

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR SUCCESS

Let me start by wishing a hearty welcome to Paul Hogrogian as he assumes the National Presidency of the NPMHU. I know that Paul's vast union experience and leadership skills will help keep our union moving ever forward. I also would like to welcome our two newest members of the National Executive Board (NEB). Local 309 President David Wilkin assumed the position of Northeast Region Vice President on May 1, 2015; that position became vacant when Brother Hogrogian was installed as National President. David has now attended his first NEB meeting, and his contributions already are having a positive impact. As this magazine goes to press, Local 308 President John Gibson is preparing to assume the duties as Eastern Region Vice President on the NEB. Brother Gibson was unanimously selected by the NEB to fill the vacancy that was created when outgoing Eastern Region Vice President Kevin Fletcher relinquished that position to assume new, full-time duties in the NPMHU National Office Contract Administration Department. Brothers Wilkin and Gibson possess decades of experience as union officers and representatives, and I very much look forward to working with each of them on the National Executive Board.

As evidenced by the content of this issue of the magazine, a primary focus of the NPMHU at present is the process surrounding proposals to enact comprehensive postal reform legislation in the U.S. Congress. The NPMHU continues to meet with key Members of Congress to discuss various reform proposals, while at the same time closely coordinating strategies with our three sister postal unions. And we continue our collective discussions with top USPS leadership, representatives of the mailers organizations, and other important stakeholders. Unfortunately, as is now the norm in our Congress, there is a lot of talk about enacting responsible legislation. But too often good, logical legislative initiatives become grossly entangled in the hyper-partisan political process. As we head into an election year, it may become even more difficult to reach a legislative solution that the unions, postal management, and the various stakeholders can agree on—and one that both Houses of Congress will pass, and that the

President will sign into law. Please know that your NPMHU is well represented in these many discussions, and we will continue our fight to reach consensus on a plan that will help save the valued public institution that is the USPS.

With our National Agreement set to expire on May 20, 2016, your National officers and Contract Administration Department representatives already have initiated strategy and planning discussions related to contract negotiations with the USPS for our 2016 National Agreement. While formal negotiations won't begin until February 2016, there is much that can be done over the course of 2015 to lay the ground work for successful negotiations. On the third day of our scheduled August 2015 Semi-Annual Meeting of the Local Unions, we will conduct a bargaining strategy session with representatives from our Local Unions from across the country. This will be a good opportunity to discuss the general history of NPMHU collective bargaining, and to flesh out topics that likely will be on the bargaining table in early 2016.

In the weeks following that bargaining strategy session, National President Hogrogian will finalize details and logistics regarding the work of the NPMHU Field Negotiating Committee. This committee will be comprised of various National and Local Union officers who will meet, along with Contract Administration Department representatives in Washington, DC, to discuss the merits of what likely will be hundreds of contract bargaining proposals submitted for consideration by Local Unions and NPMHU members from across the country. The Field Negotiating Committee will review and discuss each submitted proposal, and will make recommendations to be carried forward when contract talks formally begin in February 2016. Be sure to check your union bulletin boards and the Mail Handlers website (www.npmhu.org) in the coming months for information and details about submitting contract proposals for consideration by the Field Negotiating Committee.

In the interim, your National Union will continue to closely monitor the ongoing bargaining



MARK A. GARDNER, National Secretary-Treasurer

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efforts between the Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union, and separate contract negotiations involving the National Rural Letter Carriers Association. At present, the parties have declared bargaining impasse in each of those processes, and are headed toward the legally mandated mediation/interest arbitration process. At the national level, the four postal unions have built a strong, working relationship over the years, and the NPMHU stands ready to support all of our postal union brothers and sisters in the collective bargaining arena.

In Solidarity,

Mark A. Gardner
National Secretary-Treasurer