

MOVING FORWARD, TOGETHER

As you will read more about elsewhere in this magazine, your National Negotiating Team has now begun bargaining with the United States Postal Service over the terms of our 2016 National Agreement. As we have done during prior rounds of contract negotiations, we will keep the membership informed as we move through the various stages of this process. Be sure to monitor your branch bulletin boards, as well as the NPMHU website at npmhu.org, to learn more about proposals that are exchanged and discussed as this process moves along. From the ceremonial opening of negotiations last week (on February 25th) through the contract expiration on May 20, this three-month period will see many formal on-the-record main table sessions, along with countless subcommittee meetings and other discussions to flesh out proposals submitted by both parties to these negotiations. Our stated goal is to stand firm in our efforts to negotiate an agreement that improves the wages, benefits, and working conditions for all of our craft members. We ask that you stay tuned as this process unfolds, and we greatly appreciate the support and solidarity that our Union's membership demonstrates every single day.

Another track that will keep our officers and staff very busy in the coming months is the planning and preparations for our 2016 NPMHU National Convention, which will take place in Chicago, Illinois in mid-August. As this issue goes to press, many of our Local Unions are nearing completion of their election process to select delegates to attend the Convention. These delegates will participate and serve as the highest elected governing body of our Union during Convention week, which will take place over a six-day period from Monday, August 22 through Saturday, August 27, 2016. These delegates will hear comprehensive reports on the state of our Union. They also will consider, debate, and vote on important legislative, political, worker rights, and other resolutions and on various proposals to amend our National and Uniform Local Union Constitutions. Another important function of the delegates is to implement the nomination process for any contested elections for the National Executive Board that will serve the NPMHU for

the coming four years. Under our Union's National Constitution, President Hogrogian is charged with empaneling the various committees, from among the elected delegates, that will meet in advance of the Convention to prepare their respective reports and recommendations for presentation and action by the entire Convention in August. We look forward to presenting a productive and enjoyable Convention this summer.

On the national election front, I write this article on the morning after the "Super-Tuesday" Presidential primary contests. To say the least, 2016 has provided a most unusual political election season. While the Democratic primary process has followed a more traditional route, with candidates engaging in fairly reasoned, respectful discourse and debate, the Republican primary process has turned traditional electioneering on its head. I will refrain from passing judgment on the candidates involved in those primaries and caucuses, as we have all had the opportunity to watch this most unusual battle play out on the national stage before our very eyes.

Barring self-destruction from a comment or attack that fully crosses the fine line of political correctness, Donald Trump seems to be emerging as the likely standard bearer of the party. And now it seems that many in the Republican establishment are entering crisis mode, with party leaders still publicly trying to derail Trump, who continues to grow his lead in the race for the Republican nomination. Needless to say, if the primary process for both parties continues its current trend, our country will experience a real barn-burner of a general election in November.

Let me say that I fully recognize that postal employees, and indeed NPMHU members, hail from all walks of life, and represent a microcosm of our American society. Our Union has long-appreciated the wide geographic, racial, ethnic, religious, gender, and yes, political diversity woven into the fabric of our great Union. Given that, it stands to reason that there is some percentage of our members whose views are more closely aligned with Republican ideals and Republican candidates. It also should come as no surprise that, in general, the union movement normally



MARK A. GARDNER, National Secretary-Treasurer

*"Your vote really
does matter."*

finds itself siding with the core principles and ideals espoused by the Democratic Party. It has never been the practice of the NPMHU to stifle the views, opinions, and beliefs held by any of its members. It has, however, long been the practice of your Union to promote and support candidates, irrespective of party label, who seriously commit to promote and support the values and issues that are important to the working lives of our members and to the lives of all working people, many of whom continue their struggle to find a path to the American middle class.

The good news is that participation in the primary process, in both Republican and Democratic contests, is at all-time highs. The voters are doing their part to narrow the field for the general election. Organized labor will need to continue its strong showing in the voting booth going forward, especially when we get to the critical Presidential and Congressional elections on Tuesday, November 8th. If you are not already registered to vote, please do so, and exercise your right to shape the future for working Americans. Your vote really does matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark A. Gardner". The signature is fluid and cursive, matching the printed name below it.

Mark A. Gardner
National Secretary-Treasurer