

# The Mail Handler



**MAIL HANDLERS CONVENE IN PORTLAND**

**SPECIAL CONVENTION ISSUE**



# 100 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE POSTAL SERVICE

Summer 2012



# The Mail Handler

The Quarterly Publication of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union

Summer 2012

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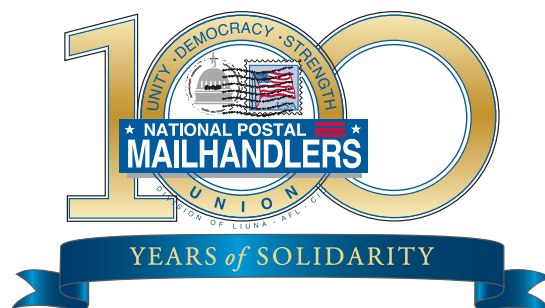
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Shape the Future!  
In Portland, Oregon



## National Postal Mail Handlers Union

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*National President*

**Mark A. Gardner**  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

**Jefferson C. Peppers III**  
*Vice President Central Region*

**Samuel C. D'Ambrosio**  
*Vice President Eastern Region*

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# ONE HUNDRED YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG

## Dear Members,

We are pleased to send you this special Convention issue of *The Mail Handler*. I want to take the time to thank all of the Mail Handler delegates who participated in this historic event, as we celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the NPMHU. A special thank you goes out to all of the Union officers and representatives who served on the various Committees to ensure that the business of the Convention was properly taken care of.

As you will see from the various articles enclosed, there were a number of important items of business to attend to at this Convention, including: nominations for the election of your national officers, constitutional amendments to debate and vote on, and resolutions to guide, educate and inform the membership on a number of critical issues, just to name a few. All in all, it was a very busy week, but also a very productive one.

I wish to thank the delegates for their faith in me, as I was reelected by acclamation to another four-year term. At the Convention I pledged to work just as hard during this term, as I have during the past ten years to keep this great Union moving forward. It is not a one man show however, and I am fortunate to have the



JOHN F. HEGARTY, National President

help and support of NPMHU Officers, and members from around the country. We have a number of challenges that lie ahead, and we are preparing to meet those challenges head on. Working together, we will continue to move forward with the proud tradition of excellent representation that has embodied the NPMHU for the past 100 years.

**"We have a number of challenges that lie ahead, and we are preparing to meet those challenges head on."**

Looking now to some of the immediate concerns on the horizon, as has been previously communicated to the field, we are



headed to interest arbitration over the terms of our collective bargaining agreement with the USPS. After failing to reach an agreement through direct negotiations and a subsequent mediation process, we will begin formal hearings soon in front of Arbitrator Herbert Fishgold, with a decision expected later this year, or early next year.

Another important topic that requires our attention is the upcoming election season. Whether voting in a primary election, or in the general election, it is critically important that Mail Handlers take an active role. This is especially important with all of the different views on “postal reform” that have been bandied about. There are those who would help us, and who deserve our support, and, there are those who would all but destroy the Postal Service, and who do not deserve our vote. It is imperative that you, your families, and your friends, are registered to vote in this critical election.

One of the important Resolutions that unanimously passed at the recent

Convention was the endorsement of Barack Obama and Joe Biden in the November election. While we would never presume to tell you who to vote for, please make sure that you educate yourselves on the issues, and vote in the elections on November 6 for those candidates who will support us as USPS employees and who support working families in general.

In conclusion, please read over this issue of *The Mail Handler* carefully, as it contains a thorough review of our Centennial Convention, and other important Articles outlining current events, and what we need to do to keep our Union strong.

Thank you for being a proud member of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union as we “Honor the Past” and “Shape the Future.”

John F. Hegarty  
National President

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MARK A. GARDNER, National Secretary-Treasurer

# HONOR THE PAST SHAPE THE FUTURE

**T**his edition of *The Mail Handler* magazine is chock full of updates and reporting on the myriad subjects that have consumed this past summer and early fall. From the normal, important issues that our Union attends to every day to the major, intractable battles that are more infrequent—like planning for the presentation of our Union's best case in the upcoming interest arbitration proceedings—we've been busy.

Our recent Convention, celebrating the one hundred years we've been in existence as a Union, was a highlight of the season. Our delegates made me proud every day of that week by demonstrating their unwavering commitment to accomplishing the work they were elected to do while maintaining the highest levels of mutual cooperation and respect. During the course of the week, I was pleased to accept the nomination for, and subsequent reelection to, my position of National Secretary-Treasurer. I want to extend my thanks to the delegates for giving me the distinct honor and privilege to serve you for the next four years.

Held on the heels of our own Convention, the Democratic National Convention also

was a stunning success that spelled out the many worker-friendly policies and major accomplishments of the Obama Administration, like signing the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law in 2009, providing an avenue for health insurance coverage for those who have fallen through our country's social safety net, restoring America's auto industry and the hundreds of thousands of jobs that rely on that work to feed their families, and reinforcing the Democratic Party's commitment to advancing the causes vital to all workers.

Speaker after speaker at this Convention inspired me beyond words. As with many of you, their messages resonated deeply and served to validate my core beliefs. I know that our country, like our Union, works best when we pull together, when we look out for one another, when we provide everyone with the opportunity to achieve success, and when we treat everyone with dignity and respect—no matter their station in life or the balance in their bank account.

When compared to the stunted platform that the Republican National Committee put forward during their own Convention the week before, there is no question that a Romney-Ryan win would be disastrous for American workers and especially disastrous for Mail Handlers and other postal workers.

As is the case at this point in our national election process, especially during Presidential election years, the political pundits and campaign gurus have reached hyper-drive—and the airwaves and news programs have become consumed with voter polling analysis, campaign commercials, and partisan maneuvering. While it can be interesting to watch, I know that many Americans have neither the time nor the interest in absorbing the minutiae of this evolving social experiment.

It would be easy to simply check out of the whole process, but that would be a mistake. There has never been a more important election for workers, including Mail Handlers, than this election. We literally cannot afford to sit back and let those on the side of millionaires and billionaires

**“I know that our country, like our Union, works best when we pull together, when we look out for one another, when we provide everyone with the opportunity to achieve success, and when we treat everyone with dignity and respect...”**

“Please do your part to continue moving our country forward. Please do all that you can to turn out the vote on November 6th. Please help reelect Barack Obama and Joe Biden. Your job, your pay, your benefits, your health insurance, your pension, and your future are on the line.”

decide our future. Romney-Ryan would be elated to see all public sector unions completely dismantled. They would be thrilled to see our wages, benefits, and job protections evaporate. We simply cannot allow that to happen.

The choice for Mail Handlers could not be clearer in this election. Please do your part to continue moving our country forward. Please do all that you can to turn out the vote on November 6th. Please

help reelect Barack Obama and Joe Biden. Your job, your pay, your benefits, your health insurance, your pension, and your future are on the line. Please step up, take charge, and help take us forward.

Faternally,

Mark A. Gardner

National Secretary-Treasurer

# Why Endorse? A Comparison of Where They Stand on the Issues

	Obama	Romney
<b>JOB</b>	Getting Americans Back to Work, through an economic recovery plan that created over 4 million jobs. Future plans encourage small business growth, prevent up to 280,000 teacher layoffs, and provide a \$1,500 tax cut for the average family.  More than 300,000 Public Sector Jobs Saved, by preventing layoffs of police officers, firefighters, healthcare workers, teachers, and other trusted public servants.	Tax Breaks to Corporations, to entice big corporations to create new jobs.  Poor Job Growth Record. While governor of Massachusetts, that state had one of the worst job growth rates while the national economy was thriving, ranking 47th among all states. As head of a private equity firm, Bain Capital, made a fortune by acquiring companies and laying off thousands of workers.
<b>WORKING FAMILIES</b>	Tax Cuts for Working Families, by providing tax cuts to 95% of working families at a time when families needed it most.  Unemployment Insurance for 2.5 Million Americans, by extending unemployment benefits to assist Americans who lost their jobs in the recession.  Making College More Affordable, by expanding Pell Grants and revamping the student loan program by eliminating fees paid to private banks.	Privatize Unemployment Benefits, by requiring workers to pay for their own unemployment benefits through individual savings accounts.  Less Help for the Jobless. As governor, Romney proposed scaling back unemployment insurance costs by paying benefits for fewer weeks.  Job Training Funds Slashed. As governor, Romney vetoed \$11 million in job training funds.
<b>WORKERS' RIGHTS</b>	Protecting American Workers, by calling the efforts to curb collective bargaining an "assault on unions" and recognizing that public employees "make enormous contributions to our states and our citizens."  Standing Up for the Middle Class, because restoring the middle class means giving everyone a chance to succeed. "The truth is we'll never be able to compete with other countries when it comes to who's best at letting their businesses pay the lowest wages, who's best at busting unions, who's best at letting companies pollute as much as they want. That's a race to the bottom that we can't win, and we shouldn't want to win that race."	Supporting Anti-Worker Agenda, claiming it was critical to support Gov. Scott Walker's efforts to "rein in out-of-control public employee pay and benefits in Wisconsin," and by supporting the anti-middle-class SB 5 in Ohio "110 percent."  Supports Union-busting Laws, by claiming that "right-to-work for less" legislation "makes a lot of sense."  Opposing Enforcement of Labor Laws by the National Labor Relations Board, which he says is "stacked with union stooges," and calling the enforcement of federal labor laws against union-busting companies an "assault on business" and "political payback."
<b>HEALTHCARE</b>	32 Million Americans Covered by historic healthcare reform law, the Affordable Care Act, which expanded healthcare coverage to the uninsured.  Quality Coverage Regardless of Pre-Existing Conditions or Illness, by preventing insurers from denying coverage for people with pre-existing conditions and prohibiting insurance companies from dropping people due to illness.  Coverage for Young Adults and Children, by allowing parents to keep their children on their health plans until age 26, and giving 11 million children coverage under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).	Repeal Healthcare Reform, by issuing an Executive Order to provide a waiver from the Affordable Care Act for all 50 states, and then working with Congress to repeal the law.
<b>FINANCIAL REFORM</b>	Reforms that Hold Wall Street Accountable, by enacting the most sweeping financial reform package since the Great Depression.  Better Protections for Consumers, by establishing the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which increases regulation and oversight of big banks and mortgage companies. Also enacted the CARD Act, which reigns in and reduces credit card rates and fees.	Criticizing Wall Street reform and saying that the "level of over-regulation and burden which has been placed on the financial services sector I think is unnecessary."  Supporting Wall Street, by saying that Wall Street greed "is not the reason we had an economic meltdown."
<b>RETIREMENT SECURITY</b>	Maintain Social Security and Medicare, by protecting Social Security benefits and refusing to move the goal post by increasing the Medicare eligibility age.	Supporting Private Accounts for Social Security, claiming in 2007 that President Bush's plan to use private Social Security accounts "works."  Ending Medicare as we know it, by selecting Paul Ryan as his running mate and supporting a voucher system for each senior's medical benefits.
<b>U.S. POSTAL SERVICE</b>	With postal reform currently being debated within Congress, the Republicans are blocking legislation recently passed by the Senate to give the Postal Service some breathing room in the face of up-front retiree health care payments. Instead, the Republican leadership has proposed a version of reform that is harmful to postal employees and postal unions, and will cut 200,000 jobs. Without question, Romney would seek the destruction of the unionized postal workforce, the degradation of the public postal infrastructure, the outsourcing and privatization of all postal services, and the elimination of the Postal Service as we know it. Obama sees the Postal Service as a necessary service that sustains good jobs and the hard working men and women it employs; Romney sees dollar signs, as his campaign has pushed for selling off and privatizing the 30,000 USPS facilities, as well as other equity (e.g., vehicles). One of Romney's economic advisors believes that the USPS is in an unchangeable downfall and suggests that it could be sold "to a private contractor, avoid[ing] those losses while cashing a nice big check."	



# National Postal Mail Handlers Union

**John F. Hegarty**  
*National President*

**Mark A. Gardner**  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

**Jefferson C. Peppers, III**  
*Vice President  
Central Region*

**Samuel C. D'Ambrosio**  
*Vice President  
Eastern Region*

**Paul Hogrogian**  
*Vice President  
Northeastern Region*

**Bruce Z. Miller**  
*Vice President  
Southern Region*

**Rudy Santos**  
*Vice President  
Western Region*

Dear Members:

Four years ago, the NPMHU and many Mail Handlers were part of a historic moment, when President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden were first elected to office.

Their first term, in January 2009, began with the worst economic recession in modern American history, leftover from the failed economic policies of the Bush Administration. Two years later, with economic progress slower than anticipated, the 2010 mid-term elections put anti-union politicians in Congress and state governments across the country.

Since then, American workers have been assaulted with a wave of attacks on average working Americans. Although our members in many respects have been protected against most of these attacks because of the NPMHU's 2006 National Agreement, our brothers and sisters in the wider labor movement, and working families generally, have not been so lucky.

The past two years have seen political gridlock in Washington, DC, as the Republican Party has made the defeat of President Obama its number one priority, while Republican leadership in Congress has refused to pass legislation that would create jobs, repair our economy, or even fix the non-partisan Postal Service.

Especially in 2010, too many NPMHU members decided to sit out that election. We cannot let that happen again. Every member of the NPMHU, and every family member and friend of the NPMHU, must be sure to vote on November 6.

Indeed, the same anti-Union politicians who drove our economy into a ditch before 2009 and who have barely lifted a finger to get the economy moving again are trying to solidify their supporters in Congress and take over the White House. The NPMHU and its members cannot allow that to happen either. During the past four years, President Obama has moved the nation forward, by stimulating the economy into producing 30 straight months of job growth, by reforming and extending health care coverage, and generally by creating in the executive branch of the federal government a worker-friendly atmosphere that will pay dividends for many years to come.

That progress must continue. That is why the delegates at the 2012 NPMHU National Convention unanimously endorsed the re-election efforts of President Obama and Vice President Biden, and that is why every Mail Handler needs to work and to vote for the election of worker-friendly candidates in this year's elections.

We urge all of you to do your part, and to vote on (or before) November 6.

Fraternally,

John F. Hegarty  
National President

Mark A. Gardner  
National Secretary-Treasurer

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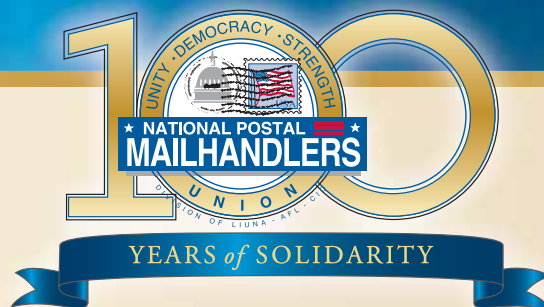


VISIT THE NPMHU WEBSITE at [www.npmhu.org](http://www.npmhu.org) to VIEW THE LIVELY NPMHU 2012 OBAMA ENDORSEMENT VIDEO.



# HONOR *the* PAST SHAPE *the* FUTURE

## 2012 CONVENTION ★ PORTLAND, OREGON



**B**eginning on August 6, 2012, delegates from NPMHU Local Unions from across the country gathered in Portland, Oregon to participate in the 2012 NPMHU National Convention. This quadrennial gathering of NPMHU officers, representatives, and delegates represents the highest governing body of the National Postal Mail Handler Union. This particular Convention was extraordinary in that its opening session occurred one hundred years to the day from when the Mail Handlers Union was founded. What follows in this article is a daily recap of this centennial Convention.

### GETTING READY

In the days preceding the opening ceremonies on Monday, August 6th, the Committees that had been appointed to make recommendations to the Convention delegates were hard at work finalizing their reports and making final preparations. The Credentials Committee and the Constitution

Committee met on Thursday, and the Rules Committee, the Political and Legislative Committee, and the Resolutions Committee met throughout the day on Friday. The Elections Committee—which is charged with running the election to choose the Judges of Election for any election that may be required for National Officers—met on Saturday, August 4. Additional meetings took place over that weekend, and early on Monday morning to put the finishing touches on the advance work for this Convention.

Chaired by Madelyn Puricelli of Local 320, the Credentials Committee also worked through the weekend to help register delegates and sort through the complex logistical details required for ensuring that only properly elected delegates would partici-

pate in the week's proceedings. At its initial meetings in Washington, DC, the Committee reviewed the results of all Local Union delegate elections and addressed each of the protests that were filed about those elections. Then, until the Convention opened, the Committee had to monitor various changes in the delegate list, as elected delegates withdrew and alternate delegates were substituted. The same process, on a smaller scale, operated immediately before and during the Convention itself.

The Constitution Committee, chaired by Eastern Regional Vice President Sam D'Ambrosio, also spent time working to fine-tune its recommendations and to ensure that the intent of each amendment would be fully explained to the delegates

who would cast final votes on each amendment. A host of proposed amendments to both the National Constitution and the Uniform Local Union Constitution were to be debated by the delegates during the week, with a two-thirds vote required to adopt any amendment.

Northeastern Regional Vice President Paul Hogrogian led the Rules Committee, which finalized its recommendations for more than thirty rules to govern the Convention proceedings. On the opening day of the Convention, this Committee would recommend all of these rules for adoption by the delegates. In addition, Parliamentarian Gaut Ragsdale was in attendance to ensure that the Convention abided by the governing parliamentary procedures.

Also meeting prior to the Convention was the Political and Legislative Committee, chaired by Rudy Santos, Western Regional Vice President. After a short presentation by Bob Losi, the NPMHU Political and Legislative Director, the





*The convention opening invocation was delivered by Local 320 delegate Ace Balderrama.*



*This year's host, David Jarvis, President of Local 315 in Portland, OR, welcomed the delegates.*



*The Young Marines and the Presentation of Colors*



*Linda Hornbuckle delivered a passionate performance of the National Anthem.*



*Commissioner Amanda Fritz, Portland City Council, welcomes and expresses her support for delegates in their struggle.*

Committee discussed arrangements for a number of elected officials who had graciously agreed to address the delegates at this year's Convention. The Committee also worked hard to finalize its proposals for consideration by the delegates.

Finally, the Resolutions Committee, chaired by Central Regional Vice President Jefferson Peppers, made a final review of the resolutions it would propose for discussion and possible adoption by the delegates.

#### DAY 1

## MONDAY

AUGUST 6, 2012

The much anticipated 2012 National Convention of the NPMHU formally opened on Monday, bringing approximately 280 delegates together from across the nation to "Honor the Past" and "Shape the Future" of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the initial recognition of the NPMHU, and thus the Convention was certain to be a memorable week in the history of the NPMHU.

To kick off the day's events, after the introduction of all Local Presidents and National Officers, a powerful

Invocation was delivered to the delegates by Ace Balderrama of Local 320, after which the delegates enjoyed a riveting bag-pipe performance by Logan Chavez of the Portland Metro Youth Pipe Band. The Presentation of Colors by the Young Marines followed, and Linda Hornbuckle delivered a passionate performance of the National Anthem.

National President John Hegarty expressed the gratitude of the delegates for these inspiring performances, and then delivered some opening remarks to the delegates, urging Mail Handlers to "Fight hard, to never give up, and to never give in" to forces working to dismantle the Postal Service and suppress the labor movement. David Jarvis, President of Local 315 in Portland, OR and this year's host Local, followed President Hegarty with a warm welcome to the delegates. Brother Jarvis encouraged the delegates and their families to enjoy all that Portland has to offer, including a vibrant city culture and surrounding natural beauty.

Delegates had the pleasure of being addressed by several special guests, all of whom shared their thoughts on the Postal Service and their ideas for its success going forward. First,

Commissioner Amanda Fritz of the Portland City Council and long time member of the Oregon State Nurses Association gave an enthusiastic welcome from the City of Portland, informing the delegates that the City is behind the Union in its fight to preserve the Postal Service. As a testament to the City's unwavering commitment, the City Council unanimously voted to ratify a proclamation in support of the Union's efforts, and it also sent a letter to the Postmaster General vehemently protesting recent cuts to the Postal Service. These efforts by the City of Portland received an ebullient round of applause from the delegates.

The second special guest for the day was Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA), who was unable to attend the Convention in person, but submitted a video statement in support of the Union's efforts, telling delegates that "Mail Handlers didn't cause this economic crisis, so why should they have to pay for it?" Again, a booming round of applause shook the floor of the Convention.

Next up was Arlene Holt-Baker, the Executive Vice-President of the AFL-CIO, who addressed the Convention by giving a spirited speech, pledging solidarity with the NPMHU, chastising the Republican Congressional leadership for threatening to decimate



*Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA) extends her greetings and best wishes.*



*Arlene Holt-Baker, Vice President of the AFL-CIO, pledged solidarity with the NPMHU.*



*Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL) gave a moving and heartfelt speech connecting present worker struggles with those of the past.*





**TIM GRILZ**  
 LOCAL 327 PRESIDENT



**KERRY SCATES**  
 LOCAL 329 BRANCH PRESIDENT



**JOSEPH PALAU**  
 LOCAL 300 STEWARD



**NICK MOSEZAR**  
 LOCAL 318 PRESIDENT



**JULIO FIGUEROA**  
 LOCAL 313 PRESIDENT



*Madelyn Puricelli, Vice President of Local 320 and Chairwoman of the Credentials Committee, presented the Committee's report.*



*June Harris, Vice President of Local 306 and Chairwoman of the Convention Election Committee, presented the process for choosing this year's Judges of Election.*



*Paul Hogrogian, Northeastern Regional Vice President, President of Local 300 and Chairman of the Rules Committee, presented the Committee report.*

the Postal Service, and condemning the deplorable attempt by Rep. Darrell Issa (D-CA) to pass a piece of legislation that would completely dismantle the Postal Service as we know it. Baker also reminded the delegates that Mail Handlers play an important role in maintaining the Postal Service's standing at the top of the list of the most trusted institutions in the United States.

Following Ms. Baker's speech, President Hegarty officially recognized four recently retired Contract Administration Department staff for their devotion to the Union and for their many years of hard work representing brothers and sisters throughout the country in the grievance process. Dallas Jones (former National CAD Representative), Dianne Williams (former Central Regional Director), Charles Reynolds (former Southern Regional Director), and Ray Sokolowski (former Northeastern Regional Director) all took the stage, heads held high, as they were recognized for their service.

Next, President Hegarty called the official proceedings of the Convention to order, handing the microphone over to Madelyn Puricelli, the Chairwoman of the Credentials Committee and Vice President of Local 320. According to Convention procedure, the Report of the Credentials Committee must be read and ratified by a majority vote of the delegates. Until the Credentials Report is adopted, no other business can proceed, as its adoption is required for the seating

of the delegates. The Report was presented and ratified unanimously.

The final special guest for the day was a great friend of labor, Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL). Davis, an incredibly skillful orator, gave a heartfelt speech highlighting the accomplishments of the labor movement, and the importance of advancing the movement's achievements into the future. He placed the Postal Service and its survival at the center of the struggle for a better future for working families.

Next to be presented was the Report of the Convention Election Committee, together with a short video that was prepared and shown in order to explain the election process for choosing this year's Judges of Election. Chairwoman June Harris, Vice President of Local 306, spoke for the entire Committee. The Election Committee presented the rules it had adopted to govern this election. The delegates then nominated twenty candidates, all of whom were

to appear on the secret ballot later in the day for a shot at being elected as one of three Judges of Election.

The last order of business for the opening day was the presentation of the Report of the Rules Committee, given by Chairman Paul Hogrogian, Northeastern Regional Vice President and President of Local 300. Brother Hogrogian read each rule to the delegates, and then moved for each rule's adoption. All thirty-one rules were successfully adopted, thereby allowing the Convention to operate in an orderly fashion. The Convention then recessed for the remainder of the afternoon in order to allow the delegates to cast their votes in the election to select three Judges of Election.

## DAY 2

# TUESDAY

AUGUST 7, 2012

The Convention reconvened on Tuesday for the second day of the NPMHU's centennial celebration.



*Retiree Recognition for Ray Sokolowski (former Northeastern Regional Director), Dianne Williams (former Central Regional Director), Dallas Jones (former National CAD Representative), and Charles Reynolds (former Southern Regional Director)*





**DAVID WILKIN**  
LOCAL 309 PRESIDENT



**RITA TRIPP**  
LOCAL 307 SEBM



**JAVIER VALENCIA**  
LOCAL 303 BRANCH PRESIDENT



**BEVERLY HENDERSON**  
LOCAL 297 PRESIDENT



**LINDA WAGMAN**  
LOCAL 298 PRESIDENT



**JAMES HAGGARTY**  
307 PRESIDENT

The day started with a brief message from Rep. Peter Defazio (D-OR), in which the Congressman shared some motivational words, encouraging Mail Handlers to continue to fight for their collective bargaining rights. Rep. Defazio also gave a special thanks to David Jarvis, President of Local 315 in Portland, OR, for playing an integral role in assisting the Congressman in developing “a thoughtful, sustainable bill for the Postal Service.”

Following Congressman Defazio was an inspiring Invocation, delivered by Brother Reggie Riggins, Treasurer of Local 310. President Hegarty then delivered an emo-

tional tribute to our veterans and to all American troops. A gripping video portraying the heroic acts of our Service Members was played, and then, with great respect and admiration for our troops, President Hegarty asked those delegates who have served in the military to rise and be recognized, proclaiming that “Because of brave Americans like you, we live our lives in freedom. We salute you!”

The first order of official business for Tuesday morning was the presentation of the Second Supplemental Report of the Credentials Committee, once again delivered by Chairwoman Madelyn

Puricelli of Local 320. The purpose of this report was to inform the delegates that the number of registered delegates in attendance had increased by one, resulting in a total of 278 certified delegates to the Convention.

Sister June Harris, Vice President of Local 306 and Chairwoman of the Elections Committee, delivered the much-anticipated results of the Election for National Judges of Election, the balloting for which took place following Monday’s proceedings. Coming in first place was Susanna Paniagua of Local 320, with Kevin Tabarus of Local 300 coming in second, and Michael

Rembelinsky of Local 308 coming in third. These newly elected Judges of Election then had the important duty of supervising the forthcoming election for National Officers. Brother Kevin Tabarus was selected as Chair of the Judges of Election, and he took the podium to accept nominations for National Officers for the 2012 election.

National President John Hegarty and National Secretary-Treasurer Mark Gardner were both nominated, without opposition, and both were declared duly re-elected by acclamation to the thunderous roar of the delegates. Incumbent Vice Presidents Jefferson C. Peppers, III from the



*John Hegarty*



*Mark Gardner*



*Paul Hogrogian*



*Jeff Peppers*

**Members of the National Executive Board who were reelected by acclamation**



*Brother Reggie Riggins, Treasurer of Local 310, delivers in inspiring invocation.*



*National President John Hegarty presents the Report of the National Officers.*



*National Secretary-Treasurer Mark Gardner reports on the National Union’s internal operations, including its membership and finances.*





**ANDY BADILISHAMWALIMU**  
LOCAL 310 PRESIDENT



**ANTHONY DAVIS**  
LOCAL 314 PRESIDENT



**DON SNEESBY**  
LOCAL 316 PRESIDENT



**RONNIE SANDERS**  
LOCAL 317 PRESIDENT



**JAMES ROSSO**  
LOCAL 319 PRESIDENT



*Rep. Peter Defazio  
(D-OR) welcomes the delegates to Oregon.*



*Rep. Raul Grijalva  
(D-AZ) urged the delegates to advance and defend the dreams of laboring men and women.*



*Billy Hayes,  
Communication Workers  
Union of the United  
Kingdom, shared his insight  
from workers abroad.*



*Labor historian and professor,  
Dr. Greg Giebel, in the first  
of his four lessons this week,  
unearths the foundation of  
NPMHU's 100 year history.*

Central Region and Paul Hogrogian from the Northeastern Region were also duly elected by acclamation to their respective offices, and both received equally jubilant applause from the delegates. The other three Regional Vice President positions were contested and the subject of upcoming elections. Nominations for Western Regional Vice President included the incumbent Rudy Santos and Kimberly Rojas of Local 302. In addition, because of the upcoming retirements of Sam D'Ambrosio, Eastern Region Vice President, and Bruce Z. Miller, Southern Region Vice President, there were several nominations for those positions. In the Southern Region, Brothers Lawrence Sapp of Local 318, Pervous "Andy B" Badilishamwalimu of Local 310, and John R. Macon of Local 329 were to face off in a primary election on Wednesday, August 8th, in accor-

dance with the provisions governing elections in the National Constitution, so that the field of candidates would be narrowed down to two, both of whom will then appear on a mail-ballot election in the fall. Likewise, in the Eastern Region, five candidates were nominated and subject to Wednesday's primary election: John Gibson of Local 308; Eugene Horton of Local 305; James Bell of Local 304; Kevin Fletcher of Local 305; and Clyde Patterson of Local 304.

Following the nominations for National Officers, the delegates had the pleasure of receiving special guest, Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ). Congressman Grijalva shared his thoughts on possible avenues toward amelioration of the Postal Service's current crisis, and he also provided the delegates with a look into his own past, explaining how his father's membership in a

labor union shaped his own convictions regarding the role of the labor movement in America. The Congressman's father told him as a young boy, "I work with my hands, a shovel and a drill. Sometimes, they work you like a dog. But with the Union, they have to treat you like a man." This resonated deeply with the Brothers and Sisters of the NPMHU, and Congressman Grijalva left the stage telling the delegates that Americans have a beautiful dream which the Union must defend.

The delegates also heard an insightful speech by Billy Hayes, who serves as both the General Secretary of the Communication Workers Union of the United Kingdom and President of UNI Global Union's Post and Logistics sector. Brother Hayes was kind enough to make the long journey from Wimbledon, England

to share his insights regarding the challenges being faced by postal workers across the globe, and to stress the need for cooperation as we confront these collective struggles. The delegates were pleased to hear Brother Hayes' message of support and solidarity during these difficult and challenging times.

It was then time for President Hegarty to deliver his National Officers' Report. The report highlighted the strength of the National Union and the progress that it has made over the last four years. As part of that speech, Hegarty promised to continue to fight for the rights and interests of all Mail Handlers across the country:

Our common goals can be simply stated: on this, the 100th anniversary of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, our Union pledges not only to Honor the Past, but also to use the lessons learned from our past to Shape our Future. We will dedicate whatever time and effort is needed; we will expend whatever resources are demanded; we will implement whatever strategies are justified; and together we will do whatever it takes to ensure our Union's continued success, and the continued success of all Mail Handlers.

Following President Hegarty's address, National Secretary-Treasurer Mark Gardner spoke to the delegates, informing them of the state of the National Union's internal





**DON GONZALES**  
LOCAL 321 PRESIDENT



**MICHAEL MCINTYRE**  
LOCAL 322 PRESIDENT



**DAN REIMANN**  
LOCAL 324 PRESIDENT



**EARNEST WALLACE**  
LOCAL 325 PRESIDENT



**TODD LARSON**  
LOCAL 328 PRESIDENT



**JOHN R. MACON**  
LOCAL 329 PRESIDENT

operations, including its membership and finances:

Ever since I first took office in 1992, the National Union has expended a lot of time and energy on efforts to improve itself. That emphasis has continued unabated for the past four years, and those efforts continue to bear fruit. Today, the Mail Handlers Union is a well-run labor organization, second to none in overall financial management, membership recruitment and maintenance, and internal communications.

Wrapping up the day's proceedings, the delegates offered a warm welcome to labor historian and professor Greg Giebel, who has had a decades-long association with the NPMHU. Dr. Giebel delivered the first part of his four-part history lesson, highlighting the achievements of the trade union movement in the 19th century, and the role that

our Union's forebears played in the workers' struggles at the turn of the century, just prior to the founding of our own great Union. Over the course of the Convention week, he would delve into the founding of the NPMHU and chart its development over the course of the last 100 years. It was with great enthusiasm that the delegates welcomed Dr. Giebel as the Centennial Historian for the NPMHU 2012 Convention.

Finally, the delegates enjoyed a video about the Mail Handler Benefit Plan and a speech by Stewart Lavelle from Coventry Health Care, the administrator and underwriter of the MHBP. Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the MHBP, which remains one of the largest health plans available to all federal and postal employees and retirees.

Prior to recessing for the day, the delegates were reminded that the National Officer primary elections were to be held beginning at 8:00 AM the following morning, with the Convention set to resume at 2:00 PM that afternoon.

**DAY 3**

**WEDNESDAY**

AUGUST 8, 2012

Wednesday's Convention business began at 8:00 AM, with the start of voting in the primary election for two of the National Officer positions: Regional Vice President in the Eastern Region and Regional Vice President in the Southern Region.



*Newly elected Judges of National Election: (l-r) Michael Rembelinsky, Local 308, Susanna Paniagua, Local 320, and Kevin Tabarus, Local 300*

The two nominees who received the largest number of weighted votes from the delegates would appear on a mail referendum ballot in September, when one of them will be elected by the membership into the office of Regional Vice President.

As the primary election voting came to a close, delegates poured into the Convention Hall to reconvene for business. Once seated, the delegates viewed a short, but important, message from a good friend of the NPMHU, Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-VA). Connolly spoke on current postal reform legislation, declaring that the next few months will require many decisions that will have "lasting ramifications" for the Postal Service, its employees, and its patrons. He later opined that the bill proposed by Republican Darryl Issa, H.R. 2309, would "gut mail services" and would have a perilous impact on the future of the Postal Service.

Afterwards, Matthew "Matty"

McDonald of Local 300 delivered an uplifting Invocation, in which he sought protection for our troops at home and abroad. His message was especially appropriate given yesterday's recognition of our courageous men and women in uniform by President Hegarty.

Following the Invocation, Fred Rolando, President of the National Association of Letter Carriers, gave a masterful speech in which he focused on prospective ways that postal unions and all postal employees can deal with the lack of leadership now being displayed by the upper ranks of the Postal Service. After expressing his gratitude for NPMHU efforts in bargaining, in legislative representation, and in the work place, President Rolando declared that the highest echelons of USPS management are not doing their jobs: "We have more than a crisis in leadership; we have a total abdication of leader-

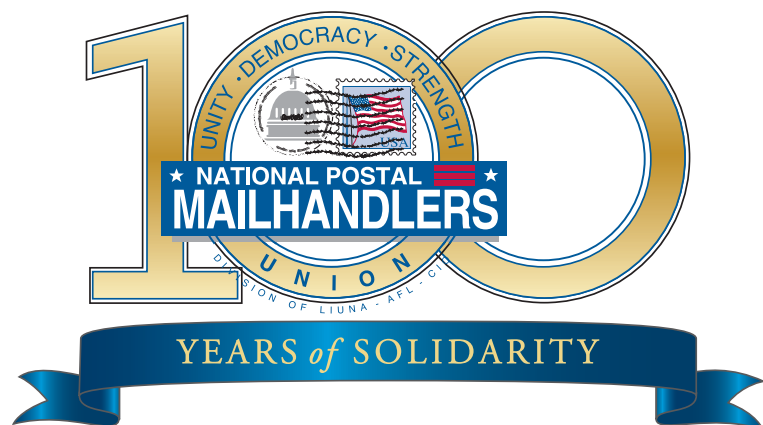


*Matthew "Matty" McDonald of Local 300 delivered an uplifting invocation.*





HONOR *the* PAST



SHAPE *the* FUTURE

2012 CONVENTION ★ PORTLAND, OREGON

NATIONAL POSTAL  
2012 NATIONAL CONVENTION  
PORTLAND, OREGON





# NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION CONVENTION ON • AUGUST 6–11, 2012





**ROBERT GRIFFITH**  
 LOCAL 330 PRESIDENT



**ZEKE MORENO**  
 LOCAL 331 PRESIDENT



**WOODY HENDRICKSON**  
 LOCAL 332 PRESIDENT



**ARTHUR PERRY**  
 LOCAL 334 PRESIDENT



**DAVID JOYCE**  
 LOCAL 315 TREASURER



*Fred Rolando, President of the National Association of Letter Carriers, gave a masterful and forward-looking speech.*

ship!" The Convention Hall shook with applause. President Rolando continued, "If we do nothing, we face a future of decline. . . . The only thing we need to decide is this: will we be the agents of change, or will we be the victims? I am here to say that we will be the agents!" Once again, the delegates responded with cheering and applause.



*Brother Sam D'Ambrosio, Eastern Region Vice President and Chairman of the Constitution Committee, reviews all proposed constitutional amendments with the delegates.*

Part two of Dr. Greg Giebel's history lesson followed, as he expounded on the formation of our own great Union, highlighting the period from 1900 to 1916. Of particular note, Giebel informed the delegates that the reason we celebrate August 6, 1912 as the NPMHU's birthday is because this was the first day on which the Postal Service recognized our right to organize and our right to engage in the grievance process. Noting that "few would dispute the claim that the Postal Service has been one of our Nation's greatest treasures," Giebel continued to captivate the audience as he elaborated on the creation of the NPMHU, the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century, and the manifestation of workers' rights. He also shared archival video obtained from the Library of Congress, showing mail handlers loading horse-drawn trailers as far back as 1903.

Turning to the day's business, President Hegarty gave a hearty introduction to the Constitution Committee, chaired by Brother Sam D'Ambrosio, Eastern Region Vice President. The Constitution Committee has had the monumental responsibility of reviewing all proposed constitutional amendments submitted by the membership and making recommendations to the delegates. Given their importance, amendments to the Constitution require a super-majority vote (2/3 of the delegates) for passage. This important process



*Sister June Harris, Local 306 Vice President, provided the morning's invocation in unity and solidarity.*

would continue over the next few days as the delegates debated and voted on dozens of proposals. On this first day of the Report of the Constitution Committee, the delegates adopted amendments that reconfirm the Union's opposition to privatization and express support for union-security proposals requiring nonmembers to pay their fair share of the costs of representation. Also adopted were amendments to allow certain non-postal and non-federal employees to join the Union as associate members, to provide the National Officers with payments for earned but unused sick leave upon leaving office, and to prohibit any member from representing the National Union for a period of two years if he or she worked in a supervisory or management position with the Postal Service.

**DAY 4**

**THURSDAY**  
 AUGUST 9, 2012

As the delegates were seated in the Convention Hall, they were greeted with a video message from Rep. Steven Lynch (D-MA), highlighting his personal connection, and unwavering commitment, to seeking viable solutions for a sustainable Postal Service. Rep. Lynch has a deeply personal connection to the mission of postal unions, due to his family's generations of service the Postal Service. Lynch's mother, two sisters, and brother-in-law, along with at least 12 extended family members, are current or retired USPS employees. He has recently sponsored legislation, H.R. 1351, which has the bipartisan support of over 230 Members of the House of Representatives. As a





**DOUG VITEK**  
LOCAL 323 BRANCH PRESIDENT

**RANDY KRUEGER**  
LOCAL 333 PRESIDENT

**GARY STERN**  
LOCAL 304 TREASURER

**JOHN SZEWCZYK**  
LOCAL 322 BRANCH PRESIDENT

**ANDREA HAYNES**  
LOCAL 300 STEWARD

**OSCAR SANTILLANO**  
LOCAL 321 STEWARD



*Brother Kevin Tabarus, Chairman of the Judges of Election and Treasurer of Local 300, read the results of the primary elections.*

result of the anti-worker and anti-union Republican leadership in the House, however, Representative Darrell Issa's (R-CA) draconian anti-worker bill, H.R. 2309, (which has been co-sponsored by just two Members, including Issa) has been the focal point of the Republican legislative efforts. Congressman Lynch promised the delegates that he would continue to oppose the adoption of H.R. 2309, and further declared that he is "extremely proud to have you, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, all as true partners in this fight."

President Hegarty subsequently requested that everyone in the room rise in remembrance of the anthrax victims, and Sister June Harris of Local 306 provided the morning's Invocation, which was especially spirited, as she asked the delegates to join hands in unity and solidarity.

Next, Sister Madelyn Puricelli of Local 320 provided the delegation with the Third Supplemental Report

of the Credentials Committee. Sadly, one of the delegates had a death in his family, and his departure from the Convention brought the total number of registered delegates down to 277.

With much anticipation, Brother Kevin Tabarus, Chairman of the Judges of Election and member of Local 300, read the results of the primary elections for Eastern Region Vice President and Southern Region Vice President. For the Eastern Region, the two candidates receiving the largest number of votes were Kevin Fletcher of Local 305 and James Bell of Local 304, and their names will therefore be placed on the mail referendum ballot this September. In the Southern Region, the two candidates receiving the most votes were Pervous "Andy B" Badilishamwalimu of Local 310

and Lawrence Sapp of Local 318, and thus they will appear on the upcoming ballot.

Following the announcement of the election results, the delegation listened attentively to the third part of Dr. Giebel lecture series on the history of our great Union and the labor movement. Today, the Convention's centennial historian covered the period of 1912 to 1952. The lecture included four video clips displaying the archaic—though efficient for the time—procedures that once comprised the mail processing and transportation systems, mostly on the railroads. In addition, Giebel's lecture emphasized the accomplishments of the labor movement, including the passage of the Railway Labor Act, which set the precedent for more comprehensive legislation, such as the National

Labor Relations Act of 1935. Giebel also noted several setbacks, many of which were a result of deplorable segregation and anti-labor policies during the period known as The Roaring 1920s.

The delegates continued to enjoy some incredible special guest speakers. Leading off the list for today's proceedings was Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR). President Hegarty introduced this skillful orator, commending him as "an advocate of the principle of bipartisanship, which has allowed him to author more than 150 bipartisan bills on health care, infrastructure, and tax reform." He went on to recognize Wyden as "a friend of Mail Handlers, and a friend of all working people." Sen. Wyden, to wild applause, suggested that every American should have the right to vote by mail—he



*Rep. Steven Lynch (D-MA) delivers his message of support for all Mail Handlers.*



*Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), the first U.S. Senator to be elected by mail-in ballots, spoke with conviction about American voter participation.*



*Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA) stressed the importance of grassroots work to ensure the future viability of the U.S. Postal Service.*



*Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), recently elected to Congress, promised to fight for the causes of the NPMHU and proudly wore a Mail Handler Union jacket as she left the hall.*



**EDDIE COWAN**  
LOCAL 303 PRESIDENT



**LYNDEN CLARK**  
LOCAL 318 MEMBER



**STEVE TAYLOR**  
LOCAL 312 PRESIDENT (RETIRED)



**MARTY EVENSON**  
LOCAL 318 MEMBER



**KIM ROJAS**  
LOCAL 302 BRANCH PRESIDENT

was, in fact, the first U.S. Senator in history to be elected by mail-in ballots. Oregon is the only state in the Union where citizens vote exclusively by mail, a process that has proved efficient, and also effective in raising voter participation. A huge proponent of his home-state's system, Wyden said, "Everybody in America ought to have the chance to vote by mail and see how all of you, day in and day out, offer quality, efficiency and value to the American people." The delegates could not have agreed more.

Following Sen. Wyden to the podium was Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA), who represents President Hegarty's hometown of Springfield, MA. President Hegarty welcomed him with a warm introduction, particularly thanking him for the work he has accomplished in saving Mail Handler jobs in Springfield. The

Congressman touched on the importance of working at the grassroots level to ensure the future viability of the Postal Service, and went on to admonish House Republicans for their partisan political banter that is based on unsubstantiated opinions, rather than fact. He later acknowledged the challenges facing the Postal Service brought about by advancement in email technology, but noted that "We can address these changes in technology, but not retreat from the guarantee of a Postal Service that functions efficiently."

Sam D'Ambrosio, Chairman of the Constitution Committee, then led the delegates to continue the process of debating and voting on the proposed amendments to the National Constitution and the Uniform Local Union Constitution. A variety of proposals were passed, and none of the recommendations

was rejected. Several particular amendments are worthy of note.

First, after substantial debate, an amendment to Article XIV, Section 3 of the National Constitution was passed, tying possible dues increases of \$1.00 per pay period to any future contractual increases in salary or cost-of-living adjustments totaling over \$500 in any calendar year. As part of this amendment, the National Union agreed to provide all Local Unions with an extra 80 cents per member per pay period, from the National Union treasury, for the next three years starting this December.

Second, there was substantial debate about a contentious amendment pertaining to Article IV, Section 5 of the ULUC and the authority of each Local President to certify stewards. After that debate, and a failed roll call vote to further

amend the proposed amendment, the delegates passed an amendment restricting the appointment of Mail Handlers as stewards if they have served as temporary supervisors (204Bs) at any time during the past two years, with a limited exception provided in unusual circumstances at the discretion of the Local President. The rationale behind the exception clause is that, in some unusual cases, Local Presidents should have the prerogative to make such appointments in order to mitigate the possibility of having no available options for stewards at a particular facility. Though all delegates expressed their distaste for 204Bs and a desire to expunge them from the ranks of Union representatives, it was decided that, in the end, Local Presidents need to retain this discretionary power.

To conclude Thursday's proceedings, the delegation welcomed first-year Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), who was elected to office just six months ago. The delegates were excited to have a new ally in Congress, as Bonamici promised to fight for the causes of the NPMHU, for the labor movement and working families, and for sustainable postal reform. "Postal Service reform bills are going to be critical for the long term viability of the Postal Service, and that is something that I am committed to," she told the crowd. Like the elected officials that spoke before her, she castigated her peers who are seeking to pass legislation that would dismantle the Postal

## Our Departed Brothers and Sisters

**Local 300**  
Bert Carley  
Allen Hall  
Ed Malinowski

**Local 301**  
Tom Butler  
John Conant  
Ben McKnight  
Ray Racette  
Ben Stone

David Welskopp  
Joseph "Tony" Wythe

**Local 305**  
Ron Burgess  
Tony Papa

**Local 307**  
Leroy Deraamus  
James Calvin Holmes  
Gladys Darby-Cobb Phillips

**Local 310**  
Anthony "Tony" Dowell

**Local 320**  
Dean Owen Poirier  
Joanne Elizabeth Selleck  
James Wesley Swartz  
Hector Ruiz

**Local 324**  
Abe Calamease

**Local 329**  
George Brown  
Turner Gilmore  
James Harbin  
Levi Pope





**TOM MULLAHEY**  
LOCAL 300 BRANCH PRESIDENT



**SEAN SWEENEY**  
LOCAL 301 BRANCH PRESIDENT



**PHIL TYSON**  
LOCAL 303 MEMBER



**PAMELA GRANT**  
LOCAL 297 STEWARD



**MARK COLEMAN**  
LOCAL 306 BRANCH PRESIDENT



**MICHELE COMBS**  
LOCAL 307 VICE PRESIDENT



*Julio Figueroa, President of Local 313, delivered an invocation with a focus on the unity needed to stand strong against the foes of labor and the Postal Service.*



*Legislative and Political Director Bob Losi and Senior Legislative Advisor Roger Blacklow jointly presented their assessment of the political scene.*

Service, and noted that the challenges that lie ahead are not by any means “insurmountable.” President Hegarty honored her, as he had the other elected officials that have joined us over the past few days, by presenting her with a beautiful Mail Handler jacket, which she proudly wore as she made her way out of the Hall to the cheers and applause of those in attendance..

#### DAY 5

## FRIDAY

AUGUST 10, 2012

Sen. John Tester (D-MT) delivered the morning’s opening video message, as the fifth day of the 2012 Convention started. Tester made reference to the Senate leadership’s efforts to pass sustainable postal reform legislation, in the form of S. 1789, urging the House to consider and pass the Senate’s version of the

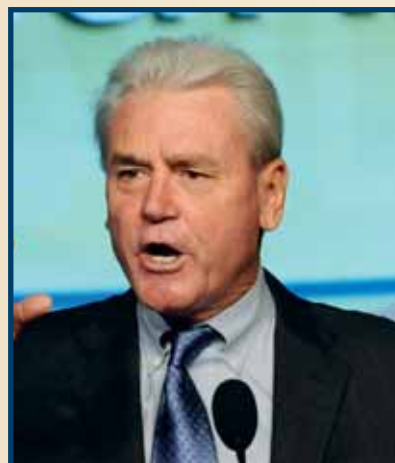
bill. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, such action is not likely given that right-wing Republicans control the House. They have made it clear that they will try to move forward with their own ill-advised postal reform legislation, H.R. 2309, sponsored by Darrell Issa (R-CA). Senator Tester told the delegates that “your role is critical in keeping America connected.” But should H.R. 2309 become public law, this role would be exponentially more difficult for Mail Handlers to carry out.

Next, Julio Figueroa, President of Local 313, delivered the Invocation, focusing again on the critical element of unity that is necessary to stand strong against those seeking to decimate the accomplishments of the labor movement and to deconstruct the Postal Service.

The keynote speaker of the day followed. With a command-

ing presence on the podium, Terry O’Sullivan, General President of the Laborers International Union of North America, delivered a rhe-

torical masterpiece, reproaching right-wing Members of Congress and Wall Street “fat-cats” for their vicious attempts at destroying



*Keynote speaker, Terry O’Sullivan, General President of the Laborers International Union of North America, delivered a rhetorical masterpiece to urge delegates to stand and repel vicious anti-union attacks.*



*Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain encouraged unity to accomplish great deeds.*



*Rudy Santos, Western Region Vice President, President of Local 320 and Chairman of the Legislative and Political Committee presented the Committee's recommendations.*



*National President John Hegarty recognizes retiring Southern Region Vice President Bruce Z. Miller for his tireless efforts on behalf of his NPMHU sisters and brothers.*



*National President John Hegarty recognizes retiring Eastern Region Vice President Sam D'Ambrosio for his relentless pursuit of workplace justice.*

labor rights and imploring all Mail Handlers to stand up and fight for their rights.

Wall Street sleazebags and right wingers are out to destroy the future of America's working class. These hypocrites claim

the Constitution as their bible, yet they ignore everything in it they don't like. They don't care if Saturday delivery disappears; they don't care if people in underserved communities don't get their paychecks on time; and they sure as hell don't care about your jobs! Brothers and Sisters, make no doubt about it, we are in a battle; we are at war! In this battle, and in every battle, LIUNA has your back. If it's a fight they want, it is a war they will get! This is our moment, this is our time, and this sure as hell is our country, not Wall Street's! It is a country of the people, by the people, and for the people. The pledge of allegiance does not state liberty and justice for some; it states liberty and justice for all!

These powerful and inspiring words evoked thunderous applause and an ear-splitting roar from the delegates.

President Hegarty then recognized Eastern Region Vice President Sam D'Ambrosio and Southern Region Vice President Bruce Z. Miller for their relentless commitment to the NPMHU as they prepare for pending retirements from the NEB. As a token of the National Union's appreciation, President Hegarty presented both with a commemorative NPMHU vase, which they humbly accepted with appreciation.

D'Ambrosio next guided the delegates through the remainder of the Constitution Committee's recommendations. All remaining recommendations were passed by the delegates, including some procedural changes to Article X of the ULUC governing the filing and processing of internal charges. The delegates then moved to consideration of amendments that were timely proposed but did not receive a positive recommendation from the Committee. Each of

these proposals was rejected, after some colorful debate.

The spotlight then focused on Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, as he delivered a speech to the delegates. "We wait for heroes; it's in our nature," he said. He continued:

My Brothers and Sisters, there was a time when it was different. Everyone who was willing to work hard and play by the rules could enter [the middle class], but that dream is fading. When you wait and you hope, what you really are is powerless. Our movement doesn't have the luxury to sit and wait. We either take responsibility and move forward together, or we revert back to the labor movement of the 1890s, with no power, no middle class, and no hope. The heroes are sitting behind you, and they are sitting in front of you. We need to understand that if we're united, we can accomplish great things.

Next, the delegates turned to legislative and political issues. To start, the delegates watched a video presentation, courtesy of the Legislative and Political Department of the National Office, which encouraged all Mail Handlers to apply pressure on their elected officials, enroll as e-activists, and contribute to the NPMHU Political Action Committee (PAC). Bob Losi, the Union's Political and Legislative Director pointedly told the delegates that "the PAC is by far the most important part of the Political and Legislative Department." Contributions to this fund enable the National Union to get its message out to Capitol Hill and the White House, and in the current political climate, this is a crucial component of the Union's labor agenda. All members are encouraged to participate in these endeavors to the greatest extent possible, in

order to ensure that the NPMHU is able to command an authoritative presence in the legislative arena.

The final task of the day centered on the recommended resolutions from the Legislative and Political Committee, chaired by Western Region Vice President Rudy Santos. Each of the Committee's eleven recommendations was adopted, culminating in the unanimous adoption of a resolution endorsing the re-election of President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden. The delegates broke out in song and dance to show their enthusiasm for the expected endorsement. The full text of the endorsement resolution is reprinted in a separate article in this magazine.

The day concluded with Legislative and Political Director Bob Losi and Senior Legislative Advisor Roger Blacklow jointly presenting their message on the legislative and political landscape now, and into the future. Their message reinforced the need to take this country back from those politicians who would do us harm, and the absolute need to reelect Barack Obama and Joe Biden in November of this year.

DAY 6

**SATURDAY**

AUGUST 11, 2012

On the final day of 2012 NPMHU National Convention, delegates met for a morning session only. Following an inspiring Invocation by Beverly Henderson, President of Local 297, Dr. Giebel delivered the final lecture in his four-part series on the history of the NPMHU. Giebel discussed the rise of both private-sector and public-sector unions in the middle of the 20th century, the expansion of the Postal Service and growing presence of female postal workers during the post-World War II economic boom, and the gradu-





*Local 297 President Beverly Henderson delivered an inspiring invocation.*



*Celebratory high-five after convention delegates choose Chicago as the site for the 2016 national convention*

al demise of segregation policies following the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954. As he progressed through his lecture, Giebel also touched on the latter part of the 20th century, highlighting the Union's historic merger with LIUNA in 1968, the 1970 strike by postal employees, and the beginning of full-scale contract negotiations, also in 1970. National Secretary-Treasurer Mark Gardner gave a personal thanks to Giebel for inspiring him to develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the history of the NPMHU, and the Convention's centennial historian was sent off with a warm round of applause.

Next, President Hegarty made a brief announcement, informing the

delegates Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney had chosen Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) as his running mate for Vice President. "He couldn't have gone any further to the right than that," Hegarty said, as he urged delegates to mobilize and prepare for the coming November election.

The much anticipated site selection for the 2016 National Convention was next on the agenda. The vote came down to a difficult choice between San Juan, PR and Chicago, IL. Delegates presented arguments for or against each destination. Ultimately, delegates elected by a roll call vote to make Chicago, IL the location of the next NPMHU National Convention in 2016.

President Hegarty then wished all retiring delegates a fond farewell, recognizing each of them by name and thanking them for their many years of service.

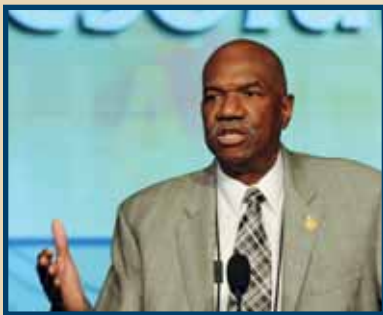
The last item of business for the day was the presentation of the Report of the Resolutions Committee. All resolutions timely submitted to the Committee for consideration were recommended by the Committee for adoption, and all but one were approved by the delegates on the floor of the Convention Hall. The full text

of all the Resolutions that were adopted are reprinted elsewhere in this magazine. After considerable debate by the delegates, a resolution encouraging a boycott of Coca-Cola to protest their alleged union-busting activities throughout the world was tabled for further study by the National Executive Board or a special committee selected by the National President. The matter will be reconsidered at the next Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions in December 2012.

In hindsight, the 2012 NPMHU National Convention proved to be an incredibly productive one. Delegates worked hard through-

out the week to ensure that the future of our great Union is secure, and without a doubt, it was a job well done. A final celebration of the Union's 100th anniversary was held on the evening of Saturday, August 11, 2012 at the Portland Art Museum.

As the delegates returned to their respective Locals, Mail Handlers across the nation are being encouraged to join with their elected Union representatives to help honor the past and shape the future, by remaining informed and active on the issues facing both the Postal Service and the NPMHU.



*Central Region Vice President, Local 306 President, and Chairman of the Resolutions Committee Jeff Peppers presented the report of the Committee.*



*In a closing exhortation, National President John Hegarty urges the delegates to "Honor the Past" and "Shape the Future."*



# HONOR *the* PAST COMMITTEES



**ELECTIONS COMMITTEE:** (l-r) Randy Krueger, Local 333, June Harris, Local 306, Zeke Moreno, Local 331



**CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE:** Seated (l-r): Bob Blum, Local 300, Lisa Greer, Local 310, Bob Broxton, Local 301; Standing (l-r): Tim Grilz, Local 327, Madelyn Puricelli, Local 320, Chairperson, John Hegarty, National President, Anthony Coleman, Local 302, Ronnie Sanders, Local 317, Ed Flagg, Local 321, Joe Boston, Local 306



**CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE:** Seated (l-r): Kevin Fletcher, Local 305, Pervous "Andy B" Badilishamwalimu, Local 310, John Hegarty, National President, Neil Ryan, Local 301; Standing (l-r): Jeff Larsen, Local 323, Sam D'Ambrosio, Local 322, National Executive Board, Chairperson, Don Sneesby, Local 316, Rita Tripp, Local 307, Woody Hendrickson, Local 332, Beverly Henderson, Local 297, David Wilkin, Local 309, Julio Figueroa, Local 313



**RULES COMMITTEE:** Seated (l-r): Linda Lewis, Local 311, John Hegarty, National President, Paul Hogrogian, Local 300, National Executive Board, Chairperson, Juanita Contreras, Local 302, Jason Adachi, Local 299, Bruce Miller, National Executive Board; Standing (l-r): Earnest Wallace, Local 325, Anthony Davis, Local 314, J.R. Macon, Local 329, Jim Rosso, Local 319, Michael McIntyre, Local 322, Dan Riemann, Local 324



**POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** Seated (l-r): John Hegarty, National President, Cindy Hoehl-Rinker, Local 321, Arthur Perry, Local 334, John Savala, Local 297, Bob Losi, National Legislative and Political Director; Standing (l-r): Todd Larson, Local 328, Roger Blacklow, Senior Legislative Advisor, Larry Gibson, Local 311, John Szewczyk, Local 322, David Jarvis, Local 315, Rudy Santos, Local 320, National Executive Board, Chairperson, Clyde Patterson, Local 304, Robert Griffith, Local 330



**RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:** Seated (l-r) Tom Mullahey, Local 300, Jeff Peppers, Local 306, National Executive Board, Chairperson, John Hegarty, National President, Joyce Weber, Local 318; Standing (l-r): Nick Mosezar, Local 318, Don Gonzales, Local 321, Debbie Retter, Local 316, John Gibson, Local 308, Eddie Cowan, Local 303, Ernie Grijalva, Local 302, Jim Haggarty, Local 307, Steve Taylor, Local 312



# SHAPE *the* FUTURE CONVENTION MOMENTS







# HONOR *the* PAST AROUND THE UNION

LOCAL 318



NATIONAL STAFF



LOCAL 300



LOCAL 302



SOUTHERN REGION



LOCAL 311



LOCAL 320



HOST LOCAL 315





# SHAPE *the* FUTURE AROUND THE UNION

LOCAL 303



LOCAL 321



LOCAL 334



LOCAL 306



LOCAL 322



NORTHEAST REGION



LOCAL 301



LOCAL 307



LOCAL 329



LOCAL 305



LOCAL 297





# REPORT *of the* NATIONAL OFFICERS PREPARED FOR THE DELEGATES *to the* 2012 NATIONAL CONVENTION *of the* NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

**AUGUST 6–11, 2012 ★ PORTLAND, OREGON**

**NATIONAL  
PRESIDENT  
JOHN HEGARTY**



**NATIONAL  
SECRETARY-TREASURER  
MARK GARDNER**

## REPORT of the NATIONAL OFFICERS

The National Constitution of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union—in Article XII, Section 9—requires the National President, acting on behalf of the entire National Executive Board, to present a report to the delegates describing all of the activities and accomplishments of the National Union since the last Convention. To comply with that constitutional requirement, this written report is being distributed to all delegates attending the 2012 National Convention, and will be made available to all other Union members over the coming weeks. The entire National Executive Board sincerely hopes that all delegates and other Mail Handlers will take the time necessary to review the entire report, for the NEB strongly believes that an informed membership is crucial to the continued success of the NPMHU.

### Overview

For the NPMHU, the 2012 National Convention is an extremely significant milestone in the history of our great Union. It marks the centennial

anniversary of the founding of the NPMHU, which was initially recognized by the Post Office Department exactly 100 years ago—on August 6, 1912—as the National Association of Post Office and Railway Mail Laborers representing postal laborers in the mail handler craft. Twenty-five years later, in 1937, our Union affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, and thus 2012 also marks our 75th anniversary in the united AFL-CIO. And finally, in 1968, our Union became an autonomous Division of the Laborers' International Union of North America, and thus next year will mark the 45th anniversary of our affiliation with the Laborers.

Four years ago, at our last Convention in August 2008, we told the delegates assembled in Orlando, Florida that the state of the National Union was excellent, that the Union and all of its officers, representatives, and members at the National, Regional, and Local levels had reason to be proud about their accomplishments over the prior four years; and that every Mail Handler had reason to be optimistic about the future. At the time, the Union and all Mail Handlers were enjoying the early stages of the wage increases

and non-economic improvements contained in the 2006 National Agreement, the nation was in the throes of an upbeat and forward looking election for a new U.S. President and a new U.S. Congress after suffering from eight years of the George W. Bush Administration's failed economic and foreign policies, and the U.S. Postal Service had only recently completed one of its best years in history, with mail volume peaking at 213 billion pieces.

Since then, the surroundings certainly have changed. The Great Recession of 2008—brought about because of greed in the banking industry and on Wall Street, an out-of-control housing market, and eight years of disastrous economic strategies—has been longer lasting than even the so-called experts could have predicted; the American voters had a crisis of confidence, and in 2010 cast their votes to put anti-worker, tea-party, right-wing Republicans in charge of the House of Representatives; the American government collapsed into a stalemate on most of the crucial economic and social issues on the domestic agenda of the United States; and the Postal Service—as a result of both the 2008 recession and ongoing



electronic diversion of the mail to the internet, email, and social media—has been dealing with its first, sustained, and (at least, in part) probably irreversible decline in mail volume.

The challenges facing our nation, the Postal Service, and this Union cannot be overstated. We find ourselves, on this 100th anniversary of the founding of our great Union, facing many challenges and many obstacles. We are about to enter lengthy and complex arbitration hearings that will determine the terms of our 2011 National Agreement. We continue to battle on Capitol Hill and in the Executive Branch to preserve not only our statutory benefits and our collective bargaining process, but also to guarantee the important and sustained role that the Postal Service must continue to play in the future of our American communications system. We need to marshal our forces, along with the rest of the American labor movement and other like-minded organizations and individuals, to ensure that this November the maximum possible number of pro-worker, pro-union, pro-working family candidates are elected into office by the American people. And, as if these challenges were not a sufficient test, we must continue to fight all of these battles while, at the very same time, the National Union and all of its affiliated Local Unions struggle against the internal effects of declining membership, rising expenses, and more intense disputes with the Postal Service, most notably relating to the potential dislocation of our members through the closing and consolidation of postal plants.

If there are visitors and guests at our 2012 Convention, they might be wondering how the Union is able to deal with all of these important issues, any one of which might lead to catastrophic results for Mail Handlers, and how the Union is able to deal with all of these issues at the very same time. But the delegates and other Mail Handlers who have gathered at this centennial National Convention know how the Union is coping, because we know that the NPMHU has been growing stronger and better for the past 20 years. The NPMHU is ready; it is prepared; indeed, it is anxious to confront these challenges, and to Shape the Future of this great Union and all of the Mail Handlers we represent.

Our common goals can be simply stated: on this, the 100th anniversary of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, our Union pledges not only to Honor the Past, but also to use the lessons learned from our past to Shape the Future.

We will dedicate whatever time and effort is needed; we will expend whatever resources are demanded; we will implement whatever strategies are appropriate; and together we will do whatever it takes to ensure our Union's continued success, and the continued success of all Mail Handlers. Whether it is arbitrating over the 2011 National Agreement, lobbying on Capitol Hill; electing pro-worker candidates to federal office; dealing with the ill-advised closings and consolidations of postal plants; or representing Mail Handlers during grievance meetings or in arbitration hearings, the NPMHU and its Local Unions are prepared to act on behalf of Mail Handlers, now and in the future. Our goal is not simply to deal with these events or address these issues, but to act proactively, to lead by example, to respond aggressively, and ultimately to help Shape the Future.

Before addressing how and what the NPMHU must do to Shape the Future, it is fitting to look back, and Honor the Past, with special emphasis on the past four years.

## Collective Bargaining

As always for the NPMHU, the primary focus of the National Union must be at the bargaining table against the Postal Service, especially during rounds of National negotiations, but also between periods of direct negotiations, when the Union must enforce the National Agreement at the National level.

When the 2008 National Convention convened in Orlando, Florida in August of that year, the NPMHU was in the second year of the five-year National Agreement that was negotiated with the Postal Service in late 2006 and ratified by the membership in early 2007. The membership's decision to ratify the 2006 National Agreement—by an overwhelming margin—proved to be the right decision.

The 2006 National Agreement contained a continuing stream of base wage increases, in the form of both general wage increases and cost-of-living adjustments. All Mail Handlers covered by that agreement received six general wage increases in November 2006, November 2007, February 2008, November 2008, November 2009, and November 2010, totaling 6.6% of pay, and continuing COLA payments—calculated using the historical formula and immediately rolled into base pay—that were negotiated for March and September of each year from 2007 through 2011, depending

on inflation increases. In addition, the contract included a new Step P that was instituted for the benefit of all senior mail handlers, offset in part by a lower entry step for new hires. During the five years of that contract, the COLA payments totaled \$3,640, including extremely large COLAs in September 2008 (\$1,477) and September 2011 (\$978). Thus, over the life of the five-year contract, a Level 4 Mail Handler at top step received guaranteed wage increases totaling \$6,989 or 15.2% of base pay, and even larger percentage increases were provided to mail handlers at earlier steps of the pay scale. Significantly, the total wage increases that occurred under the entire five-year contract were better than the predictions issued by the National Office at the time of the contract ratification vote in December 2006, and exceeded the total wage increases obtained by other postal bargaining groups. In addition, the current contract locked in other key economic protections, including rules on overtime, night differential, and Sunday premium pay, and although it contained increases in employee health care contributions, the contract nonetheless provided all Mail Handlers with substantial wage improvements during the five years covered by the agreement.

On noneconomic issues, the 2006 National Agreement extended the no-layoff protection for all mail handlers. It also continued several memoranda related to Article 12, one of which created an Article 12 Task Force so that the National parties could seek agreement on contentious reassignment issues. And it contained a host of other noneconomic improvements on important issues like casual reporting and enforcement, arbitration scheduling, and the automatic conversion of part-time flexibles into residual vacancies.

For the past two years, the focus of the National Office has been on National negotiations over the terms of the 2011 National Agreement. As always, the bargaining process has been lengthy, beginning with the solicitation of proposals from the membership. Both the Field Negotiating Committee comprised of Local and National officers and the National Negotiations Team worked endlessly to develop and analyze proposals, to prepare and present those proposals at the bargaining table, and to make the compromises and adjustments that are part of any negotiations.

Negotiations continued until the end of January 2012, when the Postal Service declared statutory impasse under the Postal Reorganization Act. Efforts at mediation followed in the period



from March through May, but those efforts were unsuccessful, with the Postal Service more interested in trying to obtain legislative solutions to its congressionally created financial problems and trying to finalize its arbitration over the terms of its 2010 agreement with the rural letter carriers. In that arbitration, the Postal Service argued that it essentially is a bankrupt entity, now defaulting on legally required payments into the Retiree Health Benefits Fund that total more than \$5.5 billion per year, and therefore should be able to avoid all improvements in wages in its future contracts. That contention was soundly rejected by the arbitration panel.

As this report is being written, the NPMHU and the Postal Service have started the interest arbitration process that ultimately will determine the terms of the 2011 National Agreement. In accordance with a striking procedure implemented by the parties, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service has appointed Herbert Fishgold as the neutral arbitrator to head the three-person arbitration panel that will issue the final arbitration award, after extensive hearings on the issues that continue to divide the parties. Each party also will appoint one of the remaining arbitrators. The actual hearings have not been scheduled yet, but are expected to occur as soon as possible following the conclusion of this National Convention, with a decision sometime later this year or early next year.

Delays in the completion of National negotiations are not uncommon, and delays in the completion of arbitration as the final procedure in National negotiations are inevitable. Nor are the ongoing delays in the current round of bargaining surprising, given the central role that Congress and the financial condition of the Postal Service have played, and will continue to play, in this round of bargaining. At this point, however, the final stage of this extended bargaining process has begun, and the end result is getting closer and closer. The National Office has the skills and resources necessary to achieve a fair and equitable result for all mail handlers, and the NPMHU remains dedicated to do whatever may be necessary to reach that result.

### Early Retirement Incentives

On two separate occasions during the past four years, first during the fall of 2009 and then during the summer of 2012, the NPMHU has negotiated terms for the implementation of retirement

incentives for mail handlers who may want to decide that leaving the Postal Service and collecting their retirement benefits is the right personal choice. In 2009, approximately 2,500 mail handlers made that choice, and a larger number of mail handlers, probably around 3,000, are likely to be retiring or otherwise separating from the Postal Service on or before August 31, 2012.

These incentives were made available (with certain restrictions) to all Mail Handlers who were currently eligible for regular retirement or voluntary early retirement, and all other employees who may have wanted to separate from the Postal Service. Although the NPMHU does not like to reduce the total number of mail handlers employed, or to lose active members of the Union, these retirement agreements with the Postal Service were intended to provide a financial cushion, and added peace of mind, for mail handlers who might be prepared to move on to the next chapter of their lives by leaving the Postal Service. Of equal importance, with many reassignments, consolidations, and even plant closings being implemented at mail processing facilities during the past four years, the agreements also produced important side benefits for remaining mail handlers, by ensuring that they experience less excessing and, if excessed, have more landing spots and bidding opportunities to protect themselves from the adverse effects of reduced staffing.

The NPMHU wishes a long, enjoyable, and well-deserved retirement to all of our departing brothers and sisters.

### Contract Administration

Between rounds of formal bargaining with the Postal Service, the Contract Administration Department (CAD) of the National Union—comprised of Mail Handlers working in both the National Office and our Regional Offices—works to improve the interpretations and implementation of the current National Agreement. These dedicated representatives are available to assist and consult with Mail Handlers and Mail Handler advocates from around the country on the endless contractual topics that arise each and every day. It often is easy to overlook this important function, but the National and Regional CAD is in constant and direct communication with Mail Handlers throughout the country.

In addition to these routine communications, the CAD continues to produce a host of reports,

publications, and memoranda that are intended to keep the Local leadership and membership informed about contract developments.

First, the National CAD continues to produce a series of semi-annual reports—released in conjunction with each Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions and then distributed to all Local Union officers and representatives—that describe all of the ongoing activities of the CAD since the last report. These reports, together with a constant stream of mail communications with the Local Unions, help to keep all NPMHU advocates apprised of the most recent contractual developments.

Second, more than six years ago, the National Office began to publish *Union Time*, a newsletter aimed directly at NPMHU officers and shop stewards who take on the tough, and often thankless, job of representing Mail Handlers on a day-to-day basis. The newsletter contains articles that are meant not only to be informative, but particularly useful in an officer's or shop steward's day-to-day dealings with postal management.

During the past four years, issues of *Union Time* have included articles analyzing a host of important topics, including seniority and status after excessing under the National Agreement; sick leave documentation and the “deems desirable” provision; the enforcement of Weingarten rights before the National Labor Relations Board; the reassignment of mail handlers in excess of the needs of a section under Section 12.6C4 of the National Agreement; incumbency rights under Section 12.3B3; and an entire issue devoted to the Contract Interpretation Manual (Version 3). Also included in each and every issue are summaries of recent arbitration decisions that should prove helpful to our NPMHU advocates.

The CAD also routinely distributes proposed and final revisions to USPS postal handbooks, manuals, and regulations (as well as any challenges that the Union may have filed on those changes); copies of the dozens of training and resource manuals that have been developed over the years; and NPMHU interpretations of various contract provisions.

Aside from these day-to-day communications, the CAD also takes primary responsibility for a host of other activities of the National Union:

#### Contract Interpretation Manual (CIM):

After several years of meetings and discussions with the Postal Service, the NPMHU and the USPS were able to issue their Version 3 of the



Contract Interpretation Manual, together with a Resource Manual that contains each and every arbitration award, memorandum of understanding, letter of intent, and Step 4 agreement that is cited in the CIM. This revised version of the CIM includes all updates necessary under the 2006 National Agreement, as well as matters that have been settled at the National level during the past few years.

Feedback on the publication and utilization of the CIM has been extremely positive. The manual took years to write, and each revision also takes a very long time to produce, but the bottom line is that, for the first time in the history of collective bargaining between the NPMHU and the Postal Service, the parties publishing the CIM have set forth, in a comprehensive manner, their substantive agreements about the appropriate way to interpret the National Agreement. To be sure, the CIM has not resolved all work-related disputes; but it has helped the parties at the Local and Regional levels to narrow their disputes by concentrating on the facts underlying particular grievances or issues that are not covered by the CIM.

Reports from the Union's Regional representatives show that the number of Step 3 appeals has decreased, and that management representatives at Step 3 are resolving those cases where local management is not adhering to the requirements set forth in the CIM. The CIM also is being used as a resource to cite when Step 3 decisions are being issued at the Regional level. And a review of the arbitration decisions being issued—at both the Local and National levels—demonstrates that many of the interpretations included in the CIM are being enforced and implemented, and often provide the common rules from which eventual decisions are reached.

Thus, the CIM continues to be used to settle or resolve cases at a much earlier stage of the grievance process, saving the Local Unions from expending resources that can then be used to represent members in other cases. In previous years we have reported that there has been a tremendous decrease in the number of cases pending Regional arbitration: eight years ago, the NPMHU had more than 5,600 open cases pending arbitration; four years ago, that number was down below 2,000; today, that number remains below 2,000, for a reduction of more than 65%.

It is safe to say that the development and publication of the CIM has had an extremely positive impact on the entire grievance-arbitration process. The document has proven to be far more substan-

tive, and therefore far more useful, than prior efforts at joint interpretation of the National Agreement. The National Office will continue to update the CIM and its supplements, to ensure that these manuals pay dividends for many years to come.

## **Contract-Based Training Programs:**

Throughout the past four years, the National Union has continued to develop and conduct a series of comprehensive training programs on a host of contractual and statutory issues important to all members. Each of these programs has been aimed at assisting Union officers and representatives from the Local Unions to advocate for Mail Handlers more effectively. Education and training is a crucial component of the National Union's overall program for improving the representation of Mail Handlers; indeed, the importance of this training can hardly be overstated, as educated Union representatives—at both the National and Local levels—are the lifeblood of the effective representation constantly being pursued by the National Union. That is why training during the past four years has been extensive, as reflected by these examples:

- (1) **Training Around the Local Unions** is held continuously, to ensure that the first-line Union representatives are properly filing and processing grievances. These training programs, conducted by National Shop Steward Trainer and Eastern Regional Vice President Sam D'Ambrosio, often accompanied by Northeastern Regional Vice President and Local 300 President Paul Hogrogian, are invaluable, and include not only basic shop steward training, but also a series of advanced training programs, with special emphasis on defending Mail Handlers who are being disciplined, challenging the hiring and use of casual employees, arbitration advocacy, and reassignments under Article 12.
- (2) **Arbitration Advocacy** training was held in Washington, DC in December 2010, and included a comprehensive review of the procedural and evidentiary rules that govern local arbitrations, strategies for dealing with grievants and witnesses, and approaches to settlement, among other topics.
- (3) **Article 12** training was held in conjunction with the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions in March 2012, to provide Local Union representatives with the tools needed to deal with seniority, reassignment, relocation, and excessing issues that arise in the context of plant closings and consolidations.

- (4) **QWL Training** for coordinators has been held at various locations, in order to encourage the continued success of the Quality Work Life process for those Local Unions that choose to participate.

To prepare for each one of these training programs, and well as prior programs on casu- als, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and occupational safety and health, the National Union has developed comprehensive manuals or handbooks on the specified topics, including outlines of the covered material and relevant documents needed by stewards and other advocates. Supplementary materials often are developed to include relevant arbitration decisions and case law. Of most importance, these manuals or handbooks also are circulated by mail—in either hard copy or on compact disc—so that the benefits of each training program is shared with thousands of Union representatives across the country.

## **Jurisdictional Disputes and Regional Instruction 399:**

For more than five decades, since the 1950s, no area involving the job rights of Mail Handlers has been more difficult for the NPMHU than its ongoing jurisdictional battles with the APWU and the Postal Service. Seen in that light, the National Union has made consistent progress during the past four years.

With regard to the RI-399 arbitration docket, cases are moving forward, both Nationally and Regionally, albeit at a slow pace. At the National-level, Arbitrator Joseph Sharnoff ruled that the Postal Service properly assigned the mail handler craft as the primary craft to load and sweep mail on the Small Parcel and Bundle Sorter (SPBS). The award not only ruled in favor of the NPMHU, but also agreed with several important principles and arguments that have been made on behalf of Mail Handlers, including a favorable standard of review that should be of benefit to the NPMHU in future cases.

Perhaps of greater long-term significance, the National Union has prevailed upon the Postal Service to make several extremely favorable craft determinations at the National level, thereby awarding what will prove to be thousands of jobs to employees represented by the NPMHU. Our string of successes in this area date back many years, with the most recent examples including the determination that the mail handler craft is the primary craft for the Flat Sequencing System (FSS) and for the Integrated Tray Converter position (ITC Groomer) on the FSS. A less favorable position was issued by the Postal Service with

regard to the Automated Parcel Bundle Sorter, and additional jurisdictional determinations are pending for the latest version of Advanced Facer Cancellor System (AFCS 200) and for various universal sorter systems.

To be sure, the RI-399 dispute resolution process remains extremely frustrating, often because it operates so slowly. But the FSS determination on jurisdiction is an excellent example that hard work and patience more often than not produce positive results for all Mail Handlers.

**National-level Arbitration:** The past four years also have seen substantial progress on the National arbitration docket. A host of issues have been resolved in pre-arbitration settlements, and other unresolved issues have been arbitrated at the National level.

Here is a sampling of final arbitration awards issued during the past four years:

- the NPMHU prevailed in a case determining that the USPS may not force mail handlers and other postal employees to use only Department of Labor forms to submit medical certifications for leave under the Family and Medical Leave; to the contrary, the Postal Service cannot prohibit mail handlers from using forms developed and designed by the NPMHU, provided that the required information is contained on those forms;
- an earlier case on the FMLA, decided in late 2008, determined that a host of form letters developed by the Postal Service were improper under the governing statute, and also strictly confined the actions that the USPS may pursue when it determines that there are potential problems with an employee's medical certifications;
- the Postal Service prevailed in a decision concluding that Section 12.6C5a2 of the National Agreement means that the separation of casuals prior to excessing, which must be accomplished "to the extent possible" to minimize impact on bargaining unit mail handlers, is only required in the affected craft, and not in other crafts within the installation;
- the Postal Service prevailed in the so-called casual "flip-flop" case, determining that the durational limitation in Article 7.1B of the NPMHU-USPS National Agreement "applies only to those 90-day periods in which an individual casual employee is des-

ignated as a mail handler casual or performs mail handler work assignments"; at the same time, the decision recognized that the 90-day limitation applies with full force to work performed in the mail handler craft, over which the NPMHU has exclusive bargaining authority, and thus, if an individual casual employee is either "designated as a mail handler casual" or is designated as a casual in another craft but "performs mail handler work assignments," then the casual's work during that 90-day period counts toward the overall durational limitations set forth in Article 7.1B;

- the NPMHU challenged the Postal Service's refusal to allow employees to use voting leave to attend the 2008 presidential party caucuses that were used in several states to choose delegates to the Republican and Democratic National Conventions, but right before the hearing the unions and the USPS settled their dispute with an agreement to pay the individual employees involved, and to preserve the underlying legal issue for another day;
- the NPMHU intervened in a National-level arbitration on whether postal employees should receive Sunday premium pay when they are placed on administrative leave for a tour on which they would otherwise receive Sunday pay. Although the NPMHU previously had prevailed on whether postal employees receive night differential when they are placed on administrative leave for a shift for which they would otherwise receive night differential, this arbitration resulted in a contrary decision, based on different language in the ELM provision regarding Sunday premium pay;
- the NPMHU prevailed in another National-level arbitration, concerning the impact of an untimely Step 2 decision issued by the Postal Service after it failed to schedule or hold a Step 2 meeting with the appropriate union representative within the time provided under the National Agreement. The arbitrator agreed with the NPMHU arguments, and concluded that where a grievance challenging a 14-day suspension is properly moved to Step 3 under Article 15.3C of the National Agreement based on a procedural default by the USPS at Step 2, the USPS may not thereafter issue a belated Step 2 decision for the purpose of triggering the griev-

ant's service of the 14-day suspension under Article 16.5. The Arbitrator did not rule on whether a USPS procedural default at Step 2 was a waiver by the USPS—pursuant to Article 15.3B—of any timeliness objection to the grievance that the USPS had failed to assert in a proper manner while the grievance was still at Step 2.

Here is a listing of arbitration cases currently being heard, and awaiting either the completion of briefs or the issuance of a decision:

- hearings started in March 2011 on the long-standing dispute between the NPMHU and the Postal Service concerning whether employees on light-duty, after they are placed in a light-duty assignment, have work hour guarantees.
- whether the MOU on Layoff Protection allows employees in other crafts to be reassigned to or transfer into the mail handler craft and retain their no-layoff protection from another bargaining agreement, when mail handlers are not themselves covered by a no-layoff clause.

#### **National-level MOUs and Step 4**

**Agreements:** The National CAD also plays a major and continuous role in the handling and settlement of Step 4 grievances, and the development of new National agreements and memoranda of understanding. The volume of such agreements during each four-year period makes it difficult to mention all of these activities, but key subjects addressed by the National Union included the following:

- the expansion of transfer opportunities for mail handlers facing potential excessing from their installation.
- an MOU on excessing issues under Article 12, giving mail handlers who are subject to involuntary reassignment to mail handler positions in other installations, as well as senior volunteers, the opportunity to be reassigned as unassigned Full-Time Regulars to installations nearer to their current installations rather than being reassigned only into those installations that have residual vacancies. The MOU also provides that all excessing will be by strict inverse seniority within the employee category (Full Time Regular, Part Time Regular, and Part Time Flexible) rather than by inverse seniority within pay levels.



- a pre-arbitration settlement concerning the NRP or National Reassessment Program, providing that (a) “[t]he NRP has not redefined or changed the Postal Service’s obligation to provide limited duty or rehabilitation assignments for injured employees.” The parties also have agreed that ELM Section 546 “has not been amended and remains applicable to all pending grievances,” recognizing that ELM Section 546.142 refers repeatedly to “adequate work” and “adequate work available” as the governing standard, not “necessary work”; (b) “[t]he Postal Service has not developed new criteria for assigning limited duty,” and that “[i]njured employees will continue to be assigned limited duty, in accordance with the requirements of ELM 546 and 5 C.F.R, Part 353”; and (c) “[e]mployees on existing non-workers’ compensation light duty assignments made pursuant to Article 13 . . . will not normally be displaced solely to make new limited duty or rehabilitation assignments unless required by law or regulation.”
- implementation of the VERA or Voluntary Early Retirement Authority during both 2009 and 2012.

**Other Major CAD Activities:** The past four years have presented several major tests of the CAD’s oppositional skills, because of aggressive and unilateral management actions aimed at reducing the number of career Mail Handlers. The following are some of the major initiatives of the Postal Service that have been contested by the NPMHU, with the direct involvement of the CAD and others:

**(a) National Reassessment Process:** The Postal Service instituted its so-called National Reassessment Process (“NRP”) in 2007, under which it claimed to be re-evaluating all limited duty and rehabilitation positions held by Mail Handlers and other postal employees who have been injured on the job. Earlier, the National Office distributed a comprehensive memorandum to all Local Union officers and representatives, to assist the Local Unions in understanding the NRP process, and to offer ways in which to help members affected by this process. The first section of the memo set forth the NRP Process, step by step, and suggested specific action points for the Locals. The second section set forth suggestions for grieving NRP-related issues.

Although the USPS claims to have ended the NRP program, the National CAD continues to monitor any residual effects of NRP, and to assist Local Union representatives in challenging adverse actions taken against mail handlers by abusive managers, whether under NRP, the ELM, or by any other means.

As noted above, at the National level, an arbitration scheduled over the Postal Service’s use of the term “necessary work” led to a successful settlement of several NRP-related claims.

**(b) Plant Closings and Consolidations and Network Optimization:** It was in 2005 that the Postal Service began to notify both the National Union and the Locals about its plans to consolidate or close certain postal facilities, but those actions did not take hold until the past four years, as the Postal Service has claimed that it is compelled to reduce the size and scope of its network because of reduced mail volume.

During the past four years, the Postal Service proposed and sought public input, via public hearings, over several hundred AMP studies under Handbook PO-408 (Area Mail Processing Guidelines), at which hearings many NPMHU and Local Union representatives testified and/or objected to the USPS plans. The Postal Service also has proposed, both in the Federal Register and before the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC), to change its governing service standards, thereby proposing to reduce drastically the locations and situations in which first-class mail will be delivered overnight or in two days, and substantially extending the time for processing and delivering other mail. Indeed, in December 2011, the Postal Service submitted a formal request to the PRC, which must issue an advisory opinion on the reasonableness of the Postal Service’s plans, and is expected to do so before the end of this summer. The NPMHU was a full participant in the evidentiary hearings held before the PRC, and eight National and Local Union officers and representatives testified during those proceedings. A lengthy brief setting forth the NPMHU position was recently filed, and distributed to all Local Unions.

Even before these legal proceedings, the National Union had convened emergency meetings of the National Executive Board and the entire Contract Administration Department, at which all officers and representatives were in attendance. Acting together with the National Union’s legislative and legal staff, these mail

handlers discussed a host of issues raised by the potential closings and consolidations, and developed strategies that could assist the Locals in responding to these proposals.

The result of these meetings was a comprehensive package of materials that was prepared and distributed to assist the Local Unions with responding to these proposed actions. Included were answers to questions about strategy, the proper application of the National Agreement, and suggestions for legislative and political activities as a possible response to a particular closing or consolidation. These written materials have been updated on several occasions.

It also was agreed during the NPMHU’s early strategy meetings that not every notice of a consolidation or closing is going to require the same response—every situation is different. In some cases—such as where the proposal concerns a facility that currently has no Mail Handlers, or where the Mail Handlers in that facility do not object to the consolidation—the Local Union may decide not to get involved. In other cases, the best approach may be to “wait and see.” In every case, however, communication between and among the National Office, the relevant Regional Office, and the affected Local Union(s) and Branch(es) is critical. Of even more importance, it is crucial to communicate with the affected or potentially affected members. The package of materials circulated by the National Office was designed to assist each Local Union in making the determination about what is the appropriate response in a particular situation, and to assist the Local in deciding what to do once it has made that determination. The National and Regional CAD continue to assist, on a case-by-case basis, when requested to do so by the Local Unions.

With the reality of declining mail volumes and recent changes in the mail mix, these proposals for “network rationalization” will continue. In their latest incarnation, 48 closings and consolidations are set for August 2012, and another 90 are scheduled for early 2013. Thereafter, the Postal Service is currently planning more closings and consolidations for 2014, but intervening legislative action certainly could change the plans for either 2013 or 2014.

From a contractual perspective, the NPMHU has in place many provisions in Article 12 of the National Agreement, in related memoranda, and in Local Memoranda of Understanding, all of which will have to be enforced, and the Union will remain vigilant as closings and con-

solidations continue to occur. The Union at all levels must continue to address each particular closing or consolidation, or each proposed closing or consolidation, using a combination of contractual and political responses. For the former, issues under Article 12 must be raised, to minimize to the greatest extent possible any dislocation or inconvenience to mail handlers. On the legislative front, NPMHU representatives are coordinating with other postal unions and community groups that may be working either to oppose or to mitigate the effects of a proposed closing or consolidation. Together, these contractual and political efforts have proved useful, at least in some places, to defeat or limit or delay a closing or consolidation, and in other places to reduce any adverse impact on mail handlers.

#### (c) **Conversion of Bulk Mail Centers into Network Distribution Centers.**

Mail handlers in attendance at the 2008 Convention will remember that a crucial issue at that time was the potential subcontracting out of mail handler work from the Bulk Mail Centers. A resolution was unanimously passed to create a Task Force to address the issues and combat the ill-advised plans, and representatives from each BMC were selected to join forces with the National Union in a nationwide effort to protect the BMCs. Fortunately, the hard work paid off, and the Postal Service decided to maintain the BMC network, slightly revised, as an in-house USPS network, now called Network Distribution Centers.

**Subcontracting.** The past four years have seen a continuation of the Postal Service's efforts to subcontract or outsource Mail Handler work under Article 32. Most troubling has been the project aimed at bedloading trucks for cross-country trips by using low-paid private contractors instead of mail handlers, with claims that the Postal Service has neither the money nor the equipment to perform the work with career postal employees.

It makes absolutely no sense to the NPMHU for the Postal Service to give away mail volume to the private sector, when nearby postal plants are suffering from a major loss of mail volume themselves. If the Postal Service decides that bedloading of trucks makes the transportation of mail more efficient and less costly, then it would make perfect business sense to relocate that work to the nearby plants to be performed by Mail Handlers.

There simply is no need to outsource this work. We have challenged this ill-advised plan, and will fight to get this work back where it rightfully belongs, in the Mail Handler craft.

#### **Safety and Health in the Workplace:**

During the past four years, the National Union has continued its efforts to protect the on-the-job safety and health of all Mail Handlers. From a historical perspective, two key events have dramatically changed the landscape in this area. First, in 1998, Congress enacted the Postal Employees Safety Enhancement Act, which applied private-sector rules under the Occupational Safety and Health Act to Mail Handlers and other postal employees. And second, beginning in 2001, the Postal Service and its employees fell victim to a series of bio-terrorist attacks, starting with anthrax in October 2001, and continuing with the mailing of ricin and other harmful agents since that time. Both of these developments have significantly changed the postal landscape.

#### **Bio-Terrorism and the Mail Security Task Force.**

As always, a paramount concern of the NPMHU is the safety and well-being of all Mail Handlers and other postal employees. To this end, the National Union has been an active participant in the Mail Security Task Force (renamed the Homeland Security Advisory Group)—which includes representatives of postal management, as well as all unions and employee associations. This group has been meeting on a routine basis to ensure that all reasonable measures are being taken to prevent any further infection from anthrax, ricin, or other biological agents. With union support, the Postal Service was able to obtain funding for the installation of new bio-detection technology, and more recently, the focus of the Group has turned to planning for an outbreak of pandemic flu and similar natural disasters. Only by planning in advance can the safety and security of all Mail Handlers be maximized.

#### **Ergonomic Risk Reduction Process and Voluntary Protection Program.**

Almost ten years ago, the National Union signed a historic agreement with the Postal Service and representatives of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration aimed at reducing musculoskeletal risk factors in the postal workplace. The partners agreed to work cooperatively to implement an Ergonomic Risk Reduction Process to identify musculoskeletal disorders and control the associated risk factors. After implementation of the program for five years, the results were

terrific. The program was launched at more than 160 postal facilities, and in those facilities in which studies were conducted, there was a substantial reduction in reportable injuries. Given this success, the Union had hoped that ERRP would be expanded into every postal facility so that the protection offered by this process could be afforded to all Mail Handlers.

The National Union also partnered with the Postal Service and with OSHA to implement the prestigious Voluntary Protection Programs, a long-standing program with a proven record of reducing injuries and illnesses. Data showed that sites utilizing the VPP had a 13% reduction in recordable injury and illness incidents, resulting in 60% fewer injuries and illnesses than the industry average.

Unfortunately, the financial crisis facing the Postal Service has caused unjustified cuts in these safety and health programs. For the USPS to be penny-wise and pound-foolish when it comes to safety is unacceptable to the NPMHU; thus, the National Union is seeking to resurrect the joint efforts, as the well-being of Mail Handlers cannot take a back seat to financial concerns.

**Quality of Work Life:** The QWL or Quality of Work Life process continues to succeed, for those Local Unions that choose to participate. There have been several meetings and training programs to highlight the QWL process, which seeks to develop good working relationships between labor and management. To foster this program, the National Union remains an active participant on the National Joint Steering Committee, and hundreds of Mail Handlers from around the country are still participating in QWL. Unfortunately, in many areas—again in an ill-advised attempt to save money—the Postal Service has cut back on QWL. At a recent National Joint Steering Committee meeting, we made it clear to our counterparts on the NJSC that this was counterproductive, and that QWL should be encouraged in the field. We are hoping to have a “National Commitment letter” sent out to the field shortly. We also have discussed having a National QWL Conference in the not-too-distant future.

**Lead Clerks:** In a recent development, reports from the field have indicated that the newly designated “lead clerks” in the APWU craft are being assigned to “lead” mail handlers. We have exchanged correspondence with Postal Headquarters expressing our objections to being supervised, directed, or guided by clerical



employees, and we will be filing a National-level appeal on this issue if it cannot be resolved.

## Protecting the Mail Handler Craft

For reasons described earlier, there has been a substantial drop in mail volume, and this has caused an equally substantial, if not alarming, drop in the number of career Mail Handlers employed by the Postal Service. Four years ago, in August 2008, there were 56,300 mail handlers, whereas today that number has dropped to only 45,000, meaning that the Mail Handler craft has seen a decrease of almost 20% in the total number of Mail Handlers. In addition, the NPMHU expects another 3,000 Mail Handlers to retire on or before August 31, 2012, putting the total reduction at approximately 25% of complement.

As the Postal Service continues to downsize through attrition, Mail Handlers must continue to battle to preserve their jobs against jurisdictional challenges, against subcontracting to private entities, and against the free riders who take union wages and union benefits without paying their fair share of union costs. The NPMHU has waged these battles—with great success—for the past 100 years, and must continue these efforts without fail.

## Legislative Lobbying and Political Action

The National Union often tells Mail Handlers that, with one stroke of a pen, decades of progress can be obliterated by an uncaring Congress and an unfriendly White House. That is why legislative and political action are both so critical to the future of all Mail Handlers. And never in the 100 year history of the NPMHU has this been more true than today, when anti-worker forces are in control of Congress, and draconian proposals are being introduced, with the claim that they are deficit-cutting measures, but in reality they are aimed directly at postal and federal employees, and at the Postal Service as a government enterprise.

The entire American labor movement has come to recognize that the political arena holds the key to many of its most important goals. This is more true for Mail Handlers represented by the NPMHU than for most American workers, for our very jobs and most important benefits are dependent on actions taken by Members of Congress and the current occupant of the White House. There is no other group of employees—besides other postal or federal employees—for

whom retirement benefits, health insurance, workers' compensation, and life insurance are determined by the actions or inactions of the political branches of our National Government. Nor is there any other employee group whose employer is also so dependent on the views and actions of these political branches. It necessarily follows that all Mail Handlers, and certainly the Union that seeks to provide effective representation for Mail Handlers, must maximize their involvement in the political processes that control the Federal Government.

Put simply, that is why the National Union has remained so focused on its legislative and political programs during the past four years. Under the leadership of the National Executive Board, our Legislative and Political Director, and the Committee on the Future of the NPMHU, the National Union has strengthened its legislative lobbying efforts, while increasing its involvement in the electoral political process.

First and foremost, the bi-annual Legislative Conference, most recently held in 2009 and 2011 to coincide with the first session of each new Congress, has become the focal point of the NPMHU's legislative efforts. Not only are hundreds of Mail Handler activists educated about current legislative issues and the legislative process, but their visits with Members of Congress and professional staff have continued to, quite literally, open the doors for the NPMHU. It is now commonplace for important Senators and Representatives to seek the views and opinions of NPMHU officers and other activists on the key postal and related issues pending before Congress. Leadership in these ongoing efforts has been provided by Bob Losi, who serves as Legislative & Political Director for the NPMHU, and also by Senior Legislative Advisor Roger Blacklow.

The NPMHU also has greatly expanded its efforts—and its results—in raising money for its Political Action Committee. Because many members do not realize that the Union's dues revenues may not be contributed to political candidates, it has taken some time to increase the rates of participation in the Mail Handler PAC. But recent trends are extremely encouraging. Using the salary allotment program that the NPMHU implemented through the Postal Service, members have chosen to apportion a small amount of their paycheck each pay period for direct allocation into the PAC. Many Local Unions also have done a superb job of encouraging their officers and stewards to contribute to

the PAC, as a means of demonstrating leadership by example to the rank and file. As a result, the numbers of Mail Handlers routinely contributing to the PAC, while still small, has increased geometrically in the last few years. Thus, our total contributions have increased each and every year, and we expect an all-time record to be set during 2012. Each and every one of those dollars will go toward supporting our friends on Capitol Hill.

All of these efforts are aimed at one objective: to ensure that the NPMHU is able to influence legislation or impact congressional oversight that will directly affect the work lives of the Mail Handlers that the Union represents. The upcoming federal elections in November 2012 promise to be another watershed in American political history, and the NPMHU's political efforts must continue.

**Postal Reform:** For almost twenty years, ever since 1995, the NPMHU's principal legislative issue has been amendment of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, often called postal reform. Our work always is centered around two important objectives: to ensure that the Postal Service can survive amongst the modern system of communications in the 21st century, and to guarantee that the right to collective bargaining and the resulting wages and benefits of postal employees are preserved.

With these goals in mind, the NPMHU became a key player in the debate and ultimate enactment of postal reform legislation in December 2006, in the form of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA). To be sure, the PAEA was not a perfect bill. It capped price increases at the rate of inflation by class of mail, subject to exceptions for unexpected conditions and price increases previously banked, thereby potentially creating a wage cap for future negotiations. It also included an unjustified cut in OWCP benefits that was aimed only at postal employees. That provision—moving the 3-day waiting period so that it applies before an injured employee receives 45 days of COP or Continuation of Pay—was enacted without any evidence or hearings to justify the cut in benefits.

But the PAEA also made clear that collective bargaining will remain the touchstone of labor relations in the Postal Service for decades to come. Congress correctly rejected the most onerous recommendations issued by President Bush's Commission on the Future of the Postal Service, and also provided the Postal Service with additional flexibility in developing products, setting

rates, and entering competitive markets. The NPMHU was able to provide direct input into certain legislative language important to Mail Handlers. Throughout the legislative process, the NPMHU remained an active participant because, notwithstanding the Union's reservations about certain aspects of postal reform, to do otherwise would have been to risk the wages and benefits, and perhaps even the jobs, enjoyed by our members.

After the passage of postal reform legislation in 2006, of course, America experienced the Great Recession of 2008. It therefore has become clear that one of the key features of that law, the required pre-funding of retiree health benefits, has become outdated and unjustified. In times of financial distress, it simply makes no sense for Congress to require the Postal Service—and only the Postal Service—to prefund one hundred percent of its future health care costs. As of today, the Retiree Health Benefits Fund (RHBF) already contains \$45 billion, more than enough to pay for all of the expected retiree health care costs for decades into the future. The currently effective law that requires ongoing annual contributions of \$5.5 billion needs to be repealed. Congress created this problem, and Congress needs to fix it.

Just this past week, the Postal Service for the first time in modern history has now defaulted on its financial obligations, mostly because the full House of Representatives has refused to debate amendments to the PAEA that have been adopted by the full Senate, while also refusing to adopt another extension of the RHBF payments. This is an outrage, and a complete dereliction of duty—indeed, the uncertainty surrounding the financial future of the Postal Service is by itself having an adverse impact on mail volume, as mailers consider alternatives and reduce their long-term plans for using the U.S. mail.

It therefore is essential that the attention of the NPMHU's legislative operations remain focused on postal reform. The full Senate adopted S. 1789 in April 2012, and although it is not perfect legislation (among other potential problems, it contains wholly unjustified cuts in workers compensation benefits), it would reduce funding requirements for the RHBF by spreading out the payments over 40 years and by requiring that the fund only contain 80% of the long-term unfunded liability. The Republican leadership in the House, however, refuses to consider S. 1789. Instead, Representatives Darryl Issa (R-CA) and Dennis

Ross (R-FL), who chair the relevant committee and subcommittee, continue to pursue their own legislation—H.R. 2309—which contains a host of draconian proposals and will never be supported by the NPMHU or the rest of the postal community. It is not surprising that the Issa/Ross efforts have so far garnered no additional co-sponsors.

While NPMHU representatives continue to work behind the scenes on these issues, National President Hegarty and other NPMHU officers continue to testify on Capitol Hill or appear before the Postal Regulatory Commission. Their testimony has focused on general issues of PAEA implementation, on the NPMHU's opposition to the contracting out of postal career jobs to private companies, on the possible closing or consolidation of postal facilities, on the economics of universal mail service after the PAEA, and on continuation of the universal service obligation.

The NPMHU must remain vigilant, and must continue to expend a tremendous amount of time and effort on legislative relations over the coming four years. That is why the NPMHU continues to urge each and every Mail Handler, including but certainly not limited to all officers and representatives, to stay informed and to stay involved. This means each member must read *The Mail Handler* magazine and the monthly bulletins, and each member must be sure to log on to the NPMHU website and become a legislative activist. If any member reading this report has not already done so, please join—and encourage your officers, stewards, members, friends, and family members to join—the NPMHU e-activist network. Your future, and the future of all Mail Handlers, very well may depend on your active involvement.

Nor are these efforts limited to postal reform, as there are a host of other crucial issues of direct interest to all Mail Handlers pending in Congress.

**Other Legislative Proposals:** Although postal reform has occupied a large portion of the NPMHU legislative agenda, there are other important issues also pending. In prior years, the NPMHU has organized legislative efforts to oppose the subcontracting of Mail Handler work, and more recently legislative attention has turned to placing limitations on the closing and consolidation of postal facilities. On these and other issues, the NPMHU and its legislative staff work behind the scenes to garner support for positive proposals or to amend and/or defeat unwanted legislation.

Other legislative proposals currently being monitored by the National Union include the following:

- legislation that would repeal or reduce the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), which currently reduces the Social Security benefit of postal or federal employees who spend most of their working years in Civil Service Retirement System jobs not covered by Social Security. If the WEP is applicable, then the amount of a retiree's Social Security benefit is reduced when the retiree becomes eligible for that benefit (after age 62 or thereafter)
- legislation that would eliminate or soften the impact of the Government Pension Offset, which as currently in effect could eliminate spousal or survivor benefits for thousands of postal or federal employees. Under current law, CSRS employees who receive a pension annuity after December 31, 1982 will have an offset (by two-thirds of the amount of their government pension) of any Social Security benefits that they otherwise would be eligible to receive as a dependent of their spouse or widow or widower
- legislation that would allow postal and federal retirees to pay their health care premiums on an after-tax basis, thereby reducing the effective cost of such contributions
- various proposed improvements in the TSP or Thrift Savings Plan
- efforts, mostly at the State level, to require "Do Not Mail" lists similar to the "Do Not Call" list generated by Congress several years ago. Some legislators do not appreciate the important economic role played by the Postal Service and have not been able to distinguish between the value of mail and unwanted telephone solicitations.
- legislation that would allow vote-by-mail in all fifty States and the Territories, thereby increasing voter turnout and increasing mail volume.

On a positive note, during the past few years there, the NPMHU has successfully worked with like-minded organizations to obtain retirement credit for unused sick leave under FERS, the Federal Employees Retirement System. The NPMHU had been proposing a financial incentive for unused sick leave under the FERS program in national negotiations since 1994, and finally these provisions have been enacted into law.



When all is said and done, the renewed promise that the National Union is giving to its legislative and political program is an especially important, and hopefully effective, means of representing all Mail Handlers.

## Internal Operations of the NPMHU

Ever since 1992, the National Union has focused a large part of its efforts on improving its own internal operations. That emphasis has continued unabated for the past four years. The NPMHU remains a well-run labor organization, with overall excellence in overall financial management, membership recruitment and maintenance, and internal communications.

**Financial Management at the National Union:** As has been true since 1992, for three of the past four years, the National Union continued its remarkable financial recovery, during which it managed to spend less each year than its annual income. With recent and significant declines in membership, however, that string of surpluses has now come to an end. In 2011, and continuing into the foreseeable future, the National Union will be running a deficit. Thus, although the National Union now enjoys a large surplus, approaching \$40 million, a compelling argument can be made that the Union's fund balance is now more important than ever.

Like most unions, the NPMHU must continually preserve its funds so that it has the resources necessary to effectively represent, and ultimately fight for, all of its members, without fear of financial collapse when such fights become necessary. Moreover, given the ongoing costs of the Union's activities, and the increasing share of the National Union's revenues that are being shared with the Local Unions, it is likely that the National Union will be operating at a deficit on a year-to-year basis. Thus, the maintenance of the NPMHU's general fund balance will become an ever-increasing internal priority.

The need for such a large fund balance should be obvious. If the National Union is to continue to obtain favorable agreements in collective bargaining, it is imperative that the Postal Service know that the NPMHU has the financial resources necessary to take the USPS through a complicated (and extremely costly) interest arbitration if bargaining does not produce an agreement, as is the case with the current deadlock in bargaining over the terms of the 2011 National

Agreement. Likewise, each time that the parties at the National level engage in National grievance arbitration, or threaten to file litigation against the other party, it is essential that USPS officials understand that the Union does not have to make strategic judgments based on its financial well-being. Without these financial resources, therefore, the Postal Service—which never has to worry about such financial limitations—will try to take advantage of the NPMHU, as it was last able to do successfully in the 1990 round of National negotiations.

Nor is there any risk that the operating fund maintained by the National Union will be squandered or expended inappropriately. The National Executive Board has authorized a conservative investment portfolio of government bonds and treasury notes. And in 2007 and 2008, the NPMHU was subject to a lengthy and in-depth audit by the U.S. Department of Labor, which determined that the National Office and its accounting office were appropriately managing the membership's money.

**Financial Assistance to the Local Unions:** Notwithstanding the continuous need to preserve National Union resources, the National Executive Board also has routinely recognized that the Local Unions have their own financial requirements that need to be met. That is why, on several occasions, the National Officers have supported—and, in fact, voluntarily adopted—programs designed to share large amounts of dues revenue with all of the Local Unions. At prior National Conventions, with the support of the National Union, the delegates adjusted the amount of per capita taxes retained by the National Union from both regular and associate members, transferring millions of dollars each year to the combined treasuries of the Local Unions. The National Executive Board also has adopted a Revenue Sharing Program, which in the ten years since it was started in 2003 has provided the Local Unions with nearly \$28 million in additional tax-free revenue. No other National Union has implemented such a voluntary effort to provide direct financial assistance to all of the Locals.

Stated another way, the improvement in the National Union's financial resources has had positive and wide-ranging effects, not the least of which has been to provide all 37 Local Unions with additional revenues with which to operate. Under the governing constitutional provisions, the Local Unions affiliated with the NPMHU cur-

rently receive more than 70% of all dues collected, and thus the Local Unions and members being represented at the Local level are the principal beneficiaries of these revenues. Here, the bottom line speaks for itself: In 1992, the National Union remitted a total of \$13.6 million to the Local Unions; by 1999, that amount had increased more than 50% and was up to \$21.7 million; and during the past four years—from 2008 through 2011—the amount of money remitted to the Local Unions reached an all-time high, at approximately \$23 million per year. In the past twenty years, therefore, the Local Unions have seen their revenues increase by very large margins.

**Membership and Organizing:** The National Union continues to maximize Union membership to the greatest extent possible. In 1998, at the peak of postal employment, the Union made history by reaching 50,000 members for the first time. Membership remained over 50,000 for several years, but because of recent downsizing in the postal workforce and a substantial number of retirements, the total membership today is down to approximately 38,000. As a percentage of all Mail Handlers, however, membership remains high, at almost 90%.

These membership numbers have not occurred by happenstance. For many years, the National Union, working in cooperation with the Locals, has made concerted efforts to sign-up new members and to convince many former members to give the NPMHU another try. On occasion, financial and other incentives are provided to members who helped in the recruitment efforts, and these campaigns will continue, especially with regard to new members of the bargaining unit who transfer into the mail handler craft from other USPS positions.

**Communications:** One area in which the National Union constantly works hard to improve is communications with the membership. The quarterly magazine—*The Mail Handler*—has successfully implemented its new look and larger proportions, allowing more substantive coverage of the major issues facing the Union. Monthly bulletins continue to be circulated to all Local Union officers and representatives, for posting on all bulletin boards. As discussed earlier, a quarterly newsletter—*Union Time*—has been published on contract-related issues important to Local Union officers and stewards. And the NPMHU website at [www.npmhu.org](http://www.npmhu.org) is an increasingly important source for the timely circulation of information, especially in the legislative and



political arena. Indeed, less than a year ago, the NPMHU website was completely revamped and updated, with announcements and developments now appearing on a routine and timely basis. Not too many Mail Handlers remember that, in 1995, the NPMHU was the first major national or international union with an operating website that contained searchable archives of arbitration decisions, and to this day the NPMHU website remains a leader in that area as well.

## Mail Handlers In the Community

**Within the Labor Movement:** The National Union remains an active participant in the trade union movement, both in America and on a world-wide stage.

Relations between the NPMHU and its international parent body, the Laborers' International Union of North America, continue to be strong. Under the leadership of General President Terry O'Sullivan, who is recognized as one of the mainstays in America's next generation of labor leaders, LIUNA has become a staunch supporter of the NPMHU, offering its assistance and cooperation when advisable, but otherwise allowing the NPMHU to operate under its own autonomy. Mail Handlers also have a direct say in the operations of LIUNA, as Mail Handlers receive their fair share of delegates at all LIUNA Conventions, and the NPMHU National President is an automatic member of the LIUNA General Executive Board.

In 2005, when the labor movement represented by the AFL-CIO split into two, a new federation of unions known as Change to Win was founded. LIUNA decided that it would, at least temporarily, withdraw from the AFL-CIO, but the NPMHU wanted to stay put within the traditional house of labor. Significantly, LIUNA provided its full support for the NPMHU's independent decision, and was a major proponent of the decision by the NPMHU to directly affiliate with the AFL-CIO while also remaining a part of LIUNA. Now that LIUNA has re-affiliated with the AFL-CIO, the NPMHU continues to benefit from all of the activities conducted by that labor federation.

The NPMHU also continues as an active participant in UNI Global Unions (UNI)—formerly known as Union Network International, which includes a Postal Sector representing the interests of postal workers from across the globe. As the American economy continues to globalize, especially in the postal and commu-

nications sectors, the NPMHU's involvement in UNI provides the National Union with valuable information about postal technology and trends in postal employment.

**In the Greater Community:** The National Union continues to recognize that giving to those less fortunate is a significant part of the Union's legacy.

In the past four years, the NPMHU Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$400,000 in college scholarships to more than 300 Mail Handlers and family members who seek a university degree. For many of the recipients, this financial aid makes it possible to continue their higher education, and allows the Union to encourage members and their families to take advantage of such educational opportunities. It is especially fitting that the Vallone Scholars chosen by the scholarship program are named in memory of Arthur S. Vallone, the former Northeastern Regional Vice President and Local 309 President who died suddenly in 2005. His memory and good works will forever live in the minds of these scholars.

The NPMHU also remains an active sponsor of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, which is the official charity of the NPMHU and LIUNA. Both the National Office and many Local Unions participate in walkathons and other fundraising activities to help pay for research to find a cure for this disease.

The NPMHU also continues to contribute, both time and money, to PERF or the Postal Employees Relief Fund. This joint project of all postal unions, management associations, and postal management provides timely loans and grants to postal employees who suffer financial losses from natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires. With the support of the NPMHU, PERF has liberalized the criteria for eligibility and the dollar amounts of the grants available to postal employees in need. The PERF fund has made hundreds of payments to postal employees, including scores of Mail Handlers, during the past few years.

**Providing Value to the Members:** The National Union also sponsors and in part administers important benefit programs aimed at giving Mail Handlers and other NPMHU members excellent benefits at a good value.

The Mail Handlers Benefit Plan, which has been sponsored by the NPMHU since the early 1960s, remains one of the largest health insurance programs under the Federal Employees

Health Benefit Program. Although the past four years have seen some significant reductions in associate membership in the MHBP, both premium rates and membership rates seem to be stabilizing. Our partners at Coventry Health Care continue to serve as the underwriter and administrator for the program, and they are working hard to ensure the MHBP's continued success.

Equally important to the everyday lives of many Mail Handlers are the programs made available through Union Privilege, including the Union Plus Credit Card, and mortgage and educational services. These benefits of NPMHU membership make our job of organizing new members easier, while enhancing the NPMHU's ability to serve our current members.

## Committee on the Future of the NPMHU

The aptly named Committee on the Future of the NPMHU has continued to engage in long-range planning and strategic thinking on behalf of the Union and all Mail Handlers employed by the Postal Service. The Committee is comprised of all members of the National Executive Board and several Local Union Presidents representing a cross-section of the NPMHU membership.

The agenda of the Committee remains wide-ranging, and includes long-term issues such as privatization of the Postal Service, the NPMHU's legislative relations program, USPS automation and other technological changes, financial planning; and membership recruitment.

It is extremely difficult to measure the benefits of strategic planning, at least over the short term, but all Mail Handlers should rest assured that their National Union and its Committee on the Future are very much focused on the long-term interests and anticipated needs of all members.

## Conclusion

As the NPMHU celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2012, all Mail Handlers should take pride in the accomplishments and activities of their Union, not only over the past four years, but for the ninety-six year history that came before. It therefore makes sense to Honor the Past during this year's National Convention.

But remembering the past cannot substitute for the Union's need to Shape the Future. The entire National Executive Board remains focused on the challenges that lie ahead. We believe that the NPMHU is stronger, tougher, quicker, and



# REPORT *of the* NATIONAL OFFICERS

smarter than it has been at any point in its long and colorful history, and these attributes will help all Mail Handlers face the difficult issues that must be confronted over the next four years.

Although it often is difficult to predict exactly what challenges may develop in future years, 2012 presents one of those rare situations in which the future challenges can be easily identified. We know that the Union is about to enter into lengthy and complex arbitration hearings that will determine the terms of our 2011 National Agreement with the U.S. Postal Service. We know that the Union must continue to battle on Capitol Hill and in the Executive Branch to preserve not only our statutory benefits and our collective bargaining process, but also to guarantee the important and sustained role that the Postal Service must continue to play in the

future of our American communications system. We know that the Union needs to work with the rest of the American labor movement and other supporters to ensure that this November, and in future elections, the maximum possible number of pro-worker and pro-union candidates are elected into office by the American people. We know that the Union must continue to address, on a pro-active basis, the potential dislocation of our members because of the expected closing and consolidation of postal plants. We know that the Union will have to continue its battles over subcontracting, over craft jurisdiction, and over maintaining the well-being of the American working class.

We also know many of the obstacles that lie ahead. Of most importance, we know that the Union, and all of its Local Unions, must con-

tinue to fight all of these battles while dealing with the internal effects of declining membership, rising expenses, and more intense disputes with the Postal Service.

But we also know that the NPMHU starts its second hundred years with the ability to address all of these challenges and confront all of these obstacles. Working together, in solidarity with all Mail Handlers and in cooperation with the entire labor movement, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union is ready, willing, and able to deal with all of these challenges and obstacles, no matter where or when those future battles may take place. The National Officers firmly believe that the National Union—with the continued support of all 37 Local Unions and all 40,000 Mail Handlers—is well situated to Shape its own Future.

## HONOR *the* PAST





## Convention Delegates Adopt Important Resolutions

Over the course of the NPMHU 2012 National Convention, the delegates considered, debated, and voted on a series of important resolutions. All of these resolutions were initially submitted by NPMHU members for consideration by either the Resolutions Committee or the Legislative and Political Committee. Both of these committees were comprised of elected convention delegates, who met prior to the Convention to review, debate, combine similar resolutions, and on occasion to modify the submitted

proposal to language that the committee could agree to present to the full Convention for consideration.

What follows here are the fourteen resolutions that were adopted by the Convention (including any amendments adopted during the debate at the convention). The first three of the following resolutions were presented by the Resolutions Committee, and the remaining eleven resolutions were presented on behalf of the Legislative and Political Committee.

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### RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

#### *Recommendation No. 1*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

#### **Support the U.S. Mail—Use the U.S. Mail**

WHEREAS, the mail processed and delivered by the U.S. Postal Service has been a lynchpin of the American communications system for more than two hundred years; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. mail provides a secure and private means of communication in a fully unionized environment; and

WHEREAS, communications that are accomplished electronically and over the internet are far less secure and less private, and are processed in what is largely a non-union environment; and

WHEREAS, the recent economic downturn has negatively affected the Postal Service, as has the electronic diversion of mail to on-line communications, such as on-line banking and on-line bill paying; and

WHEREAS, all Mail Handlers and other postal employees should patronize the Postal Service;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NPMHU fully supports continued use of the U.S. mail; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NPMHU supports all forms of mail communications, including first-class stamped mail such as cards, letters, and packages, that can be sent via the Postal Service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NPMHU urges its members, families, friends, and business associates to use—to the maximum extent possible—the U.S. Mail for all of their communication needs, including a follow-up hardcopy by U.S. Mail in those situations when time-sensitive matters require use of electronic mail or facsimile; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NPMHU will disseminate this message through various communication channels, such as the NPMHU website, the Mail Handler Update bulletin, and the Mail Handler magazine.



## RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

*Recommendation No. 2*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

CHARLES BURKS, LOCAL 303

**In Support of Workers Memorial Day**

WHEREAS, on April 28 of each and every year, the union movement observes Workers Memorial Day to remember those workers who have been injured or died on the job, and to renew the fight for a clean, safe, and healthy workplace; and

WHEREAS, many postal employees have been injured or killed in the performance of their duties; and

WHEREAS, the safety and health of its employees is oftentimes considered a low priority by USPS management; and

WHEREAS, management is lawfully and morally obligated to comply with all aspects of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and the Postal Employees Safety Enhancement Act of 1998; and

WHEREAS, compliance with these laws and the safety and health of postal employees is often overlooked by USPS management because, in management's view, safety and health often takes a backseat to increasing productivity and/or reducing expenses; and

WHEREAS, all members of the NPMHU want and deserve a clean, safe, and healthy place to work; and

WHEREAS, Workers Memorial Day serves to raise public awareness of the constant need for workers to demand, develop, and secure a workplace free of danger and injury;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that members of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union should participate in each year's Workers Memorial Day events; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all Local Unions are encouraged to observe Workers Memorial Day and to participate in related activities in their communities or at their postal facilities and/or Branches; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NPMHU National and Local Unions shall seek to promote Workers Memorial Day, through the Union's publications and websites, as an annual remembrance of those who have been injured or died in the workplace.

## RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

*Recommendation No. 4*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Buy Union—Buy American**

WHEREAS, the workforce of the United States has been hurt by outsourcing of jobs to other countries, and by American companies that are using foreign operations as a means of holding down wages and benefits for American jobs; and

WHEREAS, the economic hardships of unemployment and underemployment continue, and are adversely affecting the economy as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the economic downturn also is affecting the Postal Service, with mail volume decreasing, bulk mailers sending fewer catalogs or other mailings, and consumers shopping and buying less; and

WHEREAS, there are opportunities to purchase quality Union-made and American-made goods both in person and on-line; and

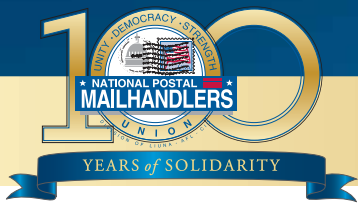
WHEREAS, purchasing said goods on-line should result in additional volume for the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, purchasing Union-made and American-made goods will help other American workers keep their jobs;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NPMHU fully supports purchasing Union-made and American-made goods; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NPMHU will disseminate this message through various communication channels, such as the NPMHU web site, the Mail Handler Update bulletin, and the Mail Handler magazine; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all Mail Handlers nation-wide should spread this message through word of mouth to family and friends.



# RESOLUTIONS

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

### *Recommendation No. 1*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD | RONALD WILLIAMS, JR., LOCAL 303

### **In Support of a Union Shop**

WHEREAS, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) fights for better wages, respect, dignity, health care, safety, and retirement for all Mail Handlers, regardless of race, color, creed, nationality, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, or physical or mental status; and

WHEREAS, the NPMHU, its affiliated Local Unions, and its thousands of dedicated representatives are working day in and day out to protect the interests of all Mail Handlers, through the negotiation and enforcement of agreements between the Union and the U.S. Postal Service for wages, job security, anti-discrimination protection, seniority, choice vacations, health and safety, and other benefits; and

WHEREAS, the NPMHU invests significant resources in achieving the best for our craft, whether by legislation, politics, grievances and arbitration, legal cases, training and education, membership communication, collective bargaining, and other means; and

WHEREAS, the NPMHU has been on the frontline for many decades, fighting to obtain, defend, and uphold our collective bargaining rights; and

WHEREAS, non-Union members are allowed by law to enjoy all the privileges and benefits negotiated by the NPMHU, as well as all job protections at the workplace, even though they pay no Union dues; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that a workforce performs at higher levels of productivity, with fewer accidents and greater job satisfaction, when all workers are treated with dignity and respect as Union members, than when the workers are exploited by management, divided amongst themselves, and alienated from their leadership; and

WHEREAS, the prohibition by law of a Union shop is designed to and does in fact undermine and weaken the solidarity of the working class and specifically of the men and women who work for the Postal Service, by encouraging postal employees to shun Union membership and exploit unfairly the courage and generosity of the Union Brothers and Sisters, turning worker against worker; and

WHEREAS, solidarity and universal Union membership among all the workers in a Union shop are the surest ways to advance the common interest of the workers in improving productivity and employment conditions and achieving dignity within the workplace; and

WHEREAS, all Mail Handlers and other postal employees should exercise their collective political power to correct the injustice of the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act's prohibition of the Union shop; and

WHEREAS, the imminent national elections offer an opportunity for all Mail Handlers and other postal employees to exercise their collective political influence to correct the unjust prohibition of the Union shop and continue the struggle for a better workplace;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this Union shall maintain a sustained effort and shall take all reasonable steps to persuade Congress and the President to amend the Postal Reorganization Act to grant postal unions the right to negotiate and enforce lawful and constitutional Union shop agreements, so that Mail Handlers and other bargaining unit employees who refuse to join the NPMHU may be charged for their fair share of representational services, including but not limited to the filing of grievances, advocacy at arbitration hearings, training and education, membership communications, and the bargaining of Local and National Agreements regarding pay and working conditions.

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

### *Recommendation No. 2*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

### **In Support of Vote by Mail**

WHEREAS, voting is a precious constitutional right that often is made unduly difficult, and the U.S. Postal Service provides a modern, secure, efficient vehicle that has proven to increase participation and make voting much more convenient; and

WHEREAS, the State of Oregon and many other locations have proven that vote by mail expands on existing absentee balloting, eliminates the embarrassing errors of malfunctioning electronic equipment, human error, and untrained poll workers, and also preserves the necessary paper trail to certify elections while increasing participation in the election process; and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service also provides a trusted and trained, profes-

sional workforce to handle the ballots, unlike many polling places, and it will have a corollary effect of saving money that normally would be spent by state and local governments on training and paying poll workers, while at the same time providing the Postal Service with additional revenue; and

WHEREAS, in the 112th Congress, bills have been proposed to encourage voting by mail, including H.R. 2084, the Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act of 2011, with regard to federal elections;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NPMHU supports and will work for passage of vote by mail legislation.



## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

*Recommendation No. 3*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

**In Opposition To “Do Not Mail” Legislation**

WHEREAS, legislation that would create “Do Not Mail” registries, similar to the “Do Not Call” lists for unwanted telephone solicitations, has been introduced in several state legislatures, and such legislation—whether at the state or federal level—would prevent mailers from sending direct mail to those who sign up on a “do not mail” list; and

WHEREAS, contrary to unwanted telephone solicitations, direct mail to homes and businesses is not an invasion of personal time or space, and can be reviewed and/or recycled whenever the recipient chooses; and

WHEREAS, such a registry, often introduced by well-meaning legislators, poses a serious threat to the finances of the U.S. Postal Service, and the processing and delivery of mail; and

WHEREAS, advertising or “standard” mail has grown significantly in recent years, as retailers and political campaigns have discovered how effective it is as a form of communication, such that standard mail now accounts for more than 50% of mail delivered by the Postal Service, which no longer can rely on first-class mail as its principal product; and

WHEREAS, this is an issue that affects our jobs, wages, and benefits because it affects volume and revenue; and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service needs to maintain its universal and reliable service, and its affordable means of communication, for all American households, political campaigns, and businesses; and

WHEREAS, without the revenue generated by advertising mail, the harmful results could include eliminating six-day delivery, closing local post offices, closing or consolidating additional mail processing facilities, reducing the hours at many postal facilities, and vastly increasing rates for personal correspondence and package delivery; and

WHEREAS, taken together, these negative results could mean a virtual death spiral for the Postal Service (on which all Americans rely and depend);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NPMHU strongly opposes any legislation that would create or support “do not mail” lists.

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

*Recommendation No. 4*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

CINDY HOEHL-RINKER, LOCAL 321

**In Support of Reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**

WHEREAS, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA), since it was initially signed by President Bill Clinton, has provided crucial support to women victimized by violence, by providing billions of dollars for the investigation and prosecution of violent crimes against women, by imposing automatic and mandatory restitution on those convicted, by allowing civil redress in cases prosecutors chose to leave unprosecuted, and by establishing an Office of Violence Against Women within the Department of Justice; and

WHEREAS, VAWA was initially drafted by then Senator Joseph Biden, with support from a broad coalition of advocacy groups, and was passed by Congress in 1994 with strong bipartisan support; and

WHEREAS, VAWA was reauthorized by Congress in 2000, and again in 2005; and

WHEREAS, earlier this year, the Senate passed an important reauthorization of VAWA’s life-saving programs that has the full support of women’s rights and anti-violence advocates; and

WHEREAS, the Senate bill would consolidate some programs to reduce costs, while also expanding services for various underserved populations on Native American reservations, on college campuses, among immigrants, and in lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender communities; and

WHEREAS, a bill now being supported by House Republicans would fundamentally transform VAWA, by slashing resources, by imposing new and unnecessary costs on service providers, and by rejecting VAWA’s victim-centered response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, while exposing victims and survivors to the risk of heightened violence; and

WHEREAS, the VAWA’s reauthorization is necessary to support the struggle, sacrifice, and courage of victims of violence;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Postal Mail Handlers Union urges the House of Representatives to adopt the VAWA reauthorization that already has been adopted by the U.S. Senate, so that this important piece of reauthorizing legislation can be signed by the President and enacted into law.



# RESOLUTIONS

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

### *Recommendation No. 5*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

### **In Support of the NPMHU Political Action Committee (PAC)**

WHEREAS, financial contributions are important to support the lobbying and political actions taken by the NPMHU in support of all Mail Handlers and the future well-being of the U.S. Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, the NPMHU is prohibited from using regular dues monies to provide direct support for the campaigns of candidates for federal office; and

WHEREAS, the NPMHU can use only voluntary contributions received by its Political Action Committee (PAC) to provide direct support to candidates in federal election campaigns; and

WHEREAS, many actions taken by Congress and the White House are crucial to all Mail Handlers, including particularly the benefits—e.g., retirement, health care, life insurance, workers compensation—earned by Mail Handlers; and

WHEREAS, positive actions taken by Congress and the White House are important to the future of the Postal Service, and it is imperative that the NPMHU provide financial contributions to its friends and supporters; and

WHEREAS, the PAC historically has contributed, on a non-partisan basis, to Democrats, Republicans, and Independents who either support NPMHU legislative positions or who are running against politicians who oppose the NPMHU;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NPMHU strongly urges all Mail Handlers and retirees to contribute on an ongoing basis to the NPMHU Political Action Committee (PAC).

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

### *Recommendation No. 6*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

BOB LOSI, LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL DIRECTOR

### **Grassroots Legislative and Political Activities**

WHEREAS, for more than a decade, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union has expanded its network of legislative and political activists; and

WHEREAS, this grassroots-oriented program has expanded to bi-annual Legislative Conferences, to boots-on-the-ground programs during national and local political campaigns, to participation in postal demonstrations, to e-activists and letter writers responding to urgent situations, and to NPMHU member/lobbyists meeting with elected and appointed officials; and

WHEREAS, political action can achieve legislative results, but lack of action leaves members and their families at the mercy of others; and

WHEREAS, the NPMHU website, at [www.npmhu.org](http://www.npmhu.org), makes it very easy for members to sign up as legislative activists;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NPMHU will continue to work with other postal and federal employee groups, LIUNA, the AFL-CIO, and other like-minded organizations to protect jobs and the U.S. Postal Service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each Local Union will continue to reach out and mobilize its membership, and their families and friends, with educational and legislative materials in order to engage all NPMHU members in the defense of their jobs and their Union.



## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

*Recommendation No. 7*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

BOBBY BLUM, LOCAL 300

JOHN GIBSON, LOCAL 308

**Oppose USPS Plans to Dismantle the Postal Service**

WHEREAS, the U.S. Postal Service was established in the United States Constitution to provide universal communication accessible to and for the benefit of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, in response to recent financial difficulties, the Postal Service has embarked on and currently is implementing a plan to reduce service to the American people by closing or consolidating scores of mail processing facilities, reducing service standards, closing smaller post offices, cutting 200,000 career employees, restricting door-to-door delivery, and reducing residential delivery to five days per week; and

WHEREAS, these plans, if fully implemented, would dismantle a large part of the postal network and communications system that currently is the backbone of the Postal Service and its career employees; and

WHEREAS, these proposed changes will have an adverse and disproportionate effect on the poor, the elderly, rural communities, and others dependent on the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, these plans are misguided, and if left unchallenged and unchanged, could lead to the demise of the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, decreasing service and increasing privatization is not in the public interest;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NPMHU should take all appropriate actions to oppose all unnecessary and unreasonable cuts in service, including specifically unjustified closings and consolidations of mail processing facilities that may be proposed and/or adopted by USPS management; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NPMHU should join with other unions and membership organizations, as well as concerned citizens and community groups, to stop the reduction in universal postal services and to resist privatization by any and all lawful means possible.

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

*Recommendation No. 8*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Protecting Mail Handler Retirement Programs**

WHEREAS, the federal government already has increased retirement contributions for postal and federal employees hired beginning in 2013; and

WHEREAS, both the White House and Congress are considering additional cuts in the retirement programs covering most postal and federal employees, including all Mail Handlers; and

WHEREAS, most of these cuts would require all postal and federal employees to pay higher contributions with no increase in retirement benefits, effectively imposing a reduction in the take-home pay of all Mail Handlers and other covered employees; and

WHEREAS, such cuts are wholly unjustified and should not be used as a means of reducing the federal or USPS budget deficits; and

WHEREAS, these proposals highlight the need for all Mail Handlers and retirees to be legislative activists and ongoing contributors to the Political Action Committee (PAC);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NPMHU shall continue to educate and mobilize its members about these and future proposals, and the risks presented by them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NPMHU shall continue to oppose these draconian proposals by all possible means.



# RESOLUTIONS

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

### *Recommendation No. 9*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:  
BOB LOSI, LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL DIRECTOR

### **Saving the USPS**

WHEREAS, the U.S. Postal Service finds itself in a precarious financial position, because of the 2008 recession, the electronic diversion of mail, and Congressionally mandated payments to prefund the Retiree Health Benefit Fund, which have robbed the USPS of more than \$20 billion over the last five years; and

WHEREAS, this dire situation has led some opportunists on Capitol Hill, within the Postal Service, and in the private sector to use these circumstances as a pretext to attack the wages and benefits of postal employees and the collective bargaining process itself; and

WHEREAS, these same forces wish to dismantle the Postal Service's processing and delivery network, cut more than 200,000 career employees, and reduce USPS competitiveness by reducing service standards; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 2309 sponsored by Representative Darrell Issa (R-CA) and his one co-sponsor, Representative Dennis Ross (R-FL), embodies the worst of these insidious plans; and

WHEREAS, a far better alternative is found in H.R. 1351, introduced by Representative Stephen Lynch (D-MA), with the bipartisan support of 229 co-sponsors;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union will spare no effort to support H.R. 1351, to oppose H.R. 2309 (as currently written), and to combat any other measures—legislative, administrative, or otherwise—that would lead to the demise of the Postal Service.

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

### *Recommendation No. 10*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:  
BOB LOSI, LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL DIRECTOR  
JOHN GIBSON, LOCAL 308

### **United We Stand**

WHEREAS, the 2012 election cycle may be the most critical in the history of the American labor movement; and

WHEREAS, there are growing and glaring differences between some of the candidates seeking political office; and

WHEREAS, voting in the upcoming elections is crucial to protecting our jobs, income, retirement, the union movement, and the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and many other states with Republican Governors and legislatures elected in 2010, there is an all-out assault on unions in general and public-sector employees in particular, and such attacks have unjustifiably blamed our union brothers and sisters for financial problems not caused by workers or their unions; and,

WHEREAS, an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us; and,

WHEREAS, the "Citizens United" decision issued by a Republican-appointed Supreme Court majority has given unfettered political clout to corporations and rich individuals to use their wealth to influence elections unfairly; and

WHEREAS, all postal unions must continue to unite and act as one in opposition to those who are unfriendly to labor;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that each Local Union will work with the NPMHU Legislative and Political Department to register our members to vote, setting as a goal a 100% voter registration level; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Local Unions will meet—and work—with State and local AFL-CIO bodies on voter education, voter registration, and voter participation, with particular attention to early and mail-in voting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NPMHU shall take the steps necessary to join with other labor organizations in an effort to educate their voting constituents about those Members of Congress who have attacked the rights and benefits of working Americans and therefore jeopardize the hopes and dreams of millions of working-class citizens.



## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

*Recommendation No. 11*

BASED ON RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY:

BOB LOSI, DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL AFFAIRS  
 PERVOUS BADILISHAMWALIMU, LOCAL 310  
 CINDY HOEHL-RINKER, LOCAL 321

**Endorsement of Barack Obama for President of the United States**

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama assumed the Presidency during the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s, and has helped steer the American economy from the brink of a second depression to a record of consistent job growth over the past forty months; and

WHEREAS, three and a half years into President Obama's first term, America is beginning to dig out of the economic hole, including the loss of more than 8 million jobs, that was created by the pro-corporate, right-wing economic agenda of his predecessor administration; and

WHEREAS, President Obama's efforts to grow the economy have been stymied by the efforts of the Republican majority in the House of Representatives and by the Republican minority in the Senate, led by Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (KY), who specifically said in 2009 that his intention was to "beat Obama in 2012" rather than pass meaningful legislation that would help rebuild the economy; and

WHEREAS, the legislative plans of the Obama Administration continue to be blocked by a Congress beset with gridlock and held hostage by ultra-right-wing and "Tea Party" Senators and Representatives who espouse anti-union, antigovernment, and pro-privatization rhetoric; and

WHEREAS, the Republican Party has made reductions in postal and federal benefits one of its top priorities, including increases in employee contributions to the Civil Service Retirement System, the Federal Employee Retirement System, and the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program; and

WHEREAS, the Republican Party has implemented various voter-suppression schemes as a means of using government power to deny legitimate voters the right to cast ballots in 2012; and

WHEREAS, the Republican candidate for President, former Governor Mitt Romney, has openly stated his hostility toward unions and working families, and has posted anti-union propaganda on his campaign website; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has worked to support many issues important to organized labor; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has worked to support and maintain the American middle class; and

WHEREAS, the NPMHU sides with President Obama on many of the stark differences between the Obama Administration and Governor Romney on tax fairness, support for veterans' programs and military families, women's

rights, college education, issues of equality, and appointments to the Supreme Court, other federal courts, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and elsewhere in the federal government; and,

WHEREAS, President Obama successfully passed and signed into law comprehensive health insurance reform, giving the promise of health security to millions of our fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, President Obama implemented Wall Street reform, which now is beginning to reverse decades of financial deregulation that put our entire economy at risk; and

WHEREAS, through President Obama's appointments, the NLRB finally is taking steps to level the playing field for workers who want to organize, and agencies that are charged with protecting the lives and livelihoods of workers, from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, now are led by competent individuals who are aggressively enforcing the law; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has made the revival of the manufacturing sector a hallmark of his jobs agenda, evidenced by the successful federal effort to rescue the domestic auto industry; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has kept his word by bringing home the troops from the war in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, President Obama said he would work tirelessly to find and destroy Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, and has succeeded remarkably well in that mission; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has received the enthusiastic endorsement of the AFL-CIO and the Laborers' International Union of North America;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Postal Mail Handlers Union will work to register, educate, and mobilize its membership to vote for President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden on November 6, 2012; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Postal Mail Handlers Union enthusiastically endorses President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden for reelection to a second term in office, and will work toward their victory in the November 2012 elections.

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