

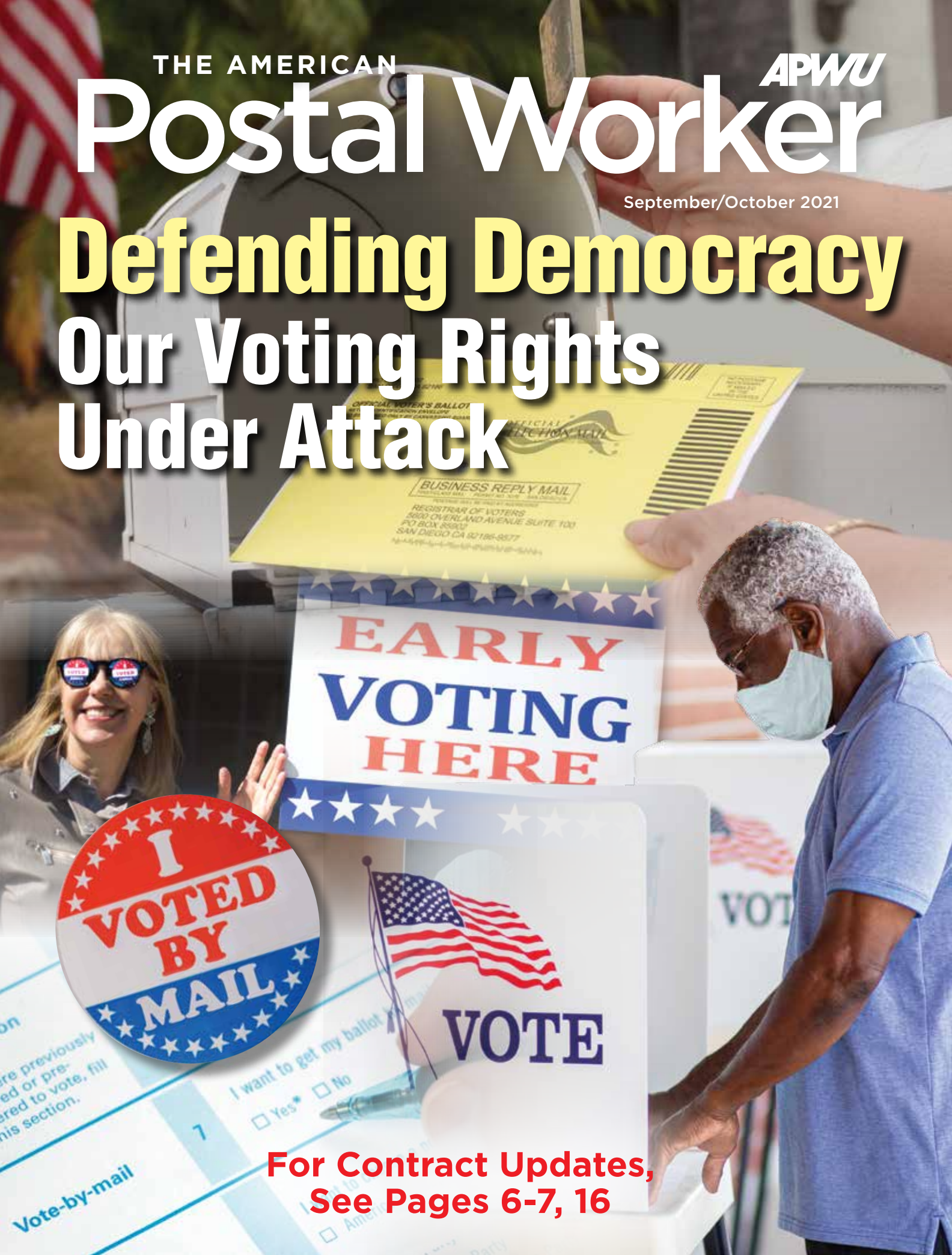
THE AMERICAN

APWU

Postal Worker

September/October 2021

Defending Democracy Our Voting Rights Under Attack



**For Contract Updates,
See Pages 6-7, 16**



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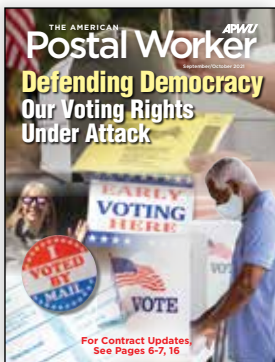
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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

Democracy: Of, By and For the People

The word democracy comes from Greek and translates to “*rule by the people*.”

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln captured this essence of democracy in his famous Gettysburg address upholding a government “*of the people, by the people and for the people*.”

Workers make up the vast majority of ‘the people.’ Thus, a true democracy would primarily serve the interests of working people – ensuring living wages, safe working conditions, shorter work weeks, health-care as a human right, affordable housing, healthy food, a sustainable planet, quality childcare and education, dignified retirements, equal rights of all people and world peace.

Yet we live under a system where the interests of the Wall Street corporate profiteers are primarily served by the government. Witness the pandemic: postal and other frontline workers faced dangerous and deadly conditions; the economic collapse put tens of millions out of work; poverty reached the highest level in 50 years; and millions lost health insurance. Meanwhile U.S. billionaires increased their ill-gotten fortunes by 55% (\$1.6 trillion!) and laughed all the way to the bank.

Yet, over generations “we the people” have struggled and won vital democratic rights, including voting rights. Though distorted and skewed in favor of the wealthy with the buying and selling of elections, gerrymandering of districts, the “lesser of two evil” choices, the undemocratic institutions of the electoral college and Senate filibuster, and a long history of voter suppression, voting remains a cherished won right.

We are now facing a frenzied wave of voter suppression. Feeding off former President Trump’s “BIG LIE” that the 2020 presidential election was stolen and rigged – the blatant falsehood that led to the despicable violent coup attempt of January 6 – there are now new voter suppression laws being promoted in 48 states. Eighteen states have passed 30 laws that will make it harder for people to vote with new restrictions on vote by mail, early voting and drop boxes – aimed at suppressing the powerful African-

American and Latino vote (as shown in the Georgia special election), but also directed against all working people.

President Biden pegged this new wave of voter suppression as “an atrocity” and “un-American.” Right on the first point. Wrong on the second. Voter suppression is “American as apple pie.” Upon the country’s founding, no postal worker could have voted, a right only afforded to wealthy, white, male landowners. Woman’s suffrage was won just 100 years ago, and did not apply to Black women of the south. African-Americans were denied their right to vote until passage of the *Civil Rights Act* in 1965, won after generations of struggle and sacrifice. Holding Election Day on a work day is aimed at depressing the workers’ voice.

For workers of all backgrounds, the defense and expansion of voting rights is now a critical fight of our time. Whether right, left or center on the political spectrum, I am confident postal workers are united that politicians must not be allowed to pick voters. Voters should be choosing elected representatives.

The *For the People Act* will overcome much of these state voter suppression laws and ensure early voting, maximum access to mail ballots and easier voter registration (*see next page*). In March, it passed the House of Representatives. While both mainstream parties have generally failed the working class, shockingly no Republican voted in favor of this fundamental, non-partisan legislation. The Senate filibuster, the anti-democratic “requirement” of 60 percent, rather than a simple majority to move legislation, has blocked the bill from moving forward.

Postal workers, at the intersection of election mail and voting rights, have a special role to play. Last election we proudly carried out our civic responsibility to the people by timely and securely moving millions of ballots. Let’s take that same spirit to the streets and Congress. Unite with the AFL-CIO, community allies and the people and demand ending the filibuster and passing the *For the People Act* and for Election Day to be a paid holiday.

The more democracy, the better our lives will be! ■

For The People Act: Securing Voting Rights for All

If signed into law, the *For the People Act* (HR.1/S.1) would be the largest expansion and protection of voting rights in decades. The legislation would also override the unjust laws recently passed in several states, including Georgia, that make it much harder for all working people to vote, especially for minority and low-income people.

The legislation, which passed in the House of Representatives on March 3, is broken down into three main sections: voting rights expansion, campaign finance reform, and ethics enforcement. Below is a summary of the main provisions in each of these sections:

Voting Rights Expansion

- Establishes national automatic voter registration requiring citizens to opt-out, rather than opt-in of being registered to vote.
- Bans any restrictions on voting by mail, and requires states to pre-pay return postage for all mail ballots.
- Requires online options for voter registration, correction, cancellation, or designating party affiliation.
- Requires at least 15 consecutive days of early voting in federal elections, with voting centers open for at least 10 hours per day.
- Ends partisan gerrymandering.
- Bans the practice of purging voter rolls for reasons of non-forwardable mail.

- Restores the right to vote for felons who have completed their sentences.

Campaign Finance Reform

- Establishes public financing for campaigns, with the government providing \$6 for every \$1 donated up to \$200. The funding for this provision would come from new fees placed on banks and corporations during corporate malfeasance cases.
- Requires Super PACs and other “dark money” groups to disclose donors.
- Requires Facebook and Twitter to disclose funders of political ads on their platforms.
- Requires disclosure of election spending by any government contractors.
- Prohibits coordination between super PACs and candidates.

Ethics Enforcement

- Requires the President, Vice President, and all candidates for these offices to disclose the 10 most recent years of tax returns.
- Bans the use of public money to pay for sexual harassment or discrimination settlements involving members of Congress.
- Expands oversight of Office of Government Ethics and creates stricter requirements for lobbyists.
- Establishes a new ethics code of conduct for Supreme Court members. ■



John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act

Another piece of important legislation to protect voting rights is the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*, introduced on August 17 by Rep. Terri Sewell (D-AL-07) and passed in the House on August 24. The legislation, named after the late congressman and Civil Rights icon, would protect voters from discrimination by restoring and protecting provisions of the landmark *Voting Rights Act of 1965* that were gutted by U.S. Supreme Court decisions over the last decade.

The first major provision in the bill is the re-establishment of “preclearance,” the federal oversight that would prevent any states or localities with a recent history of voter discrimination from restricting the right to vote. This oversight, a crucial part of the *Voting Rights Act*, was dismantled by the Supreme Court’s 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*.

The law would also make it easier to challenge voter discrimination, a process made more difficult by the Court’s 2019 decision in *Brnovich v. DNC*.

The APWU fully supports this legislation. For more information on the bill, go to the Legislative and Political department page on apwu.org.

APWU Is “Locking Down” With Management

On September 7, the National Negotiation Committee (NNC) locked down with management for a week of intense negotiations. As this issue goes to press, both the APWU officers and postal management plan to stay in the same hotel, meeting daily at main table negotiations, craft tables, and other sub-committees where they will hash out the various proposals on that table. The contract will expire on September 20, 2021.

The NNC is meeting regularly with postal management, and as this issue goes to press, has submitted over 90 proposals. These proposals include items to protect job security and work opportunities, increase

career opportunities and improve conditions of work.

So far in negotiations, the proposals have focused on addressing work rules, working conditions and workforce structure. The APWU will submit additional proposals in the next weeks including ones for “economic provisions” – wage increases, COLA, step increases, etc.

Throughout this process, the NNC is keeping the APWU National Executive Board and the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee updated about the process and developments of negotiations. The APWU also published two updates to the members on the website and in News Service Bulletins to



be posted on union bulletin boards across the country. On August 24, the NNC hosted a second series of APWU Contract Town Hall events to update the members and answer questions.

Negotiating Team: WE’VE GOT YOUR BACK!

On August 6, 2021, hundreds of local and state presidents answered the Special CAT call. There was an air of excitement as participants raised their hands and vowed to fight for “Our Union, Our Contract, Our Future,” to remain “Union Strong, All Day Long,” and to proceed with the conviction that “The Fight for Our Future Starts Today.”

It was clear that APWU leaders are committed to supporting the National Negotiation Committee (NNC) as they work hard to secure a good contract. Also evident was the presidents’ pledge to rally members through collective action. Preparations to join together, stand up and mobilize members to exert their voice during the negotiations process accelerated as more CATs were formed shortly after the call. Hundreds more members have officially joined our fight for a good contract.

The CAT Call was convened and moderated by Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell. National officers, the National Campaign Committee (NCC)

and CAT liaisons were present, and *Fired Up and Ready to Go.*

APWU’s Lead Negotiator, Mark Dimondstein, and Chief Negotiator Vance Zimmerman stopped by and gave critical contract updates, and Craft Directors: Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks, Maintenance Craft Director Idowu Balogun, MVS Craft Director Michael Foster and Support Services Director Steve Brooks also spoke to the group. Organization Director Anna Smith emphasized the importance of organizing. Local presidents and members gave important input on various issues.

Let’s continue to support the NNC and our collective goal to get a good contract!



Gary Area Local (IN)

Contract Negotiation Update Hotline - 866-412-8061

The APWU launched our hotline for instant contract negotiations updates. President Dimondstein started regularly updating the hotline on September 7 – when the lockdown with management started. Call **866-412-8061** for updates.

APWU Holds Another Round of Contract Town Halls

On August 24, the APWU again held three virtual Town Halls via Zoom with the National Negotiations Committee (NNC), to allow members to hear important updates about negotiations, a timeline of events moving forward, negotiation goals, and the ways members can get involved on the workroom floor during the contract campaign for APWU – *Our Union, Our Contract, Our Future*. The meetings were also livestreamed on Facebook, YouTube, and apwu.org.

Again emceed by Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth “Liz” Powell, the events kicked off with opening remarks from President and Lead Negotiator Mark Dimondstein. The entire NNC spoke during the event, including Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy, Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman, Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks, Maintenance Craft Director Idowu Balogun, MVS Craft Director Michael Foster, and Support Services Director Steve Brooks.

In his opening remarks, President Dimondstein saluted postal workers as the essential “heroes” that they are, and introduced the NNC. “We are working together towards a positive new contract that serves our members, serves the public, and certainly

serves our families and communities,” President Dimondstein said.

He also explained the process of collective bargaining and how it came to postal workers with the 1970 Great Postal Strike. “Collective bargaining is not a magic wand; it’s not a one-way street and it is not us negotiating with ourselves. The negotiation process’s outcome largely depends on the power and leverage we bring to the bargaining table,” he explained. “Our power starts with you. That we are union!”

“I want to thank everybody and say how proud I am to be working with you to get this contract for you – the essential workers that tied this community across the country together [during the COVID pandemic],” said Director Zimmerman. “The union is negotiating the largest single union contract in 2021... So you are part of a contract that will not only protect APWU workers – your wages, hours and working conditions – but also the union movement as a whole.”

In addition to contract updates, President Dimondstein, Vice President Szeredy, Secretary-Treasurer Powell, Director Zimmerman and others discussed the need for continued vigilance against COVID-19, encouraged members to get vaccinated and stressed the importance of wearing masks to stop the spread of the virus and stay safe at work. “The upticks in the last four weeks is over 100 percent,” Director Zimmerman said. “You’re eighteen times more likely to be hospitalized with the COVID Delta variant if you haven’t been vaccinated.



The officers also discussed what happens if a contract is not reached by September 20. Postal workers will continue to work with our rights and protections in place. The grievance and discipline procedure will continue, unchanged. “Everything is intact with the exception that we don’t get any raises or COLAs, and the no-layoff clause after six years of service expires September 20,” explained Director Zimmerman.

It is the primary focus and goal of the NNC to reach a voluntary agreement with USPS management during this negotiation process, but a secondary focus is to be prepared for interest arbitration, if necessary.

“It is far superior to have a voluntary agreement, where we are in control of our own destiny. Where the National Negotiations Committee can do our work, the Rank and File Bargaining Committee can do their work, and the decision then rests with the members who do their work to decide in its final form if it is an acceptable contract,” said President Dimondstein. “If we don’t get there, our conditions of employment – from raises, benefits and working conditions – become the decision of one person, which is high risk.” ■



New Jersey Mid-State Area Local



Bakersfield Area Local



USPS Ends Attempt to Change Union LWOP Rules for Political Activity

On July 9, postal management informed President Dimondstein that they are ending their attempt to change Union Leave Without Pay (LWOP) rules relating to APWU members taking leave to engage in political activity.

The Postal Service initially changed Union LWOP rules in 2017. Their change required APWU members to certify they would not be conducting partisan political activity while taking Union LWOP. The APWU initiated a grievance against these changes in Nov. 2017. After an arbitrator ruled in our favor, the USPS attempted to overturn the decision in federal court, and their case was voluntarily dismissed earlier this year. Management's notice to President Dimondstein certifies that their attempt to change Union LWOP rules has ended.

"This is a great win for the APWU," said Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman. "Even after an arbitrator overturned their changes, the Postal Service insisted on carrying out a lawsuit in an attempt to force their way. We are glad this lawsuit was dismissed and APWU members can continue engaging in partisan political activity while on leave without pay, a right we have earned."

"It is the right of everyone to participate in the political process if they wish," said President Dimondstein. "There was no question the union was going to stand up and fight back against this rule change. I want to thank Director Zimmerman, Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard, our attorneys and staff whose hard work led to this victory." ■

Postal Regulatory Commission Issues Warning to USPS about Service Standard Change

On July 20, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) released its Advisory Opinion regarding the Postal Service's proposals to slow the First Class Mail service standard to as many as five days, and issued a serious warning to postal management about their proposal. The PRC found that management's planned changes are untested, unlikely to improve the Postal Service's finances and risk further alienating the mailing public, who justifiably expect to receive their mail quickly and reliably.

The Postal Service's proposals would slow down the mail for millions of users and billions of pieces of mail, including extending the current three-day delivery standard for First Class and Periodicals to up to five days, depending on distance of travel.

"The PRC's opinion echoes what the APWU has argued since management first introduced their plans to slow down the mail," said President Mark Dimondstein. "We strongly opposed these proposals and we are heartened that the Commission shares many of our concerns."

The PRC remained unconvinced that any modest savings were worth the cost to service expectations; noting:


The Commission finds that the amount of estimated annual cost savings, even if fully realized, does not indicate much improvement, if any, to the Postal Service's current financial condition...Therefore, it is not clear that the tradeoff between financial viability and maintaining high-quality service standards is reasonable.

An APWU-led effort, along with other members of *A Grand Alliance to Save our Public Postal Service*, generated 70,000 public comments that were included in the PRC's findings.

While the PRC's reservations were made clear in their opinion, the agency lacks the authority to stop the USPS from proceeding with their plans. USPS has issued its final rulemaking in the case and made clear their intention to proceed with the changes effective October 1.

"The APWU calls on postal management and the Postal Board of Governors to reconsider their plans, and to ensure the people of the country received the prompt, reliable and efficient service promised under the law," President Dimondstein said.

The PRC's Advisory Opinion can be accessed at bit.ly/3x0RdkO. ■



UPDATE on Postal Service Reform Act

The *Postal Service Reform Act* of 2021 is critical to providing the Postal Service with much-needed financial relief. It is slowly moving its way through Congress. In May, the bill received bipartisan approval by the House of Representatives Oversight on Government Reform Committee, the main committee that addresses postal issues. It was also introduced with bipartisan support in the Senate.

As it is currently written, the APWU supports the legislation. The legislation's language is currently in flux as it is reviewed by the other House committees of jurisdiction (Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means). Members of Congress can offer amendments as the legislation moves forward through Congress. The APWU is closely monitoring any potential changes that would weaken the legislation and cause it to be unacceptable to our union.

The key components of the currently proposed legislation include eliminating the 2006 pre-funding mandate (PAEA) for retiree health benefits that has financially crippled the USPS, maintaining 6-day delivery, more frequent reporting on service performance and Medicare integration. Additional information on this legislation can be found on the Legislative and Political Department section of apwu.org. ■

Medicare Integration Q&A

Any postal reform legislation that passes into law will likely include "Medicare integration." There has been much misinformation spread through social media on the issue. What follows are clarifying questions and answers.

Q | What is "Medicare Integration"?

A | Medicare Integration means that future USPS retirees will be enrolled in both Medicare and FEHBP once they become eligible for Medicare at age 65. Medicare will become the primary provider and FEHBP will be the secondary provider. Only future retirees, upon becoming Medicare eligible, will have to join Medicare Parts A and B and purchase Part B in order to remain in FEHBP.

Q | Will current retirees have to join Medicare to maintain their FEHBP health insurance?

A | No, the language only applies to future retirees. In addition, there is a provision that allows for current retirees who did not voluntarily choose to join Medicare B when they were eligible to do so and have the late enrollment penalty waived.

Q | Does Medicare integration mean that active postal workers and postal retirees will no longer be part of the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program?

A | Absolutely not, and the APWU will not support any legislation that attempts to remove us from FEHBP. The legislation will establish a separate "postal pool" *within* FEHBP so that postal workers and the Postal Service receive the savings created by Medicare integration.

Q | How will such savings be generated and who will benefit?

A | Medicare will become the primary provider. What Medicare does not cover, FEHBP will

then provide as the secondary insurance. This will reduce the cost of the FEHBP plans. By reducing, or slowing the increase in FEHBP health premiums, both the USPS and postal workers will save money on their respective share of the premiums.

Q | If all future retirees must pay the premium for Medicare, how is Medicare integration a positive development?

A | There is no cost associated with Medicare Part A. Currently Medicare Part B has a required premium of approximately \$150.00/month. With Medicare integration, retirees receive 100% coverage with elimination of co-pays, deductibles and catastrophic limits. In addition, healthcare premiums will increase more slowly over time than they would otherwise.

Q | Are there any exceptions to requiring future retirees to enroll in Medicare A and B in order to keep their FEHBP?

A | Yes. The legislation includes exceptions for veterans who receive their benefits through the VA, for retirees in areas where Medicare services are unavailable, and for those who have retired and moved outside the United States.

Q | Do most of our retirees already belong to Medicare?

A | Yes. Almost 80% of our current retirees voluntarily join and pay for Medicare B because it saves them money and provides 100% full coverage when it comes to health insurance.

Q | Would I lose health coverage in the unlikely event that Medicare becomes insolvent?

A | No, if such an event occurred, health coverage reverts to the secondary plan under FEHBP.

The Billionaire “Space” Race is *Built on Workers’ Backs*

With great media fanfare, three billionaires, Jeff Bezos of Amazon, Richard Branson of Virgin Group and Elon Musk of Tesla, are engaging in a new “space race” while workers at these companies are mistreated and deprived of the benefits of unions.

“As further Amazon unionization campaigns spread beyond Bessemer, AL to other Amazon warehouses and more workers begin fighting for their rights on the job, we see this billionaire ‘space race’ for what it is: using wealth built on the backs of workers to fund their hobbies,” said President Dimondstein. “These mega-wealthy individuals are only able to fund these ‘personal projects’ after exploiting their workforce and taking advantage of corporate welfare. Only by coming together in solidarity can workers take back what has been stolen by Bezos and other billionaires, and build power for ourselves on the work room floor.”

“You paid for all of this.”

After spending \$5.5 billion on an 11-minute, 62-mile flight, Bezos, who often pays less taxes than the average postal worker, shared a glimpse of truth saying:

I want to thank every Amazon employee and every Amazon customer because you guys paid for all of this... Seriously, for every Amazon customer out there and every Amazon employee, thank you from the bottom of my heart very much.



Cartoon by Brien Cardello

THESE MEGA-WEALTHY INDIVIDUALS ARE ONLY ABLE TO FUND THESE ‘PERSONAL PROJECTS’ AFTER EXPLOITING THEIR WORKFORCE AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF CORPORATE WELFARE.

Bezos, who hypocritically “thanked” his employees, was not challenged by any media member on exactly how the million-plus Amazon workers paid for the trip: through back-breaking, low-wage, dangerous labor for a company that will not hesitate to crush any attempts at organizing for better pay, benefits and working conditions.

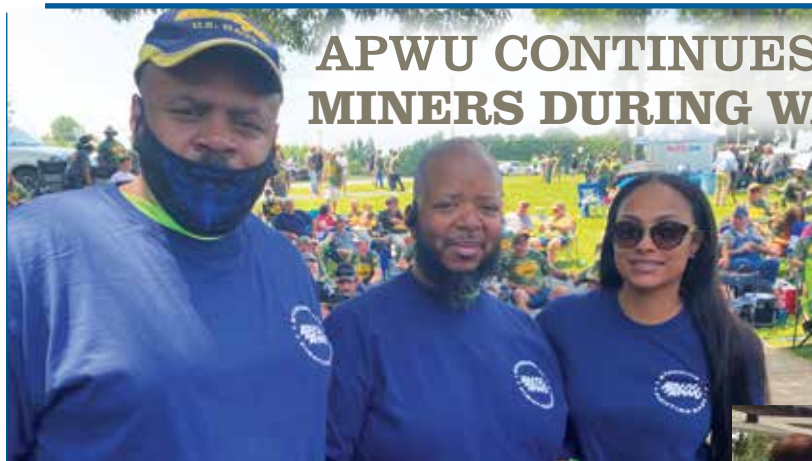
In Bessemer, AL, the company engaged in brutal union-busting tactics against its distribution center workers ahead of the Retail, Warehouse and Department Store Union (RWDSU) NLRB election in March 2021. The company lobbied the local government to change traffic light patterns to prevent RWDSU organizers from approaching cars at red

lights, held numerous captive audience meetings, defied the NLRB’s orders not to install a mailbox at the warehouse in advance of the mail election and threatened to close the facility.

“Workers everywhere are fed up with the status quo of billionaires profiting off our labor while we work longer hours for less pay,” said President Dimondstein. “It is an outrage that these multi-billionaires willingly spend billions of dollars, gained from the exploitation of workers, on the new ‘space race’ while refusing to pay living wages and suppressing through intimidation and coercion their workers efforts to organize into unions. I suggest on their next effort at space travel we leave them up there while we continue to wage the just fight for a better life on Earth.” ■

MEMBERS IN ACTION

APWU CONTINUES SUPPORT OF UMWA MINERS DURING WARRIOR MET STRIKE



Birmingham Area Local members and officers at a United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) rally to support striking Warrior Met coal miners in Brookwood, AL on August 4. Clerk Craft National Business Agent Pam Smith addressed the rally (below). The strike, which began April 1, remains ongoing as this issue goes to press. APWU members are encouraged to donate to the UMWA strike fund at umwa.org/umwa2021strikefund.

SAN FRANCISCO LOCAL MEMBERS HOLD RALLY AGAINST INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER CLOSURE

On June 28, San Francisco Local members and officers held a rally and caravan protesting the closure of the International Service Center (ISC) post office at San Francisco International Airport, one of only five such centers in the country that distribute and dispatch international mail received from a designated service area to specific foreign countries or to gateway exchange offices.

During the rally, local members handed out flyers to local businesses and community members, asking them to contact Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA-14) to help stop the ISC from closing. Following the rally, Rep. Speier agreed call for a GAO audit on the closure.



San Francisco Local members and officers rallying on June 28



SEND US YOUR PHOTOS! HAVE YOUR LOCAL FEATURED IN MEMBERS IN ACTION

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

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

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

Please make sure to follow all COVID-19 health and safety guidelines when taking photos, **including wearing masks** and social distancing. High-resolution photos should be emailed to communications@apwu.org



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

The Solution to Resolving the USPS's Delayed Mail Challenge and Building Back Better

On July 20, the Postal Regulatory Commission advised the USPS not to change service standards.

There were over 130,000 comments submitted to the Federal Register/Postal Regulatory Commission, from customers, mailers, unions and other coalition partner organizations. It's the first time in history that this many comments were received regarding the degradation of service standards.

Our country is telling the USPS: "do not change the service standards."

In 2016, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) weighed in and the USPS agreed not to continue with their consolidation of mail processing facilities without advanced new AMP studies. No surprise to postal workers, the consolidation moves did not provide the savings or the service they were expecting. There was a continued spiral of degraded delivery performance (even before COVID-19). There was a loss in business accounts and consumer use. The moratorium was in place for almost 7 years.

Reversing consolidations is what should have occurred (see Chapter 8 of the USPS PO-408). The consolidation moves in 2012 through 2015 cut too deep. Many of the gaining facilities are continuously unable to timely process too much of the mail volume they receive from losing facilities.

Though the APWU has requested another moratorium to stop consolidations, the USPS has begun plans to close many mail processing facilities by early November 2021. Impact Statements have been provided with none of the required studies. We are already bleeding, do not cut us deeper!

Simple Solutions to Start Saving the USPS:

- Stop consolidations immediately. Do not waste any more money on projects that adversely affect our communities.
- Go back to the 2012 Service Standards, which will include replacement of new AFCS's (cancel/postmarking equipment) back to Phase 2 mail processing facilities that will provide a large savings in transportation costs, safer work environments, and better service.

- Add more parcel sorting equipment to mail processing facilities and build annexes or expand mail processing facilities where it can be done.
- Review the facilities and add staffing needs from actual work hours and including the excessive overtime hours. Stop wasted projects to replace human interaction. Our brand has been made off the backs of our trusted workers; the USPS and our communities need more workers, not less.
- Protect workers from hostile management work environments.
- Stop subcontracting our bargaining unit work, adversely affecting our prompt efficient mail service. Invest in your valuable employees.
- Stop trying to close small post offices, stations and branches that communities rely on.
- Pilot postal banking in 5,000 retail offices around the country (and start generating more revenue), audit the success and expand services (USPS already has over 50 years of banking experience during 1911-1967).
- Invest in solar units on roofs of large mail processing plants (review savings from the Los Angeles Plant), purchase electric vehicles and place charging stations (revenue creating) at retail postal facilities to build back better.

We are getting ready for peak season with COVID-19. The letter and package season will be as big as last year. We may play a very important role in helping to provide necessary medical assistance during another COVID-19 wave. We also have a year of election activity in 46 states, primaries starting March 1, 2022. This includes state primaries, including congressional, gubernatorial, and statewide office elections.

The PMG and the Board of Governors must protect and build back our Postal Service.

Make your voice heard by reaching out and educating our communities, and taking action.

Be the instrument of POWER! ■

COVID Vaccines: Fact vs Myth

COVID-19 is deadly and is continuing to quickly spread with the "Delta" variant. Cases, hospitalizations and deaths are rising. The APWU strongly encourages our members to voluntarily get vaccinated, if they have not already done so.

The information shared below is taken largely from Johns Hopkins Medicine. None of this is medical advice, which you should receive from your medical provider.

MYTH: Researchers rushed the development of the COVID-19 vaccine, so its effectiveness and safety cannot be trusted.

FACT: Studies found that the two initial vaccines are both about 95% effective – and reported no serious or life-threatening side effects. There are many reasons why the COVID-19 vaccines could be developed so quickly:

- The COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna were created with a method that has been in development for years, so the companies could start the vaccine development process early in the pandemic.
- The vaccine developers didn't skip any testing steps, but conducted some of the steps on an overlapping schedule to gather data faster.
- Vaccine projects had plenty of financial resources, as governments invested in research and/or paid for vaccines in advance.
- Because COVID-19 is so contagious and widespread, it did not take long to see if the vaccine worked for the study volunteers who were vaccinated.

MYTH: Getting the COVID-19 vaccine gives you COVID-19.

FACT: The COVID-19 vaccine does not contain the SARS-Co-2 virus, so you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. It helps your immune system recognize and fight the virus.

MYTH: The side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are dangerous.

FACT: The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccine can have side effects, which are very short term – not serious or dangerous. Some people experience pain where they were injected, body aches, headaches or fever, lasting for a day or two. These are signs that the vaccine is working to stimulate your immune system. If symptoms persist beyond two days, you should call your doctor.

In April 2021, the CDC temporarily paused and then resumed use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Read more at bit.ly/3kbV8XS.

If you have allergies or other notable medical conditions – especially severe ones that require you to carry an EpiPen – discuss the COVID-19 vaccine with your doctor.

MYTH: The COVID-19 vaccine enters your cells and changes your DNA.

FACT: The messenger RNA from two of the first types of COVID-19 vaccines does enter cells, but not the nucleus of the cells where DNA resides. The mRNA does its job to cause the cell to make a protein to stimulate the immune system, and then it quickly breaks down – without touching your DNA.

MYTH: The messenger RNA technology used to make the COVID-19 vaccine is brand new.

FACT: The mRNA technology behind the new coronavirus vaccines has been in development for almost two decades.

MYTH: If I've already had COVID-19, I don't need a vaccine.

FACT: Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people are generally advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before.

MYTH: The vaccine places a microchip in our bodies with which our activities can be tracked and monitored.

FACT: This is a conspiracy theory spread through social media and has no basis in fact.

MYTH: Since there are a significant number of "breakthrough" COVID-19 infections among those who have been vaccinated, the vaccine is not effective and not worth getting.

FACT: The more transmissible "Delta" variant now makes up 98% of the new infections in the U.S. With its spread has come more "breakthrough" cases. But, the vaccine is proving very effective in keeping people from developing more severe cases. 95% of COVID hospitalizations are patients who were not vaccinated. Almost all recent deaths are among the unvaccinated.

On Aug. 23, the FDA fully approved the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for adults. It is no longer under "emergency use authorization" status.



SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

How to Proceed When Considering a Merger

There may be various reasons why a local may want or need to contemplate a merger. Whether it is a result of decline in membership or elected officers retiring or resigning, merger options should be considered. Additionally, when the structure and future of a local is at risk or administration and representation of the local is not maintained, merger options should be considered.

When a local union is no longer able to offer the representation it was chartered to provide, the members should consider the APWU's merger procedures. Locals who are contemplating merger options can obtain a copy of the Merger Guidelines by contacting the Secretary-Treasurer's department or visiting the Secretary-Treasurer's page on apwu.org.

APWU Merger Guidelines provides the following procedures depending on the local's circumstance(s):

Forming An Area local

Forming an area local allows two separate locals to consolidate. This is a good option when the locals have experienced leaders and stewards, but do not have the sufficient income to carry out their activities.

Combining resources provides greater possibility to expand leadership opportunities for interested and available members to provide representation and administer the local.

Local/Area Local Merging with a Local/Area Local

When a local or area local merges with another local or area local, all offices represented by the incoming local or area local are considered one entity. If that former local or area local seeks to disaffiliate, all offices of the entity would be part of that request and not just a specific office.

Dissolving a Local to Become Members-at-Large (MALs)

A local may seek to dissolve their charter and become Members-at-Large (MALs) within the state organization. MAL representation is provided by the state representatives and also have access to the information and resources provided by the state organization.

Members must meet the required criteria and complete the necessary forms for the specific process chosen and a vote by the membership must be conducted. Additional provisions may be required if the merger crosses over boundary lines or across state borders. Authorization from the National Executive Board may be required for the merger. ■

Collective Action Teams

Local/State Collective Action Teams (CATs) continue to be established across the country. CAT liaisons are tasked with assisting local/state presidents and mobilizing their membership for National APWU campaigns, solidarity efforts, and non-member organizing. Currently CAT teams are focused on bringing awareness to the APWU contract negotiations by participating in APWU Gear Days!

Building strength and solidarity on the workroom floor is crucial in negotiating a contract that represents our strength. This is *Our Union, Our Contract, Our Future!* Be a part of a winning team. Join in and stand with other brothers and sisters who are CAT team members. Everybody wants to be a CAT! Learn more on the 'APWU: Our Union, Our Future, Our Contract' page on apwu.org.

2022 APWU Convention

The Secretary-Treasurer's department continues to solidify plans for the 2022 National Convention. Working around the uncertain circumstances as a direct result of the pandemic, the safety and health of the delegates and guests will be in the forefront. Information will be provided as it is finalized in the coming months and the official convention call will be announced in the *American Postal Worker* and on apwu.org. These continue to be challenging times and adapting to a new normal will take some time. However, we accept the challenge and have always persevered.



Newly Elected AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler

Liz Shuler Elected AFL-CIO President Following Tragic Passing of Richard Trumka



Late AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka at 2018 APWU National Convention

On August 5, the labor movement was saddened to learn AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka had suddenly passed away. Liz Shuler, who served as Secretary-Treasurer alongside Trumka since his election as President in 2009, was elected to fill the role by the AFL-CIO Executive Council on August 21. United Steelworkers (USW) International Vice President Fred Redmond was elected as Secretary-Treasurer, with Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre remaining in his position.

Shuler becomes the first female President in the AFL-CIO's history. She will serve out the final 10 months of Trumka's term, which ends when delegates at the AFL-CIO

Convention will elect a President to begin a new four-year term. The convention is scheduled to take place from June 12-15, 2022 in Philadelphia.

Before her election as Secretary-Treasurer in 2009, Shuler served as Executive Assistant to then-IBEW President Edwin Hill, following decades of service to the union beginning in 1993. In addition to overseeing the AFL-CIO's finances and operations as Secretary-Treasurer, Shuler also leads the AFL-CIO's initiatives on the future of work, the clean energy economy, workforce development, and empowering women and young workers.

"Brother Trumka's life in service to the working class can inspire us all. As working people, we can best honor his legacy as another mine-worker leader, Mother Jones, taught us best – 'to fight for the living,'" President Dimondstein said following Trumka's death.

"The APWU looks forward to working with Sister Shuler as we continue to build back workers' power, organize the unorganized and defend democracy," President Dimondstein continued.

Go to apwu.org to read the APWU's full statement on Richard Trumka's passing and the AFL-CIO leadership election. ■

IT PAY\$ TO BE UNION Sixth COLA Increase Announced

THE VALUE OF THE COLA FOR CAREER EMPLOYEES IN EACH STEP AND GRADE WILL INCREASE BY \$1,935.00 ANNUALLY, AND THE HOURLY RATES FOR PART-TIME EMPLOYEES WILL BE ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY.

In accordance with the 2018-2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement, career employees represented by the APWU received a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), effective August 28, 2021.

The increase is the result of a rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W). It will appear in paychecks dated September 17, 2021 (Pay Period 19-2021). The value of the COLA for career employees in each step and grade will increase

by \$1,935.00 annually, and the hourly rates for part-time employees will be adjusted accordingly.

The COLAs are in addition to general wage increases. This is the sixth cost-of-living increase under the 2018 contract. The COLAs received so far during the 2018 National Agreement will total \$3,349.00 per year.

In light of the fact that Postal Support Employees (PSEs) do not receive cost-of-living increases, they have received several additional increases beyond the general wage increases for all employees in the APWU bargaining unit under the 2018 contract.

Updated pay scales are included as an insert in this issue. They are also available on apwu.org/pay-information. ■



Contract Negotiations Update

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

The APWU and postal management have now been engaged in negotiations for more than two months.

The APWU National Negotiations Committee (NNC) consists of President Mark Dimondstein, Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy, Secretary/Treasurer Liz Powell, Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman, Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks, Maintenance Craft Director Idowu Balogun, Motor Vehicle Service Director Michael Foster, and Support Services Craft Director Stephen Brooks. The Negotiations Committee meets weekly, at minimum, to plan, refine proposals and develop strategy. In addition, the Craft Directors met individually with Lead Negotiator President Dimondstein and Chief Spokesperson Director Zimmerman to coordinate efforts. Many other officers and staff are also working diligently with research and planning. Throughout the process, the NNC has kept the National Executive Board and Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee apprised on the process and developments of negotiations.

Generally, at this stage of early negotiations we are focused on proposals addressing work rules, working conditions and workforce structure. Later in the negotiations process, the economic provisions (wage increases, COLA, step increases, etc.) will be proposed and discussed. To date, the APWU has submitted over 90 proposals and management has less than 15 proposals for discussion and negotiation. The union proposals include nearly 50 craft proposals covering the Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Service and Support Services crafts, and over 40 general article proposals. These include numerous proposals to protect job security and work opportunities, increase career opportunities and improve conditions of work. The APWU will submit additional proposals over the next weeks, including our wage and financial package.

Since negotiations opened on June 22, there have been twelve “Main Table” meetings between the APWU and postal management, where proposals are exchanged and assigned to various negotiators or to the craft tables for further discussion and development.

Each APWU craft is conducting at least weekly meetings with their counterparts at the Postal Service. I am regularly meeting with the Postal Service Chief Spokesperson and President Mark Dimondstein is meeting regularly with the Deputy Postmaster General to discuss the overall picture of the new Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The parties are currently planning to “lock down” in the same location for a week of negotiations beginning September 7. Each day will consist of intense main table negotiations, craft tables and any other sub-committees where the parties agree to work on the various proposals.

If an agreement is not reached before the expiration of the CBA on September 20, the parties will begin to move towards interest arbitration. An APWU team consisting of national officers, attorneys, and staff members is preparing for interest arbitration at the same time negotiations are ongoing. Furthermore, negotiations can continue beyond the expiration of the contract even while preparing for interest arbitration. It is always best for the parties to reach a voluntary agreement rather than have an arbitration panel impose new wages, hours and working conditions. ■

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Changes

You often hear “elections have consequences.” That is especially true with the 2020 presidential election. With the election of President Joe Biden, the agency that governs labor relations has undergone a significant turnaround. Under the previous administration, the NLRB took an obvious pro-employer and anti-union stance.

President Biden has appointed pro-labor board members and general counsel to the NLRB. The NLRB is now getting back to its job of protecting workers – not businesses. For the first time, the NLRB will have an African-American woman, Gwynne Wilcox, sitting on the board. Also confirmed to the board was David Prouty. Both served as general counsels to large Service Employees International Union (SEIU) locals. The new NLRB General Counsel, Jennifer Abruzzo, who previously worked as a special counsel at the Communications Workers of America, “...will spearhead the anticipated pro-union shift on workers’ rights.” I personally look forward to having an NLRB who fights for workers once again.

OSHA Releases New COVID-19 Guidance to Protect Workers

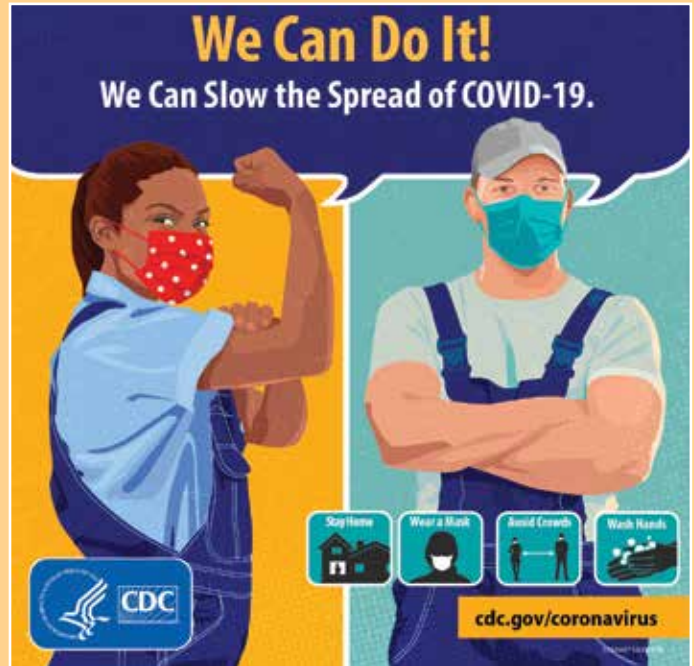
On August 13, The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) released new guidance to protect workers from the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Guidance can be found at [osha.gov/coronavirus/safework](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework).

OSHA's Latest Guidance added these recommendations:

- ✓ Recommends that fully vaccinated workers in areas of substantial or high community transmission wear masks in order to protect unvaccinated workers;
- Substantial or High Community Spread is occurring in over 93 percent of U.S. counties as of August 14, 2021. You can see the current community spread using the CDC's COVID Data Tracker at covid.cdc.gov.
- ✓ Recommends that fully vaccinated workers who have had close contacts with a person diagnosed with coronavirus wear masks for up to 14 days unless they have a negative coronavirus test at least 3-5 days after such contact.
- ✓ Clarifies recommendations to protect unvaccinated workers and other at-risk workers in manufacturing, meat and poultry processing, seafood processing and agricultural processing.

Remember that the best tool to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 is receiving one of the COVID-19 vaccinations that are now widely available, at no cost, to any person over the age of 12.



The APWU fully supports the OSHA and CDC recommendations to slow the spread of COVID-19:

- ✓ Wear a face covering indoors
- ✓ Practice Social Distancing
- ✓ Wash your hands often
- ✓ Get one of the approved vaccines

Key Facts about COVID-19 Vaccination



Getting vaccinated can help prevent getting sick with COVID-19



COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you COVID-19



People who have already gotten sick with COVID-19 may still benefit from getting vaccinated



COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests



APWU, NALC and UAW Request Postal Board of Governors Respect the Right to Organize



On August 4, the APWU, National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and United Auto Workers (UAW) wrote a joint letter to the Postal Board of Governors, regarding the upcoming plans to develop the next generation of postal delivery vehicles. The contract to build these vehicles was awarded to Oshkosh Defense, which employs 1,000 workers unionized with the UAW at their plant in Wisconsin.

However, Oshkosh Defense plans on building the new fleet of postal vehicles in South Carolina, using non-union labor. In their letter to the Board of Governors, the three unions requested the Postal Board direct Oshkosh Defense to instead build

the fleet at their unionized facility in Wisconsin.

“Working under a union contract gives Oshkosh’s workers a voice, job security, and the ability to negotiate over wages and benefits,” the unions wrote. “Our unions value hard work and are committed to making sure our brothers and sisters around the country have the same rights to organize and bargain collectively as we do. NALC, APWU and the UAW are united in calling for the next USPS fleet of vehicles to be union made in Wisconsin.

“Additionally, wherever the vehicles are built, we urge the Postal Service to direct Oshkosh Defense to negotiate an agreement with the UAW to

Keep it Union

ensure the company remains strictly neutral in any union organizing efforts, and workers are given the right to an efficient and fair majority sign-up process,” the letter continued. “The same principles of neutrality and non-interference in union organizing that applies to employees within the Postal Service should be applied to the employees of large contractors, such as Oshkosh Defense.”

Further updates on the new delivery fleet will be posted on apwu.org. For more information on the new vehicles, see the MVS Division column on page 24. ■

APWU Union Communicators Gather Online

On August 4-5, members of the APWU National Postal Press Association (PPA) gathered via Zoom for two days of workshops to enhance and sharpen their communication skills. For over 50 years, the PPA has held a multi-day biennial conference featuring communication-related instruction. Due to the ongoing pandemic, an abbreviated version was moved online.

The PPA, in partnership with the University of Iowa Labor Center and the APWU Communications Department offered sessions covering a variety of communication methods; from written, to verbal, to the use of social media.

The two-day gathering ended with announcement of the 2021 PPA Awards. Established in 1968, the PPA Awards Program recognizes communicators for outstanding work in writing, editing and publishing. The award winners are listed below:

Overall Excellence Awards: **Best Non-Professional (A)** - *Tampa Mailbag News*, Tampa, Florida; Mike Botts, Editor; **Best Non-Professional (B)** - *Aurora Local News*, Aurora Colorado; Edward Seidler, Production Editor; **Best Professional** - First Place: *Iowa Postal Worker*, Des Moines, Iowa; Lance Coles, Editor

Best:

- **Editorial** - “Thank veterans with more than just words,”

The Hi-Lites, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Chris Czubakowski, Local Business Agent

- **Headline** - “To wear a mask or not to wear a mask...that is the question” *Michigan Messenger*, Lansing, Michigan; John Greathouse, editor
- **Cartoon** - *Tour’s End*, Gainesville, Florida; Phillip Breunig, Editor
- **Feature Story** - “The Six Triple Eight - WWII morale boosters” *The Newsroom*, Mentor, Ohio; Louise Balog, Editor
- **Community Service** - “What we can do for each other” *The Auxiliary Spirit*, Saint Charles, Missouri; Bridget Yurachek, Secretary-Treasurer Saint Charles Auxiliary

- **News Story** - “Postal workers, retirees, and community allies rally to tell Grassley, Ernst to fund USPS!” *DMI News & Views*, Des Moines Iowa; Mark Sarcone, Editor & Legislative Director
- **Creative Writing** - “The perfect storm continues to pummel the Postal Service” *The Badger Bulletin*, Cecil, Wisconsin; Paul McKenna, President
- **Non-Postal Labor Story** - “Women’s history: The uprising of the 20,000” *The Union Mail*, New York, New York; Florence Summergrad, Editor
- **Website** - Central Michigan Area Local, Lansing, Michigan; Dustin Hume, Website Editor

Alliance to Postal Governors: Stop the Slowdown

Since its creation, members of *A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service* have shown up to defend our national treasure and the rights of everyone to the *prompt, reliable and efficient* mail services promised us under the law. That has certainly been true in the last several months, as we have documented in the pages of this magazine. One example is Alliance members' effort in urging the Biden Administration to quickly nominate new governors to the Postal Service Board of Governors.

In early August, the USPS Board met for the first time in public session since Biden's three nominees – former Deputy Postmaster General Ron Stroman, former APWU General Counsel Anton Hajjar and vote-by-mail advocate Amber McReynolds – joined the Board. Grand Alliance members wasted no time in making demands of the Governors and the rest of the Board, urging them in a letter delivered in advance of their meeting to reconsider postal management's plans to lengthen First Class Mail delivery standards to as many as five days.

The letter followed on the more than 130,000 comments Alliance partners generated to the Postal Service's Federal Register notice on the proposed service standard changes, many of which were included in the APWU's filing at the Postal Regulatory Commission on the proposal. In July, the PRC issued its Advisory Opinion on the slowdown plans, which raised serious concerns about the Postal Service's proposal. The Advisory Opinion said, "The Commission finds that the amount of estimated annual cost savings, even if fully realized, does not indicate much improvement, if any, to the Postal Service's current financial condition... Therefore, it is not clear that the tradeoff between financial viability and maintaining high-quality service standards is reasonable."

In writing to the Governors, Alliance members raised many of the same concerns, and noted particular concerns about how the slowdown would impact communities our organizations represent. The letter noted:

The interests of seniors, small businesses, working-class people and people in rural areas...was

never taken into consideration of by the Postal Service. Slowing down as much as 40% of First Class Mail would not only fall short of the public's needs and expectations, it risks creating disparate impacts, hastening the public's flight from the mail and further jeopardizing the Postal Service's already fragile finances.

In his remarks at the Board meeting, newly-seated Governor Ron Stroman noted the public opposition – including many Alliance partners – to management's service standard proposals. He opened his remarks by noting, "Mr. Chairman, as you know, the newest governors did not have the opportunity to participate in the Board's decision in May to change our service standards...There is no compelling financial reason to make the changes," Stroman said. He further added that the changes "will likely hinder the Postal Service's ability" to meet its obligation under the law to provide *prompt, reliable, and efficient* delivery service across the country.

Anton Hajjar similarly noted public opposition to the service standard changes. He said in the meeting, "I have not seen a groundswell of support from affected customers for this change. I have heard concerns the public at large that they may be adversely affected by this change...So I ask why this change needs to be implemented now?"

Despite the opposition from the new members of the Board, Board Chair Bloom and postal management seemed intent on continuing to pursue the service standard changes. A Grand Alliance members will continue to organize in defense of the public Postal Service and the right we all share to speedy and reliable mail service for all. ■

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.

New Report Proves How Unions Raise the Bar for All Workers

In April, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) released a new fact sheet on the effect unions have on the lives of all workers. Specifically, the report shows that increased union density increases wages and benefits for all workers, reduces racial and gender disparities in the labor market, and helps win pro-worker legislation across all levels of government.

“By bringing workers’ collective power to the bargaining table, unions are able to win better wages and benefits for working people – reducing income inequality as a result,” the report says. “When unions are strong, they set wage standards for entire industries and occupations; they make wages more equal within occupations; and they close pay gaps between white workers and workers of color.”

Higher Union Density Means Improved Wages and Benefits and Less Income Inequality

According to the fact sheet, union workers earn around 10.2 percent more in hourly wages than their non-union counterparts with similar levels of education and training. This is especially evident in traditionally low-paying occupations, such as dishwashers, janitors and nurses: “After unionizing, dishwashers in Las Vegas hotels made \$4 per hour more than the national average for that job, and they were offered excellent benefits. In Houston, a 2006 first-ever union contract for 5,300 janitors resulted in a 47% pay increase and an increase in guaranteed weekly hours of work,” the report says.

Even when not part of a union, workers see their wages benefit from high union density on the state level. The average median weekly wages are \$1,121.70 a week in the 10 states with the strongest union density versus \$942.70 a week for those in the 10 lowest union density states in 2020.

In addition to higher wages, union members are also much more likely to have strong benefits and job protections. “More than nine in 10 workers – 95% – covered by a union contract have access to employer-sponsored health benefits, compared with just 68% of nonunion workers,” the fact sheet says. Union employers also contribute 77.4% more (per hour worked) toward their employees’ health coverage than non-union employers. Union workers are much more likely to have paid sick, vacation and holiday leave, as well as job security protections against being fired “at-will.”

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LIFTS WAGES OF BLACK WORKERS CLOSER TO THOSE OF THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS.

Collective bargaining also boosts wages for Black and Hispanic workers. “Black workers – both men and women – are more likely than white workers to be covered by collective bargaining, and the wage boost they get from being covered by collective bargaining is 13.1%, above the 10.2% average wage boost for unionized workers overall,” the report says. “The result of this union wage premium – how much more union workers earn than comparable nonunion workers – is that collective bargaining lifts wages of Black workers closer to those of their white counterparts.”

Higher Union Density Helps Win Policies that Help Every Worker

On the federal level, unions were major parts of the efforts to pass laws improving economic security and workplace protections. “The labor movement helped pass and defend the *Occupational Safety and Health Act*, the *Civil Rights Act*, the *Social Security Act*, Medicare and Medicaid, and numerous other laws benefiting all workers and their communities,” the report says.

Additionally, higher union density correlates strongly with higher minimum wage laws and better worker protections. Cities and states with high union density are more likely to have laws guaranteeing paid sick days, paid family leave and fair scheduling laws.

“EPI’s fact sheet confirms what we already know: more unionized workers across all industries mean better working conditions and better lives for all workers. As contract negotiations continue, we are reminded that our collective bargaining rights won in the Great Postal Strike of 1970, has, through continuing struggle, greatly uplifted the well-being of postal workers, our families and communities,” said President Dimondstein. “We indeed are living the ‘union difference.’” ■

Earnings Comparison

| | 10 States With Strongest Union Density | 10 States With Lowest Union Density |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Worker Median Weekly Wages | \$1,121.70 | \$942.70 |

Q&A with Bessemer, AL Amazon Union Organizer **Jennifer Bates**



Earlier this year, workers at Amazon's Bessemer, AL fulfillment center worked to unionize their workplace with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). While the initial vote came up short, the election garnered widespread attention for Amazon's brutal union-busting tactics, dangerous working conditions, and the bravery of the workers in the facility fighting for better conditions.

We spoke with fulfillment center worker Jennifer Bates, one of the campaign's lead organizers, on the lessons she took from the union drive, the importance of workers coming together in solidarity at Amazon, and why she believes the company will one day have a union. This interview has been condensed for space and clarity.

APWU: Before Amazon, your previous job was at a unionized workplace. What do you feel are some of the biggest differences between a union and non-union job?

You have less harassment. In the unionized facility, it's not as easy to attack or to fire someone, as Amazon did. Also, everything is in a contract. When something happens, management has to always revert back to what's in the contract. That's one of the differences that I know worked well. They knew what they could and could not do to employees, as far as mistreatment or intimidation, or firing for no reason.

APWU: What made you decide to start this fight?

The first week [at Amazon] was rough for me. I was shocked that the elevators at the four-story facility

were only for material. I began to see people getting fired for small things instead of being given a warning or being shown the right way to do it. When going to human resources, you're ignored, and they're talking and laughing about someone who got fired. Once, I went out to break one day, and I was stopped by security to do a random security check. When they made me take my shoes off and empty my pockets, and I asked if I would get that time back for my break. They said no.

APWU: What did you feel was the most rewarding part of the organizing experience so far?

The most rewarding is the opportunity to open up an attic that has been closed for years. Not only did the community in Bessemer, in Birmingham, and in all of Jefferson County get a

wind of what's going on at Amazon, but the whole country was able to stand up and speak out. I really get emotional every now and then because I think about, what if we had never stepped up and said one word? Because it's not just at an Amazon fulfillment center, these same tactics are happening across the country. So that's the biggest reward for me, is that we spoke up, we spoke out, and sounded an alarm.

Not only did the alarm go off, but this time in history, during a pandemic, other workers began to stand up and say: "Wait a minute. This is happening to us too." And they have given me courage to stand up and speak out on the devaluing that this country has been giving to us for a long time as a working-class people.

APWU: What did you think was the most successful way to talk to workers about the benefits of being union?

Being in a position to explain to them it's about having a better way of life and having a better foundation. Because if you have to come and work overtime in an unsafe environment, then that's not satisfying. Letting the worker know that they are

someone, they are valuable, and when the management of their company tells them that they don't deserve [fair pay and a safe workplace], you have a mind to think and say: "You know what? I do deserve this. The skills that I bring to this facility, if I did not bring them, the CEOs wouldn't have what they have."

People are now waking up and understanding more about what a union means and how having one would open doors to have a better life.

APWU: Do you think that one day Amazon is going to be union?

Yes, without a doubt. Because I've heard from several people who work at different Amazon [locations], who are ready to unionize. Before we even started the campaign here, we had no idea that there were issues going on at other places. So, because everyone is waking up, I believe that one day some, if not all, of Amazon will be unionized. But we have to continue to do it. ■

Changes are Coming in Mail Processing Facilities



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

In recent weeks and months, the Postal Service has begun implementing changes to its mail processing operations, and these changes are apt to continue for some time. The USPS 10-Year Plan is the reason for many of these modifications. APWU Regional Coordinators recently began receiving Article 12 impact statements from management throughout the country. Most of these impact statements are due to the movement of different mail processing machines from one installation to another. The plants that are losing machines are adversely affected and face possible excessing of employees, both in the clerk and maintenance crafts.

Offices within a 50-mile radius of the installations that anticipate excessing are also adversely affected, as management will begin to withhold sufficient full-time residual vacancies for each excessing event. While the Postal Service is withholding residual vacancies, Part Time Flexible (PTF) and Postal Support Employee (PSE) conversions to full-time are placed on hold, in many cases, until sufficient residuals can be withheld to place the excessed employees.

Additionally, the Postal Service has outsourced certain Surface Transfer Centers' (STCs) operations to a third party and is hiring non-postal employees at those locations. The initial notification to the APWU concerning the staffing of new STCs stated that no significant impact to the bargaining unit was anticipated. Nevertheless, the numerous impact statements added together with the outsourcing of postal jobs at STCs suggests the opposite could happen.

In anticipation of this possibility, the Clerk Craft officers met via Zoom with the Regional Coordinators several months ago to begin developing plans to combat management's actions. Each of the five Regional Coordinators are responsible for Article 12 issues in their respective areas and the Clerk Craft officers has offered any assistance we can provide them. Fortunately, we have contractual provisions that support our goal of preventing excessing from occurring whenever possible.

For instance, Article 12 requires management to keep dislocation and inconvenience to employees in the regular workforce to a minimum. In addition, the Postal Service

is obligated to meet with the union at the Regional Level in advance (as much as six months whenever possible) of when the reassignments are anticipated to occur.

Article 12.4.D states, "In order to minimize the impact on employees in the regular workforce, the Employer agrees to separate, to the extent possible, PSEs working in the affected craft and installation prior to excessing any regular employee in that craft out of the installation." The contract also requires that transfer requests be given priority in order to minimize excessing and management must also identify duty assignments within the appropriate radius held by PSEs and make those assignments available for the reassignment of excessed career employees.

To stop – or at least limit – excessing, locals can assist in identifying additional full-time duty assignments by using the language in Article 37.3.A.1, which states, "Every effort will be made to create desirable duty assignments from all available work hours."

By utilizing the union's MDAT program, duty assignments can be created from the work hours of PSEs, PTFs, NTFTs, full-time regular overtime and cross craft violations. Now that the Postal Service has issued impact statements throughout the country, all work hours must come into play in our efforts to minimize involuntary reassignments of career employees from the affected installations. For assistance with Article 37.3.A.1 grievances, contact your Clerk Craft National Business Agents. ■

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Maintenance: 50 Years Later



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

In 1971, five independent and separate unions representing several thousand postal workers merged to become the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO as we know it today. The five unions were the United Federation of Postal Clerks (UFPC), National Postal Union (NPU), Motor Vehicle Service Employees (NFPOMVE), Special Delivery Messengers (NASDM), and the National Association Union of Post Office and General Service Maintenance Employees (NAPO & GSME).

The July 1971 joint statement on mergers into APWU stated:

Your Officers now pledge to do everything possible to carry out your mandate. Every effort will be made to achieve unity in spirit and in action. We now are one union and we must think and act as one. We intend to live by majority rule as defined by the APWU constitution because only if all respond affirmatively to the will of the majority can democratic procedures prevail.

NAPOGSME President Monroe Crable became the first National Maintenance President, now known as APWU National Director of the Maintenance Division; with Bill Kaczor and Richard Wevodau as his Assistants.

Richard Wevodou became the next National Maintenance Director, followed by Director Thomas Freeman.

James (Jim) Lingberg, from Dallas, TX, became Maintenance National Director in the early 1990s. Brother Lingberg previously served as Bulk Mail Center (BMC) Coordinator prior to becoming the National Craft Director. Among other notable victories, in 1993 Brother Lingberg was instrumental in job consolidation and seniority becoming the determining factor in promotions, outstanding union achievements. Notable resident officers that served with him were Edgar Williams, Randy Sutton, Jake Jackson, Malcolm Smith, Bobby Donelson and Gary Kloepper.

Steve Raymer, from Madison, WI, became Maintenance Director in 2001. He was responsible for multi-million-dollar MS-47 settlements before Arbitrator Das. Under his leadership, Maintenance agreed on the creation of the MS-47 TL-5 that brought in millions of dollars on Line H settlements year after year, as well as the establishment of an all-career workforce in the Maintenance Division. Notable Maintenance resident officers that served with him were Gary Kloepper, Jake Jackson, Gregory See and Idowu Balogun.

Idowu Balogun, from Los Angeles, CA, became the National Maintenance Director in 2018, after the untimely passing of Steve Raymer. The other current Maintenance Resident Officers are Jimmie Waldon, Assistant Director A, and Terry B. Martinez, Assistant Director B. Together, they were responsible for the POSTPlan enforcement, Individual Open Season instead of every three-year open season, Building Equipment Mechanic MS 1 settlement, ET 11 2021 Local Memorandum of Understanding and several COVID-19 MOUs. We are also currently being represented by nine National Maintenance Business Agents and three All Crafts Business Agents, working throughout the country

National Negotiations Are Underway

The 2018 National Collective Bargaining Agreement with the USPS will expire September 20. Negotiations opened on June 22, three months prior to the expiration of our current Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The Maintenance Negotiation Craft Table participants are: National Maintenance Director Idowu Balogun, National Assistant Director A Jimmie Waldon, National Assistant Director B Terry B. Martinez, NBA Northeast Region Dave Sarnacki, and NBA Eastern Region Jason Treier.

Your Maintenance Team met with the Postal Service immediately after the Opening Day of Contract Negotiations. To say the least, we were fired up and ready to go.

We are currently scheduled for a weekly meeting via Zoom and once a month negotiations in person in Washington, DC, until the final weeks of negotiations in September, when we will start meeting daily in person at a lock down location.

The Maintenance resolutions from past conventions are the backdrops of our proposals. Our goal is to continue the growth of the Maintenance Division, increase your standard of living, protect your jobs and ensure our future as a craft.

It is an honor of a lifetime to be your voice and your advocate in the 2021 Craft Negotiations. We are looking forward to delivering to you a negotiated contract.

As this issue was being finalized for press, Assistant Director Waldon announced his planned retirement (See page 27). His replacement will be announced in the next issue of The American Postal Worker. ■

And It's Got Air



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Kenneth Prinz

The Motor Vehicle Service Craft members who were around in the 1990s vividly remember the craft's struggles to have our transportation vehicles equipped with air conditioning. The parties entered into the first air conditioning Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during the 1998 – 2000 Collective Bargaining Agreement, and agreed that contracts would specify air conditioning for vehicles domiciled in specific areas of the country. The parties formed a committee, and the committee was to rely on the heat/humidity index information and industry norms in making their recommendations by no later than March 1999. The MOU Air Conditioning in 9-Ton Vehicles, Tractors, and Spotters was followed in 1999 by the Air Conditioning in Postal Vehicle Service Motor Vehicles MOU, which included air conditioning in all vehicles for all future purchases. The progress and the health and welfare of the employees has advanced a long way since the 1990s due to the concerns and complaints voiced by the APWU and its members.

In the largest capital investment in USPS history, APWU MVS representatives participated in the Production Design Review (PDR) of the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV), held on the Oshkosh Defense campus in Oshkosh, Wisconsin in mid-July. Replacing the current fleet with these vehicles, scheduled for completion in the latter part of 2023, will mean that the Postal Service has completely upgraded their transportation and delivery fleet.

The NGDV will replace the Long-Life Vehicle (LLV), first introduced into the postal fleet in the mid-1980s (with the life expectancy of approximately 20 years). The Postal Service awarded the \$482 million initial contract to Oshkosh Defense, which is the first stage of a multi-billion-dollar, 10-year effort to manufacture a new generation of delivery vehicles. Oshkosh Defense will assemble 50,000 to 165,000 NGDVs in a facility they will set-up in Spartanburg, South Carolina, a so-called “right-to-work” state (*read more on page 18*).

Production of the NGDV will start rolling off the assembly line in late 2023. The Next Generation Delivery Vehicle will be a right-hand-drive vehicle for mail and package delivery. The vehicles will be equipped with

either fuel-efficient internal combustion engines or battery electric powertrains, and can be retrofitted to keep pace with advances in electric vehicle technologies. The vehicles will include heating and air conditioning, 360-degree cameras, advanced braking and traction control, air bags, front- and rear-collision avoidance that includes visual and audio warnings, and improved ergonomics, just to name a few of the most advanced vehicle's technologies.

The APWU already stressed to upper postal management officials responsible for the production of this vehicle the importance of training, equipping of the VMF employees with the proper tools to perform timely repairs, and ensuring the safety conditions of this fleet for years to come. The NGDV will have an increased cargo capacity to maximize efficiency and better accommodate higher package volumes. The main reason for the need for this type of vehicle is from the explosion of packaged mail into the postal network, and the USPS attempt to keep up with competitors in the timely delivery of packages.

The Postal Service fleet has more than 230,000 vehicles in every class, including commercial-off-the-shelf vehicles. The NGDV, along with other commercial vehicles, will replace and expand the current 190,000-vehicle delivery fleet. This purchase of the NGDV has allowed meaningful input during the early development stages from the unions of the employees who will be responsible for the driving, delivery of mail, and repair of these vehicles, unlike the purchases of the transportation vehicles where the MVS Craft is only allowed to participate during the final development stages of the assembling of the vehicles known as the First Article Testing (FAT).

Representatives of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association (NRLCA) participated in the PDR, and also participating were the National and Assistant MVS Directors, Eastern Region NBA Garrett Langley, and selected MVS members from the field (William Drew – Boston, Dale Cornelius – Chicago, Mike Crum – Harrisburg, Anthony Morson – Detroit, Faron Williamson – Omaha). ■

NORTHEAST REGIONAL COORDINATOR

NEW YORK | NEW JERSEY | CONNECTICUT | MAINE | NEW HAMPSHIRE | MASSACHUSETTS |
RHODE ISLAND | VERMONT | PUERTO RICO | THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Postal Strike/50th Birthday/ Anniversary of APWU



Tiffany Foster, Northeast Regional Coordinator

On July 1, 2021, the APWU celebrated its 50th Anniversary/Birthday. The APWU commemorated the event by giving a presentation via Livestream about how the union was formed. It was The Great Postal Strike of 1970 that led to the formation of the APWU. I hope you were able to attend the celebration because the presentation provided valuable information about our union's history.

Coming from the New York Metro Area Postal Union, I thought I knew a lot about the Great Postal Strike of 1970 because many of my mentors participated in the strike and shared their stories with me. The 50th Anniversary/Birthday taught me more and deepened my sense of pride for our union.

We must learn about the struggles, the fight and sacrifices made that afford us the ability to have what we have today. The right to collectively bargain and negotiate our wages, benefits and work conditions was not given to us. Our union foresters and forebrothers said 'hell no, we ain't going to take it no more.' They put their jobs and family on the line for what they believed in and knew they deserved.

We stand on the shoulders of those giants. Some of those giants are still with us today in the struggle and some have passed on, but they left a legacy that must not be taken for granted. Their fight and sacrifice must not be in vain.

Today in the 21st Century, workers across the country are still fighting for the right to unionize and negotiate their wages, benefits and work conditions.

I challenge those of you who do not know about the APWU's history to take the time to learn about it. If you do know the history share your knowledge with someone who doesn't know.

Learning the APWU's history is important to the existence and survival of our organization. As the famous Maya Angelou said: "if you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going."

If you weren't able to see the livestream event, the presentation is on YouTube at youtube.com/apwucommunications. I implore you to see it.

You Can't Make This Stuff Up

Article 12 Events are still occurring across the country within APWU. The Northeast Regional Office was notified of several Article 12 impacts throughout the region. Several of the impacts were postponed, and some were changed from Article 12.5.C.5. excessing outside the installation to Article 12.5.C.4 excessing within the installation, which requires notification to the local leadership.

**TODAY IN THE 21ST CENTURY, WORKERS
ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE STILL FIGHTING
FOR THE RIGHT TO UNIONIZE AND
NEGOTIATE THEIR WAGES, BENEFITS AND
WORK CONDITIONS.**

If there is a proposed excessing in your installation, please speak to your local leadership first. Please get your facts from them. Do not take your supervisor's word as gospel. The Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) Article 12, page 4 says field managers and/or supervisors should not discuss proposed excessing outside the craft or installation with bargaining unit employees until the Area/Regional parties have held their discussions.

The supervisors have these conversations with the employees to get the desired effect they want for the excessing. So again, get your information from your local or state union leadership, not management.

You can be assured that the NBAs and I are working diligently with the locals to fight the excessings, and APWU HQ has made themselves available to assist if necessary.

With all the structural changes in the Postal Service and management grasping for jobs, it has not made them develop compassion for the employees or prevent them from impacting the employees' lives. But because of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, management cannot do whatever they want to us or excess us to wherever they want.

I join my fellow Regional Coordinators, Omar Gonzalez, Sharyn Stone, Ken Beasley, and AJ Jones when I say this fight is a collective one, and we need all hands-on deck. Yours too! ■



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 or email ppa@apwupostalpress.org.

"Now is the time that you take stock, recognize the power of collective action, and decide to take back your power in the workplace and actively support the unions... Membership provides you access to the tools you need to make good choices and better understand the rules of the workplace; you share in the power of our sheer number. This power is only realized when you are actively engaged and working towards a shared vision.

The union is not an insurance policy that you activate when there is trouble, it is a dynamic organization that thrives on the talents of each individual and depends on a strong informational network to send and receive information. It is important now more than ever that you realize the critical role you play in maintaining power in the workplace. Failing in this moment not only puts your jobs at risk but positions you to be witnesses to the permanent demise of the Postal Service and the last vestige of true democracy in this country."

– Kimberly Karol
Iowa Postal Workers Union President
Iowa Postal Worker

"While the labor movement simply is not what it was 20 years ago, I know we can do better and we can do more. We are fortunate to have a union and everyone who enjoys the benefits of our being a unionized workforce should be contributing to the effort to not only maintain what we have, but to build the labor movement back up. Our struggle for better wages and working conditions is directly tied to the rise of the nonunion workforce. We are not in a position to tolerate non-members taking a free ride. They reap the benefits and must be held accountable.

We need everyone's support if we are going to thrive in the future. APWU-represented employees have a distinct advantage over unrepresented employees in the postal workforce, thanks to the support of dues paying members. Members are encouraged to join forces in asking our non-member co-workers to stand with us."

– Jerry Labinski
APWU of Wisconsin
Director of Human Relations, Organization & Education
Badger Bulletin

"A labor union or trade union is an organized group of workers who unite to make decisions about conditions affecting their work. Labor unions strive to bring economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our nation. Each one of us who pays dues is the union. When I hear or read people say things like 'the union' it hurts. It makes me feel anything but united. And that is what management wants.

If we are not working together, they are winning. When they violate the contract and we pretend we don't notice, they are winning. If they have you afraid to write a statement or request a steward, they are winning. Right about now you are thinking I am one person. What can I do? Well the first thing is changing that way of thinking. You are not one person; you are the union. If there is one clerk in your office or ten, every office should have a steward; someone who can put on that steward 'cap' granting them the ability to speak with management not as a subordinate, but an equal."

– Travis West
Washington American Postal Workers Union
District 1 Representative
Evergreen State Postal Worker



Passing of Frank Romero, Former Organization Director

Frank A. Romero, former Organization Director of the APWU, unexpectedly passed away on July 28 at the age of 67.

Brother Romero joined the APWU because he was concerned about the safety and health of his coworkers and management's abusive behavior. He wanted to make a difference in the workplace and in 1976 became a union steward. He was elected as National Organization Director in 1986 and served in that position until his retirement in 2011. He first got involved in the union at the Dallas, TX BMC and held a variety of local union positions including shop steward, clerk craft director and local BMC coordinator.

Brother Romero trailblazed as the first Hispanic resident national officer and also served as the national APWU liaison to the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) and was the past president of its local DC metro chapter.

"The APWU family is saddened by the news of Brother Romero's passing and extends our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to his wife and family," shared President Mark Dimondstein. "He was passionate about the union cause and dedicated to the APWU as the path to a better life for all postal workers."



National Maintenance Assistant Director "A" Jimmie Waldon Retires

National Maintenance Assistant Director "A" Jimmie Waldon announced his retirement in August 2021

after over 14 years as a national officer. Prior to being elected to this position on July 18, 2018, he served as the Western Region Maintenance National Business Agent for eleven years. He also served as the Vice President of the Sacramento Area Local.

Waldon was a tenacious defender of the Maintenance craft, leading many craft trainings and conferences. He specialized in non-discrimination, leave, staffing assignments, discipline, safety and injury issues; and also served as the BMC Coordinator. "Brother Jimmie's presence will be missed at the Maintenance Council," Director Idowu Balogun said. "We thank him for his many years of service to the APWU Maintenance Division and wish him a joyful retirement."

"On behalf of the entire membership, I thank Brother Waldon for his many years of dedication and service to the American Postal Workers Union. I wish Jimmie and his family the very best, and a long, happy and healthy retirement," shared President Dimondstein. ■

All Craft Conference Goes Virtual

In an effort to keep our members safe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year's All Craft Conference will be held virtually instead of in-person. The ACC will kick off on Monday, September 27 conclude on Friday, October 1. All start times for conferences are listed

in Eastern Standard Time. The Legislative Conference will be held Sept. 26, the Sunday before the ACC.

For more information and to register for events and individual conferences, please visit apwu.org/all-craft-virtual-conference. Below is the tentative schedule of the All Craft Conference, subject to change:

Sunday, September 26

Legislative Conference

Monday, September 27

Retiree Conference

Retirement Planning Workshops

Tuesday, September 28

Retiree Conference

Wednesday, September 29

Retiree Conference

Clerk Conference General Session

Maintenance Conference General Session

MVS Conference General Session

Support Services Conference General Session

Thursday, September 30

Clerk Conference

Maintenance Conference

MVS Conference

Support Services Conference

Friday, October 1

Clerk Conference

Maintenance Conference

MVS Conference

Support Services Conference



Postal Banking Gaining Steam on Capitol Hill

There has been more activity around expanding postal financial services on Capitol Hill since the last edition of *The American Postal Worker* went to press. In a July 21 hearing before the House Financial Service Committee, lawmakers debated the merits of an updated version of the *Banking For All Act* we mentioned in the in the July/August edition of this column.

The *Access to No-Fee Accounts Act*, as the updated bill is being called, would authorize what are called FedAccounts, where people could have access to a no-fee account with no minimum balance requirement backed by the Federal Reserve at their local post office, community bank or credit union. The system, proponents argue, would address one of the principal reasons millions of people remain unbanked or underbanked in this country – they often do not have enough money to meet traditional financial institutions’ minimum balance requirements to keep an account open. Without access to a bank account, the underserved often pay exorbitant rates to cash a check, pay their bills or send money to family or friends either across town or around the world.

With FedAccounts, consumers would be able to conduct the usual types of financial transactions that people with bank accounts today are able to regularly do. With a debit card, they could access cash at ATMs, make purchases at stores and buy goods online. Direct deposit, increasingly the way most people get their paychecks, would be made possible. Paying bills could be free or significantly cheaper than the predatory check-cashing and bill-pay counters that prey upon the unbanked and underbanked today.

At the hearing, Ameya Pawar, a senior fellow at the Economic Security Project, referred to the University of Michigan research we presented in the last edition of this column in his testimony, noting the value the postal network would bring to a banking system designed to serve everyone. He noted that “there are 21 million people who live in census tracts that do not have a single bank or credit union, and that is where the post office can fit in and serve as a conduit.”

In her testimony at the hearing, University of California at Irvine Law Professor (and friend of the Campaign for

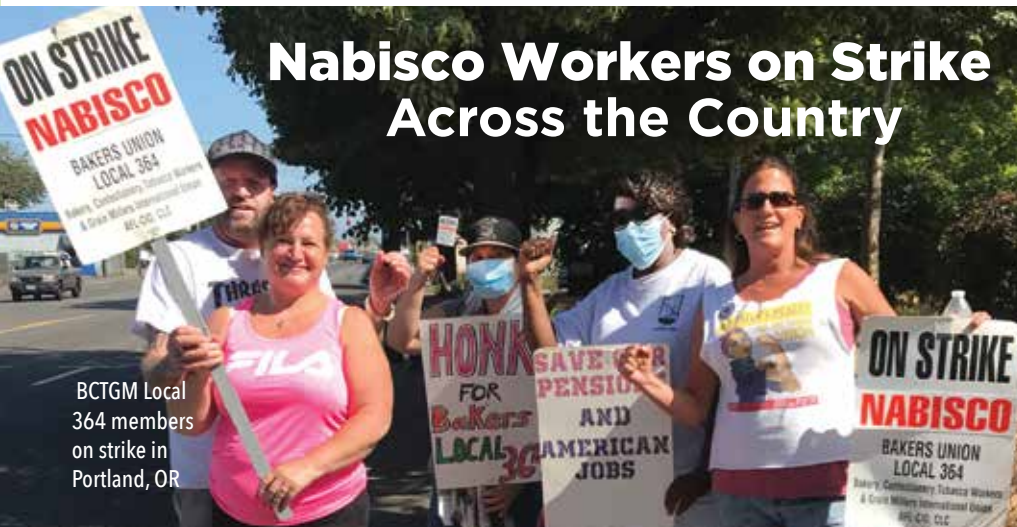
Postal Banking) Mehrsa Baradaran also made the case for why the Postal Service is well situated to serve as the access point for these new services. “Over the past ten years, as banks have become bigger and more profitable, 93% of bank branch closings were in LMI (low and medium-income) communities. Rural Americans have lost over half of their banks. Banks don’t serve these communities for the simple reason that there aren’t enough profits,” Baradaran said. “In fact, as banks have deserted many of these low-profit ZIP codes, the Post Office has remained, in accordance with its public mission.”

The hearing was also an opportunity to discuss another piece of legislation which could expand postal financial services. The *Public Banking Act of 2021* is draft legislation which would encourage the creation of public banks at the state and local government levels. The bill would grant these new public banks equal footing with existing banks to access the Federal Reserve’s inter-bank payment systems and FDIC deposit insurance. Additionally, the bill would instruct the Postal Service to partner with these new public banks in order to offer retail financial services to consumers like the ones discussed above.

Today, the network of public banks in the country is small, but as we have reported here before, it is growing. In 2019, California passed legislation allowing cities and counties there to develop public banks, many modeled after the long-existing public Bank of North Dakota. While it may be trickier for the Postal Service to ultimately partner with a patchwork of smaller local public banks, the inclusion of the Postal Service in the draft bill is indicative of the gaining support for expanded postal financial services in Congress. ■

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

Nabisco Workers on Strike Across the Country



BCTGM Local 364 members on strike in Portland, OR

On August 10, 200 workers at a Nabisco bakery in Portland, OR, represented by Bakers, Confectioners, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) Local 364, began a strike against the company's demands for drastic contract concessions and in protest of the continued outsourcing of jobs while the owners are making record profits. The strike quickly spread to all four other Nabisco locations across the country; on August 12, distribution center workers in Aurora, CO walked off the job, followed by 400 workers at the company's factory in Richmond, VA on August 16 and those at the factory in Chicago on August 19. Workers at the factory

in Norcross, GA joined the strike on August 23.

During the entire pandemic, Nabisco bakery workers were frontline, essential workers and rather than being treated with dignity and respect the company is refusing to negotiate a fair contract. "Nabisco workers in all five locations are saying strong and clear: stop exporting our jobs to Mexico and end your demands for contract concessions," said BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton. "The BCTGM will take all appropriate action necessary in order to reach a contract settlement that treats Nabisco workers fairly and equitably." ■

40,000 Child Care Workers in California Ratify First-Ever Union Contract

In 2019 40,000 child care workers in California secured collective bargaining rights for the first time when Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a law allowing workers to form a union. Following a successful vote to form Child Care Providers United, the union negotiated an agreement for its first-ever union contract with the state of California.

The historic agreement, approved by 99.6 percent of voting members, includes long-overdue pay increases for child care providers as well as new state investments in the child care system that creates more jobs and increased childcare enrollment opportunities by 200,000.

The contract's ratification follows over 15 years of struggle by child care workers, including multiple vetoes of collective bargaining rights bills by the state's previous governors.

"This moment is why union membership matters. I cast my vote last week, and for the first time, I got to have a say in my future as a provider. Before I joined CCPU, I had no way to talk to the State of California about my pay or working conditions," said child care provider Angelica Mares. "Joining CCPU, I finally felt my voice was heard."

Postal Workers in Senegal Hold Nationwide Protest Amidst Funding Crisis

On July 8, UNI Global Union's postal affiliate SNTPT held protests in 11 different regions across Senegal against the current financial crisis at Post Senegal, the country's postal service. Due to severe financial mismanagement, many postal services have been suspended, workers' paychecks are arriving months late, and family allow-

ances are going unpaid, according to UNI Global Union.

The protests in Senegal demanded that the government fix the financial crisis and pay what is owed to postal workers and their families, a total equal to around \$102 million in US dollars.

"The workers of Post Senegal are experiencing a deep crisis...

in the midst of a global pandemic, postal workers have demonstrated their importance by providing essential services throughout the country," said SNTPT General Secretary and UNI Africa Post & Logistics President Ibrahima Sarr.

"Despite the important role they play in the social and financial inclusion of the population, they

are now facing unusual delays in salary payments and are at risk of losing their jobs due to financial difficulties resulting in cash flow tension," Sarr continued. "The State still owes the Post a debt that needs to be settled to relaunch the postal activities and to ensure that the post can assume its public service mission in Senegal."



Colectivo Coffee Workers Win Union Following Long Campaign Against Union-Busting

On August 23, following over a year of struggle against brutal union busting tactics, around 400 workers at Midwest coffee chain Colectivo Coffee won their union, following the NLRB's decision to open and count challenged ballots cast during the election in April. That vote ended in a 99-99 tie, but all seven challenged ballots – now official – voted 'Union Yes' certifying the workers' victory.

The new union, organized with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), covers all workers at every Colectivo Coffee café location across Wisconsin and Illinois, including baristas, bakers and other workers, and makes Colectivo the largest unionized coffee chain in the country.

The workers' victory followed a long struggle, with management immediately retaliating against organizers following the workers initially going public with their desire for a union. Though the chain touts its "progressive" values, management hired a union-busting law firm and held multiple mandatory anti-union meetings.

"We are very proud of the workers at Colectivo Coffee! They have taken a bold and necessary step toward ensuring that every employee has fair treatment and dignity in their work," said IBEW Local 494 Business Manager Dean A. Warsh. "We hope that the courage and hard work that Colectivo Coffee workers put into their victory inspires others in the hospitality/service industry to organize a union at their workplace." ■

NLRB Hearing Officer Recommends New Union Election at Bessemer, AL Amazon Facility

On August 2, an NLRB Hearing Officer issued a recommendation for a new union election at the Amazon fulfillment center in Bessemer, AL, due to Amazon's illegal union-busting tactics during the first election.

The NLRB Regional Director must now determine whether a new election should take place at the facility. That decision, widely expected to be in the union's favor, can be appealed to the NLRB in Washington, DC by either party.

Further updates on the NLRB process will be posted on apwu.org.



New York Times Tech Workers Hold Walkout in Protest Against Management Union Busting

On August 11, hundreds of tech workers at the *New York Times* staged a half-day walkout, protesting management's union busting tactics since going public with their intent to join the staff Guild in April.

Management denied voluntary recognition, instead demanding an NLRB election, and began forcing workers to attend captive-audience meetings. Management is also attempting to shrink the bargaining unit by one third, filing with the NLRB to exclude roles such as data analysts and designers, and only include tech engineers.

In addition to the walkout, workers are circulating a petition to demand the end to union busting tactics and a swift NLRB election covering the entire 600-person unit. "The *Times* is using these combined coercive tactics to attempt to prevent us from exercising our rights to join together and bargain for a more equitable, sustainable, and diverse workplace. It is our right as workers to organize and show support for our union, and this right is protected by federal labor law," the petition says. "It's clear the *Times* won't practice their own stated values without public accountability." ■

800 Car Mechanics on Strike at Chicago-area Dealerships

On August 1, following the expiration of their union contract, more than 800 car mechanics at 56 car dealerships in the Chicago area began a strike, demanding stronger base pay guarantees and more management contributions to health and welfare funds. The strike began following workers voting 97 percent in favor of rejecting the final contract proposal from the Chicago Automobile Trade Association. The workers are represented by the Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 701.

While the Trade Association represents 120 dealerships in the Chicago area, nearly half of individual dealers have negotiated new contracts with Local 701. The union is demanding the Trade Association meet the

Mechanics Local 701



IAM Local 701 members on strike in Chicago

terms of those contracts for the remaining 56 dealerships.

"IAM Local 701 members have spoken. These hard-working mechanics deserve the respect of a strong labor contract that shows the importance of their work," said IAM Midwest

Territory General Vice President Steve Galloway. "I am proud of these members. They're holding the line and demanding respect on the job, which includes fair wages and the training needed to keep Local 701 auto mechanics at the top of their craft." ■

500 Grocery Warehouse Workers Win New Contract Following Strike Authorization

On July 30, over 500 Fred Meyer grocery store distribution center workers in Puyallup, WA won a new four-year agreement.

The new agreement came two weeks after the workers, represented by Teamsters Local 117, voted unanimously in favor of striking follow-

ing management's refusal to include improved safety protections in their contract proposal.

During the pandemic, Fred Meyer's profits have skyrocketed as the demand for groceries increased. However, the company refused to properly protect the safety and health of its distribution center workers. Following the strike authorization, the new tentative agreement includes stronger safety language. As this issue goes to press, the members are currently voting on ratification.

"We were relentless," said shop steward Matt Collins. "From fighting the company to implement basic measures like efficient temperature checks, to our resounding strike vote, to punishing hours of bargaining, we bring this victory back to our coworkers with our head high. We are proud to raise standards of what is a strong union contract."

Teamsters Local 117 workers in Puyallup, WA



Teamsters Local 117



Judy Beard, Director

APWU Member Testifies on Service Standards

APWU member Brian McLaurin was asked to testify before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) by Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen (D), who serves as chairman of the subcommittee. The hearing, held July 13, was convened to review the 2022 fiscal year budget request for the USPS Office Inspector General and review the ongoing USPS service issues. McLaurin was one of four witnesses asked to testify by the subcommittee. The subcommittee also asked USPS Inspector General Tammy Whitcomb to testify.

McLaurin, who currently serves as the Motor Vehicle Service Craft Director of APWU's Nation's Capital Southern Maryland Area Local, was hired by the Post Office in 1998 as a driver. He has driven tractor-trailers for the Postal Service for 23 years. Having "personally witnessed the slow and steady decline and delay of our nation's mail," McLaurin offered the subcommittee a firsthand account of the service issues currently afflicting the Postal Service.

In his testimony, he outlined the gravity of the problems that post offices and postal facilities around the country currently face. McLaurin reported that "the mail is already late as a result of changes in delivery schedules. To make matters even worse, postal facilities are short-staffed; so, when mail finally arrives at a station, there aren't enough workers to process mail and get it out for delivery. We're seeing the same mail sitting in the facility for two or three days. Postal employees get to it when they can. Over the years, these processing changes have made it difficult for us to distribute the mail on time."

In response to these issues, McLaurin presented our union's demand: that the Appropriations Committee intervene to guarantee a baseline level of service for USPS performance, facility and window hours. McLaurin, on behalf of the APWU, requested that Congress add language to the FSGG Appropriations bill which would: 1) prohibit the USPS from reducing its service standards, mail delivery times, facility hours, post office operation/window service hours, and performance metrics below its 2020 levels and 2) direct the PRC to look at the costs and benefits of returning USPS to its 2012 service standards.



Senator Chris Van Hollen (left) and Brian McLaurin (right)

In her testimony, USPS Inspector General Whitcomb expressed similar concerns regarding the need to further study the impact of the Postal Service's proposed slow down, saying that "[p]rior to changes in the network, service really needs to be analyzed to see what the impacts of those changes would be."

As the hearing wound to a close, Chairman Van Hollen thanked McLaurin for his testimony before the subcommittee and agreed that returning to 2012 service standards is necessary. The APWU is incredibly proud of McLaurin for his illuminating testimony and is grateful to him for presenting our union's ask before the Senate subcommittee.

"We need to get back to those 2012 standards," said Chairman Van Hollen. "We know that [processing the mail on time] can be done right, because you were doing it right in 2012 before some of these deliberate changes were made that have compromised the ability to deliver mail on time."

For more information, please visit apwu.org/legislative-priorities. ■



Anna Smith, Director

The Power of Organizing

I often hear some members asking why it matters that we keep emphasizing the importance of organizing. With 200,000 members, some say, why does it matter that we keep talking to non-members and growing our union? Our National Negotiations Committee (NNC) is bargaining for us either way, so who cares how many non-members we have? The answer to these questions is very simple: power. Organizing builds our power and strength, from the workroom floor to the bargaining table, from the post office out into the community, and in our government.

The late, great farm worker organizer Cesar Chavez told us: “Talk is cheap...It is the way we organize and use our lives every day that tells what we believe in.” Our national officers can go to the bargaining table, but it is all of our responsibility to build a powerful, united and strong union that will hold management accountable to negotiate and deliver a good contract for all of us. Without a truly organized union, there is no power behind them. We have to continue speaking to our non-member co-workers, bring them into the APWU, and grow our union to truly build that strength. And we have to continue showing this power on the workroom floor by joining CATs and participating in Union Gear Days.

The power of organizing goes beyond this contract, too. Organizing was central to the historic worker legislative victories throughout our history – in winning a minimum wage, the two-day weekend and ending child labor. A stronger postal union will build power in our fight to pass urgent, needed postal reform in Congress, and is central to the fight of winning universal paid sick leave, maternity and paternity leave, protecting our voting rights and other important pro-worker policies. Organizing now builds power for more organization later as well: we can use our union power to help pass the *PRO Act* and make it easier for other workers across the country to join a union and advocate for better working conditions.

The material benefits from building power through organizing are clear to see. After organizing a union at their workplace, workers see better wages and benefits across the board, even in occupations with a history of low wages. Union workers are far more likely to have employer-based health coverage, with union employers contributing more to their workers coverage than non-union employers. And organizing one workplace helps build power for the community as well: higher ‘union density’ in a city or state means a much stronger likelihood of guaranteed paid sick days, paid family leave, and a higher minimum wage (*for more information on how building union power raises the bar for workers, see page 20*).

If we looked around at our fellow co-workers, union and non-union, and remained satisfied with our past gains, the important victories so close to our grasp would remain out of reach and what we have accomplished will be in jeopardy.

As a union, we believe in good pay, good benefits, and dignity on the job for everyone. As Chavez said, if we really do believe those things, it is all of our responsibility to continue organizing to build power to achieve them. ■

Organizing Materials and Booklets Available Now - Don't Wait to Order!

With peak hiring season around the corner, now is the time to order organizing materials and booklets for orientation!

Do not wait for October before ordering; printing and shipping delays because of COVID are still expected. Order now to be ready for the new postal workers coming to the work room floor this fall and winter! Email organization@apwu.org to order materials.

VA Issues New Rules Regarding Mandatory Vaccination



NEWS AND
RESOURCES
FOR VETERANS

On July 26, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) became the first Federal Agency to require the COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of employment. VA Secretary Denis McDonough announced that the COVID-19 vaccine was mandatory for Title 38 VA health care personnel — including physicians, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, registered nurses, physician assistants, expanded-function dental auxiliaries and chiropractors — who work in Veterans Health Administration facilities, visit VHA facilities or provide direct care to those the VA serves.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said current federal laws do not prevent an employer from requiring employees physically entering the workplace to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has heavily promoted vaccinations as a way to slow the pandemic and save lives. However, at this point, the CDC has not recommended that state or local officials, or employers, mandate vaccinations for their employees.

With COVID-19 case counts rising amid the spread of the Delta variant, the VA's move came on a day when nearly 60 leading medical and health care organizations issued a call for health care facilities to require their workers to get vaccinated. While there are no federal laws that stand in the way of employers requiring vaccinations, like mask mandates, the issue has been politicized in a society that's divided on matters of public health.

Nonetheless, the VA's decision is supported by numerous medical organizations including the American Hospital Association, America's Essential Hospitals and a multi-society group of the leading Infectious Disease Societies. The American Medical Association, American Nurses Association, American College of Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, Association of American Medical Colleges, and National Association for Home Care and Hospice have also endorsed mandating COVID-19 vaccination for health care workers.

The endorsements of mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for health care workers aims to protect the safety of patients and residents of long-term care facilities and make the health care sector a leader in COVID-19 vaccination, just as cases, hospitalizations and deaths are once again rising throughout the United States.

"With more than 300 million doses administered in the United States and nearly 4 billion doses administered worldwide, we know the vaccines are safe and highly effective at preventing severe illness and death from COVID-19," Dr. Susan Bailey, immediate past president of the American Medical Association, said in a statement. "Increased vaccinations among health care personnel will not only reduce the spread of COVID-19 but also reduce the harmful toll this virus is taking within the health care workforce and those we are striving to serve."

Although vaccination among physicians is nearly universal — 96 percent according to an AMA survey — that's not the case for many other people working at health care facilities. In nursing homes, only about 60 percent of staffers are vaccinated, compared with about 80 percent of residents, according to recent numbers from Medicare.

COVID-19 cases are rising. In recent weeks leading up to the decision, the VA had lost four employees to COVID-19 — all of whom were unvaccinated. At least three of those employees died because of the increasingly prevalent Delta variant. There has also been an outbreak among unvaccinated employees and trainees at a VA Law Enforcement Training Center, the third such outbreak during the pandemic.

All VA employees are eligible to be vaccinated at no personal expense at any of the VA facilities. Employees also receive four hours of paid administrative leave after demonstrating they have been vaccinated. Employees will have eight weeks to be fully vaccinated. VA has repeatedly stated that the safety and wellbeing of veterans and their personnel is paramount.

The American Postal Workers Union continues to encourage its members to get vaccinated, and has encouraged the Postal Service to negotiate with the union over any mask and/or vaccination requirements. ■



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Surviving a Hurricane or an Earthquake

As I write this article, many APWU members are still recovering from the effects of this year's devastating weather. My prayers go out to my APWU families who were adversely affected. Natural disasters demonstrate the importance of preparing an emergency plan, which can reduce serious injury or loss of life during a hurricane or an earthquake. Listed are tips to help you prepare when disaster strikes:

Check for Hazards - Repair all electrical wiring, leaky gas connections cracks, and structural damage in your home. Place large, heavy and breakable items on lower shelves in closed cabinets with latches.

Have Disaster Supplies - Buy a battery-operated radio and flashlights, extra batteries, a first aid kit, and a non-electric can opener. Keep a seven-day supply of food, bottled water, medication, and cash. Have a fully charged phone and fill your car with gas, in case of evacuation. Copy all vital records; keep them in a waterproof container. Store original copies in a safe deposit box. Take photos and/or videos of all valuables. Have an extra pair of eyeglasses, house and car keys.

Identify Safe Places - If inside when disaster strikes, drop to the floor – stay under sturdy heavy furniture or against an inside wall, away from where glass could shatter or where heavy furniture could fall over. If you are outside, stay in the open; keep away from buildings; trees; telephone and electrical lines; overpasses; elevated expressways; and/or roads, bridges, and ramps that might have been damaged. If you are in an automobile, stop as quickly as safety permits, and stay in the vehicle, away from trees or buildings.

Educate The Family - Teach children how to call 911, the police, or fire department. Learn how to use the shutoff valves for water, gas and electricity.

Develop an Emergency Communication Plan - In case of family separation, ask someone out-of-state to serve as the “family contact.” Ensure everyone knows their name, address and phone number. Designate someone to pick up kids from their school or daycare center in case you are unable to do so. Attach identification tags with your name and address to pets.

Follow Safety Precautions - Listen to the radio or television for emergency information. Use the phone only in emergencies. Stay indoors, away from windows and glass doors. Close storm shutters, curtains, blinds, and all interior doors. Secure outdoor objects and brace external doors. Turn off propane tanks. Turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and avoid opening until necessary. Fill the bathtub and large containers with water for flushing toilets and cleaning. Never run a generator inside a basement or garage, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented.

BUY A BATTERY-OPERATED RADIO AND FLASHLIGHTS, EXTRA BATTERIES, A FIRST AID KIT, AND A NON-ELECTRIC CAN OPENER. KEEP A SEVEN-DAY SUPPLY OF FOOD, BOTTLED WATER, MEDICATION, AND CASH. HAVE A FULLY CHARGED PHONE AND FILL YOUR CAR WITH GAS, IN CASE OF EVACUATION.

When to Evacuate? - Evacuate if your family's safety is at risk and/or when directed to do so by local authorities.

Returning Home - Return home only when authorities say it is safe. Do not use elevators. Open cabinets cautiously and clean up spills immediately. If you live in coastal areas, stay away from beaches. Contact the gas company, an electrician or a plumber, as appropriate if you have a gas leak, electrical or water damage. Avoid drinking tap water until its safe.

For additional information, contact your local Office of Emergency Services, your local American Red Cross chapter, or visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Website at fema.gov.

Resources for this article include text from the American Red Cross and FEMA. ■



Nancy Olumekor, Director

Grief Management

When I attended the quarterly meeting of the Denver Metro Retiree Chapter on ZOOM, held on July 24, I was inspired to write this article about “grief.” At the end of the meeting while greeting members, we were surprised to learn that when one member lost his wife in April, his grief was overwhelming. Everyone immediately embraced him, virtually. Then, another member, who others knew had lost his wife in March, shared his story; sharing that he was part of a group who helped him cope with his loss. They called themselves “ROMEO” – Retired Old Men Eat Out. This was an example of an important function of our Retiree Chapters: reaching out, embracing and helping each other.

According to *HealGrief.org*, one of the critical factors in healing from grief is the support of other people. Being able to share your story or your feelings is vital to the healing process. We grieve loss in different ways; while we may not get over our loss, we will survive it. You can find support in various places: faith-based groups, support groups, therapists or counselors.

HealGrief.org tells us, when you’re grieving, it is both important and difficult to take care of yourself. Your loss may take away your energy, your appetite and your emotional reserves. *HealGrief.org* makes four points to remember:

- **Allow yourself to grieve:** Unresolved grief can lead to other problems.
- **Express your feelings in a tangible way:** Whether it’s getting involved in an organization, making a financial donation, or another method of creative expression.
- **Be physically healthy:** Physical health helps with the emotional healing process.
- **Don’t judge yourself, or let others judge you:** You are allowed to grieve for as long and as deeply as you need to.

The pandemic has taken a deep emotional toll on all of us. The CDC says that “grief can happen in response to loss of life, as well as to drastic changes to daily routines and ways of life that usually bring us comfort and stability.” Some people, the CDC says, may experience multiple losses during a disaster or emergency event. These losses can happen at the same time, which can complicate or prolong grief and delay a person’s ability to adapt, heal, and recover.

It is normal to feel grief about “lost time” due to COVID-19 lockdowns and quarantines. After all, time is the most precious commodity. ■



Dolores Young, APWU Retiree Delegate Passes Away

The APWU Retirees Department was saddened by the death on July 24, 2021 of Dolores Young, APWU Retiree Delegate to the National Convention for the Northeast Region. Sister Young served as the Northeast Region APWU Retiree Delegate to the National Convention for the past ten years. Dolores began her postal career in 1963. She was a full dues paying member of APWU for over 50 years as member of the New York Metro Area Postal Union. Dolores was part of the Great Postal Strike of 1970 and is featured in the APWU Great Postal Strike Video and in New York Metro’s, *Passing the Torch* video.

Dolores was a union activist and over the years she served the APWU in numerous positions as a local shop steward and officer, APWU POWER Coordinator and alternate for the Northeast Region, and the Moe Biller-Eleanor Bailey Retiree Chapter secretary, treasurer and vice president. Dolores’ many years of dedication to APWU is recognized, acknowledged and appreciated by all who knew her; she was fondly referred to as “Mama D.”

The evidence of her work and her spirit will be remembered by all of whom she touched. Dolores Young was a beautiful person with a wonderful smile and personality to match.



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

Women's Health

It is important to take an active role in our health, and continue or catch up on healthy choices and preventative screenings. Because of concerns about COVID-19, too many people have put off important, sometimes life-saving preventative care. Women have a variety of options, that when combined, contribute to optimum health. The APWU Health Plan partners with our members to provide education, support and services to all facets of a women's health.

Preventative Care

Both the APWU High Option and Consumer Driven Option plans cover 100 percent of preventative care for women, as long as you use an in-network provider. Our preventive care benefits are based on uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org recommendations. In addition to one routine physical exam and one well-woman exam each year, the plan covers a number of lab tests and screenings to check your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, lipids and more. At your well-woman visit, the doctor may recommend screening for:

- **Cervical Cancer** – Screening tests can find cervical cancer early when treatment tends to be more successful. Screenings can also detect abnormal cells that may be pre-cancerous, so they can be treated before the cells turn into cervical cancer. The most important thing you can do to help prevent cervical cancer is to have regular screenings starting at age 21.
- **HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)**
- **Mammograms** – Regular mammograms are the best way to find breast cancer early. A mammogram is an X-ray picture of the breast.
- **Colonoscopy/Cologuard** – Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer-related death among adults in the U.S. With proper screening and treatment, if caught early it is easily treatable.
- **High blood pressure and cholesterol**
- **Diabetes**
- **Osteoporosis** (weakening bones)

Schedule your yearly exam with your doctor so that you can discuss the screenings that are appropriate for your age and lifestyle.

Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

To help you feel better and more in control of your emotional wellbeing, the High Option and Consumer Driven Option offers mental health and substance use services. As a member, you can find the confidential support you need to cope with:

- Stress management
- Surviving a pandemic
- Depression
- Living with a chronic condition
- Challenges of adoption
- Spending time as a caregiver
- Treat substance use disorders

Nutrition

Another step in contributing to optimum health is in the foods we choose to consume. High Option Members' visits to an in-network registered dietician/nutritionist are free. Healthy weight decreases the risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes. The CDC recommends a heart-healthy diet to include:

- Fruits and Vegetables
- Whole Grains
- Low Fat Dairy
- Reduced Sodium

Special Programs

APWU Health Plan offers programs and support to help with smoking cessation and substance use disorder.

The Health Plan also has coverage for healthy pregnancy programs and pregnancy care. Both the High Option and Consumer Driven Option plans offer programs with no additional cost to the member. The Health Plan offers you one-on-one time with a nurse, access to our 24-hour nurse line and website, and other healthy extras, all with no out-of-pocket costs. Please visit www.apwuhp.com for more information.

For further information, please go to: womenshealth.gov; cdc.gov; uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. ■

2021 APWU SCHOLARSHIP

The APWU proudly presents the winners of three scholarship programs: the E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship, the Vocational Scholarship and the Best Essay Award for 2020.

Hallbeck winners will receive a \$2,000 award each year for a period of four years to be used in an undergraduate program.

The Vocational Scholarship winners will receive up to \$3,000 for three years of study in a trade, technical, industrial or vocational school. The Best Essay winner will receive a one-time award of \$2,000.

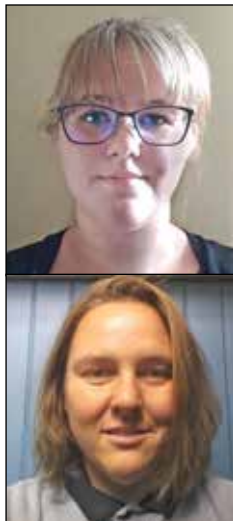
Winners are selected from applicants who are the children or grandchildren of current, retired or deceased APWU members.

HALLBECK WINNERS

Nya Brigham, sponsored by father **Garland Brigham** of the North Central Florida Area Local



Andres Mackliff, sponsored by father **Alberto Mackliff** of the Tampa Area Local

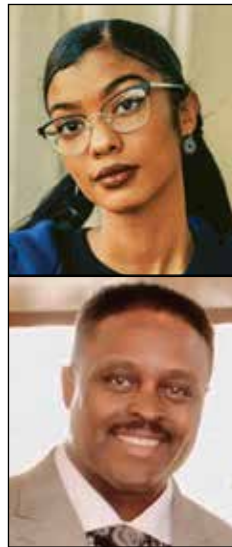


Brooklynn Stahl, sponsored by mother **Penny Stahl** of the Indiana Postal Workers Union



Dwight Ellis, sponsored by mother **Trudi Ellis** of the 480-481 Area Local (MI)

Brooklyn Bush, sponsored by father **Donnaell Bush** of the San Diego Area Local



Dylan Jones, sponsored by father **David Jones** of the Sacramento Area Local



Stephanie Mao, sponsored by mother **Lei Lee** of the Philadelphia BMC Local



Jadon George, sponsored by father **Levie George** of the Philadelphia PA Area Local

Victoria Lowczyk, sponsored by father **Jerzy Lowczyk** of the Greater Hicksville Mid-Island Local (NY)



Cameron White, sponsored by father **Timothy White** of the Boston Metro Area Local



WINNERS

VOCATIONAL WINNERS



Ashanti Henderson, sponsored by father **Daniel Henderson** of the Dallas Area Local



Kylie Becenti, sponsored by father **Harley Becenti** of the Phoenix Metro Area Local



Terisa Kohl, sponsored by grandmother **Sandra Seefeldt** Wausau Area Local (WI)



The scholarships are funded by donations, and the APWU is extremely grateful for contributions by union members. To make a contribution, please send a check or money order to: APWU Scholarship Fund, 1300 L Street NW, Washington DC 20005. Your tax-deductible donation may specify "Hallbeck," "Vocational" or "Best Essay."

BEST ESSAY WINNER



Lennea Johnsen, sponsored by father **David Johnsen** of the Greater Smokey Mountain Area Local (TN)

Can you Connect Us with an Amazon Worker Who Needs a Union?



The battle to gain better pay, benefits and working conditions for all workers in this country continues, especially for Amazon workers.

As Jeff Bezos goes to space while Amazon workers are denied bathroom breaks and treated worse than robots, unions, including the APWU, are uniting to help Amazon workers help themselves – **by organizing unions!**

Amazon employs almost one million workers in the United States. If Amazon workers came together in a union, that would increase union density in the mail and package industry, helping raise wages and benefits for everyone in our industry. It is going to take the entire labor movement – multiple unions allying – to organize Amazon, but together workers can accomplish anything.

We, as postal workers and union members, know that the way to good pay and benefits and dignity, respect, safety and justice in the workplace is to organize together in a union. The pay and benefits postal workers enjoy today is because of the collective bargaining rights fought for and

achieved by strikers during the 1970 Great Postal Strike. That pay and benefits continues to be under attack because of the low pay and high healthcare costs now normal in the private-sector. A non-union Amazon brings down the wages and benefits for workers in many industries, especially in transportation and mailing.

Do you have a friend or family member who works at Amazon at a fulfillment or sort center, delivery station, or who drives for an Amazon Delivery Service Partner (DSP)? The APWU would like to have a conversation with them, to discuss what is happening in their workplace and talk about how they can join with their co-workers to build the power at work necessary to make positive change.

Text AMAZON to 91990 or go to apwu.org/amazon to learn more.