

# Top Flight

Spring Edition

May 2013

## MISSISSIPPI POSTAL WORKERS UNION

### 2013 STATE CONVENTION

JUNE 14 and 15, 2013

HOLLYWOOD CASINO

711 HOLLYWOOD BLVD

BAY ST. LOUIS

#### **Presidents Corner**, *Mark Cunningham*

April's Tri-State was a new experience for our three State training seminar with Alabama and Tennessee conducting their State Conventions in conjunction with the Tri-State. As with any event of this size, it had it's problems, but the event was completed by Thursday evening.

Liz Powell and Mike Morris both commended the two states for combining these events together as a cost cutting measure.

Delegate surveys were passed out to get feedback on the event. I would like to ask that any Mississippi delegate to the Tri-State please give us your honest opinion of what you thought. These surveys will be discussed by the three State Presidents for future planned events.

The 2014 Tri-State will be hosted by Tennessee by the Memphis Area Local. When a date is set, it will be transmitted. I suspect that it might be hosted in Tunica as they have better hotel rates than any hotel in the Memphis area.

At our upcoming State Convention in June, there is one issue I hope the body will agree to. That issue is the fact that our current Constitution locks our State Convention to a specific date in the year. Having negotiated with hotels over the years I realize that when you are locked into a specific time frame to host an event, your negotiating powers are diminished. On the coast, for example, the best time to host an event is January. This is the slow period for tourism. In June, schools are letting out and families are beginning their summer vacations. Other areas of the state may have different times of the year in which they can negotiate for lower rates to host such events. I would like to see the body support this idea in a constitutional change.

Lets face it, membership numbers are down, and even if all the PSE's in the state join the Union, their dues are lower than the dues we are loosing to retirement. If we are to be a viable organization, we need to do whatever we can to reduce our cost. We all know that costs are what determine the number of delegates that we can send to a Tri-State or State Convention. If a host local can negotiate a lower hotel rate, then the Local could afford to send an additional delegate to these events. The more delegates, the more feedback we get on what the issues are in the field that need to be addressed.

### State Officers Elections

This year is "Election Year" at the State convention.

It's our opportunity to elect those that will represent us in the Mississippi Postal Workers Union for next two years, but you have to be a certified delegate to vote.

The offices that will be filled during the elections are:

President

Secretary/Treasurer

Historian/Top Flight Editor

District One Director  
(386,388)

District Two Director  
(387,389,397)

District Three Director  
(390,391,392,396)

District Four Director  
(393, 394, 395)

Good luck to everyone willing to serve.

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

*Abraham Lincoln*



Mississippi Postal Workers Union  
State Officers  
2011-2013

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DISTRICT 4 (393,394).....Vacant

### **Sign the Petition Save the Postal Service!**

The APWU is asking union members and supporters to sign an online petition urging the White House to Save the Postal Service and Save American Jobs by supporting the Postal Service Protection Act (H.R. 630 in the House and S. 316 in the Senate).

The We the People petition must garner 100,000 signers by May 24 to generate a response from the White House. We still need more than 80,000 additional signatures!

**Get involved! Help save YOUR job!**  
Go to APWU.org to see how.

# R E G I S T R A T I O N F O R M

## MISSISSIPPI POSTAL WORKERS UNION

### 2013 STATE CONVENTION

**JUNE 14 -15, 2013** (CHECK IN JUNE 13)

**HOLLYWOOD CASINO  
711 HOLLYWOOD BLVD  
BAY ST. LOUIS, MS 39520**

**RESERVATIONS: 1-800-946-2442 CODE APW0613**

**ROOM RATE \$79.00 PLUS TAX**

*Smoking rooms are available although most of the hotel is non-smoking.  
The hotel has free Wi-Fi, free general parking, 18 hole golf course, and 24 hour snack shop.*

APWU Contact: Mark Cunningham, (228)234-9890

<b>NAME</b>	
<b>LOCAL</b>	
<b>ADDRESS</b>	
<b>PHONE</b>	

**DELEGATES(\$35.00 Per Delegate)**

1.	11.
2.	12.
3.	13.
4.	14.
5.	15.
6.	16.
7.	17.
8.	18.
9.	19.
10.	20.

**TOTAL DELEGATES** \_\_\_\_\_ **AT \$35 =** \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: MS Gulf Coast Area Local  
Attn: Mark Cunningham  
33 Pembroke Circle, Gulfport MS 39503



### President's \$52 Copa Club

This is a club EVERYBODY should belong to because it's so easy to join; it only costs a person \$1 per week!

The proceeds go towards COPA, a political action committee that supports electing politicians who fight for the causes we support.

The corporations have their PAC's lobbying Congress everyday on their behalf. We all know what that means. It means they are lobbying Congress to cut you out of your job, your pension, your health benefits and your right to work and form a union.

Who do you have lobbying for you on your behalf?

**COPA!**

Join the \$52 Club **TODAY!**

### ***Items of Interest***

#### ***PSE's***

I know that most employees don't go around asking one another how much per hour the other employee is earning, but this is an exception to the rule. It has come to my attention that some of the new PSE's who are being hired throughout the state are not being paid properly. Since all Clerks that work in plants or stations are Level 6, all PSE's should be earning \$14.89 per hour. If you know of a PSE who

is not receiving that hourly rate, please let a Union official know. If you do not know who should represent them, please contact me.

#### ***Small Offices***

The Union recently received a major award from Arbitrator DAS in case # Q11C-4Q-C 11311239. In his award, Arbitrator DAS upheld the Unions position that if the window is open, then that time counts towards the hours worked by the Postmaster in that station. For small offices this may have a huge impact on the hours worked by PTF's and PSE's in the station, depending on the level of the office.

This will be my major project for the near future. Hopefully, it will create new Traditional and Non-traditional duty assignments in these smaller offices. I would like to say that the Postal Service might even convert some of the PSE's that have been working for the past year to Career Employees.

#### ***Plants***

The Postal Service continues to proceed with their Plant closings. The most recent notice I received was that Grenada was to be closed in the Summer of 2013. This mail will be moved to Jackson, MS. Apparently, the USPS doesn't understand logic, but makes a decision and moves on it with total disregard to the consequences.

At the rate they are going, within 5 years Jackson, MS will be the only processing plant in the state. When that happens, I foresee them closing the District Office in Jackson.

Meridian and Tupelo have already been closed. Meridian mail is now processed in Jackson and Tupelo mail is being processed in Memphis.

These closures will have a major impact on stations and branches, as the employees from these plants will be excessed into the smaller stations with their seniority, provided Article 12 is adhered to.

See "Interest" Page 5

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.

Send submissions and change of address information to:

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[www.ms-apwu.org](http://www.ms-apwu.org)

On Facebook  
**Mississippi Postal Workers Union**



## From the MS FEDS Director

Brothers and Sisters:

How would you like to belong to a great organization? This organization was created to show empathy for families of our fellow co-workers who have died because of illness, accidents or just old age.

When a loved one dies emergency situations arises and the insurance plans have not had the time to pay for the necessary expenses. A group of employees thought highly enough of their co-workers that they wanted to do something to help the families in emergencies. This, the death of a co-worker, counts as an emergency.

Believe me, some things the family is never prepared for and these funds come to be very useful in the event of death of a family member.

I, a member of the MS-FEDS, am asking that we as a Union come together and support the Fund that would help our fellow co-workers should the need arise. Please join this wonderful organization and show some support for the families.

**PLEASE SIGN UP AND JOIN THE MS FEDS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION!**

*"Interest " from Page 4*

On that line of thought. From my understanding, an employee excessed will be advised to visit eReassign to see what jobs are available within their District. eReassign is for "VOLUNTARY" transfers. Voluntary transfers do not keep seniority, nor do the employees have retreat rights provided for in Article 12.

All stewards and officers in these impacted sites need to know Article 12 inside and out.

The only way that these closures are going to stop is for the Public to get involved by writing letters, making phone calls to their elected officials. For years now the general public is being given the picture that it's the USPS against overpaid employees. We need public support behind us.

Finally, watch your mailboxes. There is legislation in both houses of Congress on Postal Reform. The National Office of the APWU will be sending out information on what bills are being discussed and which ones we should support.

*Mark Cunningham*

## ***What You Can Do About It?***

*Go to [Apwu.org](http://Apwu.org) and:*

- [Sign the petition](#) urging the White House to Save the Postal Service and Save American Jobs by supporting the Postal Service Protection Act. We've got less than three weeks to get 100,000 signatures!
- [Contact your U.S. Representative and Senators](#) and ask them to co-sponsor the legislation.
- Contact community organizations, postal customers and local businesses. Ask them to support efforts to strengthen the USPS. (The union has produced a [flyer \[PDF\]](#) for distribution to the public.)
- Let the local media know how the Postal Service's manufactured financial crisis is hurting customers and businesses in your community.
- Organize informational rallies and pickets to spread the word in your community.

## **COPA**, stands for Committee On Political Action

The purpose of COPA funds is to help support political candidates at all levels of government get elected or re-elected.

The American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO collects contributions from APWU members throughout the year. Our National President has also in the past established goals for each Local based on the number of members in the Local.

The goal established for the Mississippi is close to \$10,000.00

Reasons to contribute

### **Your job**

Contrary to popular belief, Congress controls our destiny.

Before Congress established the U.S. Postal Service we were a department of the Federal Government, with disputes resolved by the President in whatever manner he chooses. Postal Managers were political appointees from the Postmaster General on down. Congress, not the USPS established wages for employees.

Congress still regulates the Postal Service even though we are supposed to be a self-sustaining entity. The laws created over the years still dictate how the Postal Service is to provide "Universal service at an affordable price."

Think of it this way, would you still work for the Postal Service if you had no

Annual Leave

Sick Leave

No Lay-off

Lower Wages

No Seniority rights

There are some in Congress who want to help the USPS eliminate your benefits and job.

These are the things that your COPA contributions help protect. COPA dollars are provided to candidates and elected officials based on their voting record for Working Class People, regardless of occupation supported and ***regardless of party affiliation.***

We need voices in Congress as well as at local levels who support working families.

Voting record of our Senators

<http://aboutpolitics.com/politicians/Mississippi-MS>

Voting record of our Congressmen

District 1 – Alan Nunnelee

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/person.xpd?id=412442>

District 2 – Bennie Thompson

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/person.xpd?id=400402>

District 3 – Gregg Harper

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/person.xpd?id=412280>

District 4 – Steven Palazzo

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes.xpd?year=2012&person=412443>

## ***The Labor Movement and Unions***

*From www.iuoe.org*

### ***What is the Labor Movement?***

Labor unions are groups of workers organizing and taking collective action to improve their lives. The labor movement is all unions, union members and union organizations acting collectively.

There are approximately 15 million workers in unions and employee associations in the United States and approximately 4.5 million union workers in Canada.

### ***What do Unions Do?***

Unions are the principal means for workers to organize and protect their rights on the job. The union contract or "collective bargaining agreement" establishes the basic terms and conditions of work. Unions give workers a voice with employers and provide a means to gain a measure of security and dignity on the job. Most unions maintain a paid professional staff to manage their activities.

Unions pursue strategies and activities that serve the interests of their members. These include representing members and negotiating with employers, recruiting new members and engaging in political action when necessary to support policies that improve working conditions for all workers.

### ***What is Collective Bargaining?***

The simple phrase, collective bargaining, covers a wide variety of subjects and involves hundreds of thousands of union members in the process.

Representatives of labor and management negotiate over wages and benefits, hours and working conditions. The settlement reached is spelled out in a written document or contract. The contract normally contains a grievance procedure to settle disputes. It is the job of the union to enforce the contract on behalf of the members.

It has not been easy to establish collective bargaining as a permanent part of American life. The efforts of unions to establish the concept of collective bargaining are a little known, but very important part of American history, involving great sacrifice and bitter struggle. Historically, management took the position that because they owned the means of production, they had the sole right to determine the conditions of employment. Collective bargaining forms the cornerstone of industrial democracy.

### ***Why are Unions Important?***

Workers formed unions so that they could have some say over wages, hours, working conditions, and the many other problems that arise in the relationship between a worker and employer. Unions are important because they help set the standards for education, skill levels, wages, working conditions, and quality of life for workers. Union-negotiated wages and benefits are generally superior to what non-union workers receive.

Most union contracts provide far more protections than state and federal laws. For example, in many states there is no legal right for workers to take a break. More importantly, most states follow a legal doctrine called "employment at will" and non-union workers can be fired for reasons that might be arbitrary or for no reason at all.

Unions also work to establish laws improving job conditions for their members through legislation at the national, state and local level. This ultimately benefits all workers. The 8-hour work day is an example of a positive change won by unions that affects everyone.

### ***Are Unions Still Important to Working People Today?***

*Continued on Page 8*

Unions are more important today than they ever were. It is no secret that in a global economy, the nature of work is changing and some employers resist unions. Research consistently shows that far more workers would join unions if anti-union campaigns weren't so common. Misinformation and intimidation – including firing union supporters – are routine responses when workers try to form unions.

Workers have less power when they act individually, but acting together as a group they can effect real change. Unions are the collective voice of workers. Unions are the workers' watchdogs, using their power to ensure that workers rights under the law are protected.

In addition to ensuring fairness and equitable treatment, many employers recognize that there are advantages to offering workers better wages and benefits. Companies concerned about long-term profitability want to maintain a supply of skilled labor and minimize turnover. The basic reason for this is simple: if unions provide a voice to workers, the number of dissatisfied workers who leave is reduced. Another valuable function of an organized workforce is that workers are able to contribute their knowledge about the job, which helps increase productivity.

### ***Why Join a Labor Union?***

As a worker, you have a federally guaranteed right to form or join a union, and bargain collectively with your employer. Business agents and/or stewards are the representatives of the union who help workers deal with unfair treatment, discrimination and with other workplace issues. This helps balance the power that an employer has over individual employees.

Belonging to a union gives you rights under the law that you do not have as an individual. Once you have formed a union, your employer must bargain with your union over your wages, benefits, hours and working conditions.

Union workers, on average, earn higher wages and get more benefits than workers who don't have a voice on the job with a union.

*Reprinted from The IPWU Dispatch*

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## **Mississippi Postal Workers Union**

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
HATTIESBURG MS
PERMIT No. 104

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED