

Top Flight

Winter Edition

January 2013

The Fight Is Not Over

We, the Working Class of Mississippi managed to survive the Congressional Actions of 2012 as far as Postal Reform goes. But, that doesn't mean that it won't occur in 2013.

Just because no legislation was passed in 2012 doesn't mean that the representatives who were in Congress have changed their minds. The attack will begin again.

Unfortunately, there was no candidate (with enough money) to run against Steven Palazzo in Southern Mississippi, so he retains his seat for another 2 years and we can expect the same help from him as we've received in the past. Since I was raised in Southern New Jersey I was really offended by his comments about his "No" vote on the Sandy Aid Bill which passed despite his vote. Then he votes "Yes" on a much more costly bill for the same purpose. Unfortunately, he will probably still be in office when the next major storm hits the Mississippi Coast and when he tries to gain support for his district. Does he really think they will forget his actions?

We must remain diligent in our efforts to save our jobs and the jobs of future generations of Postal Workers. We must remain active to challenge actions which will destroy the Postal Service. If we don't, the Postal Service will become the new Wal-Mart in the employment sector. The turnover rate for PSE's is really high now. It will get to the point where no one will want to work for the Postal Service. When that happens, there will be no Postal Service.

Please don't forget to donate to COPA as much as you possibly can. I know I've been saying that for many years now, but I honestly believe that is was through COPA dollars and the involvement of Postal Workers across the country that helped prevent bad legislation from passing in 2012.

Additionally, we have a new Chairman on the Board of Governors who is a lobbyist and not a CEO of a employing company. His job is to talk Congress into doing things that benefit the companies he represents. I can only imagine what his new lobbying strategy will be.

Mark Cunningham

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Some Postal Service Facts

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation — 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office™ Boxes.

The Postal Service™ receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, usps.com®, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail.

If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500.

In 2011, Oxford Strategic Consulting ranked the U.S. Postal Service number one in overall service performance of the posts in the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world.

Black Enterprise and Hispanic Business magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity.

The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

*If a man tells you he loves America,
yet hates labor, he is a liar.*

Abraham Lincoln



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2011-2013

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Upcoming Senate Hearing on Postal Finances

As has been previously reported, Republicans and Democrats were unable to reach a consensus on comprehensive postal reform legislation in the last Congress.

In this new Congress, Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), the chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, have pledged to negotiate a compromise and finally pass postal reform legislation. Said Carper, "I think we narrowed our differences. . . . In terms of negotiations, we're in the red zone."

In order to move the ball on postal reform, Sen. Carper is scheduling his committee's very first hearing on the financial difficulties facing the Postal Service and how to address them.

Secure Your Rights

Much has been said lately about the second amendment, the right to bear arms, so I've been hearing "God created Man; but Sam Colt made Man equal" a lot these days.

This old saying is a play on the phrase in the Declaration of Independence that says "that all men are created equal" and is meant to imply that even though God created men equal, it is really the invention of the revolver that "secures" that right of equality.

This most often quoted part of that declaration, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" is used to imply that we have rights simply because God gave them to us and therefore the Government can't take them away.

Many who quote this part of the declaration leave out what follows, that "to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed".

The implication here is that yes we have God given rights, but they are no good unless we actually do something to secure them for ourselves, the "something" being we institute Governments and in this way collectively secure our individual rights.

There are individual rights, but these are collectively enforced, secured, and made real by Government using powers delegated by the consent of the governed.

Remember the story in the Bible that tells us not to worry about things because God even takes care of the sparrows. Well, as anyone can see, the sparrow has to work awfully hard to get her daily nourishment. She has to work daily to secure the blessings God has given her.

We have to work hard every day to secure our God-given rights too.

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights

states "Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests".

Just because we have the right to form and join unions doesn't mean we can sit back and take it easy. This right, like all others, has to be secured. Our right to form and join unions is in trouble. It is being taken away from us by those who profit from our demise.

Many States are considering and passing "right to work" laws that make Union efforts an entitlement program for any who want the benefits Unions gain, but don't want to pay for them. As much as a certain political party claims to hate entitlements, they sure seem to love that one. They know by getting rid of the funding they can get rid of the Union.

It's the same pogrom they have been running against the government too.

Starve the funding for the union by requiring the union to provide benefits to people who didn't pay for them and you will kill the Union; starve the funding for the government through tax cuts and corporate subsidies and you kill the government.

We also face a battle within the Federal government to secure our right to form and join unions. Labor friendly appointments to the executive and judicial branch don't even make it to the Senate floor to be voted on because of Republican filibusters. They don't want the government to function in securing our right to form and join unions so they hold up the appointments or the funding.

What can we do to secure our rights?

The answer is right there in the Declaration of Independence. "To secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed".

Lobby your congressman and support and vote for candidates at the local, State, and Federal level that are labor-friendly.

Tim Eaton



USPS Job Cuts Weigh Heavily on Minorities and Veterans

Cuts to the U.S. Postal Service labor force have had distinct effects on many segments of the American workforce.

The Postal Service is one of the largest employers of all minorities, led by African-Americans who make up 20 percent of postal workers and in some urban areas represent 75 to 80 percent of postal employees.

For many minority groups the Postal Service offered jobs that provided security, decent pay and benefits that allowed workers to adequately provide for their families and build vibrant communities.

The decimation of postal and other public sector jobs continues to effect other populations as well, such as veterans. Veterans make up 22 percent of the postal workforce and nearly a third of those are disabled.

For groups like African-Americans, other minorities and veterans, instability at the Postal Service will continue to have negative consequences.

Who Is Your Legislative & Political Grassroots Coordinator?

Grassroots Coordinators are here to help support local presidents, legislative directors, and APWU members with matters related to federal legislation, COPA fundraising, and political activities that affect postal workers.

Grassroots Coordinator for Mississippi:

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***United we Bargain
Divided we Beg***

The **TOP FLIGHT** is the official publication of the Mississippi Postal Workers Union. The opinions and views expressed in this publication are those of the writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Editor or the Executive Board of the MPWU.

All submissions are welcome, but may be edited, when necessary, for space or clarity.

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Don't Get 'BOG'd Down

At the last convention, the voice of the convention expressed the idea that it might be more effective in pursuit of our goals to lobby the Board of Governors (BOG), because the Postmaster General "serves at the pleasure of the governors for an indefinite term".

The request was sent out to all locals to write a letter to the Chairman asking him to direct the Postmaster General to "adhere to the APWU's 2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement and to work with the postal unions to save America's postal service".

As President of Local 1311, I dutifully sent in the letter and asked my members to do the same, but logically, it never made any sense to me. For me, it would be like a grievance that goes from Step 1 all the way to Arbitration, and getting an Arbitrator's ruling that said "The Postal Service is directed to follow the contract".

That would be a zero-sum gain and I'd be right back where I started.

The Postmaster General signed a contract with our Union, and by law, he is already directed to follow the contract he signed. It is circular reasoning and an inefficient use of resources to request that he now be directed to follow the contract he signed.

Our Union should be about the business of enforcing the Contract, not begging the Papa-Daddy Chairman to please make the mean old Postmaster General play fair.

I think it is a waste of time lobbying the BOG because politically the directors do not have anything to gain by listening to us and they lose nothing by ignoring us. We do not have a seat at their table, we are not part of their family, but the Postmaster General does sit at their table; he was in fact appointed by them.

The BOG is appointed by the President and they have to be confirmed by the Senate. Once they take office they cannot be removed during their 7 year term except by impeachment. An appointment to the Board of Governors is essentially political pay-back to supporters of a particular president or political party.

These 7 appointments, along with thousands of others, are a way to reward political party loyalty and a way to maintain political party hegemony of power overlapping democratic elections that would otherwise transfer power to govern from one party to the other.

The Postal Service governance, as with all corporate governance, is designed to be anti-democratic. Mr. Barnett, the new chairman, is happy to include in his bio that he is a member of the Federalist Society. If you remember back to the beginning of our Republic, it was the Federalists that wanted a strong authoritarian government that didn't include much of a democratic voice of the people.

They likened democracy to two wolves and a sheep voting on what's for dinner.

The BOG does not consider what we, the employees, might think about how the Postal Service is run, or whether or not we, the employees, might think the Postmaster General should be relieved of duty. They don't consider our opinions because we do not have any legal rights to the means of production, the profit from our labor applied to their means of production, or to the management of anything related to the production cycle.

It seems to me our best efforts would be most efficiently used when directed towards our elected politicians. They are the ones who make the laws we live with, they are the ones whose continued employment and accumulated power depend on our collective votes, and they are the ones who appoint and consent to membership on the BOG.

In order to save the Postal Service and save our jobs we have to do two things; enforce the contract, and as Obama said, "Don't boo.....VOTE!" for candidates who will appoint and consent to worker-friendly members on the BOG.

At least when I write my congressman, I get a response. I'm not holding my breath waiting for a response from the BOG.

Tim Eaton

***All life is interrelated
All men are caught in an inescapable
network of mutuality
Tied to a single garment of destiny
Whatever affects one directly
Affects all indirectly***

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Presidents Report January 2013

I certainly hope everyone had a good holiday season. The Postal Service reported gains in package mail, but I'm sure that their next financial statement will report another whopping loss.

The Postal Service is implementing a new Window Training Course which is already being rolled out. Only time will tell if this is an improvement over the old system.

The Postal Service also announced it's opening of the 100th Village Post Office. That's 100 new contract stations, taking away from the clerk craft. It is also counter to our current contract.

The Postal Service has also implemented their PostPlan that affect some stations in Mississippi. This is the plan to cut hours in small communities where the stations are not making any or little revenue. These PostPlan stations will be manned by PMR's. The same position that our current contract eliminated. These employees will be earning the same or less than current PSE's and work about 20 hours a week. Unfortunately, in this economy, there are folks out there who will work these jobs. When the economy picks up and more jobs become available the Postal Service may yet regret this new position.

All employees throughout the state will soon be experiencing more work hours because of the early out offer which becomes effective January 31st. Don't expect the postal service to replace these employees. If they do hire, it will be PSE's. I would like to hear from all Presidents in the state as to how many PSE's are working in your stations and whether they are Function 1 or Function 4 hires. I have been told that Mississippi is nowhere near their 20% cap. I suspect that the Postal Service is hiding these employees. This is my next project to explore.

The Union is rolling out it's electronic grievance system and I have signed the State organization to participate in the program. Hopefully by the State Convention we will know how well this system works.

Speaking of the State Convention, we have a tentative place selected but no contract signed as of this date. Hopefully, I will sign a contract at the end of January.

When the PSE position was introduced, I like many thought that a PSE could be trained on any position held by a Clerk. I've discovered that there is one job which PSE's are not permitted to perform. That job is the resistered mail. They cannot handle bank remittances. This means that PSE's should not be handling the stations deposit or the last dispatch of the day in which the deposit is transferred out of the station. This policy is stated in the Postal Services procedures on bank remittances and has not changed as far as I know. PSE's can handle registered mail across the window, but must turn it over to the stations accountable clerk once it's received, that's part of window training.

Local Presidents, I still lack contact information on many of you. Please e-mail it to me if necessary at Mc204apwu@aol.com.

Hope to see some of you at Tri-State in Montgomery in April

Mark Cunningham

Postal Support Employees BAG

WAGES

- Regular pay increases
- Night differential pay
- Time-and-half for overtime > 40 hours
- Higher level pay for higher level work
- Work hour guarantee when scheduled to work

JOB SECURITY

- Rights to Just Cause
- Reappointments by seniority
- Preferential career appointments
- Opting on vacant full-time duty assignments

REPRESENTATION

- Representation in the grievance procedure
- Effective grievance procedure to adjudicate disputes with management
- Representation in contract negotiations
- Right to join APWU and to become a Union Steward
- Active legislative program that fights for postal workers on Capitol Hill

UNION DEMOCRACY

- Direct elections of all union officers
- Membership ratification of contracts
- Access to information
- Having a Voice and a Vote

BENEFITS

- Health Insurance: 75% paid by USPS for APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan after 360 day term and reappointment
- Annual Leave
- Vacation Planning
- Holiday Scheduling rights

MEMBER ONLY BENEFITS

- APWU MasterCard
- Union Plus discounts, mortgage programs
- College and vocational scholarships programs
- Voluntary Benefits Plan including term life insurance, dental coverage, group legal services, accidental death and dismemberment insurance, dental insurance, and much more
- Accident Benefit Association
- The *American Postal Workers* magazine

***Some men rob you with a six-gun –
Others rob you with a fountain pen***
Woody Guthrie

Retiring APWU Members

Thank You! Farewell!

As approximately 20,000 APWU members say bittersweet goodbyes to their co-workers and hit the clock for the last time today, we say, "Thank you! Farewell!"

We wish you all the best as you begin a new chapter of your life. Thank you for your years of dedicated service to the American people and for the contributions you made to the APWU.

There are many battles left to fight — to protect the institution we have dedicated so much of our lives to; to secure our health insurance and retirement benefits, and to strengthen our nation's middle class.

To win these battles, we need your help!

So please join the APWU Retirees Department today!

It's a great way to stay in touch and stay informed.

For more information, call 1-877-279-8669; send an email message to retiree2@apwu.org, or visit www.apwu.org.

Some day

there will come the brotherhood of man.

Some day

industrial warfare, as well as warfare between nations, will be seen to be ridiculous and a waste of life and money.

Some day

men will work together in a grand cooperative scheme.

But until that day

the trade union must stand as the only safeguard of the working man; the only instrument by which he can maintain himself and his family.

Clarence Darrow

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2013 Alabama/Mississippi/Tennessee Tri-State Seminar
April 15 – 17, 2013

Registration Form
(Due with \$35.00 fee per attendee No Later Than March 15, 2013)
Please submit as soon as possible.....

Local Name _____

	Name	Title	Craft
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____

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