

# THE AMERICAN Postal Worker

March/April 2020

## New Union Contract!!

- ✓ General Wage Increases!
- ✓ No Lay-off Protections!
- ✓ Cost-of-Living Raises!
- ✓ Narrowing the Gap in the Two-Tiered Wage Structure!
- ✓ Improvements for PSEs!
- ✓ 50 Mile Limit on Excessing!
- ✓ Back Pay!

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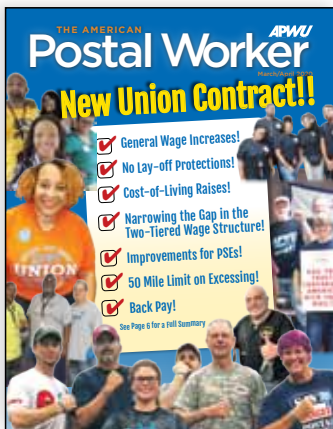
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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

# Home of the Brave

**W**hat bravery! 50 years ago, postal workers made history with the Great Postal Strike of 1970 and faced real and tough questions: Should I break the law? Might I be fined or arrested? Will I lose my job?

In 1970, postal employees worked for low pay and long hours under deplorable working conditions. Many qualified for public assistance and held multiple jobs to make ends meet. “Collective begging” to Congress for more wages and better treatment failed the workers.

When Congress voted themselves a huge pay raise, pent-up anger led to action. New York City postal workers from all crafts took matters into their own hands. They defied the law, their own national union leaders and their government. The strike quickly spread to 30 cities with 210,000 workers withholding their labor.

THE LESSONS OF THE STRIKE ARE  
PROFOUND: NO LAW CAN DENY WORKERS  
OUR INHERENT RIGHT TO WITHHOLD OUR  
LABOR TO IMPROVE OUR LIVES.

Workers’ power brought Wall Street and the politicians to their knees! By standing tall, postal workers gained a new self-respect. They won collective bargaining rights and achieved significant wage gains, COLAs and job security. Out of the strike the APWU was born when five postal unions merged into one. Decades of progress followed.

I was hired in 1983, just 13 years after the great strike. My family’s life became much better with good union wages, benefits and job security – the inheritance left to all future postal workers.

The lessons of the strike are profound: no law can deny workers our inherent right to withhold our labor to improve our lives (once again proven by the education workers from West Virginia and beyond); postal union unity is key to victory; we can take on powerful adversaries and win; and as the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass declared, “power concedes nothing without a demand.”

We best honor the courageous strikers by carrying the torch of justice forward as the struggle continues to save our union, our jobs, and the public Postal Service and to build a country and world that respects and uplifts the 99%.

## A New Union Contract

With the victorious strike, postal workers became the only federal workers to have full collective bargaining rights.

50 years later we are still reaping the benefits.

After a long battle, we now have the results of the final and binding Interest Arbitration Award setting forth the terms of our new union contract. Arbitration never completely favors one side or the other. But thanks to your union membership, involvement and a strong and well-prepared union case, we once again have gained a solid union contract with great job security. Retroactive pay raises and COLAs were achieved. Big gains were made in bridging the gaps in the multi-tier pay scales with the restoration of some higher step increases in Grades 5-8 of the lower pay scale. Thousands of PSEs will gain career conversions. No lay-off protections and the limit of a 50-mile radius for excessing were maintained (*for details of the Award see page 6*).

Some perspective: management made draconian demands. They advocated for a third lower tier career wage scale. They demanded more non-career employees. They sought to weaken our no lay-off protections. They said we did not deserve any general wage increases. They proposed COLA should be lump sum payments.

What stopped this backward march? You the member! That’s right. In a non-union workplace, management would have simply implemented their changes. With our union, we had the organized vehicle to fight back, wage a good contract campaign, counter with our own progressive demands and, if necessary, engage in final and binding arbitration.

I thank all of those involved, starting with you, the member, the foundation of our union. Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman did an outstanding job planning and coordinating the union’s case. National craft officers provided key testimony. Worker witnesses were terrific. Our staff, attorneys and economists were right on the money.

Job well done! Onward! ■

# The CATs Next Life

With the successful conclusion of the interest arbitration process, it is time for the CATs to continue *Fighting Today for A Better Tomorrow* beyond the 2018 Contract Campaign.

“The CAT teams’ work in ensuring rank-and-file unity actions on workroom floors across the country, with our demand for a *Good Contract Now*, was vital to the life of our union,” said President Mark Dimondstein. “Postal management knew we were united and strong during negotiations and interest arbitration.”

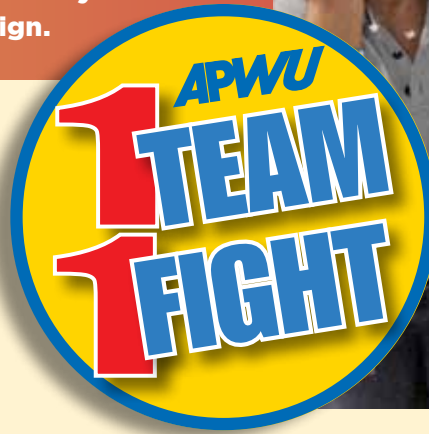
We are building on the activism CATs brought to the contract fight to continue educating, agitating, organizing, and mobilizing members and allies in all of the union’s campaigns, including future campaigns for a good contract. With that in mind, the National Officers have rebranded the Contract Action Teams to be the **Collective Action Teams!**

Over the last two contract campaigns, the work of the CATs has been essential to increasing solidarity and awareness on the workroom floor. The APWU National Campaign Committee (formerly the National Contract Campaign Committee) is excited to help continue that important work to expand worker power.

Collective Action Teams will continue coordinating local actions similar to how they have done before, including:

- Facilitating contract campaigns during national and local negotiation periods.
- Assisting APWU national/local/state unions with mobilizing members for specific days of action (for example Tax Day, Workers Memorial Day, Congress Call-In Days, Postal Heritage Day, etc.).
- Supporting and spreading the National APWU campaigns’ information and calls to action, including *Stand Up for Safe Jobs*, *U.S. Mail: Not for Sale*, *A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service*, and *Campaign for Postal Banking*.
- Assisting locals and local officers with workplace disputes with management by organizing local solidarity efforts.
- Reaching out and showing solidarity with other unions and community allies in their fights for justice.
- Increasing APWU membership at USPS workplaces across the country by speaking to non-members about the union.

CAT members should “keep up the good work of APWU activism buzzing in the workplace,” said President Dimondstein.



Miami Area Local

## ‘One Team, One Fight’

The CAT members from across the country voted and the new Collective Action Teams’ slogan to rally behind is *One Team, One Fight!*

A union is only as strong as its members, and the Collective Action Teams are paramount to increasing solidarity and strength in each local. All workers in the APWU bargaining unit are welcome to join their teams as we unify and gain strength for our fight for workers’ rights.

If your local has a CAT, reach out to your CAT coordinator today about joining our “team.” If there is not one, speak to your local officer, or contact [ncc@apwu.org](mailto:ncc@apwu.org) to find out how you can start one. ■

*“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”*  
– Helen Keller

Rochester SCF Area Local (NY)





# Summary and Highlights from

In early March, Neutral Arbitrator and Interest Arbitration Panel Chair Stephen Goldberg issued the binding decision on the terms of the new union contract between the American Postal Workers Union and the United States Postal Service.

The Award was the product of 20 months of preparation, member and local union input, negotiations, mediation, a strong contract campaign and a well-prepared and presented arbitration case. Thirty-two workers testified about their work. Officers and subject matter experts testified for the union. A team of economists presented our case and rebutted management's presentations for union concessions.

The full arbitration award can be found at [apwu.org](http://apwu.org). Below are the highlights and significant changes contained in the Award.

Unless specifically changed by this Award, all rights and benefits in the previous contract carry forward into the new one. These include seniority and bidding rights, protections against unjust discipline, the grievance procedure, annual and sick leave, holiday and overtime pay, health and safety protections and so many of the important rights and benefits won over many decades of struggle.

## Length of Contract

- Three Years: September 21, 2018 to September 20, 2021

## Career Employee General Wage Increases

- Three annual general wage increases totaling 3.4% over the life of the Agreement.
- 1.3% effective November 24, 2018 (Retroactive)
- 1.1% effective November 23, 2019 (Retroactive)
- 1% effective November 21, 2020

## Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA)

Semiannual COLAs for career employees will continue under the current formula. Management pushed, but failed, to convert COLAs into one-time lump-sum payments.

- \$624 or \$.30/hour COLA will be applied retroactive to August 31, 2019
- \$166 or \$.08/hour COLA will be applied retroactive to February 29, 2020
- Future COLAs will be applied in September 2020, March 2021 and September 2021

- COLAs to date add \$790 annually or \$0.38 per hour to base pay.

The APWU is now the only postal union that has protected and maintained full COLA.

## Increased Compensation – General Wage plus COLA Increases

Adding the 3.4% in General Wage Increases plus the known COLAs, compensation for a level 6 Step O employee will increase \$2,855 over the life of the Agreement. With three additional COLA increases, the total increases over the life of the Agreement will likely come to \$3,600 annually, an increase of about \$1.75 per hour. In addition, those not yet at the top step of the wage scale will gain new step increases with each Step representing an approximate \$.50/hour raise.

## Step Increases

APWU argued for the return of higher steps to the lower-tier schedule. In response, Arbitrator Goldberg narrowed the gap in the two-tier career pay schedules by adding additional top steps in Grades 5-8 for employees hired after May 23, 2011 (There is no lower tier for Grades 9 and above).

- Grade 5: One additional top Step Increase (Step K).
- Grade 6-7: Two additional top Step Increases (Steps K & L).
- Grade 8: Two additional Step Increases (Steps L & M).
- Depending on Grade, each additional step increase approximates \$1,000 per year based on full-time straight-time hours of work.

## PSE Wage Increases

Since PSEs do not receive COLAs, they receive larger annual general increases:

- 2.3% effective November 24, 2018 (retroactive)
- 2.1% effective November 23, 2019 (retroactive)
- 2.0% effective November 21, 2020

PSEs will receive an additional forty cents per hour raise as follows:

- \$.20 per hour effective May 23, 2020, and
- \$.20 per hour effective May 22, 2021.

Over the life of the Agreement a Level 6 PSE pay will rise from the \$17.19 to \$18.69 per hour.

# Interest Arbitration Award

## No Lay-off & Job Security Protections

- The no lay-off protections of Article 6 for career employees with more than six years of service remain unchanged. Management argued for increasing the six years to 15 years for current employees with no protection for future hires.
- In addition, no lay-off protection is extended for the life of the Agreement to all career employees on the rolls as of the date of this Award who have not yet qualified for protection under the six-year rule.
- A ban on subcontracting of any existing PVS driving work during the life of the contract.
- No employee can be excessed out of an installation beyond a 50-mile radius.

## Career Employee Health Benefits

The FEHB Health Plans and benefits remain in effect for career employees.

- No change in employee share of premiums in 2019 and 2020.
- In 2021, the USPS contribution level for health premiums will be reduced from 73% to 72% and then remain the same in 2022. 72% is the share federal agencies pay for federal employees and the Postal Service pays for annuitants and EAS employees. This 1% shift represents a cost to an employee of between \$75 and \$165 per year depending upon health plan options.
- The USPS contribution level of 95% of the weighted average to the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan option will remain in effect for 2021 and 2022.

## PSE Health Benefits

Improvements in USPS payments of PSE Health Insurance premiums gained in a June 13, 2018 grievance settlement will be incorporated into the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Specifically, the Postal Service will make a bi-weekly contribution equal to 65% of the total premium in the USPS Non-career Health Care Plan for either self plus one or family coverage during a PSE's initial year of PSE employment. And thereafter 75% of the total premium for either self plus one or family coverage. PSE share of premiums can be made on a pre-tax basis. The Postal Service will continue to contribute 75% of the total premium for PSEs electing the APWU Consumer Driven Plan in FEHB.

## Workforce Structure

- One-time PSE conversions: All PSEs in 125 work year and larger offices with 30 months or more of service in the installation as of the date of the award will be converted to career. Over 4,000 PSEs will be converted under this provision within 60 days of the Award.
- Maintenance will remain an all-career workforce.
- MVS will remain an all-career workforce, and maintain the exception that PSEs may be hired to perform some of any "new work" returned to the bargaining unit.
- No increase in PSE percentages in the Clerk Craft.
- APWU is now the only postal union that has not increased non-career percentages.

## Uniform & Work Clothes Allowance for Eligible Employees

- 5% increase in the uniform and work clothes allowance in 2020.
- 2.5% increase in allowances in 2021.
- Compression socks, gloves and overalls will be covered as available items for purchase.
- Full uniform allowances for eligible Clerk PSEs will now be incorporated into the CBA. Similarly, any "new work" MVS PSE meeting eligibility requirements would be entitled to a full uniform.

## Work Environment

- The Union and Management established a joint task force to address hostile work environments.

## Work Rules

- For the first time, pregnancy is now included in the Non-Discrimination language of the CBA.
- *The Filling of Residual Jobs* Memo, which since March 2014 has led to 70,000 PSE conversions to career, continues in full force.
- Arbitrator Goldberg reaffirmed that custodial positions should be fully staffed. However he changed under certain conditions what hours apply in calculating "Line H" violations of staffing. Hours associated with long-term absences and excessing events can be exempted from calculations when fully staffed.
- Improvement in maintenance training selection.
- PSE overtime rules from a June 13, 2018 settlement will be incorporated into the CBA; specifically, time and one-half after eight hours of work in a day and double time over 10 hours in a day or 56 hours in a week.
- Small Office Local Memorandum of Understanding is renewed. ■

# APWU Meets with USPS on the Spread

The coronavirus, officially named COVID-19, is a contagious illness that originated in China. As this issue goes to press, it has spread to over 65 countries including the United States. The APWU is continuing to monitor the situation and is in constant contact with the USPS about COVID-19.

On Feb. 29, the Postal Service informed the APWU that an employee tested positive for the virus. The APWU initiated a meeting with USPS leadership to discuss their response to the virus. On March 2, President Mark Dimondstein, Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman, the Directors of the Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Service, and Clerk Crafts, and the officers assigned to Article 14 met with the USPS and representatives of the other postal unions to discuss the Postal Service's response and plans, as well as the unions' concerns and suggestions.

Postmaster General (PMG) Megan Brennan was present along with senior representatives of Labor Relations, Human Resources, the USPS Legal Department, and their incident preparedness team. Brennan discussed with the unions what they are doing to help protect employees.

The Postal Service reported that they are working very closely with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department



of Health and Human Services, and various state public health agencies around the country to address COVID-19.

## Stand Up Talks & CDC Resources

Employees around the country should have received multiple “mandatory stand up talks” including:

- **Staying Healthy:** Take steps to avoid flu, other illnesses (Jan. 24 and Jan. 27)
- **Health Tips:** Flu and respiratory diseases including novel (new) coronavirus (Feb. 11)
- **Staying Vigilant:** Flu and respiratory disease prevention tips (Feb. 25)
- **Staying Vigilant:** Flu response and prevention (Feb. 29)
- **Voluntary Use of Filtering Facepiece (FFP) Respirators** that explained the use of masks.

Consistent with the processes put in place during the H1N1 (swine flu) pandemic in 2009, employees may choose to wear FFP and/or nitrile gloves at work. Management Instruction EL-810-2009-4 addresses the use of gloves and masks and states management must provide these items.

Management also sent out numerous posters from the CDC that should be prominently displayed in every facility to include bathrooms and break areas. These are:

- **Stop Germs! Wash Your Hands**
- **What you need to know about the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)**
- **What to do if you are sick with the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)**
- **Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019**
- **Stop the Spread of Germs.**

You can find all these resources and updated information on [apwu.org/coronavirus](http://apwu.org/coronavirus) as well.

## APWU Response

In addition to the meeting at headquarters, a teleconference with the Regional Coordinators and then a full briefing of the National Executive Council (comprised of every national officer) was held on March 3.

As this issue goes to press, the Regional Safety and Health Representatives are reaching out to the local and state organizations to make sure they are aware of the protocols, guidelines, and to assist as needed.

National officers at APWU Headquarters during teleconference with the National Executive Council





# of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The APWU contacted two expert safety professionals who will assist us. One of them previously worked with the APWU during the 2001 anthrax crisis as well as the H1N1 (swine flu) pandemic and is well versed in efforts of both the APWU and the USPS during these past events.

## Virus On Surfaces

During these meetings with the Safety and Health Representatives one of the most common questions directed at union representatives from members is about COVID-19 being transmitted on surfaces. The CDC has a Frequently Asked Questions page on the virus where this is addressed:

*There is still a lot that is unknown about the newly emerged COVID-19 and how it spreads. Two other coronaviruses have emerged previously to cause severe illness in people (MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV). The virus that causes COVID-19 is more genetically related to SARS-CoV than MERS-CoV, but both are betacoronaviruses with their origins in bats. While we don't know for sure that this virus will behave the same way as SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, we can use the information gained from both of these earlier coronaviruses to guide us.*

*In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures. Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets.*

*Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods and there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods.*

## Prevent Virus Spread

The most effective method to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is frequent handwashing, use of hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol, and staying home from work when you are sick.

Along with these the Postal Service said they will be implementing additional cleaning and sanitizing of facilities and workstations. They will be providing hand sanitizer in facilities to include customer areas.

The additional cleaning will be in line with what was done during the 2009 H1N1 (swine flu) pandemic. Management issued a new *MMO-031-20 Influenza and Coronavirus Cleaning Contingency*. This Maintenance Management Order (MMO) should be in effect now, and, as this issue goes to press, the APWU is currently reviewing it to ensure it is sufficient. The APWU requested that the current cleaning solutions under the MS-47 TL-5 be temporarily changed to chemicals previously used to better ensure disinfection of work areas.

"No one can take COVID-19 lightly," President Dimondstein said. "We will be working diligently and unleash all necessary resources to keep our members informed and protected. The health and safety of

all postal workers is our top priority and we insist it be the Postal Service's priority as well."

"There is no question that this must be a concern to all workers and everyone in this country," said Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman. "We will provide you information and guidance as it develops."

"This is a fluid situation and new things will be learned as COVID-19 progresses and the researchers learn more," Director Zimmerman continued. "Keep washing your hands and please follow the rest of the CDCs guidelines."

Each post office and distribution center – no matter the size – should:

- Have all the Stand Up talks,
- Post the CDC posters as required by USPS headquarters,
- Get an adequate supply of gloves and masks,
- Have hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.

If this is not happening in your workplace, please contact your local or state organization, they can reach out to their National Business Agents and the Regional Coordinator to address the issue. The Postal Service has committed to these issues being quickly addressed and rectified.



For more information on COVID-19 or the resources listed text VIRUS to 91990 or scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera. Documents and links to CDC resources can be accessed from this page, [apwu.org/coronavirus](http://apwu.org/coronavirus).

## CONVENTION CALL



# CONVENTION 2020 - LOS ANGELES, CA 25th Biennial APWU National Convention

**APWU Passing the Torch—The Struggle Continues** is the theme of the American Postal Workers Union's 25th Biennial National Convention, which is set for Monday, August 17 through Thursday, August 20, 2020, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, CA.

The National Convention is the union's highest decision-making body and helps the union 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 Bylaws, 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. Members-at-Large (MAL) 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/or the secretary, secretary-treasurer, or treasurer of the local. Beginning March 30, they will be able to log-on to the Members Only section of the APWU website and in just a few easy steps

they 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 1 is the deadline for the submission of resolutions for publication in the Convention Book. Resolutions are accepted from local or state affiliates, local and state retiree chapters 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 and local and state retiree chapters must be submitted electronically through a special link on the union's website that will be accessible only to local, state and retiree chapter presidents and to local, state and retiree chapter 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 1 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 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 1 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:

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

A sample resolution format can be viewed online.

## Other Convention Events

Several other important union events will take place in the days before and after the convention. Meetings for each of the Divisions – Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Service, and Support Services – are set for the weekend of August 15-16, as is the APWU Retiree's Conference. The BMC Conference will be held prior to the convention, on Friday, August 14, 2020. The APWU Research & Education Department will conduct a series of post-convention workshops on Friday, August 21 (The complete schedule of events can be viewed in the Convention pages on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org)).

## Plan Your Stay Well Ahead

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

APWU negotiated special room rates for this year's convention at the following hotels: Westin Bonaventure, Sheraton Grand and the JW Marriott. The rates, cutoff dates and cancellation window for each hotel are listed below. Please note that the Westin Bonaventure 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 [apwu.org/convention](http://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. (Please note that APWU locals and state organizations may pay by check. Details can be found at [apwu.org](http://apwu.org).)

## 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 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Reservations will be necessary. Submit the forms (available on the 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
Westin Bonaventure	\$175/night + tax	July 31, 2020 at 5:00 pm	48 hours
Sheraton Grand	\$224/night + tax	July 21, 2020	72 hours
JW Marriott	\$244/night + tax	July 21, 2020 at 5:00 pm	72 hours



# How Does A Union Member Get Awakened?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

I don't know a union member that doesn't want to belong to a strong, successful APWU local. To do that, we need members to be awakened and participate.

I want to tell you the story of how I became awakened.

In 1978, I was a new PTF with almost a year in. Supervisors abused us. The building was filthy. I had to learn a difficult scheme. There was sexism, harassment, and racism. I never knew where I would be working or what hours. That first year I don't remember any conversation about our union, or what a steward was.

BE A PART OF A PLANNED STRATEGY  
TO AWAKEN YOUR COWORKERS. TAKE A  
LEAP OF FAITH AND KNOW THAT UNION  
POWER IS ACHIEVABLE.

I was in the swing room and saw a flyer on the table about the union president being fired for allegedly causing a slowdown. The union requested help making signs for a picket. Being curious, I showed up to make signs. There was a guest speaker from the New York Metro Postal Union: Moe Biller.

Moe gave a speech on why each member must get involved. He told the history of the union fighting management so workers could have a better future, and how members needed to make our union strong. Tears ran down my face. I knew I had to do my part in the struggle to make our union strong. On the picket line, Moe told me to start as a steward; he explained the job and that day I was signed on. I was 23 years old.

It feels good, and I am grateful for all the many victories we have won over the years. There weren't many women activists. You had to educate yourself. I had union mentors and heroes & heroines in the union movement that inspired and helped me – like the postal workers that went on strike in 1970 so we could have a better life, a real contract. Like anything in life, we have the ability to make a difference when we get involved.

So where are we today? Members can find the excitement, the passion, when they participate. Members can support their union steward. We can help end problems of a harassing supervisor by getting involved.

Members can become a big part of making our workplace a safe, non-hostile work environment. The local can make it easy for you to step up and become an activist in our union.

Be a part of a planned strategy to awaken your coworkers. Take a leap of faith and know that union power is achievable. We need mentors to bring members to union meetings, sign them up to important committees and reach union goals.

This year I will be providing locals and states with a new booklet on ways to help members to step up, participate at meetings, committees, campaigns, and activities on the workroom floor. Be the change that builds union power at work and in our communities. We can protect our work and provide the best public services when we stand together.

This year, we're celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the 1970 Strike.

MEMBERS CAN FIND THE  
EXCITEMENT, THE PASSION, WHEN  
THE PARTICIPATE. MEMBERS CAN  
SUPPORT THEIR UNION STEWARD.  
WE CAN HELP END PROBLEMS OF A  
HARASSING SUPERVISOR BY GETTING  
INVOLVED.

Sign up with your local to help plan activity in your community, educating and celebrating the Great Postal Strike that helped provide communities with better wages, benefits, and continued public services for us all. ■



# APWU Executive Board Endorses Bernie Sanders for President

Sen. Bernie Sanders speaks in 2018 at the APWU's 24th Biennial National Convention.



**T**he APWU National Executive Board (NEB) voted on Jan. 29 to endorse Senator Bernie Sanders for President of the United States.

In light of the importance of the presidential election and in response to many inquiries from members as to the union leadership's position, a number of "top tier" candidates, or their designees, were invited to address the NEB. Candidates who oppose the public Postal Service were not invited.

"We're pleased that a number of presidential candidates have positions and have taken actions supportive of postal workers and expanding union rights. But when we judge candidates by their long-term and consistent actions, Bernie Sanders stands out as a true champion of postal workers and all workers throughout the country," said President Mark Dimondstein.

"Bernie Sanders has proven he is a fierce advocate on the side of postal workers. He has opposed the closures of postal facilities and reduced service standards," President Dimondstein continued. "He has been a leader in the fight for expanded postal financial services and was the lone senator who stopped postal privatizers from appointments to the Postal Board of Governors."

Senator Sanders' commitment to working people extends far beyond postal workers. He has a long record of walking picket lines, fighting for

living wages and health care as a human right, advocating for veterans' benefits, promoting expansion of social security and opposing every job-killing trade deal like NAFTA. The positions of the Sanders campaign align with the APWU's core principles of social and economic justice for all, as expressed in our union Constitution and by delegates to our national conventions.

In a speech to APWU convention delegates, Sen. Sanders said "The beauty of the Postal Service is that it provides universal service six days a week to every corner of America, no matter how small or how remote. It provides decent paying union jobs to some 500,000 Americans and is the largest employer of veterans... Yet, the Postal Service is under constant and vicious attack. The same billionaires who want to privatize Social Security, Medicare and public education also want to privatize the Postal Service... The wealthy and the powerful see an opportunity for Wall Street and corporate America to make billions in profits out of these services and couldn't care less how privatization or degradation

of services affects ordinary Americans."

Sen. Bernie Sanders accepts zero corporate dollars and his "Not Me, Us" campaign slogan reflects his belief that the campaign is not about electing one individual but rather, "... building a movement with millions of Americans to take on a corrupt political system that holds in place a rigged economy."

"The National Executive Board fully recognizes and respects that our members come from all walks of life, hold many differing political beliefs and vote according to their own conscience. However, for the NEB to remain silent at a time when the current Administration advocates selling the entire public Postal Service to private corporate interests, would be a failure of our leadership. As with 2016, once again the Sanders campaign is boldly uplifting the goals and aspirations of workers," President Dimondstein concluded. "Simply put, we believe it is in the interests of all postal workers, our job security and our union to support and elect Bernie Sanders as president." ■



The San Antonio Alamo Area Local hosted a phonebank for supporters of Sen. Bernie Sanders on Feb. 5.



SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

# Keeping Control of Local Finances

One of the ways locals can ensure compliance with the Department of Labor (DOL) and safeguard union assets by promoting transparency and accountability is to adopt policies that detail and clarify constitution and bylaw provisions. Whether it is a policy to clarify the use of the local credit card; payment of lost time (LWOP) or “Other Compensation” and Travel and Expenses, all will assist in keeping control of local finances.

**LOCAL TREASURERS SHOULD EVENLY  
APPLY THE RULE: NO RECEIPT – NO  
REIMBURSEMENT – NO EXCEPTIONS!**

As the year progresses, local leaders and their membership will be making financial decisions to send officers and members to various conventions, conferences and trainings. The local’s responsibility to any member or officer elected or authorized to travel for official union business is to provide reasonably priced transportation, lodging and per-diem. The local travel and expense policy should contain information on how these expendi-

tures will be provided or reimbursed. Locals may opt to include provisions in which the transportation expense is reimbursed after the travel is completed and required receipts are submitted. If the local does not have a local credit card to secure lodging, the local treasurer will need alternative arrangements – i.e. sending a check to confirm lodging before the travel begins. The policy should contain provisions specific to whether per-diem will be at the GSA rate or Fully Receipted plan. If so, the daily amount is determined by the local and requires total accountability of all expenses in accordance with DOL and IRS guidelines.

The local travel and expense policy should contain clear policies on reimbursed travel expenses, what documentation is needed for reimbursement and establish procedures that provide for approval of travel expenses claims. A mileage expenses log should be required for applicable mileage expenses. In order for the travel expense to be eligible for reimbursement, it should be for union business and authorized in accordance with the local’s constitution and bylaws. Local treasurers should evenly apply the rule: No receipt – No reimbursement – No exceptions! ■

## APWU Scholarships

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, or massage therapy, etc. Eligible programs can be of a nine-month to three-year duration.

One “Best Essay” winner is selected from the applicant pool to receive a one-time \$2,000 award towards his or her four-year college tuition.

**March 31, 2020** is the deadline for the APWU to receive completed applications. Applicants must be a child, grandchild, stepchild, or legally adopted child of a current, retired, or deceased APWU member. Proof of membership required for deceased members. The scholarships are open only to high school seniors. Applicants may apply for either the Hallbeck or Vocational scholarship, not both.





# SECRETARY-TREASURER POWELL JOINS Call for Moral Revival for Civil & Economic Rights



Secretary-Treasurer Powell speaking at the press conference on Jan. 29.

On Jan. 29, Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth “Liz” Powell represented the APWU at the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival’s press conference in Washington, D.C. The press conference, held on Capitol Hill, raised awareness for the Poor People’s Campaign’s Moral Budget, a budget proposal focusing on the needs of the 140 million poor people in the country. The press conference also promoted the organization’s “Mass Poor People’s Assembly & Moral March on Washington,” scheduled for June 20, 2020.

In her remarks, Secretary-Treasurer Powell recalled the unanimous resolution adopted at the 2014 APWU Biennial National Convention to support the Forward Together Moral Monday Movement, a civil disobedience campaign to protest actions by the North Carolina state government in 2014. That movement was led by Rev. William Barber, who now co-chairs the Poor People’s Campaign.

Powell also emphasized the importance of the labor movement standing for civil rights. “There is a liaison between labor and civil rights. One cannot go without the other,” Secretary-Treasurer Powell said. “We each fight for economic justice, social justice, human rights, wom-

en’s rights every day.” She pledged the APWU’s full support for the June 2020 March on Washington.

The Poor People’s Campaign, inspired by the 1968 campaign of the same name led by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., began in 2018 under Barber’s leadership. In the summer of 2018, activists in over 40 states began a campaign of civil disobedience and direct action to build lasting power for poor people. The campaign has continued into 2020 with the release of the Moral Budget and a twenty-five state We Must Do M.O.R.E. Tour (mobilize, organize,

register, and educate) leading up to the June 20, 2020 March on Washington.

Secretary-Treasurer Powell was joined by activists, organizers, and other labor leaders, including CWA Secretary-Treasurer Sara Steffens, AFSCME President Lee Saunders, AFT President Randi Weingarten, AFA-CWA President Sara Nelson, Acting AFGE President Everett Kelley and UFCW Vice President Robin Williams.

For more information on the June 20, 2020 march, visit [poorpeoplescampaign.org/june2020](http://poorpeoplescampaign.org/june2020). ■

## May 1 – International Workers Day

May Day, also known as International Workers Day, is the annual holiday recognizing the working class. Originating in the 1880s, the holiday came out of the historic fight in Chicago for the eight-hour work day.

The holiday is celebrated worldwide 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 your 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 coworkers to [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org) for a chance to be featured on the APWU website or in future publications. Remember to wear your union gear!



# APWU Again Preserves Pay Increases and Job Security

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

**W**e have a new contract! With Arbitrator Goldberg's award in early March 2020, our collective bargaining agreement is now set.

We would not have had this outcome if it were not for all the hard work of the members who participated in our contract campaign events throughout the process, and without the sacrifices of the employees selected off the workroom floor to come to Washington, D.C. to testify in front of the Arbitration Panel. The employees from all crafts – full-time regulars, part-time flexibles and postal support employees – shared their work stories, personal life experiences and the complexity of their jobs with the panel. Their testimonies were moving and effective. I want to thank them all again for what they did for us all in these proceedings.

You have all seen highlights and specifics of the new contract online or in this magazine (*see page 6-7*), so I am not going to discuss them all again. I want to discuss some of the things that I believe were important gains and preservations.

**WE DID NOT SEE ANY INCREASES TO THE NUMBER OF NON-CAREER EMPLOYEES THE USPS CAN USE IN THE APWU REPRESENTED CRAFT.**

First, we began to close the gap on the contentious two-tier wage scales. For those hired after May 23, 2011, in level 5 positions you gained an additional top step. Now you will top at step "K" instead of step "J." Those in level 6 and 7 gained two additional top steps, now topping out at step "L." Level 8 employees also gained two steps and will now top out at step "M."

The gains in step progression is big! What exactly does this mean? Currently, each step in level 6 is worth about \$1000 a year more. This means more per hour for straight time, overtime work, and Sunday premium. It also means at least an additional \$100 deposited to your TSP if you are saving 5% – not including the interest you would earn. It also increases your "high three" years for the calculation of your retirement annuity. The value of any banked leave also increases when moving to a new step.

We achieved these gains without having to give anything back or "buy" them with other changes to our contract!

We did not see any increases to the number of non-career employees the USPS can use in the APWU represented craft. We preserved the all-career maintenance work force; the MVS PSE usage only in "new work" that is returned to the craft, and the PSEs in the Clerk Craft restrictions in Function 1 and Function 4 remained in place. Something only the APWU has done in recent contracts, while other unions saw increases to non-career employee usage.

**THE APWU STOOD ITS GROUND AND BEHIND ITS CORE VALUE TO NEVER AGAIN SACRIFICE THE JUNIOR EMPLOYEES IN OUR CRAFTS IN THE NAME OF ANY CONTRACT PROVISION.**

Also, we kept our COLA provisions intact. We did not see a change to the COLA "base" that would lead to a loss of COLA pay. We fended off the USPS "proportional" COLA demand keeping full COLA for all our employees.

Our no-layoff protection continues for career employees and the 50-mile limitation on excessing continues to protect our bargaining units for multiple years.

The APWU stood its ground and behind its core value to never again sacrifice the junior employees in our crafts in the name of any contract provision. What we defended in the interest arbitration process is very important. Other unions now have proportional COLA and increased the usage of non-career employees in their crafts.

Each union negotiating separately from each other has shown to be beneficial to the USPS and not for the union movement as whole. In the current process, the USPS hangs what the other unions got as either a carrot for the negotiating union to give back or the maximum to what the Postal Service will negotiate.

It is not the best system. We need to go back to negotiating together. If we do, we will be stronger as we fight side by side for all postal workers.

Solidarity! ■



# April 28 is Workers Memorial Day



Rockford Area Local (IL)

# PROTECT OUR RIGHTS

AFL-CIO



STAND UP FOR  
SAFE JOBS

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY • APRIL 28

Local officers and members participating in Workers Memorial Day actions in 2018.

Every year on April 28, workers and their organizations come together to remember those who have died, been injured, or contracted an occupational disease at work. Each year more people are killed at work than in wars. Most do not die of mystery ailments, or in tragic “accidents” – they die because an employer decided their safety was not a priority.

Workers Memorial Day (WMD) commemorates those workers. It is a day that we must remember the words attributed to the great Mother Jones: “Remember the dead; fight like hell for the living.”

Every 7 seconds, a worker is injured on the job. That is over 85,000 a day and nearly 4 million per year. In 2018, about 4,800 workers were killed on the job. Our jobs with the USPS are some of the most dangerous jobs in government service. In fiscal year 2019, a total of 36,634 postal workers had their injury claims accepted by the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP). This does not count the injury claims denied or never

reported. Fifteen of our postal sisters and brothers died on the job, only five less than the rest of all U.S. government work combined.

April 28, we ask you to take a moment and remember those who have been afflicted by a workplace injury, illness, or death. You too can *Stand Up for Safe Jobs* and insist management provide you a safe and healthy work environment, so you can return home to your family every day uninjured. We encourage you to wear a sticker or wrist band that commemorates the day. Contact your local representatives to know what other actions may be planned. ■



Central Florida Area Local

San Jose  
Area Local

MARCH-APRIL 2020

# Senators Receive the Message – Fix the Prefunding Debacle



**T**housands of APWU members again stepped up to join the *U.S. Mail: Not for Sale* campaign's nationwide phone action on Tuesday, February 25, to tell the Senate to fix the problem Congress created that put our public Postal Service in jeopardy.

Almost 7,000 postal workers, allies, and community supporters called their Senators and asked them to cosponsor the *USPS Fairness Act* (S. 2965) – following a call to action from President Mark Dimondstein and Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard.

The legislation would repeal the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act's (PAEA) burdensome pre-funding mandate for retiree health care. That burdensome mandate is taking billions of dollars out of the Postal Service. This has led to job and service cuts across the USPS.

*The USPS Fairness Act* is the first step to putting the USPS back on the road to sustainability.

“AGAIN, POSTAL WORKERS AND OUR ALLIES HAVE ANSWERED THE CALL TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE,” SAID PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN. “OUR NATIONAL TREASURE IS BELOVED BY THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY, AND THEY WANT MORE PUBLIC SERVICES, NOT LESS!”

## Calls Made to Every Senator

As seen with our successful call-in day around the House of Representatives bill, H.R. 2382, the spread of calls was inspiring. Every Senator received at least one call about S. 2965, with many receiving hundreds.

This action followed right after the passage of the *USPS Fairness Act* in the House of Representatives on Feb. 5, with a two-thirds majority.

“WE ARE SHOWING WHAT WORKERS UNITED CAN DO WHEN WE EDUCATE CONGRESS TO DO THE RIGHT THING FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE,” SAID LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL DIRECTOR JUDY BEARD. “KEEP UP THE PRESSURE. VISIT YOUR SENATORS DURING THEIR RECESSES, WRITE LETTERS AND KEEP CALLING.”

## Call Your Senators Today

If you were unable to participate on February 25, it is not too late to call your Senators! If you did participate, call again, **844-402-1001!**

It is important that we keep the pressure on our Senators, so they cosponsor the bill. Our work is not done on the *USPS Fairness Act* until the Senate pass it on the floor, and the President signs it into law. ■

## Preparing for Tax Day



Big Island Area Local





# US Mail: Not for Sale Campaign Generates Major Media Presence

One goal of the *US Mail: Not for Sale* campaign is to gain extensive media coverage to educate the public about the serious postal privatization threat. So far this year, the campaign's work has resulted in stories and columns published in major daily newspapers and reported on television news programs across the country, reaching tens of millions.

The work to broaden public awareness of the White House's attacks on the public Postal Service is key to putting pressure on the Postal Board of Governors, who as this issue goes to press have yet to name a successor to outgoing Postmaster General Megan Brennan. This media spotlight also contributed to the push on elected representatives, and the resulting passage of the *USPS Fairness Act* in the House of Representatives on Feb. 5 with a two-thirds bipartisan majority.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning *Los Angeles Times* columnist Michael Hiltzik wrote an article on Jan. 9 titled "The Postal Service is America's most popular government agency. Why does Trump hate it?" In it he strongly criticizes the right-wing attacks on the public Postal Service and its attempt to sell-off parts of the USPS.

Hiltzik cited the Postal Service's 90 percent favorable rating, and mentions our successful petition campaign in January, which resulted in over 411,000 signatures deliv-

ered to the Postal Board of Governors demanding the new Postmaster General support the public Postal Service.

Hiltzik also noted the U.S. constitutional universal service mandate: "Establishing 'post offices and post roads' is one of the powers of Congress explicitly enumerated in the Constitution, right up there with the power to tax and borrow, declare war, coin money, establish federal courts and issue patents and copyrights... Because of the Postal Service's mandate to provide universal delivery across the United States, no matter where, the commercial firms often rely on the Postal Service to deliver their packages to the last mile."

The column reached over 15 million people, through both the *Los Angeles Times* and syndication in numerous publications across the country.

In our earned and broad media efforts, President Dimondstein was also featured on a major television news segment done by Nexstar Broadcasting, shown on over 100 local tv stations throughout the United States.

"Everybody has the same right to have mail service no matter who we are and where we live," said President Dimondstein. "And that would all be threatened, undermined and done away with, with privatization."

To watch the interview, go to [bit.ly/3cvbJrt](https://bit.ly/3cvbJrt). ■

As this issue goes to press, the *U.S. Mail: Not for Sale* campaign is preparing materials for this year's Tax Day.

We want to build on the last two years of success in informing the public that the USPS operates with no taxpayer dollars.

Be sure to speak with your local or state organization, and/or go to [apwu.org](https://apwu.org), to find out what you can do to spread the word. ■



New York Metro Postal Union



# When the Mail Stopped!!

## 50th Anniversary of the 1970 Great Postal Strike



### The Strike that Replaced “Collective Begging” with Collective Bargaining

Fifty years ago, between March 17-25, 1970, postal workers declared “Enough is Enough” and used their collective power to stop the mail in a historic and momentous strike. The illegal wildcat strike began in NYC and before it was over 210,000 postal workers were on the picket lines in 33 cities. The strike was victorious!

The courage and solidarity shown by thousands of union members of many crafts during the unlawful job action resulted in vastly improved wages and benefits and a better life for successive generations of postal workers.





## Leading Up to the Strike

Postal workers had suffered decades of low pay, meager benefits, long hours and deplorable and unsafe working conditions. There were few work-hour guarantees. Jobs were assigned based on company favoritism. Without union collective bargaining rights, the workers' only recourse had been to plead to Congress for better treatment and better pay. Hence the term "collective begging."

Most postal workers belonged to one of seven craft unions recognized by the federal government, but they were denied a key right of private-sector unions: to bargain collectively over compensation. Although President Kennedy issued an executive order in 1961 recognizing government-employee unions, postal and other federal workers were barred from striking and could seek wage and benefit increases only by petitioning Congress – a course that was usually met with inaction.

The sporadic pay raises that postal workers received were inadequate especially for high-cost urban areas. In March 1970, starting full-time employees were paid approximately \$6,200. It took 21 years of service to obtain top step, which then aver-

aged only \$8,440. It was not enough to make ends meet. Many full-time postal workers qualified for welfare and food stamps. Many had to work multiple jobs.

In 1968, a presidential commission concluded that postal workers deserved the same collective bargaining rights that private-sector workers had under the *National Labor Relations Act*.

Initially Congress failed to act on the commission's recommendations.

On March 12, 1970, Congress finally did act, but not in favor of the workers: it gave President Nixon a 100 percent raise, itself a whopping 41 percent pay hike, and offered postal workers only a 5.4 percent raise, less than the rate of inflation. Workers' outrage over this and frustration over pent-up grievances spread like wildfire in postal facilities throughout the country.

Five days later, irate letter carriers of New York City's Branch 36 voted to strike and set up picket lines, then the Manhattan-Bronx Postal Union (MBPU) President Moe Biller issued a bulletin advising that good union members DO NOT cross picket lines. By March 18, *the strike was on!*

Postal workers struck in over 30 cities including:

New York; Akron, OH; Buffalo, NY; Chicago; Cleveland; Dearborn, MI; St. Paul, MN; Detroit; Denver; San Francisco; Pittsburgh; Boston; Minneapolis; Milwaukee; Los Angeles; Philadelphia; Hartford, CT; Long Island, NY; Westchester, NY; Stamford, CT; Paterson, NJ; Hackensack, NJ; Passaic, NJ; Newark, NJ; Scranton, PA; Trenton, NJ; Toledo, OH; Duluth, MN; Chester, PA; Madison, WI



**In Los Angeles, on March 23 a handful of postal supervisors attempted to move first class and air mail.**



The wildcat job action quickly gained support from postal workers across the country – much to the consternation of postal executives, the Nixon Administration and even national union leaders.

But that didn't matter to postal workers who were tired of being taken for granted, "We're used to hard times," a striker told *Time* magazine.

The MBPU voted to officially join the strike on Saturday, March 21.

Many other locals soon joined the strike shutting down mail service in over 30 major cities. By the following Tuesday, 210,000 postal workers had walked off the job.

Mail destined for New York and other major cities in these states ►







Nixon sends in troops who try and fail to move the mail.

“began piling up by the ton,” *Time* reported. “After just a few days of stoppage, the effects of the shut-down appeared to be little short of devastating” as the movement of letters, business mail, financial transactions, and government documents ground to a halt.

## Risking it All

***“I don’t care. I know it is against the law...if they want to put me in jail, put me in jail, but they haven’t got a big enough jail to put all of us in.”***

Chicago postal worker Greg Boyles when challenged by CBS News for breaking the law.

The strike was front-page news across the country, and brought a great deal of attention to the plight of postal workers. But the leaders of the seven national unions, fearing a backlash from the public, met with Postmaster General Winton Blount and secured a pledge that “if a substantial number of employees

would return to work by Monday, March 23, negotiations would begin” over pay and other improvements.

The union leaders urged the strikers to accept Blount’s offer and return to work, but the workers refused and demanded that negotiations commence immediately. In response, President Nixon decried the illegal job action and vowed to break the postal workers, telling the nation on March 23, “We have the means to deliver the mail.”

22,000 troops were placed into postal facilities with orders to transport, sort and deliver the mail. Without the skill, training and dedication, the military proved woefully inadequate to the task.

Soon, while courts were serving injunctions and imposing fines against union leaders, the Postmaster General defused the situation by announcing that enough workers had returned to the job and negotiations would begin immediately.

## Unity and Solidarity Win the Day!

Bargaining began and ended quickly: In a preliminary agreement

## It’s All About Power!

The courageous postal strikers brought to life the inspiring words of labor organizer, poet and songwriter Joe Hill:

***If we workers take a notion,  
We can stop all speeding trains,  
Every ship upon the ocean,  
We can tie with mighty chains,  
Every wheel in the creation,  
Every mine and every mill  
Fleets and armies of all nations,  
Will at our command stand still.***

reached the first day of talks, the Post Office Department offered a 12 percent pay increase, retroactive to October 1969; a decrease from 21 to 8 in the number of years required for a worker to reach the top step in the wage scale; real collective bargaining rights; and amnesty for all strikers. No striker was fined, jailed or lost their job. Unity and solidarity prevailed!

Striking and “sick” postal workers across the country returned to the job on March 25.

The final agreement, announced a month later, however, fell short of the Postmaster General’s promises and to achieve some of them Congress would have to fund the pay increase and change the law on bargaining.

Congress quickly approved a 6 percent wage increase, retroactive to the previous December, and on Aug. 12, 1970 enacted the *Postal Reorganization Act (PRA)*, which gave postal workers an additional 8 percent raise and shortened the time it took to reach top pay. In granting postal workers the right to bargain collectively over wages, benefits,





**Moe Biller and strikers celebrate victory at hand.**

and working conditions, the PRA also instituted a binding arbitration process for resolving contract disputes.

The PRA abolished the Post Office Department and established the United States Postal Service (USPS) as an independent agency funded by postage sales and services.

## Birth of the APWU

In January 1971, the five-month-old USPS participated in the first collective bargaining session with seven postal unions, including five that would merge to become the American Postal Workers Union on July 1, 1971.

On July 20, 1971, a two-year contract with the Postal Service was signed by the APWU, along with the National Association of Letter Carriers, the National Rural Letter Carriers Association, and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union. In the

first agreement, a starting postal worker's salary was set at \$8,488 – more than a 21-year-veteran of the Post Office Department had been getting when the job action began 16 months earlier.

Subsequent contracts have helped postal workers own homes, support families and communities, and enjoy job security, decent health care and retirement benefits. In the months

and years after the job action, many strikers went on to become leaders of the union. Moe Biller was elected president of the National APWU in 1980, a position he held until 2001.

In 2020, those brave postal workers who took part in the strike can look back with pride at what they had accomplished. Millions of workers have since reaped the benefits from their actions. ■

## Return to “Collective Begging” on the White House Agenda

One of the strike's great accomplishments was winning the right to collective bargaining over wages and other compensation. Collective “begging” to Congress for wage increases was replaced with union rights to negotiate directly with the Postal Service. Collective bargaining led to signed and binding union contracts, resulting in decades of progress for postal workers with wage increases, Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs), step increases, improved working conditions and job security, including the no layoff clause. In a December 2018 report, President Trump's Postal Task Force called for an end to collective bargaining rights for postal workers. The unions' response? No way!



# It is Time to Collect on the 2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement!

Assistant Director Lynn Pallas-Barber, Director Lamont Brooks and Assistant Director Sam Lisenbe

**I**n the 2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the United States Postal Service (USPS) and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), monetary concessions were granted to the USPS in exchange for the protection of clerk work and the securing of non-managerial/non-supervisory work being reassigned to the Clerk Craft. Any new positions must be assigned in accordance with Article 1.5 of the CBA.

APWU honored their agreement – now it is *past time* for the USPS to honor theirs. Clerk Craft officers will actively pursue, at all levels of the organization, the work that should be rightfully ours.

## Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS) Work

Clerks have always performed TACS, however, in some offices supervisors also performed the work. Under the 2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement, all this work should have been returned or reassigned to the craft via the 'Clerical Work MOU', the 'Clerk Jobs Audit MOU' and the 'Job Audits MOU'. While the parties have settled several national disputes on the Lead Clerks performing TACS, it is still all clerk work for the clerk bargaining unit. If supervisors are performing the work, local grievances should be filed. Contact your respective Clerk Craft NBAs for local guidance. If the proper training has not been provided, NBAs have been instructed to file District-wide grievances.

## Rural Management Support System (RMSS), formerly Rural Work Hour Tracker (RWHT)

This is data entry work and consistent with the 2010 CBA, this is clerk work and should be performed by clerks. While supervisors have authority to approve entries made by clerks, this is still bargaining unit work. If a supervisor performs TACS clerk bargaining unit work, this is a contract violation under Article 1.6 of the National Agreement.

Within the RMSS is a section called the Ad-Hoc Activity Report which recognizes all hours being worked by rural carriers in other crafts. This report proves that nationally, rural carriers are performing almost 10,000

hours a week in the clerk craft. This report shows how many hours are being transferred per week in each location. This is an Article 7 crossing craft violation and the work should be assigned to the clerk, with a make whole remedy.

## Customer Retention (CRT), formerly Sales Retention Team (SRT) Global Remedy

The APWU submitted the final payment listing with amounts to be paid to the USPS for the remaining payment on the \$36 million Global Settlement Agreement where the USPS violated the CBA when they improperly used non-clerks to staff the Customer Retention Centers. Payments usually take up to eight weeks to process. More up-to-date information will be shared on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org).

## POStPlan Postmaster Relief (PMR) Settlement Agreement

Arbitrator Goldberg ruled the USPS improperly denied employees clerk work as a result of their failure to comply in a timely fashion with the POStPlan MOU. The USPS improperly retained PMRs. Goldberg ruled the number of hours shall be determined, in the first instance by the Postal Service records. The parties agreed to a monetary settlement of \$49.9 million. The Postal Service provided the APWU with a listing of offices where the Postmaster Reliefs (PMRs) worked and the clerks in a work hour status during the period of the grievance. The remedy period covered Pay Period 02, Fiscal Year 2015 – Pay Period 15, FY 2017. Postal Support Employees (PSE) and Part-Time Flexible (PTF) clerks in POStPlan Level 4 and Level 6 offices where PMRs improperly worked during the grievance period were identified.

In the second part of the award, career clerks in Level 18 POStPlan offices where an PSE-818 PMR worked were entitled to a remedy. There were 67 offices identified.

All the information relied on was based on the Postal Service's records, most of which was presented in the arbitration hearing. The union will identify the employees to be paid based on the Postal Service's records provided to the APWU, and it will be updated on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org). ■

# POStPlan Award Implementation



Assistant Director Terry Martinez, Director Idowu Balogun and Assistant Director Jimmie Waldon

On February 10, the Maintenance Craft Division Director Balogun and the Postal Service signed off on the implementation of Arbitrator Goldberg's Award on POStPlan Custodial Staffing in (APO/RMPO) Installations. The outstanding issue in implementing the Award was the process of returning custodial cleaning in POStPlan Installations to the Maintenance Division.

## In the settlement, the parties agreed to the following:

- Determining whether a contract cleaning service can be utilized in an Administrative Post Office (APO) and its associated Remotely Managed Post Offices (RMPOs) within a POStPlan Installation will be based on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) *Re: Subcontracting Cleaning Services*.
- Custodial duties that are currently performed by contractors and other non-Maintenance Craft employees will be assigned to custodial employees within 180 days.
- Cleaning contracts that include a penalty for canceling the contract will be reviewed at the national level regarding cancellation.
- Current custodial employees who are within a POStPlan Installation will not be involuntarily reassigned to a different office within the POStPlan Installation or have their duty assignment reposted to change their principal assignment area from one office to another.
- The Postal Service may require that future custodial duty assignments require the use of a privately-owned vehicle (POV) to travel between offices in a POStPlan Installation. The Postal Service reserves the right to provide postal vehicles and/or transportation at its option. This exception is limited only to POStPlan Installation and Maintenance Craft.
- Any initial Notice of Intent will be posted no later than 90 days after the signing of this Agreement.
- Employees on the clock will be compensated at the appropriate higher-level while operating a postal vehicle or a POV between offices in a POStPlan Installation. When using a POV, daily compensation and mileage reimbursement will stop at the employee's last assigned facility where he/she ends tour.
- Reposted or newly established duty assignments will be posted in accordance with Article 8 (Work Week and Work Schedules).

- The employee will be reimbursed at the current approved mileage rate when required to use a POV in accordance with this Agreement.
- Each facility within the POStPlan Installation will have the necessary cleaning supplies and equipment.
- When custodians are traveling between offices in a POStPlan Installation in a POV, they may be required to transport custodial supplies (e.g. paper towels, toilet paper, handheld detergent spray bottle, etc.); however, they will not be required to transport soiled custodial equipment or open chemicals.

The parties also agreed that in POStPlan Installations for which the subcontracting computation is less than one and a custodial employee is currently assigned, that custodial employee will remain until he/she vacates that assignment.

This Agreement applies only to custodial duty assignments in POStPlan Installations and cannot be cited as precedent or having applicability in any other facilities. If you have any questions, please contact your stewards, local officers, then your Maintenance National Business Agents.

## USPS Announces Potential Breach in Maintenance Exam 955 Materials

On Jan. 31, the Postal Service informed APWU of a potential breach in testing materials related to Maintenance Selection System Exam 955, stating the following:

*As a precautionary measure, a temporary hold on Exam 955 test scheduling has been issued until a full investigation has been completed. Individuals currently in process to complete testing will be rescheduled for a later date. The hold is expected to last until March 1, 2020.*

This is important for members who were recently tested, are scheduled to be tested, or are in the process of updating their test results about this new development.

Each local must decide based on individual fact circumstances whether to enter into the grievance process.

The Maintenance Craft is currently scheduled to meet with the Postal Service, and will keep the membership updated accordingly. ■



# Replacing an Antiquated Fleet



Assistant Director Javier Piñeres and Director Michael Foster

**T**he Postal Service is in the final stages of purchasing new delivery vehicles to add to the fleet as they continue replacing the antiquated Long-Life Vehicles (LLVs) that have been in use for the past thirty years.

In Jan. 2020, certified APWU representatives attended the First Article Test (FAT) of the new Mercedes-Benz Metris Right Hand Drive Van in North Charleston, SC.

The Postal Service is replacing the Long-Life Vehicles with the new Mercedes Metris van. This van has a cargo volume of a minimum of 121 cubic feet. The delivery vehicle has a mail tray system in the operator cab compartment capable of accommodating Delivery Point Sequenced (DPS) letters, Flat Sequencing System mail, saturation mail and spurs (small parcels less than 1 lb.), among other things.

According to the Postal Service's requirements, the vehicles must have a mirror system sufficient to eliminate blind spots.

The main concern for the testers was the visibility and the number of blind spots present on the Metris van from the driver's perspective. The vehicle is only equipped with the standard mirrors that come with any passenger vehicle.

The vehicle is not equipped with the traditional pot lid mirrors that are normally used when driving the LLVs. The rearview mirror served no purpose at all, as a plate attached to the cage blocked its view. Additionally, the front of the vehicle was not visible from the driver's point of view, making it difficult for the driver to see the curb, objects and mailboxes – a potential hazard. The vehicles are not equipped with alert sensors, nor cameras to assist the driver.

Additional safety and health concerns were included with the union's remarks under the FAT's provisions of the contract.

## Peterbilt Tandem Tractors FAT

On Jan. 28-31, APWU representatives traveled to the Pac-car Technical Center in Mount Vernon, WA for the FAT of the Cab Over Engine (COE) Peterbilt Tandem Tractors. The USPS intends on a one-for-one replacement of the remaining COE tandem tractors in the fleet. In all

my years of driving and reviewing these tractors for the USPS, I always believed that the main purpose of the COEs was maneuvering in close quarters, such as those at some of the intra-city stations and branches we service. The reasoning from upper management attending the FAT was that these vehicles are primarily intended for use in situations where the operator is entering into traffic, and situations where the cab over is needed for the driver to have a better view.

The APWU had the opportunity to inspect, review, and test drive this vehicle during the FAT. Listed below are some of the concerns. The entire review of our safety and health concerns can be found on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org).

- The position of the DEF needs to be moved and labeled to prevent confusion.
- Glad Hands should be full-length and solid style.
- A slip resistant step needs to be installed on the fuel tank.
- The 5th wheel is non-sliding; install sliding 5th wheel.
- The current three-mirror system on both sides of the cab needs to be replaced with a two mirror system, and add a mirror on the top of the right-side door to allow the driver to see down.
- The length of the tractor is approximately two feet longer than its replacement.
- The brake and accelerator are too close. When attempting to engage either pedal, both pedals are engaged due to their proximity.

We will notify the membership of the USPS responses when received. ■

We want to thank the following APWU members who represented the MVS Craft during the FAT's:

### Mercedes Metris Right Hand Drive Van

Bruce Amey, NBA  
Nate Walker  
Timothy Schwarzbauer

### COE Peterbilt Tandem Tractor

Michael O. Foster  
Brandon Main  
Kermit Chatman  
Felix Colon  
William Drew

# What's new in Support Services?



Director Steve Brooks

**T**he APWU National Postal Professional Nurses came to terms with the Postal Service on a successor collective bargaining agreement (CBA) just before Christmas 2019. The terms were subsequently ratified by the membership with a unanimous 21-0 vote.

The terms will provide for some well-deserved retroactive pay increases of 2.4 percent for 2017, 2.9 percent for 2018, and 3.0 percent for 2019. These increases are based on a yearly Economic Cost Index (ECI) which in comparison to the USPS/APWU CBA, relates to our basic contractual increases and COLA combined. These increases are well overdue, as it has been tough to hire new nurses because the salary schedule has not kept up with comparable salaries in the private sector.

**THE APWU NATIONAL POSTAL PROFESSIONAL NURSES CBA TERMS WILL PROVIDE FOR SOME WELL-DESERVED RETROACTIVE PAY INCREASES**

The contract will extend through 2023 with yearly increases in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Additionally, the postal nurse staff will increase by 32 positions per an agreed-to staffing package.

## IT/AS

The Information Technology/Accounting Services (IT/AS) unit of the Support Services also came to terms with the Postal Service just before Christmas 2019. This agreement is an extension that will go through July 17, 2020. The group agreed to an extension because the parties were still a long ways off from agreeing to any terms for both the IT and Accounting sections. The Postal Service was also involved with the APWU Interest Arbitration, the Mail Handlers and Letter Carriers' negotiations, and the postal police interest arbitration processes, so it was hard to get consecutive dates from them for negotiations. The extension was ratified by the group by a 515-29 vote.

The decision was made to get some terms in place now so that members in these units were not waiting for what

could be a few years for any negotiated increases. By extending the negotiations out, the hope is that the APWU will have its interest arbitration award and the other unions will also be close to terms or have possible interest arbitration decisions finalized as well. This should free up some time for management to dedicate more time to the demands of the IT/AS group.

## HRSSC Workers Welcome

You may have noticed on *apwu.org* that the APWU has organized another group of employees – EAS Level 18 Personnel Processing Specialists at the Human Resources Shared Services Center (HRSSC) in Greensboro, NC. This particular group is in the EAS pay schedule, but they are non-supervisory employees, which means they do not supervise or have any authority to issue discipline to employees.

This group approached the APWU for any possible help with their wages and working conditions. President Dimondstein and Private Sector Organizing Coordinator Rich Shelley had several conversations with lead individuals from the HRSSC about what the steps and expectations were in forming a union. Additional meetings were held with APWU representatives Sharon Colonna, Barbara Allen, and Judy McCann to answer questions from the HRSSC Organizing Committee.

The group decided to go forward with an NLRB vote. A group of HRSSC workers went to Washington, DC for an APWU National-organized meeting with Postmaster General Megan Brennan to request that the Postal Service recognize them as a union. The Postal Service agreed not to interfere with the vote process. In the NLRB vote, the unit voted 160-40 in favor of unionizing.

Since the vote transpired, Vance Zimmerman, Liz Powell, Annette August-Taylor, Judy McCann, and I have met with the group to develop a constitution and bylaws, sign membership applications, and develop proposals for collective bargaining negotiations. This is a great win for the APWU and the Support Services Division. We look forward to negotiating a contract that will provide for increased wages and better working conditions for these employees. ■



AJ Jones, Eastern Regional Coordinator

## Facing Challenges Together

**G**reetings Brothers and Sisters from the Eastern Region officers and staff. I would personally like to thank all our members who participated in the recent APWU elections, and especially those who supported me in being elected your new Eastern Region Coordinator. I look forward to working together with everyone during these challenging times as we move forward.

Thank you to Mike Gallagher, our outgoing Eastern Region Coordinator, for all his years of dedication and service to the American Postal Workers Union and for his continued support as I navigate this new position. I wish him the best in his retirement.

### Humanity in the Workplace

I am a people person and enjoy working with others to get the best results. During my travels, I heard many stories from members about degrading and disrespectful treatment from management. I believe we need to work with our employer to bring back humanity in the workplace. This is a positive approach that will hopefully foster healthy working relationships.

If you experience a hostile work environment, contact your local union representative and complete a Form 1767 (Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice). These forms are required to be on the workroom floor and easily accessible for all employees. Please remember to keep a copy for your records to share with your union.

### The Importance of Education, Training, Communication and Networking

I am a firm believer in education and training for all, good communication with one another, and networking. These practices create a solid foundation affording the best representation and leadership. We can learn from each other, and everyone has something to offer. Entertaining this methodology will allow for our best efforts to be revealed.

I reached out to each state and local president in the Eastern Region to create a line of communication to keep folks up to date. I sent out an information contact sheet and requested it be completed and returned. Thank you to those who have responded, and I hope

the remaining folks will follow suit. I look forward to expanding this effort by using other forms of communication, such as Zoom, to further enhance our network. Any state or local that needs assistance, I am here for you, please do not hesitate to contact me at 856-740-0633 or [ajjones@apwu.org](mailto:ajjones@apwu.org).

### Article 12 Rearing Its Ugly Head

Upon taking office, I walked into multiple Article 12.5.C.5 notices (excess outside craft or installation) in the Maintenance Craft. These notices failed to provide the union with the required 6-month advanced notice whenever possible. They also failed to provide the basic information necessary to support an Area/Region meeting no less than 90 days prior to the move date of Feb. 29, 2020. Therefore, no meetings took place, effectively holding off any excess of employees for now. Some of these events may end up being canceled or reduced to local impacts. We will continue to assist locals in fighting any improper excess attempts by the employer.

I also received communications from the Postal Service requesting that the parties meet at the Area/Region level regarding potential impacts when no official Article 12 implementation had been issued. The union held strong, and will only agree to meet on actual events we have been properly notified about after the necessary information has been provided in advance. Recently the union was notified that Article 12 events from Nov. 2019 will not endure any excess (outside of installation or craft) until the next move date of June 2020.


I would like to thank our National Maintenance Craft officers: Director Idowu Balogun, Asst. Maintenance Director Jimmie Waldon, and Asst. Maintenance Director Terry Martinez, along with Eastern Region Maintenance Craft National Business Agent Jason Treier, as well as Northeast Region Coordinator Tiffany Foster, Central Region Coordinator Sharyn Stone, Southern Region Coordinator Kenneth Beasley, and Western Region Coordinator Omar Gonzalez, who have all come together, committed to each other. We are working together to fight back against this recent attack on Maintenance Craft jobs. ■





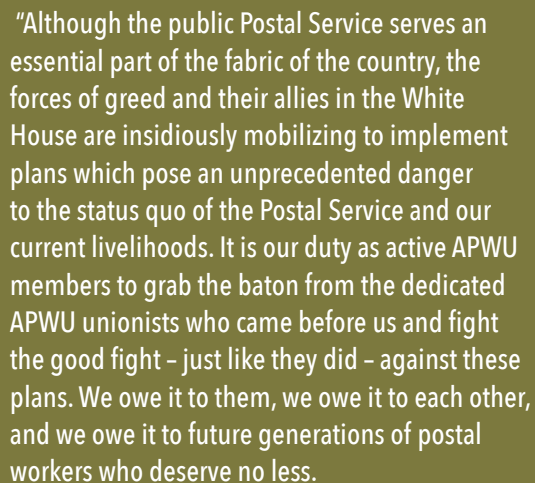
# FROM the FIELD

Below are quotes from various APWU local and state publications throughout the country. All the publications listed are part of the Postal Press Association (PPA). For more information on the PPA, visit [apwupostalpress.org](http://apwupostalpress.org) or email [ppa@apwupostalpress.org](mailto:ppa@apwupostalpress.org).



"Solidarity' is a unionist term. There's no doubt about it. When you read over the words of fellow workers who attend training workshops, you'll see it. When you read an article or letter-to-the-editor written by a fellow worker, you might see them end with it. We show solidarity with other unions when we shop at unionized retailers and grocers. We show solidarity when we boycott products and businesses where strikes or contract fights are ongoing. We show solidarity when we show up to each other's pickets. But what is solidarity? I think it's another word for family... Every time I attend union training, I'm always pleasantly surprised by some of the people I meet. We have amazing talent within our ranks. We have amazing support. But sometimes we forget that. The union is not some mysterious thing. It's us – all of us. Get involved. Come to a meeting. Volunteer for a committee. Not everyone has to be a steward in order to get involved. We'll get to know each other more and you'll be making the union stronger."

– Cole Butterfield, Eugene (OR) Area Local Editor  
*The Windowcase*

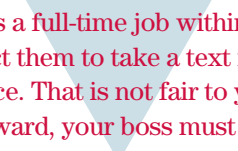


"Although the public Postal Service serves an essential part of the fabric of the country, the forces of greed and their allies in the White House are insidiously mobilizing to implement plans which pose an unprecedented danger to the status quo of the Postal Service and our current livelihoods. It is our duty as active APWU members to grab the baton from the dedicated APWU unionists who came before us and fight the good fight – just like they did – against these plans. We owe it to them, we owe it to each other, and we owe it to future generations of postal workers who deserve no less."

– Chris Czubakowski, APWU of Wisconsin  
Legislative Director, *Badger Bulletin*

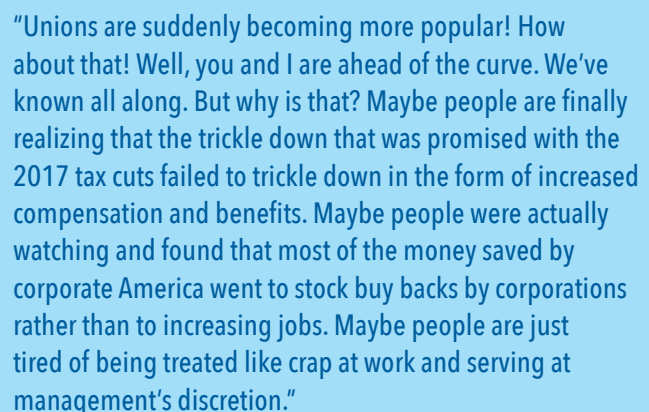
"Representation does not just mean the grievance process. It is providing information to members that make them fully understand what it means to be a member of a labor organization; that representation also includes processes that are available to them, benefits of membership, and the ability to keep them fully informed."

– Jeff Greenlee San Antonio (TX)  
Alamo Area Local Secretary-Treasurer  
*Alamo Area Local Dispatch*



"Your steward has a full-time job within the Postal Service. You cannot expect them to take a text message from you and file a grievance. That is not fair to your steward. If you request a steward, your boss must get a hold of the steward's boss to get you and the steward together. This gets the steward away from their job to help you and gives them time to investigate and file your grievance. Do not be scared or intimidated by management! Look at it this way: you have 750 brothers and sisters behind you! You will never be alone! We have all the power in the world when we are unified!"

– Michael Bates, Des Moines Area Local President  
*DMI News & Views*



"Unions are suddenly becoming more popular! How about that! Well, you and I are ahead of the curve. We've known all along. But why is that? Maybe people are finally realizing that the trickle down that was promised with the 2017 tax cuts failed to trickle down in the form of increased compensation and benefits. Maybe people were actually watching and found that most of the money saved by corporate America went to stock buy backs by corporations rather than to increasing jobs. Maybe people are just tired of being treated like crap at work and serving at management's discretion."

– Richard Haefner, Minnesota Postal Workers Union  
President, *Minnesota Postal Worker*

# LABOR NEWS

## Labor Law Overhauling PRO Act Passes in House of Representatives

**O**n Feb. 5, one of the strongest labor bills in decades passed 224-194 during a House of Representatives floor vote, following a strong push from union members and workers to gain cosponsors and advocates for the bill. The *Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act*, a major overhaul of labor law, would vastly improve the rights of workers across the country, make it easier to join unions, and increase penalties on employers who violate the rights of workers.

The bill is ambitious. The legislation would improve not only the rights of workers already in unions, but those looking to form unions as well. The bill would create new penalties for employers who violate federal labor law by retaliating against workers attempting to unionize, allow workers classified as “independent contractors” to form unions, and make it easier for workers to seek compensation when employers disrupt union activity. The bill also would make it illegal for employers to permanently replace striking workers.

“This bill is for working people,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. “Our movement is bigger than any party or politician, and we will not rest until the PRO

Photo courtesy of the CWA



CWA members preparing to deliver postcards urging Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO) to sign on to the PRO Act.

Act is the law of the land and the rights of workers are restored.”

Communications Workers of America (CWA) members were integral in the campaign to bring the PRO Act to the floor for a vote. The union’s members organized call-in days and lobbied Congress members to pass the bill. National Nurses United (NNU) Executive Director Bonnie Castillo also wrote a passionate op-ed in *The Hill* in favor of the bill.

“Congress must pass the PRO Act...not just because it’s popular and right, but because it protects members of the public who are served by working people every single day,” Castillo wrote.

After passing in the House, the PRO Act now moves to the Senate. Currently Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, said he will not consider the legislation. CWA is urging fellow union members to sign its petition to push the Senate to pass the bill. To sign the petition, go to [cwa-union.org/proact](http://cwa-union.org/proact). ■

## Kickstarter Employees Vote to Form First-Ever Tech Union

**O**n Feb. 18, employees at the online crowdfunding platform Kickstarter voted to form a union. The workers – organizing under the name Kickstarter United – will now become members of the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 153.

The 47-36 vote in favor of unionizing comes after more than a year of organizing, during which management routinely engaged in unionbusting tactics. Organizing began in earnest after management attempted to pull a crowdfunding project from the site to raise money for a comic book called “Always

Punch Nazis” after pressure from far-right online trolls. While workers successfully kept the project on the platform, they began organizing a union to officially gain a seat at the table.

Six months after Kickstarter United went public with their intent to unionize, two lead organizers were fired and another was pressured to resign while management continued attempts to persuade employees not to sign union cards.

Workers overcame management’s attempt to bust the union, and now have the first union

covering all non-management employees at a tech company. Kickstarter United’s victory comes on the heels of a year that saw an increase in worker action in the tech industry, including walkouts at Google. 90 Pittsburgh-based contractors at Google also successfully unionized last year.

“I’m overjoyed by this result,” Dannel Jurado, a Kickstarter senior software engineer, told the New York Times. “There’s a long road ahead of us, but it’s a first step to the sustainable future in tech that I and so many others want to see.”

## Health Care Workers in Minnesota Win New Contract After Strike Vote

On Feb. 6, over 1,800 workers at HealthPartners clinics overwhelmingly voted to authorize a strike. The workers, represented by SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, voted 95 percent in favor of a seven-day unfair labor practices (ULP) strike, following HealthPartners's refusal to bargain with workers in good faith during contract negotiations that began when the previous contract expired on Jan. 31.

The strike threat worked: on Feb. 18, HealthPartners conceded to the workers' demands for fair wage increases and no cuts to health plan benefits and overtime pay. The agreement came in the final hours before workers were due to walk out.

The strike would have included caregivers in over 80 different jobs, who work at 30 clinics across the Twin Cities. 1,200 OPEIU Local 12 members also committed to honor the picket lines should workers have walked out on Feb. 19.

"We are very proud of how our membership stood up together and fought back huge cuts and cost shifts to health care and overtime pay that management had insisted on for months," said Nancy Wickoren, a 31-year licensed practical nurse at HealthPartners and member of the union's bargaining team.

Workers have not yet ratified the contract, but are expected to do so by the time this issue goes to press. ■

## WNBA Basketball Players Win Groundbreaking New Contract

On Jan. 14, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and its players union, the WNBPA, came to an agreement on an overhauled contract. The new eight-year collective bargaining agreement is a major paradigm shift, setting a new precedent for women's sports on both a domestic and international level.

Under previous agreements, many WNBA players were often forced to travel overseas during the offseason to play internationally in order to earn more money. The new contract includes pay raises that average around 25 percent, plus a 50-50 revenue split between the league and the players. The contract also mandates players receive full pay while on leave due to pregnancy, as well as improved maternity leave, childcare stipends, and travel benefits.

The WNBPA's members used their social media influence to increase public pressure on the league during negotiations, beginning when the union opted out of the previous CBA in November 2018. As a result of their efforts, the new contract improves not only the current standing of WNBA players, but is now a model for equitable labor contracts in all women's sports.

"We're providing a new starting line for those who come after us," WNBPA President Nneka Ogwumike told *the New York Times*.



(Top) Paris bus drivers join demonstrations against Macron's pension reforms. Sign translation: "Macron and the Bankers want war, we're ready to fight"

Photos by Jeanne Menjoulet CC by 2.0

(Bottom) Students join demonstrations against pension reforms on Dec. 9.

## Massive Strikes Erupt in France Against Proposed Pension Reforms

On Dec. 5, more than 30 trade unions joined together in massive strike actions across France in protest of forthcoming proposals from President Emmanuel Macron to overhaul the country's pension system. The proposals, unveiled a week later, include raising the country's retirement age by two years, while also combining France's 42 separate pension plans – individually tailored by profession – into a single, one-size-fits-all points system.

The strikes have seen widespread participation across the country: trade union CGT reports that over 1.5 million people joined in the protests at their peak in December. The most effective actions have come from workers targeting important economic sectors and massively impacting the country's operations over the holiday season and into the new year.

Much of the labor action centered on the country's transport system, as rail workers, air traffic controllers, port workers, and other public transport workers joined in on the walkouts over the course of the strike. Most striking transport workers returned to work after six weeks, the longest transportation strike in French history.

Actions also included targeted power cuts by electric workers, who shut off electricity at an Amazon distribution center outside Paris on Dec. 22. After transportation workers returned to work, electric workers once again cut power to 30,000 people in Paris suburbs in a show of solidarity.

As this issue goes to press, workers have succeeded in forcing the government to back off its raising of the retirement age. However, targeted strikes and actions remain ongoing as the other proposed reforms make their way through the French legislature. Further updates on the strikes and pension reforms will be posted on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org). ■



# It's an Election Year – and Vote by Mail is on the Ballot

**2020** is an election year. While much of the country's political attention span is consumed by the presidential primary, there is another important question heading into November this year – not for whom voters will vote, but how they will vote. One of A Grand Alliance's key priorities for a more vibrant public Postal Service is the expansion of postal voting, usually referred to as “vote at home” or “vote by mail.”

Since the last election, a number of states made significant changes to their voting laws to expand the use of vote by mail options. In other states, voters will go to the polls this November and have the chance to vote for vote at home!

In Virginia, spurred by the work of the national Vote at Home coalition (which includes the APWU, NALC and other Grand Alliance allies), legislators recently passed a broad package of voting rights reforms that recognize the important role of the mail in expanding democracy. First was a bill that makes Virginia a “no excuse” absentee voting state, meaning that any voter can request their ballot papers at home without providing a qualified excuse.

The second important change in Virginia was passing a “permanent absentee” provision so that voters can opt to vote by mail in every election, without having to register as an absentee voter in each election.

Those two changes now await the governor's signature, which is expected soon. Postage-paid return of ballots was not able to make it across the finish line, but advocates expect it will be up for ballot allocation in Virginia again in 2021 and stands a good chance of passage.

In Pennsylvania, similar reforms passed into law since the last election and are in place for 2020 voting. Voters will enjoy no-excuse absentee voting for the first time and can vote by mail as early as 50 days before the primary and general election days. Pennsylvania also expanded the permanent vote by mail options, meaning voters can register to receive all their future ballots by the mail.

These changes expand democratic rights of voters and ensure everyone has access to the ballot box. For A Grand Alliance, it is an important demonstration of the

power of the trusted, public, universal Postal Service to meet the needs of the country in significant ways.

## **New report sheds light on billions wasted on school privatization efforts**

For years, corporate interests have funded vicious attacks on public education and the teachers' unions that defend it. The most notable manifestation of their efforts to break unions and privatize education has been the charter school movement of the last two decades, which we have covered in this column before.

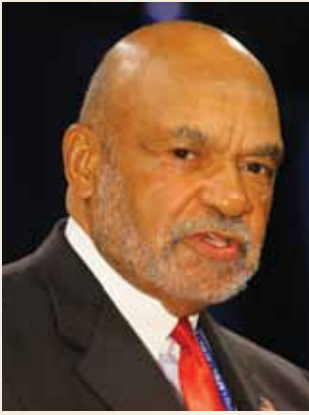
A new report from the Network for Public Education shows that the federal Department of Education (DOE), under the leadership of pro-privatization Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, continues to waste millions of public dollars on privatization schemes that never even led to the creation of new schools!

The report, titled "Still Asleep at the Wheel," finds that the DOE's Charter School Program has awarded public grants to schools that immediately converted back to being private schools, or even to boards that never broke ground on a new school. In total, it identified 537 “ghost schools” and other instances that cost more than \$500 million.

Charter schools are usually funded at least in part by public funds, but are usually privately-managed or subject to different rules and regulations than traditional public schools. Public education advocates have long held that the charter school movement is a thinly-veiled campaign to defund quality public education and bust unions, shrouded under the guise of “education reform.” The report sheds light on the tremendous amounts of public money wasted on these cynical efforts. Taxpayer money should instead be invested in quality public services we all deserve! ■

**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](http://www.AGrandAlliance.org).

# Former APWU National Officers Pass Away



## John R. Smith

John R. Smith (known by most as "JR"), former Retirees Department Director, passed away Jan. 11, at the age of 91. Brother Smith was the first ever director of the Retirees Department. He served in this position from 1993-2005 when he retired from the APWU. After the merger that created the APWU in 1971, Brother

Smith was appointed as national vice president of the APWU's Mail Handler Craft (the Mail Handler Division continued for decades in the APWU). In 1981, Brother

Smith returned to Dayton, and was president of Dayton Ohio Area Local for 11 years until his appointment as Retirees Director upon the creation of the department in 1993.

A committed fighter for labor and civil rights, Brother Smith traveled to South Africa in 1994 with six other APWU officers as part of an 89-member AFL-CIO delegation to observe the first free and fair election in the country that resulted in Nelson Mandela winning the Presidency.

"This has been the most rewarding work," Smith said when he retired as Retirees Director in 2005. "Helping people to make the most important decisions they have to make in their entire lives ... not only in deciding when to retire, but in helping them make the decisions they will have to make once they have retired."

## Linda Coleman



Linda Lee Coleman, former Clerk Division National Business Agent for the Washington, D.C. region, died Dec. 24, at the age of 81. A member of the Nation's Capital Southern MD Area Local Retiree Chapter, Sister Coleman was the first woman in her local to serve on its negotiating team and the first woman elected as president of the Maryland State/District of Columbia APWU. Coleman was active in APWU POWER, and attended the first POWER convention in Detroit in 1980.

In 1989, Coleman became one of the first seven female national officers when she was elected as a National Business Agent.

## Lawrence "Larry" Gervais



Lawrence "Larry" Gervais, former Clerk Division National Business Agent for the Minneapolis region, passed away on Feb. 14 at the age of 78. A former clerk, Brother Gervais participated in the 1970 Great Postal Strike, when the strike spread to St. Paul, MN.

Brother Gervais became a National Representative for the National Postal Union shortly after the strike, and continued in the position following the 1971 merger that formed the APWU. He continued as a national officer until 1989, when he returned to St. Paul and accepted an appointment as a Special Assistant to the President, working in that position until his retirement in 1996.

## Samuel "Sam" Anderson



Samuel "Sam" Anderson, former National Special Delivery Messenger Division Director, passed on Feb. 19 at the age of 81.

A committed unionist, Brother Anderson began his postal career in 1963 and remained active as a leader and mentor in the years that followed.

Brother Anderson also served as President of the Chicago Local, and as the local's representative to the Chicago Federation of Labor. He became an APWU national officer in 1983.



Judy Beard, Director

# H.R. 2382 Passes the House!

Last month, the *USPS Fairness Act* passed the House of Representatives. This was the critical first step in repealing the pre-funding mandate that has plagued the Postal Service since it was signed into law under the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act.

Prior to the bill's passage, Postal Service detractors sent their lobbyists to Capitol Hill to push the false narrative that eliminating the pre-funding mandate would cause a taxpayer-funded bailout. Fortunately, APWU rose to the occasion and participated in an emergency day of action where we called our Representatives to urge a YES vote on H.R. 2382. The hard work paid off and ultimately defeated the pro-privatization forces in the House.

Now we have shifted our focus to the bill's companion legislation in the Senate, S. 2965, which was introduced by Senator Daines (R-MT) and Senator Schatz (D-HI) (*for more information on our actions on S. 2965, see page 8*). In addition to fighting for the *USPS Fairness Act* in the Senate, your national Legislative Department is building support for additional legislative fixes to bolster our Postal Service. In the 116th Congress, APWU will continue to educate lawmakers on the need for improving USPS service standards and empowering USPS to innovate and provide additional products to meet the needs of the 21st century.

THE HARD WORK PAYED OFF AND  
ULTIMATELY DEFEATED THE PRO-  
PRIVATIZATION FORCES IN THE HOUSE.

### Presidents 2021 Budget Released

The White House released its 2021 budget plan and made clear its intention to balance tax breaks for billionaires on the backs of working people – including postal and federal workers. The White House budget would:

- Reduce pay and benefits for postal workers.
- Reduce mail delivery days.

- Franchise out mailboxes.
- Calculate pensions for new FERS retirees by switching from the High 3 formula to the High 5 formula.
- Eliminate the FERS annuity supplement.
- Levy a 1 percent annuity contribution increase each year for the next six years for FERS employees. The employees will not see any additional money from this.
- Eliminate the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for FERS retirees and reduces the COLA by half for CSRS retirees.
- Reduce the rate of return for the TSP G fund.

Thankfully, Congress puts together their own budget, and we are actively engaging members of Congress, on both sides of the aisle, to educate them on how the White House's budget will adversely affect postal workers and their families.

WHEN YOU RECEIVE YOUR  
CENSUS, MAKE IT A PRIORITY TO  
COMPLETE AND RETURN IT.

### 2020 Census

The 2020 Census will determine the allocation of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives. The census is a constitutionally required survey that occurs every ten years, and determines the distribution of power across the country.

In 2010, eight states received more seats in the House while ten states lost seats. Understanding the implications of the census is important, especially during our ongoing work to pass legislation in the House. We are constantly working to build relationships with members of Congress and the census could result in us gaining or losing key allies or opponents. When you receive your census, make it a priority to complete and return it. ■





Anna Smith, Director

# Standing Strong Together in the Past and in the Future

**S**isters and Brothers, if there was ever a time to stand together as APWU members, that time is now. Government proposals are clearly and consciously aimed at our pay, benefits and working conditions, while attempting to pulverize the service we provide to the American public.

As in the past, this situation is just as serious as before when the powers-that-be crank up the USPS wrecking ball to meet their ultimate objective – to profit from privatizing our nationally treasured institution.

How do we fight back these types of assaults that continue to come our way? The age old saying of strength in numbers applies. It is up to the members of the APWU to defend our rights and livelihoods. We are in a presidential election year. What better time to strengthen our numbers to defend ourselves, as these are the times in which anti-public Postal Service politicians use the USPS as a political leverage tool.

There will be significant loss of membership from retirements, downsizing and consolidations of facilities. Each and every local and state organization must start organizing campaigns immediately. Signing up our long-term non-member coworkers who have been enjoying negotiated benefits and job protections is just as important as signing up that new employee in orientation.

It is understandable that not everyone is comfortable with approaching these folks. But think about when you were approached. How did the person who spoke to you the very first time about joining the APWU carry themselves? They were most likely polite and informed as to why joining the union is so very important to the rest of the membership, and why it should be important to you too.

Some people are intimidated by management for all sorts of obvious reasons, and some are not even quite sure if they are permitted to approach a new coworker or known non-member. Article 31.1 of our collective bargaining agreement gives us the right to solicit others to join the union “in non-work areas of the Employer’s premises, provided such activity is carried out in a manner which does not interfere with the orderly conduct of the Employer’s operation.”

Speaking to your coworkers about joining and standing with you as a member is an opportunity to be actively involved in the APWU. The importance of gaining strength in numbers is more imperative than ever before. This is something you must convey to your non-member coworker.

### What’s in a number?

50! Usually a golden occasion to celebrate an anniversary, a number that expresses a threshold of sorts. Perhaps the beginning of another, 50.

So it is, that we begin the celebration of APWU’s Golden Anniversary. Fifty years of progress through struggle. Why struggle? Just imagine five separate institutions coming into one.

**SPEAKING TO YOUR COWORKERS ABOUT JOINING AND STANDING WITH YOU AS A MEMBER IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE APWU. THE IMPORTANCE OF GAINING STRENGTH IN NUMBERS IS MORE IMPERATIVE THAN EVER BEFORE.**

As we await the full ramification of our new contract, imagine seven unions negotiating one contract.

We celebrate 50 years of progressive struggle because we deal with one of the oldest and most powerful government institutions. We have prevailed numerous times, despite seemingly insurmountable odds, because of our members.

As we enter into our 50th year, the Organization Department will be rolling out a new campaign: *Organizing For 50 More*. Be on the lookout for updated organizing materials and activities to assist every member in their organizing efforts to build on our great union.

**You are remarkable and yes, you are resilient – but most of all you are APWU. ■**



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

# Attend a Post-Convention Workshop

**T**he Research & Education Department will sponsor the APWU's 17th Educational Conference, a National Convention event that provides union members with a wealth of information to take home to their locals and state organizations. 26 Post-Convention Workshops will be offered on **Friday, August 21, 2020, the day following the adjournment of the convention, at the Los Angeles Convention Center.** Full day workshops will be offered from 10 am- 5:30 pm and half- day workshops will be offered from 10 am-1 pm and from 2:30 pm-5:30 pm.

All APWU members are welcome and encouraged to sign-up online. ***Participants are encouraged to register early, as classroom space is limited.*** Other participants may try to sign up for workshops after they arrive in California; however, late registrants will have a limited choice of workshops, as many workshops will already be filled to capacity.

***Special Note: If you need an ASL interpreter, you must register by Friday, July 24.***

***The registration process will be conducted online ONLY.*** More information can be found on the APWU website, "**Post-Convention Workshops.**" Below is a list of workshops.

- **APWU SEARCH Interface:** Arbitration Advocates should attend this training. The new web-based database is designed to be used by arbitration advocates to simplify searches for arbitration awards and decisions. The company that maintains APWU SEARCH database has developed this new design to enable the system to function efficiently. The training will include how the new interface works, how to conduct searches using the multiple-tab feature, and methods to narrow searches. Participants must bring a fully charged laptop to the training. **(10 am-1 pm)**
- **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. **(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **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. Full Day Workshop. **(10 am-5:30 pm)**
- **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 am-1 pm)**
- **Department of Labor and IRS Reporting Obligations:** Reviews the federal/state reporting and insurance requirements for local/state unions. As these reporting and insurance obligations are mandatory, new presidents, treasurers, trustees, and executive board members are urged to attend. **(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **Disabled Veterans' Benefits:** Assists representatives in helping disabled veterans obtain benefits. **(10 am-1 pm)**
- **Disability Retirement:** Explains how disability retirement pay is calculated and how to avoid delays and disapprovals. **(10 am-1 pm)**
- **Empowering Young Workers:** Brainstorming how to encourage young union members to become more actively involved in the union, increase activism and aid in building a more diverse labor movement. **(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **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 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **Improving Your Workplace Environment:** Discusses the member's rights to a workplace free of abusive behavior. Outlines the steward's role and obligation to represent employees reporting inappropriate behavior in the workplace pursuant to the CBA, USPS Handbooks, Publications, and Policies. **(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **Innovative Organizing:** Focuses on real-life organizing challenges. Participants will learn the techniques and strategies needed to expand membership and strengthen our union. Explores ways to encourage

new members to join the union and addresses what to say to convince those members, who are considering dropping their membership to stay involved.

**(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**

- **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 am-1 pm)**
- **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 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **Leadership Development:** Helps newly elected union leaders understand the responsibilities, challenges, and qualities of leadership; examines goal setting; outlines the steps to developing effective listening skills; discusses the necessity of coalition building; gives tips on how to get along with difficult people, resolving conflict, and stress reduction. Also, it offers a basic knowledge of parliamentary procedure. **(10 am-5:30 pm)**
- **Legal Issues and Union Communications:** A review of editorial policies, union regulations, libel, copyright and federal election laws that apply to hardcopy and electronic forms of communication. **(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **Maintenance New MS 1 Handbook TL 6:** Gives an overview of the Implementation of Arbitrator Goldberg Award regarding transition of Maintenance work from Station and Branches to the Field Maintenance Operation (FMO) within the guidelines of the New TL 6 Handbook and applicable Maintenance Management Orders (MMOs). **(10 am-1 pm)**
- **Maintenance Article 12 Excessing Guide:** Addresses how to challenge Maintenance Article 12 Excessing Notifications; Understanding 12.5.C.4 and 12.5.C.5, which outlines reassignment within and outside of the Installation, and the applicable RFIs. **(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **Motor Vehicle Service Division (MVS) Issues:** An update on MVS issues and information on the Articles 39, 32, and other articles of the CBA that apply to the Motor Vehicle Craft. **(10 am-5:30 pm)**
- **Protecting Clerk Work in Smaller Offices:** An overview of issues such as crossing crafts, maximization, supervisors performing bargaining-unit work, postal support employees, “lobby sweeps/lobby director” and “Article 37.3.a.1, creating duty assignments in small offices. **(10 am-1 pm)**
- **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 am-1 pm)**
- **Representing Employees When Discipline is Issued:** An in-depth discussion of how to protect APWU members from unwarranted discipline. Proper investigation techniques will be explained in detail, along with common arguments for defending employees against unwarranted discipline. **(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **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 am-1 pm)**
- **Reversing Runaway Inequality: An Activists’ Guide to Economic Justice:** Examines the origin of runaway income and wealth inequality and discusses how social movements – both inside and beyond the labor movement – have created social change throughout U.S. History. Provides an in-depth understanding of the attack on workers and unions with emphasis on the importance of workers joining forces to regain power, achieve justice, and stop the threats of privatization. **(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**
- **Stand Up for Safe Jobs:** Designed to build active and strong safety campaigns at the “grassroots” level. Participants will learn how to complete 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. **(10 am-1 pm)**
- **The Strike that Shocked the Country:** Explores the importance of the “Great Postal Strike of 1970.” Takes a look at the events that led up to the strike, the impact of the strike on our Country and the gains that have been achieved largely due to the brave postal employees who marched to change postal wages and working conditions. **(10 am-1 pm)**
- **The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) from A to Z:** Covers every aspect of TSP including: The benefits of savings; Traditional vs Roth Contributions; Investments; Loans, and Post-Separation Withdrawals. **(2:30 pm-5:30 pm)**

If you have problems registering online, please contact Bernadette Nathan at [bnathan@apwu.org](mailto:bnathan@apwu.org). ■





Nancy Olumekor, Director

# Social Security, IRS, DEA, OPM are not calling you!

### These are Scams – Fraud Calls.

When you receive a “cold call” from one of these federal agencies, it is a fraud call. A “cold call” is an unsolicited call from someone that you did not call or they may leave you a message to call them back. These are fraud calls, or scams. The callers are attempting to get your personal identifying information, such as your social security number, your bank account, your CSA number or your credit card information. Absolutely no federal agency will ever “cold call” you to discuss your personal identifying information. ***Be aware and don’t let this happen to you!***

The following is a true account of a fraud call and financial scam involving a retiree. On the same day that a retiree’s annuity was deposited into their bank account, they received a telephone call claiming that their Social Security number came up in a money laundering scheme which was being investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

The retiree was told that a warrant was issued for their arrest. The retiree was advised that in order to avoid arrest, all of the money in their bank account had to be converted to gift cards and the gift card numbers given to the caller, posing as a DEA agent. The caller remained on the telephone with the retiree until the retiree purchased the gift cards and gave the caller the numbers on each gift card. The next day, the retiree went back to the store to make sure the money was still on the gift cards, and the cards had zero balances.

Of course, the DEA agent was a fraud; the retiree’s money was gone. This fraud was reported to the police, the bank and Social Security. The retiree also **reported this fraud scheme to the US Senate Special Committee on Aging by calling the toll-free Fraud Hotline at 1-855-303-9470.**

If you ever receive this type of call or message, hang up the telephone and don’t return the call.

It is important that you report these incidents to the Fraud Hotline because the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging has made consumer protection and fraud prevention a major focus of its work. The Fraud Hotline

offers help to victims and to those targeted by scammers. Committee staff and investigators are experienced in dealing with scams and fraud, and they speak directly with the victims and will assist the victim.

Every year, the Aging Committee releases a report, the Fraud Book, to educate older Americans about the most frequently reported frauds and scams. For the first time since the report was released, the Social Security Impersonation Scam is now the most frequently reported scam. The 2020 Fraud Book provides information about how to spot and stop this and other scams. Call **202-224-0185** to request copies of the 2020 Fraud Book. ■

### From Collective Begging to Collective Bargaining!

Fifty years ago, postal employees throughout the country “Made Their Mark” on the world! This month, we celebrate the 1970 Great Postal Strike. The employees who worked for the Post Office at that time demonstrated a tremendous act of courage. All of us who came to work for the USPS are the beneficiaries of their bravery. We recognize you! We thank you! We celebrate you!

In recognition of Older Americans Month, May 2020 this year’s theme “Make Your Mark” was selected to encourage and celebrate the countless contributions that older adults make to our communities. Our time, experience, and talents benefit family, peers, and neighbors every day. This year’s theme highlights the difference everyone can make – in the lives of older adults, in support of caregivers, and to strengthen communities.

**REMEMBER:**  
**Do your part, GOTV-**  
**Get Out the Vote 2020!**



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

# Is a Generic Available?

If you've needed a prescription filled recently, there's a good chance a generic is available. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), almost 80% of fills are generics over brand-name drugs. If you are filling your prescriptions with a brand-name drug, you may be paying more than you could for your medications.

**"A GENERIC MEDICINE WORKS IN THE SAME WAY AND PROVIDES THE SAME CLINICAL BENEFIT AS ITS BRAND-NAME VERSION. THIS STANDARD APPLIES TO ALL FDA-APPROVED GENERIC MEDICINES. A GENERIC MEDICINE IS THE SAME AS A BRAND-NAME MEDICINE IN DOSAGE, SAFETY, EFFECTIVENESS, STRENGTH, STABILITY, AND QUALITY, AS WELL AS IN THE WAY IT IS TAKEN AND SHOULD BE USED."**

– U.S. Food & Drug Administration

### What is a generic medication?

A generic drug is a medication created to be the same as an already marketed brand-name drug in dosage form, safety, strength, route of administration, quality, performance characteristics, and intended use. These similarities help to demonstrate bioequivalence, which means that a generic medicine works in the same way and provides the same clinical benefit as its brand-name version.

One way to save money on prescriptions is to ask for a generic, which typically costs less because the manufacturer did not have to conduct the initial research or repeat the studies that the first-to-market branded drug did. Generics fall into two categories:

- **Direct chemical equivalent:** a drug that has the same active ingredient as its brand-name counterpart

- **Therapeutic alternative:** a drug that may not be chemically equivalent to the brand, but has the same therapeutic or treatment effect

In other words, direct chemical equivalents are practically identical to the branded product, while therapeutic alternatives are part of the same family.

### Does the generic work the same as brand-name drug?

Yes. Any generic medicine modeled after a brand-name medicine must perform the same in the body as the brand-name medicine. This standard applies to all generic medicines. Generic medicines use the same active ingredients as brand-name medicines and work the same way, so they have the same risks and benefits as the brand-name medicines. The FDA Generic Drugs Program conducts a rigorous review to make certain generic medicines meet these standards, in addition to conducting 3,500 inspections of manufacturing plants a year and monitoring drug safety after the generic medicine has been approved and brought to market.



### Ask Questions

At your office visit, before your prescription is sent to the pharmacy, be sure to ask the doctor or nurse, "Is there a generic available?"

Review your maintenance medications. Regularly check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if a generic is available.

Get the facts from the FDA. Learn more about the benefits of generic drugs from [fda.gov](http://fda.gov). ■

*Editor's Note: Information in this article is taken from the Food & Drug Administration's Generic Drug Facts webpage. For more information, visit [fda.gov/generic-drugs/generic-drug-facts](http://fda.gov/generic-drugs/generic-drug-facts).*

**APWU**

# 50th Anniversary of the 1970 Great Postal Strike



## Passing the Torch

*Read more about  
the strike on page 20.*

