



The Badger Bulletin

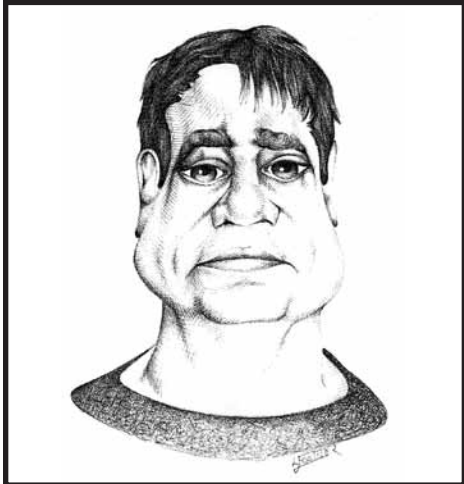
The American Postal Workers Union of Wisconsin

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2011 PPA Award Winner

January-February, 2012

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT . . . BY STEVE LORD



We Are Still Being Attacked!

an APWU rally in Madison in support of our state workers. I attended a National Presidents Conference in Washington DC. During this conference I led a delegation of Wisconsin APWU members to the offices of our Wisconsin representatives to lobby them to save the USPS. I also attended the

of the same I guess. The USPS is cherry picking the provisions of the new CBA that they want to abide by and ignoring the rest. It seems that every other Congressman or Senator either has a bill to save us or destroy us. However, no one seems willing to debate any of them. Instead of fixing

to the wealthy and corporations.

Trickle-down economics is a scam. Over the last thirty years the rich have gotten richer while the middle class has stagnated and begun to disappear. We cannot sit idly by and cry about the stressful situation we once again find ourselves in

Hi Everyone,
Happy New Year! I would like to report that 2012 is shaping up to be a better and less stressful year for postal employees but I don't want to lie to you. Before I talk about 2012 though, let's look at some of the things that happened in 2011.

On the Wisconsin front Governor Scott Walker started off the year by stripping state workers of their rights to collective bargaining and increasing their contributions for health and retirement benefits. At the same he awarded corporations in Wisconsin hundreds of millions of dollars in tax cuts. This was nothing but an outright attack on the working middle class of Wisconsin. The extreme right wing in Wisconsin and the rest of the country are seeking to make us slaves to the corporate rich.

APWU members took the streets in Madison to protest this attack. We held our own rally in March attended by APWU members from around the country. These attacks on the working class also led to efforts to recall members of the Wisconsin legislature. APWU members hit the streets collecting signatures needed to hold recall elections. Friends of union workers also faced recall. Once again APWU members around Wisconsin went to work on elections seeking to help our friends and send our enemies packing.

I and other members from around the state went on release staff for the national APWU. We were successful in 5 of the 9 races. However, we fell short of our goal to take back the State Senate so the fight goes on in 2012. First and foremost is our goal of recalling Governor Walker.

On the postal front we faced post office and plant closings, the USPS facing financial ruin, and certain right wing factions in Congress intent on destroying postal unions and in the process the USPS. 2011 has been a very stressful time to be a postal worker. The daily uncertainty that has become a part of our work lives is sometimes almost too hard to bear.

Personally in 2011 I organized and led



Craft Conferences and NPC in Las Vegas this past October.

Unfortunately, I fell off a ladder on November 14th and shattered part of an arm bone. I missed six weeks of work. I just recently went back the week after Christmas. I only mention this for two reasons. The first is to explain why I have been a little out of touch and the other to tout the APW Accident Benefit Association. My local is 100% ABA. Meaning the local pays the dues as a benefit to its members. I pay extra to get the high option. **Every single day since my accident I was paid \$24 a day. It added up to \$1050. It will be a great help with my medical bills. The ABA is something you all should look into.**

So what's in store for us in 2012? More

our financial problems that they created Congress sees fit to keep extending the USPS's financial deadlines. Congress is in a state of gridlock because of 2012 being an election year and because the extreme right wing still seeks to impose their will on the American people.

The only solution to our problems will be to elect representatives to Congress that will work for the American working class and not for corporate America. Let's make the 2012 elections a backlash to the 2010 elections that were influenced by the poor economy. When the Republicans took over the House of Representatives in 2010 they said they would improve the economy and create jobs. Instead all they did was continue to give unsustainable tax breaks

for 2012. We must take action and cause change to happen. If we go down at least we will go down fighting.

**Please note our new address:
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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.

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ORGANIZATION . . . BY RICK GALLO



Several months ago, the APWU announced that the new national agreement had been ratified. Following that ratification action, the agreement was actually signed by President Guffy and PMG Donahoe on May 23, 2011 – some eight months ago. The APWU Web News on May 23rd stated, “A permanent printed version of the contract will be finalized soon. The union will post a notice on www.apwu.org when it is available.” Only 80 days later, Donahoe was before Congress requesting massive layoffs, changes in health care provisions, and changes in retirement programs; all in direct and blatant violation of the agreement he put his own hand to 11 weeks earlier. Those of us in the field are assuredly used to the lying and unabashed lack of integrity on management’s part, so this should have come as no surprise. Yet, here we are, some

This Is Frustrating!

eight months after the **actual signing** of the national agreement, and no printed version has yet materialized. Now, I’ve been thoroughly involved with employee representation for virtually my whole career, just over 39 years, and I can honestly say I have never seen anything like it!

Our state organization, in compliance with our own state constitution, conducted contract orientation training concerning the new contract. During those presentations we were repeatedly assured that all kinds of bargaining unit work would be returned to the crafts as set forth in that new national agreement. Pursuant to the agreement’s own terms, USPS was to meet with APWU within 30 days of the signing of the agreement “. . . to review the audits and career position descriptions.” (See 2.D.3, paragraph 4 of the MOU on Clerk Craft Jobs).

Perhaps the laugh was on us. No work has, as of yet anyway, been returned. If my office is any indication, I would say that higher levels of management have actually opened the floodgates and instructed lower managers and line supervisors to do as much bargaining unit work as they possibly can. All of this of course, is in blatant violation of the agreement. In fact, I have heard of at least one POOM who clearly instructed local Management to do exactly that, and even further, to disregard any grievances

the union might initiate concerning such violations.

At least in our District, USPS has conducted little (if any?) training for managers/supervisors concerning the new contract. The message clearly is that they do not care. They don’t care what is in the contract, and they most assuredly do not care if they violate it. Equally frustrating for me, is the fact that we have no printed contract, and further, there has been absolutely no indication that any work has been agreed to be returned to the craft.

Show me the list of work that is to be returned, and tell me when we get it! You see, for me the most important cornerstone of union representation is the contract itself. Yes, I acknowledge that the union must also be concerned about a myriad of other issues which impact upon our members, not the least of which is the financial health of our employer and the various legislative efforts that have been ongoing for the past several months. But folks, if we can’t even enforce the contract we negotiated, I’m not sure much of anything else matters. The utter reality of the USPS lack of integrity has a deep affect on the attitude of our own members. We must do something to stifle this frustration! As we start the New Year, let’s hope we start kickin’ some serious butt!

HUMAN RELATIONS . . . BY LUCY HAUSER, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RELATIONS

— O W C P —

Late last year the Department of Labor made internal changes in an effort to centralize their data entry and case creation operations. What does this mean to you, the injured worker? More delays.

In the past you received a notification from OWCP that they received your initial claim forms and your case number was printed on that notice. The new procedure is they will mail the claimant a postcard notifying them that the paperwork was received, but it is up to the claimant to contact the employer or OWCP to obtain the claim number. First of all, we all know what happens to postcards in the machinery – they get missent, missorted and damaged. When you finally get your postcard you must act quickly to obtain your claim number because no medical bills can be submitted to OWCP without the claim number. We no longer have any local Human Resources personnel so you should ask your supervisor for the phone number of the District HR Specialist so you can request your claim number.

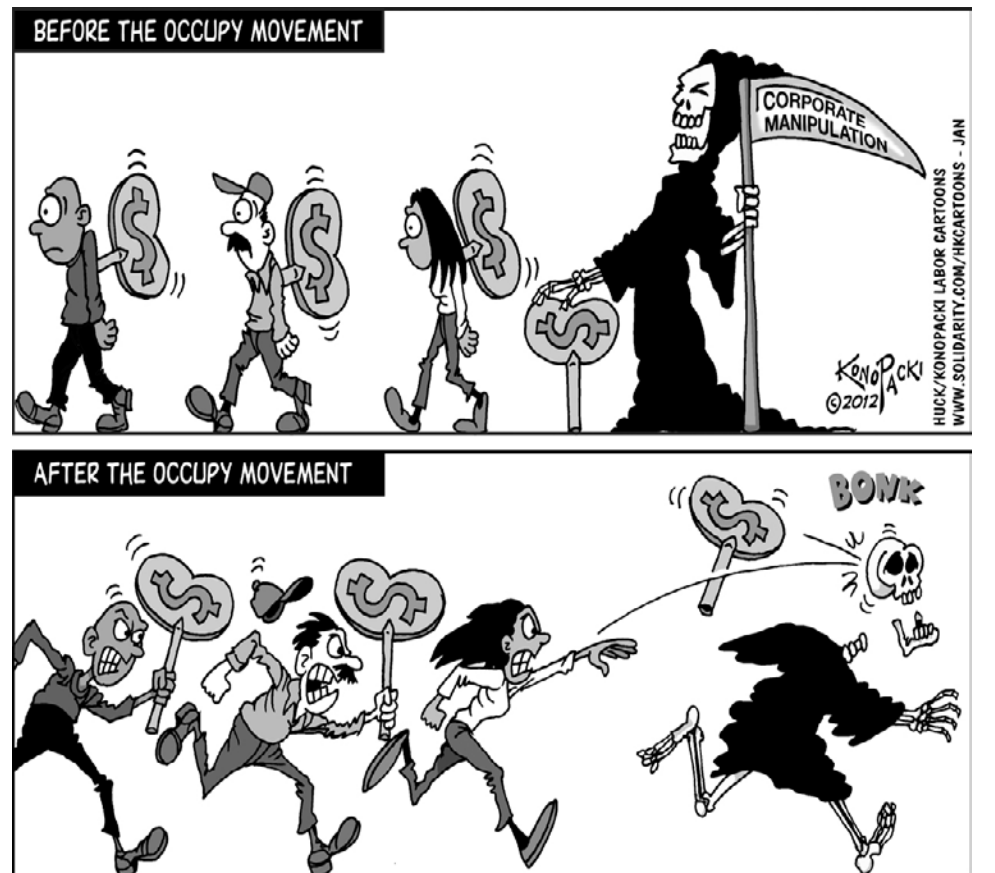
OWCP claims that this change was necessary to protect your privacy – so nobody else can see your claim number. Guess how the District HR offices are notified of your claim number? They get a postcard in the mail with your name and claim number.

As if it wasn’t already bad enough, compensation payments will probably be delayed because of changes made to the processing of CA-7’s. Management is not allowed to submit the forms if the “from” date on the CA-7 is a projected future date. If you submit

the form to your supervisor in advance the supervisor must either hold or refuse your CA-7 until “after the fact”. It’s anybody’s guess as to how much more this procedure will delay your compensation checks.

I have often mentioned at Union meetings that we should all consider purchasing some type of Disability Insurance, even if

you have a lot of sick leave on the books. You may not need an amount equal to your bi-weekly paycheck, but we all have regular monthly payments that cannot be ignored. Figure out how much money you would need each month if you were not receiving your paycheck and obtain disability insurance that covers at least that amount.



LEGISLATIVELY SPEAKING . . . BY JEFF WORDEN, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

— Total Recall —

No, it's not the movie, but even better, a real live event happening here in Wisconsin!

On November 15th "United Wisconsin" (The group responsible for the "Recall Scott Walker" internet movement) started the drive to collect signatures to **recall Governor Scott Walker and Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch.**

A total of 540,260 signatures are needed to start a recall election! There is a 60-day window in which to collect the signatures. The final date will probably be Jan 17, 2012. At that time the signatures will go to the Government Accountability Board to be verified.

Within less than two (2) weeks there have been **over 300,000** signatures collected—that's over 50% and in less than two weeks! According to the Milwaukee County Labor Press "*Even the GOP spokesmen concede that the issue was no longer the minimal threshold of 540,260 signatures by Jan 17, 2012, but how many more will be collected.*"

The republicans are trying to get their "Redistricting Plan" done and in place before the recall. But, why you ask? Because if they (Republicans) should fail to get their redistricting done, then the districts would stay as they now are and (with the next election) there is a very good chance the republicans may lose their one (1) vote majority in the State Senate!

Last summer the recall of two (2) of the Republican State Senators narrowed the republicans margin of majority to just one (1)!

With the **ease** in which signatures are being collected it is quite obvious that Wisconsin voters are **NOT** happy with Scott Walker and his Sidekicks.

There are a handful of Scott Walker cronies who whine that there are a large number of "Out-of State" union people driving the recall process. To that I say BULLSH#T! Everyone knows (including the Republicans) that this recall was and in fact is a **WISCONSIN GRASSROOTS EFFORT!**

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the recall just go to; www.unitedwisconsin.com and wisdems.org.

On Dec. 13, 2011 the House Republicans (you know, the party that **hates** the unions/working/middle-class) voted in favor of H.R. 3630

The so-called **Middle class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011**, which would cut the take-home pay for federal and postal employees by forcing CSRS and FERS employees to pay more into their retirement. The bill was introduced by Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI), and Co-Sponsored by another (5) five Republicans. (See a pattern here?) Voting in favor of the bill was 224 Republicans and 10 Democrats. There were **14 Republicans and 179 Democrats** who **voted NO!** President Obama has threatened to **veto** the bill if it reaches his desk. (It sure is good to have a friend in the Whitehouse).

We must ALL contact our Senators and tell them to vote NO on H.R. 3630.

Again, brothers and sisters the **proof is in the pudding.** The **Republicans** are defi-

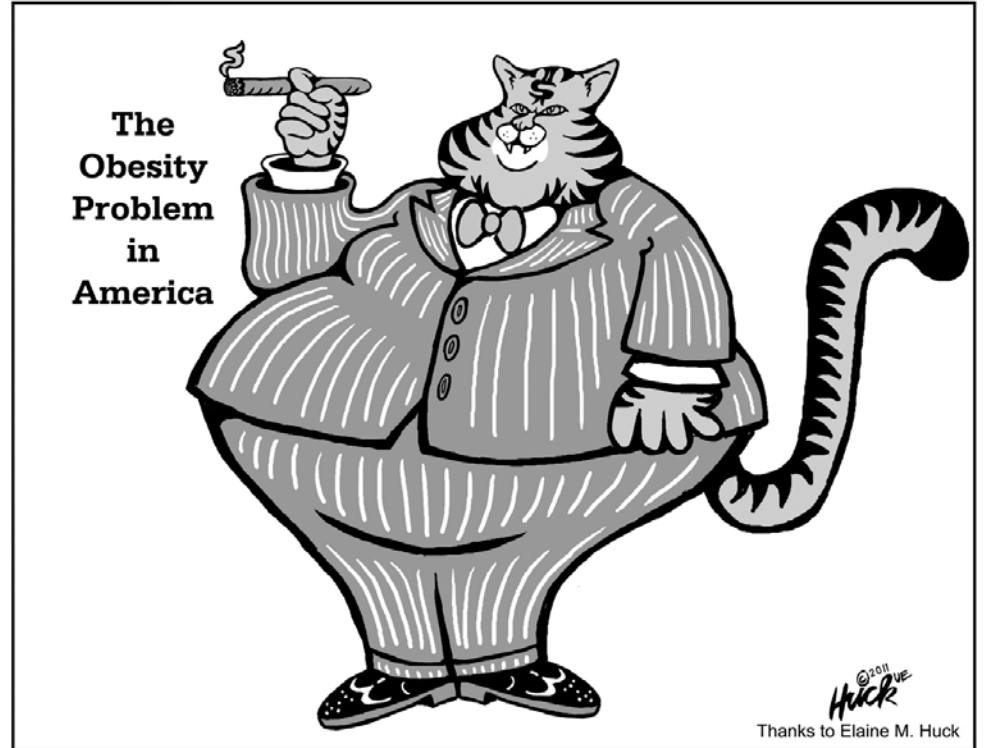
nately **NOT** for the working/middle class!

On Dec. 7, 2011 Rep. DeFazio introduced H.R. 3591 (The Postal Service Protection Act).

This is a companion to S. 1853, a bill that was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). Some of the specifics on the bill are;

- Fix the immediate fiscal woes of the USPS.
- Stop the closure of many Rural Post Offices.
- Keep the current (high standards) of first class mail delivery while stopping the efforts to eliminate overnight mail.
- Require the continuation of 6-Day delivery. This in of itself is HUGE!
- Would established new ways for the USPS to generate revenue.
- Eliminate the requirement to pre-fund healthcare for future retirees.
- Would allow the USPS to recover more than 11-Billion dollars paid in overpayments to FERS and to recover overpayments of between 50 billion to 75 billion dollars to CSRS.

I will talk to APWU National Legislative Director Myke Reid shortly after the New Year to find out more about the above bills



and other legislative action that the APWU national would like put out to the members. I will keep everyone updated/informed as information becomes available.

In closing, I hope all members and their families had a Merry Christmas and a Happy and safe New Year. Take Care.

Walker's Belated Attack On Retirees

by Leon Burzynski

Perhaps you heard the old saying about "the other shoe falling." Given the propensity of Governor Walker and his Republican minions in the Wisconsin legislature to introduce -and pass one bill after another that guts employee rights and benefits, the latest move should not be a surprise.

Buried in the Wisconsin Biennial Budget Bill was a directive "to study the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS)." What did this mean? In a nutshell, that phrase is the Walker code for privatizing the WRS. As the notorious bank robber, Willie Sutton, once said, "That's where the money is."

To be honest, Walker and the Fitzgerald brothers do not have the intelligence to make this happen on their own. Upon completion of their bogus "study/" they will introduce the language written by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).

The ALEC model language wants to make public employee retirement benefits optional. Their proposal would give public employees the option of a defined benefit (pension plan) or a defined contribution (401 (k) type plan).

In the "land of freedom" mentality that has overtaken the country, ALEC figures this is a good way to decimate the existing pension plans. Younger workers, in particular, have this notion that they can do better on their own in the stock market. Young workers are never going to get sick, never going to get old, and they are going to become millionaires from their Wall Street gains.

While Walker will claim the folks already in the plan have nothing to worry about, he is flat out lying. The ALEC model

legislative proposal specifically states that the present plan "would be required to transfer the actuarial present value" of employees who decide to try their luck on Wall Street to their 401 (k) type account.

Given how actuarial values of pension plans work, this would be the same as stealing from the existing retirees. The actuarial value of a pension plan is based on the professional management of the entire amount of the plan with the funds at hand as they relate to the number of participants in the plan.

It factors in the amounts paid by all workers in the system.

The present economy is a perfect illustration of the fallacy in this proposal. By allowing plan participants to withdraw at any time, it creates the same trap door that 401 (k) and IRA investors have faced. In order to buy groceries, keep their homes, or send their kids to college, they raided

their 401 (k)'s which, of course, is their retirement income.

The WRS is not broke and does not need any repairs. Governor Walker's efforts to facilitate the privatization of the WRS is nothing more than his way of rewarding his cronies on Wall Street and continuing the war he started against public employees in Wisconsin.

With the Mercury Marine and Manitowoc Crane company treatments of their workforce, it will only be a matter of time before private company unions adopt Walker's pro-1 % agenda.

I urge all Wisconsinites to see this for what it is -another attack on union workers and retirees. It is stealing through the legislative process, which I thought only took place in Chicago.

— Source: Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans

The APWU of Wisconsin State Convention will run from April 26 -28 in La Crosse, WI. The plan is to do a half day of craft round tables with some legislative training included. The rooms have all been blocked. More information will be furnished via *The Badger Bulletin* or at: APWU-WI.COM. We are also on Facebook.

Occupiers Occupied:**The Hijacking Of The First Amendment**

A funny thing happened to the First Amendment on its way to the public forum. According to the Supreme Court, money is now speech and corporations are now people. But when real people without money assemble to express their dissatisfaction with the political consequences of this, they're treated as public nuisances and evicted.

First things first. The Supreme Court's rulings that money is speech and corporations are people have now opened the floodgates to unlimited (and often secret) political contributions from millionaires and billionaires. Consider the Koch brothers (worth \$25 billion each), who are bankrolling the Tea Party and already running millions of dollars worth of ads against Democrats.

Such millionaires and billionaires aren't contributing their money out of sheer love of country. They have a more self-interested motive. Their political spending is analogous to their other investments. Mostly they want low tax rates and friendly regulations.

Wall Street is punishing Democrats for enacting the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation (weak as it is) by shifting its money to Republicans. The Koch brothers' petrochemical empire has financed, among many other things, candidates who will

vote against environmental protection.

This tsunami of big money into politics is the real public nuisance. It's making it almost impossible for the voices of average Americans to be heard because most of us don't have the dough to break through. By granting First Amendment rights to money and corporations, the First Amendment rights of the rest of us are being trampled on.

This is where the Occupiers come in. If there's a core message to the Occupier movement it's that the increasing concentration of income and wealth poses a grave danger to our democracy.

Yet when Occupiers seek to make their voices heard — in one of the few ways average people can still be heard — they're told their First Amendment rights are limited.

The New York State Court of Appeals along with many mayors and other officials say Occupiers can picket — but they can't encamp. Yet it's the encampments themselves that have drawn media attention (along with the police efforts to remove them).

A bunch of people carrying pickets isn't news. When it comes to making views known, picketing is no competition for big money.

Yet if Occupiers now shift tactics from passive resistance to violence, it would spell

the end of the movement. The vast American middle class that now empathizes with the Occupiers would promptly desert them.

But there's another alternative. If Occupiers are expelled from specific geographic

locations the Occupier movement can shift to broad-based organizing around the simple idea at the core of the movement: It's time to occupy our democracy.

— Source: Robert Reich.org

Celiac Disease

Celiac Disease is a hereditary autoimmune disorder of the small intestine and affects a wide range of people regardless of race or age. Currently this disorder affects 1 in 105 people and while in the past it has gone undetected, through screenings and education more cases are being found every day. This disorder is a result of the body's reaction to the protein found in wheat, rye and barley. When consumed these proteins react with the immune system causing inflammation in the intestine which in turn interferes with the absorption of nutrients. This lack of nutrients can cause vitamin deficiencies that deprive your brain, peripheral nervous system, bones, liver and other organs of vital nourishment.

People with celiac disease have a higher chance of developing:

- Autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, and estrogen syndrome
- Addison's disease
- Down syndrome
- Intestinal cancer
- Intestinal lymphoma
- Lactose intolerance
- Thyroid disease

Symptoms of Celiac Disease include:

- Type 1 diabetes
- Bruising easily
- Depression or anxiety
- Fatigue
- Growth delay in children
- Hair loss
- Itchy skin
- Missed menstrual periods
- Mouth ulcers
- Muscle cramps and joint pain
- Nosebleeds
- Seizures
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Unexplained short height

If you feel that you or a family member has Celiac Disease please consult your medical professional for testing. No treatment can cure celiac disease, however, you can effectively manage celiac disease by changing your diet. Members in the High Option can take advantage of the New Weight Management Program to see an in-network dietician/nutritionist to help you get on the path to a diet that meets your needs.

— Source: APWU Health Plan



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

— THE LIGHTER SIDE —**Subject: Telephones**

After having dug to a depth of 10 feet last year, New York scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 100 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network more than 100 years ago.

Not to be outdone by the New Yorkers, in the weeks that followed, a California archaeologist dug to a depth of 20 feet, and shortly after, a story in the LA Times read: "California archaeologists, report finding of 200 year old copper wire, have concluded that their ancestors already had an

advanced high-tech communications network a hundred years earlier than the New Yorkers."

One week later. A local newspaper in Wisconsin reported the following: "After digging as deep as 30 feet in his pasture near New Richmond, Wisconsin, Ole Swenson, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely nothing. Ole has therefore concluded that 300 years ago, Wisconsin had already gone wireless".

Just makes a person proud to be from Wisconsin.

**The next
due date
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is
March 1
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