

THE AMERICAN

Postal Worker

APWU

January/February 2018

THE ROAD AHEAD

FIGHTING TODAY
for a **BETTER**
TOMORROW



WIN
A FAIR
CONTRACT



HALT
JOB AND
SERVICE CUTS



SECURE
POSTAL
LEGISLATION



STAND UP
FOR SAFE JOBS



BUILD
WORKER SOLIDARITY



6



Photo by Richard Copley

20



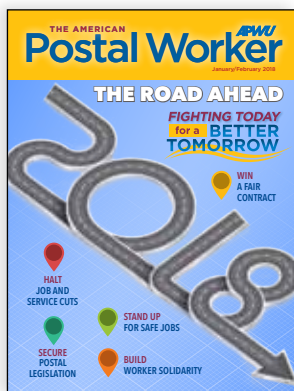
CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 5** From the National Headquarters to the Workroom Floor, APWU Prepares for 2018 Contract Negotiations
- 6** Protests Against Job, Service Cuts Continue
- 8** Op-Ed: Postal Services Should Be Expanded
- 9** A Grand Alliance Takes on New York City Postal Cuts
- 10** Members in Action
- 13** As Wildfires Blaze Across California, Postal Workers Stand Together to Get the Job Done

- 15** Inaugural Legislative Conference Builds Political, Union & Community Strength
- 17** Post Office Dedicated in Memory Of APWU Member & Activist
- 18** 'Stand Up for Safe Jobs' Campaign a Priority in St. Paul
- 20** Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike Anniversary
- 26** Clerk Craft Successfully Stops 'End of Day' Button
- 27** Postal Regulatory Commission Proposes Changes to Ratemaking System
- 28** AFL-CIO Endorses Campaign for Postal Banking
- 29** 'Join Together! Fight Together! Win Together!' – Call to Action at the AFL-CIO Convention
- 30** Labor News

12



ABOUT THE COVER

On the road ahead in 2018, APWU members will be *Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow*. We'll work to win a fair contract, halt job and service cuts, *Stand Up for Safe Jobs*, secure postal legislation, build worker solidarity, and more...



COLUMNS

- 4 PRESIDENT**
2018 Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow
- 12 VICE PRESIDENT**
Active or Retiree? Play an Important Role in 2018!
- 14 SECRETARY-TREASURER**
It's That Time Again
- 16 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**
APWU Fights Changes to PS-Form 3971
- 25 WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATOR**
P.O. Déjà Vu is Not a Good Thing

DIVISIONS

- 22 CLERK DIVISION**
Large Mailers Are Privatizing the Postal Service
- 23 MAINTENANCE DIVISION**
Change is Continuous
- 24 MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICE DIVISION**
The Postal Service & the DOT Physical

DEPARTMENTS

- 32 LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL**
When Workers Turn Out, We Win!
- 33 ORGANIZATION**
What Has the Union Done for You?
- 34 HOME FRONT**
My Heath eVet
- 35 HUMAN RELATIONS**
Claim Privacy
- 36 RESEARCH & EDUCATION**
Stopping Workplace Harassment
- 37 RETIREES**
Spousal Survival Benefits
- 38 HEALTH PLAN**
Welcome to the APWU Health Plan

The American Postal Worker

(ISSN 0044-7811) is published bimonthly by the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO 1300 L Street NW, Washington, DC, 20005

www.apwu.org

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
THE AMERICAN POSTAL WORKER, 1300 L Street NW, Washington, DC, 20005

Mark Dimondstein, President - Editor
Debby Szeredy, Executive Vice President
Elizabeth Powell, Secretary-Treasurer

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Vance Zimmerman | Industrial Relations Director |
| Clint Burelson | Clerk Division Director |
| Steven G. Raymer | Maintenance Division Director |
| Michael O. Foster | Motor Vehicle Service Division Director |
| Steve Brooks | Support Services Division Director |
| Sharyn M. Stone | Central Region Coordinator |
| Mike Gallagher | Eastern Region Coordinator |
| John H. Dirzius | Northeast Region Coordinator |
| Kennith L. Beasley | Southern Region Coordinator |
| Omar M. Gonzalez | Western Region Coordinator |
| Judy Beard | Legislative & Political Director -Assoc. Editor |
| Anna Smith | Organization Director |
| Joyce B. Robinson | Research & Education Director |
| Sue Carney | Human Relations Director |
| John L. Marcotte | Health Plan Director |
| Nancy E. Olumekor | Retirees Department Director |
| Lamont Brooks | Clerk Division Assistant Director |
| Lynn Pallas-Barber | Clerk Division Assistant Director |
| Idowu Balogun | Maintenance Division Assistant Director |
| Terry Martinez | Maintenance Division Assistant Director |
| Javier Piñeres | Motor Vehicle Division Assistant Director |

CLERK DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Robert D. Kessler | Christine Pruitt |
| Shirley J. Taylor | Larry Crawford |
| Robert Bloomer Jr. | Chuck Locke |
| Peter Coradi | Martin J. Mater |
| Sam Lisenbe | Mike O'Hearn |
| Stephen Lukosus | Stella 'Joann' Gerhart |
| William Mellen | Mike Schmid |
| Tom O'Brien | Michael Sullivan |
| Pamela Richardson | Bernard C. Timmerman |
| James E. Scoggins | Rachel Walthall |
| Billy Woods | Liz Swigert |
| Brian Dunn | James Stevenson |
| Frank Rigiero | Sonia E. Canchola |
| Pat Davis-Weeks | Brian Dunsmore |
| Linda J. Turney | Daniel F. Skemp |
| Robert Romanowski | Vince Tarducci |
| John Jackson | Vicki L. Carios |
| Jack Crawford | Michael William Funk Jr. |
| Jerry McIlvain | |

MAINTENANCE DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| William LaSalle | Louis M. Kingsley Jr. |
| Jimmie Waldon | Carlos Paz |
| John Gearhard | Craig Fisher |
| Jeffrey S. Beaton | Dave Sarnacki |
| Curtis Walker | |

MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICE DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Dwight D. Johnson | Bruce Amey |
| Joseph LaCapria | Jerome Pittman |
| Kenneth Prinz | William Wright |

SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

Judy McCann

OTHER NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Daniel Soto | Rufina Pagaduan |
| James M. Patarini | |

PRODUCED BY THE APWU COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Emily Harris | Communications Director |
| GO! Creative, LLC | Design and Layout |



PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

2018 Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow

Happy New Year! 2018 will be extremely challenging and busy as the fight continues to protect our jobs from the outrageous management onslaught of reversions, abolishments and threatened excessing. The 2018 elections, including issue-based ballot initiatives, are important to our future. The ongoing *Stand Up for Safe Jobs* campaign has the potential to reduce tens of thousands of workplace injuries. The APWU Biennial National Convention, the union's highest authority, will help set the course for the coming years. Critical postal reform will need serious attention to be achieved.

Front and center will be negotiations for a new union contract covering wages, hours and working conditions for 200,000 postal workers. Our current contract expires Sept. 20, 2018. Preparations are well underway. Negotiations will open June 26.

Everyone has a role to play in building power and leverage to win a good contract. The "contract campaign" is in the works. Local Contract Action Teams (CATs) are forming and are "fired up and ready to go!"

**POSTAL WORKERS WANT AND DESERVE
GOOD WAGES THAT RESPECT OUR
WORK, PRESERVE JOB SECURITY, LIMIT
SUBCONTRACTING, PROTECT AND EXPAND
CAREER WORK, AND ENHANCE SERVICES ALL
WHILE ALSO PROVIDING DECENT HEALTH
CARE AND A DIGNIFIED RETIREMENT.**

We started the contract campaign with our slogan contest. Impressively, over 1,500 members participated. The winning slogan, *Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow*, helps point the way forward.

First, it recognizes that contract negotiations will be a fight. Postal workers want and deserve good wages that respect our work, preserve job security, limit subcontracting, protect and expand career work, and enhance services all while also providing decent health care and a dignified retirement. Abusive managers must be held accountable. We strive to end the divisive multi-tiered

wage structure. On the other hand, management aims to increase non-career workers, freeze and/or lower wages and benefits, eliminate the COLA, limit workers' rights to union representation, and increase management "flexibility" by expanding sub-contracting, eliminating "no lay-off" protections, and ending excessing limitations. The battle lines are drawn!

Second, the slogan underscores that negotiations are both about the immediate and important needs of "today," such as the next pay raise and "making it" to retirement, while simultaneously fighting for "tomorrow" – as we stand for future generations of workers, for our families and communities, and for a vibrant public Postal Service.

My comments before the Interest Arbitration Panel two years ago, during the final stage of the 2015 contract negotiations, spoke to this issue:

"When I began working at the Post Office, in 1983, my life rapidly changed for the better. I had three young children at the time. Literally overnight I was making good union wages and secured good benefits. I had union-negotiated job security... My postal career began 13 years after a massive shift that resulted from the 1970 postal strike. Those postal workers who stormed the heavens did not know if they would still have jobs after an unlawful job action. But their legitimate frustrations and anger left them no other path. They did it to take care of themselves and their families and in so doing took care of me and other postal workers who followed. I now believe it is not only our turn to take care of ourselves in these negotiations, but to reach out to the new workers, the younger workers, and those who aren't here yet, to make sure we're passing on decent sustaining wages, good benefits, secure retirements – where workers are not living to work, but working to live, and live decently."

Postal workers of all crafts, career and non-career, full-time and part-time, long-term and short-term, In Our Unity Lies Our Strength as together we are *Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow!* ■

FROM THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS TO THE WORKROOM FLOOR

APWU Prepares for 2018 Contract Negotiations

The APWU is gearing up for upcoming negotiations to secure a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the United States Postal Service. The current contract expires on Sept. 20, 2018.

FIGHTING TODAY **for a BETTER** **TOMORROW**

The national officers who will serve on the National Negotiations Committee (NNC) – and will negotiate our next union contract – are specified by the APWU's Constitution and Bylaws. President Mark Dimondstein, Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy, Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman, Clerk Division Director Clint Burelson, Maintenance Division Director Steven Raymer, Motor Vehicle Service Division Director Michael Foster and Support Services Division Director Steve Brooks comprise the constitutionally-mandated committee.

In addition, President Dimondstein appointed Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth "Liz" Powell as a member of the core committee. Other national officers will be involved as needed and able.

"Negotiations are never easy," remarked President Dimondstein. "In the current political environment, they will be extremely challenging. The APWU's success will depend on the power and leverage gained from member involvement and support from the public."

Following the guidance of hundreds of resolutions proposed and passed by the membership, the NNC intends to make sure that the APWU puts forth the best arguments and evidence possible when bargaining for a good contract. As part of the negotiation process, it is also necessary to include subject matter experts, such as economists, lawyers and consultants.

"We take this responsibility seriously and understand the impact the CBA has on our member's lives," added Director Zimmerman. "We intend to have the highest quality data and facts to support our goals, and in order to do that, we need an army of individuals behind us."

We Need You!

As we continue preparing for negotiations, we want to hear from local/state officers and members

on the workroom floor. Suggestions for bargaining table issues can be emailed to **2018ContractNegotiations@apwu.org** or mailed to 2018 Contract Negotiation Items, C/O Industrial Relations Department, 1300 L Street NW, Washington D.C. 20005. Members are also encouraged

to submit ideas and resolutions to their local union, so they can be voted on and introduced at state and national meetings/conventions.

Over the next year, the APWU will be building momentum for our 2018 Contract Campaign. The campaign is one method APWU members can fight for change and mobilize other union members and our communities.

As part of the campaign, the APWU is establishing Contract Action Teams (CATs). These teams locally coordinate "union gear days" (when members wear APWU gear to the worksite), pass out leaflets/flyers, organize and participate in informational pickets, and reach out to postal customers via social and traditional media (TV/newspapers). For information about the 2018 Contract Campaign or how to join a CAT, send an email to nccc@apwu.org.

There will be many opportunities – and much need – for members to get involved as we are *Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow!* ■



Save the Date!

On Jan. 24, 2018, APWU officers will host a Tele-Town Hall call at 2 p.m. EST and 6 p.m. EST about the contract negotiations. You can go to apwu.org or follow the union on Facebook for more details and contract campaign updates!

Protests Against Job,



Members of the Des Moines Area Local and the Des Moines BMC Local picket in front of the downtown P&DC.



Des Moines picket.

APWU members from coast-to-coast continue to fight against postal management's cuts to jobs and resulting diminished service. Following the previously reported demonstrations by the Baltimore Francis "Stu" Filbey Area Local, the Charlotte Area Local (NC), and the Greater Seattle Area Local, in Massachusetts and Iowa APWU members hit the streets and spoke out to inform postal customers about how these cuts lead to slow mail processing, delayed delivery and poor customer service.

Tens of thousands of postal customers in these communities were

informed through the protests and local news stories about how management is weakening the public Postal Service with job reversions, abolishments and threatened excessing.

On the Ball in Boston

On Oct. 18, APWU members, allies and activists took to the streets to demand management fill New England Area postal vacancies.

Over 100 people attended the protest, organized by the Boston Metro Area Local. It brought together APWU Cape Cod Area Local and Manchester Area Local members,

members of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), and supporters from the Greater Boston Labor Council, Massachusetts AFL-CIO, Jobs with Justice, and Labor for Our Revolution.

"Hundreds of postal vacancies in the Boston area have gone unfilled," said Boston Metro Area Local President Scott Hoffman. "It drastically disrupts service to the public and is just another way to pave the road to privatization."

New York Metro Works with Legislators to Stop Cuts

In September, the New York Metro Area Local planned a press conference and rally to pressure the USPS to stop job cuts that would further diminish postal services in the Bronx. The local worked with Congressman José E. Serrano (D-NY-15) to distribute a "sign-on" letter from local politicians to support the union's effort. After pressure from elected officials, USPS canceled most planned cuts to the Bronx.

"The cancellation of planned staffing cuts is a victory for The Bronx," Congressman Serrano said. "The post office is experiencing revenue issues, but the way [to] fix those problems is not by reducing the very services that loyal clients depend upon."

"The members of the New York Metro Area Postal Union are proud to stand with Congressman Serrano and the Bronx community in the fight for the people of the Bronx to receive first class postal services," said New York Metro Area Postal Union President Jonathan Smith.

(L-R) Stephen Lipinski, Tour 3 alternate steward at the Boston GMF; Jimmy Donohoe, Boston Area Local member; Billy Thomas, Boston Metro Area Local Industrial Relations Director; Rennie Paolini, Tour 1 steward at the Boston GMF and Elena Koumbouris, Boston Area Local member.



Service Cuts Continue

Picketing in Des Moines

A few weeks later, the Des Moines Area Local and the Des Moines BMC Local held an informational picket in front of the downtown processing and distribution center (P&DC). The Nov. 8 protest was in response to postal management eliminating 36 positions at the main Des Moines post office – with plans to cut another 34 positions. This is a cut to about 20 percent of the staff.

Protesters included members from the NALC and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, as well as activists from the Teamsters, Communication Workers of America, the Iowa Federation of Labor and Citizens for Community Improvement. Iowa State Representative Bruce Hunter and Iowa Secretary of State candidate Jim Mowrer also joined the protest.

“Nationwide, postal management is cutting jobs and realigning the workforce, which is causing disruptions to workers’ lives and postal operations,” said Des Moines Area Local President Mike Bates. “Our message was very clear. We want to provide first-class service 24/7, 365 days a year.

“We want to educate the public that it’s the peoples’ post office and it op-



Members of the Boston Metro Area Local picket outside the main post office downtown.

erates on ZERO tax payer dollars,” he continued. “Give service back to the people!”

As a follow-up to the rally, President Mark Dimondstein and Bates published a joint op-ed in the *The Des Moines Register* on Nov. 10. To read the full article, see page 8.

Protests Will Continue

The protests will persist as long as management holds to their plan to further degrade service and cut needed staffing. The APWU national officers continue to pursue all possible avenues to fight these cuts. You can go to apwu.org or follow the union on Facebook to get the latest news about this fight.

Contact your local/state representative if you want to participate in a protest, rally or informational picket.

If you would like to publicize your recent action, or need assistance obtaining press coverage for your event, do not hesitate to contact the APWU

National Communication Department. You can send an email to communications@apwu.org or call 202-842-4250 with any questions or concerns. ■

Albuquerque Speaks Out

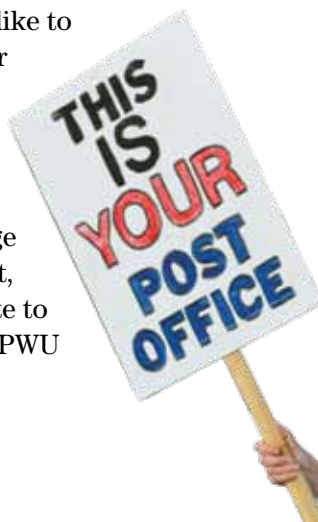
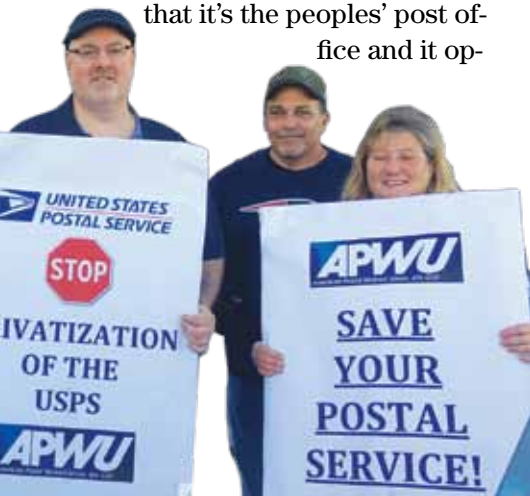


Albuquerque Local President Ken Fajardo

Albuquerque Local President Ken Fajardo secured major news coverage on local *KROQ News* (CBS), informing the public about management’s plans to cut 63 mail processing and window clerk jobs, as well as mail handler

positions, in the city’s P&DC. Of the 63 cuts, 47 are abolishments and 16 are reversions.

“Cuts are not the answer,” said Fajardo. “In reality, our data shows that more jobs are needed. We have issues right now as it is, but once these cuts take effect, it’s just going to devastate customer service even more... Problems that customers do have – they’re going unanswered and unresolved. It’s not really fair and it’s not justified.”



Protestor at a Des Moines picket.

The Des Moines Register

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2017 ■ THE NEWS IOWA DEPENDS UPON ■ DESMOINESREGISTER.COM METRO EDITION

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Opinion

■ DAVID CHIVERS, president
■ CAROL HUNTER, executive editor

■ LYNN HICKS, opinion editor
■ ANDIE DOMINICK, editorial writer

Postal Services Should Be Expanded



Your Turn

Mike Bates and Mark Dimondstein
Guest columnists

The following is an op-ed by President Mark Dimondstein and Des Moines Area Local President Mike Bates that originally appeared in the Des Moines Register on Nov. 10.

The United States Postal Service belongs to all the people. Its valuable mission is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and mandated in legislation to “provide postal services to bind the Nation together” and to “provide prompt, reliable and efficient services to patrons in all areas.”

Incredibly, the USPS provides universal service six days a week to 156 million addresses and extensive Sunday package delivery. Postal services are provided no matter who we are or where we live – at reasonable rates – without the use of any taxpayer dollars.

During the upcoming holiday season, so many of us rely on the trusted USPS to deliver in a timely fashion and connect family and friends. In this ever-increasing boom in on-

line shopping and massive package growth, no American institution is better positioned to serve the people of our country with the ongoing e-commerce revolution.

So why were postal workers, politicians and their community supporters protesting on Wednesday in downtown Des Moines?

Postal workers are dedicated public servants and believe that postal customers deserve the best of service. However, in Des Moines, USPS management plans to slash jobs by more than 20 percent, both inside the facility where mail is processed and at the windows where retail clerks interact with customers.

That’s totally unacceptable. So is the fact that many individual customers and businesses in Des Moines are already experiencing mail delays, and further understaffing will only make matters worse.

The problem reaches way beyond Iowa, and it’s not just postal workers and customers who are upset. The U.S. Postal Regulatory Commission, an independent agency, reported in March 2017 that the USPS is failing to meet its own service goals. First-class mail isn’t being delivered on time, and neither are periodicals nor packages.

The USPS does face new challenges. And, yes, there are some financial hurdles that were directly caused

by a 2006 law that forced the Postal Service to “pre-fund” retiree health costs 75 years into the future, draining postal funds by \$5.5 billion/year. No other agency or business faces such an unfair burden; it’s a burden that translates to lower customer service and satisfaction. Congress manufactured this problem and could quickly solve it by passing long-stalled bipartisan postal reform legislation.

The men and women of the American Postal Workers Union who work in Des Moines’ post offices can’t wait for Congress to act.

We have taken our concerns to the public and will continue to fight for both quality postal services that all our customers deserve and the good jobs our communities need.

Rather than cutting jobs and service, postal management should improve and expand by ensuring shorter wait times at retail counters, quicker mail processing and delivery, and providing basic financial and other services.

The Postal Service is a national treasure and is uniquely positioned to serve everyone by delivering letters, cards, catalogs, newspapers, magazines, medicines and packages. Our union and the dedicated postal workers we represent are committed to a strong and vibrant public Postal Service for generations to come.

A Grand Alliance Takes on New York City Postal Cuts

For too many years, in response to pressure from Congress, the Postal Service has slowed mail service, closed community-based post offices and mail processing facilities, slashed hours of operations, tried to end six-day and door-to-door delivery service, and eliminated hundreds of thousands of living-wage jobs.

These cuts continue today around the country. Residents throughout New York City's boroughs are taking action to stop cuts to service and post office closures. In Harlem, community residents, business owners, and the APWU New York Metro Area Local organized to protest the sell-off of the College Station Post Office and to hold postal management accountable to its promises.



The Postal Service has been talking about selling the College Station property and relocating for years, but had not sufficiently responded to community concerns over poor service and the need for more staffed windows and expanded service hours. Nor have they addressed criticism of the proposed new location. A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service encouraged our organizational and individual supporters to join in the discussion by attending a public meeting in October. The sale of the historic site was not yet final and representatives of USPS management were tight-lipped about the details.

Bronx Battle

In the Bronx, residents are plagued by broken mailboxes, two-hour post office lines and undelivered packages, as revealed in a recent audit by the USPS Office of Inspector General. South Bronx Councilmember

Rafael Salamanca called the cuts in service “a form of discrimination.”

Additionally, postal employees in the Bronx regularly lack access to buildings on their routes and encounter damaged mailboxes. The USPS also announced plans to remove 206 mail collection boxes from Bronx neighborhoods.

Nora Taggart, New York Metro Area Local Legislative & Political Director, said of the cuts, “It seems like the people in the wealthier areas of New York City are not seeing these cuts in services, and the people that need the post office the most are experiencing more cuts in service.”

As the busy holiday season approached, USPS threatened to reduce staffing by hundreds in Manhattan alone.

In November, A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service promoted a letter writing campaign demanding the Manhattan postmaster provide first-class postal services in the borough. This was in response to threats to reduce staffing, which would contribute to longer lines and mail delays.

The USPS predicted a more than 10 percent increase in package volume for the 2017 holiday season, compared to the previous year. New Yorkers and residents across the country need the Postal Service to be prepared to meet everyone's needs, which includes consistent and timely mail delivery, sufficient mail collection boxes, and an end to long wait times with better staffing and extended hours. ■

A GRAND ALLIANCE TO SAVE OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE

A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service is a broad coalition of national, state and local organizations including the NAACP, Vote Vets, Jobs with Justice, National Council of Churches and Rainbow PUSH. These groups have come together to take a stand against the unprecedented assaults on the Postal Service including efforts to dismantle and privatize it. To join A Grand Alliance, visit www.AGrandAlliance.org.

MEMBERS



(L-R) Virgin Islands Area Local President Becky B-Simmonds and clerk Mary Meyers who works at the general post office on St. Thomas.

(L-R) Puerto Rico Area Local members Nydia Lopez and Angieliz Colondres.

APWU DONATES \$25,000 TO HURRICANE RELIEF

Delegates to the 2017 All-Craft Conference donated \$12,500 to help their sisters and brothers affected by the catastrophic Sept. 2017 hurricanes and APWU National matched the contributions – resulting in \$25,000 worth of donations.

APWU members who the locals identified as needing immediate financial assistance received checks to help with their recovery.

(L-R) Puerto Rico Area Local member Cristobal De Jesus and Local President Juan Carlos González-Del Valle.



PUERTO RICO AREA LOCAL SAYS ‘THANK YOU’

Puerto Rico Area Local members wish to thank everyone who sent donations after Hurricane Maria. “We are deeply thankful to those that have helped and continue to do so,” said Grisselle Nieves, local shop steward and interim secretary-treasurer.

She sent a special “thank you” to members of the Montana Postal Workers Union, and their President Gary Phillippe, for sending supplies including flashlights, wipes, water filters, solar showers, first-aid kits and batteries. “With their contributions, many co-workers have warm water to shower in, clean water to drink, and a better night’s sleep with battery-operated fans and mosquito repellent,” she said, adding that other locals generously sent items such as water and non-perishable food.

“We will be eternally grateful,” Nieves continued. “This sense of solidarity shown by our brothers and sisters



across the country in our moment of need is the real meaning of union.”

Puerto Rico Area Local President Juan Carlos González-Del Valle added, “My most sincere gratitude to all APWU members for the show of solidarity with their Puerto Rican sisters and brothers who were affected by this catastrophe. The APWU is not my second family but MI FAMILIA, period.”

IN ACTION



RETIREE RALLIES AGAINST TAX-CUTS FOR THE RICH

Joyce Debnam, a member of the Nation's Capital Southern Maryland Area Local Retiree Chapter, attended a rally protesting proposed tax cuts for multi-millionaires outside the Capitol on Nov. 1.

Joyce Debnam (left) and Retirees Director Nancy Olumekor at the rally.



POSTAL UNION SOLIDARITY IN PHOENIX

On Nov. 12, members of the Phoenix Metro Area Local participated in a rally hosted by the Arizona State Association of Letter Carriers in front of the Arcadia Station Post Office.

Nearly 200 community members attended, including Mayor Greg Stanton, as postal workers protested various issues.

APWU members were protesting job cuts, which results in delays getting mail from processing plants to the stations and branches, and cutting window staffing – resulting in poor customer service, explained Phoenix Metro Area Local Secretary-Treasurer Sarah Rodriguez.

Members of the National Association of Letter Carriers were picketing late start times and deliveries after dark.



APWU members joined NALC members at a rally in Phoenix.

Members of the Phoenix Metro Area Local left to right (back) Media Director Greta Garrett, Local President Joe Cuccinotto, Secretary-Treasurer Sarah Rodriguez, (front) Retiree Chapter President Joanne Romero and Rodriguez's daughter, Amity.



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

Active or Retiree?

Play an Important Role in 2018!

As we go into the New Year, I'd like to remind our members how important our retirees are to our future. Our country has become a war zone and we must unite as strong activists, whether you are a retiree or an active postal worker. We can choose to participate, or we can sit back comfortably in our homes, guaranteed to lose our rights and our livelihoods.

Local and state organizations need to look to our retirees as a vital part of our union. They should share resources with retirees and encourage more chapters to be formed. Retirees are our family and are our activist backbone, who fought to preserve the worker protections we have today. **We are all in this battle together.**

Built the Union

Today's retirees helped build the American Postal Workers Union. During the 1970s and 1980s, they were staunch defenders of the union, many taking part in the Great Postal Strike of 1970. Thousands served as both negotiators and stewards, representing workers on the job and securing the benefits we have today.

As young postal workers, our retirees were not willing to be fired at will, segregated by color, or denied safety and health provisions, wage increases and collective bargaining rights. As young workers, many fought in the Vietnam War, marched for the equal rights amendment, supported better worker protections and became active in their unions. Gains become a reality when workers participate.

Today, we see a government that is actively cutting workers' rights with a vengeance. Those brave young workers, who are now retirees, are also affected by the proposed cuts, especially to health care and retirement benefits.

Wealth of Knowledge and Experience

There is a place in every local for retirees. They are great mentors and can help provide training and give valuable advice to workers. There are many local officers who are retired or will be retiring soon, and



San Fernando Valley Area Local Legislative Director and Retiree Yoggi Riley at a Stop Staples protest.

they would like to see new workers step up into union leadership positions.

Retirees can also help with the contract campaign and anti-consolidation activities, as well as build relationships with elected officials. They can reach other organizations that can become part of *A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service*. One of the primary reasons the *Stop Staples* campaign was so successful was because of the countless hours worked by dedicated retirees across the country.

Only when we stand and act together in solidarity, can we grow. We must fight to keep the Postal Service vibrant and serving our community with equal access to affordable, prompt, postal services.

We must protect our rights as workers. We are at a serious place in history and every member must get involved now. We cannot win this battle without large numbers of people acting together.

Let's make 2018 the year that all postal workers, retirees and our communities come together, *Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow*. ■

As Wildfires Blaze Across California, Postal Workers Stand Together to Get the Job Done

Devastating natural disasters struck the U.S. again. Thousands of people were affected, including APWU members. In October, wildfires destroyed over 245,000 acres of land, 55,000 homes – at least three belonging to APWU members – and took over 40 lives across northern California. The fires mercilessly burned across Napa, Lake, Sonoma, Mendocino, Butte and Solano counties. As this issue went to press in December, ravenous fires had broken out across the southern part of the state.

‘We Got the Job Done’

Redwood Empire Area Local Executive Vice President Valerie Schropp said as the fires broke out, all postal operations moved to the North Bay Plant in Petaluma. She said the area her local covers, which includes 95 post offices, was totally evacuated for about four days.

Although the plant in Petaluma was 20 to 30 miles away from the fire, when workers “walked into the plant, it was hazy because of all the smoke,” Schropp said, adding that their “eyes were burning because of all the ash.”

Special N65 face masks were handed out to protect workers while sorting mail. Pallets of bottled water and food were also brought in. “It was quite an operation,” Schropp said.

Since the southern part of Santa Rosa remained untouched, postal services slowly moved back to the carrier annex there. At times, more than 100 people were waiting in line, trying to find out where their mail was.

As this issue went to press, wildfires started to burn outside Los Angeles and San Diego. Our thoughts are with APWU members and their family impacted at this time. Please visit apwu.org for more information on how to help our affected sisters and brothers.



Santa Rosa was devastated by the wildfires.

Photo courtesy of Army National Guard/Capt. Will Martin Flickr/CC

Wildfires burned across northern California for days.

“Every day they had the mail stacked up. We had to try to get it together, so when someone came in, they would get all of their mail at once, instead of some of it,” explained Redwood Empire Area Local President David Swaney. “It was an effort by everybody to get the mail out...It’s been a hassle.”

Schropp added, “Post office operations were all messed up, but we got the job done.”

‘Community Comes Together’

Schropp said three APWU members living in Santa Rosa have not been able to return to work because they lost their home.

Schropp said due to astronomically high housing costs, one member had to live in a parking lot for the first few days. The Redwood Empire Area Local donated a \$2,000 check to each member who lost their home. “Because it’s such a high cost area to live in, more than anything they just need cash,” she said.

Schropp recalled handing one member who lost her home a check, who told her, “I can get new shoes now.” When Schropp looked down, she saw the member was only wearing slippers.

“It’s all very traumatic. The fires were so hot, there are people who had fireproof safes guaranteed to burn for four hours, and those safes completely melted...they are having a hard time finding anything [in the wreckage],” Schropp said.

Members who lost homes are also eligible for relief from the APWU National’s Disaster Relief Fund.

Swaney said that even after the fires were put out, air quality was bad “for days and days.”

“It’s going to be years before it gets back to normal,” he said. “People were burned out of their homes and will still be out for a couple of years because they have to rebuild. It’s a big mess.” ■



SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

It's That Time Again

Each year, this department seeks to assist local officers in performing the administrative duties they were elected to do. All the listed chores are essential to running your local or state union. Once you start scheduling, you will be surprised how easy it is to keep up with your local duties.

W-2s and 1099s must be issued by Jan. 31. The W-2 form is used to document income earned by union employees. Similarly, the 1099 form is used to detail the amount of income that is earned by independent consultants hired by the union. Understanding the difference in tax payment accountability between a full-time (W-2) and contract (1099) employee is important because the union must withhold and pay taxes for employees, but only has to report income to the IRS for non-employees.

**DON'T FORGET LOCAL AND STATE UNIONS
MUST ISSUE W2s AND 1099s BY JAN. 31!**

The LM Reports for 2017 must be electronically submitted. The LM report is an annual financial report required to be filed by the Department of Labor. The LM 2, 3, or 4 for 2017 must be electronically submitted by March 31, 2018. Complete instructions for electronically submitting these forms are available at <http://www.apwu.org/issues/departement-labor>.

Your 2018 budget. Part of responsible management of the local's funds requires that the budget be reviewed and prepared for the next year. A budget committee usually consists of the president or vice president, treasurer, and some knowledgeable officers and members. The final budget is presented to the executive board for review, then voted and approved by the membership.

Meeting calendars (general membership, executive board and training). It is best to map out the meeting schedule for the local at the beginning of the year, rather than do it on a month-to-month basis. This permits local officials to schedule around holidays or other events that would probably result in poor at-

tendance. It also allows your members to adjust their personal schedules so they can attend. Advance scheduling will help local leaders avoid conflicts with other meetings.

Conference and convention schedule for the upcoming year. Advance planning for upcoming training seminars and conventions is critical in making sure that local members can schedule for them.

Shred old financial records and grievances. Federal law requires that local officials keep original hard copy or electronic files of all its financial records for five years. After five years, these records should be shredded or disposed of, because they contain personal information that could result in identity theft. *(Any building title documents and other real estate papers should be kept as long as the property is owned by the local).* Additionally, disposing of hard copy files will free up significant storage space. Large quantities of hard copy files should be shredded by a commercial company. Electronic files should be fully and completely erased. Closed grievance files older than five years should also be disposed of and shredded.

Update local inventory of assets. Did the local purchase any equipment, furniture, or other items with a value in excess of \$500 dollars last year? In accounting, fixed assets do not necessarily mean immovable; any asset expected to last, or be in use for, more than one year is considered a fixed asset. Every time these types of items are purchased for the local union, they should be recorded in your inventory of union assets.

Archive membership and executive board minutes. The minutes of your executive board meetings and membership meetings are legal records of the operations of your union. Because these minutes will contain the motions passed to authorize spending local funds, they are also financial records. Unlike regular financial records – which are required to be kept for five years – your minutes should be kept forever, as they document the history of your union. ■



Sondra Cosgrove, president of the Nevada League of Women Voters, speaking during the general session panel presentation. Also pictured are (l-r) Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard; Larry Cohen, chair of Our Revolution; Derrick Johnson, president of the NAACP; and David Driscoll-Knight, interim field director at the AFL-CIO.

Inaugural Legislative Conference Builds Political, Union & Community Strength

The inaugural Legislative Conference was a resounding success, leaving attendees with tools to protect workers' rights and prepare for the 2018 mid-term elections. On Oct. 1, nearly 300 APWU members learned how to build political, union and community strength during a full day of workshops, an intensive general session and regional breakouts.



APWU retiree Donald Sevre from the Minneapolis Area Local asks a question to the panel during the general session.

This was the first official Legislative & Political training conducted after the convention resolution

Legislative Conference and Training was passed at the APWU's 23rd Biennial National Convention in August 2016. The conference also fulfilled the adopted resolutions on

Beyond Bernie – Building a Movement for Economic and Social Justice and *Exploring New Directions for Labor in Electoral Politics* by conducting workshops in the morning on advancing our legislative priorities via referenda and ballot initiatives, as well as by joining with other organizations to fight for economic and social justice.

The conference's general session kicked off with opening remarks by President Dimondstein and Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard, who outlined the threats we face as workers in this political atmosphere and how we have the power to enact change at all levels of government. Next, a panel of nationally recognized

leaders and social justice activists (pictured above) discussed what their organizations were doing to fight back against corporate privatizers and what APWU members can do to get involved.

Following the general session, attendees joined their respective regions for breakout sessions facilitated by Central Regional Coordinator Sharyn M. Stone, Eastern Regional Coordinator Mike Gallagher, Northeast Regional Coordinator John H. Dirzius, Southern Regional Coordinator Kenneth L. Beasley and Western Regional Coordinator Omar M. Gonzalez. In these breakouts, the groups learned about local/state ballot initiatives and significant races coming up in 2018.

Coming Soon to Your Region

"The participants at the Legislative Conference are ready and willing to step up and take a new approach to get organized for the 2018 midterm elections," said Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard.

Regional-level trainings will be offered in 2018. The trainings will be open to all APWU officers and members (including retirees), and the Auxiliary. Look for more details about the trainings on apwu.org or in upcoming issues of *The American Postal Worker*. ■



Northeast Regional Coordinator John H. Dirzius facilitated a discussion of local and state political issues during his regional breakout.



APWU Fights Changes to PS-Form 3971

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

Happy New Year! I hope this finds you having had a wonderful holiday season, spending time with your families and friends, and having had some joyous times leading into 2018. I also want to thank you all. No matter your craft, work location, or job title, you each had an impact on millions of Americans' holiday season. Because of your hard work, the holidays were brighter due to the gifts, cards, and letters you delivered during the season. I know it is a busy and exhausting season for all of you, but don't forget what the work you did meant to millions of people.

By now I am sure that many of you have noticed that the USPS has introduced a new version of PS-Form 3971 *Request for or Notification of Absence*. A change to the form has been made that has a major impact on any member who may be asked to perform union business. On the back of the form there is a new section:

LWOP-Union Official (Required Certification)

By signing this form, I certify that this request is not for the purpose of engaging in partisan political activity as defined by the Hatch Act and its implementing regulations.

The USPS notified the APWU of this change to the 3971 and to ELM Section 514 late in 2017. These changes resulted from a situation during the 2016 presidential elections. The postal unions regularly use union members on Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for union business in order to help get union supported candidates elected to office.

However, in one location an employee was upset that he had to work some overtime to cover for an employee who was off on LWOP to support the union political efforts. He lodged a complaint and the Department of Justice's Office of Special Counsel (OSC) investigated and filed formal charges against the Postal Service for alleged violations of the Hatch Act.

Because of this, the USPS was required to create a plan of action and make changes to prevent these alleged violations from occurring again. Part of the

plan is to bar USPS employees on LWOP for union business to participate in politically partisan activities, even though the OSC acknowledged that USPS employees may engage in political campaigning and no Hatch Act violations occurred in the unions' 2016 political campaigning.

The USPS will require certification that members on union LWOP will not engage in partisan activities while on LWOP and the Postal Service intends to use this certification to discipline or prosecute employees for providing false information on the Form 3971 if they engage in partisan political activity while they are on LWOP.

Your union is not taking these changes lightly. These are not fair, reasonable, or equitable. The Postal Service completely ignored their contractual requirement to negotiate changes to the ELM, only provided the APWU one-days' notice of the change, and ignored decades of past practice regarding the use of LWOP to attend union events that may involve partisan political activity.

In our opinion, this is just another attempt in the current political environment to silence unions and the workers of America in general. We will be initiating a national dispute on this change and are considering other legal actions through the court system, as well as the National Labor Relations Board unfair labor practice charging process.

This isn't the first time politicians in Washington, D.C. have tried to silence postal employees. In the early 1900s there was a presidential gag order preventing any government employee – especially postal employees – from lobbying Congress for pay and benefit increases. This gag order helped lead to the formation of our pre-cursor union – the United Federation of Post Office Clerks.

The APWU will not allow us to be silenced again! You can read more about this issue and what political activities you are permitted to participate in as a postal employee at <https://goo.gl/tJUAkr>. ■

POST OFFICE DEDICATED in Memory of APWU Member & Activist

On Sunday Oct. 22, the South Shore Annex Post Office – located on Staten Island, NY – was renamed and dedicated in memory of Leonard “Lenny” Montalto.

Montalto, a proud father, APWU member and local union leader was tragically killed in 2012 during Superstorm Sandy. After sending his daughter to safety, he stayed behind to ensure the family home on Staten Island was secure.



Lenny Montalto's three daughters – Angela Eve Hoffman, Nicole Buonomano and Ashley Montalto – with APWU sisters and brothers, former coworkers and other attendees of the dedication.



Lenny Montalto

Montalto's postal career spanned over three decades. He served as secretary-treasurer of the Staten Island Local. At the time of his death, he was planning a run for local president. He was an APWU activist and highly involved in his community.

To honor his life and legacy, on Dec. 16, 2016 Congress passed H.R.5150 (Public Law 114-295), legally establishing the “Leonard Montalto Post Office Building.”

“Today represents a proper recognition of this long-time resident of Fox Beach,” said John Dirzius, APWU Northeast Regional Coordinator. “His name will forever be proudly scripted on this post office building. It is a loving and lasting memory for all who knew him, for all who loved him, for all who called him friend, for all who called him Dad and for all who called him union brother.

“Lenny and the local union leadership of the Staten Island Local worked hard in fighting the Postal Service's decision to shift the mail processing operations from the Staten Island plant to Brooklyn a few years back,” he continued.

“We witnessed our father's passion for his work with the USPS and the APWU on a daily basis; he even encouraged us to join him at rallies and watch him speak on behalf of others,” said Montalto's daughter, Angela Eve Hoffman, after his death. “Our father's memory will live on among those who loved and knew him best.”

“Leonard Montalto was a family man who dedicated his life to public service and the American Postal Workers Union,” said Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), cosponsor of H.R. 5150. “Naming this post office after Leonard Montalto will be a lasting tribute to his service and allow his legacy to live on in an enduring way.” ■

APWU Communications Dept. Wins ILCA Awards

President Dimondstein Received Third Place for Coveted Saul Miller Award for Collective Bargaining

President Mark Dimondstein was awarded third place for the International Labor Communication Association's (ILCA) Saul Miller Writing Award for Collective Bargaining for his July-August 2016 *American Postal Worker* column, *We Have a New Union Contract!* The award honors the late Saul Miller, a director of the AFL-CIO Department of Information and an ILCA founder.

The APWU Communication Department won three ILCA awards for its work in 2016:

- **First Place, Writing, Best Labor History Story, *A Look Back, Paul Robeson: Internationally Acclaimed Performer, Champion of the People***
- **Second Place, Visual Communication, Best Photograph, *Staples Rings NASDAQ Bell, Protestors 'Ruin' Their Day***
- **Honorable Mention, Writing, Best News Story, *480-481 Local Takes Stand Against Hostile Work Environment***

‘STAND UP FOR SAFE JOBS’ Campaign a Priority in St. Paul

Every worker has the right to a safe workplace. Most APWU members know first-hand what can happen if proper safety procedures are not followed by management. The simple truth is: If postal workers want a safe workplace, APWU members have to work together to force management to make changes when necessary.

The St. Paul Area Local has consistently worked hard to make safety a priority. These workers have the unique opportunity to be a part of not one, but two local committees that work to identify safety issues and propose solutions to reduce injuries – the Joint Labor Management Safety & Health Committee (JLMSHC) and the Ergonomic Risk Reduction Process (ERRP) – at the St. Paul Processing & Distribution Center (P&DC).

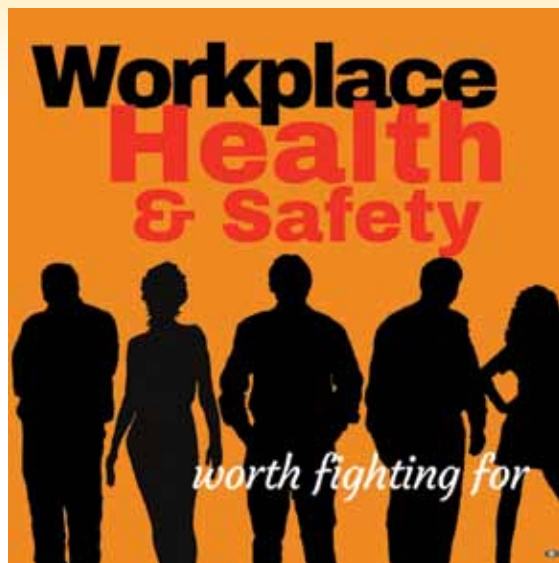
“It’s important to get the perspective from people who are actually doing the job,” said St. Paul Area Local President Todd Elkerton.

He explained that in the past, management has attempted to create workplace involvement committees, consisting of management-appointed employees, but the local opposed it.

“We don’t want to get in a trap that management picks who they are,” Elkerton said. “We want to represent members on the committee. It’s our voice.”

Workroom Floor Issues

Committee members work with management to resolve a wide



range of issues on the workroom floor.

Jodi France, the Clerk Craft Safety Representative on the JLMSHC said that a big problem at the St. Paul P&DC is untrained workers. “We’ve got a lot of new Postal Support Employees (PSEs) who really need to shadow someone for a week and know the proper way to do these very repetitive jobs,” she said. “That’s where injuries come into play.” The committee then works to make sure members receive the proper training.

After hearing complaints, the JLMSHC helped improve working conditions for deaf and hard of hearing members. France explained that the facility now has a special emergency alert system with lights to alert those members in case of a tornado or other disaster. There are also prominently displayed posters picturing American Sign Language signs for common words and the alphabet.

Anti-fatigue mats are commonly used to help workers who spend a lot of time standing on concrete. Once, when newer and bigger machines arrived at the St. Paul P&DC they totally covered the three-foot wide mats, leaving workers with no protection. St. Paul Area Local Clerk Craft Director Jason Stevens recalled how the ERRP team presented the issue to the plant manager. “We had been pushing

them. It took some time, but [the manager] agreed and bought 16 four-foot wide anti-fatigue mats,” Stevens said.

Another matter of great concern at the P&DC were fires that broke out in the loading dock’s insulation. Elkerton explained that lighting from the tractor trailers parked at the docks were pushed up on the foam padding surrounding the door. Heat from the lights caused small fires. “Over the past six months we worked with management to replace them all – 150 dock doors – and replaced the lighting in the trailers to LEDs so they are much cooler,” he said.

Rank-and-File Engagement

These committees, especially the ERRP committee, are also a way for rank-and-file workers to get involved in a union activity and see first-hand one of the largest benefits of having a voice at work. Some committee members are

shop stewards, but the majority are rank-and-file employees.

A representative from each craft is on the JLMSHC, as well as a representative from the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and management. JLMSHC members receive completed P.S. Form 1767s (*Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice* form) from shop stewards.

The ERRP committee works a bit differently. This committee focuses on ergonomics – designing or arranging a work station to prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) affecting the muscles, nerves, blood vessels, ligaments and tendons. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) writes that “ergonomics – fitting a job to a person – helps lessen muscle fatigue, increases productivity and reduces the number and severity of work-related MSDs.”

In the committee, a representative from each tour puts up suggestion boxes for employees to submit ergonomic workplace issues. Mike Thompson, an ERRP committee member explained how the committee works to correct issues like not “being properly educated on how to operate equipment safely.”

“I don’t see it as a panacea to solve all issues, but we encourage people to take an active role at work,” Elkerton said of the committees. “I

have a good team. It’s not me at all. It’s all the work being done around me. We are here to help and be a resource.”

Getting the Word Out

Committee members also use preventative measures for workplace safety. After APWU National officers launched the *Stand Up for Safe Jobs* campaign, the local widely distributed flyers and wrote articles focusing on safety in their local union paper, *Postmark*. They also “discussed the campaign at LM (Labor Management) meetings and with the Safety and Health and the ERRP committees,” said Elkerton.

Flyers with messages such as, “Push, don’t pull,” “It doesn’t hurt to be safe” and “Work safe, work

smart,” are posted in facilities. All notes from committee meetings are also on display.

Thompson said, “We try to keep it constantly on people’s minds that safety is first.”

The priority on safety empowers members to report issues to the union, instead of letting them slide. “We tell employees, ‘You are our eyes and ears,’” Elkerton added. “So when things happen, we can communicate.”

Big Benefits

Both committees regularly see the fruits of their labor.

“The best benefit is obviously employees going home uninjured every day,” Stevens said.

Thompson agreed. “Whatever we can to do make the person’s work-day more comfortable and without stressing themselves physically... I find it pretty rewarding,” he said.

Thompson added that safety should be a priority for everyone. “I think safety should be pushed by unions [and] by management,” Thompson stated. “It affects the whole aspect of the job. If you have one less person to do the job and someone works twice as hard, that snowballs.

“Our main goal is to have you go home the same way you came to work,” Thompson concluded. ■



Stand Up for Safe Jobs!

MEMPHIS SANITATION WORKERS 50 Years Later, Unity of Labor

This spring marks 50 years since sanitation workers in Memphis went on strike, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Mountaintop" speech and his subsequent assassination.

In February 1968, Memphis denied its sanitation workforce – consisting of mostly black men – not only a safe working environment, but also the right form a union. The workers needed a solution, but the city, led by Mayor Henry Loeb III, refused to negotiate. With no other choice, they walked off the job in what would be a two-month strike.

The sanitation workers fought not just for themselves, but for all workers. Churches and community groups joined the picket line, with ministers leading daily demonstrations.

Labor Movement & Civil Rights

The sanitation strike is a prime example of the intersection between the labor and civil rights movements. When working people fight on the same team, we all reap benefits. King understood the importance of labor unions in securing

good jobs for African-Americans and all working people.

Just before the strike, King launched the *Poor People's Campaign*, in which he traveled around the country, building a movement of working people who demanded better jobs, homes and education. He believed that when workers join together, anything can be accomplished, and that the key to a thriving society was a workforce paid a living wage in safe work environments.

"I think it is necessary for us to realize that we have moved from the era of civil rights to the era of human rights... In short, we have moved into an era where we are called upon to raise certain basic questions about the whole society," King said months before the strike.

King had long been arguing that unions failed to reach poor people – organized labor had not gone far enough beyond the ranks of well-paid, blue-collar industrial workers, he said, and had not begun to address "economic inequality."

He pointed out that unions have a positive effect on all who labor – even those who were not unionized. In his last Sunday sermon, King said, "We read one day: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal... among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But if a man doesn't have a job



March 29, 1968 protest

or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists."

Setting the Stage

Memphis was a crucial piece of the *Poor People's Campaign*. More than half of the city's black residents were living below the poverty line in 1968, compared with only one out of seven whites. Four out of 10 sanitation workers qualified for welfare, and they received no medical insurance, workers' compensation, or overtime pay.

The workers didn't only want improved conditions, they also wanted a union. Workers had been trying to organize with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) for five years, but Mayor Loeb refused to recognize the union.

Boiling Point

During a heavy rainstorm on Jan. 31, 1968, about two dozen Memphis



March 29, 1968 protest

WORKERS' STRIKE ANNIVERSARY

Poor and Civil Rights Lives On



Photo By Richard Copley

sewer workers – all of them black – were sent home without pay. Their orders came from supervisors – all of them white – who were paid.

The next day, two black sanitation workers were crushed to death by a malfunctioning compactor.

On Feb. 12, workers learned virtually nothing was being done about their fallen comrades and they would be compensated only two hours' pay for the full day missed. More than 1,000 black municipal employees walked off the job in a wildcat strike, demanding union recognition.

Within days, the strikers' garnered national support. Memphis NAACP members endorsed the strike and AFSCME International President Jerry Wurf declared the strike could end only when the workers' demands were met.

'We Go Down Together'

A month into the strike, King visited Memphis during his *Poor*

People's Campaign. On March 18, more than 10,000 workers, preachers, homemakers, and students greeted him at Mason Temple.

"You are doing here in Memphis what I am trying to do nationally," King said. "You are reminding America that it is a crime for people to live in this rich nation and receive starvation wages."

Afterward, a March 28 rally was marred by violence, resulting in a dusk-to-dawn curfew and National Guardsmen sent to Memphis by the governor of Tennessee.

King announced that he would be back for a "massive nonviolent demonstration" on April 4 and returned April 3. His staff and local officials agreed to postpone the march until April 8. However, a pre-march rally the evening of April 3 was not to be delayed, and that is when King delivered what would become known as "The Mountaintop Speech."

"You may not be on strike, but either we go up together, or we go down together," King said to strike supporters. "Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop... And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything."

King was fatally shot the next day as he left his hotel room to go to dinner.

On April 8, a march did take place in Memphis. A crowd estimated at

40,000 walked silently in memory of King.

Lessons Learned

In the wake of the tragedy, and Mayor Loeb still refusing to negotiate with workers, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson stepped in. He instructed Undersecretary of Labor James Reynolds to take over contract mediation and settle the strike.

Reynolds met with Loeb, and then AFSCME, in separate meetings. The following week, Loeb and the union came to an agreement. On April 16, workers voted to accept it, ending the strike.

President Johnson and Tennessee's governor pressured the city into recognizing AFSCME Local 1733 and allowing the check-off of union dues – key components that enabled the union to bargain over other grievances.

Within 10 years, Local 1733 had grown from about 1,300 sanitation workers to more than 7,000 government employees, with jurisdiction in the city and county school boards, fire commission, city courts and auto inspection stations. ■

How You Can Celebrate

To commemorate these events, AFSCME launched the **I AM 2018** campaign. There are local days of action in January, followed by springtime town hall meetings and rallies, culminating with 50th anniversary events in April.

For more information and to find an event near you, visit iam2018.org.

Large Mailers Are Privatizing the Postal Service



Assistant Director Lynn Pallas-Barber, Director Clint Burelson and Assistant Director Lamont Brooks

Millions of Americans utilize USPS on a daily basis, yet the public desire for a Postal Service that serves the common good is trumped by the financial wealth and political power of relatively few owners of large corporations that utilize the Postal Service for advertising purposes. Even though the large mailers receive huge discounts for their mailings, they want to decrease their institutional postage costs even further by reducing service to the American public and cutting the wages and benefits of postal workers.

The Large Mailers' Agenda

The large mailers' agenda is essentially self-interest: To increase service and profit for them, and decrease service and good jobs to regular Americans. Given that large mailers bypass the plant network by drop shipping most of their mailings, large mailers push consolidations and the resulting mail delays in order to reduce overall costs for themselves. They also advocate increased discounts for their mailings and have corporate Democrats like the Brookings Institution's Elaine Kamarck, arguing on their behalf in an attempt to privatize all mail processing.

THE LARGE MAILERS' AGENDA IS ESSENTIALLY SELF-INTEREST: TO INCREASE SERVICE AND PROFIT FOR THEM, AND DECREASE SERVICE AND GOOD JOBS TO REGULAR AMERICANS.

Large mailers do not often visit retail windows at post offices and their institutional costs are substantially reduced by having retail work performed by private corporations paying low wages. Therefore, large mailers often push for reduced service at public post offices and encourage the USPS to outsource work to Village Post Offices (VPOs), Contract Postal Units (CPUs), and Approved Shippers in order to reduce overall costs for themselves – at the expense of public service and family-wage jobs.

In addition, a coalition of large mailers is pushing for the reduction of the USPS workforce, as well as lower

wages and benefits for postal workers. Ominously, they are also lobbying for legislation that would change the rules of interest arbitration to require a consideration of the financial situation of the USPS in collective bargaining.

Clearly, large mailers do not support a vibrant public Postal Service. Many are bankers or otherwise associated with the financial industry. Therefore, a powerful coalition of them have argued against the Postal Service offering affordable financial services to the American people. They prefer to make profits by ripping off the American people, offering high cost banking services through payday lenders and other corporations such as Walmart.

How Do Large Mailers Exert Influence?

The large mailers communicate directly with USPS on a regular basis and help decide the direction of the Postal Service through their participation on the Mailers Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC). MTAC has pushed the USPS to implement presorting, drop shipping, automated verification of business mail, service standard changes and more. They also are very influential in selecting corporate-friendly members of the Board of Governors and the Postal Regulatory Commission.

The large mailers created a false crisis at the Postal Service by requiring the aggressive prefunding of health care for retirees and an unreasonable price cap on postage. The large mailers are now using this manufactured crisis to make real cuts in service.

What Can We Do?

The future of the Clerk Craft and the APWU will be determined by how well we fight back against the self-interest of a few relatively wealthy individuals utilizing the Postal Service to their advantage. Postal workers and community members should educate each other and expose the large mailers' influence over the Postal Service through press conferences, articles and discussions in friendly media outlets, panel discussions, social media, rallies, and other events. Ultimately, we have to address a system that allows the few to benefit at the expense of the many. ■

Change is Continuous



Assistant Director Idowu Balogun, Director Steven J. Raymer and Assistant Director Terry B. Martinez

On Oct. 17, we attended a national Tech & Mech joint committee meeting with the USPS. APWU Maintenance, Clerk and MVS Officers, as well as representatives from the Mail Handlers were present. The USPS attendees included program managers over many of the new or changed equipment systems and, of course, labor relations.

The majority of this Tech & Mech agenda was presented by Assistant Director Terry B. Martinez during his report to the Maintenance Division General Session at the recent All-Craft Conference in Las Vegas.

The Postal Service gave us the current status of their initiatives:

- **Automated Parcel & Bundle Sorter Infeed (APBS)** – This included both the semi-automatic singulator and development of pallet box alternatives.
- **Automated Delivery Unit Sorter (ADUS)** – as the name implies, this is another attempt to put sortation equipment in stations. Testing has been in the FDR station since 2015 and management wants to try it in four different locations. Installation and training should have already occurred (absent any sliding in the deployment) at Chelsea, MA; Paschal, PA; JCTM in DC; and Ft. Lauderdale, FL.
- **Advanced Letter Processing System (ALPS)** – The Postal Service's replacement for the Delivery Bar Code Sorter (DBCS). Testing is ongoing at Richmond, VA and Oklahoma City, OK.
- **Expanded Package Processing System (EPPS)** – An update to Automated Package Processing System (APPS) being tested in Portland, OR. Local Maintenance is trained on this machine.
- **High Throughput Package Sorter (HTPS)** – Testing in Denver, CO and Queens, NY. It is intended to leverage other parcel sorting designs and subsystems.
- **Automatic Guided Vehicles (AGV)** – A self-driven powered industrial vehicle being tested at Penwood Place P&DC (Warrendale, PA) and Queens P&DC, NY. This concept can be an impact to both tuggers and pallet moving equipment.

- **Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV)** – a new delivery vehicle.
- **High Density Staging System (HSFF)** – This is an upgrade to the Flats Sequencing System (FSS) machines that replaces existing four feeders with two high speed feeders. Currently utilized at Dulles P&DC (installed 2013); Philadelphia P&DC (2014); and Royal Palm P&DC (2015). Maintenance personnel are trained on this modification.
- **SPSS Keying System (SPSS)** – a keying station to be installed by Maintenance on console 1 at sites with a small package sorting system. It is intended to provide SPSS sites the ability to finalize No-Read mail at the SPSS.

If we are notified at the headquarters level of the Postal Service's decision to contract this work out, we will challenge it and file a dispute.

As always, do not take as gospel any management assertion that there is a national contract between the USPS and a vendor to justify the contracting out of our work. Always proceed to file a local grievance with the facts for your specific circumstance. The Maintenance Division provides local officers and our National Business Agents with regular updates of subcontracting challenged under Article 32 at the headquarters level.

As always, please say "Hi" and "Happy New Year" to your friendly floor steward. ■

June 26, 2018 marks the official opening session for negotiations on our next Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Maintenance Division Officers are, once again, geared up for our struggle to improve the working lives of our membership. We are certainly up to whatever the Postal Service will throw at us.

As members of the APWU, your thoughts and input are always welcome. Please bear in mind that not every concern or idea ends up as an actual proposed change to the CBA. Sometimes, it is a matter of enforcing the existing language. In that regard, your input on what you believe we should strive to maintain is important.

The Postal Service & the DOT Physical



Assistant Director Javier Piñeres and Director Michael Foster

On Feb. 26, 1995, the Postal Service informed the APWU that to be consistent with the trucking industry and its own contract drivers, USPS would voluntarily mirror DOT requirements covering physicals for Commercial Driver's License (CDL) employees, including the issuance of a medical card and drug and alcohol testing. The federal government is exempt from Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations, under 49 CFR 390.3(f)(2).

This means that every USPS employee operating a commercial motor vehicle is required to have a standard DOT CDL physical and participate in drug and alcohol testing procedures. Under normal procedures, the DOT-required physical is administered every two years. Under certain circumstances, such as for employees who may have high blood pressure, obstructive sleep apnea, diabetes and other health conditions, the certifying physician may grant a medical card covering less than two years.

By letter dated April 9, 2014, the Postal Service advised the union that medical personnel and contractors are instructed to follow the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Comprehensive Health Services guidelines, recommendations and standards.

Since these procedures affect working conditions, the policy must meet the standards of being fair, reasonable, and equitable.

Reports from the field indicate the Postal Service has been unilaterally implementing changes to DOT CDL required physicals, including:

1. Requiring employees to sign release of medical information forms from their personal physicians to the contract doctor;
2. Having USPS doctors modify or revoke the two-year DOT physical cards from employees who successfully passed the DOT physical at the contract clinic;
3. USPS regional medical personnel unilaterally changing the CDL medical card requirement standards.

The APWU has initiated several Step 4 disputes on these changes. Additionally, the requirement to sign a medical release of all information maintained by the employees' personal physician may violate the employees' privacy and involve possible HIPPA violations.

As we continue our discussions with the Postal Service, it is essential APWU locals remain vigilant of any changes to the DOT CDL physicals and continue to file grievances challenging them. Q&A number 49 in the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) sets the foundation when challenging medical disputes:

49. What is the process for resolving Department of Transportation medical disputes?

Response: An employee may appeal an adverse result of a certifying examination to the District Occupational Health Services office with a copy of the concern, without revealing the medical condition in question, to their immediate supervisor. If the physical is performed by a community based contract physician, review of the examination results will be done by the Senior Area Medical Director. If the Medical Director review agrees with the current examination, the employee may ask for an independent medical assessment by a physician jointly chosen by the Postal Service and the employee. The results of the independent review will stand as the final decision. The independent review is paid for by the USPS. ■

Resolution of Scanner Disputes

On Aug. 31, 2017, the APWU and the USPS signed an agreement resolving the following national disputes on the use of Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) scanners: HQTV20160275, A19V20160276, and HQTV20150846. The parties agreed in part that:

- Scanning may be performed by any craft, but those duties should be consistent with their Position Description;
- PVS drivers will receive adequate training and allowed sufficient time to perform scanning duties;
- When drivers make a scan, it will accurately reflect the data and drivers shall not be given instructions contrary to this;
- Scan data will not be the sole basis for adjustments to routes or disciplinary action; however scan data may be used in conjunction with other records to support or refute discipline;
- Employees will be financially liable only when loss or damage to the scanner resulted from deliberate misconduct.

The Scanning Duty Settlement can be found on the MVS Division section of apwu.org.



Western Regional Coordinator Omar M. Gonzalez

P.O. Déjà Vu is Not a Good Thing

The more postal changes occur, the more they remain the same – a mess! Mismanaged repeated schedule/tour realignments and excessing will continue through 2018.

Bosses use Mail Processing Schedulers/Customer Service Variance Reports from inaccurate data to disrupt service and lives of employees, continually abolishing reassignments and excessing.

Why doesn't the union stop them? Pursuant to law (Postal Reorganization Act/Postal Accountability Enhancement Act) management determines the methods, means and personnel to operate USPS. However, such rights must be exercised in accordance with the contract, applicable laws, regulations and arbitrations.

We have no magic wand to stop realignments/excessing (otherwise we would wave it). What the law permits, under our contract, is to lessen the impact and ensure seniority rights compliance.

Realignments

Schedule changes are being repeated quarterly by wayward bosses following the dictates of D.C. bosses, and they still can't get it right. CBA Article 37.3.A.4 (Reposting) spells out when clerical assignments are to be reposted:

- When the fixed schedule day(s) in the basic work week are permanently changed.
- When the starting time change is more than one hour.

- When the cumulative changes in starting time during the life of the CBA (May 2015-Sept. 2018) move the starting time outside a circle having the starting time as the center and the agreed upon time as its radius.

Incumbents have the right to accept the new reporting times, if negotiated at the local level. Far too often local bosses make repeated, stupid mistakes causing sectional excessing (Article 12.5.C.4) unnecessarily. This is policed by the local union with violations grieved and appealed (no extensions).

So-called "Expedited Bidding/Canvassing" deviating from normal processes may be negotiated locally but cannot be imposed unilaterally.

Excessing

Reports indicate D.C. bosses have targeted 14,496 clerical duty assignments for elimination. Management plans to continue to issue involuntary reassignment notices. There will likely be some excessing in February 2018, followed by more involuntary reassignments in May through November 2018.

Following the Area/Regional Article 12 meeting, locals should be approached by District management to discuss the actual impacts and related issues:

Attrition is effective the date of withholding notice to the region, ALL attrition must be counted to reduce the impact number.

PSE reductions are required IF their hours equate to full time equivalents. (PSEs are not the enemy, their conversions will be hard to come by). There is a formula that helps de-

termine FTEs. Reductions take place BEFORE actual excessing.

Non-APWU craft employee on light/limited duty must be returned to their craft.

Seniority is the sole criteria determining who is excessed. Locals must ensure seniority lists are up to date and accurate. Senior clerks must be solicited to volunteer in lieu of junior clerks and take their seniority with them. ALL clerks must be advised of their transfer rights to apply via 21-day eReassign taking their seniority with them. Junior clerks must be advised of retreat rights.

Retreat rights should be explained and employee written submissions allowed and accepted.

Preferencing for available assignments likewise should be explained and awarded based on seniority.

Refer to the CBA (on apwu.org). For clarification, contact your regional office.

Persevere This Year

Fellow Coordinators Sharyn Stone, John Dirzius, Mike Gallagher, Kenneth Beasley and I wish you a prosperous year but, we know we'll face major challenges – contractual and otherwise.

A major event is the 2018 midterm elections which will have consequences! In the balance is your postal career, benefits and job security. Social/cultural issues must not be your sole focus. DO NOT VOTE AGAINST YOUR INTEREST – otherwise we will be forced to relive postal déjà vu over and over again! We must persevere as we fight today for a better tomorrow. God bless you and the APWU! ■

Clerk Craft Successfully STOPS ‘END OF DAY’ BUTTON

Arbitrator Das Sides with Union for Arbitration Victory

Arbitrator Shyam Das found in favor of the APWU again in the union’s ongoing efforts to enforce the Global Settlement Memorandum of Understanding (GSMOU) and the Global Settlement Remedy Agreement (GSRA) for implementing the GSMOU.

In an award issued Dec. 8, 2017, Das found that the “End of Day” button – a function the USPS added into the Retail System Software (RSS) point-of-sale system allowing postmasters to enter and exit the system without fully closing out – did not satisfy the requirement in the GSRA that postmasters are only allowed to perform bargaining unit work for 15 hours per week, to be counted from the start to the “end of day.”

The GSRA requires the postmaster/supervisor to fully close out by conducting the four-step “End of Day” process. The four-step process includes, (1) an advance deposit, (2) a final remittance, (3) verifying supporting documentation, and (4) submitting a daily PS Form 1412 closeout. The new USPS “End of Day” button for postmasters requires nothing more than a press of a button. It bypasses proper financial accounting and allows postmasters/supervisors to hit the button after every transaction, thereby improperly reducing their recorded time on the window.

Das relied on the APWU’s unrebutted evidence that the full four-step End of Day process was what the

parties agreed to use as the endpoint; when the clock would stop on a postmaster performing bargaining unit work on the window when a clerk was also present in the office. He noted that “until the Postal Service’s development of the PMEOD (Postmaster End of Day) button in late 2015, there was only the one four-step End of Day process. If a postmaster performed more than one End of Day in a workday, this entire process had to be completed on each occasion.” When the Postal Service unilaterally deployed a “Postmaster End of Day” button in RSS, it put in place a function that “takes a second to push, in contrast to the approximately five minutes (the Postal Service’s estimate) needed to perform a full four-step End of Day.”

“This is an important victory for the Clerk Craft and all APWU members,” said President Mark Dimondstein. “This is especially a significant decision for PTFs (Part-Time Flexibles) and other bargaining unit employees in smaller offices across the country. In management’s attempts to redefine ‘15-hours,’ clerks were not getting the hours that they should.”

For the remedy, Das stated, “The Postal Service is directed to cease use of the PMEOD button... As soon as practicable, appropriate software changes are to be made to disable the PMEOD function.”

“The Postal Service’s actions at USPS headquarters in this case

were highly unethical,” said Clerk Division Director Clint Burelson. “Local and state organizations can utilize the hours improperly worked by postmasters and supervisors to assist in gaining additional hours for all employees (especially PTF employees in the Level 18 offices), creating duty assignments, and preventing excessing in the small offices.”

“Congratulations to Assistant Clerk Division Director Lamont Brooks, who was the case officer and main witness,” said President Dimondstein. “Also to [Director Burelson], Assistant Clerk Craft Director Lynn Pallas-Barber and Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman for their assistance.”

Director Burelson continued, “We’d also like to thank the APWU members who served as witnesses and/or assisted in preparation – Mike Barrett, Buffalo Local (NY); Michael Macho, Radcliff Local (KY); Sylvia Crane, Gadsden Area Local (AL); Pam Smith, Birmingham Area Local (AL); and Cora Spratt, Virginia Postal Workers Union. Their participation greatly contributed to our success.

“Finally, much thanks to the locals who filed grievances on this issue.” Director Burelson added. “Their actions assisted their members, as well as contributing to the national efforts for the good of all.”

For more information or to review the award, visit apwu.org. ■

Postal Regulatory Commission

Proposes Changes to Ratemaking System

On Dec. 1, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) issued their long-awaited proposal to change how much the Postal Service can raise postage rates of market dominant products. Market dominant products include first class letters and cards, periodicals, and standard/market mail, but do not include most package products which are “competitive” products.

The 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) instituted two changes that manufactured a postal financial crisis. First, the PAEA forced the Postal Service to pre-fund retiree health benefits 75 years into the future, draining \$5.5 billion a year from the postal treasury. This is an absurd burden required of no other agency or company. Second, the PAEA capped future postal rate increases at the Consumer Price Index (CPI).



financial stability.” The APWU argued in our comments as part of the ten year review, that the price cap should be eliminated because it deprived the Postal Service of the ability to meet its objectives.

The PRC found in their ten year review that the price cap system did not generate enough money for the USPS to meet its goals and objectives. To fix the problem and meet the objectives of the PAEA, the PRC proposes to revise the cap to generate

more revenue. Specifically, the PRC advocates for a CPI plus 2 percent a year cap for five years, with a new review after five years. They made several other recommendations.

These are positive steps forward but unfortunately, they are only half measures. With these revisions, the Postal Service will continue to struggle financially and will lack sufficient capital to maintain and improve its networks and operations.

A 90-day comment period follows with an additional 30 days for reply comments. After comments, the PRC is expected to issue final regulations.

The APWU will actively participate in this process, as we continue to advocate that there should be no arbitrary price cap.

“The APWU supports reasonable postal rates for the people of the country,” said President Dimondstein. “However, the CPI cap, along with huge pre-sort discounts, keep rates artificially low for the profits of the big corporate mailers.

“The price cap, even with the proposed changes, deprives the Postal Service of needed revenue to maintain and improve facilities, update the fleet, expand new products and innovate, and serves to depress wages and benefits for hard-working postal workers,” he continued. “The APWU will continue to work for fair and sensible rate-setting regulations so that the Post Office can continue to serve the public and fulfill its constitutionally-mandated mission.” ■

“THE APWU WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR FAIR AND SENSIBLE RATE-SETTING REGULATIONS SO THAT THE POST OFFICE CAN CONTINUE TO SERVE THE PUBLIC AND FULFILL ITS CONSTITUTIONALLY-MANDATED MISSION.”

– President Dimondstein

While this was a boon to the giant mailing industry, these combined requirements starved the Postal Service of much needed revenue. They became the justification for lowering service standards, slowing down mail delivery, closing processing plants and post offices, reducing retail operations, cutting jobs, and also pressured the USPS to increase subcontracting and reduce six-day delivery.

Ten Year Review Complete

The PAEA authorized the PRC to do a ten year review to assess whether the rate cap system met the objectives of the PAEA, which included assurance of “adequate revenue, including retained earnings, to maintain



AFL-CIO Endorses Campaign for Postal Banking

Delegates to the 2017 AFL-CIO Convention unanimously passed Resolution 46, “Support Postal Financial Services and Postal Banking.”

The resolution states that “the AFL-CIO endorses and supports the ‘Campaign for Postal Banking,’ including the ongoing efforts to compel the Postal Service to provide basic financial services such as paycheck cashing and electronic funds transfer, as a step toward establishing nonprofit, public postal banking.”

The APWU and our sister union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, jointly submitted Resolution 46. Outlining the great need in the United States for affordable financial services, the resolution states there are:

- “68 million American adults throughout rural and urban America who don’t have bank accounts or who have limited access to bank services; and that
- “Legal loan sharks’ prey on the underserved by trapping them in a cycle of payday loans, check-cashing fees, and interest that costs families an average of \$2,400 per year when their entire annual family incomes average just \$25,000.”

From the floor of the AFL-CIO convention, Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard spoke passionately in favor of the resolution. Beard stated, “The Postal Service already has a presence in these [underserved] communities. The Postal Service is well suited to provide this service. Financial services in the Postal Service will promote an economy that serves the public, not Wall Street... [Postal banking] will be a great help to the American people.”

The resolution also illustrates why the Postal Service is so well-suited:

- The U.S. Post Office operated the Postal Savings System from 1911 through 1967 and, at its peak, had \$3.4 billion in deposits;
- USPS operates more than 33,000 retail locations nationwide, 59 percent of which are located in bank deserts (zip codes with either zero banks or only one bank branch);

- USPS has a mandate to serve all Americans, regardless of geography, at uniform price and quality;
- USPS has a skilled workforce which processed more than 378,000 money orders per day in 2014.

CLUW Support

Delegates to the 19th Biennial Convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) are also with us on postal banking. Judy Beard, CLUW’s treasurer, introduced a resolution calling for postal banking, passed by the delegates.

The Campaign for Postal Banking looks forward to working with CLUW to take postal banking to the streets!

The postal banking resolution was introduced in conjunction with Resolution 21, “Holding Wall Street Accountable.” Chris Shelton, president of the Communications Workers of America, spoke about postal banking as part of the fight to take back power from Wall Street.

In support of Resolution 21, Shelton stated, “We must fight to stop Wall Street’s growing power over our economy, our politics, and especially our lives... We need to have postal banking in the country.

“We need to make sure Wall Street no longer rigs the tax code to their benefit and leaves us paying the bills and instead pays their fair share through a financial transaction tax or, as we call it, a Wall Street sales tax,” he continued. “We need to stand up together in solidarity to take on the power of Wall Street. Are you with me brothers and sisters?” ■

The Campaign for Postal Banking is a coalition of consumer, worker, financial reform, economic justice, community, civic, and faith-based organizations calling for low-cost, consumer-driven financial services via the Postal Service. Products and services could include check cashing, bill payment, savings accounts and small-dollar loans. Postal Banking will benefit consumers without access to traditional banks as well as those who want a public option. The expansion of services would also strengthen our public Postal Service. To learn more, visit www.CampaignforPostalBanking.org.

‘JOIN TOGETHER! FIGHT TOGETHER! WIN TOGETHER!’

Call to Action at the AFL-CIO Convention



The APWU was one of 55 unions who participated in the AFL-CIO's 28th Constitutional Convention in St. Louis, MO, from Oct. 22-25. The convention is held every four years, during which officers are elected and resolutions are passed that guide the largest voluntary federation of national and international labor unions.

APWU delegates to the convention included President Mark Dimondstein, Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy, Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth "Liz" Powell, Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman, Clerk Division Director Clint Burelson, Western Regional Coordinator Omar M. Gonzalez, and Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard.

At the convention, the current AFL-CIO officers were re-elected – President Richard Trumka, Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre and Secretary-Treasurer Liz Schuler. President Dimondstein was elected as a vice president of the federation.

During the first day of the convention, President Dimondstein expressed from the floor APWU's appreciation to the many unions who supported the *Stop Staples* campaign. "All of you rallied to the boycott in this just fight!"

Elizabeth 'Liz' Powell, Debby Szeredy, Judy Beard, Vance Zimmerman, Clint Burelson and Omar Gonzalez at the AFL-CIO Convention

During the convention, all the APWU delegates attended a variety of seminars and training workshops.

Resolutions

This year, 56 resolutions were passed at the convention. The APWU drafted and/or co-introduced seven convention resolutions on important issues including health care for all, voting rights, postal banking, new directions in electoral politics, and a foreign policy independent of Wall Street's interests.

President Dimondstein spoke from the floor about electoral politics, foreign policy, international solidarity and against the rising tide of fascism.

On the resolution dealing with electoral politics, President Dimondstein stood to address the delegates, "I think everybody agrees that the political system is rigged and the 'lesser of two evils' politics is not working for working people.

"In the last election, we literally saw a rebellion of much of the working class against the status quo, against business as usual," he explained. He continued that the labor movement should focus on "expanding our core issues through referenda, initiatives, and propositions."

President Dimondstein speaking from the floor about an APWU resolution.

Director Beard spoke from the floor about the importance of expanding postal services. "Sixty-eight million-plus people in America don't have bank accounts or have limited access bank services," she said. "The Postal Service is well-suited to provide [financial services] ... [and] will promote an economy that serves the public, not Wall Street."

Director Burelson spoke about the everyday discrimination people of color face, including access to health care, in the justice system and when trying to get a mortgage, "we need to educate our brothers and sisters about this, so we have a better understanding of the atrocities that accompany this racism and fight as a union to eliminate it."

The Workers' Bill of Rights, that unanimously passed the convention, calls for all workers to have good jobs with fair wages, quality health care, workplace safety and financial security in retirement, all issues that are long standing goals of the APWU.

"We are proud to be part of the house of labor," President Dimondstein said after the event. "The labor movement has a long road ahead to rebuild its fighting capacity and all workers across the country need to come together and work together in order to be successful." He encourages all APWU members to be involved in their local labor councils and state AFL-CIO federations. ■



INTERNATIONAL UNIONS DENOUNCE T-MOBILE FOR UNION-BUSTING

During a UNI Global Union conference, a coalition of information technology and telecommunication workers from over a dozen nations unanimously denounced T-Mobile and its parent company, Deutsche Telekom, for suppressing workers' attempts to form a union in the United States. Countries included Argentina, Mexico, Bermuda, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Nicaragua, Peru, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and the United States.

UNI Global Union is an international union association based in Switzerland, representing more than 20 million workers from over 900 trade unions around the world – including the APWU. UNI's goal is to preserve and expand rights for all workers, across all industries.

T-Mobile promotes an “atmosphere of fear at the workplace,” said the coalition, adding that the establishment of a company-controlled union is a violation of International Labor Organization conventions, as well as a violation of the United Nations Global Compact.

“I was proud to present the resolution, which highlights the anti-worker atmosphere that members of T-Mobile Workers United deal with every day,” said Teresa Casertano, CWA Global Campaigns and Organizing Coordinator and UNI Information and Communication Technology Service Americas President. “The conference delegates were surprised and quite shocked and indignant that workers [in the U.S.]

would be subjected to such resistance to their fundamental rights.”

The coalition also put out a call for action by both T-Mobile CEO John Legere and Deutsche Telekom CEO Timotheus Höttges, demanding that they “respect T-Mobile employees' right to collective representation.”

Communication Workers of America (CWA), which represents T-Mobile workers in the U.S., has been fighting in courts since 2014 to secure collective bargaining rights and launched a campaign to build public support. For more information visit, tmobileworkersunited.org.



Educators from Bellevue Elementary gathered before school on Oct. 10 to support their public union brothers and sisters at the start of the ratification vote.

Iowa Public Unions Overwhelmingly VOTE TO STAY UNION

In 2017, Iowa passed a law that requires all public-sector unions to vote to recertify before they begin contract negotiations. The local unions are also required to get 50 percent of all members in the bargaining unit to recertify, not just 50 percent of all votes cast. This meant that if an employee did not vote, it was counted as a “no.”

Despite the union-busting bill, 88 percent of public union workers voted to remain union. Out of all ballots counted, 28,448 people voted to stay union and only 624 voted against. Early results show that 436 of the 468 bargaining units have been recertified.



Working Families Party (Ilyna Yafimchyk) Flickr/CC

BOYCOTT WENDY'S

Leaders of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers during a #BoycottWendys march, "Harvest without Violence," in New York City on Nov. 20.

Farmworkers, led by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), are calling for a boycott of Wendy's fast-food restaurants, due to their refusal to responsibly source food.

Wendy's is the last of the five, major fast-food corporations in the country that refuses to join the Fair Food Program (FFP) – an organization that ensures humane wages and condition for workers. Wendy's also stopped buying tomatoes from Florida and instead purchases them from Mexico, where workers face wage theft, child labor and even slavery without access to any protection.

Throughout the year, the Boycott Wendy's crew has been protesting at locations across

the country, often joined by local student and advocacy organizations.

"What we want [Wendy's] to do first is to commit to paying a penny more per pound for tomatoes to raise wages that have been stagnant for farm workers," Lupe Gonzalo, a tomato picker from Florida told *The Cap Times*. "And second, to commit to a human rights code of conduct in which workers have access to shade, water, [and] clean bathrooms."

Delegates to the 2016 APWU National Convention passed a resolution to boycott Wendy's until it joins the FFP. For more information, visit boycott-wendys.org.

RIGHT-TO-WORK LAW IN HANDS OF MISSOURI VOTERS

The fate of Missouri's Right-to-Work (RTW) legislation is now in the hands of voters. RTW laws are designed to cut through the unified front workers represent to management and weaken unions.

Missourians will be given a chance this upcoming election day to decide whether or not the state should remain RTW. The Missouri Secretary of State's Offices needed 140,000 signatures from registered voters to get an amendment on the ballot to undo the union-busting legislation, and 250,357 workers and supporters signed their name.

"This is proof positive that Missouri's working people want to decide for themselves and not leave it to Gov. Eric Greitens and his legislature to force this upon us," Heavy Construction Laborers Union Local 663 President and Business Manager Jason Mendenhall told local *KY3 News*. "This so-called 'Right-to-Work' hurts families and communities. We should have the right to protect ourselves with our right to vote."

Tim Bell, Business Manager of the Western Missouri and Kansas Laborers District Council added, "Just the name 'Right-to-Work' is a lie. Federal law already protects workers from being forced to join a union. This is just a cash-grab, trying to take money out of the pockets of working people in Missouri."

British Postal Workers 'Up For' A Strike

As this issue went to press, British postal workers were waiting for the green light to strike.

In October, 89 percent of postal workers, employed by privatized Royal Mail, voted to go on strike later in the month. The courts prevented the strike – Royal Mail obtained a high court injunction – and contract mediation began. Since then, workers remain fired up.

In early November, the union rallied during a national day of action, "We Are the 89.1 Percent Day." Members have also been holding regular "gate meetings" where they discuss mediation updates. Royal

Mail continues to propose massive cuts to workers' pensions and benefits – along with service standard cuts.

Doncaster Branch Secretary Steve West said members seemed "angrier" this time, compared to the last two contract fights. "We didn't really have social media back then, so people now are much better informed – and they're more up for it," he explained.

Area distribution representative Bobby Ravenall recalled that during one meeting, the departing night shift joined the arriving early shift to hear mediation updates. "Everyone's up for [the strike] and 100 percent behind the union," he said.



Judy Beard, Director

When Workers Turn Out, We Win!

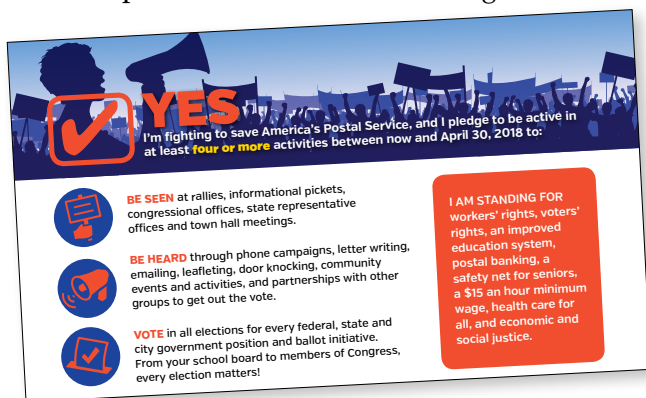
We know that when workers are actively engaged in the political process, we win.

We witnessed it in Virginia's governor's race in November, when a corporate lobbyist was soundly defeated by the now Governor-elect who opposes Right-to-Work (for less) legislation and helped prevent the law from being enshrined in the state's constitution in 2016.

We witnessed it in New Jersey, where labor ran up the score by voting in 43 rank-and-file union members to elected positions across the state.

With momentum on our side, it is time for APWU members to turn their attention to the 2018 midterm elections.

On Nov. 6, 2018 we have the opportunity to reshape our nation by electing representatives (local, state and federal) who will fight for worker rights and believe in a viable public Postal Service. All 435 seats in the House, 33 seats in the Senate, and 36 governorships will be on the ballot. Several states, including Missouri, may also have ballot initiatives to undo Right-to-Work (RTW) laws. When union members – and the communities that support them – not only vote but are politically active, we have a proven track record of winning!



Be Seen, Be Heard, and Vote!

Let's start the year with a union resolution to take the pledge to Be Seen, Be Heard, and Vote! When union members and the communities who support the working class are organized, educated and active, we win.

Please sign the pledge online at bit.ly/2ABFKjb. For assistance, call 202-842-4211. Those who sign the

pledge will be contacted with updates on events they can participate in such as, phone banking, door-knocking, rallies, congressional office visits, etc.

Following the success of the Legislative Conference held in October (see page 15), where members left excited about the power they have to enact change at the local, state and national level, the Legislative & Political Department will be hosting additional conferences in the field to prepare our members to do the work that needs to be done in 2018. ■

Legislative Priorities

Support

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2017 (H.R. 756) – Solves the disastrous postal pre-fund mandate. The APWU supports this bill moving through the legislative process – it has advanced to the House Energy & Commerce and Ways & Means Committees.

Postal Service Financial Improvement Act of 2017 (H.R. 760) – Allows USPS to invest a portion of the Retiree Health Benefit Fund to better match medical inflation and significantly reduce future liabilities.

Medicare For All (H.R. 676 & S. 1804) – Ensures universal access to high-quality affordable health care for all Americans, regardless of employment, income, or health care status.

Vote by Mail Act (S. 1231 & H.R. 2669) – Requires every state to provide registered voters the opportunity to vote by mail. By utilizing America's most trusted government agency, voting by mail can reduce election-related expenses and is proven to increase voter participation.

Thrift Savings Plan Modernization Act (S. 873 & H.R. 3031) – Provides much needed flexibility to retiring postal workers, lifting the current restrictions and allowing them to make multiple, partial post-separation withdrawals from their TSP savings. The bill passed both chambers of Congress and was signed by President Trump on Nov. 22.

Oppose

The PAGE Act (H.R. 3257) – Strips union representation and protections from new postal and federal employees, making them "at-will" employees, subject to discipline or termination at management's discretion.



Anna Smith, Director

What Has the Union Done for You?

Have you ever found yourself saying, “I haven’t ever used the union,” or “that [craft, tour, post office/station, or co-worker] got something I didn’t get?” How about, “I pay my dues, but the union hasn’t represented me or didn’t do anything for me?” Let’s take a moment to address your concerns.

First and foremost, it can never be said enough, **YOU ARE THE UNION**. If you ever find yourself thinking that the union did not do something for you, ask yourself what you can do. If you want to see change, let it begin with you.

Having a local union representative does not take away the responsibility that comes with being a member. Ask local officers how you can help, attend union meetings, participate in a union gear day. Be active in your communities and help increase community support in protecting our jobs.

Union Benefits

If you currently have an APWU-represented duty assignment, or have retired from one, you my friend can thank the labor movement. Any workplace benefits and livable wages you receive(d) are because of what union postal workers fought for – what we achieved by standing together.

“Using the union” should not be defined as whether or not you have ever requested steward time or asked that a grievance be filed on your behalf. If you have ever taken a day of annual or sick leave, if you have ever received overtime, and if your seniority ever came into consideration for conversion to career, vacation sign-up, job bidding, or holiday work – you my friend can thank the union. I could go on and on. Let’s be clear, we have all benefited from being in a union.

Strength Comes from Standing Together

My point is simple: Our strength will only come from us standing together, being on the same team. We all will go through times when we are tested, when a force attempts to divide us. Some may be led to believe they are better standing alone, or on the outside. If we allow others to divide us, we will not succeed.


Management never gave us anything. Union members take steps and fight, benefit by benefit, dollar by dollar, to bring everyone up to a viable standard of living. We do this for ourselves, and as those before us did. We do it for the future of our friends, families, and co-workers.

Our union will only be as strong as we make it. ■



My Health eVet

My Health eVet (MHV) is an award winning, comprehensive website provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It offers veterans, active duty service members, their dependents and caregivers 24-hour, secure internet access to portions of their personal medical records. Authorized users can manage their VA benefits through the site, obtain trusted health information, and take advantage of an array of services and dashboard tools that empowers them to become active partners in their health care and wellness needs.



MHV also can help expedite the disability claim process by granting immediate access to most medical records that support individual claims. The wait time to obtain medical records can often be lengthy when requests are made by submitting VA Form 21-5345 (Request For and Authorization to Release Medical Records). Veterans

and their advocates now have the ability to independently upload records and instantly submit them to the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) representative working on their claim – essentially cutting out the middle man and exhaustive wait times.

Accounts and Features

There are three types of accounts available through My Health eVet. Creating a basic account provides limited access to site features. Program users can self-enter personal information, select goals and track progress at this level. Advanced and Premium levels are only available to veterans and VA patients. Veterans are encouraged to register for a premium account to get the most benefit from the site. A premium account grants the highest level of access but requires authentication in order to protect the veteran's personal information.

Blue Button – Access and download medical records online with the VA Blue Button. This feature also makes it easy to share personal civilian health records with your VA medical team.

Secure Messaging Center – Lets users communicate with their local VA hospital or doctor, ask questions

about medical conditions, treatment options and lab test results. This feature should not be used in emergency, contact 911.

My Health eVet Email Updates – Helps registrants stay informed with email updates on managing their health. It provides information on diet and nutrition, resources for diseases and medical conditions (including upcoming treatment options) and shares VA news and updates from local VA medical centers. Users must use the opt-in to receive these updates.

Request Prescription Refills Online – Home delivery for medication refills is available for VA patient prescriptions via the VA Mail Order Pharmacy. There is also Rx delivery and tracker feature that is available with Advanced or Premium MHV patient portal accounts.

“Ask a Pharmacist” VA Mobile App – A new feature that provides VA patients access to trusted sources that can help answer questions about their VA medications, help them find a local VA pharmacy or doctor, and much more. To learn more about VA Health mobile apps, visit the VA App Store at *mobile.va.gov*.

Schedule Doctors Appointment – At more than 100 VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) across the country, veterans are now able to request or schedule certain types of appointments online through My Health eVet. The new feature enables individuals with VA health care benefits to schedule routine check-ups and doctor appointments at participating VA facilities and clinics where they have had a primary care appointment in the last two years. The MHV appointment calendar also allows users to set appointment reminders, view their appointment history and cancel or reschedule a VA health exam. Patients can also send messages to request an appointment, track the status of those requests and receive messages about upcoming appointments. If your VA facility does not currently participate in online scheduling, the VA is working to expand access to additional medical centers.

To learn more or to register, visit www.myhealth.va.gov. Questions should be directed to the www.MyHealth.va.gov Help Desk. To contact My Health eVet by phone, call **877-327-0022**. ■

Source: VA.gov

— Human Relations Department

Claim Privacy



Sue Carney, Director

It is important for employees who have been injured on the job to know their rights regarding claim privacy. Despite being the employing agency, the United States Postal Service does not have privileges to most claim information.

The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), Division of Federal Employees' Compensation is responsible for the administration of the Federal Employees Compensation Act. It has sole authority to control and limit the disclosure of claim records.

The USPS is merely the control point. The primary role of a control point is to ensure Compensation Act (CA) forms are completed accurately from the claimant's perspective and submitted timely to OWCP as required by law. Postal designees, including management officials, health and resource management personnel, occupational health nurses, postal physicians and contract doctors have specific roles regarding workplace injury claims, but their access to claim records is very limited. Any disclosure must be consistent with the DOL's Privacy Act routine uses. Secretaries should not have access.

The Office of the Inspector General is subject to the same rules unless a criminal investigation is underway. Agents must indicate the suspected activity and relevance of the documents before OWCP will disclose records. The claim file should not be the original source for an investigation. If under investigation, state your willingness to cooperate, disclose nothing and obtain legal counsel before meeting with agents.

Postal officials are barred from using claim information in grievances without having the written consent of claimants, unless the record falls under what is known as the Safe Harbor list. Employees can limit consent to the union by completing a DOL Privacy Act Waiver.

Employees cannot be forced to sign disclosure forms to release claim or medical information to postal representatives, nor can they be disciplined for refusing. Claimants and their treating physicians are not required to provide claim information to the USPS or obliged to cooperate, respond or make themselves

available to postal designees and service providers, e.g. Contract Claim Services, Inc. except as follows:

Only notices of injury (CA1), disease (CA2) and recurrence (CA2a), claims for wage loss compensation (CA7, CA7a) and leave buyback (CA7b) need to be submitted to the Postal Service. Claimants must provide their medical restrictions and prognosis to the employer. Form CA 17 is recommended but not required. Physicians should include concurrent, non-work related medical restrictions as they must be factored into job offers. The USPS may only contact the treating physician in writing solely to obtain restrictions and prognosis information. The employee must be provided a copy of the letter at time of submission and must be given a copy of the doctor's response upon receipt.

Claimants should return job offers, accepted or refused, to the USPS. Disabled employees are not required to report to work or other locations to discuss potential job offers. USPS can mail the offer. If claiming continuation of pay (COP), employees must submit prima facie medical evidence to their supervisor within ten calendar days of claiming COP to support their work-related absence.

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE DOES NOT HAVE PRIVILEGES TO MOST CLAIM INFORMATION.

That's it. All other forms and medical documentation can – and should – be submitted directly to OWCP. Any other employer requests should be directed to OWCP to determine entitlement.

Employees are not required to answer or return postal calls, nor are they required to let postal officials into their homes. Doing so can be at their peril.

Refusing to share additional claim information with postal designees should have no bearing on claims or benefits. DFEC is the determining office. It makes all decisions about claims and benefits under FECA, including claim approval, medical benefits, payment for lost wages, and the suitability of job offers – not the Postal Service. You have every right to protect your claim privacy. ■



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Stopping Workplace Harassment

Employees have the right to work in an environment free of harassment or intimidation. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines harassment as “unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.”

What Kind of Behavior Constitutes Harassment?

According to the EEOC, annoying comments and isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) are not the kind of harassment that is actionable in court unless the conduct creates a work environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people. Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Making offensive or derogatory comments, nicknames, or racial slurs.
- Engaging in physically threatening, intimidating, or humiliating actions.
- Circulating or showing written or graphic material that belittles or shows hostility towards an individual or group.
- Using racially derogatory words, phrases, or nicknames.
- Expressing derogatory comments relating to and arising out of a person's military service.
- Displaying posters or symbols offensive to individuals of a certain race, sex, national origin, religion, etc.
- Making derogatory references to an employee's physical or mental impairment.

What to Do If You Are Harassed?

Any level of serious harassment has no place at work. If you are offended by someone's conduct:

- Try to tell the harasser that his/her behavior is unwelcome.

- Talk to your shop steward or a local union officer.
- Report the incident to a supervisor, manager, or postmaster.
- Keep a diary **at home** of incidents, dates, times, places, behavior, what was said, and of all witnesses.
- File a grievance and an EEO Complaint. If a supervisor, manager or postmaster is doing the harassing, insist that the “proposed solution” does not adversely affect you. Insist the harasser be the one who is inconvenienced or moved.

How Can Co-Workers Help?

Co-workers can help stop harassment in the workplace by taking it seriously. Do not laugh or condone teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions that may be hurtful or inappropriate. Ask the harasser to stop, even if the behavior is not directed at you. Report the harassment to the union steward, a supervisor, manager, and/or a postmaster.

If you don't feel like you can speak up for yourself or others, tell a union steward or officer who will speak up for you. And if you feel that you are retaliated against for speaking up or making a report, that is a form of harassment and should be reported, too.

What Kind of Legal Action Can I Take?

If harassment and/or retaliation is happening in your workplace and you've raised it to management but it doesn't stop, you can file a grievance against management to document that the Postal Service knew about the harassment and was given an opportunity to stop it. In addition, file an EEO complaint within 45 days of the incident by calling 1-888-336-8777. You must file a timely EEO complaint to bring a lawsuit over harassment.

If the alleged harasser's behavior included assault and battery or rape, file criminal charges with the police and consult an attorney. Also, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to give employees emotional support for problems that may result from being harassed. Contact the EAP at 1-800-327-4968. ■

References: *EEOC (Harassment)* and *USPS Policy on Workplace Harassment*



Nancy Olumekor, Director

Spousal Survivor Benefits

We begin a new year with a subject that has generated numerous questions: Spousal Survivor Benefits.

When a retiree receiving Civil Service Retirement System/Federal Employee Retirement System (CSRS/FERS) benefits dies, recurring monthly payments may be made to the surviving spouse if the retiree elected a reduced annuity to provide the benefit. If you are married when you retire, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will compute full survivor benefits for your spouse, unless you and your spouse elect a lesser amount or no annuity.

To qualify for the benefits, the surviving spouse must have been married to the retiree for at least nine months. If the death occurs before the ninth month of marriage, a survivor annuity may still be payable if the retiree's death was accidental, or if a child was born during the marriage.

The survivor benefit election may not be revoked or changed, or another survivor named later than 30 days after the date of the first regular monthly annuity payment to the retiree. Should the marriage terminate before the retiree dies, the amount of annuity will be increased by the amount previously deducted for the survivor annuity. If the retiree remarries, a selection can be made to provide the new spouse with survivor benefits.

Retirees who are not married at the time of retirement, but marry after, can request that the annuity be changed to include survivor benefits by notifying OPM in writing no later than two years after the marriage.

Survivor claims for death benefits are processed by OPM. To minimize processing delays, the eligible survivor should:

- Promptly notify the bank and request they return any payments received after the date of death to the Treasury Department. OPM cannot authorize a survivor benefit until the Treasury Department informs them there are no

outstanding checks payable to the deceased annuitant.

- Notify OPM by completing the form at apps.opm.gov/retire/death/death.cfm, emailing retire@opm.gov or calling 1-888-767-6738 or 1-724-794-2005.
- Complete the Application for Death Benefits; attach certified copies of the annuitant's death certificate and any other forms and/or evidence and send to: OPM Retirement Operations Center, Attention: Survivor Processing Section, PO Box 45 Boyers, PA 16017-0045.

Any accrued annuity, unpaid to the annuitant during their lifetime, will be included in the benefits to the eligible survivor. Survivor benefits

are effective the day after the retiree dies and continue until the survivor remarries before age 55. The surviving spouse can still receive the annuity if they remarry after age 55.

The surviving spouse and any eligible children can continue coverage with your health insurance (FEHBP) only if a survivor annuity was provided, unless the survivor would

otherwise be eligible. The premiums will be withheld from monthly survivor payments, provided the premium is less than the monthly survivor annuity.

If you have any additional questions, please contact RetireeQandA@apwu.org. ■

Retirees in Action



(L-R) California Area Local President David Gordillo, Congresswoman Norma Torres (D-CA-35) and California Area Local Retiree Chapter President Roosevelt Daniels.

Retirees remain engaged in the political process by holding our congressional representatives accountable and asking them to support issues that protect benefits for retirees, seniors and working families.



John Marcotte, Director

Welcome to the APWU Health Plan

Another Open Season has come and gone, and I would like to welcome our new members to the APWU Health Plan family! Thanks to our many long-time members for their loyalty and support as we continue to work together to provide high quality health care at the most affordable price.

This January your 2018 benefits go into effect, and with that – for our Consumer Driven Option members – we will deposit \$1,200 into your Personal Care Accounts (PCA) for Self, \$2,400 for Self Plus One and Family plans. This will add to any unused PCA monies that rolled over from 2017.

For High Option and Consumer Driven Option members, it is time to schedule those free wellness checks. Choosing and working with a primary care physician is a great first step toward better health.

Seminar Success

The 2017 Health Plan Seminar was held in St. Louis, MO and the “Show Me” state showed off their Midwestern hospitality. After a long day of training classes on this year’s changes to not only APWU health plans but also health care in general, our seminar attendees were able to see a little of the history and unique venues St. Louis has to offer.

THANKS TO OUR MANY LONG-TIME MEMBERS...AS WE CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY HEALTH CARE AT THE MOST AFFORDABLE PRICE.

I would like to thank the Saint Louis Gateway Area Local and President Fred Wolfmeyer for their hard work, participation and hospitality, which was key to making the 2017 Open Season Seminar such a wonderful success.

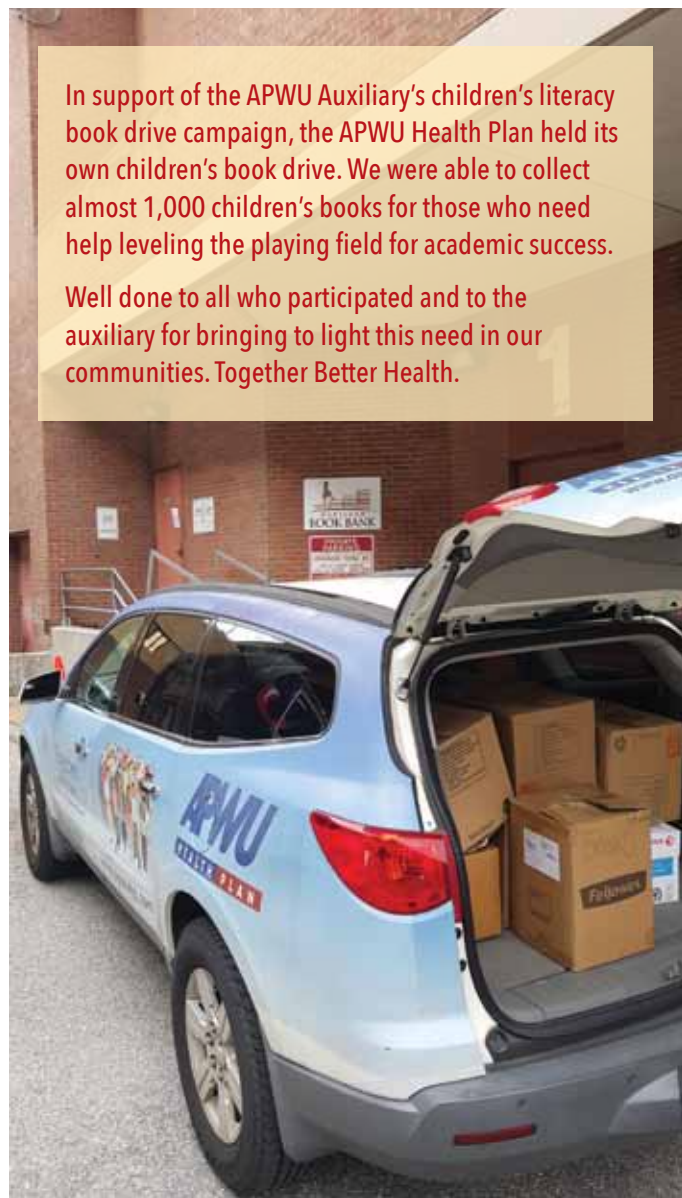
Building on the momentum of the 2017 seminar, I am proud to announce that the 2018 Health Plan seminar will be held in San Antonio, TX, at the Riverwalk Hyatt

Regency. This hotel recently became unionized and we are thrilled to bring union business to a union hotel deep in the heart of Texas.

The APWU Health Plan has moved up our save-the-date and hotel links to make seminar information available for local 2018 budgetary meetings. Make sure you register early for this valuable training, as we were filled to capacity in 2017. ■

In support of the APWU Auxiliary's children's literacy book drive campaign, the APWU Health Plan held its own children's book drive. We were able to collect almost 1,000 children's books for those who need help leveling the playing field for academic success.

Well done to all who participated and to the auxiliary for bringing to light this need in our communities. Together Better Health.



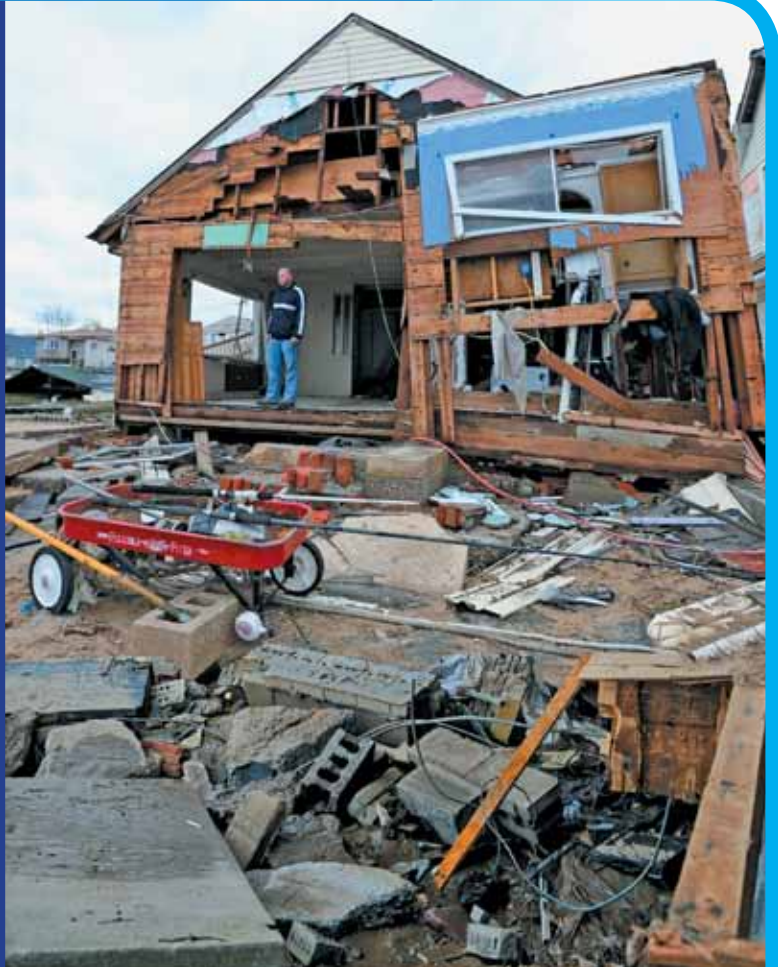
| BROUGHT FORWARD | | PAY PERIOD BEGINS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | EARNED THIS PERIOD | | | | USED THIS PERIOD | | | | BALANCE | |
|-----------------|------|-------------------|-----|-----|----------------------------|----------------------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----|----------------------------|--------------------|--------|------|--------|------------------|--------|------|--|---------|--|
| ANNUAL | SICK | | SAT | SUN | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | ANNUAL | SICK | ANNUAL | SICK | ANNUAL | SICK | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Jan. 6, 2018 | | | | | | | | | | JAN. 15 MLK Day | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Jan. 20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Feb. 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Feb. 17 | | | FEB. 19 President's Day | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | March 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | March 17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | March 31 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Apr. 14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Apr. 28 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | May 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | May 26 | | | MAY 28 Memorial Day | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | June 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | June 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | | JULY 4 Independence Day | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | July 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | July 21 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Aug. 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Aug. 18 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Sept. 1 | | | SEPT. 3 Labor Day | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Sept. 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Sept. 29 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Oct. 13 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Oct. 27 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Nov. 10 | | | NOV. 11 Veterans Day | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Nov. 24 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Dec. 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Dec. 22 | | | | DEC. 25 Christmas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | New Year's Day JAN. 1, 2019 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Leave year Begins: PP 02-2018 Jan 6, 2018 **Leave year Ends:** PP 01-2019 Jan 4, 2019

GIVE

**to the
Postal
Employees
Relief Fund**

**When Disaster
Strikes Postal
Employees We
Have Their Backs**



Your Generosity Helps Rebuild Lives



To Make a
Recurring or One
Time Donation visit
postalrelief.com



Scan this
code to
donate by
phone
today