



MARK A. GARDNER, National Secretary-Treasurer

## THE NPMHU: CHANGING & GROWING

**T**hese certainly have been challenging times for our Union. From a lengthy negotiations and interest arbitration process to determine the terms of our 2011 National Agreement, to the ongoing roller coaster ride of the legislative process related to badly-needed postal reform legislation, to the ill-advised initiatives pursued by the Postal Service to rush through cuts in service in an effort to claw its way out of what has been described by many as an artificial financial crisis. As Mail Handlers, we must all continue to remain engaged in these matters to help retain a viable Postal Service going forward, and to ensure the continued success and prosperity for our members and their families.

I am pleased that we have concluded the hard-fought process related to our contract negotiations. With the release in mid-February of the Fishgold Arbitration Award, the NPMHU has secured for its members a return to historic guaranteed wage increases, and has reinstated Cost-of-Living Adjustments to help the wages of career Mail Handlers keep pace with inflation over the next three years. The arbitration panel also has directed an upward adjustment to night-shift differential rates, which affects the vast majority of Mail Handlers. These salary increases come after two years of wage stagnation, and are much-deserved by our hard working and ever-productive Mail Handler workforce.

The arbitration award addresses many areas of concern for our membership, and I certainly encourage all Mail Handlers to read and familiarize themselves with its terms. There are a couple of key provisions that I believe are worth noting here. In keeping with the pattern established in negotiated and arbitrated agreements for our three sister postal unions, the Fishgold Award has directed major adjustments to the Mail Handler complement and categories of workers.

The allowed percentage of casual workers has been reduced significantly (along with a significant relaxation of the limitations on how these casuals may be employed). And the panel implemented the new employment category of Mail Handler Assistant (MHA), a non-career, bargaining unit position within the Mail Handler craft. MHAs will be selected for employment from a hiring register, and will receive many benefits and guarantees that are not available to the casual workers. As with the similar categories of employment with the other three postal unions, the employment of MHAs will be limited to a 360-day period of employment, and must have a five-day break in service before being re-appointed for subsequent employment periods. Of great importance, future career hires in the Mail Handler craft will be from among the MHA bargaining unit members.

Over the coming months and years, MHAs will become a vital component of our craft, and an important segment of our union

membership. I ask that all Mail Handlers join your National Union leadership in welcoming our new MHAs with open arms, and making them feel at home as full members of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union.

The Fishgold Award spells out many of the details related to the benefits and guarantees associated with the MHAs, along with the many provisions affecting the wages and benefits for the existing career Mail Handler workforce. All of those details and provisions will be incorporated into the 2011 National Agreement booklet, which is currently being developed, and which will be distributed to all Mail Handlers as soon as that document is finalized. In the interim, you may download and review the full Fishgold Arbitration Award, along with a summary of its terms, from the NPMHU National Union website at [www.npmhu.org](http://www.npmhu.org).

I would like to add my thanks to all Mail Handlers for their relentless support of the NPMHU, and for their patience and interest during the difficult bargaining and arbitration process. I know that we will stay strong and united as we confront our challenges together.

Fraternally,

Mark A. Gardner  
National Secretary-Treasurer

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