



Your Job Depends on It!



The battles we fight day in and day out on workroom floors, in grievance meetings, and in arbitration hearings across this local and across the country are obviously critically important to protecting the contractual rights we have struggled to gain over decades of collective bargaining. Our National partners, over those many years, have constructed terms and conditions that rival the best in organized labor. To be sure, at every opportunity we strive to improve upon those terms at all levels of the organization. This ability to bargain for better wages and working conditions is in real jeopardy Brothers & Sisters as we face an administration bent on taking from the working men and women of this nation to give even more to the very wealthiest among us. One need only review the recent actions of the President for evidence that he and his ilk aim to reduce our standard of living while they stuff their already obscenely bulging pockets. The recently released report of the Office of Management and Budget sets forth the plan to privatize the United States Postal Service, sentencing the American mailing public to a future of further declining service and sealing the fate of the employees of the Postal Service to less than a living wage. Buried deep within the OMB report beginning on page 68 they write **“This proposal would restructure the United States Postal System to return it to a sustainable business model or prepare it for future conversion from a Government agency into a privately-held corporation.”** They add **“A privatized Postal Service would have a substantially lower cost structure.”** Sisters and Brothers when they use the term lower cost structure we all know what they

The Lay of the Land

As many of you now know, the national parties have resolved a number of ongoing disputes with the signing of the **Update of Regional Instruction (RI) 399 Procedures MOU**. This agreement in its entirety is available for review on the National website @npmhu.org.

The MOU itself is seven pages in length and signed by NPMHU President Paul Hogrogian and APWU President Mark Dimondstein. At its core, the MOU proports to cure some of the major defects within the mechanism for resolving disputed work assignments along with giving the parties a fresh start in a procedure that currently finds some disputes decades old with no real hope they would see resolution in our lifetimes. Like all negotiated agreements there are aspects that benefit the craft and there are some, not so much. However, Brother Hogrogian has never shied away from the tough decision and has always put the mail handler membership ahead of all other considerations. It is clear to us that in this case the pros significantly outweigh the cons. The Union in negotiating this agreement with the APWU and Postal management has secured thousands of jobs that would have otherwise been in jeopardy. For those who see this as mere hyperbole, one need only review the recent history of the SPSS. The initial craft assignment of the Small Parcel Sorting System gave the entire operation to the mail handler craft only to see the employer change its position and give much of the work away. Prior to this historic agreement the risk of los-

are really talking about and that is your wages, your benefits, and your retirement. The Office of Personnel Management has already weighed in on reducing your retirement package by proposing that it be calculated based on your high five-year average and not the current three-year average, having the effect of lowering your actual take home annuity. And for good measure they want you to contribute more on a bi-weekly basis to get that reduced amount. The OPM also proposes to eliminate the Social Security supplement for those who retire prior to the age of 62. The supplement, as many of you know, is paid by the OPM and approximates your entitlement to social security until you reach 62. Add to this bubbling cesspool the soon-to-be released report by the White House Task Force on the Postal Service and the squeeze on our standard of living and a real threat to the future of a family supporting job will be in full force.

Supporting congressional candidates that support our issues as working women and men is the only path to protecting the standard of living we deserve. Whether the candidate displays an I, an R, or a D next to their name is secondary to what their position might be regarding protecting the career jobs of the United States Postal Service. If you are not yet registered to vote there is still time to do so and stay informed about who is running in your congressional district or your state this November.

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In Solidarity,
John Gibson

ing jobs on the mere whim of postal management was a very real and dangerous possibility. This risk has been neutralized and jobs saved.

The effect on the outstanding jurisdictional disputes for Local 308 will depend on the timing and status of the individual case. Many disputes will be “administratively closed in consideration of payments made by the Postal Service in accordance with each Union”. Locally, cases subject to closure with consideration of the payment cited within the MOU would include the long-standing Philadelphia LDC dispute or commonly referred to as the **“Swedesboro case”**.

The methodology and distribution of payments as a result of the national settlement and covering the Swedesboro case have not yet been defined by the parties. As soon as details are available they will be made known. Other cases, such as the AFSM-100 grievance out of our **Trenton** facility will be scheduled for hearing under Article 15 as soon as practicable. It is important to note that in terms of any jurisdictional claim against the employer there is never any certainty of outcome when the case is presented before an arbitrator. The promise of remedy for what appears to be a clear violation in the eyes of the charging party is never guaranteed. As additional details are made available we will be certain to pass them along. As always, any questions or concerns should be directed to Local Union headquarters.

-*John Gibson*