



The Badger Bulletin

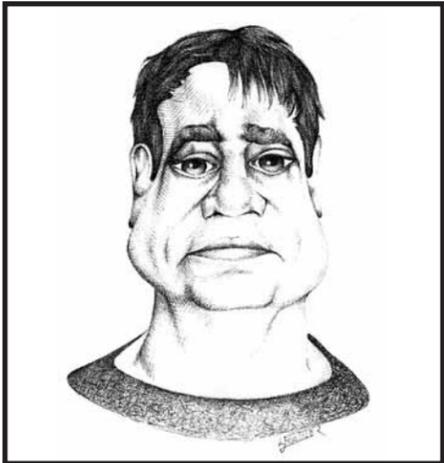
The American Postal Workers Union of Wisconsin

Volume 43 No. 6

2009 PPA Award Winner

November-December, 2010

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT . . . BY STEVE LORD



MARTY WINS

First and foremost let me congratulate Marty Mater for his successful election campaign for the office of Clerk Craft NBA Minneapolis Division. Marty will make an excellent NBA. It's about time we had an NBA from Wisconsin again. The key to Marty's election was the voter turnout from Wisconsin. Those that voted in the election from Wisconsin voted overwhelmingly in favor of Marty. A big thank you is due to those who endorsed and supported Marty and educated their membership on who was the best candidate.

MIDTERM ELECTIONS

The results of the Congressional races didn't have such a good result. We lost an excellent senator when Russ Feingold lost and house districts from around the state were turned over to the Republicans. Nationally the Republicans took over the House of Representatives and lessened the Democrat majority in the senate. Thank God we still hold the Senate or we would be cooked.

Still we are in the battle of our lives. As you remember in the last few hours of the Republican House of representatives in 2006 we were hit hard by legislation that makes us pre-fund future retirees' health care costs. This one provision in the Postal Reform act is responsible for all of the USPS financial woes. Now I fear that the Republican Congress will try to put the nail in our coffin.

Representative Darrell Issa from

The Results Are In

California is likely to become the chairman of the Government Oversight Committee. He has said that when he does one of his priorities is to reform the USPS and federal pensions. Heaven only knows what he has in mind for us but, the prevailing right wing opinion is that all state and federal employees are under worked and overpaid. Have you ever heard one of these right wingers say that American private sector workers should be brought up to the pay level of public sector workers? Not on your life. That would cut into the huge profits corporations are making off the backs of the American worker.

The Tea Partiers say that they are starting a revolution when all they are spouting is the same old right wing rhetoric. It is very confusing how the American voter can vote in the same party whose deregulation and unnecessary wars got us in the fiscal shape we are in now. Can someone explain it to me? What is needed is real revolution by workers stopping the outsourcing of American jobs and the huge corporate profits. I fear we will have to hit rock bottom before that happens though.

LA CROSSE SEMINAR A BIG HIT

The La Crosse Seminar held Halloween weekend was a huge success. The attendance was much more than expected. There were about 110 attendees. Thank you to the La Crosse Local for the great job hosting. As always, thanks go out to Barb M and Deb K and the rest of the auxiliary for their efforts above and beyond the call. Almost \$2000 was raised for COPA. The major reason for the big turnout was the dinner and roast honoring outgoing NBA Lyle Krueth. A great dinner was served and a lot of fun was had poking fun at each other but the main thrust of the dinner was to honor Lyle and the awesome

job he has done representing our four states. A plaque was presented to Lyle from the APWU of Wisconsin for his office in Washington. *Thanks again Lyle for your fine representation and good luck in Washington DC.*

COUNCIL OF LOCALS

A Council of Locals was also held in La Crosse. It was decided that no seminars would be scheduled for 2011 until we know when we will have a new contract. If the contract has a negotiated settlement a seminar will be held shortly after to do contract orientation and local negotiations training.

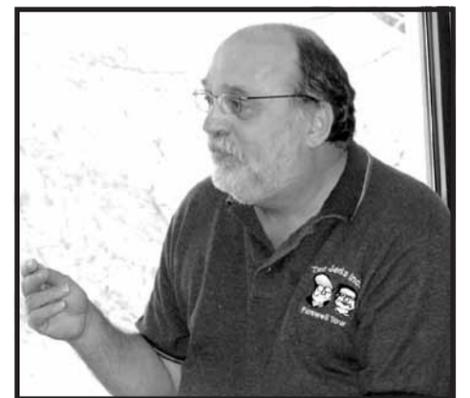
If the contract is arbitrated these events will be held after the arbitrators have ruled. This does not mean there will be no training in 2011 however. The John Akey Seminar will be held in St. Paul in the middle of August.

Also discussed was the budget of the APWU of Wisconsin. Due to declining membership from members retiring or being excessed to another craft we will continue to take in less and less money every year. Before the

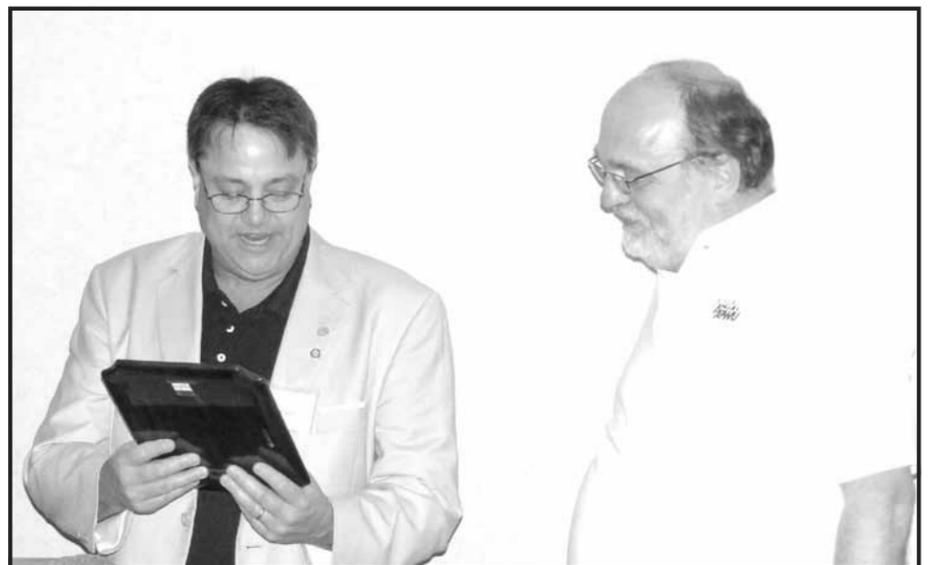
situation becomes dire I have decided to hold an economic summit with the Executive Board and some officers from the Locals. We have to find ways to cut our expenses. Nothing will be off the table and all ideas will be entertained. If you have any ideas or would like to attend let me know. I am planning this meeting after the first of the year.

On a final note I would like to thank Sue Peterson for stepping up and becoming the 530-534 Regional Representatives. Thank you Susie.

Thanks for listening.



Lyle Krueth presents his last seminar as a Central Region NBA at LaCrosse.



APWU of WI President Steve Lord presents Lyle Krueth with a plaque as a small token of Wisconsin Postal Workers' appreciation for hard work and dedication in representing us on the next level. The presentation was presented at a "Roast" at the recent Fall Seminar.

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

LEGISLATIVELY SPEAKING . . . BY JEFF WORDEN, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Congratulations Marty And Lyle!

First off I would like to congratulate Marty (Martin) Mater on his victory as our new NBA! I would also like to wish good luck to Lyle Krueth on his new job at the APWU headquarters in Washington D.C. I would also like to thank all the APWU members who took the time to vote in the recent APWU National elections.

From Oct. 29-30 your APWU offices/stewards attended an educational seminar in La Crosse, WI. These classes are an excellent way to educate/inform all APWU stewards. It was good to see the large number of APWU

representatives at this seminar.

On Sept. 16th a GOP strategist (Jack Burkman) stated that postal employees are "Thoroughly unskilled labor". He also stated that post workers could replace "Nigerian and Ethiopian cab drivers". This asinine statement was an attack on postal workers, not to forget an attack on Nigerian & Ethiopian cab drivers. Many of the right wingers, Tea baggers, etc. try to sell that the postal service is tax payer funded. WRONG! The postal service received no tax payer monies whatsoever!

On Sept. 30th the OIG (Office of Inspec-

tor General) made a recommendation that the ISPS could recover 142 Billion dollars. This was due to over 80 Billion Dollars in over funding for CSRS and FERS. Also, that the pre-funding levels for pensions be reduced to from 100% to 80%. If these pre-funding charges were changed/removed- the postal service would show a surplus of monies! According to APWU National President William Burrus "Despite these burdens placed on the USPS over the past four years, in accordance with the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), the agency

has paid more than 20.8 billion dollars to pre-fund retiree healthcare liabilities".

But the only way to change these (unfair) pre-funding issues is through legislative action by Congress.

In closing, I want to thank the La Crosse Area Local for hosting this event. A great job was done by all! I would also like to thank the Auxiliary for all of their hard work and a thank you to ALL the members that purchased COPA raffle tickets. A grand total of \$1019.20 was raised for COPA at this seminar. Take Care.

Provisions Of Bowles/Simpson (Co-Chairs) Proposal

A 50 page, highly preliminary report released by the bipartisan co-chairs of President Obama's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform on Wednesday, November 10, proposes major tax code changes, dramatic changes to Social Security and spending cuts, including to federal retirement and health benefits.

Coincidentally, today the NARFE "Fiscal Commission Watch" webpage was launched. Presently, for NARFE members, this information can be found from the home page, www.narfe.org, Members' homepage and Legislation homepage. The specific URL is <http://www.narfe.org/departments/legislation/fiscal.cfm>

The proposal comes from the bipartisan co-chairmen, Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson, and has NOT been approved by the Commission which requires the votes of 14 of the 18 members. A vote on the approval of a final report is required not later than December 1, 2010. The Commission's web site, www.fiscalcommission.gov includes the proposal under the News header. (An additional 24 page document is also available. The URL is http://www.fiscalcommission.gov/sites/fiscalcommission.gov/files/documents/Illustrative_List_11.10.2010.pdf

Simpson and Bowles say their plan would bring spending down to 22 percent and then 21 percent of U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and reduce the deficit from 60 percent of GDP to under 40 percent by 2037.

Impact on Federal Retirement: Most important to federal employees and retirees, the co-chairs' proposal would "achieve mandatory savings from civil service retirement" by: 1) Calculating federal civil service annuities by using highest five years of salary instead of the highest three years; 2) Requiring Federal Employees Retirement System covered workers to contribute a much higher share of payroll to their defined benefit annuity 3) basing Social Security, federal civilian and military retirement cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) on the "chained consumer price index" which would result in lower payments than under current law and 4) Requiring federal civilian retirees to pay a larger share of Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) premiums.

Impact on Federal Employees: Fur-

thermore, federal employees would be especially impacted by the recommendation to enact tough discretionary spending caps and provide \$200 billion in domestic and defense savings by 2015. This includes a three-year pay freeze and cutting the federal workforce by 10 percent.

Impact on Social Security: The draft proposal would make the "benefit formula" for Social Security more progressive - meaning benefits would target those who need them the most. As a result, Social Security would reduce payments to upper income

recipients. In addition, the retirement age would be increased based on the average American's greater longevity, increasing the age to 68 by 2050 and 69 in 2075.

Impact on Medicare: Address the Medicare "doc fix" not through deficit spending but through savings "by asking doctors and other health providers, lawyers, and individuals to take responsibility for slowing health care cost growth." This would be done by paying health care providers less, among other tactics.

Revenue summary: Pass tax reform

that dramatically reduces rates, simplifies the code, broadens the base and reduces the deficit.

MORE to COME: Given that the Co-Chairs' report omits specific details about their proposals; some questions about their draft document cannot be answered yet. More direction will be provided shortly about contacting your Members of Congress.

— Source: *NARFE*

Note: You don't have to be retired to belong to NARFE. Check out their website at: www.narfe.org

APWU Health Plan

by Lucy Hauser,
Director of Human Relations

I attended a seminar on the APWU Health Plan while in La Crosse at the Fall Training Seminar. There is an interactive website that helps you decide which Health Plan is best for you: www.plansmartchoice.com. You enter your personal information and the program compares all the Federal Health Plans for you. The program does not have the 2011 information in it yet, but if you access the website and enter your email address they will notify you when the site is ready to go.

Changes to the APWU High Option plan are as follows:

- ✓ Zero copays for routine exams with in-network doctors.
- ✓ Free smoking cessation program!
- ✓ Expanded Diabetes Management Program
- ✓ Hypertension Care program
- ✓ Cancer Centers of Excellence (COE) program*
- ✓ No separate deductible for Mental Health & Substance Abuse
- ✓ Hearing Aid benefit

Changes to the APWU Consumer Driven Plan are as follows:

- ✓ Free Smoking Cessation program
- ✓ Expanded Diabetes Management Program
- ✓ No separate deductible for Mental Health & Substance Abuse
- ✓ Hearing Aid benefit

✓ Cancer Support Program with enhanced benefits at Cancer Centers of Excellence (COE)

✓ Healthy Back program

✓ Premiums for the Consumer-driven plan did not increase!

If you are enrolled in the High Option plan and you or someone in your family is diagnosed with Cancer, contact CIGNA/

CareAllies at 1-800-582-1314 before obtaining medical services. You will be given information about Cancer Centers of Excellence: doctors and hospitals that have shown to provide exceptional care. If you attend one of these Cancer Centers of Excellence your benefits will increase from 85% to 95%! That's right: you will only pay %5 of the plan allowance for treatment of cancer!

2010 Open Season Dates To Remember

(FEHB) Federal Employees Health Benefits

Nov. – 8 to Dec. 14, 2010 5:00 p.m.

(FSA) Flexible Spending Account

Nov. – 8 to Dec. 26, 2010 5:00 p.m.

(ALE) Annual Leave Exchange

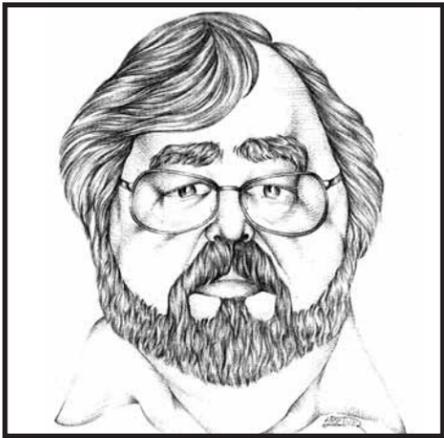
Nov. – 15 to Dec. 15, 2010 11:59 p.m.

(FEDVIP) Federal Employees Dental & Vision Insurance Program

Nov. – to Dec. 13, 2010 11:59 p.m.

BADGER BULLETIN BOARD

What Happened To Change?



by John E. Durben, Editor

How about that National Congressional Election? Looks like the Right Wingers and Tea Baggerers wanted it more (or had deeper pockets) than the "working class". As though that's not bad enough, Wisconsin turned colors and now become a GOP State as well.

It's hard to believe what is happening to this great Country. Less than two years ago we elected our first black President and a Democratic Majority on the premise of "Change". As the economy was in a downward spiral, we were told that "Change" would not come overnight. The downward trend had to be stopped, before it could be reversed. I'm not going to list here the "Changes" that did take place since our new Leadership took Office because you all

know them as well as I since they've been publicized in every way in some of those sleazy commercials we were all privy to. I can't believe the American public has such a short memory. They voted in the same crap that got us into this mess in the first place?

The American public can't take the whole blame though; this Country has one screwed up election system. It's obvious that as long as we have a process which allows unlimited third party funding from foreign interests as well as Corporations and other special interest groups, the working class may be doomed.

I am anxious to see what the next two years will bring us. If you thought the postal service was going through a lot of changes lately - hang on to your hat. I hope we all hang on to our jobs.

SPECIAL MEETING ANNOUNCED

A public Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 23rd, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at UW-Oshkosh Reeve Memorial Union (748 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh WI 54901) in Rooms 227 AB. The purpose of the meeting is for public input regarding the consolidation of the Oshkosh and Green Bay processing centers.

It's obvious that careful planning by the postal service was involved here when it

came to scheduling the meeting. Oops . . . right in the middle of Thanksgiving Week. Oops again . . . right in the middle of deer hunting season when many of the hunters have left the area. Well, I guess it really

doesn't matter since the decision has been made and it's probably a done deal anyway.

NEXT DUE DATE: The December due date for the *Badger Bulletin* will be on January 3. Please be on time.

APWU Must Fight For Our Future In Wake Of Tough Congressional Elections

Elections have consequences. The Republican Party gained control of the House of Representatives in the recent election, and it didn't take long for Rep. Darryl Issa (R-CA), who is expected to become chairman of the House committee with jurisdiction over the Postal Service, to elaborate on his plans.

Following his victory, in an interview with Congressional Quarterly, Issa vowed "to clamp down on government agencies he sees as wasting taxpayers' money." He outlined an agenda that includes cutting postal

facilities and creating a commission to decide which facilities should be shut down.

"There are too many distribution centers, too many postal workers, too many post offices, and there's a reluctance to make those changes," Rep. Issa told CQ magazine.

"We face tough challenges, but the union will do everything possible to protect the interests of postal workers," said Myke Reid, APWU Legislative and Political director. "The recent election makes that task very difficult, so it is imperative that we work together." - reprint

— THE LIGHTER SIDE —

After closing time at the bar, a drunk was showing his new apartment to a couple of his friends. He led the way to his bedroom where there was a big brass gong and a mallet. "What's up with the big brass gong?" one of his guests asked. "It's not a gong. It's a talking clock," the drunk replied. "A talking clock? Seriously?" asked his astonished friend. "Yup," replied the drunk. "How's it work?" the friend asked, squinting at it. "Watch," the drunk replied. He picked up the mallet, gave the gong an ear-shattering pound and stepped back. The three stood looking at one another for a moment. Suddenly a voice on the other side of the wall screamed . . . "You JERK! It's three-fifteen in the morning!"



We're Also On The Internet APWU of Wisconsin website:

Check Us Out!

<http://www.apwuwi.com/>

Capitalism Is...



...Not Working.



HUCK/KONOPACKI LABOR CARTOONS WWW.SOLIDARITY.COM/HKCARTOONS - NOV

KONOPACKI ©2010

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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED