

## Introducing: The First-Ever National Young Members' Committee!

It's a sign of the times: An energized, fighting spirit has gripped the APWU. To build on the momentum and secure a vibrant future for the union, convention delegates overwhelmingly approved a resolution to create a National Young Members' Committee.

The resolution, which was submitted by the Baltimore Area Local, calls for a committee comprised of one young member and one alternate from each of the union's five regions. The representatives will be recommended by the Regional Coordinators and appointed by the President.

The youth representatives will meet at least once a year and will convene during each national convention to report on the state of youth membership in the APWU.

Numerous young workers took to the convention's floor microphones to speak in favor of the resolution.

"We have a wave of young workers coming in and they are not really sure of what the union is," said Spencer Gilbert, 23, of the Western Michigan Area Local. "This will be a great way to get them organized and involved in the union."

Sabrina Larson, a member of the Salt Lake City Area Local, said that it will make a big difference in the lives of young workers. "We would like to learn

and be mentored by more experienced people," she said.

Candice Cunningham of the Las Vegas Area Local agreed. "We are the future of the APWU and the Postal Service, and if you guys are willing to

share your knowledge and experience with us, nothing but progression and growth will continue to happen in this union," she said.

"As young people, we really want to  
*(Continued on p. 3)*

## Delegates: Clinton for President

Delegates voted to endorse Hillary Clinton for President and to "support her in every possible way" on the second day of the union's National Convention.

Although Clinton was unable to attend the convention, she sent a letter thanking the APWU for the endorsement and made a strong commitment to uphold APWU goals if she is elected.

"I'm running for president to make our country work for all Americans – the struggling, the striving, and the successful – not just those at the top," she wrote. "We need to invest in good-paying jobs; fight for collective bargaining rights; raise the minimum wage and strengthen overtime rules..."

"For the past 45 years, APWU has been on the frontlines of the fight for a fairer, stronger America, and I'm proud to stand with you... If I am so fortunate to serve as president, I'll work to relieve the pre-funding mandate for retiree health costs; restore overnight mail ser-



vice standards for local mail; appoint postal leaders who champion a strong public Postal Service; and strengthen partnerships between the Postal Service, community banks, and credit unions to provide more American access to affordable financial services.

"I believe all workers should have a voice and a seat at the table in making decisions that impact them, and I look forward to working with you and your brothers and sisters as we build a brighter American future. Let's keep fighting, and let's win!"

## *Verizon, Nabisco Workers:*

# When We Fight, We Win!

Two rank-and-file workers shared the stories of their fight for justice on the second day of National Convention.

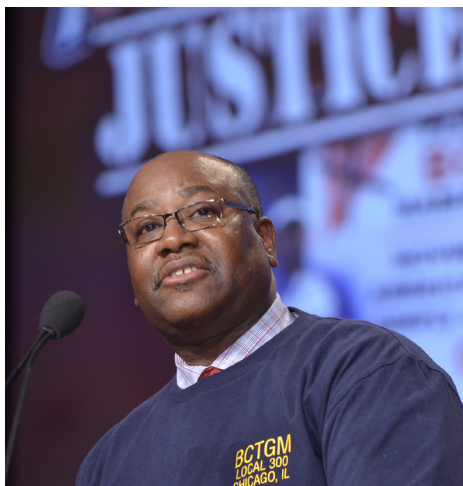
“In 2014, I joined my co-workers and we decided we wanted a union with CWA [Communications Workers of America],” said Tatiana Hill. “After a two-year fight that was more intense than anyone could imagine, I stand before you with a new union contact.”

Hill, a Verizon retail worker from Brooklyn, NY, is now a union steward who served as a member of the CWA’s rank-and-file negotiating committee.

Verizon used all sorts of tactics to try to sweet-talk workers into opposing the union, Hill explained. They fired her co-worker, Bianca Cunningham, for speaking out against the company.

“They hoped that it would scare us enough to not be in the union, but it didn’t work,” Hill said. In fact, it made them stronger.

The fight ended in a 46-day strike, which the workers won. The NLRB ordered Cunningham’s return to work.



**Nabisco worker Mike Smith**

“Corporate America is more greedy than I could ever imagine, but I learned to have more courage than I ever knew I could possess. I also learned that there is a growing movement of workers that will do anything to win,” Hill said, thanking APWU members for joining the picket lines.

### **A Billion-Dollar Cookie**

Members of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union (BCTGM) are also fighting corporate greed. This year, Mondelez International, the company that owns Nabisco, outsourced 600 union jobs at the company’s Chicago plant to Mexico, where the minimum wage is measured not by the hour, but the day.

Mike Smith, 59, was laid off in March. “This is corporate greed at its worst and it must stop,” he said. “You hurt our communities, you hurt our schools, you hurt our children, just



**Verizon striker Tatiana Hill**

for profit? We have to tell others that this taking of union jobs must end. If we don’t fight, we can’t win.” APWU delegates voted to endorse a boycott of Nabisco products made in Mexico.

## **Delegates Adopt Four Changes to APWU Constitution**

Delegates spent most of the third day of the convention considering recommendations of the Constitution Committee, chaired by Western Michigan Area Local President Amy Puhalski.

Delegates approved four changes: They voted to add a National Business Agent position to the Support Services Division, which represents a very diverse membership – including employees in Information Technology/Accounting Services, private-sector trucking companies, Material Support / Operating Services, and nurses.

Delegates also voted to abolish a

vacant Washington, DC, Clerk Craft NBA position; approved reimbursement of expenses for the union’s five retiree National Convention delegates to attend the Retirees Department Conference that is held in conjunction with the All-Craft Conference, and added a requirement to the Officers’ Oath of Office to purchase goods from unionized retailers whenever possible.

In a lengthy, often spirited debate, delegates considered a resolution that would allow retiree chapters to elect delegates to national conventions, but the resolution fell short of the required two-thirds vote for adoption.



## *APWU Retirees:*

# Still Fighting for Justice!

APWU retirees no longer work in the post office, but they are still a fighting force in the union and their communities. Delegates from around the country who attended the Retiree Conference held in conjunction with the 23rd Biennial APWU National Convention made that crystal clear.

Western Region Delegate Byron Denton said that since Retiree National Convention Delegates were established in 1994, “We have grown so much... We are going to fight like heck for what’s ours!”

The 88-year-old member of the Sacramento Area Local, who is not seeking re-election, was one of two delegates given special recognition. Denton served as a Retiree Delegate at the 1996 National Convention, the first where Retiree Delegates were credentialed.

“I am very deeply honored. I felt I wouldn’t make it here, but I did,” Denton said. “I love all of you and depend on you to keep up the good work!”

David Bernstein, president of the Florida Postal Workers Retiree Chapter,

was given a special video tribute to his 60 years of union activism.

Like active members, the new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) was on everyone’s mind. “So many of you have emailed me asking, ‘What’s in the contract for us?’” Retiree Director Nancy Olumekor said. “The CBA is generally negotiated for active members working every day. ... But the union has taken steps forward to expand its ability to negotiate benefits for retirees.”

Some of those benefits include the Peak Holiday Season Memorandum of Understanding, which allows annuitants to work up to six weeks as Holiday Clerk Assistants without affecting their retiree benefits.

Retirees are still mobilizing and organizing. President Mark Dimondstein saluted their “tremendous spirit of activism,” especially in the Stop Staples campaign.

“By the way, we are winning. We haven’t won yet, but we are on the road,” Dimondstein said of the campaign to drive Staples out of the postal business.



**Byron Denton, Nancy Olumekor**

Retirees are also busy fighting on behalf of the Campaign for Postal Banking, opposing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, donating money to COPA, and working to turn out the vote this November.



**Gilbert, surrounded by other young workers, speaks in favor of the resolution.**

## Young Workers

*(Continued from p. 1)*

build on the hard work and rights you have all fought for. We don’t want any of your hard work to go to waste,” Cunningham continued. “We want to continue to fight for our rights and build this foundation that has become a platform for us. Nothing but growth can continue to come from young workers.”

Support and encouragement for the young workers has been a theme throughout the convention.

# Rolando: Coalition is Key to Our Survival

“We are at war with an ideology in this country that wants to destroy our public Postal Service as we know it,” Fred Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, told APWU members on the third day of the convention.

Why the attack? It’s simple: The Postal Service makes money. And its networks are extremely valuable.

“If you look at the strategy of those who would like to destroy the Postal Service, the first major blow came in 2006 because when this Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act passed in 2006, it opened the door and gave those who would like to destroy us an opportunity to do so through legislation... Overnight, on paper, they manufactured a \$100 billion debt.”

The key to the survival of the Postal Service is a coalition – among the four

postal unions, but also including the big mailers and postal management. “When it comes to legislative survival, we are truly one union,” but the bigger coalition is fragile, he said. There are dozens of mailers’ organizations and some are short-sighted and concerned only about the cost of postage, he noted.

One way to address the manufactured debt is through Medicare integration, which would cut the \$100 billion pre-funding liability in half. “We have the \$50 billion in the account – we could be pre-funded,” Rolando explained. “Integration itself is something 85 percent of postal employees do now. When they turn 65, they are eligible for Part A and Part B. Essentially, that means they never pay a dime on health insurance.”

Rolando also called for the expansion of postal services, including postal banking, and a strong Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service.

“The key is to keep our coalition. Don’t let them try to divide us and wait for the right legislation at the right time to pass it,” he stated. “The bottom line is a grassroots movement. What becomes tricky is when you are a union the size of yours or mine, you have members all across the political spectrum, but remember, that’s a strength,” Rolando pointed out. “In Congress, when we need support to stop bad legislation and move good legislation you have the same political spectrum.

“Whatever it is you do for the union... never forget that you are what makes our movement strong.”

## Video Highlights

Video highlights of convention activities are posted on [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org) and [Facebook.com/APWUnational](https://www.facebook.com/APWUnational).

## APWU: Agent of Change

“As postal workers, you are the face of this nation. You symbolize the tenacity and strength of the American spirit,” said Rev. Terry Melvin, president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

“A career as a postal worker once, and still is, a status symbol in this country... People of all colors, creeds and backgrounds can find a place to work, and your existence supports the entire function of this nation,” he said. “It’s a solid source of income that can lift one out of poverty and carry along their family, too.”

Melvin praised the work of A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service “as a way to say, ‘This is not a worker issue, not a union issue or a community issue, this is a national issue.’”

He called for postal banking and the expansion of postal services.

He also stressed the need to elect candidates that support the union cause – not “the yellow-haired elephant in the room.” But the work doesn’t end on Election Day, he said.

“We’ve got to come together to keep America heading towards the light of justice and unity. We can’t go back to the days of Jim Crow and vigilantes and church burning,” he explained.

“We must be recharged and focused. This convention sets an agenda for APWU going forward. It sets an agenda for the progressive labor movement going forward. But the real work begins when we get home.”

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### **Credentials Committee**

As presented by Co-Chairperson Sunny Thigpin of the Jackson Area Local, the preliminary report for the APWU Credentials Committee for Wednesday, Aug. 24, is as follows:

The 23rd Biennial Convention’s 2,100 delegates represent 338 locals, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Also in attendance were 76 national officers and 5 Retiree National Convention Delegates.