

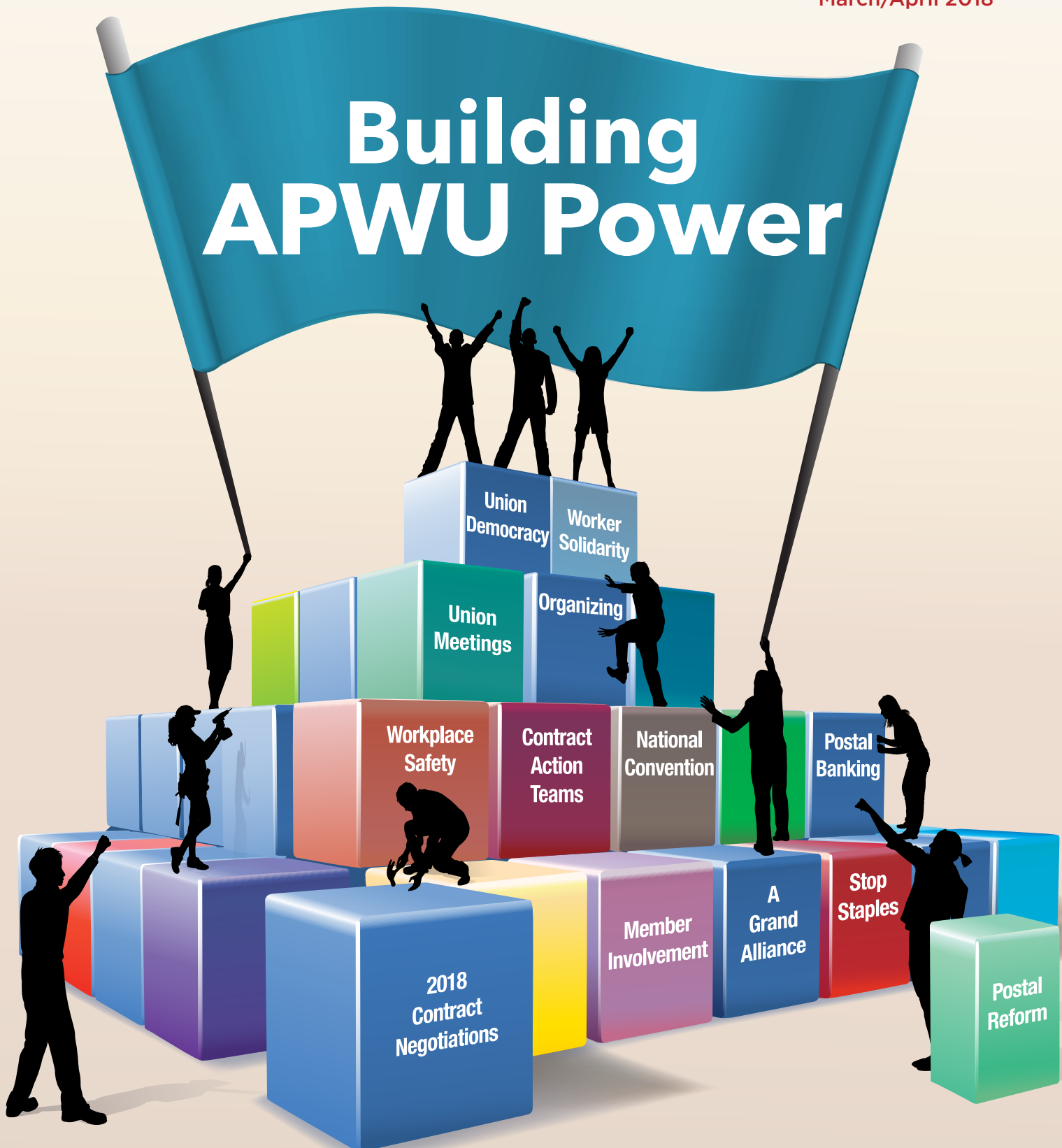
THE AMERICAN

Postal Worker

APWU

March/April 2018

Building APWU Power



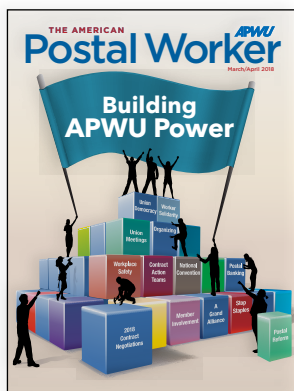


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In 2018, we are "Building APWU Power" as we tackle the many challenges facing postal – and all – workers across the country.



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

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PRODUCED BY THE APWU COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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



PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

‘Let Them Eat Cake’

When the hungry people were demanding bread, French Queen Marie Antoinette was said to utter the words, “Let Them Eat Cake!” Little wonder she lost her head in the ensuing 1789 French revolution.

This statement has remained symbolic of the arrogance of kings, oligarchs, corporate robber barons and Wall Street vultures – and their utter disdain for “common” people.

The recent passage of “tax reform” is a “let them eat cake” scam – a huge \$1.5 trillion transfer of wealth from working people to corporations and the ultra-rich. It further skews a tax system where the elite already don’t pay their fair share. Whatever temporary small gains may be included for working folks (I am for lower taxes on working people), over the long run most will pay a heavy price with higher taxes, cuts to vital programs such as Medicare and Social Security, fewer investments in our communities, and less public services. These politicians who have added trillions to government “debt” will now target our retirement and other postal worker benefits for cuts.

Whether Republican, Democrat, Independent, Libertarian, Socialist, Conservative or Green, I doubt any APWU member welcomes this outcome. Nor should we stand for this.

Some “lowlights” of the legislation:

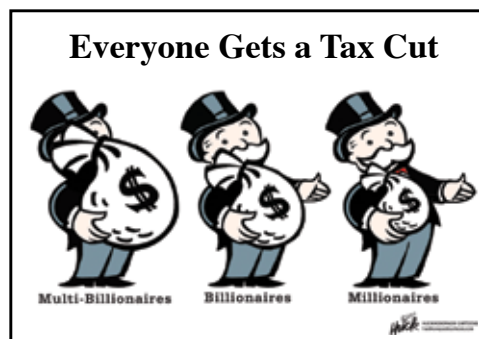
- The law **permanently** lowers maximum taxes on corporate profits from 35% to 21%. Supporters “selling” this hoax claim it will lead to more job creation and higher wages. In reality, the increase in corporate profits (already at record levels) will mainly go to private investors/shareholders, individual bank accounts and trust funds.
- The Congressional “Joint Committee on Taxation” estimates that by 2025, taxes will rise for every group with incomes under \$75,000 a year. For those making less than \$30,000/year, taxes will rise in four years.
- An analysis by the non-partisan Tax Policy Center predicts that those in the top 20% income level will

receive 90% of the legislation’s benefits. The wealthiest 1% will gain around \$62,000/year, and for the wealthiest 0.1%, \$321,000/year!

- The law widens already obscene income inequality. Imagine, just six Walmart family members have personal wealth equal to the combined wealth of 130 million U.S. people in the lower economic tiers!
- Huge loopholes enabling corporate tax evasion remain. In 2014, General Electric made \$14 billion in profits but paid no taxes!
- The \$1.5 trillion in corporate tax cuts could have been directed to public works projects rebuilding the country’s crumbling roads, bridges, railways, schools, parks, water/sewer systems and electrical

grid – and creating millions of decent jobs.

A jubilant President Trump celebrated his first major legislative



achievement, as well he should. Research indicates that he could personally gain an additional \$15 million/year in tax savings. His son-in-law, senior advisor Jared Kushner, may reap \$12 million/year.

King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette won plenty of battles in their day, but the people eventually prevailed, declaring “Down with the king!” Today’s Wall Street rulers won this round. Those who can afford higher taxes will now pay even less, with ever greater tax burdens on workers. Making matters worse, half our tax dollars are diverted to the bloated military industrial complex at the expense of human needs. The system is rigged. It’s high time to take back our country from the rule of the billionaire class. With unions helping to lead the way, let’s mobilize in our millions, from our workplaces and communities, to the halls of Congress and the streets, to reclaim a country “of, by and for the people!” ■

Officers Share Information and Answer Members' Questions at Tele-Town Hall

During a country-wide Tele-Town Hall on Jan. 24, APWU National officers discussed the unity required to be successful in our fight for a good contract, with safe working conditions and the ability to provide a better standard of living for APWU members and families. A total of over 1,300 members participated in the two calls.

Officers on the National Negotiation Committee (NNC) spoke, including President Mark Dimondstein, Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy, Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth "Liz" Powell, Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman, Clerk Division Director Clint Burelson, Maintenance Division Director Steven Raymer and Motor Vehicle Service (MVS) Division Director Michael Foster (Director Foster was unavailable for the second call, so MVS Assistant Director Javier Piñeres spoke on his behalf).

Beforehand, the officers reviewed over 850 questions submitted by members when they registered for the call. Some of the most frequently asked questions were summarized and answered during the call, either directly or within the officers' reports. There is still an opportunity to forward contract suggestions to 2018ContractNegotiations@apwu.org. Contract negotiation resolutions are currently being accepted for the 24th Biennial APWU National Convention in August.

Building Worker Power

The message during the call was clear:

We need you to build worker power as we "Fight Today for a Better Tomorrow." Two Contract Action Teams (CAT) which have already stepped up to join the fight, described activities and actions that took place during the 2015 Contract Campaign.



Des Moines Area Local members Russ Abel and Steve Coppock.



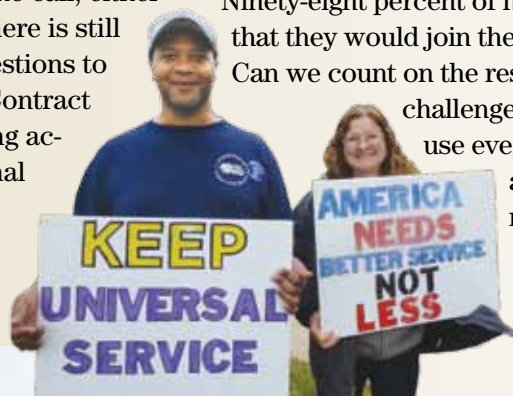
APWU National officers and staff during the Tele-Town Hall.

The Des Moines Area Local and the Oklahoma City Area Local spoke about how they are *Fired Up! and Ready to Go!* for the 2018 Contract Campaign. They discussed the good that their Contract Action Teams did in 2015 and expressed the importance of solidarity actions on the workroom floor.

President Dimondstein emphasized "the outcome of negotiations is not based on waving magic wands or wishful thinking, but on the relationship of forces and how much power and leverage can be exerted by either side."

Ninety-eight percent of members on the call indicated that they would join the fight for a decent contract.

Can we count on the rest of you as we face the serious challenges ahead? The NNC intends to use every resource available to achieve a fair contract for all APWU members. ■



Des Moines Area Local member Jermaine McGregor and community supporter Viola Seger at a protest during the 2015 *Good Service, Good Jobs, Good Contract* campaign.

Join a Contract Action Team Today!

Contract Action Teams (CATs) plan many different types of actions that build solidarity within the local and the entire union. Some actions include planning union gear days, passing out leaflets/flyers, organizing and participating in informational pickets, spreading contract news to coworkers and reaching out to the community. Members can volunteer as little or as much as their schedules allow.

If you are a local/state president who has not formed a CAT, sign up forms are available on apwu.org. Just click on the *Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow* Contract Campaign link. Send completed forms to nccc@apwu.org. Members should let their local/state presidents know that they are willing to join the fight!



April Burger (left) with Brenda Sprague, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Passport Services, after the award ceremony.

APWU Member April Burger is 2017 Passport Acceptance Agent of the Year

April Burger, a 31-year member of the Jefferson City Local (MO) and the local's secretary-treasurer, was unanimously chosen as 2017 Acceptance Agent of the Year for the Department of State's (DOS) National Awards Program for Passport Acceptance Facilities and Agents. She was honored at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 29.

Burger handles the administrative responsibilities of the Jefferson City Main Post Office's passport acceptance program. She manages information resources, plans passport fairs, and operates and maintains photography equipment and supplies.

Burger said many people visit the post office for their passport needs because it's more cost-effective. "They know when you go to the post office, you go to a trusted, public institution and you know things are going to be handled correctly," she explained.

Demand is Increasing

"Sometimes you don't have enough help," she noted.

Part of the problem is the Postal Service currently does not have a formal position description for a Passport Clerk. The APWU has filed a national dispute requesting the creation of a Passport Clerk standard position and qualification standard.

Burger talked about the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, launched in 2007, which required travelers to use a passport every time they crossed the border between the U.S. and Canada or Mexico. Those passports are now beginning to expire, leading to an influx of renewal applications.

"The Department of State has been telling us...that this is coming, but it fell on deaf ears at the post office," Burger said. "Our business is booming...This is the time to invest."

Burger discussed how the need for a passport is more prevalent today than ever for other reasons. More

and more colleges offer study abroad programs, and there are Americans who prefer to have a passport as another form of identification.

"It's expanding, people are becoming global. [The demand is] not going away," Burger said.

'Like A Swiss Army Knife'

At the awards ceremony, Department of State officials had nothing but praise for Burger.

"Like a Swiss Army knife, she does it all," Brenda Sprague, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Passport Services, said. "Her passion knows no bounds. It's comforting to know such a dedicated and enthusiastic person is working full-time as a passport acceptance agent and handles all the details it entails."

Karen Christensen, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Overseas Citizens Services at the DOS, said that the work Burger does is, "public service at its best. Every day, you come to work and don't just do the job – you think of ways to do it better." ■

USPS Rated Top Government Agency Once Again by Gallup Poll

Americans like their public Postal Service – and results from a country-wide poll prove it. In fact, the Postal Service is even more popular now than it was in 2014, the last time this poll was conducted – its approval rating rose two points to 74 percent.

"All the privatizers out there like to say the Postal Service is obsolete, but the results of this poll prove otherwise – and should come as no surprise to postal workers and allies," said President Dimondstein. "Now is the time for the Postal Service to use the public's trust to expand services, including financial services."

Liz Powell Honored with ‘At the River I Stand’ Award

At the 2018 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil & Human Rights Conference

Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth “Liz” Powell was honored by the AFL-CIO Civil and Human Rights Executive Council Committee with the “At the River I Stand” award, at the 2018 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference on Jan. 14, appropriately themed “Reclaiming Our Dream: Strategize, Organize, Mobilize.”

The “At the River I Stand” award is a national award presented to a leader who has demonstrated an unyielding commitment to civil and workers’ rights. It captures the spirit of the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike and the strikers’ courageous struggle. They stood at their “river” and made the decision to take a stand

against unsafe working conditions and racial discrimination.

At the awards gala, Secretary-Treasurer Powell gave a sincere speech of gratitude for those who fought before her without recognition and offered words of moral inspiration for future struggles.

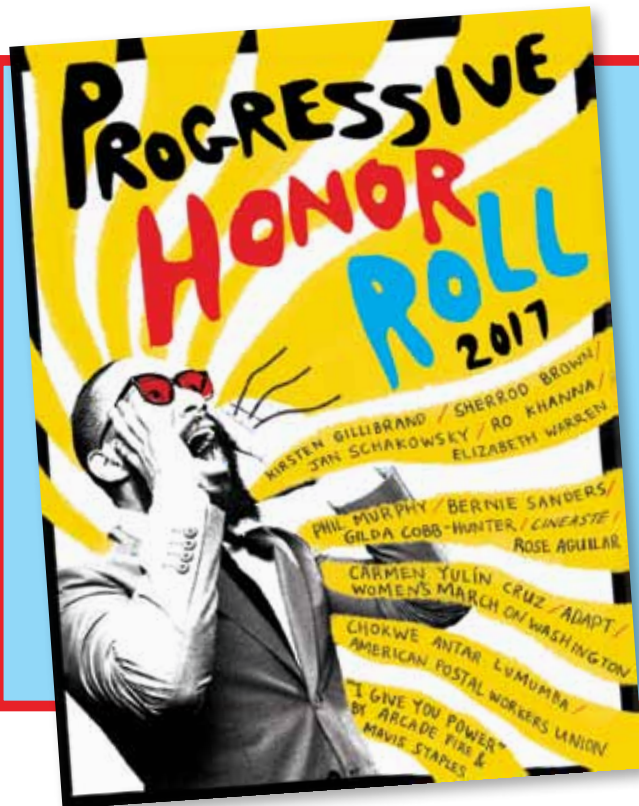
“As I stand at the river with each of you in this room this evening, there can be no doubt that it is the achievements of those who came before us that allow us to be here,” she said. “And while we may not move mountains, if we do the work that falls to us and do it to the best of our ability, we may rest in the consciousness of a job well done.

“As Dr. King would say, ‘The time is always right to do what is right.’



(L-R) AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler presents the award to Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell.

Therefore, I would ask that each of you keep in mind that as we continue to stand at the river reclaiming our dream – while we strategize, organize and mobilize – it is not necessary for us to put out anyone else’s light in order for ours to shine,” she continued. “The more light we have sisters and brothers, the brighter and clearer the path for us all.” ■



APWU is *The Nation’s* ‘Most Valuable Union’

The American Postal Workers Union was named 2017’s “Most Valuable Union” by the publication *The Nation*, as part of its annual Progressive Honor Roll.

“If you want to see solidarity in action, consider the response of the union that represents more than 200,000 U.S. Postal Service employees and retirees to last summer’s Nazi violence in Charlottesville, Virginia,” *Nation* reporter John Nichols wrote. “APWU President Mark Dimondstein explained to his members that rallying ‘for equality and against the hate-mongers’ is essential union work.”

Americans Still Rate the Postal Service Best

Why the Calls for Privatization?

Once again, the U.S. Postal Service has been rated most well-liked federal agency by the American public. A recent Gallup poll asked Americans to rate the job performance of 13 key government agencies. Seventy-four percent of respondents rated the USPS as “excellent” or “good,” an increase of two points from 2014.

In more good news, for fiscal year 2017, the Postal Regulatory Commission reported that the USPS experienced an 18 percent increase in Parcel Select volume over 2016, and a 22.9 percent increase in Parcel Select revenue. In addition, First-Class Package volume increased 24.1 percent and revenue increased 34.6 percent from 2016.

Despite the rising popularity and increased usage of the Postal Service, corporate-backed think tanks are still on the offense and pushing privatization.

In a Dec. 14, 2017 editorial piece for *Real Clear Markets*, Ike Brannon and Jared Whitley of the Cato Institute, stated the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act’s plan to obligate the USPS to prefund retiree health care 75 years into the future over a 10-year period is “a sensible way to address their problem.”

In reality, it created enormous problems for the USPS – an unreasonable burden which has been the reason for financial losses. Furthermore, the bill hampered the Postal Service’s ability to innovate and generate new sources of revenue, such as postal banking.

Andrew Heaton of the R Street Institute and the Taxpayers Protection Alliance argued in *The Hill* in January that the “the best way to fix the Postal Service” is to

privatize, just as, he noted, systems in Germany, the U.K., and other European countries have done.

“The mail still gets delivered,” in Britain, he wrote. At what cost? Royal Mail cut at least 11,000 jobs, and shuttered a fifth of its mail centers and five percent of its delivery offices in the nearly five years since it privatized.

This past October, 110,000 Royal Mail workers represented by the Communications Workers Union (CWU) voted overwhelmingly to strike, citing austerity measures by new management, including closing offices, choosing to provide better service to more profitable areas, closing the pension to new employees, and moving from full-time jobs to part-time and temporary jobs.

Shortly after the vote, CWU General Secretary Len McCluskey told *The Mirror*, “Royal Mail is looking in the rear-view mirror, taking us backwards. All they are interested in is minimizing costs and maximizing profits for shareholders.”

Ross Marchand, also with the Taxpayers Protection Alliance (a pro-privatization group formed by members of right-wing organizations and think tanks such as the American Legislative Exchange Council [ALEC] and the Heritage Foundation), also wrote to *The Hill* in January. He decried the “ludicrous schemes keeping the agency in debt,” the worst of which, he said, is delivering packages for Amazon. However, that service – Parcel Select – generated more than \$5.6 billion in revenue in 2017. That’s nearly \$1 billion more than in 2016.

The Postal Service is as relevant and well-liked as ever in the era of e-commerce. The best way to move forward with a public Postal Service that serves and connects all households and businesses across the world, is to repeal the retiree pre-funding mandate; restore service standards to pre-July 2012 levels; halt post office and plant closures, and consolidations; appoint a Postal Board of Governors and members of the Postal Regulatory Commission who support strong public postal services; and for the USPS to expand services into postal banking. ■

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.



Voters Support Holding Wall Street Accountable

U.S. voters strongly support holding Wall Street accountable, according to a 2017 poll by Americans for Financial Reform (AFR). Majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents favor more regulation of finance, not less.

In addition, 74 percent of voters support the work of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Created as part of the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act, in the aftermath of the 2008 financial collapse, the CFPB has worked to reign in high-interest payday lending and debt collection. The CFPB has awarded nearly \$500 million to consumers who were victims of scams involving mortgages, student loans, and credit cards.

“The American public, across lines of party, want Congress and the administration to protect the progress made in Dodd-Frank, and do more – not less – so the financial system works to the benefit of ordinary Americans,” said Lisa Donner, AFR’s executive director.

Hobbling the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

However, two alarming moves threaten to weaken the power of the CFPB. Under its new director, Mick Mulvaney, the CFPB appears to have altered its mission. The bureau’s official description now includes “regularly identifying and addressing outdated, unnecessary, or unduly burdensome regulations.” The reason for creating the bureau, as supported by the public, is to regulate more, not less.

Mulvaney also put a stop to collection of consumer data, which is needed for monitoring for unlawful activity. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), who helped create the CFPB, has been particularly critical. “Director Mulvaney’s actions appear to be aimed at hobbling the agency,” she said.

The bureau is also considering a reversal or watering down of current rules on prepaid cards, debit accounts, mortgage disclosure, and payday lending.

‘Fintech’ Legislation a Back Door for Payday Lending

Supporters of a Senate bill, *Protecting Consumers’ Access to Credit Act of 2017*, say they aim to open up lending opportunities to consumers who desperately need them – but many consumer rights advocates say it is just payday lending in disguise.

Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) introduced the bill that would allow “fintech” – financial technology – companies to get in on the action of payday loans. Under such legislation, fintech companies, which provide financial services through a mobile app or website, could partner with a national bank and get around state caps on interest rates. New York state, for example, essentially prohibits payday lending by capping interest rates at 25 percent. The “rent-a-bank” scheme would create a loophole, as banks are subject only to the rules of their home state, not those of the borrower.

Opening up the fintech market to lending could result in a nearly half-trillion dollar market within a few years, according to a study by Morgan Stanley. But “such a move could severely undermine state oversight and state laws that protect consumers and small business owners from abusive financial products and practices,” stated a letter signed by more than 250 organizations.

Postal Banking: The Time is Now

“The American people demand accountability from Wall Street and access to financial services that serve the people,” said President Dimondstein. “We must push even harder for affordable financial services at the post office. It will promote an economy that serves the people, not Wall Street, and it will strengthen and protect our public Postal Service.” ■

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.

24th Biennial APWU National Convention

Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow is the theme of the American Postal Workers Union's 24th Biennial Convention, which is set for Monday, August 20, through Thursday, August 23, 2018, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA.

The National Convention is the union's highest decision-making body and helps the APWU chart its course for the future. Approximately 2,000 APWU delegates will debate and vote on resolutions that will be introduced on a wide variety of subjects. The resolutions give focus to the union's goals and help us better serve our members.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

In accordance with the APWU Constitution and By-laws, each local and area local is entitled to representation at the National Convention based on one delegate – and one vote – for each 25 members or fraction thereof. Each local is entitled to at least one vote.

State organizations are entitled to one delegate and one vote for each 25 members or fraction thereof in the state who are not part of a local. Each regional organization that is organized in place of a state organization, and where no state organization exists, is entitled to one vote for each 25 members or fraction thereof of the unrepresented members. No local, state or regional organization shall be represented by proxy.

Each national officer holding an elective office shall serve as a delegate with the right to speak and one vote. The convention can authorize members-at-large (MALs) to vote, provided not more than three attend the convention. If more than three attend, the convention can apportion one vote to every three MALs. Five elected Retiree National Convention Delegates, one from each region, shall be seated at the National Convention. Each will have a voice and a vote.

APWU locals and state organizations are urged to send their full quota of delegates. MALs also are encouraged

to attend. **Local, state, and regional organizations are reminded that they must adhere to the requirements of applicable federal laws when electing delegates.**

Convention Credentials

Convention credentials must be authorized in the online process by the local president and the secretary, secretary-treasurer, or treasurer of the local. Beginning April 2, they will be able to log-on to the Members Only section of the APWU website, apwumembers.apwu.org, and in just a few easy steps will be able to register their members for credentials. Upon presentation of proper credentials, alternate delegates may be seated in place of regular delegates who will be absent from that point on.

Resolutions

June 4 is the deadline for the submission of resolutions for publication in the Convention Book. Resolutions are accepted from local or state affiliates, or from members-at-large (who are the only members permitted to submit resolutions under their own signature). Resolutions adopted at craft division meetings, either during an off-year or immediately prior to the National Convention, are also accepted.

Resolutions from local or state affiliates must be submitted electronically through a special link on the union's website that will be accessible only to local/state presidents and to local/state secretaries, treasurers, and secretary-treasurers. There will be a box to check certifying that the submitter is the authorized officer, which will serve as an electronic signature.

Members-at-large must sign and submit their resolutions directly to the National Secretary-Treasurer prior to the **June 4 deadline**. Resolutions must be typed, double-spaced and submitted individually (one per page). Resolutions not properly certified electronically or signed will be returned.

Per Article 5, Section 3, of the APWU Constitution, the National Secretary-Treasurer will submit the resolutions to the Screening Committee, which works to eliminate repetition and consolidate issues. Once the committee has completed its review, locals and pre-registered delegates will have an opportunity to view the resolutions on the APWU website.

Resolutions received after June 4 will be referred to the appropriate committees and will be presented at the National Convention as addendums, provided they have been properly authorized and signed, and provided they do not deal with subjects otherwise covered by the Screening Committee.

To achieve uniformity, it is requested that resolutions be structured as follows:

- The name of the appropriate committee to review the resolution, e.g., Labor-Management Committee;
- The article number and section of the Collective Bargaining Agreement or APWU Constitution and Bylaws the resolution addresses, if applicable;
- The resolution title;
- The names of the sponsoring locals, state organizations and/or member-at-large;
- The body or text of the resolution itself.

A resolution form can be viewed online on the Members Only website.

Other Convention Events

Several other important union events will take place in the days before the convention. The APWU Research & Education Department will conduct a series of workshops on Friday, August 17. Meetings for each of the Divisions – Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Service, and Support Services – are set for the weekend of Aug. 18-19, as is the APWU Retiree's Conference. The BMC Conference will be held following the convention, on Friday, Aug. 24, 2018. The complete schedule of events can be viewed on the 2018 Convention page at www.apwu.org/convention.

Plan Your Stay Well Ahead

Although the convention is months away, it is essential that locals, state organizations, members-at-large, and retirees to make their arrangements as soon as possible. Everything you need to make your hotel and travel plans can be found at www.apwu.org/convention.

The APWU negotiated special room rates for this year's convention at the following hotels: Wyndham Grand, Westin Convention Center Pittsburgh, Omni William Penn and DoubleTree Downtown Pittsburgh. The rates, cutoff dates and cancellation window for each hotel are listed below. Please note that the Westin Convention Center Pittsburgh is the headquarters hotel.

Please make your room reservations directly with the hotels. After these dates, rooms and rates will be based on availability. You must use a credit card when booking online. You will receive a confirmation of your reservation via e-mail. Be sure to mention that you are with the American Postal Workers Union in order to receive the negotiated rates.

For each room, a one night's stay deposit, plus tax, is requested with payment by credit card. Failure to notify the hotel of a change in arrival date will result in cancellation of the reservation and the deposit will be forfeited. Cancellation policies will be outlined by the hotel on the confirmation received after making a reservation. Please visit www.apwu.org/convention for additional details.

Early departures are subject to a penalty, set by the individual hotels. If you do not cancel per the cancellation policies mentioned above or do not arrive on your confirmed arrival date, your full reservation will be cancelled. APWU locals and state organizations may pay by check, but must send the full amount to the hotel 30 days prior to arrival.

Children's Programs, Car Rental

KiddieCorp, a professional child care company, will provide activities for delegates' children ages 6 months to 12 years during the four days of activities on the convention floor, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Reservations will be necessary. Submit the forms (available on the APWU website) by July 20.

APWU has made arrangements with Enterprise/National for discounted rates for convention delegates. Information regarding reservations can be found on the APWU convention webpage. ■

Hotel	Rate	Cutoff Date	Cancellation
Wyndham Grand	\$159/night + tax	July 30, 2018 at 5:00 pm EST	48 hours
Westin Pittsburgh	\$159/night + tax	July 30, 2018	48 hours
Omni William Penn	\$156/night + tax	July 25, 2018	48 hours
DoubleTree Downtown	\$150/night + tax	July 30, 2018 at 5:00 pm EST	48 hours



Building ‘Strong, Action-Oriented’ Communities

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

During November 2017, I met with locals and members who are still on the Phase Two Consolidation List and have shown interest in not only saving their plant, but also building a strong membership and community engagement.

The locals I met with included the Central Michigan Area Local; Pocatello Local (ID); Mid-Hudson Area Local (NY); Dayton Ohio Area Local; Youngstown Area Local (OH); Central Kentucky Area Local; Northern Indiana United Area Local; Lafayette Area Local (IN); Kokomo Area Local (IN); and the Muncie Indiana Area Local.

They were given a developing strategy for building their power. We hope to see great local and community movements in 2018. There are more Phase 2 locals and members to strategize with in the next few months, so get ready.

Management has caused delayed mail service, making a mockery out of the work we do for our communities! The Postal Service’s plan is less jobs and less mail processing facilities.

Pocatello Local is On Its Way

The Pocatello Local (ID) has already started building strong community support. They have a community group preparing to save their mail processing facility by developing relationships with mailers, businesses, other unions and their legislative representatives, to grow and protect their postal services. It takes a whole community to bring about necessary change.



A group of APWU members from the Pocatello Local (ID)

Get Involved!

2018 is the time for every member to get involved in activities to save the people’s Postal Service. What can you do?

Sign-up to be part of a Contract Action Team (CAT) for the 2018 Contract Campaign. If your local is on the Phase Two Consolidation List, volunteer to help build a community movement to stop future consolidations. Get involved politically by building a legislative group to visit and call legislators to get support for bills that help save and expand our Postal Service. You can also help stop voter suppression and participate in Vote-by-Mail campaigns.

Do you need some ideas on how to get started? Check out the Executive Vice President’s resources, as well as the National Contract Campaign page on the APWU website, apwu.org.

Every crisis is an opportunity and we must build strong, action-oriented communities. That starts with each and every one of us saying, “Yes! This year, I will get involved and become part of the solution to save my job, benefits, family and future – while preserving public services for myself and my community.” ■



(L-R) Sandra Hartwig of Engleson, Capell and Engleson; Dustin Manwaring, Idaho State Rep District 29 Seat A; Kelley Packer, Idaho State Rep District 28 Seat B; Kathryn Venable, Department of Environmental Quality; Pocatello Area Local President LaNae Parkin; Pocatello Area Local Executive Vice President Scott Parkin; APWU Vice President Debby Szeredy; Pocatello Mayor Brian Blad; Chubbuck Mayor Kevin England; former Idaho State AFL-CIO President Aaron White; Angie Wilhelm, Bannock Development Corporation; Mike Ennis, Bannock Development Corporation; and Idaho State Association of Letter Carriers President John Paige.

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Pittsburgh Metro Area Local Retiree Chapter CELEBRATES CLC AWARD

Members of the Pittsburgh Metro Area Local Retiree Chapter had a lot to celebrate at their annual holiday awards luncheon.

John Richards, Pittsburgh Metro Area Local Retiree Chapter President, reported to *The American Postal Worker* that the chapter was presented an award from the Beaver-Lawrence Central Labor Council for their “successful conclusion of the Stop Staples campaign” back in May, and celebrated it at the December luncheon.

The Chapter, along with National Postal Mail Handlers Union Local 332, honored National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 84 Local President Ted Lee and APWU Pittsburgh Metro Area Local Secretary-Treasurer Bob Montana at the event, who are both on the Western Pennsylvania Postal Workers Solidarity Committee.

Retirees Director Nancy Olumekor and Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard attended the event.

Awards on display at the luncheon.



Pittsburgh Metro Area Local Retiree Chapter members, family and supporters at the luncheon.



(L-R) APWU Research & Education Director Joyce Robinson, Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) President Elise Bryant, APWU Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy, APWU Assistant Clerk Craft Director (B) Lynn Pallas-Barber, CLUW Vice President Rachel Bryan and APWU Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard, in front of the Lincoln Memorial at the 2018 Women's March in Washington, D.C.

NATIONAL OFFICERS JOIN 2018 WOMEN'S MARCH

APWU National officers joined hundreds of thousands of women (and men) across the country on Jan. 20 for the 2nd Annual Women's March. Participants were protesting the Trump Administration's policies regarding women's rights, as well as calling for more legal protections for women in their daily lives – including at work.

APWU members in other cities also came out to participate in the events closest to them.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS! Have Your Local Featured in *Members in Action*

The American Postal Worker is putting the call out to send photos of local officers and members at APWU local, state or retiree chapter sponsored events, community parades, picnics or any other civic event.

We want to highlight the great work that you, the members, do every day!

Anything from membership events, to supporting a picket line or an organizing drive for other union brothers and sisters, to participating in a community donation drive, to handing out flyers at a community barbecue or baseball game would be welcome.

High-resolution photos should be emailed to communications@apwu.org. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the APWU National Communications Department at 202-842-4250.



Support Your AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils and AFL-CIO State Federations

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

Central Labor Councils (CLCs) and State Federations play an intricate and necessary part in the labor movement's effort to ensure that policies pertaining to the economy, education, health care and other issues, benefit working families.

Working together through them, members of different unions support one another's organizing campaigns and contract bargaining. They engage union members in developing and promoting an agenda for good, secure jobs; health and safety; adequate investments in the needs of working families, such as education, health care, and retirement security; and against job-killing proposals like the privatization of government services.

These issues are all important to APWU members. Supporting your AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils and AFL-CIO State Federations provides opportunities to voice issues that affect postal workers among allies in a labor conducive environment.

Affiliation in state federations and local labor councils has always been a topic of concern for some locals, specifically the cost. Recognizing the financial aspect is why delegates to the 18th Biennial APWU National Convention adopted a resolution to refund 50 percent of the cost of affiliation to APWU local and state organizations that pay full per capita to the state federations. It is time for our member unions to do what is right.

Affiliating with the State Federations and Central Labor Councils is essential in our continuous fight to protect our jobs and keep the public Postal Service, one of the oldest institutions our customers have grown to depend on. The support of our brothers and sisters in other unions has and will continue to be a vital part of our success into the future.

Times are tough and local budgets are tight. However, during these difficult times, having dependable allies in the labor movement at your side is necessary in order to be successful. Whatever your union needs – whether it be to assist with marching, protesting, petitioning

legislators, making phone calls, etc. – all of these tasks stretch local resources.

The success of the *Stop Staples* campaign is an excellent blueprint for locals to follow. Alliances with the AFL-CIO and other allies were crucial components in obtaining our victory. Together, we create a powerful voice for future challenges on issues that are important for working families. ■

2018 National Convention "Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow"

The 24th Biennial National Convention will be held in Pittsburgh, PA on Aug. 20-23, 2018.

For more convention details, please see page 10.

SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER



The E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship will award a total of \$8,000 (\$2,000 annually) to ten recipients (one male and one female, from each of the five APWU regions) to apply towards their four-year college tuition.

Vocational Scholarship winners will receive up to \$3,000 for specialized training in fields such as culinary arts, medical or dental assistant, electrician, real estate, auto mechanic, certified IT/computer education, cosmetology, massage therapy, etc. Eligible programs can be of a nine-month to three-year duration.

March 31, 2018 is the deadline for the APWU to receive completed applications. The scholarships are open only to high school seniors. Applicants may apply for either a Hallbeck or Vocational scholarship, not both.

BILL LUCY Presented with Alston/Jones International Civil and Human Rights Award

The International Civil Rights Center and Museum's Alston/Jones International Civil and Human Rights Award was given to renowned trade union leader and APWU member William "Bill" Lucy on Feb. 3, in Greensboro, NC. The museum is on the site of the Woolworth Department store where four courageous African-American students "stood up" by sitting down at the segregated lunch counter in 1960, and sparked a sit-in movement for equal rights that spread throughout the south, and beyond. Sixteen national unions and the AFL-CIO joined in supporting the event and honoring Bill Lucy.

Lucy's legendary career began a half century ago, when he was deeply involved in the historic 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike. For many decades he served as Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Lucy also co-founded the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), where he served as president for forty years. In addition, he was part of the movement against the U.S. government's backing of South African apartheid.

President Mark Dimondstein and Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth "Liz" Powell presented Lucy the award at the museum's 2018 Annual Gala Fundraiser. "Based on a life-long commitment to worker rights and



(L-R) International Civil Rights Center and Museum founders Melvin "Skip" Alston and Earl F. Jones, Secretary-Treasurer Powell, Honoree William 'Bill' Lucy, and President Mark Dimondstein presenting the Alston/Jones International Civil and Human Rights Award.

Photo courtesy of ICRCM

civil rights and his accomplishments in uplifting all workers, it is most fitting that Brother Lucy received this award," said President Dimondstein. "And as we recognized Bill Lucy, we were also honoring the heroic Memphis Sanitation Workers and their victorious struggle fifty years ago."

On Sunday, Feb. 4, the museum hosted a community meeting with Bill Lucy and others commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike. Secretary-Treasurer Powell presided over the event with APWU Solidarity organizer and NALC activist Richard Koritz. ■

Celebrate the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike 50th Anniversary

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. To commemorate these historic events, the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) rolled out the *I AM 2018* Campaign.

Workers across the country, including APWU members, held a moment of silence on Feb. 1, to commemorate the deaths of sanitation workers Echol Cole and Robert Walker, who were crushed to death by their malfunctioning garbage truck – a safety issue that was long ignored by management. This tragedy sparked the historic

1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike.

Shortly before the strike, Dr. King's *Poor People's Campaign* was launched, through which he built a movement of working people, demanding better jobs, homes and education. He believed when workers join together, anything can be accomplished. He joined the workers twice during the strike, and was assassinated during the second visit, on April 4.

To honor Dr. King's legacy, as well as the striking sanitation workers, AFSCME will host a series of workshops and events April 2-4 in Memphis. For more information, visit iam2018.org.



Renew the Fight for Safe Jobs

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

We all know and enjoy our holiday – Labor Day. But did you know that there is another day that honors the workers of the world? It is celebrated on April 28 of each year, and it is *Workers Memorial Day*. This day honors and remembers those who have suffered from injuries, occupational illnesses and died while on the job. This day is also the day we renew the fight for safe jobs.

Congress passed the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* more than 40 years ago. This law intended to guarantee workers safe jobs. Through this law and the efforts of various unions and allies in this country, workers in America did go to work in safer environments and countless lives have been saved.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was created by this law and has been the governmental agency that has enforced the regulations meant to keep workers safe. However, the fight is not over for safe jobs – it is more important today than ever.

Here are just a few statistics, as supplied by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2016 – the last year for which the data has been published – 2.9 million non-fatal injuries and illnesses were reported by private companies and 5,190 fatalities were reported. That is an injury rate of 2.9 cases per 100 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers.

This of course does not include injuries not reported due to fear of retaliation, intimidation or other reasons workers may not report injuries. The federal government had 86,470 injuries in fiscal year 2017, an accident rate of 3.01 cases per FTE with 35 fatalities.

The Postal Service? Even worse. Of the 86,470 federal injuries, 42,594 of those were postal employees (not counting the ones people were afraid to report) for a rate of 6.67 cases per FTE. Twelve of the government's 35 deaths were postal employees. Your job is dangerous!

We also are battling the Trump Administration, which is shrinking the number of government employees. According to a story in the *Washington Post*, OSHA has been crippled. They have lost 6 percent of their permanent workers. Manager and supervisor positions are

not being filled. Without these supervisors, inspection reports and fines cannot be reviewed and finalized.

In essence, the Administration has crippled OSHA. The White House has delayed the implementation of new safety rules on injury reporting, chemical exposure and identification of safety hazards. The Administration has also ordered for every new regulation, two must be eliminated. For a new safety rule to take effect, two must be destroyed.

Philosopher and writer George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." We must remember our past where insufficient safety regulations led to tens of millions of injuries and tens of thousands of deaths annually.

On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, TN. He was there participating in the historic Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike that began over unsafe working conditions.

On Feb. 1, 1968, two African-American city sanitation workers were crushed to death by their malfunctioning garbage truck, when they took shelter from a heavy downpour inside the barrel of the truck.

These sanitation workers were not allowed to take shelter on the porches of those they served or they were required to go home without pay – unlike their white co-workers who could go home with pay. The deaths led the sanitation workers and their union to strike. They were demanding safe equipment, equal treatment and better pay.

Dr. King died supporting workers and their safety. So on the 50th anniversary of his death, we cannot forget how important safety is – or how easily we could go back to those days of no safety regulations, where going home ill, injured or dead was just part of the price one had to pay to have a job.

This is why we must remember those hurt and killed this April 28, 2018. We must fight for safe jobs and to keep the protections we have. To quote the AFL-CIO, *Safe Jobs: Every Worker's Right*. ■

L.A. Times' Newsroom Unionizes in Landslide Vote



Photo courtesy of The NewsGuild-CWA

Reversing 136 years of management rule, 85 percent of employees working in the *Los Angeles Times*' newsroom voted to join The NewsGuild-Communications Workers of America, in a 248-44 vote on Jan. 4.

Reporters, copy editors, graphic artists and photographers organized for months leading up to the vote, hanging up pro-union signs in the newsroom and sharing stories of why they were voting "yes" on social media.

Transportation reporter Laura Nelson explained, "I love the *Los Angeles Times*, and I want to make it better. Big breaking news stories and investigations are proof that we're at our best when we collaborate. We should stand together to fight for our workplace, too."

NewsGuild President Bernie Lunzer said the victory is part of a national trend of workers raising their voices. "The media landscape is changing, with the demands of private profiteers pushing against the hallowed traditions of quality journalism. The journalists of the *L.A. Times* are taking control of their own future," he said.

CELEBRATE MAY DAY

May Day, also known as International Workers Day, was born in the 1880s in Chicago during the fight for the eight-hour work day.

The working-class holiday is celebrated in 80 countries (although it is not recognized in the United States as a federal holiday).

The APWU encourages all members to participate in any events in their area. If your city or town is not hosting an event, and you want to participate in one, reach out to local labor groups and other sister unions about planning something in your area.

If you take part in an event, please send pictures of you, your family and/or co-workers to communications@apwu.org for a chance to be featured on the APWU website or in future publications. Remember to wear your union gear!

Nearly 1M German Metalworkers Negotiate Precedent-Setting Contract

After threats of an indefinite strike and weeks of one-day walkouts, 900,000 German metalworkers, who are members of the union IG Metall, secured higher wages and benefits in their new collective bargaining agreement.

One new breakthrough of this contract is a worker will now have the option to temporarily cut their work week from 35 to 28 hours for a period of six to 24 months. Their salary will reflect the part-time status, but the worker is guaranteed their full-time position when they come back.

"For too long, work time flexibility has been a privilege of employers," Joerg Hoffman, chair of IG Metall said. "From now on employees will have the right to opt for a reduced working week... The collective agreement is a milestone on the way to a modern, self-determined working world."

The union also secured a 4.3 percent wage increase, a supplementary monthly income and additional days to take leave to care for young children or older parents.

AT&T Wireless Workers **APPROVE CONTRACT**

After months of taking it to the streets, AT&T wireless workers overwhelmingly approved a four-year contract in January. The contract between Communications Workers of America (CWA) and AT&T, covering 21,000 workers in 36 states, “rolls back offshoring and outsourcing and sets a new standard for wireless retail and call center jobs in America,” according to a union press release.

and our future will be brighter. Quality jobs are here to stay and grow.”

However, hundreds of AT&T wireless workers not living in the 36 states covered by this contract are still fighting. In February, they released a Statement of Principles, calling for:

- “Fair wages, commissions, and benefits;
- “Respect for employees as people and as workers;
- Support, training, and communication with management;
- “Honesty and integrity in customer relations.”

For more information, visit wirelessworkersunited.org.



San Jose, CA AT&T strikers in May 2017.

Photo courtesy of CWA

Workers came together and fought hard for the new agreement, walking off the job for three days in May 2017 – the largest national retail strike in American history – forcing hundreds of stores to be shuttered. Some highlights of the contract include, according to the press release, “a guaranteed 80 percent increase in the portion of customer service calls handled exclusively by wireless workers who are CWA members; and first-ever job security language that guarantees a job for workers whose store or call center is closed or whose job title is eliminated.”

Brandon Beck, an AT&T wireless retail worker in San Diego, CA, said, “This contract shows that wireless workers like me will no longer put up with companies that squeeze workers. We can breathe easier knowing that service to our customers will be better

British Postal Workers Reach Agreement with Royal Mail

After months of workers ready to strike, British postal workers represented by the Communication Workers Union (CWU) reached an agreement with their employer, privatized Royal Mail. Terry Pullinger, CWU Deputy General Secretary (Postal), said that the new contract remedies “all the issues of concern and all the issues we campaigned on.”

“I absolutely believe that we have now, with this agreement, laid the foundation for the right attitude and approach to the future of our business,” Pullinger said in a video to members.

CWU officers call the agreement “ground breaking” because it secures one pension plan for every member. A union spokesperson said the agreement also “increases job security because of the assurances that we’ve got for the ratio of full-time to part-time.” According to the union, the agreement will ensure CWU members will have employment and pension security moving forward.

As this issue goes to press, the agreement still needed to be ratified by the CWU membership and approved by the Royal Mail board.



Newly organized Lipton Tea workers celebrate with allies at an August 2016 press conference.

Lipton Tea Workers Ratify First-Ever Contract

In the spring of 2016, several workers at the Lipton Tea plant in Suffolk, VA – that produces most of the tea consumed by North America – reached out to the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) about possibly forming a union. They were being forced to work up to a 12-hour shift for as many as 13 days in a row, with only one day off in between.

In August 2016, the majority of workers voted to unionize and a bargaining committee formed. After nearly a year of negotiating, workers ratified their first-ever contract in July 2017, with a 106-9 vote. The agreement, which covers 240 employees, includes improvements to working conditions and more than \$4,000 a year in health care cost savings, plus better coverage. The contract also puts strict limits on overtime.

“I didn’t know much about unions, but I knew something had to be done. Enough was enough,” said Philip Surace, a Lipton mechanic. “I would encourage anyone who wants to make their workplace better to do the same thing we did.”

Supreme Court to Hear *Janus v. AFSCME*

As this issue is printing, on Feb. 26, the U.S. Supreme Court is hearing a case that will affect many public-sector unions across the country: *Janus v. AFSCME*.

The National Right-to-Work Foundation is backing the case against the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). If the Supreme Court rules in the National Right-to-Work Foundation’s favor, state, county and municipal employees working under a union contract will be able to benefit from safe working conditions, pay raises, job security, and other negotiated benefits in their collective bargaining agreement, but not have to pay any of the cost associated from negotiating or enforcing it. This drains the financial resources for many public-sector unions.

“The *Janus* case is a blatantly political and well-funded plot to use the highest court in the land to further rig the economic rules against everyday working people,” said Lee Saunders, president of AFSCME.

For updates, visit afscme.org and stay tuned for more information about the case in upcoming issues of *The American Postal Worker*.

Photo courtesy of UFCW Local 400

Importance of Contract Action Teams



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

Contract negotiations will begin in June, and the membership has democratically decided on resolutions to improve the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

In general, most postal workers are sick and tired of the understaffing, daily contractual violations, and poor service that the Postal Service is providing to the public. Most union members would like to see better service to our communities, as well as improvements to working conditions, wages and benefits. Contract negotiations will be an opportunity to make progress on these important issues.

Hostile Opposition in Negotiations

However, we will face strong opposition in our efforts to improve the Postal Service. Many of the large mailers – who are among the largest corporations in the world – and their friends in Congress will again be pressuring the Postal Service to seek concessions from postal employees. These large mailers continually push the Postal Service to cut staffing and reduce service to the public in order to reduce how much they pay for postage.

In addition, many of the large mailers are media companies like Time Warner, who have significant influence on the public's understanding of what is occurring at the Postal Service. Corporate-owned news and information will reflect the interests of corporate ownership and their advertisers. The labor movement today lacks the type of media outlets that can explain our story to millions of people like corporate media can.

In this hostile environment, simply asking for an improvement in our contract will not be enough. Collective bargaining without the willingness to engage in collective action is merely collective begging, and will not change the balance of power.

Collective Action is the Historical Recipe for Success

All significant gains in the past – either in the labor movement, civil rights movement or any other movement – has come about from collective action. Gains were made through strikes, boycotts, working to rule,

public campaigns and other efforts where large groups of people worked together to bring pressure to bear on important decision makers. It takes a movement to make progress.

The wildcat, Great Postal Strike of 1970 was the key collective action that the people who came before us did to win many of the benefits that we enjoy at the post office today. More recently, the many volunteers who participated in the *Stop Staples* boycott stopped the Postal Service from utilizing large chain stores to contract out Clerk Craft work. When people came together and sacrificed for the greater good, we made progress.

Contract Actions Teams Are the Key to Success

APWU Contract Action Teams (CATs), where individuals come together to carry out collective action, will play a critical role to bring pressure on the USPS to win contractual language that management would not otherwise provide.

Actions usually begin small and gradually escalate as the CAT teams get stronger. For example, it might start with education within the team so that everyone is on the same page, then education to employees on the floor, to “Wear Your Union Gear” days, to safety enforcement day, to informational pickets, etc. Working together as a large group in collective actions is surprisingly fun and empowering.

In order to get the Postal Service to agree to any improvements in the CBA, the APWU will need a corresponding amount of leverage. A little bit of power will translate to a little bit of improvements – a lot of power, a lot of improvements. It is up to us.

The more employees that participate in Contract Action Teams, the more the APWU can gain improvements in the CBA. Join the fight for a better tomorrow. Sign up today to participate on a Contract Action Team in your workplace. If your local or state union does not have a CAT Team set up yet, speak to your local/state president about forming one. ■

Our Week in Norman, Oklahoma



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

During the week of Nov. 27 - Dec. 4, 2017 your Maintenance Craft headquarters officers traveled to Norman, OK for meetings with the Postal Service and students attending training at the National Center for Employee Development (NCED).

Maintenance Craft Director Raymer, Assistant Director (A) Balogun and Assistant Director (B) Martinez met with management representatives at the Maintenance Technical Support Center (MTSC) and at the NCED. We also conducted a site visit to the Oklahoma City P&DC to observe and examine the Advanced Letter Processing System (ALPS). The system being tried out at OKC is different from the one at the Richmond, VA P&DC, which APWU representatives had previously visited.



We met with NCED management leadership twice. After the first meeting, we conducted an evening session

with maintenance students. There was good news to provide, as the food trays were coming back by the end of the following week (evidence shown in image). The balancing act to carry your plates, glasses, etc. in one trip is over.

We also discussed several other items with NCED management. The situation of the weekend meal availability seems mitigated with the 40% postal discount applying to the lounge food service. Students are to receive full per diem for the weekend when the cafeteria (called "3 Squares") is closed.

A rather unfortunate situation had developed during our visit involving the required purchase by students of different footwear to attend class. The allegation being made by NCED instructors that the shoes the students

had did not meet the USPS requirements for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This mistaken assertion was quickly rectified.

We also discussed the capability of the training center to adapt to changes in current and future USPS equipment. We emphasized the importance of quality training, particularly with the 2009 change in testing and selection brought on by the Revamped Maintenance Selection System (RMSS).

We did meet with MTSC management to discuss several items, including the ET-11s new LMOU, as well as the proposed update to eMARS. There was a separate meeting held over the construction of the preventative maintenance guidelines that are issued as Maintenance Management Orders (MMOs).

Assistant Director Martinez, who principally reviews these items when provided to the APWU, noticed some issues arising. This meeting, all agreed, was helpful to express the intentions and requirements over the assignment of work and our understanding of the development of the estimated times. These are critical documents in the staffing for our work on postal equipment, and accuracy and specificity of job tasks are extremely important.

We also met with USPS headquarters management on the remanded portions of the MS-1 that was part of Arbitrator Goldberg's award. While there was a free exchange at these meetings, no agreement was reached. Please refer to the APWU website for the MS-1 award at issue.

The opportunity to make a site visit, conduct several labor-management meetings, and meet on a national arbitration remand made the trip very worthwhile. Still, the best part to us was the opportunity to meet with the members attending NCED. We previously conducted these sessions on a more regular basis and have every intention of returning to our more regular visits to Norman, OK.

Please remember to say "Hi" to your friendly floor steward. ■



Assistant Director Javier Piñeres and Director Michael Foster

Here We Go Again!

To quote the famous New York Yankee legend Yogi Berra, “It’s déjà vu all over again.” As we prepare for the opening of the 2018 Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations, we can be certain that the USPS will once again expect the union, or an interest arbitrator, to concede the many years of benefits we have obtained for APWU members. This USPS textbook move has been used **over and over** again in their attempt to put the union on defense and not offense. Being mindful of this strategy, the APWU’s leadership remains focused on protecting and improving the rights of our members.

The membership will play an important part now more than ever as the union moves forward in preparing, and ultimately reaching a new Collective Bargaining Agreement. Your role as a member is to stay involved, submit resolutions for changes to the contract and remain informed on the issues affecting the Motor Vehicle Service Craft.

Labor Cost Rates

The amounts, cost and other charges that the USPS affixes to their employees when making the decision of performing the work in-house versus subcontracting remains unclear to the Motor Vehicle Service Division. In Postal Vehicle Service and Vehicle Maintenance Operations – despite numerous requests for information, National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) charges and Step 4 disputes – the USPS has not yet fully disclosed the components included in fully loaded labor costs. Our position remains that the *Contracting or Insourcing of Contracted Service* Memorandum of Understanding requires full disclosure by the USPS of the costs.

The APWU has repeatedly requested the Postal Service to provide the union with the “National Average Labor Rates” for 2016 and 2017, and recently received the rates for 2016 (can be viewed on apwu.org). The idea of doing a cost comparison without a labor rate flies in the face of doing a fair comparison of all reasonable costs. In addition, the union is seeking a better understanding of how certain benefits are being allocated by the USPS to the service wide cost, and used to increase overall bargaining unit cost. We will remain vigilant

during 2018 in obtaining VMF Labor Cost Methods and their use to subcontract vehicle maintenance work.

DSI Dispute Settled

On Nov. 22, 2017, the MVS Division settled a longstanding grievance, QOOV-4Q-C 05171465, regarding upgrading the Driver Safety Instructor (DSI) positions. In the dispute, the union’s grievance sought to upgrade the DSI one level higher than the Tractor Trailer Operator (TTO).

When the Motor Vehicle Operator and TTO positions were upgraded in the mid-2000s, the Driver Instructor Examiner (DIE) remained at the same level and did not receive an upgrade. In 2007, the DIE position was abolished and the DSI position was created. For many years, this left the positions ranked at the pre-2005 level. This disparity caused unintended consequences. If a TTO desired to become a DSI, this resulted in a demotion for the TTO. This mid-term upgrade restores parity with the TTO and reestablishes the appropriate level for the DSI.

Security at Network Distribution Centers

The APWU initiated a dispute at the Network Distribution Centers in 2015; we also contacted the Office of Inspector General who conducted an audit at 11 NDCs. The OIG found, based on report HR-AR-18-001, that the Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service did not always effectively address and monitor security deficiencies. Some of the deficiencies included obstructed, damaged, or inoperable gates, fences, doors, locks and closed-circuit television systems.

The OIG said that, “These conditions occurred because internal controls were not sufficient to ensure responsible security and area officials effectively addressed, monitored, and communicated security deficiencies or conducted VRAT assessments, as required...When security deficiencies are not timely addressed or VRAT assessments are not conducted as required, there is an increased risk to the safety and security of Postal Service employees, customers, the mail, and other assets.”

This issue was first raised by members attending the BMC Conference. We must remain vigilant to ensure a safe workforce in all buildings. ■

Contract News



Director Steve Brooks

The year 2017 was busy with contract negotiations for the Support Services Division. We negotiated and ratified three separate Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs). Our postal unit, Information Technology/Accounting Services, and two private sector units – Salmon Companies and a Mail Transport Equipment Service Center in Urbandale, IA – were all completed within the year.

2018 looks to be much the same with negotiations opening for B&B Trucking, Operating/Facility Services and Material Distribution Center (which encompass Articles 40 and 41 of the APWU/USPS CBA), National Postal Professional Nurses, Information Technology/Accounting Services (the current contract expires Jan. 2019), and a new private sector Mail Transport Equipment Service Center (MTEC) in Temperance, MI.

MTEC Update

It has been a slow process, but after agreeing to a settlement to bring back displaced workers from the MTEC in Detroit, the new company in Temperance began the testing and hiring process to place them in positions. By the time this article is printed, the process will be complete, and we will have informed Federal Mediation and Consolidation Services (FMCS) and the company that we are initiating the bargaining process.

We are expecting that these negotiations will be contentious as the company was not previously unionized – and in our opinion, deliberately avoided hiring these displaced, unionized employees.

Downsizing

In the past, the Information Technology/Accounting Services employees have not gone through any real type of reversions, excessing, abolishment, or closing of facilities. Times are changing, and the Postal Service is now reverting positions on the accounting side in each of the three centers that have accounting, payroll, and finance units.

Management claims that the reductions are necessary due to the automation of numerous forms and processes. Therefore, the need for manual input and review by bargaining unit employees has diminished. In our first labor/management meeting on the subject, the union was presented with the forms that would be automated and a brief description of how it may affect the review process done by bargaining unit employees. Typical of management, they had no exact information on how many jobs may be impacted as a result of the automation change.

Since that point, the union has learned that the original plan to automate the forms has led to management entering the forms. There will be no review of data by the bargaining unit, and instead of being actually processed by bargaining unit employees who have the expertise to correctly enter the transaction, the system will be programmed to complete the necessary adjustment. In essence it means that management will now enter the form, which then processes automatically and eliminates the need for any review of the adjustment.

The bargaining unit employees in these areas have the expertise to recognize the appropriate action that needs to be taken, codes necessary to correctly do the adjustment and the common sense to check the processed data for accuracy. How many of you would like to leave your financial transaction, payroll adjustment or back pay issue up to your supervisor for processing? Very few I am certain, and for good reason.

We have filed a Step 4 dispute on the subject, and continue to file on the reversion of the accounting positions, which appear to be random because the reversions are not in the areas where the automation changes occurred.

Management appears to be downsizing just for the sake of reducing the workforce. These actions have led to increased workloads and stress, which creates an unhealthy work environment. The struggle continues. We will all have to fight to save our jobs. ■



Southern Region Coordinator Kenneth L. Beasley

Management Has to Make Sense

Whatever we do in life, we must make sense in our interactions and conversations with each other – especially between the union and management – so that we can respectfully arrive at some kind of resolve. Not making sense kills morale.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, “All men are caught up in an inescapable network of mutuality, what affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” Therefore, we have to depend on each other if we are going to have civilized understanding, especially when acting as a liaison between union members and management.

Never in the history of the post office has management made such blatant, off-course actions in regard to excessing employees. The employees who are not impacted now want to retire, not because they are ready to, but because they are tired of management’s unreliable and senseless decisions.

The implications of these bad decisions have consequences that are not good for the Postal Service. They are ill-advised and detrimental to the progress of workers and the American public.

The union has received several thousand notices of excessing events from management, which the Regional Coordinators in-turn send out to the local presidents of the affected offices. As you know, the 50-mile excessing radius is still in effect – and even if it was

beyond the 50 miles, there are still no places for the employees to be excessed to.

The facilities where the employees are slated to be excessed from are short of help, and the facilities that the employees are to be excessed to have no residual vacancies. To further complicate matters, the Postal Service is still hiring non-career employees to fill positions. Management cannot justify excessing employees out of positions and hiring employees to fill them. That in itself creates an impasse. It’s like robbing Peter to pay Paul. Em-

ployees on the workroom floor are baffled and puzzled saying, “management makes no sense.”

Management’s own impact statements that are used to show justification are seriously flawed and baseless. In fact, most of their reports make the union’s case as to why the employees should not be excessed.

Our own MDAT program clearly backs up the union’s contention that the excessing should cease. The union keeps telling management if they continue to violate the provisions in Article 12, it will cost them a lot of money in arbitration. ■

JCIM Training

JCIM training should be complete by the time this article is published. I want to thank all the local and national representatives who took the time to participate. The training is much needed for the union and management.

Management was in the training with you when the interpretation was accepted by both sides. So when you go into your meetings with them and they say something different, you can then look them in the eye and boldly call them out.

Join a Contract Action Team

CAT means “Contract Action Team.” They give every union member a chance to become involved in 2018 contract negotiations. The team’s main focus will be to build solidarity with your union brothers and sisters, and explain to the public how important the public Postal Service is to America.

I do believe that the continued, enthusiastic cooperation and hard work our union members showed in 2017, will help us do even better in 2018. We are the marvel of the post office.

My fellow Regional Coordinators: Sharyn M. Stone, Central Region; Mike Gallagher, Eastern Region; John H. Dirzius, Northeast Region; Omar M. Gonzalez, Western Region; and myself, Kenneth Beasley, Southern Region, are sending our best wishes to everyone for a wonderful, safe and prosperous 2018.



FROM the FIELD

Below are quotes from various APWU local and state publications throughout the country.
All the publications listed are part of the Postal Press Association.

"Everything the USPS does is all about money and downsizing and at our expense. We all want our jobs and do not want to have to move from our comfort zone to keep it. The APWU is fighting everything for our members and want you to feel secure and know that we have your back... This is a contract negotiation year which amplifies the fight. We need the support of all members in this battle. Your help is necessary in the effort to fight for our jobs."

– Gregory Bryant, Greensboro BMC Local (NC) Editor/
Legislative Director, *The Eagle's Perspective*

"Management's best tactic is to divide and conquer. We must NOT allow that to happen. When discipline is issued, or your bid is reverted, or you are excessed from your section, know one thing: It is NOT your union's fault. The union is not the one that is doing this to you. Our union is here to protect us from harm. Grievances are filed, on your behalf because the union wants to right the wrong."

– Vivian Snitgen, 480-481 Area Local (MI)
Arbitration Advocate,
The 480-481 Communicator

"We need to come together and support our fellow union brothers and sisters when it comes to abusive managers. If you witness a manager being abusive to a coworker then write a statement. This is the only way we can combat these managers who think they can treat employees whatever way they want."

– Kevin Smith, Southern New York Area Local President, *Southern Views*

"Amazon has become the post office's most important customer and it appears that management will violate the contract with impunity to sort, scan, and deliver the packages. No one other than a clerk can accept and process the Amazon packages. This includes Sunday work for those offices that have Sunday Amazon drops. If carriers or supervisors are performing these duties, document how many 'non-clerks' are doing the work and how long they did the work. Pass this information on to the union for investigation."

– Chad Beer, Lehigh Valley Area Local (PA)
Clerk Craft Director, *Lehigh Valley Visions*

"Throughout the year we will see departures of several of our local's officers and activists who are retiring from the USPS. ...We have been fortunate to have the level of activism we've had in the past, but to ensure that hard-fought gains are not lost; we must organize, train and empower the future leaders of our local. Whether you take on a leadership role in the local or attend our monthly union meetings, your activism is not only welcome but necessary."

– Jim Alexander, Southern Oregon Area Local President, *Southern Oregon Area Review*

"It is crystal clear that the wealthiest of this country are about to get wealthier, on the backs of working people and on the backs of our children. Only a groundswell of average voters writing, calling, registering to vote and voting out those who vote against us will change this huge problem of income inequality. This country was founded to overcome royalty, tyranny, and tyrants. They have the money and power, but we have the votes."

– Russ Franklin, Salt Lake City (UT) Area Local President, *The Six-Bits*

It's Time to Play Amazon's New Hit Game, **'MILK THE TAXPAYER!'**

The following article by Jim Hightower (former Texas Agriculture Commissioner and popular activist) originally appeared in the Hightower Lowdown and was edited for length.

Milk the Taxpayer, the old corporate-politico con game, is a 5-step con that generally works like this:

1. GreatBigCorporation decides to build a facility in City A.
2. Claiming the project will create beaucoup jobs, GBC demands that City A's officials fork over boodles of tax breaks and gimmies.
3. If the officials hem and haw, GBC approaches City B to stir up a bidding war.
4. Fearing the stigma from "losing" those jobs, City A officials cave to GBC's demands.
5. At a joint press conference, both parties hail the "win-win" deal and praise each other's forward-looking vision and integrity.

The Great ScAmazon of 2017

While practically every big brand name (Apple, Disney, Marriott, Toyota, Walmart, YouNameIt) travels hither, thither, and yon to play Milk the Taxpayer, Amazon is totally re-writing the rules of the game, supersizing its piles of public money without even having to go door to door. In September, the \$136-billion-a-year, multi-tentacled monopolist sparked a prairie fire of excitement among state and local economic development officials when it coyly announced its intention to build a second corporate headquarters in Someplace, North America. Game on!

CEO Jeff Bezos baited his location-subsidy trap with red meat, announcing that Amazon "expect[ed] to invest over \$5 billion in construction and grow this second headquarters to include as many as 50,000 high-paying jobs."

Then Bezos & Co. made a bold move: They sat still and waited. Stretching corporate overreach to new lengths, the Amazonian royals bid public officials to approach the Seattle throne with all the jewels, bars of gold, frankincense, myrrh, and any other tribute they could muster to show their worthiness for HQ2 (Amazon's cute, high-techie appellation for the proposed co-headquarters). Thus, in one stroke, Amazon switched its

corporate role from asker to askew and instantly pitted taxpayers across Mexico, Canada, and the US against each other in a no-limit bidding war.

Reaching even farther, Amazon issued a seven-page directive listing some specific bribes (excuse me, "incentives") that each supplicant should offer. First was a "business-friendly environment." Then, urging hopefuls to "think big" when offering freebies, the directive listed specific incentives that would be "Decision Drivers," including contributions of "land, site preparation, tax credits/exemptions, relocation grants, workforce grants, utility incentives/grants, and fee reductions."

Oh, and also a highly-educated labor pool; an international airport with direct daily flights to key cities; quality of life where "our employees will enjoy living"; and, most important, "elected officials eager and willing to work with the company."

Surely no self-respecting civic official would willingly play the sucker in such a demeaning, sell-out-the-public scam.

Ha! Officials from 238 cities, regions, and states have so far rushed to Bezos' corporate castle to grovel, dance, beg, and stage dog-and-pony spectacles in the perverse hope that Amazon might choose their taxpayers to rip off.

All this for a tacky PR stunt with one purpose: to compel the half dozen or so actual contenders to jack up their offers. In fact, Amazon's data-driven, hard-nosed "economic development department," set up five years ago, will decide among the few locations it has already deemed most profitable. All other cities are being snookered into spending millions on a rigged game only Amazon can win.

Stop This!

Why are we subsidizing these over-privileged, arrogant elites to enrich themselves at the expense of our common good? Of course, "we" are not actually the ones cutting these deals – our public officials are cutting them in our name (and often in secret), with most people not even aware of the costs.

If people in even one place stop their public officials from giving in to this shameful corporate selfishness, the whole game will change, because others will realize they can rise up and stop it where they live. That's how "STOP THIS!" becomes a national movement. ■

Q&A

with Our Revolution President Nina Turner

Our Revolution formed in the wake of Senator Bernie Sanders' groundbreaking presidential campaign. The American Postal Worker spoke with its President, former Ohio State Senator Nina Turner about the organization's future goals.

Q: What is Our Revolution?

A: "Our Revolution is an organization that is building progressive, grassroots movements all across the country, in a way that reminds people that the political power is in our hands. In order to create a strong democracy, people have to be engaged."

"As of February, we have 540 groups all across the country and seven are international. Our work involves taking on progressive issues; for example, Fight for \$15 or Medicare for All, voting rights, gender rights, women's rights, all of those progressive issues that we refer to as the People's Platform."

Q: What does Our Revolution hope to accomplish?

A: "We are fighting for issues that make a real difference in the lives of people. We know it's vitally important not only to have the right issues, but also to have candidates who care about those issues and push them through public policy."

Q: What other issues are you focusing on?

A: "Wealth inequality is the number one issue that comes up when I'm traveling across the country speaking with our local groups. So many people work so hard and are not able to make ends meet."

"We are also working with a number of organizations to get money out of politics. That is a big deal, far too many elected officials are bought off by special interests."

Q: How do you envision uniting workers across the political spectrum?

A: "We're uniting workers by speaking to what we have in common. We cannot think of ourselves as Democrat, Republican, Green Party, Libertarian, but instead think of ourselves as working-class folks who have power and together we can bring powerful changes to our communities and our nation."

"Far too many elected officials don't care about labor issues and there has been a push in this country to take away collective bargaining rights. The only way to make this democracy strong is to make sure as many people as possible participate in it."

Q: How does Labor for Our Revolution work into the overall plan moving forward?

A: "*Labor for Our Revolution*, and our Board Chair, former Communications Workers of America President Larry Cohen, keep us in touch and engaged with issues that mean most to the House of Labor. The only way we are going to create a progressive America is to have that cross-pollination between labor, civically-minded organizations, and organizations like Our Revolution."

Q: What role do you see ballot initiatives and referendums playing in the 2018 elections?

A: "HUGE. Citizens, especially in states that have the right to have



Nina Turner speaking at the 23rd Biennial National Convention on Aug. 22, 2016 in Orlando, FL.

a referendum [in elections], can make their voices known and that voice speaks a policy into existence. The power of referendum is to have the ability to put issues on the table, a powerful tool."

Q: What is Our Revolution's position on the public Postal Service?

A: "It's the DNA of America. You do a great job. Absolutely, without a doubt, we support our postal workers. Postal workers serve the greater good for all in this country."

Q: How can APWU members and supporters get involved?

A: "Go to our website, *OurRevolution.com*, and join a group. If there's not one in your area, make one. Find us on Facebook and Twitter. No matter which action you choose, please get involved."

"The only way that we are going to transform this nation is if we have everyday citizens – the working-class, all across the country – get involved." ■

CHANGED MY MIND

*The following is a reprint of a column by APWU of Wisconsin President Steve Lord that ran in the November-December 2017 issue of **The Badger Bulletin**. On Jan. 3, Lord retired after a 41-year postal career, serving as APWU of Wisconsin president for the past 12 years. Prior to that, he was APWU of Wisconsin's Legislative & Political Director for four years, Oshkosh Area Local President for 14 years and Oshkosh Area Local Vice President for five years. Lord became an active APWU member in 1978.*

Past APWU President Moe Biller and Steve Lord



No, I haven't changed my mind about retiring. I only have 50 days left at the USPS and a few months as State President but, I have changed my mind about a few other things. One of the things I have changed my mind about is term limits for our elected U.S. representatives.

How much longer will we put up with a bought and paid for Congress and Senate? How much longer will we put up with a Congress that does absolutely nothing to help working and middle-class Americans?

Corporate wealth and billionaire individuals have bought our government and are having their way with our democratic system. I used to be firmly in the camp against term limits but not any longer. The latest tax bill is another slap in the face. Calling it the Jobs Act is a joke. The *Tax Cut and Jobs Act* will line the pockets of the rich and cut deductions for the middle-class and will increase the deficit by 1.5 trillion dollars.

Maybe term limits would give us legislators that aren't beholden to the rich and powerful. I am willing to see if it will work. Something has to be done. Another thing that I used to think was a bad idea is forming a labor party. I used to think that a Labor Party would be too divisive and hand easy victories to the Republican Party but, labor is so taken for granted that Democrats count on us at election time then ignore us at legislation time. They think, where else will we go? What else will we do? Form our own party that is what. Other countries do it. Coalitions are formed.

Labor's wants and needs would have to be addressed. True change in our government is needed. The other thing I have changed my mind about is Right-to-Work Laws. One state after another passes Right-to-Work legislation calling it a worker's choice bill instead of what it is, a wage reduction bill. So when I say I have changed my mind about the legislation, I guess what I mean is

that I have changed my mind about how to fight it.

When legislators introduce these bills as workers' rights bills we need to say, if you want to make it easy for workers to quit or not join a union let's make it equally as easy to join and form unions. If you want to call it a workers' rights bill, let's truly make it that and see who prevails. Our government is broken and needs to be fixed soon. Wise up! Rise up! ■



Steve Lord at the Climate March in Washington D.C. on April 29, 2017.



Judy Beard, Director

Voting Rights Under Attack

With the 2018 midterm elections rapidly approaching, we must remain vigilant on the barrage of attacks against our voting rights. Our vote symbolizes the values we believe in and supports the leaders we trust to make decisions affecting our livelihood. We unfortunately still live in a time where there are those who want to silence the voices of millions of citizens by making it more difficult, if not impossible, for us to exercise the fundamental right to vote.

The APWU, alongside our sister unions and like-minded community organizations, is supporting proposed ballot initiatives seeking to undo this damage by making it easier for unregistered or disenfranchised people to vote. Below are current ballot measures seeking to expand voting rights, that have either already been certified to appear on the ballot in November or are awaiting certification.

Certified

- Nevada Automatic Voter Registration via Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Initiative

Awaiting Certification

- Colorado Automatic Voter Registration via Public Entities Initiative
- Missouri Right to Vote Absentee Initiative
- South Dakota Vote-by-Mail Initiative

We encourage you to check with your AFL-CIO central labor council and state federation for more information on voting right ballot initiatives, to learn more about these positive measures and find out what you can do to help with their ongoing campaigns.

Fight Back Against Right-to-Work!

During this session of Congress, we saw the introduction of the National Right-to-Work Act (H.R. 785). To date there are 28 states with Right-to-Work laws. With every new state that passes this disastrous legislation, the federal Right-to-Work legislation gains steam.

We know this legislation will weaken union collective bargaining power and has the proven effect of lowering wages. H.R. 785 currently has 108 co-sponsors in Congress whose positions are up for election this November.

Whether or not Right-to-Work will be on the ballot in your state this November, you can fight back like our union brothers and sisters in Missouri who put in countless hours, energy and resources to have a chance at repealing their state's Right-to-Work legislation.

Legislative Training

Legislative training is underway. APWU members are gearing up to sharpen their skills to combat the threat against our civil liberties, defend our public Postal Service, and elect individuals who will fight for us. Join our *Be Seen, Be Heard, and Vote* campaign. Sign the pledge at apwu.org. ■

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.

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.

National Right-to-Work Act (H.R. 785) – Removes the requirement for employees to join a union/pay dues as a condition of employment. This would seriously reduce a union's collective bargaining power.



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Attend a Pre-Convention Workshop

The Research & Education Department will sponsor the APWU's 16th Educational Conference, a National Convention event that provides union members with a wealth of information to take home to their locals and state organizations.

Twenty-eight workshops will be offered on **Friday, Aug. 17, 2018**, the day prior to the craft meetings, at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, Hall B.

All APWU members are welcome and encouraged to sign-up online by the early registration **deadline of Friday, Aug. 3**. This deadline is firm for participants with special needs: *If you need an ASL interpreter, for example, you must register by Aug. 3*. Other participants may try to sign up for workshops after they arrive in Pittsburgh; however, **late registrants will have a limited choice of workshops and will not receive certificates**.

More information can be found at apwu.org. Below is a list of workshops and times.

Arbitration Forum

Provides an exceptional opportunity to observe a panel discussion where an arbitrator, USPS Labor Relations Manager, and an APWU NBA give their unique perspectives on preparing, presenting, arguing and deciding cases.

(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Article 37.3.A.1 and MDAT

Outlines how to use these tools to create and preserve jobs in the Clerk Craft, reduce the PSE complement, create desirable duty assignments, maximize PTFs in small offices, reduce disputes on reversions and abolishments, and reduce excessing when the USPS is utilizing PSEs. **Participants must bring a fully charged laptop to the training.**

(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Basic Shop Steward's Training

Guidelines for new shop stewards, with a focus on proper documentation of grievances, and the duties, rights and guidelines for shop stewards.

(10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Building Coalitions to Fight Consolidations

Discusses how to build the alliances we need to keep offices open and located in the communities they serve. Examines an essential element in the fight to protect jobs and improve service.

(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Communicating at the Local Level

Examines the importance of information sharing, using various mediums with special emphasis on the process of producing a member-oriented, high quality, union publication.

(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Custodial Staffing Basics

Provides instructions on putting together and verifying a MS-47 custodial staffing package and covers staffing development for both the T/L-3 and T/L-5 version. Best suited for officers and stewards lacking previous Maintenance staffing training or those who want to brush-up on their knowledge of custodial staffing. Correct custodial staffing is the first step in enforcement of Line H issues.

(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Digital Media Basic: What Is All the Fuss About?

Provides digital media training for beginners, giving an overview of what it is and how it affects the daily lives of workers. Outlines basic strategies to reach out to members, allies and potential members through websites and social media.

(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Digital Media Intermediate: Taking it to the Next Level

Digs deeper into digital media strategies with hands-on practice. It is geared toward participants who regularly use digital media – such as having a personal Facebook profile or page, a blog, or some other internet presence – and are looking to up their digital media game.

(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Disabled Veterans' Benefits

Assists representatives in helping disabled veterans obtain benefits.

(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Disability Retirement

Explains how disability retirement pay is calculated and how to avoid delays and disapprovals.

(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Effective Retiree Chapters

Discusses how to start a new chapter or reboot your current chapter. Information will be provided on maximizing membership and attendance, increasing volunteer participation, taking on leadership roles in the chapter and community, and supporting the APWU's legislative endeavors.

(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Electronic Grievance System (EGS) Training

Provides instruction on how to use the web-based EGS to complete grievance forms, email grievance information, attach supporting documentation and save grievances electronically. *Participants must bring a fully charged laptop with ability to connect to the internet during the training.*
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Empowering Young Workers

Brainstorming ways to encourage young members to become more actively involved in the union, increase activism and aid in building a more diverse labor movement.
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Excessing

Examines Article 12 and answers questions on what causes excessing, the timetable when excessing occurs, and the process – from notification to the Regional Coordinator, meetings, production of information, comparative workhour reports, retreat rights, “senior in lieu of,” super-seniority, preference eligible veterans’ rights and saved grade.
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Family and Medical Leave Act

A “how-to” session on FMLA forms, eligibility, leave requirements and guidelines.
(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Handling Workplace Injuries

Designed for beginners or to refresh your knowledge of the types of OWCP claims, forms, achieving claim approval, appeals, COP, wage loss compensation, medical treatment, return-to-work, job offers, reasonable accommodations, suitability determinations, and employer violations.
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

How to Win a Grievance Without Filing One

Addresses building workers’ power on the job without getting bogged down in paperwork. Answers the question, “How do we become a fighting union and not just a grievance machine?”
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Innovative Organizing

Teaches techniques and strategies for signing up non-members utilizing the APWU Health Plan and other benefit programs that are reserved for members. Explores ways to get members who have quit to rejoin the union.
(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Labor History Comes Alive!

A dynamic look at what we can learn from the major struggles of the past and how we can apply the lessons to the challenges we face today.
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Labor Law Fundamentals

A look at the National Labor Relations Act, with a focus on the rights of APWU members, the Duty of Fair Representation and how to identify unfair labor practices.
(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Large Office Issues (Function 1)

Covers current issues in large mail processing facilities. Topics include creating jobs, preserving existing jobs, filling residual vacancies, machine safety and staffing, and RI-399.
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Legal Issues and Union Communications

A review of editorial policies, union regulations, libel, copyright and federal election laws that apply to hard copy and electronic forms of communication.
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Maintenance New T/L-5 & T/L-3 Staffing Calculations

Teaches how to use the Maintenance Craft Excel workbook to input data and calculate an MS-47 custodial staffing package. This tool aids in determining the correct custodial staffing. *Participants must bring a fully charged laptop with the ability to connect to the internet during the training.*
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Motor Vehicle Service Division (MVS) Issues

An update on MVS issues and information on Articles 39, 32 and other articles of the CBA that apply to the Motor Vehicle Service Craft.
(10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)

Protecting Clerk Work in Smaller Offices

An overview of issues such as crossing crafts, maximization, supervisors performing bargaining-unit work, PSEs, “lobby sweeps/lobby director” and “Article 37.3.A.1, creating duty assignments in small offices.”
(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

PSEs Issues

Focuses on enforcing contractual rights of Clerk Craft PSEs. Topics include protecting PSEs’ rights, holding management accountable for exceeding the use of non-career employees, increasing the career workforce and seniority issues.
(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Retirement Planning

Provides information for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees on annuity calculations, best date to retire, benefit choices, important records to keep and tips on successfully completing the application.
(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Stand Up for Safe Jobs

Designed to build active and strong safety campaigns at the “grassroots” level. Participants will learn how to complete a PS Form 1767 (Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice), the role of local safety committees, how to seek assistance from OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) and how to help employees understand the importance of reporting safety violations on the job.
(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

If you have problems registering online, please contact Joyce B. Robinson at jrobinson@apwu.org or by telephone at 202-842-4225.

Unique Challenges for Female Vets

Record numbers of women are serving in the military and this means more female veterans. More than two million women currently account for 10 percent of our country's veteran population and that number is steadily growing. Women are entitled to the same benefits as men, but our system of care is designed for men and not equipped to meet many of the unique challenges our women veterans face.

A Women Veterans Task Force, implemented by the Veterans Administration (VA) to ascertain and address the needs of our female veterans, identified several critical areas that need attention.



The VA and Department of Defense (DoD) hospitals and medical centers are woefully understaffed. They lack facilities and specialized equipment necessary to meet gender-specific health care needs. More than a third of these medical facilities are without reproductive health care specialists, despite an increasing demand for this type of care. One in five women delay or go without feminine care annually.

Specialized inpatient mental health care intended to meet the needs and preferences of women, including peer support and group therapy, is insufficient. The VA has also been unable to keep up with the number of women returning with service-connected disabilities. Female amputees are less likely to get support and care tailored to meet their needs, or even receive a properly fitting prosthesis.

To address these issues, the VA has created a Center for Women Veterans. Every VA medical center nationwide now has a Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) available to advise women and advocate on their behalf. They coordinate primary and specialized care, ranging from chronic conditions to reproductive health.

Civilian organizations, like the Disabled Veterans National Foundation and the Disabled American Veterans Organization, are also helping by providing critical support to disabled and at-risk vets that fills some gaps

left by the VA health care system. The DoD's National Resource Directory can be another valuable tool, listing more than 17,000 organizations that provide assistance – all have been thoroughly vetted by the DoD.

Sexual abuse, harassment, and assault have reached epidemic proportions in the military. Twenty percent of women enrolled in VA health care screen positive for military sexual trauma (MST), but more than 31 percent of VA centers cannot provide adequate services.

To better assist MST victims, each VA facility now has a designated MST Coordinator to serve as an advocate. They can help access VA services and programs. Coordinators can assist with enrollment for state and federal benefits, and provide access to community resources, including free, confidential counseling and treatment. You do not have to qualify for other VA care to obtain these services. Incidents do not have to be reported or documented to obtain assistance or treatment. To learn more about MST and other violence and abuse, you can visit maketheconnection.net.

Unemployment rates are higher for post-9/11 female veterans than their male counterparts and non-veteran women. Medical and mental health concerns exacerbate challenges in the labor market. A new employment initiative, the Gold Card program, is being offered by the Department of Labor to provide unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with the intensive follow-up services needed to succeed in today's job market.

Female vets are at least twice as likely to be homeless as civilian women. They are also more likely to be single parents. Regardless of gender, no one should suffer homelessness, especially our veterans and their children. Homeless veterans and those at imminent risk should call or visit their local VA Medical Center or their VA Community Resource and Referral Center to seek assistance.

There are still deficiencies to overcome, but the VA has made some beneficial strides. If you are in need of assistance, or to learn more, contact your WVPM or call the Women Veterans Hotline 855-VA-WOMEN / 829-6636. ■

— Human Relations Department

Defend Democracy – Protect Your Vote



Sue Carney, Director

Working together from now until Election Day is a must if we are going to advance and protect our voting rights. Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy – and democracy is diminished every time we cannot get to the polls. It is weakened when we cannot afford or obtain documents required by the state to prove citizenship in order to be issued an acceptable form of identification needed to vote.

Nearly 60 million of our country's 232 million eligible voters, roughly 26 percent, were prohibited from casting a vote in the 2016 elections. We were disenfranchised by multi-prong strategies that stole our vote. They ranged from voter identification restrictions, registration purges, American Disability Act violations and polling closures.

Make no mistake – this issue is not about party lines. This is about American civil rights. Regardless of where you fall on the political spectrum, every American's voting rights, including yours, are at risk when laws are enacted that cherry-pick suitable forms of identification and target groups that are perceived to be the opposition.

As members of the labor movement, we have always been at the forefront of righting injustices within our ranks and communities. Protecting voting rights should not be restricted to legislative chambers or the courts. We need an army of volunteers to push back against restrictive laws that infringe upon our rights.

Join us. We need your help to reach potential voters well ahead of Election Day to offer support and resources that will ensure each of us, regardless of our political affiliation, are able to exercise our right to vote.

Our Work

Reaching disenfranchised voters can often be challenging. Their personal circumstances can make traditional outreach less effective, but we can connect with many of these would-be voters where they are. Make plans to visit retirement communities and senior centers, college campuses, churches, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, veterans' homes and transitional housing

establishments. Let's also not forget to check in with our co-workers, family members and friends to ensure their voices are also counted. Many might be surprised to learn they are no longer registered or fail to possess the identification needed to cast their vote.

APWU volunteers should be prepared to meet the differing needs of marginalized voters. We should be able to assist them with voter registration, obtaining acceptable identification and arranging transportation to the polls. We should be equipped to provide useful information and support that ensures everyone has the ability to vote come Election Day.

**DEMOCRACY IS DIMINISHED EVERY TIME
WE CANNOT GET TO THE POLLS.**

To get started with this important mission, visit www.rockthevote.org to find out how your state rates on its voting policies. Visitors can register to vote, learn more about identification requirements in their state, access important dates and deadlines, find polling locations and transportation assistance. They can discover whether absentee, early voting and vote-by-mail options are available. The site answers if a state permits automatic or same-day registration, provides pre-registration details for individuals who will turn 18 by election time, and includes information for voting students, military members, people with disabilities and returning citizens. *Returning citizens account for millions of Americans who are excluded from our democratic process on the basis of criminal disenfranchisement laws. Thirty-four states currently bar community members from voting based on their past mistakes.*

The time to act is now. We encourage each of you to defend democracy and protect the vote through APWU local, state and retiree chapter initiatives. Partner with Rock the Vote, the League of Women Voters and other voting rights coalitions, or participate in the ACLU Voting Rights Project.

Whatever you do, do not sit on the sidelines. Choose to defend democracy. Choose to protect the vote. With your assistance, many will get their right to vote back. ■



Nancy Olumekor, Director

Warning Signs an Older Family Member May Need Help

Changes in physical and mental abilities that may occur with age can be difficult to detect. Any one of the following behaviors may indicate the need to take action. It is also important to inform their physician of these physical or psychological behavior changes.*

Has Your Loved One:

- **Changed eating habits** – resulting in losing weight, having no appetite, or missing meals?
- **Neglected personal hygiene** – including wearing dirty clothes and having body odor, bad breath, neglected nails and teeth, or sores on the skin?
- **Neglected their home** – with a noticeable change in cleanliness and sanitation?
- **Exhibited inappropriate behavior** – such as being unusually loud, quiet, paranoid, or agitated, or making phone calls at all hours?
- **Changed relationship patterns** – causing friends and neighbors to express concerns?
- **Had physical problems** – such as burns or injury marks, which may result from general weakness, forgetfulness, or misuse of alcohol or prescribed medications?
- **Decreased or stopped participating in activities that were once important to them** – such as bridge or a book club, dining with friends, or attending religious services?
- **Exhibited forgetfulness** – resulting in unopened mail, piling of newspapers, not filling their prescriptions, or missing appointments?
- **Mishandled finances** – such as not paying bills, losing money, paying bills twice or more, or hiding money?
- **Made unusual purchases** – such as buying more than one subscription to the same magazine, entering an unusually large number of contests, or increasing purchases from television advertisements?

*Source: Administration for Community Living, DHHS, fact sheet.

Get connected with information on local aging resources that offer assistance for aging in place, enabling older adults to continue living independently in their homes and communities. Contact the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 or eldercare.gov. ■

The ER Can Often Be a Tipping Point for Seniors

Kaiser Health News (1/11, Graham) reports that an elderly person's visit to the ER "often signals a serious health challenge and should serve as a wake-up call for caregivers and relatives." Researchers have found that seniors are 14 percent more likely to acquire a disability within six months of visiting an ER.

The article adds that the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) launched an accreditation program for ERs in February that will certify "at least a minimal level of geriatric competence." Dr. Kevin Biese, chair of the board of governors for ACEP's initiative, offered a recommendation, advising, "Ask for a room, instead of letting your loved one stay out in the hallway – a horrible place for seniors at risk of delirium."

Make a Difference

According to the Administration for Community Living, older Americans are one of the fastest growing demographics in the country. By 2020, there will be more than 77 million people over the age of 60.

Seniors have worked too long and hard to reach retirement, to then have the benefits they have earned put at risk by insensitive politicians. The 2018 elections at every level of government are vitally important to all of us. This year, your participation will make a difference in the outcome of these elections. We can use our experience and our voting strength to achieve the outcome necessary to protect our hard-earned benefits that we deserve to enjoy in retirement. Are you ready to continue to *Fight Today for A Better Tomorrow*?



John Marcotte, Director

Understanding Balance Billing

My office gets many questions on the subject of “in- and out-of-network” and how it applies to members of the APWU Health Plan. First, I want to caution our readers that some FEHB insurance plans do not pay anything for out-of-network services. APWU High Option and Consumer Driven Option both cover out-of-network services.

Many of you understand that most, if not all, FEHB health insurance plans that do cover out-of-network services pay at a reduced rate for those services, this is true of APWU Health Plan (APWUHP) High Option and Consumer Driven Option. However, you may not know about balance billing. Balance billing is taking what the insurance company pays and then billing you for the difference.

There are large savings in charges for health care services by staying in-network, partly because we negotiate a reduced rate from the standard rate for those services and we forbid balance billing our members who receive in-network covered services.

Balance billing is complex, so let's walk through an example. Assuming you have APWUHP High Option, have met your deductible and you go in for a covered, in-network service. The reasonable and customary rate for this service is \$300, but APWUHP negotiated a \$220 rate for that same service. APWUHP would then pay 90 percent, or \$198. This leaves our member with a \$22 bill for this service. The provider cannot bill you for any differences or additional charges for this service.

If you choose to go out-of-network for this same service, our negotiated rate does not apply and they can charge whatever they desire for their services. The provider is also not limited to what is reasonable or customary and could bill you \$350 or more for the same service. The generous benefits of APWUHP would pay at a reduced percentage up to what is reasonable and customary for that location.

If we received a \$350 bill for a High Option member, we would pay 70 percent of the \$300, or \$210 (in this case,

even more than we paid for in-network service). You would owe \$140 for this service, because the facility is not in-network and therefore can balance bill. Accepting our payment does not bind the health care provider to our rate scale or any limit on what they can bill.

THERE ARE LARGE SAVINGS IN CHARGES FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES BY STAYING IN-NETWORK. IF YOU CHOOSE TO GO OUT-OF-NETWORK, OUR NEGOTIATED RATE DOES NOT APPLY AND THEY CAN CHARGE WHATEVER THEY DESIRE.

Balance billing complaints arise mostly from our members going out-of-network and ordering medical devices from TV ads, or not understanding the cost and getting services out-of-network. The cost for services or devices can be two to three times what is reasonable or customary, leaving members with large, dubious bills.

Medicare B Retirees

We are starting to see balance billing of our Medicare B retirees, which in the few cases brought to our attention were entirely inappropriate. If you are retired, have Medicare Part B and APWUHP High Option, you should not receive a bill with a balance due for Medicare covered services from a Medicare provider.

Medicare pays for services at a negotiated rate. Medicare then pays 80 percent of a bill for covered services and APWUHP High Option pays the remaining 20 percent while waiving all copays and deductibles. In the cases we have seen, the provider or facility accepts Medicare patients, receives Medicare's payment, receives the APWUHP payment and then are billing the patient for more money.

If you have APWUHP High Option and Medicare B, and receive a bill with a balance due, give us call right away at 800-222-APWU, so we can ensure you are being billed correctly. ■

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