



The Badger Bulletin

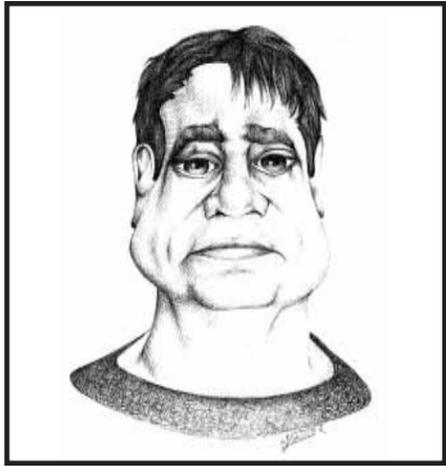
The American Postal Workers Union of Wisconsin

Volume 42 No. 1

2007 PPA Award Winner

January-February, 2009

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT . . . BY STEVE LORD



Happy New Year Brothers And Sisters . . .

this country the APWU and a coalition of other union activists have fought to change the climate for working Americans. We have elected a President and Congress that know America's economy can only be saved from the bottom up. But, if you think this means our job is done you are sorely mistaken. Our work has just begun. We must utilize the coalitions we have formed over the past year and make sure our united voice is heard and our interests be given priority.

Make no mistake about it, there are groups around every corner that will attempt to bring us down. Labor has universal goals such as the Employee Free Choice Act and Universal Health Care.

We as APWU members also have our individual goals such as legislation that will make the USPS viable again. How do we achieve these goals? We all must become activists and learn how we can work together to convince Congress that the goals of labor are righteous and good for America. As members of the APWU of Wisconsin we cannot sit back and hope others do the work for us. I know a lot of you will say you have too much on your plates already but if we don't do this no one else will.

Here are some of the things we can do: Your local can send a delegate(s) to the National Presidents conference in Wash-

ington DC in February. It is a legislative conference that will end with delegates lobbying Congress with our legislative priorities. Also, we will be holding union activism training at some point this year here in Wisconsin. Your local should try to send as many members as possible to this training. This will allow us to form a network of APWU activists in Wisconsin that will push our legislative agenda. We may not be presented with this opportunity again. We must take full advantage of it. We must step up and give back America to working Americans. Together we can do it.

Thanks for listening.

This is the time of year when we look back at what has happened in the past year and look ahead to what the future has in store for us in the coming year. Looking back, 2008 had its high points and its low points. In May we held a historic convention. The convention began with a full day of excellent training. The delegates to the convention wisely voted to become 100% affiliated with the AFL-CIO of Wisconsin.

We also raised more COPA money at this convention than any other previous conventions. In August I was asked to take a three month leave of absence to work with the AFL-CIO's Labor 2008 election efforts. Badger Bulletin Editor John Durben joined Labor 2008 in September and more APWU of Wisconsin members joined this effort in October. Together we had the privilege to be part of a coalition of union activists that manned phone banks, knocked on doors, handed out worksite flyers, and spoke to groups of union members about electing candidates who supported working Americans. The result of this unprecedented effort was the election of Barack Obama as President and the increasing of the majority in both houses of Congress.

The affiliation we made with the Wisconsin AFL-CIO back in May is providing us with great dividends already. We are now part of a grass roots effort that has the possibilities of not only bringing about the resurgence of labor in America but could help the APWU in its many struggles to come. As you know, 2008 also had low points for postal workers. Due to a bad economy, poor business practices, and anti-postal legislation that doesn't allow the USPS to properly set postage rates the USPS is billions in debt. As a result the USPS is attempting to recoup losses through job actions against employees such as cutting PTF hours, changing employee tours, changing window hours, and threatening lay-offs.

This brings us to the new year. 2009 is going to be a pivotal year for labor in general and APWU members in particular. All over

Everyone Is Entitled To My Opinion

by Michael B Ganino Jr.,
Assistant National Director
Accident Benefit Association

The assault on auto workers and the continued assault on postal workers as well as the entire working class in this country is just the beginning of the final all out battle that is not limited to any one particular group of workers but is instead aimed at all the working class around the globe.. The attacks are well timed, well funded and well orchestrated by a wide assortment of players that harkens back to the robber barons!

The ultimate goal of NAFTA and other treaties of that ilk were to bring about parity in wages of workers around the world, noble cause indeed but clear deception. Of course in the USA we believed this meant bringing workers up the standards our brothers and sisters of yesterday had fought for and earned - but the sad reality is that wages and benefits in the USA are sinking to the level of the rest of the world. If you don't believe this, listen to the call for auto workers to take "hits" on salary and benefits so they GAIN (?) parity with workers in plants owned by other car makers.

In the not to distant future, jobs that left our country for SE Asia and other underdeveloped countries, will return to the US where workers will be happy to have work, however the returned work will come with a heavy price and that is wages that are well

below the minimum wage level and with NO benefits. Workers of all stripes will continue to fight each other for substandard jobs just to eek out a measly living. This is by no means a mistake = this IS the plan. The beauty of NAFTA is that it was stewarded through congress by a president whose party of origin is the democratic party - the party of workers? Of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

As each group of workers fight the other, watching their dream(s) die - the elite worker class is vacuuming up a greater percentage of the monies, spreading a few crumbs for the workers. The 700 billion dollar bailout where so far checks amounting to 350 billion were written with NO accounting is not a mistake - it is the way of the world - a world I might add that is NOT worker oriented! Check out the so called scandals that have erupted over the last decade in the financial markets. Indeed if one were to attempt to lay blame for the massive corruption, the elites would have you believe that the workers who after fighting for well over 100 years to gain a modest salary and some comfort into retirement are responsible. The main stream press not only buys into this equation but in all actuality the free (?) press is the cheerleader.

Even if this takes the form of national strikes, as our brothers and sisters from around the world take part in - we must

begin to move now - or we will not be able to move at all. If organized labor is unwilling or incapable of leading workers than the workers must lead themselves. If it takes boycotts of industries or of the purchase of US Bonds than labor must utilize any and all means to bring about change. With billions being funneled to the investor class elite - the writing is on the wall: Only the rich and richer can have access to the funds of the USA.

How about all unions gather together to create a health plan that benefits all instead of each individual labor union holding on to the health plan cash cows that are utilized to the detriment of workers by watering down the potential market leveler that one unified concentration of worker dollars could bring about by unity???

How about the creation of a true labor party to bring about a gathering of like minded people(s)? Previously I had bought into the idea that a labor party would act as a deterrent to change as we, labor, would become an "island onto ourselves" but the facts speak loudly: As the country becomes more factionalized and fractured a true peoples party could become one of a handful of people(s) dedicated to change.

This is NOT idle chatter, nor the ranting of a crazed lunatic - this is fact - just look around - you don't need a weatherman to tell which way the wind is blowing!

THE UNION NEWSPAPER IS THE MOST VISIBLE SIGN OF LIFE IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

EDUCATION AND ORGANIZATION . . . BY RICK GALLO, DIRECTOR

Can You Count The Numbers?



It seems like a never-ending game. These days, the Postal Service is obsessed with numbers. Much of the supervisors' day is spent in the pursuit of these numbers, and managers even more. In fact, the higher the level, the more time spent in the chase for those ever elusive numbers.

There are a myriad of different numbers, and the focus seems to change from boss to boss, or from time to time. But, the numbers are always there, and everybody is always chasing them. Look at Mystery Shopper scores for example. Management will not be happy until every office gets a "100%" every time. That is the goal, and if you do not reach it, you will hear about it. It seems like every decision can be traced back to some number or other. Do we have enough staff at the windows? If not, and wait time in line exceeds five minutes (another magic number) we will lose points. So, in deciding whether or not staffing is proper, your supervisor makes that decision with the Mystery Shopper score ultimately in mind. Are clerks asking the right questions? Again, if not, we lose points. Are the clerks pushing the right keys? If not, transactions per hour number will be adversely affected, and our numbers will suffer. If the numbers aren't where some manager thinks they should be, other decisions follow, like the kind where your office will lose POS-ONE units, or perhaps window clerk positions.

If you so much as imply that manage-

ment is chasing these numbers, they deny it. It's like it's a dirty little secret they don't want you to know. No, we would never do anything like that! Right? What ever happened to providing good, honest service? Now, it only counts if it meets the numbers test. Management also seems to think that numbers even justify violating our contract. The wait Time In Line was too long, so the supervisor helps out with window transactions, or pulls other employees from their bid jobs to assist at the window, etc., etc. When we complain, they claim they "had no choice" because of the numbers!

Evidence of this some of this ill-conceived focus was recently seen by way of the window clerk "script." You know, the one that USPS steadfastly claims does not exist. The one where window clerks can only refer to Express Mail (first) and then Priority Mail, but are not supposed to talk about any other cheaper alternatives. News media on the east coast picked up on this hooaha, and ran footage of supervisors and managers denying that such a script exists, only to be repudiated by the clerks forced to implement the plan. As you might expect, it made USPS look somewhat dishonest. And folks, USPS management just doesn't get it. They see nothing wrong with deceitful business practices, or total lack of integrity, as long as the revenue NUMBERS go up!

And this is not just true of mystery shopper scores. USPS recently changed the

window hours in some 35 different offices. In large part, service hours were reduced in the morning. The focus of this change is not to give better service, or more flexible hours for the public, or to generate more revenue, or even to respond to some identified need. The purpose is to drive customers away from our window clerks to the Automated Postal Centers (APC's). Their hope is that the more people become accustomed to using the APC's, the more likely they are to use them again in the future. The more that happens, the less they need actual window clerks, and the clerk positions can be reduced.

Scores of other numbers-driven decisions surface every day. In several instances just recently, management has combined carriers from two different offices. This happened in a handful of different locations. The thought apparently was that small offices could be combined with carriers from neighboring communities working out of one location rather than two separate locations. Despite the fact that each of these separate offices had clerks, the plan was rolled out without any thought whatsoever about the affect on the clerks from either office. Again, we're going to chase some numbers and ignore the affects on human capital, or the disruption to family life it creates

As USPS grinds out more and more numbers to focus on, I hope our business and our members don't get lost in the numbers.



Badger Bulletin

**APWU OF WISCONSIN
GENERAL OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT

STEVE LORD
PO Box 2321
Oshkosh, WI 54903
HM 920-426-5285, WK 920-233-8454
lordsa@charter.net

SECRETARY-TREASURER

DALE ANDERSON
PO Box 26022
Madison, WI 53708
608-240-1024
triumph110@sbglobal.net

DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATION

JEFF WORDEN
4984 S 24th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53221

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RELATIONS

RENEE HEANEY
PO Box 1
Wausau, WI 54402
715-370-1738
Hurricaneh@charter.net

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
AND ORGANIZATION**

RICK GALLO
PO Box 1396
Kenosha, WI 53141
HM 262-652-6242, WK 262-657-5955
APWU840@wi.rr.com

EDITOR

JOHN E. DURBEN
PO Box 10021
Green Bay, WI 54307
HM 715-745-2248, WK 920-498-3987
chilihead@frontiernet.net

**APWU OF WISCONSIN
AUXILIARY OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT

DEBRA KOSZAREK
5321 S. LaSalle Dr.
New Berlin, WI 53151
414-425-8672

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Arlene Beisbier
916 Chestnut
West Bend, WI 53095
262-338-8663

DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATION

BARBARA MACIEJEWSKI
2145 S 89th Street
West Allis, WI 53227
angelmajek@aol.com

The APWU of Wisconsin publishes this newsletter as a means of communicating with our members. The union encourages letters to the editor; letters must be signed but name will be withheld upon request. All opinions expressed are those of the writer, and not necessarily those of the state organization or its officers.

The *Badger Bulletin* is a proud member of the APWU Postal Press Association. The *Badger Bulletin* is printed six (6) times per year.

Articles not credited are those of the editor.



LEGISLATIVELY SPEAKING . . . BY JEFF WORDEN, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

A New Year . . . A Time For A New Start

First off, I hope all members and their families had a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

With the New Year will come some new changes, of course we will have a Democrat in the White House. We will have a Senate of 57 Democrats, 40 Republicans and 2 Independents. There is still 1 seat (in Minnesota) which is still undecided. On the House side the Democrats have 257 seats to the Republicans holding only 178 seats.

It pretty much appears that the Senate and the House will be much more labor friendly than in the past 8 years. Of course having a labor friendly President will help make things better for all working people.

One of the changes will be to pass H.R. 4236. (The employee Free Choice Act). This would make it easier to unionize private sector workers. If this bill passes, employees could gain union recognition as soon as a majority of employees signed cards approving of a union! This is something that would definitely increase union membership nationwide! Employees would no longer be afraid to voice their beliefs about unions, because under this bill it would be illegal to threaten or fire an employee over their right to talk about and form a union! There have been more

and more co-sponsors signing on to H.R. 4236. All unions nationwide are gaining signatures for this bill so that when it is discussed in the Senate there will be over One Million signatures!

The union movement was huge in the success of getting Barack Obama elected as President and in helping Democrats get elected to the Senate.

While I believe the outlook for the labor movement is now much better than it has been, I do believe there is plenty of work to do. Let's face it, the job of getting this

country back on track has just begun and will definitely take some time. Our elected officials will have many issues to deal with such as: the economy, health care, education, jobs and of course the war. These issues will not just simply go away . . . they have to be dealt with. The American people voted on Nov 4th for whom they believed would be best in dealing with these issues and other issues affecting this nation. We need to put our trust in these officials as we all look forward to a brighter future for all! Take Care.

SERVICES AVAILABLE THROUGH PostalEASE & Liteblue

Telephone 1-877-477-3273 Internet www.liteblue.usps.gov To access PostalEASE you need your Employee Identification Number (it can be found on your earnings statement) and your USPS Personal Identification Number (PIN). The following benefits are accessible through Liteblue and PostalEASE:

BENEFITS/COMPENSATION

- Health Benefits (FEHB)
- Life Insurance (FEGLI)
- Beneficiary Forms
- Death Benefits
- Leave Policies
- Annual Leave Exchanges
- Saving Bonds
- Uniform Allowance
- Civilian/Military Buybacks
- Donated Leave
- Flexible Savings Accounts (FSA)
- Thrift Savings Account (TSP) Enrollment and Catch-up
- Allotments/Net to Bank
- Federal W4 Forms
- W2 form Reprints

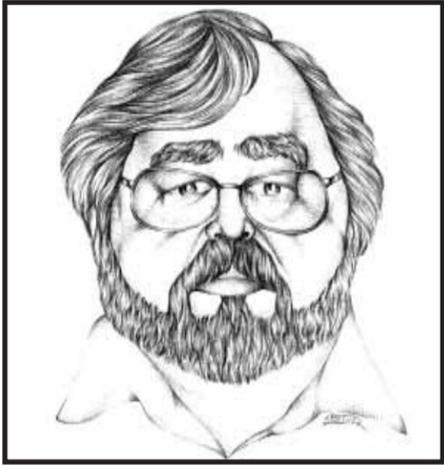
RETIREMENTS/SEPARATIONS

- General Information on Retirements
- Requests to File Retirement Applications (Optional and Disability)
- Individual Retirement Counseling
- Annuity Estimates
- Creditable Service History
- All Separation Requests
- Hard-copy informational material mailed to your home

Retirement Seminar information will soon be available to all Postal Service employees through LiteBlue. The retirement presentation includes various segments representing the A to Z information you need to know for retirement planning — whether you are covered by CSRS, CSRS Offset or FERS retirement. All this will be available 24 hours a day/7 days a week via LiteBlue. This information will also be available in a DVD format in the near future.

If you have personnel-related questions unresolved through self service or the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, you can speak to an experienced Personnel Specialist at the Human Resources Shared Service Center in Greensboro, NC by calling toll-free, 1-877-477-3273, option 5 (TDD/TTY 1-866-620-7507). The HRSSC hours of operation are 6:00 A.M. to 7:30 P.M. CST, Monday through Friday.

BADGER BULLETIN BOARD



by John E. Durben,
Editor

Do you know how sometimes your bubble gets bursted? Well here in Green Bay, our Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) is a separate building one or two hundred feet from our main office. I had to go talk to an employee regarding the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) at the VMF the other day and as I was walking through the parking

Does Your Bubble Get Bursted?

lot where the carriers normally load their vehicles I could have sworn that night crawlers were laying on the blacktop the way they normally do when the frost comes out of the ground and the weather warms up a little like in Spring – only to find out they were rubber bands laying around all over. Boy... was that discouraging.

The next *Badger Bulletin* due date will be on March 1, 2009.

Our website: <http://www.apwuwi.com/> is still up and running. This site belongs to the members of the APWU of Wisconsin. Please make use of it. I would urge any APWU of Wisconsin member to contact me with information or ideas to be posted for the rest of us. Our members have important things going on in their lives like mile stones in employment

at the PO (did you make regular which will really be difficult in today's postal service), a family member in the military? We want to give our members relatives preserving our freedoms recognition. **They** deserve it . . . Pictures are more than welcome. If you don't want to write an article – just give me a call or an email and I'll work with you to get something worthy of printing.

The APWU of Wisconsin site also has a page for APWU of Wisconsin Locals. I know this page is out of date and I've been trying for a couple of years to get it updated with no luck since I can't get a listing of Officers for each Local. Updates can't happen until I receive the information. Most of the updates have come about by accident as I find them. If each Local would provide me

with basic information such as: Name of Local, Address, Officers and contact information I could create a page on "the members" site for each local with the aforementioned information. I won't attempt this until a get enough Locals to provide me the information though.

Wisconsin Local Officers and Editors are the people in the know within their Locals. If you have an event that is in the planning stages or has past and is something that is newsworthy, let us know. The larger Locals in the State already have Newsletters but some of the information they print is newsworthy for all APWU members. That's where this site comes in. Your information could get posted here in a timely manner and it would be available to everyone.

— Safety Tip By Chuck —

by Chuck Lee,
PMA Steward Chief Trustee,
Greater Seattle Area News

PUT YOUR CAR KEYS/ ALARM SWITCH BESIDE YOUR BED AT NIGHT

To my fellow members: here's a tip I received via email the other day. This is assuming you have a car alarm, I think it's very useful and important and who knows, it may come in handy one of these days!

Tell your spouse, your children, your neighbors, your parents, fellow patients at your Doctor's office, the check-out girl at the market; in other words, tell everyone you meet.

Put your car keys beside your bed at night. If you hear a noise outside your home or someone trying to get in your house, just press the panic button for your car. The alarm will be set off, and the horn will continue to sound until either you turn it off or the car battery dies.

This tip came from a neighborhood watch coordinator. Next time you come home for the night and you start to put your keys away, think of this: It's a security alarm system that you probably already have and requires no installation. Test it. It will go off from most everywhere inside your house and will keep

honking until your battery runs down or until you reset it with the button on the key fob chain. It works if you park in your driveway or garage. If your car alarm goes off when someone is trying to break in your house, odds are the burglar/rapist won't stick around . . .

After a few seconds all the neighbors will be looking out their windows to see who is

out there and sure enough the criminal won't want that. And remember to carry your keys while walking to your car in a parking lot. The alarm can work the same way there. This is something that should really be shared with everyone. Maybe it could save a life or a sexual abuse crime.

P.S. I am sending this to everyone I know because I think it is fantastic. Would also

be useful for any emergency, such as a heart attack, where you can't reach a phone. A lady has suggested to her husband that he carry his car keys with him in case he falls outside and she doesn't hear him. He can activate the car alarm and then she'll know there's a problem.

Please pass this on even IF you've read it before. It's a reminder.

– reprint Greater Seattle Area News

Source: The Minnesota Postal Worker · November-December 2008

Administration's FMLA Changes Make Law's Use More Difficult

With barely two months left before leaving office and losing the power to do so, the Bush Administration in November issued new rules that will make it more difficult for workers to use the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney responded to the action by calling it "reprehensible" but all too predictable.

At the same time, however, the new rules included welcome language clarifying how military families can use the law to care for seriously ill or injured soldiers, and can use FMLA time to manage events revolving around a service member's departure or return.

The workplace changes take effect Jan. 16. They will force workers to tell employers in advance when they want FMLA time. Current regulations allow employees to tell employers up to two days after not showing up for work that they are using FMLA. Employees will now have to follow their employer's regular rules for informing them about missing work "absent unusual circumstances."

In addition, employers will be allowed to exclude from perfect attendance awards employees who took FMLA time.

The new regulations will make it "more difficult for people to use leave when they need it," said Jocelyn Frye, a lawyer with the National Partnership for Women and Families.

The 1993 law grants eligible workers up to a total of 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for such things as caring for a newborn or a sick family member, or because the employee him or herself has a serious health condition. It generally covers workplaces with 50 or more employees.

About 10 percent of the 77.1 million FMLA-eligible people took leave in 2005, the latest year for which data is available.

President-elect Barack Obama proposed expanding the Act during his campaign. He urged expanding coverage to businesses with 25 or more employees and said there should be leave time for domestic violence situations and elder care and for children's educational activities.

Rep. Lynn Woolsey, D-Calif., a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, said letting military families use the FMLA was necessary "to help military families balance work and family." But the other changes to the Family and Medical Leave Act look like they will, on balance, benefit employers at the expense of workers.



Healthy Lifestyle for 2009

There are many possible lifestyle guidelines that keep you healthy and prevent stress. Here we highlight the most important ones.

Avoid cigarettes. Cigarette smoking is the single most important preventable cause of illness and early death and the effects of smoking can be reversed. People tend to smoke more when under stress.

Exercise regularly. Regular exercise helps people of all ages look and feel better. Different kinds of exercise provide specific health benefits.

Eat sensibly. A nutritious diet is essential for maintaining good health and proper weight. A balanced diet, especially one low in fat or sugar, helps to prevent stress.

Get plenty of rest. Restful sleep helps you maintain health and cope better with problems.

If you drink, drink only in moderation. Alcohol is frequently used to reduce stress because it has a relaxing effect. Regular, heavy use of alcohol leads to disease. Drinking and driving often leads to fatal or crippling accidents.

Avoid too much caffeine. This is in many products such as coffee, tea, sodas and chocolate. It speeds up the body and can exaggerate the effects of stress.

Use care in taking drugs. Although drugs may provide temporary relief from stress symptoms they may not solve ongoing problems and tensions. Excessive or continued use of either prescription or illegal drugs may cause physical and mental problems and absenteeism from work.

Be safety conscious. Falls and injuries from auto or pedestrian accidents can lead to hospitalization and disability. Good safety at home, work, and on the road prevents accidents and injuries.

Get health care. Regular health care helps prevent disease by catching problems early and keeps them from getting worse.

Have friends you can talk to. People who give and receive affection regularly, who can let out their feelings to someone who cares tend to have fewer health problems and cope better with stress.

Learn to manage stress. Some stress is a normal part of living. Three steps keep daily stress from becoming a problem: take time to relax, talk with a friend, and learn to keep a perspective on things that are important and those that are not.

The first thing you can do to manage stress is to prevent it. A healthy lifestyle builds your physical and mental energy. Each of these behaviors helps prevent stress and makes a person less vulnerable to stress when it does occur.

(Information courtesy of Employee Assistance Program)



GALLERY OF PRESIDENTS

THE BADGER BULLETIN

Stojine



APWU of Wisconsin
John E. Durben, Editor
PO Box 10021
Green Bay, WI 54307

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED