



The Badger Bulletin

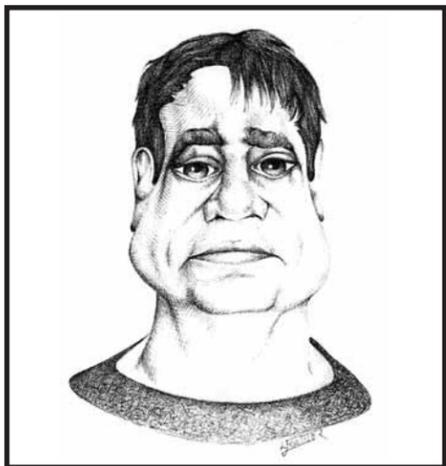
The American Postal Workers Union of Wisconsin

Volume 42 No. 3

2007 PPA Award Winner

May-June, 2009

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT . . . BY STEVE LORD



All Is Not Doom And Gloom

end to corporate greed and the false hope of trickle down economics. Times have never looked brighter for the future of health care for all Americans, a cleaner environment, and the end to dependence on foreign oil. These things cannot happen on their own. It depends on how bad we want them and how hard we are willing to work for them. But, the opportunity is there and we are lucky to have it.

of Wisconsin at the last Executive Board Meeting voted to donate two thousand dollars to the Turn Around America Fund for the Employee Free Choice Act. Our donation put the AFL-CIO of Wisconsin over its goal of twenty thousand dollars. We can be proud that our state organization is at the forefront of this historic struggle.

I mailed out to you. Due to an error at the printer the class schedule and registration rates were wrong in the last Badger Bulletin. If you no longer have the forms I mailed out don't worry I will be mailing out another copy to all locals soon.

Also, we all owe a big thank you to the hard work John Durben does on this publication. Did you know he also is responsible for our website and its new look. If you haven't seen it please plan on doing so soon. You will be impressed. It is interactive so please participate.

As always, thanks for listening.

ODDS AND ENDS

The John Akey Seminar in August is rapidly approaching. If you have not made hotel and class registrations please do so soon. Please use the registration forms that

APWU OF WISCONSIN COMES THROUGH AGAIN

There is more good news. The APWU

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

Sorry if this article is a little short but yeah for me I'm going turkey hunting. Before I can go I had to finish work on two grievances, pack, and mow the lawn. While I was mowing the lawn I was thinking about what to write this article about. Was I going to write another article about our sad predicament? It seems all you hear and read about regarding our employment is all doom and gloom. It is hard not to write about it. It is harder still not to get caught up in it. However, I thought maybe we could stop for a minute and look at the brighter side of things that gets easily lost in all the doom and gloom.

We belong to a strong union with great officers who work hard representing us. We have a great contract that has grown stronger through the collective bargaining process. Through great training we have learned how to use the contract to protect our rights. The contract gives us no layoff protection. The future of no layoff protection may be in doubt but, where would we be this minute without it. The contract provides us with a good living wage. Also, we can count our blessings that the contract does not expire until November 2010. Hopefully the economy will be on the upswing by then and along with it the fortunes of the USPS.

We have a Democrat in the White house and a Democratic Congress who I do not believe will let the USPS fail. We have Bill HR 22 before Congress that will give the Post Office some needed financial relief. We have a dedicated and excellent Legislative Department led by Director Myke Reid and Assistant Director Steve Albanese who are doing a great job working to get HR 22 passed. (Don't forget to write your congressman to press for quick passage of HR 22)

Finally, we are lucky to be entering a new era that with hard work and diligence on our parts could lead to a resurgence of prosperity for middle class working Americans. We have the opportunity to put an

'Joe' The 'Plumber' Campaigns Against Employee Free Choice, Hasn't Read Bill

This seems like it should be an April Fool's joke, but it's not: Samuel "Joe the Plumber" Wurzelbacher, who's on a tour of Pennsylvania as a spokesman against the Employee Free Choice Act, apparently took the job without even knowing what it is he opposes.

So, let's sum up: corporate front group "Americans for Prosperity" (AFP) has hired "Joe the Plumber" to be the face of their anti-Employee Free Choice Act campaign, which would be great, except that not only is he neither a licensed plumber nor named "Joe," he doesn't even particularly know what he's advocating against. And after two days of being confronted by real plumbers, Wurzelbacher ran away from Pennsylvania, leaving his tour unfinished.

Michael Morrill, a blogger from Keystone Progress, catches Wurzelbacher on video admitting that "I don't know a lot" about existing labor law and how the Employee Free Choice Act would change it. He dodges questions about the Employee Free Choice Act, showing that he's not familiar with the bill or the issues involved.

When Wurzelbacher went to Pittsburgh, he was confronted by more than 100 union members, and by the time he arrived in Harrisburg, more than 200 union members came out to protest his appearance and show their support for the Employee Free Choice Act. He admitted to these union workers he hadn't read the bill. Frank Snyder of the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO reports that Wurzelbacher ended his tour and left the state without even showing up for his last scheduled appearance.

Let's clarify this for him, shall we?

The Employee Free Choice Act is designed to restore workers' basic freedom to form unions. It allows both of the options that are currently legal under the National Labor Relations Act—majority sign-up and an extended election period—and lets workers, rather than corporations, pick which method they use to form a union.

It protects workers from management intimidation and harassment by creating real penalties for unfair practices and illegal firings. And it guarantees that when workers choose to bargain, they can reach a first contract.

The 300,000 members of the Plumbers and Pipe Fitters (UA) union have a different opinion than Wurzelbacher on the Employee Free Choice Act, possibly because they understand existing labor law and how it infringes on the critical freedom to form a union and bargain for a better life. Real plumbers are rallying in support of the freedom to form unions and against the corporate disinformation campaign. Rick Terven, the legislative director of UA, had this to say about Wurzelbacher's tour:



Joe the plumber is selling out real plumbers. Right now, labor law is stacked against real plumbers. Real plumbers want and need the Employee Free Choice Act as a way to empower themselves to join a union, without fear of intimidation or losing their jobs. Joe the Plumber doesn't speak for real plumbers.

AFP, an oil industry front, is hoping to trick the press and elected officials into thinking that there's a grassroots movement against the Employee Free Choice Act, but working people are too smart to be taken in by such a laughably transparent ruse. Sorry, Mr. The Plumber, but nobody's buying what you're selling.

— Source: AFL-CIO NOW BLOG

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

EDUCATION AND ORGANIZATION . . . BY RICK GALLO, DIRECTOR

Labor Relations



I recently attended two programs dealing with the topics of labor relations and arbitration. Every year in the spring (end of April/beginning of May) the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC) hosts a Public Sector Labor Relations Conference. The Conference is also co-sponsored by the University of Wisconsin Law School, and the Section on Labor and Employment Law of the State Bar of Wisconsin. The conference is a full day session which provides information and instruction to participants on various current and timely issues in the field of labor relations. The conference is always well attended, and this year was no exception, with almost 350 participants.

We were updated concerning current issues in the labor relations field. This was followed by a keynote address concerning what the new administration and Congress may mean for labor relations. The featured speaker was Peter Hurtgen. Mr. Hurtgen spent seven years at the top levels of the labor relations field – he was a member and chair of the National Labor Relations Board (1997-2002) and he was the Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (2002-2004).

It is interesting to hear directly from people that actually dealt with labor issues on a very broad national scale. The conference setting gave participants an opportunity to interact with these professionals in a very open and even one-on-one basis. The audience was invited to pose questions directly to Hurtgen and get his responses. Following this address, a series of 19 different breakout sessions were offered. Attendees could choose from a wide variety of topics/issues. The presentations for each session consisted of a three-member panel which included a labor representative, a management representative, and a profes-

sional arbitrator. These classes are from 60 to 90 minutes each. The information contained in these programs is always interesting, informative, and timely.

This year, in conjunction with the Labor Relations Conference, another full day program was held the day before. This was a program on Labor Arbitration Advocacy Training, and was conducted by the Central Midwest Region of the National Academy of Arbitrators. Much like the Labor Relations Conference, this program began with a general welcome address, followed by a panel discussion of current topics concerning “What’s Up In Arbitration.”

Panelists included three arbitrators/members of the National Academy, as well as two labor-relations attorneys; one representing management and the other representing labor. A “Lightning Round” was then conducted with a different panel of arbitrators which also featured discussion on the topics of evidence and procedure. A series of breakout sessions then followed which featured seven different sessions which included such topics as: The Elements of Persuasion – Understanding Arguments; Effective Interest Arbitration Advocacy; Putting Your Best Foot Forward – A Primer On Arbitration Advocacy; Workplace Bullying and Violence Updated; Difficult Issues In Activation and Return Of National Guard and Reserves; and Contract Interpretation, Discipline and Past Practice Issues.

Last but not least, the program concluded with, “Ask the Arbitrator: Any Question You Want,” a panel of five respected and nationally-recognized arbitrators responded to questions from the participants. The Academy training program was also very well attended, with at least 200-250 participants.

I found each of the aforementioned pro-

grams to be extremely engaging, interesting, informative, and highly educational. I would highly recommend these programs to any APWU officer or steward to further enhance their labor relations knowledge and skills.

After spending two full days engaging in vibrant adult conversations covering a wide range of labor relations topics, I felt like my batteries were fully charged; I was energized! After all, these were some of the finest arbitration minds in the country. And despite the fact that we were discussing common workplace issues, it was more like an academia atmosphere.

It was truly stimulating, and very engaging. The next day, I returned to work at the post office. I was instantly slapped back to reality. Unfortunately, postal management seems to know little or nothing about labor relations in practice, and even less about labor relations philosophy. You see, in order for the system to work correctly, both parties, (i.e. management and labor) must be willing and open to compromise. They must view the relationship as a collaborative one – much more like a partnership; where both parties are interested in the best outcome for the business.

Part of the problem is the extent to which the collaborative bargaining process is treated more like a poker game. Of course, the object of a poker game is to win; whether you bluff your way through or not, you still win. **Any good labor relations model includes a foundation of honesty and integrity.** These are, unfortunately, words and ideas generally foreign to USPS management. But as any eternal optimist, I continue to hold out hope that one day postal management will get educated and things will change . . . maybe someday!



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@sbcglobal.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
chillihead@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

We Need To Write To Our Elected Officials

WE NEED TO WRITE TO OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS LIKE OUR JOBS DEPEND ON IT...BECAUSE THEY DO!

First off, I would like to say “thank You” to all who attended the training seminar in Oshkosh, WI on April 4th & 5th. The classes on Saturday were a “hands-on” type of training which I believed worked quite well.

At the seminar \$1065.00 was raised for COPA. A” Thank You” to ALL who donated items for the COPA raffle and bought COPA raffle tickets. I would also like to say thank you to the APWU Wisconsin Auxiliary for all their hard work.

One of the top agenda items for the APWU is the legislation entitled “H.R. 22”. In 2006 under the “postal reform law” it required the Postal Service to pre-fund 80% of future retiree healthcare benefit costs by 2016. These payments alone cost the postal service over 5-billion a year and that’s not including another 2 ½ billion paid yearly for the current retiree benefits.

Under H.R. 22 the postal service would still pay its share of retirees’ health insurance payments but, could use the money from the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund which currently has approximately 32-billion dollars!

With the current law none of the monies from this fund can be used for “current” retirees’ health premiums until 2016. This is why year after year the postal service pays into this fund but, under current law cannot touch these funds. Therefore, the postal service keeps racking up more debt. Once H.R.22 is passed it will ease the financial burden on the USPS.

At our Executive Board Meeting it was agreed to start an “Aggressive” letter writing campaign for H.R.22. Here is an example of a letter you can write to your respective Congress person.

It is best to hand-write your letter but, if you want to type it that’s fine too! One idea is to have numerous people from your local write a letter and then have the local union mail them to the appropriate Congress person or your local can mail them to the state APWU and they in turn will get them to the appropriate office. **Don’t forget to ask family and friends to write a letter.** Remember our jobs really do depend on this legislation.

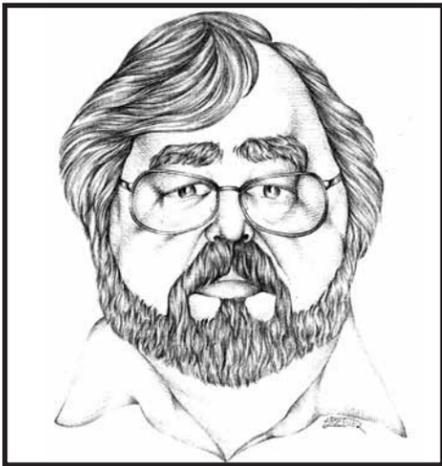
In closing I want to wish all members and their families a safe and fun summer.
Take Care.

*Dear Congressman _____
I am a postal worker from _____. I am extremely concerned about the present financial crisis the USPS is in. I am writing to you to ask for your support of HR22. This bill would amend Chapter 89 of the title 5 United States Code to allow the USPS to pay its share of present retiree’s health benefits out of the Retiree Health Benefits Fund. Without the quick passage of this bill and the financial relief it would provide I fear for the existence of the USPS. I believe that the demise of the USPS would be catastrophic for our country. Please cosponsor and support HR22.*

*Signature
Your name and address.*

BADGER BULLETIN BOARD

New FMLA Forms Available



by John E. Durben,
Editor

The next *Badger Bulletin* due date will be July 1, 2009 for members and officers who would like to submit articles and information for publication in the next issue.

For your convenience the new FMLA Forms have been uploaded to our website under Forms. The web address is located elsewhere in this publication.

If you have access to a computer, then you have access to *USPS News Link*. They've got a feature in the daily business day news release where employees write in to say something great about the post office

or what they're doing to save the post office and the big item I've noticed lately is how employees are buying stamps for all their relatives for every occasion and paying their bills by mail and so forth. A recent offering indicated that when they saw an envelope that says, "Save a stamp, pay online" they write, "Buy a stamp! Save a job!" Wouldn't the truth better be said by saying, "Buy a stamp! Save a machine!"?

I just received information from Brother Rick Gallo since the last printing that we have three new members. They are:

- Mary Rostkowski – Richfield, WI.
 - Tami Ausloos – New Holstein, WI
 - Diane Heimerl – Port Washington, WI.
- WELCOME!**

Food for Thought – The Postal Service spent \$63 Million on rubber bands in 2008.

As Steve mentioned in his article, the website has made a large transformation in the last couple of months. If anyone has constructive suggestions to improve its' usefulness for the membership, please contact me or one of the Officers.

USPS Ends Second Quarter With \$1.9 Billion Loss

Aggressive Cost-Reduction, Revenue-Generation Efforts Continue

USPS ended its second quarter with a net loss of \$1.9 billion, bringing the year-to-date net loss to \$2.3 billion, compared to \$35 million during the same period last year.

In his report yesterday at the Board of Governors meeting, Joseph Corbett, chief financial officer and executive vice president, said a significant portion of these losses can be attributed to an un-

precedented decline in mail volume. In the second quarter, mail volume totaled 43.8 billion pieces, down 7.5 billion pieces (14.7 percent) compared to a year ago.

Second-quarter operating revenue was \$16.9 billion, a decrease of nearly \$2 billion (10.5 percent) from the same period last year, and operating expenses were \$18.8 billion, a reduction of \$782 million (4.0 percent) from the second quarter of last year. To view complete second-quarter results contained in the Postal Service Form 10-Q report on *usps.com*.

Despite aggressive actions to reduce costs and grow revenue, said Corbett, the Postal Service likely will face a cash shortfall of more than \$1.5 billion at the end of the fiscal year.

USPS also is seeking support for legislation redirecting a portion of the Postal Service's prior payments to the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Trust Fund to pay its share of contributions for current retiree health benefits through 2016. If enacted, the legislation would reduce the projected 2009 net loss by approximately \$2 billion.

REVENUE GENERATION

To increase mail volumes, Corbett said USPS has developed incentive programs for advertising mail and Priority Mail services, along with a proposed "summer sale" for Standard Mail, which currently is under review by the Postal Regulatory Commission.

COST REDUCTIONS

Initiatives designed to match workhours to reduced mail volumes have resulted in a reduction of 58 million hours — the equivalent of 33,000 full-time employees — in the first half of FY 2009. USPS remains on track to meet the goal of reducing workhours by more than 100 million for the entire year, the equivalent of 57,000 full-time employees.

Corbett said other savings are coming from consolidating excess capacity in mail processing and transportation networks, realigning carrier routes, halting construction of new postal facilities, freezing Postal Service officer and executive salaries at 2008 pay levels, and reducing travel budgets.

— Source: USPS News Link

What You Need To Know About The \$250 Stimulus Payment

President Obama recently signed into law an economic stimulus plan that includes a one-time \$250 payment for many seniors. Special thanks to Alliance members who contacted their elected officials in support of this bill.

look for it that way. If you have direct deposit, it will come that way.

Who is Eligible?

Individuals who currently receive Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Railroad Retirement or Veterans' benefits.

When Will I Get It?

Payments will be mailed out in late May. Social Security asks that you wait until June 4 to contact them if you did not receive it.

How Do I Get It?

You do not have to do anything. If you currently receive benefits through the mail,

Beware of Scams!
Watch out for anyone saying you need to provide your Social Security number or other personal information in order to get your payment.

QUESTIONS?
Contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or www.socialsecurity.gov

— SOURCE: Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans

— THE LIGHTER SIDE —

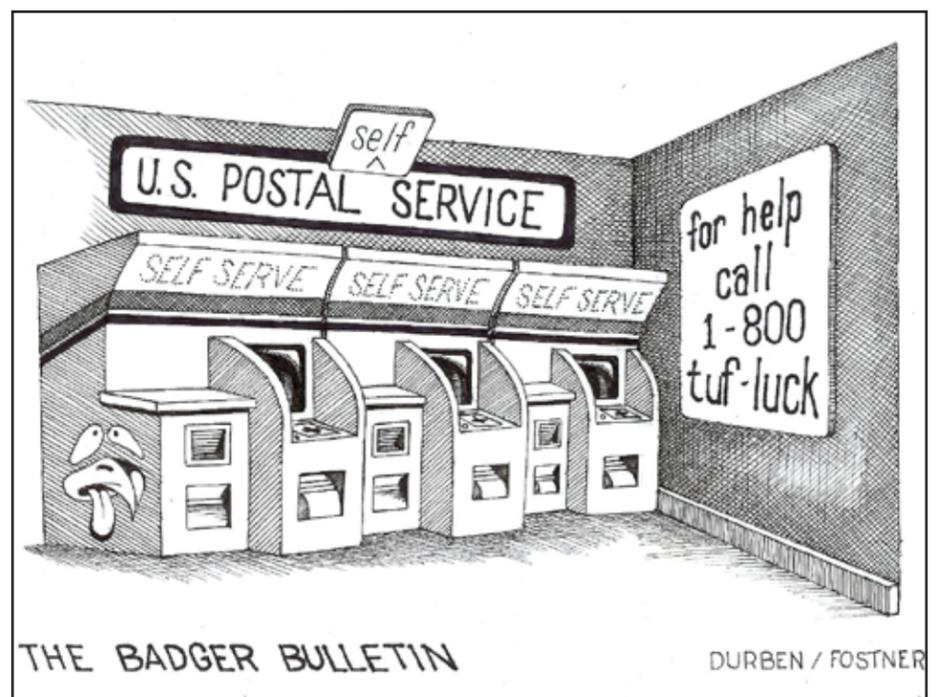
Subject: Stress Management

Just in case you are having a rough day (week, year, life), here is a stress management technique recommended in all the latest psychological journals. The funny thing is that it really does work and will make you smile.

1. Picture yourself lying on your tummy on a warm rock that hangs out over a crystal clear stream.
2. Picture yourself with both your hands dangling in the cool running water.
3. Birds are sweetly singing in the cool mountain air.
4. No one knows your secret place.
5. You are in total seclusion from that hectic place called the world.
6. The soothing sound of a gentle waterfall fills the air with a cascade of serenity.
7. The water is so crystal clear that you can easily make out the face of the person you are holding underwater.

There!!! See? It really does work. You're smiling already.

Editor's Note: Beware . . . Your EAP Councilor may frown on this.



Saving Window Jobs

The following is an excerpt from an article by Lisa Herrera from Walnut Creek, California, that was reprinted in a Colorado Springs APWU newsletter, the Pikespeaker.

Improper Method: Clerk Tom sells 3 books of stamps, hits 3 quantity and scans. POS gives Tom credit for only 47 seconds.

Proper Method: Clerk Mary sells 3 books of stamps and scans each one individually. POS gives Mary credit for 2.20 minutes.

Improper Method: Clerk Susie sells 65 2-cent stamps. She scans and changes the quantity to 65. POS gives Susie credit for only 47 seconds.

Proper Method: Clerk Frank sells 65 2-cent stamps and scans the 2cent stamps. Frank hits enter then scrolls up (up arrow key). He changes the quantity to 65. POS gives Frank credit for 3.07 minutes.

Improper Method: Tom sells 5 forever stamp books and hits 5 quantity and scans. POS gives Tom credit for 47 seconds.

Proper Method: Mary sells 5 forever stamp books and scans each booklet. POS gives Mary credit for 3.54 minutes.

Improper Method: Susie picks up PO box mail overflow for her customer. She does not hit any key and

goes to get the mail. POS gives no credit for any of the work performed.

Proper Method: Frank picks up PO box overflow for his customer. He hits "Mail Pick Up," hits "Standby" and goes to get the mail. Frank logs back on and hits "End of Visit" upon returning to the screen line. POS gives Frank credit for 1.11 minutes.

Improper Method: Tom takes a Priority box with postage already on it from a customer. POS gives Tom no credit for any work performed.

Proper Method: Mary takes a Priority box with postage already on it from a customer. She weighs it, inputs "Postage Affixed" and prints a Zero PVI. POS gives Mary 1.08 minutes credit.

Do you see a pattern here folks? Help the Union save our work by recording each and every transaction in the POS One system. The job you save may be your own.

But what about the line? What about it? Shortening the line by taking short cuts that do not fully record what you do undermines your job, the jobs of fellow employees, and will ultimately hurt the customer when window staffing is cut. When they excess clerks from the window section based on the time you neglected to record, the lines will be longer and the work more intense for those who stay.

— Source: *The Communicator*

Minimum Markup Law Increases Drug Costs

As if Rx drugs don't cost enough already, Wisconsin's "minimum markup law" is adding to the price. Retail stores, such as Target, that offer \$4 generic prescription drug pricing plans, indicate that Wisconsin's minimum mark-up law is impacting the ability to make such plans fully available to consumers.

CWAG favors the repeal of the minimum mark-up law to help lower the cost of generic drugs, gasoline, and other products. If you agree, call your state senator and state representative.

—Source: *Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans*

Your Brain On Exercise

How Breaking A Sweat Can Make You Smarter

We all know that exercise is good for the body. Now, scientists are discovering it's good for the brain as well. In recent years researchers have found that exercise improves memory, concentration and abstract reasoning among older adults, and may even delay the onset of Alzheimer's Disease. It works like this: aerobic exercise increases blood flow to the brain, which nourishes brain cells and

allows them to function more effective, kind of like making sure your engine is tuned up.

A recent study showed that exercise actually promotes the growth of new neurons (brain cells) in the hippocampus, the part of the brain that controls memory and learning. Once brain cells die, scientists believe they are not replaced. So start walking for 20 minutes a day — it's that simple to break a sweat!
— Reprint: *The Pioneer*

USPS Spent \$78 Million Relocating People In 2008

Figures released by the US Postal Service show that the organization spent \$78.4 million on relocating employees in the fiscal year that ended September 30, 2008. Of that, \$37.9 million went to "Residence Purchase and/or Sale/Lease." The USPS home purchase program for relocated employees has been a subject of controversy since it was revealed that the USPS had spent \$1.2 million to purchase the home of the South Carolina postmaster who had taken a voluntary lateral transfer to a position in Texas. Just under \$15 million went to Headquarters and Area staff. A similar amount went to postmasters and supervisors. Employees of the Inspection Service and the Office of the Inspector General got \$3.4 million in home purchase benefits. Home purchase benefits for clerks, carriers, and mail handlers came to just over \$300,000.

— As printed in *Tours End*



OOPS! CORRECTION

The last issue of the *Badger Bulletin* inadvertently listed the Registration Fee for the John Akey Seminar after July 14th as \$15.00. The CORRECT Fees are \$50.00 before July 14th and \$75.00 after July 14th. You can find complete information and a registration form at: <http://www.apwuwi.com> under John Akey Seminar.




The APWU of Wisconsin are Proud 100% Members of the APW-Accident Benefit Association. REMEMBER: If you are a Member-at Large and you pay dues to APWU of WI. This benefit also belongs to you.
<http://www.apw-aba.org/>

APWU of Wisconsin
Check Us Out!



www.apwuwi.com

Clip and Save

The United States Postal Service Shared Services phone number is: 1-877-477-3273.

- For PostalEase press 1
- For job bidding press 2
- For unscheduled leave requests press 4
- For Human Resources press 5

Be sure to have your PostalEase Pin # as well as your Postal ID number available when using this service.