4152 prohibits increases in pay (including step inc) under an extended or expired contract; any increased health care costs during and extended or expired contract must be paid by workers (passed the House and is on the Senate Floor); HB 4052 prohibits the use of public facilities or equipment for political activity-campaigning for union office — organizing activities (pending on the House Floor); The Emergency Financial Manager "Reform" has been signed into law with no salary cap or restrictions what-so-ever on whomever the EFM is; HB 4059 prohibits collective bargaining agreements that provide for paid union leave time (it also is currently on the House Floor); HB 4312 eliminates employee protections when local governments consolidate services or merge (pending on the house floor) and by the way consolidation and merging of cities, school districts, municipalities, fire, police and everything in between is what he wants and will use money as the tool to get it. He will pit city against city, suburb, schools and all. Whoever privatizes more and eliminates the most jobs is who will get the most money! So tell me how putting people out of work, sending them to the unemployment line with a decrease in the number of weeks they can draw compensation is best for our state? There are so many more bills in the works, such as eliminating **STATUTORY** revenue sharing for cities, villages and townships; lifetime limit of 48 months for low income families receiving assistance; demanding \$180 million dollars in additional wage and benefit concessions from state employees; and the list goes on.

Once again folks, it's about holding on to your rights! You have the right to seek a decent job earning a decent wage, you have the right to attend a public school and you have the right to elect and vote



for the candidates of your choice. Don't, I implore you, let your rights continue to be trampled on and/or eradicated! Stand up and fight back! Too many before you died so that you could exercise that right!

One final note, I received an e-mail from a friend that began . . . "WISCONSIN: ABOUT TO BOIL OVER." It was posted March 11, 2011 and was supposedly from the GOP Trust Pac. I don't know how true or even IF it is true but it sounds about par for the course given what is happening. In part it states . . . Thanks to you we are taking back America . . . Thank you GOP trust supporter; this morning we delivered a massive blow to Obama's radical agenda, Governor Walker just signed a heroic piece of legislation into law that will send shock waves from Madison to Wash. D.C. It further states: if we can break the unions back in 2011, the Democrats will be on life support to begin 2012. It goes on listing different states and the legislation being passed and or attempted. For Michigan . . . The Michigan legislature has approved separate measures to give the state the **POWER** to break union contracts! I now ask do you feel this is right. If yes, then do nothing. But if you feel as I do that this is not the way our country should be treating us then join us, unite with workers all over the country, **STAND UP FOR WORKERS, STAND UP AND FIGHT FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS, and STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS !!!**

IN TRUE SOLIDARITY.

## With Deepest Sympathy

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

- |                            |                      |                    |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Varyssia Bell              | Beatrice Beloch      | DeAngelo Beloch    |
| Samuel Beloch              | Kathy Carter         | Tony Chambers      |
| Vincent Clark              | John Greene          | Louise Harris      |
| Oscar Harris               | Lucy Harrison        | Martha Hatcher     |
| Sammy Hunter               | Samuel Hunter        | Kalita Jones       |
| Myra Jones-Hayes           | Marcella Johnson     | Brenda Lewis       |
| Sidney Matthews            | Anita McClai         | Kimberly McMichael |
| Kenton Parker              | Alida Perkins        | Kevin Robinson     |
| Wilbert Smith Jr. (Smitty) | Deborah Whaley-Lee   |                    |
| Patricia Williams          | Angela Williams-Dial | Yolanda Wright     |
| Samantha Woods             | Leteamma Lyons       | Richard Garvin     |
| Larita Parker              |                      |                    |

Our condolences to the families of;  
Johnny Brown Charles Craig Jr.  
Amy L. Hunter Thomas Smith

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.



Assistant Clerk  
Craft Director

Tony Corbin  
Assistant Clerk  
Craft Director

Since being sworn in as Assistant Clerk Craft Director during the month of January '2010', reports I have submitted to The Detroit Postal Worker, have more or less been informative articles for the membership; therefore, my current report pertains to the Collective Bar-

## Collective Bargaining Agreement

gaining Agreement (CBA), Article #11, HOLIDAYS. The following ten (10) days are considered holidays for full-time and part-time regular scheduled employees:

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King, Junior's Birthday  
Washington's Birthday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
Veteran's Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day

In order for an employee to be eligible for holiday pay, the em-

ployee must be in a pay status the LAST hour of the employee's scheduled workday prior to the employee's holiday; or the FIRST hour of the employee's scheduled workday after the holiday. Employees receive holiday pay at their base hourly straight time rate for the number of hours equal to their regular daily work schedule not to exceed eight (8) hours. Effective February 02, 2002, employees who work their holiday, at their option, may elect to have their annual leave balance credited with eight (8) hours of annual leave in lieu of holiday leave pay.

More often than not, when an

employee is denied holiday pay by Postal Management, even when the aforementioned requirements are met, Management denies employees holiday pay referring to Article #11, Section #6.C (CBA) which states in part, "An employee scheduled to work on a holiday who does not work shall not receive holiday pay, unless such absence is based on an extreme emergency situation and is excused by the employer."

So remember, if you are ever DENIED of your negotiated holiday pay for any reason; as soon as you are knowledgeable; FILE A GRIEVANCE.



Retirees'  
Department  
Notes

Al Fouche  
Retirees' President

My article this month will consist of "Where Unions Come From and What Unions Want".

Based on the Governor of Wisconsin and what Governors are trying to eliminate/break Unions and lower many benefits. The Union is responsible for the American public; such as, retirement, overtime, vacations, etc.

These articles come from the AFL-CIO and I think they are very informative on where the Union comes from and what they want. Part Two (What Unions Want) will be in the next issue.

### WHERE UNIONS COME FROM

The history of trade unionism in this country is frequently dated from 1792, when a local union was formed by the journeymen cordwainers (shoemakers) of Philadelphia. Within the next ten years, unions of shoemakers, carpenters and printers were founded in Baltimore, Boston, New York and several other cities.

Until after the Civil War, most of these trade unions were located in Atlantic seaboard cities and were local unions of workers in a particular trade or industry. These isolated locals sensing the need for greater strength formed city-wide federations called "trade assemblies" for mutual aid and support in strikes and emergency situations. They also functioned as boycott organizations, published newspapers, took political action and lobbied for local government legislation favorable to their members. Today these federations have evolved into city central bodies or state central bodies and their functions are much the same.

But local unions also found it nec-

## — Retiree Department —

essary to join with other locals within the same trade or industry. These national unions were labor's answer to dealing with employees who were selling their goods in a national market. Machinist local unions in New York, for example, worked for iron foundry employees who were competing with other iron foundries in Cleveland. In this national competition, the isolated New York local union soon found itself competing with its counterpart local union in Cleveland and in other plants of the industry located elsewhere. As the employers competed, wages, as a cost of production factor, were bid down and the lowest rates in the industry tended to prevail throughout the country.

So in 1859, the machinist and blacksmith locals united and formed a permanent national organization. The molders did the same in 1859 and the printers had formed their national union in 1850. In the decade after the Civil War, twenty six new national unions were formed. Some of them exist today. The locomotive engineers, the locomotive firemen, carpenters, bricklayers, and painters all date from this period. The purpose of all these national unions was the same; to influence wages, working conditions and work rules more or less uniformly throughout their trade or industry.

The isolated locals thus learned that by pooling their resources and cooperating with one another, they could more effectively deal with employers and at the same time give help and support to locals in distress. They demonstrated once again that in unity there is strength. Today, national and international trade unions (they are called international because they have members in Canada and U.S. trust territories) are the keystone of the American labor movement. Just over 100 of them are affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

So when anyone asks, "Where did trade unions come from?", you might say they came out of the necessity of the working people to look

after their own interests as businesses and industry organized and developed along national lines.

Another way to look at it is on the basis of self-interest as expressed by both labor and management the employer and employee. Each promotes his own self-interest. Wherever we find competing self interests, we find the possibility of conflict. It was out of such conflict that the trade union movement was born. And it was to resolve the issues such conflict pro-

duces that collective bargaining was developed.

One thing about it, 200 years have brought little change in the issues at stake or the basic need for unions. The individual member — whether a cordwainer or computer engineer or programmer, artisan or action, still has basic economic and social needs and has to deal with an employer to get most of them. Forming a union or joining a union makes the job a whole lot easier.

## — Steward Talk —

*continued from page 7*

*many, but this has enhanced my experience in such a manner that I believe I have to offer a sophisticated set of skills to the membership in what is becoming an increasingly difficult time for us in the Postal Service.*

**4. Give the members three things they can do to protect themselves against the wrath of the post office.**

*1. The post office is governed by an enormous and well-established body of regulations, going back, in some cases, to the 19th Century. Really. So I recommend that our members protect themselves in the first place by following the rules/regulations. I don't mean to sound like a management hack, but we are required to follow their rules. What does this mean? Well, for example:*

- *Wear your ID badge at all times, properly displayed on your chest, during working hours, which includes entering and exiting the building. You can't believe how much crap our people get into by failing to follow this simple rule, which is (like it or not) proper and legal.*

- *Don't talk on your cellphone/bluetooth/smartphone/etc. when you are on the workforce and supposed to be working. They are paying you to WORK (sorry) and they have a right to demand that you do so instead of conducting person-*

*al communication. Ditto of above about how much trouble our people get into.*

- *Don't be outside the building during periods of time that you are on the clock. Again, ditto of above about how much trouble our people get into.*

- *Follow the instructions of your supervisors (Again, sorry) no matter how stupid, as long as it doesn't jeopardize your safety or that of others or of postal property. In many cases, supervisors are appointed specifically for their willingness to give stupid or nonsensical orders (think about the bosses you know). Do not play the "gotcha" game of refusing to follow orders. Again, and again, ditto of above, you can't believe how much trouble our people get in about this.*

*2. Keep copies of EVERYTHING. This means keeping COPIES of your medical certificates that you give to your supervisor. COPIES of your 3971's when you get them from your supervisor (make sure they are properly completed and given back to you timely). Keep COPIES of your cheek stubs ••• YES, I mean keep the cheek stubs !!! FOREVER !!! I have all of my check stubs going back to 1976, and they don't take up all that much space! You can't believe how many problems are traceable to 3971's or check stubs alone! And please don't put them in a purse or hip pocket where they*

*continued on page 12*

# Ask The President

## Contract Talk Part 1



**Christopher "Chris" Ulmer, President**

In this segment of "Ask the President" we are going to address the burning issues and concerns that the membership has over the new contract. As it should be, this is a hot issue among our members. We are going to try and clear up some of the confusion.

**Q. Mr. President at press time the contract has been ratified. You did support the contract, is that correct?**

A. Yes I did and so did most of the APWU Membership.

**Q. How do you feel about the new contract?**

A. I am enthusiastic about the new contract. The contract is new and it is different, but at the same time it allows the Postal Service to compete while allowing the APWU to get back some of the work and membership that we have lost over the last 10 years or so. We face new and different challenges; but they are the same challenges we would have faced anyway no different than contract in the past. The challenges are there but I do believe the challenges we face are better for us in the contract, because this contract has so much to offer the APWU and ultimately the membership.

**Q. Mr. President, what is the contract going to accomplish now for the membership and moving forward in the future?**

A. This contract accomplishes a lot of things. One of the main things in the contract is that it limits the number of miles a craft employee can be excessed. Many people in the state and country don't realize how detrimental and destructive long distance excessing is until they are in the situation. In the past, the postal service could excess people as far away as they wanted to no limit. The new contract limits the excessing range to 40 miles and in certain situations 50 miles. The new agreement allows the APWU input into the employers' decision and the two parties must agree to anything beyond the 40 mile range. That is a good thing because in the past contract there was no agreement in place to limit excessing. In the past the Postal Service dictated how many miles our members were excessed, now the APWU will have a say in the manner.

**Q. Mr. President, address some of the negative feed back that you have encountered concerning the new contract.**

A. One area of concerns for the employees is the two tier wage system. I am going to try and clear this matter up and put it to rest. Presently every person working for the USPS is under a two

tier wage system. Don't be fooled by the naysayers who say that a union should only have one tier of pay. A one tier wage system is the goal of our Union. Look at the Step progression of our pay scale and you will see regardless of pay level the highest paid **Step** that you can receive at the Post Office is RC. The APWU has 3 more contract negotiations before anyone coming in under the new tier wage system will reach top scale of pay and steps. This gives the APWU 3 more opportunities to be able to bring the pay of the new employees that are being hired into the USPS today in line with the one who may have 30 or 40 years. So when they wanted to bring the wage tier system up as a reason to vote down this contract, it wasn't a valid or good reason. I do not believe when a person is first hired into a job that they really care about how much another person is making, I think when we start to worry about others, what they make, and how they spend it only comes up later in our careers. Another misunderstood issue is the NTFT position issue. The NTFT positions are Non-Traditional Full Time positions. This contract eliminated part-time work from APWU represented crafts. Right now the APWU represented crafts have nothing but a full time workforce.

**Q. Mr. President, the members have come up to me and they are confused about the language in the contract that defines a part time employee from a full time employee. Can you clarify the language to the membership?**

A. Yes, I can. There were only two categories of work; Full-Time & Part-Time. The old language stated a Part-Time employee (not Part-time flex of Part-time regular) was entitled to a work schedule like a full time employee, except they (part-time employees) may be scheduled for less than 8 hours a day and for less than 40 hours in a normal work week. That's a part time employee in the old contract. A full time employee worked 40 hours in a 5 day period. What has happened in the new contract, they have done away with the part-time workforce completely in terminology. The part-time workforce that the APWU use to have is now part of the full-time work force. Basically, the people that presently hold a 40 hours position now are grandfathered into and guaranteed 40-44 hour bid positions for the rest of their career. The new NTFT assignments will range in work hours from 30 to 48 hours a normal work week. So in terms of full time, we are all full time employees; basically, this simple thing eliminates the Postal Service from taking advantage of a person that chose to be a part time flexible or part time regular because they were unable to move to Timbuktu.

**Q. Are you talking about the employees who volunteered to be part-time employees over the last year or so because they could not relocate?**

A. Yes and the USPS cut some of them down to only 4 hours of pay per pay period.

**Q. How is that going to change?**

A. The new contract gives them and part-time employees at the least 30 work hours a week. It raises the bar and the standard of living for the people who were not and will not be able to follow their jobs. The new contract prevents the Postal Service from retaliating against our members if they make this choice. There are a lot of small towns and places that suffer tremendously

their whole postal career because they can only get work 2, 4 or 6 hours a pay while trying to provide for their families. This contract eliminates that and makes them a full-time employee with the guarantee of at least 30 hours. Danny, that is very important. It raises the bar and the standards of living for the employees that are already here. It allows them a greater and better chance to provide for their families in the smaller and larger communities.

**DANNY.** That clarifies a lot of questions Chris.

**CHRIS.** I want to talk about some of the negative aspects that have been brought up by the naysayers on the contract. All the naysayers wanted to do is focus on the perceived negatives. What about the positive? There are going to be two sides to every contract, negative and positive. The naysayers did not talk about the 6,000 to 8,000 jobs that the APWU is possibly going to get back. They didn't talk about the thousands of jobs the crafts are getting back from EAS, work that was taken over the years. They don't talk about any positives. Normally, when someone is being truthful about a situation, they give the negative and positives and the debate goes on from there. There are more people out there supporting the new contract than there are those who oppose it. They use the media, internet and other exploits to try and make it seem that they have a large backing, which they don't.

**Q. Now this is a question that applies directly to me and numerous other employees whom were excessed. There is confusion on the language of the contract on retreat rights from excessing. 1). Explain the line and I quote here from the new contract, "employees will not be required to retreat to crafts they were excessed from if the craft is represented by the APWU". 2). Are we coming back? 3). Do we have to come back? 4). Can we stay in the different Craft we were excessed to?**

A. 1). It means, if you get excessed into another APWU represented craft (Clerks, Maint, or MVS) within your installation you do not have to return to your former craft, if you do not wish to, as long as it is an APWU represented craft that you were excessed to. If an APWU represented craft employee is excessed into another APWU represented craft within the installation they can stay because they are still APWU members. Basically, it is protecting the APWU membership without affecting the member that may like the new APWU craft. The old contract language said if you were excessed with in your installation (regardless of craft) you had to return to your former craft. This language still applies if an APWU represented craft employee is excessed into the Carrier or Mailhandler Craft within the installation. Many times employees are forced into other crafts and they want to stay but cannot because their retreat rights opportunity comes they must return to their former APWU represented craft, they don't have a choice. If you get outside the installation, let's say Taylor MI for instance, then you will have the option of coming back or not because you are outside the installation. When you get excessed outside the installation, you have a choice whether to come back or not, regardless of what craft. 2). The APWU represented craft employees who were excessed will be returning at some point, the new contract made provi-

continued on page 12

**POSTAL FACTS . . .**

**Did You Know?**



by **Danny Sawicki**  
**THE J. W. WESTCOTT  
 MAIL FREIGHTER**

Did you know that The J.W. Westcott freighter is the only U.S. mail boat in the country providing mail service by water? The boat services other freighters coming thru the Detroit River.

The boat and office are located on the river by the Ambassador Bridge. The 45 ft. long, 15 ft. wide beam



vessel is powered-by a B-series Cummins diesel engine.

The freighter transfers mail, supplies, parts, pilots, people and even delivered a donkey! Mail is the first priority.

The boat is contracted by the USPS. It maintains round the clock operations. Depending on conditions, the boat runs on the river from the end of March until a week or so before Christmas.

To stay in touch with passing Great Lakes freighters, they use 2-way radios and telephones.

The boat delivers the mail while moving along the giant freighters. Engineering calculations are determined for each tie-up procedure. Wind, current, freighter size, freighter speed and other factors are considered. Tow-lines and ratchets are used to secure the tie-up. This can be a very dangerous procedure.

Yearly, the boat averages about 4000 trips. Amazing, considering the ever changing weather conditions we encounter here in Michigan.

Ships sailing the Great Lakes have individual mail slots in the mail room office. Back in the day, the Edmund Fitzgerald had a slot. Sadly, the slot is now replaced by another freighter.

The operation has been running since 1874! The boat even has it's own zip code, 48222.

Sometimes bad conditions and or weather cancel operations until conditions improve.

As a past time, many people watch the freighters pass by. There are many good viewing sites along the Detroit River. Some keep journals and log sightings as ships pass by. You can even follow audio transmissions on channel 10. When using a marine radio, that is the channel the Westcott uses to contact the freighters.

So while you are processing the mail and see that "weird" zip code

48222, now you know where it's going.

**THE MARSHALL POSTAL MUSEUM**

Did you know that Marshall, Michigan has the 2nd largest postal museum in the country? It is second only to the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, D. C.

The museum is in the basement of the historic Marshall post office building.

The museum's main focus is on rural delivery, and has over 4000 artifacts. The collection includes delivery vehicles (one, a 1931 Model A mail truck from Grand Rapids), clothing, postal antiques, buggies, mail sleighs and even a 1917 Model T mail snowmobile that delivered mail in the Upper Peninsula. Other historic postal items are featured. Canceling, sorting tables, stamps, photos, historic windows dot the museum. Not everything is on display at once.

A 5 dollar donation is suggested for admission, and you must book an appointment to visit the museum. Call 269-420-7030 or 269-979-2719 for more information.

**AMERICA'S STAMP STOP IN BERKLEY**

Did you know in our area there has been a store that specializes in stamps, coins and other collectables since 1978?

It is called America's Stamp Store in Berkley.

Karl Schaefer started his first store in Birmingham, Michigan in 1978. He ran 3 stores until the early 1980's. However, at that time, a law was passed stating that collectors could no longer hold stamps and other collectables as investment assets in retirement funds. That slowed down the stamp collecting and the collectable hobby. He has scaled down to 1 store that is extremely busy. Clients include doctors, swimming guards and everyone in between.

Karl says, "everyone is treated equal here." His son Todd says, "We see grandpas bringing in grandkids, and lately, we are seeing a lot of girls and women that we haven't seen before." Stamp collecting and collectables are transcending into other genres and generations.

The stores stamp inventory includes stamps dating from the 1840s, as well as proof sets, sheets and theme stamps, as well as Cinderella stamps (stamp-like labels not valid for postage) and revenue stamps. Other collectables are carried at the store. The store buys about 3 to 5 stamp collections a week, mostly local. Other business comes from ebay with customers from all over the world.

Karl and son Todd welcome you

to the" America's Stamp Stop's Free Hot Dog lunch" on Saturdays, a tradition Karl started for his customers to meet and discuss their hobby more that 20 years ago. Stop in and say hello and tell them that the DDAL sent you. For more information call 248-474-4460.

**DOG ATTACKS**

Did you know there were 59 dog

attacks on Detroit mail carriers last year compared to 10 in New York and 74 in Los Angeles? Way too many here in Detroit. Compared to the populations of those other cities to Detroit, the dog attack ratio here in Detroit is astronomical.

*Tell me what is the Post Office and the city of Detroit is going to do about this shocking and embarrassing situation?*

**APWU P.O.W.E.R. Committee**  
**announces its**

**Annual Educational  
 Scholarship Applications  
 are ready**

*Applications may be picked up at the*  
 APWU office located at  
 20530 Southfield Road  
 Detroit, MI 48235  
 (313) 532-9305

**All Applications MUST be returned to the above address —  
 ATTENTION P.O.W.E.R. Committee by the close  
 of business on Friday, July 8, 2011.**

Christopher E. Ulmer, President

Sandra Carey, Coordinator

Teresa Dickerson, Recording Secretary

Karen Catlin, Treasurer

Vanessa Williams, Organization



**American Postal Workers Union**



**Saturday, July 16, 2011**  
**11 a.m. until 7 p.m.**

*FOOD SERVED FROM 1:00 P.M. until 3:00 P.M.*

**Metro Beach – Metro Park**

31300 Metroparkway  
 Mt. Clemens, MI 48046  
 (Surfside Shelter)

**\$5 Entrance Fee into the park**

Pool - \$3 per person (under 3 free)

Locker - \$.50

**FOOD/FUN/GAMES/RAFFLES**

**ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Manuela Webster, Chairperson

Carl Williams, Co-Chair

Michelle Hamons

Darren 'D. J.' Hill

Renee Sheppard

Samantha Young



# Ask The President

continued from page 10  
sions for that. 3). You must come back to your former APWU represented craft if you were excessed into a non APWU represented craft within the installation. 4). Excessed employees may stay in a different craft as long as it is outside the installation or if it is an APWU represented craft within the installation.

**DANNY.** That should clear up some of the questions of that language.

**CHRIS.** I want to speak on the Detroit District Area Local's affect on the new contract. You know when we first took office in 2010, we filed an injunction against the USPS on the grounds that they are not doing what was contractually required when it came to excessing employees. The DDAL believed that the USPS needed to identify the jobs when they give employees their 60 day notification. The DDAL believed the USPS had the responsibility to identify the location, the tour, and all relevant information for the identified employee to make an informed decision to follow the job or not. The DDAL filed a court injunction on these grounds.

Although we did not prevail with the injunction process, the Postal Service started to adhere to that amendment. I know both sides, the APWU administration and the Postal Service administration, looked at that case very close. Now there is strict and clear language that states when the Postal Service identifies people to be excessed, they must have a job there for the excessed employee. Not like what they have been doing. They will give you a 60 day notice, not have a job available, then when one comes up they say, "well you have to go right now because we already gave you a 60 day notice".

Well now that is essentially eliminated. When we filed this injunction, we needed approval from the APWU National President (William Burrus). Mr. Burrus decided to file a Step 4 grievance on this particular issue. It is good to see new contract language that pertains to an issue(s) that you (Detroit) are facing and fighting for. It may have seemed like the DDAL lost its court injunction but see new contract language addressing something you have been fighting lets the leadership and membership of the DDAL know that we really won.

**Q. Mr. President that is a great point. We all have had friends,**

**family and colleagues excessed to Pittsburgh, Iowa, etc. and when they got there, their was no job there for them. What is your take on that?**

**A.** The job, the tour has to be identified and the employee must be notified of it 60 days before the employee can be excessed into that job. It is a big plus. There are lots of little things the people do not know because they do not deal with the grievance process everyday. People sometimes look at factors such as tours, NS days, which are very important, but we must realize union officials deal with a gamit of issues big and small everyday. The important thing is that the language regarding excessing and placement is clear and unambiguous to ensure that the USPS follows the CBA as it should.

**Q. Well Mr. President, you have cleared up many questions for me and for the membership regarding the new contract. Are there any other thoughts you might want to elaborate on?**

**A.** I think this contract lays the ground work for the future. This contract allows the Postal Service, as well as the employees to choose new duty assignments, they may say, "I will work 4 days, 10 hours a day and get 3 off days, or 3 days a week 12 hours a day. The new contract gives variety and flexibility, it will prevent employees from being excessed and

to remain gainfully employed close to home and their loved ones. This new contract allows the Postal Service as well as the Union to transition smoothly from the 20th to the 21st century. An important point about unions is that we map out a positive future for the employees who are still here and that we pave the ways for those coming behind us and this contract does that. Our leaders, our contract negotiators have done a great job on being futuristic and trying to pave the way for anybody that has 10, 20 or 30 years to go, and that is what we look for our leaders to do.

**DANNY.** That is very important Chris. I want to thank you for clarifying these issues for us.

**CHRIS.** One thing I have always said is that we have smart members. No matter what anyone says, our members are smart and intelligent and are not ones to be fooled over and over again, and I think that is why the contract was ratified.

**DANNY:** Well said, thank you Chris.

**CHRIS:** Thank you Danny.

Due to limited space the interview was edited. The most important points have been printed. If you have any questions for "Ask the President" column, contact Danny Sawicki, mailing address: 20530 Southfield Road, Detroit, MI 48235; e-mail: [dsawicki@apwudetroit.org](mailto:dsawicki@apwudetroit.org), cell phone (586) 943-3950.



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

Change Service Requested

## — Steward Talk —

continued from page 9  
rapidly turn into unreadable tissue paper; FILE them, they are YOUR records !!! COPIES of your FMLA requests. COPIES of your bids. COPIES of your disciplinary actions and settlements. COPIES of your grievances. It is YOUR life, protect yourself!

3. When in doubt, consult your union steward, and if necessary FILE a GRIEVANCE. We always tell people this, but they, alas, don't always do it. There are more rules and regulations than most rank-and-file members are aware of, which is why we train stewards. There is no harm in checking with the steward. There

is no harm in filing a "silly" grievance, we can always take it back. The only "silliness" is failing to protect yourself by not asking for help. We are here to help, that's what we do. That's our calling.

• Editors Note: Since 1986 John has been willing and able to work under every President and their administration in a fair and honest manner.

Thank you for your service John, And remember members, USE YOUR STEWARDS!

If you would like the opportunity to be a steward, send President Ulmer a letter with your name, facility, tour, craft, NS days and start time.

## Next Membership Meetings

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2011

SUMMER BREAK

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2011

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