



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