

THE AMERICAN

APWU

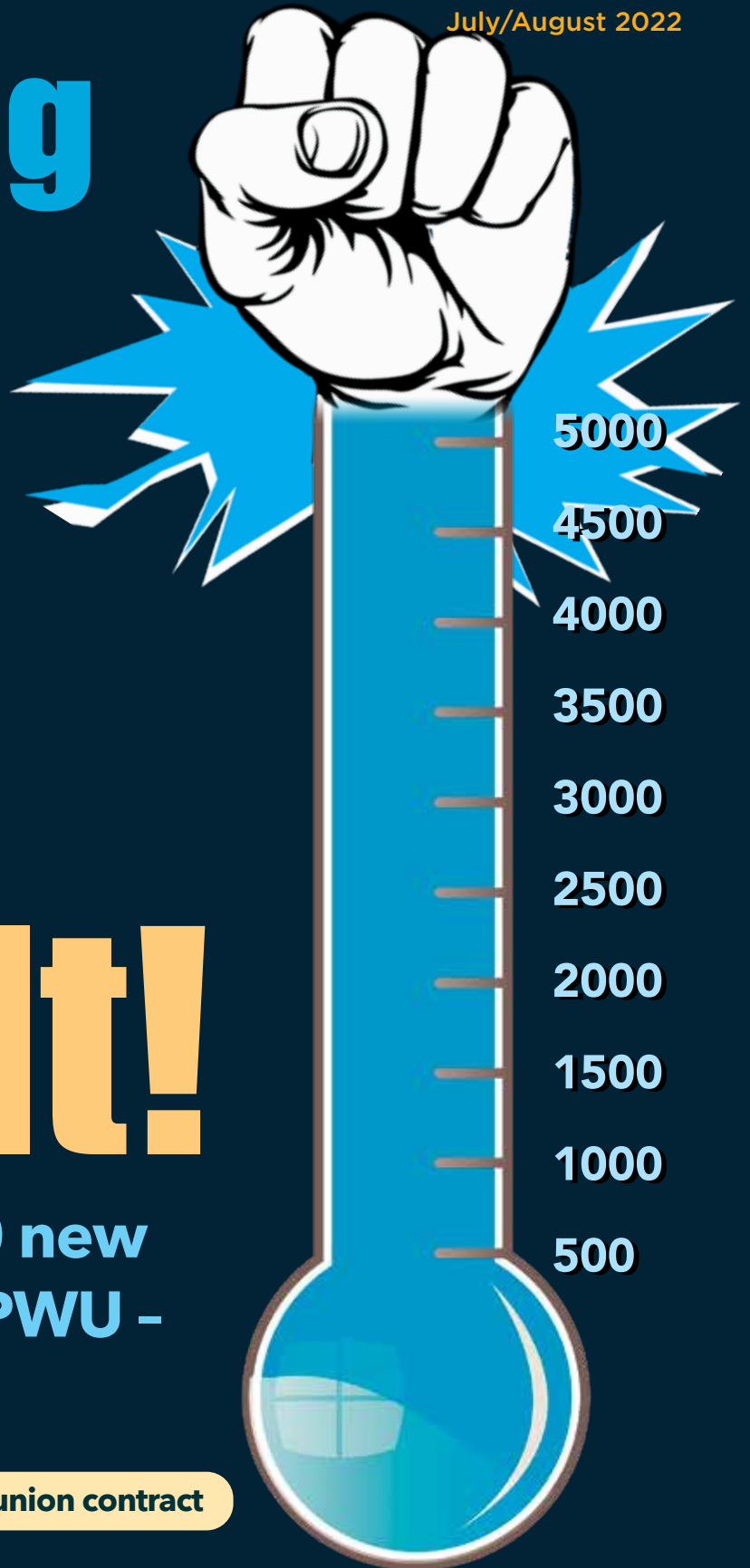
Postal Worker

July/August 2022

**Building
UNION
POWER**

**We
Did It!**

**More than 5,000 new
members join APWU –
See page 5**



INSIDE: Pay scales from the new union contract



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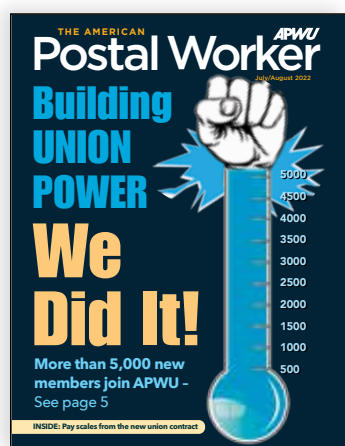
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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

COLA and You

Soaring inflation is hurting working people worldwide with rising prices on basic necessities including gasoline, food, transportation and housing. Inflation is largely being driven by an economy concentrated in the hands of a few powerful and greedy corporate monopolies that have the power to raise prices, with little fear of competition. In 2021 consumer prices rose 6.7 percent yet corporate profits rose 25 percent - a record high. In the first quarter of 2022, the five major oil companies tripled their profits to \$35 billion. Monopoly power and price gouging may be good for corporate profits and Wall Street, but they are disastrous for workers. Clearly, over the long run we have to replace corporate domination and power with more workers' power.

Rising inflation underscores just how important the continuation of our negotiated Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is in our outstanding new union contract. COLA is our best protection against inflation. We are some of the few U.S. workers who receive COLA increases. Even in the postal world, we are the only union that has maintained full COLA in our union contract. We should never take our union won gains for granted. Management puts COLA on the chopping block during every round of negotiations and we have to fight to preserve those hard-won provisions.

Let's examine the "COLA Difference:" (The APWU has negotiated a number of union contracts/collective bargaining agreements. The figures below apply to the main agreement covering 200,000 postal workers.)

- As inflation started to dramatically rise in 2021, the union-negotiated COLA increases for that year amounted to \$1.14/hour or \$2,371 annually for full-time career employees.
- The first COLA (March 2022) under the newly negotiated and ratified union contract was sixty-three cents/hour or \$1,310 annually.
- The second COLA, due this August, currently stands at a whopping eighty-seven cents/hour or \$1,809 annually. With two months left until the second COLA is set, (while the final allowance may fluctuate), we believe it could top \$1.00/hour.

RISING INFLATION UNDERSCORES JUST HOW IMPORTANT THE CONTINUATION OF OUR NEGOTIATED COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA) IS IN OUR OUTSTANDING NEW UNION CONTRACT.

- At this point in time, the first two COLAs in the new contract amount to \$3,120 annually.
- The 2021 and 2022 COLAs combined will exceed \$5,500 annually. COLA becomes part of our regular wages and thus carries over year-after-year.
- In addition to COLA, the annual wage increases due each November under the new union contract amount to an average of \$800/year for career employees. Those not yet at the top step of the pay scale continue to receive step increases of approximately \$1,000 every thirty-six weeks, in addition to COLA.
- If prices decrease, with fuel for example, we still keep our COLA increases. Those gains are locked in and become part of our base salary going forward.
- While PSEs do not receive COLA, upon conversion they are slotted into the proper pay scale that includes all these COLA increases.

Over the years of contract negotiations, it has not been uncommon to lose COLA increases, either through an arbitration award or voluntarily absorbing an increase(s). For example, the 1994 interest arbitration award eliminated two COLA increases. In 2010, the APWU voluntarily gave up two COLAs. Once we skip COLA increases, they are gone forever. Just think what would have happened if we went to interest arbitration and lost the first two COLAs of the new CBA! Full-time, career postal workers would have lost over \$3,000 a year or approximately \$100,000 over a typical postal career.

I am proud that as your lead negotiator in the last three contract negotiations of 2015, 2018 and 2021, we maintained all our COLA increases.

And you should be union proud as well -- every member is the strong foundation on which we build our union rights and build a better future for all postal workers and our families -- including COLA! ■

5,000 New Members, Stronger Union!

Building Union Power!

We did it! APWU members across the country heeded the call, had countless conversations with their coworkers, and together we've organized more than 5,000 new members into the APWU since launching our *Building Union Power* campaign on May Day.

The campaign was launched on the heels of our solid new union contract and the passage of historic postal legislation.

From May 1 to July 1, local and state organizations and union activists across the country worked tirelessly to have one-on-one conversations with non-members, share information on APWU achievements and sign people up as we continue to *Build Union Power*.

"Internal" organizing campaigns like this one are critical to increasing the union's power and our ability to win on things that matter to members. As we noted in our celebrations of the union's 50th anniversary last year, everything we've won since the courageous strikers of 1970 first won collective bargaining rights has been fought for, not handed to us. By increasing our union density we build ourselves up for all the challenges to come.

"It is exciting that we reached our ambitious goal," shared APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "Everyone enjoys the benefits of union organization and everyone should pay their fair share. More members builds more strength at the bargaining table, in the grievance procedure, in the fight for workplace safety and in the ongoing struggle to

Together we've organized more than 5,000 new members into the APWU since launching our *Building Union Power* campaign on May Day.

protect and expand the public Postal Service and our jobs."

"We know the enthusiasm is still high. We know many locals are still planning organizing activities. So, let's keep the terrific work and our great momentum going," said Organization Director Anna Smith.

The campaign kicked off with two online trainings in April for leaders and activists eager to create organizing committees and reach out to non-members in their workplaces. The Organization Department developed a toolkit of useful material for members and leaders to have on hand when reaching out to non-members.

Organizing is truly the lifeblood of the union and never stops.

While the *Building Union Power* campaign came to a successful conclusion, those tools and resources will continue to be a valuable resource to anyone interested in growing their union and building union power well into the future. You can continue to access them at apwu.org/unionpower

Every member was encouraged to join the campaign, because organizing is everyone's job, and we're all stronger when we're stronger together. The most successful organizing takes place when a trusted member has a one-on-one conversation with the non-member and helps them to understand why the union is the solution to our problems at work.

Organizing is truly the lifeblood of the union and never stops. From orientations to training classes, from the workroom floor to outside activities, let's continue to have those needed conversations until every non-member joins our great union and helps make it ever stronger into the future!

While the *Building Union Power* campaign kicked off on May 1, it seemed to be gaining steam in the final weeks of the campaign. In the week before the campaign concluded, APWU members signed up more than 1,000 members. Stay tuned to apwu.org for more updates on the tremendous work growing our union in the weeks to come.

Congratulations to all who participated! The Organizing Department is energized and ready to help you plan and navigate organizing within your area! ■

BALLOT PLACEMENT SET FOR

ELECTION OF APWU

Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth “Liz” Powell has certified the union members listed below as candidates for national union office by referendum balloting, as mandated by the APWU Constitution and Bylaws.

A drawing was held on June 27 to determine the order candidates’ names will appear on the ballot.

Incumbent officers are listed first, with “(I)” appearing after their name.

Secretary-Treasurer Powell cast one vote for candidates in uncontested races and the National Election Committee declared them elected, in accordance with the Constitution. Their names will not appear on the ballot.

Mailing of Ballots

Ballots will be mailed by the American Arbitration Association on or after Saturday, September 10, 2022, but no later than Thursday, September 15, 2022.

General and Administrative Officers

President

Mark Dimondstein (I), Greater Greensboro SCF Area Local (NC)
John L. Marcotte, Gaylord Local (MI)

Legislative/Political Director

Judy Beard (I), Detroit District Area Local (MI)
Thomas Benson, Lake Geauga Area Local (OH)

Human Relations Director

Daleo Freeman (I), William H. Burrus, Cleveland Area Local, #72 (OH)
Doris Simmons, Atlanta Metro Area Local (GA)

Regional Coordinators

Southern Region

Sam Wood, Southwest Florida Area Local (FL)
Yared Wonde, Dallas Area Local (TX)

Clerk Division

National Business Agents, Central Region, Cincinnati Region, (A)

Michael D. Schmid (I), Columbus Area Local (OH)
Mark E. Graham, Springfield Local (OH)

National Business Agents, Central Region, Minneapolis Region, (B)

Gregory Becker, Milwaukee Area Local (WI)
Christopher Mark Hendrickson, Saint Cloud Area Local (MN)

National Business Agents, Northeast Region, New England Region, (A)

Bill Mazurowski, Hartford Local (CT)
Thomas S. Smith, Bangor Area Local (ME)
Scott Adams, Portland Area Local (ME)

National Business Agents, Southern Region, Atlanta Region, (C)

Keenan D. Anthony, Sr., Marietta Local (GA)
Sandra Munoz Hernandez, Broward County Area Local (FL)
William G. Flanagan, Jr., Atlanta Metro Area Local (GA)

National Business Agents, Southern Region, Dallas Region, (C)

Diann Scurlark (I), Houston Area Local (TX)
Alex Aleman, San Antonio Alamo Area Local (TX)
Ben Martinez., Fort Worth Area Local (TX)

National Business Agents, Western Region, San Francisco Region, (A)

Sonia E. Canchola (I), California Area Local (CA)
Charquita Rainey, Greater Los Angeles Area Local (CA)

National Business Agents, Western Region, San Francisco Region, (C)

Eric A. Van Dyke (I), Greater Los Angeles Area Local (CA)
Fabiola Dominguez, California Area Local (CA)
Terry L. Hood, San Diego Area Local (CA)

Motor Vehicle Service Division

National Business Agents, Central Region

Mark Krueger, Milwaukee Area Local (WI)
Dave Cook, St. Paul Area Local (MN)

National Business Agents, Eastern Region

Garrett C. Langley (I), Lancaster Area Local (PA)
Brian R. McLaurin, Nation’s Capital Southern MD Area Local (MD)
Raymond J. Scanlon, Baltimore Francis “Stu” Filbey Area Local (MD)

National Business Agents, Northeast Region

Stephen D. Mohan, Greater Hicksville Mid-Island Area Local (NY)
Rick White, Boston Metro Area Local (MA)

Support Services Division

Director

Robin “Robbie” Robertson, St. Louis Gateway District Area Local (MO)
Arrion Brown, Nation’s Capital Southern MD Area Local (MD)
Aaron T. Young, Twin Cities PDC Local (MN)

NATIONAL OFFICERS

Retirees Department

Director

Nancy E. Olumekor (I), Nation's Capital Southern MD Area Local (MD)

Robert L. Jeffrey, Jr., Oakland Local (CA)

Retiree National Convention Delegates Southern Region

Patricia A. McGriff (I), Northeast Florida Retiree Chapter (FL)

Kim H. Guy, Greater Smokey Mountain Area Local (TN)

Uncontested National Offices

General and Administrative Officers

Executive Vice President

Debby Szeredy (I), Mid-Hudson New York Area Local (NY)

Secretary-Treasurer

Elizabeth "Liz" Powell (I), Western Nassau New York Area Local (NY)

Industrial Relations Director

Charles "Charlie" Cash (I), Buffalo Local (NY)

Organization Director

Anna Smith (I), Portland Oregon Area Local (OR)

Research and Education Director

Joyce B. Robinson (I), Richmond Area Local (VA)

Health Plan Director

Sarah Jane Rodriguez (I), Phoenix Metro Area Local (AZ)

Regional Coordinators

Central Region

Sharyn M. Stone (I), Indianapolis Area Local (IN)

Eastern Region

AJ Jones (I), Eastern Montgomery County PA Area Local (PA)

Northeast Region

Tiffany Foster (I), New York Metro Area Postal Union (NY)

Western Region

Omar M. Gonzalez (I), Greater Los Angeles Area Local (CA)

Clerk Division

Director

Lamont A. Brooks (I), The Northern Virginia Area Local (VA)

Assistant Director (A)

Sam Lisenbe (I), Fort Worth Area Local (TX)

Assistant Director, (B)

Lynn Pallas-Barber (I), 498-499 Area Local (MI)

National Business Agents, Central Region

Chicago Region, (A)

Linda Turney (I), Schaumburg Local (IL)

Chicago Region, (B)

Devendra Rathore "D" (I), Fox Valley Local (IL)

Chicago Region, (C)

James Stevenson (I), Detroit District Area Local (MI)

Cincinnati Region, (B)

Michael W. Funk, Jr. (I), Greater Cincinnati Ohio Area Local (OH)

Minneapolis Region, (A)

Todd M. Elkerton (I), Saint Paul Area Local (MN)

St. Louis Region, (A)

Robert D. Kessler (I), Greater Kansas City Metro Area Local (MO)

St. Louis Region, (B)

Daniel F. Skemp (I), Rapid Area Local (IA)

Wichita Region, (A)

Ashley D. Cargill (I), Norman Local (OK)

National Business Agents, Eastern Region

Philadelphia Region, (A)

Robert Romanowski (I), New Jersey Shore Area Local (NJ)

Philadelphia Region, (B)

John Louis Jackson, Jr. (I), Philadelphia BMC Local (PA)

Philadelphia Region, (C)

Vincent A. Tarducci (I), Philadelphia BMC Local (PA)

Washington DC Region, (A)

Rachel A. Walthall (I), Baltimore Francis "Stu" Filbey Area Local (MD)

Washington DC Region, (B)

Pamela R. Richardson (I), Lynchburg Area Local (VA)

National Business Agents, Northeast Region

New England Region, (B)

Scott M. Hoffman, Boston Metro Area Local (MA)

New England Region, (C)

Thomas "Tom" O'Brien (I), South Shore Area Local (MA)

New York Region, (A)

Peter "Pete" Coradi (I), Brooklyn Local (NY)

New York Region, (C)

Bernard "Bernie" C. Timmerman (I), Central New York Area Local (NY)

(continued)

National Business Agents, Southern Region

Atlanta Region, (A)

James “Jim” DeMauro (I), Tampa Area Local (FL)

Atlanta Region, (B)

Doris Orr-Richardson, Northeast Florida Area Local (FL)

Dallas Region, (A)

Jack Crawford (I), Houston Area Local (TX)

Dallas Region, (B)

Charles Tillman (I), Dallas Area Local (TX)

Memphis Region, (A)

Joe H. Jolley, Jr. (I), Nashville Area Local (TN)

Memphis Region, (B)

Pamela Smith (I), Birmingham Area Local (AL)

National Business Agents, Western Region

Denver Region, (A)

Lamont Green, Phoenix Metro Area Local (AZ)

Denver Region, (B)

Joseph M. Zamenick, Phoenix Metro Area Local (AZ)

Northwest Region, (A)

Brian Dunsmore (I), Portland Oregon Area Local (OR)

Northwest Region, (B)

Brian Dunn (I), Houston Area Local (TX)

San Francisco Region, (B)

Mike Hetticher, Eureka Local (CA)

San Francisco Region, (D)

Chuck Locke (I), Sacramento Area Local (CA)

Maintenance Division

Director

Idowu Balogun (I), Greater Los Angeles Area Local (CA)

Assistant Director, (A)

Terry B. Martinez (I), Dallas Area Local (TX)

Assistant Director, (B)

Jason Treier (I), Lancaster Area Local (PA)

National Business Agents, Maintenance Division

Central Region, (A)

Craig Fisher (I), Tri-County Ohio Area Local (OH)

Central Region, (B)

Jeffrey Scott Beaton (I), Greater Kansas City Area Local (MO)

Central Region, (C)

Curtis Walker (I), Flint Michigan Area Local (MI)

Eastern Region

Kenneth Lester (I), Philadelphia PA Local (PA)

Northeast Region

Dave Sarnacki (I), Springfield Mass Area Local (MA)

Southern Region, (A)

John Gearhard (I), Jacksonville BMC Local (FL)

Southern Region, (B)

Carlos Paz (I), Dallas Area Local (TX)

Western Region, (A)

Hector Baez (I), San Diego Area Local (CA)

Western Region, (B)

Louis M. Kingsley (I), California Area Local (CA)

Motor Vehicle Service Division

Director

Michael O. Foster (I), Detroit District Area Local (MI)

Assistant Director, (A)

Kenneth (Ken) Prinz (I), Philadelphia PA Area Local (PA)

National Business Agents, Motor Vehicle Service Division

Southern Region, Southeast Sub-Region

Bruce E. Amey (I), Atlanta Metro Area Local (GA)

Southern Region, Southwest Sub-Region

Dyrike Shaw (I), Dallas Area Local (TX)

Western Region

Jerome A. Pittman (I), San Francisco Local (CA)

All-Craft National Business Agents

Alaskan Area)

James M. Patarini (I), Midnight Sun Area Local (AK)

Caribbean Area

Samuel A. Hernandez Algarin, Puerto Rico Area Local (PR)

Pacific Area

Rufina J. Pagaduan (I), Honolulu Local (HI)

Support Services Division

Support Services Division, National Business Agent

Orlando L. Anderson, St. Louis Gateway District Area Local (MO)

Retiree National Convention Delegates

Central Region

Paul Browning (I), Michigan Postal Workers Union Retiree Chapter (MI)

Eastern Region

Cynthia Nesmith, Philadelphia Area Local Retiree Chapter (PA)

Northeast Region

Leona Draper (I), Moe Biller/Eleanor Bailey Retiree Chapter (NY)

Western Region

Patricia Ann Williams (I), Greater Los Angeles Area Local 64 Retiree Chapter (CA)

APWU Active at AFL-CIO Convention

President Dimondstein Introducing the Shorter Work Week Resolution.



The AFL-CIO Convention met in June to develop the labor movement's priorities for the next four years, adopt strategies to grow union membership, and secure more power for working people. The APWU left its mark on the convention, submitting a number of resolutions, debating on the floor, and leading discussions in workshops and in the exhibition hall.

APWU's Contributions Adopted by the Convention

APWU resolutions calling for an end to the undemocratic Senate filibuster, for paid sick leave for all workers, and uplifting the importance of the Juneteenth holiday, were all incorporated and adopted into broader "house" resolutions. APWU resolutions saluting Amazon workers and reviving the right to strike were incorporated into broader organizing resolutions.

One APWU resolution, on the fight to secure a shorter work week, with no loss in pay, was adopted by the Convention. President Dimondstein presented the resolution, stating "We deserve more for our time at work, and we deserve more time away from work to enjoy our families, strengthen our communities, appreciate and protect the wonders of our planet and to build a working-class movement that secures justice for all workers."

One disappointment of the Convention is that APWU resolutions on the labor movement's necessary role in combating rising fascism, and on

holding those in Congress accountable who voted to overturn the results of the 2022 election were not debated or adopted. "A strong, unified front from the labor movement will be necessary to defend our democratic rights," said President Dimondstein. "Now is no time to shrink from our responsibilities as workers and as a movement in the face of rising authoritarianism."

Postal workers, Covid and Our Democratic Rights

Cleon Williams, a member from the Philadelphia Area Local, addressed the Convention about the role of postal workers during the pandemic and recounted his experience serving on the Election Mail Task Force in his facility. APWU Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard spoke on a panel about the importance of vote-by-mail and expanding our democratic rights (see page 25).

Leadership Elections

The Convention also held elections for the Federation's leadership. President Liz Shuler was re-elected by delegates to a full four-year term. An IBEW member, Shuler is the first woman elected to lead the federation. Fred Redmond was re-elected Secretary-Treasurer.

"We are going to amplify the voices of working people—their hopes, struggles, and demands. This is more than a comeback story," President Shuler said upon being elected. "This is a new story, yet to be told... A new era for all working people across this country."

APWU Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell seconded Redmond's nomination from the floor, calling him "a committed trade unionist who has dedicated his life to the betterment of working people all across this country."

President Dimondstein was re-elected to the Executive Council as a Vice President of the AFL-CIO. "I'm proud to represent postal workers on the Executive Council," said Dimondstein. "Together, we must act boldly to grow our movement and empower the broad working class in this country." ■



The APWU participants at Convention included President Mark Dimondstein (not pictured), and L-R: Colorado Springs Local President Bria Clanton, Human Relations Director Daleo Freeman, Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard, Philadelphia Area Local President Nick Casselli, Research & Education Director Joyce Robinson, Philadelphia Area Local member Cleon Williams, Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell, Western Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez and Vice President Debby Szeredy.



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

Workers Are Fighting Back

There is a union movement that is blazing across the country. It's important for all of us to do our part to give support to workers that are standing up and fighting like hell to get a union like we have. There are workers forming their unions at Starbucks and Amazon, gig workers, tech workers, professors, students, cafeteria workers, nurses, child care providers, artists, journalists, migrant workers, truck drivers, and more -- all risking their jobs to have the security of a union. The Association of Flight Attendants is working hard to unionize at Delta, the only major airline without a flight attendant's union. This is a union that has pledged to us in our campaigns that they have our backs!!

In 1970, with incredible courage and solidarity, our foremothers and forefathers won their bargaining rights in the Great Postal Strike, and the APWU was born soon thereafter. Now it is our time to help build our union family. Let's face it, we have workers at Pitney Bowes and other mail houses that do not have the wages and benefits we do, yet work on the very same equipment as us for less...We need to start stepping up and reaching out to those workers that deserve good wages and bene-

fits and lift them up by joining our union. UPS Teamsters are getting ready for their biggest contract fight, trying to reverse concessions made in previous years.

Think of ways that your local can help support this union movement not just outside our workplace but within our workplace too. We are only stronger when we stand together. We have some of our locals that have been standing together on picket lines for those workers unionized and non-unionized. A perfect recent example is the Phoenix Metro Area Local Officers and Retirees standing with the new independent Amazon Labor Union from Staten Island that are demanding negotiations of a first contract. Amazon has taken the successful union election on Staten Island to court in another venue, Phoenix, AZ. Phoenix Metro reacted very quickly and in three days they pulled together a group of APWU members to be there on June 19 and 20, to stand with Amazon Labor Union. We need to be prepared at short notice to help our Working Families. Have your APWU signs and t-shirts ready to lend a hand to those who have been less fortunate than ourselves.

Let's strengthen our workroom floor by developing more leaders in the membership, by continuing and strengthening the fight to keep our post offices and plants open, using our safety and health committees to protect our workplace and turn it around to be a place where you want to come to work. We complain of the hostile work environment, when we should be building strong committees of members to help plan ways to best stop it at the local level. Utilize committees in your local to strengthen and add to your list of activists. The time is now while the workers in this country are stepping up calling for unionization. ■



Phoenix Metro Area Local Members join an ALU demonstration



Supreme Court's Dobbs Decision An Assault on Our Rights

On June 24, the United States Supreme Court, with a six-member anti-worker majority, overturned *Roe v. Wade* and fifty years of Constitutional rights afforded to women regarding their right to privacy, to reproductive health choices and to abortion services under certain circumstances – with its decision in the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson*. The decision effectively leaves these matters to the States, where more than 20 state governments have either blanket bans or severe limitations on access to abortion services.

The decision elicited strong reactions across the country and the labor movement.

“The fight to defend our right to make health care choices that affect ourselves and our families is inseparable from our movement’s long struggle to control our own labor,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “This Supreme Court has subjected countless women to lives of despair and material insecurity by depriving them control of their own bodies. The effects of the decision will undoubtedly fall disproportionately on poor and working-class people, as well as victims of abuse and rape, while the rich continue to have access to the health care options they need. While there are strong and differing views of this issue, 80 percent of the population opposes a total ban on access to abortion rights. As we did at our national convention in 1992,

our union must again commit itself to defend the rights of all working people, especially those facing serious decisions about their bodies, their families and their health. This matter comes down to women’s equality.” ■

Resolution Passed at 1992 APWU Convention:

Be it Resolved, That the APWU fully and actively support every American woman’s right, without any government interference, to make those private, personal and individual choices that pertain to herself and her family...

Liz Shuler, President, AFL-CIO:

This is just the latest in a harmful string of attacks on our fundamental rights, including the right to vote and to collectively bargain in the workplace, and points to an alarming trend that other well-settled rights like marriage equality may be taken away. The current conservative majority of the Supreme Court is bent on limiting bodily autonomy, freedom and self-determination to a select few, and that is fundamentally undemocratic. America’s unions remain committed to the fight for gender justice and economic equity for all people.

National Nurses United:

As nurses, we know that the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* will have devastating effects on our patients’ most basic access to health, safety, and well-being... Yet as health care providers, we know from experience that abortions will not stop. They will continue underground because they are a vital medical necessity, a basic health care service. Abortions will simply become more expensive, harder to access, and in many cases unsafe.”

Sara Nelson, President, AFA-CWA:

[T]he right for each of us to make our own choices about our jobs, our bodies, and our futures is fundamental. That includes the right to protect safe, legal options to anyone who seeks reproductive healthcare. As union members, we understand democracy in our workplaces and in our public square. This is not just a radical assault on our rights and settled law, it is an attack against the majority of this country.

Marc Perrone, International President, UFCW:

The Supreme Court’s decisions this week needlessly eviscerated sacred rights and liberties of all Americans – especially women – that have stood in place for generations. The rights to privacy, to feel safe in one’s community, and to have control over one’s personal health and safety, should never be rolled back; they should be strengthened and protected.

“While some may wish to portray these decisions and these issues solely through a partisan political lens, all Americans, from all parties, should ask themselves this troubling question – what right and freedom will the Supreme Court take away next?



SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

Bonding and Tax Issues for Local Unions

Effective July 1, 2022, local affiliates have a new three (3) year term of bond coverage, which will expire June 30, 2025. National APWU provides local affiliates with \$5,000 of coverage for each local at no cost to the local. The Department of Labor *requires* local affiliates to have bond coverage for a minimum of 10 percent of the union liquid assets. However, National APWU strongly recommends affiliates obtain bond coverage at 100 percent of all liquid assets.

When determining how much bond coverage is recommended, treasurers should include the local's total cash on hand, deposits in any type of financial institution, certificate of deposit, U.S. Treasury securities, corporate stocks and bonds, and accounts and loans receivable. These are all examples of liquid assets.

The Labor Organization Bond covers the loss of money, securities and other property resulting directly from one or more fraudulent or dishonest acts committed by an employee acting alone or in collusion with others. It also offers protection for failure to faithfully discharge duties. The total coverage is for no more than the amount stated in the bond. The amount of bond coverage can be increased or decreased by requesting a bond change form from the Secretary-Treasurer's department.

Reinstating Tax-Exempt Status

To qualify as exempt from federal income taxes, an organization must meet requirements set forth in the Internal Revenue Code. Under IRC 501(c)(5) tax exempt code, local and state unions qualify. Retiree chapters also qualify for exemption where they act to secure and maintain retirement benefits for its members.

It is important to remember that, while IRC 501(c)(5) provides exemption from federal income tax and we do not have to pay taxes on interest earned on our investments, we are required to pay sales tax for purchases and payroll taxes for our employees.

When a local or state union is notified that their tax-exempt status has been revoked that is usually as a result of failing to file the required annual electronic notice

(990, 990-N or 990 -EZ) for three consecutive tax years or if a local or state union makes over \$1,000 in unrelated business income also known as UBI. To apply for reinstatement of tax-exempt status, local and state treasurers will need to electronically file Form 1024.

As of January 3, 2022, the IRS requires that Form 1024 applications for recognition of exemption be submitted electronically online at [Pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov). To submit Form 1024, you must:

1. Register, or have previously registered, for an account on [Pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov).
2. Enter "Form 1024" or "1024" in the search box and select Form 1024.
3. Complete the form

A copy of the local or state constitution must be submitted with the form 1024 Application for Reinstatement. Local and state presidents or treasurers can use the following link: www.irs.gov/app/eos/allSearch to check tax exempt status. [Pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov) can accommodate only one uploaded file. Therefore, it is recommended the you consolidate any attachments into a single PDF file. ■

Secretary-Treasurer Training August 19-20, 2022

The Secretary-Treasurer's Department is offering Fiduciary Responsibilities Training and QuickBooks Beginners' Training August 19, 2022 (9:00 am- 5:00 pm) and Saturday, August 20, 2022 (9:00 am - 2:00 pm). There is no fee for the event and it will take place at the Gaylord National Harbor. This is a great opportunity for new officers and officers who have not had an opportunity to attend Secretary-Treasurer's training during the pandemic.

APWU Auxiliary Leader Doris Poland – Working Class Hero

Doris Poland, a longtime leader in the APWU Auxiliary, recently received the “Working Class Hero Award” from the Maine AFL-CIO.

Sister Poland has been a union member and activist for more than 55 years. When her late husband, Wayne, was hired at the post office in 1967, postal workers were prohibited from engaging in politics. So, Doris joined the union auxiliary and got involved in the political work of the union. She’s been active in the APWU auxiliary ever since, serving in a number of roles, including many years as the Auxiliary’s president.

Doris was also active in her own unions, including leading an organizing drive of custodians and her

fellow bus drivers to join with teachers in her hometown of Windham, ME, forming the first wall-to-wall education union in the state.

President Dimondstein congratulated Poland in a video message to the Maine AFL-CIO gathering, saying, “Sister Poland has been a stalwart working-class fighter over many decades. She has been an exemplary activist, fighter, and leader in our ongoing fight for workplace justice and social justice.”

“I believe in what I’m doing,” Doris said. “When you’ve been in the labor movement as long as I have, it’s part of life and part of your family. It’s a belief in what’s right and what’s wrong and what’s worth fighting for.” ■



Sister Doris Poland after receiving the ME AFL-CIO Working Class Hero Award



Sister Sandy Garcia with the “first edition” contract at a Hawaiian-themed banquet honoring retiring NBAs Vicki Carios and JoAnn Gerhart

“First Edition” Contract Nets Big COPA Donation

It may not yet sit atop the bestsellers list, but Industrial Relations Director Charlie Cash had the hottest book in town at the Denver Regional Assembly held in Tucson, AZ in June. During his remarks, IRD Cash showed the assembled leaders at the conference a printed copy of the “blueline” version – a proof made before a big print order – of the new collective bargaining agreement between the APWU and the Postal Service.

After several members eagerly asked how to get a printed copy of the new contract, IRD Cash decided to auction off his coveted “first edition” contract for a COPA donation. To up the ante, Director Cash and President Dimondstein autographed the copy.

After a lengthy and suspenseful silent auction, the bidding brought in a whopping \$551 donation to the APWU political fund.

The winning bidder was Sister Sandy Garcia, a member and the administrative aide from the Denver Metro Area Local.

While Sister Garcia can enjoy her special first edition copy of the CBA, the contract is available in an online, searchable version at apwu.org/contract. Printed copies of the new contract are currently available for pre-order at apwustore.org. ■



Your Rights To A Safe Workplace

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

Safety—how often do you think about your safety at work? Do you ever think about the impact it would have on your family if you were injured, sickened, or even killed on the job? The Postal Service is a dangerous place to work. Safety is weighing heavily on my mind today. We lost one of our union family in a workplace accident today. No employee's family should ever get that call that a loved one was lost just trying to provide for their family.

In the United States, 4,764 working people were killed on the job and an estimated 120,000 died from occupational diseases in 2020. Worldwide, 340 workers are killed on the job every single day! No one should die by just trying to provide a living for themselves and their families!

"IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGEMENT TO PROVIDE SAFE WORKING CONDITIONS IN ALL PRESENT AND FUTURE INSTALLATIONS AND TO DEVELOP A SAFE WORKING FORCE."

In fiscal year 2021, there were 44,936 on the job injury/occupational disease claims that were approved by the Office of Workers Compensation Programs (OWCP). It is likely there were thousands more unreported injuries. The Postal Service can also be deadly. In 2019 (the last year data was publicly available), there were 15 postal employees killed on the job.

Our union contract guarantees you certain rights in regards to safety. Article 14 of our National Agreement states, "It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force." That means management must make sure your buildings are safe, machines are properly guarded, emergency exits are clear, electrical panels are not blocked, and that you are all trained in safety aspects to help you come to work each day and go home uninjured.

Making sure that Management adheres to Article 14 and their obligations to provide you a safe workplace

requires that everyone participates in the enforcement of Article 14. This starts with all of us being aware of our surroundings and workplace conditions. Is the floor free of tripping hazards? If you run a machine, is it properly guarded? Are the fire extinguishers easily accessible? Are all the emergency exits free of obstructions, allowing easy egress in an emergency? When you are required to work in hot conditions, is management providing necessary heat breaks and providing drinking water? Have you been taught proper lifting and ergonomic principles? These are all things to consider when you are thinking of management's obligation to safety.

Enforcement has to begin at the workroom level. Each employee has the right under our National Agreement and federal law to report unsafe and hazardous conditions—and you should. Reporting is the first step in making your workplace safe. The Postal Service has developed PS Form 1767 Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice for you to complete when you need to report a safety issue. Management is required to make this form readily available. In the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) Section 824.62, it states, "Supervisors must maintain a supply of PS Forms 1767 in the workplace in a manner that provides employees with both easy and (if desired) anonymous access." Providing you the form is not an option—it is mandated. Management is then required to respond to your report and correct the issue. If that doesn't happen a grievance can be filed directly at Step-2 of our grievance process.

Other reporting options are available. You could also file a report directly with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). You are protected under the law and by our contract when you report a safety hazard. The law allows you to do so without fear of discipline or fear of reprisal.

The APWU provides safety resources on our safety webpage at: www.apwu.org/safety-and-health. To learn more about safety, download PS-Form 1767, and download other safety fliers. We want every postal employee to know their rights and **Stand Up for Safe Jobs!** ■



Preventing Heat Illness at Work. Ways to Protect Yourself and Others!

While many APWU-represented employees work indoors, hazardous heat exposure can still occur at your offices. Extreme heat can affect our health whether we work indoors or out and can affect anyone, regardless of age or physical condition. This is especially true in offices where there may be a breakdown of an air conditioning unit, or where a unit may require maintenance.

Did you know that nearly 3 out of 4 fatalities related to heat illness occur during the first week on the job? Remember to ease into your work! According to OSHA, new and returning workers need to build tolerance to the heat, should take their breaks, and OSHA suggests following the 20 percent Rule. On the first day, work no more than 20 percent of the shift's duration at full intensity in the heat. Increase the duration of time at full intensity by no more than 20 percent a day until workers get used to working in the heat. And don't forget to hydrate by drinking at least one cup of water every 20 minutes when it's hot out.

The following symptoms are signs of a medical emergency: Abnormal thinking or behavior, slurred speech, seizures, and a loss of consciousness. If any of these symptoms occur, call 911 immediately. Cool the worker right away with water or ice, and stay with the worker until help arrives.

Watch out for other signs of heat illness, including: headache or nausea, weakness, or dizziness, as well as heavy sweating or hot/dry skin, or elevated body temperature. If you or a coworker experience any of these symptoms, try and move to a cooler area, drink some water, and remove any unnecessary clothing. Seek medical care if needed, and when in doubt call 911!

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has a heat index app that can be downloaded to access a simple heat calculator on your device. Remember that the Heat App provides only heat index (HI), not wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT), although it does also provide workload guidance.

If you believe heat issues at work are causing hazardous or unsafe conditions, do not hesitate to fill out and submit a PS-Form 1767 – “Report of Hazard, Unsafe, Condition or Practice.” This form is used to report hazards, unsafe conditions, work practice and, in the opinion of the APWU, hostile work environments. You can use this form to report anything that you think could jeopardize your health: dirty conditions, pests, mold, disturbed or broken building materials (tiles, insulation, etc.)

The form must be readily available and easily accessible to all workers on the workroom floor. You should not have to ask a supervisor for a form—they are not supposed to be locked up in a desk or stored where an employee cannot get them. The



form can be submitted anonymously, but if it is, you will not receive back a copy of the form that includes management's actions to abate the problem.

The ELM in Section 824.6 has very clear explanations of how the form is to be used with both supervisor and employee responsibilities listed.

Although a fillable PDF form is included on our website, we recommend that you utilize the 4-copy NCR form provided by the USPS in your workplace so that you can get your copy returned to you. By doing so, you can see what abate actions were either completed or ignored. Also, having a copy helps your union representative if they need to file a grievance on the safety issue that is not being addressed. ■

If you have questions about the form, need help completing one, or can't find one in your office, contact your local union representative. For more information on reporting hazardous and unsafe conditions, visit the APWU website at: www.apwu.org/1767 or text “SAFETY” TO 91990 for a link.

Q&A For Clerks on New Collective Bargaining Agreement



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

“IN UNION SOLIDARITY, THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES AS WE WORK TO SECURE BETTER CONTRACT LANGUAGE FOR THE EMPLOYEES WE REPRESENT.”

1. Question: Does a Postal Support Employee (PSE) hired in an Administrative Post Office (APO), that allows for the 24-month automatic conversion to career, maintain that right and benefit if they are involuntarily reassigned as a PSE to a Level 4 Remotely Managed Post Office (RMPO) in the same bid cluster?

Answer: Yes. However, upon conversion to a career (PTF), the newly converted employee will be reassigned to the APO. Conversely, if the PSE voluntarily elects to be reassigned to the RMPO, he/she will not be eligible for the 24-month automatic conversion while assigned to the Level 4 RMPO.

2. Question: If there is an opportunity for a new hire PSE in an APO, will current PSEs in the Level 4 RMPO(s) within the bid cluster (installation) have an opportunity to be reassigned to the APO before external hiring?

Answer: Yes. PSEs in the installation will be provided the opportunity, in their order on the PSE relative standing list, to be reassigned to the APO. Following reassignment to the APO, the PSE will be eligible for the 24-month automatic conversion.

3. Question: In order to meet the 24 hours per pay period guarantee for part-time flexible (PTF) employees, can a PTF be assigned outside his/her installation?

Answer: Yes, if necessary, after every effort is made to assign work within the installation. This does not prohibit an employee from volunteering to work outside the installation and/or the Postal Service providing transportation, in accordance with the PTF Clerks Working in Other Installations Agreement Questions and Answers and the Use of Privately Owned Vehicles MOU.

4. Question: Can a PTF be assigned two lunches, or a lunch and split shift in a single service day?

Answer: No.

5. Question: Must a PTF be guaranteed four hours of continuance/consecutive work?

Answer: To the extent practicable, the four hours should be consecutive. This not intended to supersede any local past practice or LMOU agreement.

6. Question: How is the PSE 24-month automatic conversion date determined?

Answer: The 24-month automatic conversion is triggered 2 years from the PSE's relative standing date in the installation. Example: A PSE hired on 4/28/2020, triggers the 24-month automatic conversion on 4/28/2022. The conversion to career would be the first day of the third full pay period after the 24-month requirement is met, in accordance with the Residual Vacancies – Clerk Craft MOU Questions and Answers #24, dated March 30, 2022.

7. Question: How are PSEs ranked on the relative standing list if hired on the same date in a bid cluster (installation)?

Answer: When PSEs are hired in an installation on the same day, their ranking on the relative standing list in the installation is based on their test score. When converted to career, the same ranking order will continue to apply to the career seniority list.

8. Question: What is the seniority date for eligible PSEs who were converted to career pursuant to the initial 24-month automatic conversion following the effective date of the 2021-2024 National Agreement?

Answer: April 23, 2022.

9. Question: Is the Postal Service required to schedule full-time clerks assigned to NTFT duty assignments a minimum of four-hours a day based on the 2021-2024 contractual provisions?

Answer: No. The four-hour daily work hour guarantee negotiated as part of the 2021-2024 National Agreement was specific to PTF employees. Exception: This does not waive any other applicable contractual provisions, agreements, past practice, and LMOU language (e.g., NTFT MOU, 2 Hours or Less of Custodial Work MOU, Article 37.3.A.1). The NTFT MOU requires before implementing any new non-traditional assignments in Function 4, the Local Union will have the opportunity to review, comment, make suggestions and propose alternatives. ■

National Staffing Advocate Training: DC



Assistant Director Terry Martinez, Director Idowu Balogun and Assistant Director Jason Treier

Washington DC: In an effort to continue providing local and state unions with maintenance craft staffing assistance, the APWU once again held formal national staffing advocate training in Washington, DC for four days. The main focus during training was on MS-1 (Building Side), eWHEP (Mechanized) and Custodial staffing enforcement. All staffing advocates worked hard and successfully completed the training and are available for assignments. Congratulations!

How to Request National Staffing Advocate Assistance

In order to receive assistance from our trained national staffing advocates, local/state presidents must submit a written request to maintstaff@apwu.org specifying which type of staffing package needs to be reviewed (i.e. custodial, MS-1, eWHEP). Current, approved complete staffing packages must be provided with the written request, as well as a copy of the previous, approved staffing package for comparative purposes. Other documents may be requested depending on the nature of the staffing advocate request.

A custodial staffing review is an important tool for protecting maintenance craft jobs and is determined by following the step-by-step process outlined in the MS-47 Handbook. The three basic forms contained in custodial staffing packages are the PS Forms 4869 (Building Inventory), 4839 (Frequency of Cleaning) and 4852 (Work Hour Analysis). Local/state unions should also be prepared to identify any additional work the custodians have historically performed and provide all evidence of this additional work to the national staffing advocates.

Mechanized staffing determines the number of non-custodial positions in an installation using a program called eWHEP (electronic Work Hour Estimator Program) and is principally used in mail processing plants, but also contains sections for field maintenance staffing, maintenance support clerk staffing and building equipment staffing (MS-1). Accurate 2-A, 2-B and 2-C inventories are critical to eWHEP staffing enforcement, as well as ensuring the local is receiving a sufficient number of operational tours on the eMARS (electronic Maintenance Activity Reporting System) staffing worksheets for all mail processing equipment within the installation.

If the local or state union president does not possess the current, approved staffing packages, then an information request must be submitted and, if necessary, pursued through the grievance-arbitration procedure. Without the initial foundation documents acquired at the local or state level, it makes it difficult to provide assistance. Local or state unions will also be responsible for working with the national staffing advocates and providing them with a list of the current, accurate inventory and any inaccuracies that need to be addressed.

More detailed information can be found at the Maintenance page on the APWU web site. For all of your staffing related concerns, contact your local President first, and then your Maintenance National Business Agent, and then you can contact us by calling Maintenance Assistant Director Jason Treier at (202) 842-4213 or email us at Maintstaff@apwu.org. ■



Back row, left to right: Dave Simmons, Jeff Stagner, Dana Coletti, Kenny Allen, Leonard Dennison, Jason Behrens, John Bishop. Front row, left to right: Chauncey Mccamey, Dawud Ali, Bob Andrews, Jason Treier, Janalee Banks, Tracy Petrekovich, Russ Seibert, John Hunt. Not pictured: Adam Souza, Bob Kovalik and Jonadam Costiloe

MVS UPDATE



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Kenneth Prinz

The Craft had a National Arbitration hearing on May 23-24 to determine if the USPS violated Section 2 of the 2010 Contract Motor Vehicle Craft Jobs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by failing to convert 600 HCR routes to PVS routes. The Postal Service claims the MOU requires 600 duty assignments to be converted to bargaining unit positions. The Union's position is that the MOU requires the Postal Service to convert a minimum of 600 HCR routes to PVS, which could be a larger number of duty assignments per route in the Motor Vehicle Craft.

Because of the many monetary concessions and work rule sacrifices made by the Union and its members in the 2010 contract, when the USPS was experiencing one of the most challenging times in their history, the question remains: can the USPS be trusted to live up to their negotiations and agreements?

THE POSTAL SERVICE WILL SUSPEND THE BENCH TEST (HANDS ON PERFORMANCE TEST) FOR NEW HIRES, FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE TECHNICIAN POSITION, AND REVIEW OTHER VMF JOBS AS THEY UPDATE THESE POSITIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.

There have been disputes filed by each craft that negotiated Craft Jobs MOU's during the 2010 Contract negotiations, with the USPS agreeing in exchange for financial relief, that work would be brought into the bargaining unit. The 2010 Contract and the deteriorating trust between the parties caused the next two successor agreements to be decided by an interest arbitrator instead of a negotiated agreement. Future updates will be provided on the status of this issue.

The MVS Division has recently held Headquarter Labor-Management meetings with Fleet Management. Some of the discussions have included VMF staffing, MVS Training Initiative MOU, and local management's authority to purchase the tools and equipment to make timely repairs in-house.

During the April meeting, the Postal Service informed the Union about their World Class VMF Program. The Union was invited to South Bend, Indiana VMF the week

of May 23rd. The Union assigned a committee led by NBA Eastern Region Garrett Langley, William Drew, Boston VMF, Art King San Bernadino VMF, and Cedric Mingas Detroit VMF. The program consists of a commitment by postal management to properly staff the VMF's, increase training, supply necessary tools and equipment, and improve the work environment, at VMF's. The Union submitted a request for additional information about the World Class VMF.

Suspension of Bench Test

The Postal Service will suspend the Bench Test (hands on performance test) for new hires, for the Automotive Technician position, and review other VMF jobs as they update these positions for the 21st century. The Union has long encouraged the USPS to update the bench test but the USPS declined to do so as long as the Long Life Vehicles, (LLV's) were part of the Postal fleet.

The Union received notice about a Pilot Program to log vehicle repair tags electronically in the Retail and Delivery Application Reports (RADAR).

The RADAR program is an effort to improve the efficiency for reporting repair tags. The program was initiated in the San Diego, California VMF.

The Postal Service notified the APWU that they will be exercising the contract option and purchasing 447 additional Peterbilt's Cargo Vans. Modifications were made from the cargo vans previously purchased. The APWU will participate in the First Article Testing (FAT) and inspection.

The Postal Service has informed the APWU of their plans to conduct a pilot regarding the use of sensors installed on Postal Service vehicles to improve visibility for Postal customers and internal data accuracy and service measurement throughout the Postal Service network.

The sensor is a device which can determine if mail is in the vehicle or trailer. It can provide engine diagnostics, such as idle times, reduce fuel consumption, provide real-time locations and accurate ETAs. The sensors will be installed in various vehicles in the PVS fleet. The Pilot is scheduled to last until the end of 2022.

Have a safe summer, see you at the National Convention, "Keep on Trucking". ■



Tiffany Foster, Northeast Regional Coordinator

What is There to Hide?

In May 2022, the USPS Atlantic and Southern Area notified the Regional Union Leadership and the Management Associations that Postal Service HQ was disbanding the HQ COVID Command Team. The disbandment based on the Atlantic and Southern Area would discontinue the district's daily reporting of positive COVID-19 cases.

Does Management know something about the COVID pandemic that we don't? COVID has not gone away. We are still living with it and trying to stay safe and protect our members and families.

Initially, the Atlantic Area stated the disbandment would eliminate the stand-up talks and MMO 031-20 cleaning when a positive COVID-19 case was reported.

After our investigation, the regional APWU found that the Atlantic Area was incorrect and retracted its previous position.

Management is still required to give stand-up talks and do the MMO cleaning when a positive COVID-19 case is reported in the office.

Another position taken by the Atlantic and Southern Area Leadership is that the disbandment eliminated the tracking of COVID-19 cases. Well, that can't be true.

Below are the policies still in effect:

- Close Contact Tracing
- Return to Work Process
- Social Distancing
- Notice of Positive Case Talk
- Training Room Size Limitations

Based on the Postal Service's policy, employees are still required to report positive COVID-19 tests to their supervisor. The Occupational Health Nurse Administrator (OHNA) is still doing contact tracing, per postal policy. Doesn't this indicate that Management is still tracking and recording positive COVID cases? If not, why is there a need for the employee to report a positive test to the supervisor?

Why don't they want the Union to know when a positive COVID case is reported? What is there to hide?

We need your help.

Article 14 states it is Management's responsibility to provide safe working conditions, and it is the Union's re-

sponsibility to cooperate with and assist Management in its efforts to fulfill this responsibility.

Due to the Atlantic and Southern Areas ceasing to provide the daily district COVID reports to the Union, it prevents us from verifying and ensuring that you received the stand-up talk about a positive COVID case in your workplace and that the MMO cleaning was done.

If a positive COVID case is reported in your office, please get in touch with your steward. Let them know about the positive case reported so they can verify that Management gave the stand-up talk and followed the MMO cleaning procedures.

1767- the unused enforcer

PS Form 1767 is an underused postal form.

PS Form 1767 is used to report unsafe, hazardous work conditions and practices. This form can also be used to report abusive supervisors, managers and a hostile work environment.

In accordance with Article 14, this form must be readily available in the workplace so employees can, if they choose, fill them out while remaining anonymous.

We are seeing a rise in the abusive treatment toward the employees from supervisors and managers.

What can you do? Write statements, fill out 1767s, and request a steward are some of the things that you can do to report, document, and notify Management about your work condition.

If faced with a hostile work environment or abusive supervisor or manager, it is critical to document what took place, the date and time, and record the name(s) of witnesses, if there were any.

It is essential that your steward is provided with this information. It allows them to initiate an investigation and file a grievance, if one exists, in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement.

The struggle continues as we continue to fight.

My fellow Coordinators, Omar Gonzalez, Western Region, Sharyn Stone, Central Region, Ken Beasley, Southern Region, AJ Jones, Eastern Region, and myself are always ready to get in good trouble. ■

Grassroots Organizing and Labor Are Sweeping the Nation

A new wave of grassroots labor uprisings is currently sweeping the nation, with workers seeking to form unions in their shops and warehouses across the country at the highest rate in over a decade, mirroring trends of labor activism from the 1960s and 70s.

Workers and newly established organizers at major food and retail chains such as Starbucks, Amazon, REI, and Apple are among those leading this charge - **pushing for higher wages, better working conditions, improved benefits, and an improved work-life balance.**

On April 1st, over 2,500 workers at the Amazon warehouse in Staten Island, NY known as JFK8 voted to become the first ever labor union for Amazon workers in the United States. The Amazon Labor Union (ALU) is led by interim President Christian Smalls, who was fired in early 2020 for organizing a walk-out due to a lack of Covid-19 safety measures. There are several other Amazon union-drives currently in the works.

As later update of June 29, workers at Starbucks retail coffee shops had filed petitions for union elections at

has fired more than 20 labor leaders employed at their shops across the US in recent months.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a major catalyst for this recent surge of activism. Many workers in various industries were thrust to the front lines, called “essential employees,” only to be faced with staffing shortages, forced overtime, and a lack of safety and health precautions (or enforcement of existing policies).

Yet, many “essential, front-line” employees only receive an unlivable minimum wage and lack basic worker protections. Not only were they short-staffed and over-worked, but employees in the food and retail industry were also some of the most vulnerable to lay-offs and resulting loss of benefits, as many restaurants and businesses shuttered throughout the last two years.

Michelle Eisen, a barista at the first unionized Starbucks located in Buffalo, NY said that “we were tired and we were scared... we were feeling incredibly undervalued and unappreciated...we are being called ‘essential workers’ and we are putting our health and safety at risk to work through this pandemic.... and we’re hearing our CEO on CNN and other financial shows announce these record-breaking profits... and I know that this money is coming from my labor and my coworkers’ labor. I’ve got co-workers who are crying in the back room because they don’t know if they’re going to be able to pay their rent and put groceries in their fridge that week.”



On March 2nd, employees of the REI store in the SoHo district of New York City voted decisively in favor of forming the company's first Union, with 86 percent of the store's 102 employees voting to join the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

303 stores in 35 states and currently have established more than 174 unionized Starbucks in 30 states, a Buffalo, NY location the first location to vote in favor of unionizing just last December, 2021.

The Starbucks organizing campaign is a leading example, and a driving force of this new wave of labor organizing. Unfortunately, Starbucks

Uprisings

"...we are being called 'essential workers' and we are putting our health and safety at risk to work through this pandemic...and we're hearing our CEO on CNN and other financial shows announce these record-breaking profits..."

While workers continue to struggle to get by, corporate executives amassed even more wealth during the pandemic. Multi-billion-dollar corporations have raked in record profits during the pandemic. A study by The Brookings Institution analyzed how 22 leading companies shared their profits and financial gains with shareholders and workers between January 2020 and October 2021. The comparison found that shareholders gained \$1.5 trillion in wealth during that period while their 7 million workers received only \$27 million in additional pay (which is less than 2 percent of that gained by the shareholders). Amazon shareholders' gains were 177 times greater than the pay given to its 1 million frontline workers.

While billionaires and corporations were raking in record profits off the backs of their employees, workers began to realize their worth and started standing together to demand more. Grassroots organizers from within these companies began to fight for their collective bargaining rights. Employers often engage in aggressive union-busting activities during union organizing campaign drives. And, if an organizing drive is successful, many employers simply and significantly delay the implementation of collective bargaining.

According to data provided by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the rate of union election petitions filed has increased by 57 percent in just the first six months of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. While the NLRB is stepping up enforcement of illegal union busting, the agency is hamstrung by

budget constraints. NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo, stated "Right now there is a surge in labor activity nationwide, with workers organizing and filing petitions for more union elections than they have in the last ten years. This has caused a significant increase in the NLRB's caseload, and the Agency urgently needs more staff and resources to effectively comply with our Congressional mandate."

However, the NLRB's budget has remained unchanged for the past nine years, receiving the same Congressionally appropriated budget of \$274.2 million in annual funding, despite rising costs and record levels of inflation. Adjusted for inflation, the current NLRB budget has sustained a 25 percent decrease compared to where it stood a decade ago.

In March, President Biden requested a 16 percent increase in funding for the NLRB in his FY 2023 budget, which if implemented would total \$319.4 million annually.

The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) in 2021 would help shore up the funding shortfalls and would deter employers from engaging in



Unfair Labor Practices (ULPs) from occurring in the first place.

Some of the provisions included in the PRO Act would: protect employees from retaliatory firings for seeking to join or organize a labor union, make it illegal for companies to hold mandatory union-busting meetings to discourage successful organizing campaigns, and enable the NLRB to impose monetary fines on employers for labor law violations (with increased fines for repeat offenses), as well as providing monetary compensation to employees affected by illegal union-busting violations.

It seems like there is another news story daily about groups rising-up and organizing themselves for their collective rights and benefits. This new wave of grassroots organizing is encouraging for all in the working class!

For more information on the PRO Act, please visit: <https://apwu.org/protecting-union-rights>. ■



LABOR NEWS

STARBUCKS ORGANIZING UPDATE/ UNION ORGANIZING ROUND-UP:

The **Starbucks** organizing campaign has been brewing up a storm since our last edition! As of June 27, workers at 302 stores in 35 states have filed petitions with the NLRB to join a union. Additionally, 171 Starbucks stores in 30 states have already won their union elections to join the Starbucks Workers United union, based in Buffalo, NY.

Following in the footsteps of successful new organizing campaigns, workers at a Hadley, MA **Trader Joe's** grocery store location, which employs approximately 85 workers, filed a petition on June 7, 2022 to create the company's first union. Employee and campaign lead, Maeg Yosef, cited health and safety concerns, as well as cuts to benefits as their main motivation for organizing. The workers have created an independent union, Trader Joes United, with support of over 50 percent of the workers at the store.

Meanwhile, **Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)** workers in Berkley, CA are seeking union representation with the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) following the successful Manhattan, NY campaign where 85 percent of REI workers voted in favor of unionizing their store, which was the first REI store to do so.

Workers at an **Apple Store** location in Towson, MD voted by more than a two-thirds majority on June 18, 2022 to become the first unionized Apple Store in the United States. According to a Reuters report, Apple has accepted the store's vote and is allegedly ready to bargain in good faith.

JUST IN – Employees at the Lyndhurst, NJ location of the **Medieval Times** have petitioned to form the Medieval Times Performers United (MT United), and have affiliated themselves with the American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA). They are joining together to create a "fairer, safer, and more enjoyable workplace. With a supermajority of support, we are excited to be forming our union with the AGVA."



Video Game Workers Press Start on Union Drive

On May 23, 2022, workers in Wisconsin at the Raven Software company – a division of the larger Activision Blizzard video game company – voted 19 to 3 in favor of unionizing their group of quality assurance video game testers. Activision is based in Santa Monica, CA and employs approximately 10,000 workers.

In 2021, the California Department of Fair Employment sued Activision after a two-year investigation into accusations of workplace harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. Microsoft subsequently purchased the company for nearly \$69 billion. Since the acquisition, Microsoft

stated that it would respect the right of the workers to unionize, and said that it would not interfere in the unionization efforts.

In June, the CWA and Microsoft announced a "historic labor neutrality agreement" allowing workers at Activision Blizzard to "freely and fairly make a choice about union representation." CWA President Chris Shelton stated: "This agreement provides a pathway for Activision Blizzard workers to exercise their democratic rights to organize and collectively bargain after the close of the Microsoft Acquisition and establishes a high road framework for employers in the games industry." ■

Chipotle Walk-out and Chain's first Union Election:

Workers at a Chipotle Mexican Grill location in Augusta, ME have filed a petition for the chain's first ever union election, shortly after staging a mid-day walkout-out, citing safety concerns related to short-staffing and training. On the day of the walkout, worker Brandi McNease stated that she returned from an appointment and found only two food prep workers on site, when there should be six, and that one co-worker was visibly suffering from a hernia. The line was out the door while trash and dirty dishes were piling up. She and other workers agreed to lock the doors, serve the remaining customers, and then close. The store remained closed the following day, as a manager called out sick and workers agreed to return but not open until properly staffed.

Ten members of the staff sent a letter to the Chipotle national office expressing their concerns about persistent understaffing and lack of proper training. They wrote, "Both of these are not only unreasonable demands, but they put the crew and community at risk." The letter further states that, "Prep work such as dicing and slicing vegetables is done in the kitchen during our busy times out of necessity, creating a hazard for crew members ... We work around equipment that could seriously hurt us if a mistake is made.... Food is left on the steam table for too long ... potentially compromising food safety."

On June 22, 2022 the workers who wanted to unionize formed an independent group, which they named Chipotle United.



115,000 British postal workers vote on joining UK strike wave

115,000 postal workers in the UK are prepared to strike after the country's privatized postal company, Royal Mail, attempted to impose a pay-cut on the workforce. They would join 1,500 retail clerks, whose jobs are still in the public sector, in taking strike action over pay.

As *The American Postal Worker* goes to press, the Communications Workers Union (CWU) was conducting a mail-in strike authorization ballot of Royal Mail workers. Union members rallied at a thousand work sites across the country to show the union's overwhelming support for a "yes" vote.

Management's attempt to impose a pay-cut stood in stark contrast with Royal Mail's \$1 billion in corporate profit and the \$500 million it paid out to shareholders last year.

The union's General Secretary, Dave Ward, said, "Our members have been treated in a completely undignified manner by the people they make incredible profits for."

The postal workers join 40,000 telecommunications workers, also represented by CWU, who are balloting for strike action. Transportation workers recently brought the country's railway network to a halt in a three-day strike, with more action scheduled if bargaining is not productive. The strike enjoyed majority support with a British public that is suffering the effects of rising prices. ■

Santa Clara Adjunct Professors Win Their Union

Adjunct faculty members from the Santa Clara University, a private Jesuit university in the Silicon Valley region of California, recently voted 245 to 93 in favor of forming a union affiliated with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), after a five-year campaign constrained by the fact that the NLRB doesn't have jurisdiction over religious institutions.

One of the lead organizers, Maggie Levantovskaya, who is a lecturer in the English Department, stated that "my colleagues and I didn't know if we'd ever get to have a union election. Things were just really not promising at that moment. That's because we couldn't file for our election through the NLRB." According to Levantovskaya, there was only a short window of opportunity to unionize religious institutions, a result of the Pacific Lutheran NLRB Decision in 2014.

However, Levantovskaya said that, "as soon as Trump came into office and started appointing agents to various government organizations, we got the memo from the union that it just wasn't safe to go through the NLRB, that we could potentially set a new precedent that would make it hard for other religious institutions to unionize." She further stated that "Any employer can voluntarily recognize you through something like a card check. No employer needs to have you go through the NLRB, actually. No employer needs to fight unions. So, we made a great effort to try to work with our administration on an election outside the NLRB."

On June 21, 2022 the Board finally confirmed the vote in a tally taken which means there is now a bargaining unit of 544 full-time contingent faculty members and lecturers at the Santa Clara University.





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.

"One phrase I do grow tired of is 'What has the union done for me?' I could go on and on when I hear this. How about breaks, child labor laws, age discrimination laws, the right to collective bargaining,...eight hour workday, the minimum wage, health and safety rules, holiday pay, military leave, paid vacations, overtime pay with penalty pay, paid sick leave...and so much more. But some will still respond 'That stuff's been around forever, I mean what has the union done for me lately?' OK, well that stuff came from somewhere. The union is on the frontline battling for you every day! Maybe you don't see it because you aren't involved. A better question might be 'What have you done for the union lately?' Everyone can't be a steward or run for office, that's understood but everyone can and should be involved. Come to your union meetings! We are always looking for volunteers to help at the union hall. Write statements when you see contractual violations at work. Write an article for this publication. You might respond with 'I pay dues, isn't that enough?' Not really, we all pay dues. Paying dues isn't an insurance policy where you pay your premium and then collect when something happens to you. It takes volunteers; every single person currently working for the union volunteered. No steward or officer is under an obligation to perform these duties. Dues are more like a gym membership. If you pay your fees each month but never show up and don't put in the work, then I doubt you will see any of the results you anticipated when you first joined the gym."

– Doug Gaines, Tucson (AZ) Area Local Vice President, *The Pulse*

"As a person that has been in the postal service since 1986, I've been a proud union member from day one and now I'm nearing retirement. I'm so blessed to know that I can look forward to a nice pension. Many private industry nonunion companies don't offer pensions to their employees. With all the imperfections of the union, we're lucky to have a union that fought hard to ensure the many benefits we enjoy. A union that has always been steadfast on the mission of fighting for decent wages, health insurance, retirement benefits, job security and more. Whatever you think of the union, 'we came out on top.' I'm trusting the younger employees don't ever take for granted the importance of being a union member and how crucial it is to actively support the union by participation and attending union meetings. When we unite in numbers our fight is stronger and the benefits are greater."

– Shelia R. Smith
Montgomery County Area Local (MD)
Legislative/Industrial Relations Director
The MCAL Journal

"If a nonmember wants to voice their opinion to you, tell them you can get them a form to fill out. It's called the 1187 and it's what you fill out to become a member. Until then, they don't get to have an opinion. Period. WE as union members determine OUR success or failure of our union. WE make our local and union stronger by our members being involved on committees, going to our general membership meetings, stepping up and going to conferences and conventions and being union stewards. By being more involved YOU make this local and union stronger. The strength of our union comes from the loyalty and devotion of its members and that's YOU!"

– Kimberly Maurer
Twin Cities Postal Data Center Local (Eagan, MN)
The Data Feedback



Judy Beard, Director

Legislative Priorities and the Fight Ahead!

Service Standards/Appropriations

Returning USPS to its 2012 Service Standards remains a top priority of the APWU. In the 117th Congress, both the House and the Senate held hearings on USPS's declining service standards and invited APWU members to testify on the importance of returning USPS to its 2012 standards.

Your Legislative and Political Department continues to meet with lawmakers on the importance of preserving a fast, reliable, and accessible post office. We fought for, and won, language in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022* which was signed into law by President Biden on March 15, 2022. The language requires the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) to conduct a study that investigates and examines the benefits for USPS to return to its 2012 standards. This language has laid the groundwork for future fights to restore the speed of mail service that the American public deserves.

We will keep the APWU membership apprised of the results of this study, which must be completed within a year.

WEP/GPO Repeal

APWU continues our fight to repeal the *Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset*. This law has robbed many of our CSRS retirees of their rightful Social Security earnings. There are several bills under consideration that would repeal WEP and GPO. President Dimondstein and I have met with lawmakers who have introduced some of the legislation and they have assured us that the fight to repeal is far from over and that support to take action is bipartisan. We are committed to build more support by working with other affected unions and organizations whose members are affected.

Voting by Mail Our Work Continues!

At the recent National AFL-CIO convention which took place in Philadelphia June 12-15, I had the privilege of participating on a two-person panel, along with Lori Augino, Executive Director of the National Vote at Home Institute that focused on the importance of voting by mail. I highlighted the work done by postal workers during the 2020 election to process 65 million ballots (almost double the number in 2016) as well as the success of the national election task force established between the USPS and the postal unions. That work

was so valuable to our country that we were able to achieve a continuation of the Task Force in our recent collective bargaining agreement. The work our members did during the 2020 election is a prime example of democracy in action. The role postal workers play in the electoral process has been recognized all across the labor movement and throughout our communities. We will continue to work with our partners at the National Vote at Home Institute to advocate for national vote by mail.



2022 Midterm Elections

We are quickly approaching what may prove to be one of the most consequential elections for the labor movement. As voters go to the polls in November to cast their ballots, they will be making the decision of whether or not to elect lawmakers who stand with the working people of the country. The APWU will work to not only ensure pro-labor candidates are elected but that ballot initiatives and referendums that would enhance the lives of working people are passed. We encourage all of our members to get involved with voter engagement and empower people to exercise their right to vote. ■

National Convention - Legislative Events

**Preparing for the Upcoming Midterm Elections
- Thursday, August 18
from 8-9:15 AM.**

APWU Attendees at the upcoming national convention will have the opportunity to attend an informative and engaging session on the upcoming Midterm Election. Join us for a discussion on what is at stake and how to get involved.



Anna Smith, Director

Don't Stop Building Union Power!

As I write this article, we have just hit the target of recruiting 5,000 new members for our *Building Union Power* organizing drive.

I want to thank every member and officer who made *Building Union Power* a success. Remember that WE are the union. We cannot grow without everyone pitching in.

Each time we welcome someone into our union family and get them active, it makes us stronger. Speaking up with one voice makes us more powerful locally and nationally.

Let's keep up the momentum

Building Union Power was the start of our work to grow our membership, not the end. Let's keep up the work recruiting new employees and talking with non-members about why they should join us.

We can all learn and improve our organizing, so here are a few practical tips for you.

1. Map your workplace

A great way to start out a campaign is to map your workplace. Every local president has a list of non-members. That's the place to start. Map out their work locations and their tours. Plan who will talk to them. Who are their friends? That's who they will likely to listen to.

Once you know where and when the non-members are working, it's time to do assessments. I use a 1-4 scale to help figure out who to talk to first and how.

Organizers usually give a 1 to a really hot contact – someone who is very supportive and just needs a chance to sign up. A 2 is someone who is basically supportive but needs a conversation to close the deal.

A 3 is undecided. Maybe no one asked them to join; perhaps they're not anti-union but they had a bad experience; maybe they just don't know what they think. Lastly a 4 is anti-union.

Using an assessment scale helps you focus your energy on the most important targets. You can quickly move through the 1s and 2s. Then work on the 3s with an organizing conversation. Talk to your 4s, but don't waste

too much time.

2. Have an organizing conversation

The aim of an organizing conversation is to help the non-member see why the union is the solution to their workplace problems.

Ask them about a workplace issue. Reflect back what they are saying. Let them know it doesn't have to be that way.

The next step in the conversation is identifying who caused the problem. For example, if management is causing a hostile work environment, name it!

Show how the union is the solution! It's the only way we ever got better pay, our benefits and our rights in the workplace. How can we use our collective power in the union to solve their problems?

Lastly, call the question! Assume agreement and go ahead! "If we're going to solve that problem, we need everyone to speak up as part of the union, right?" "Right!" "So, will you join APWU now?"

3. Make building union power a part of your local's work

There's a lot for us to do. If it's not someone's responsibility, it won't get done. Do you have a local officer in charge of the organizing work? Do you get membership reports at union meetings? If you don't make it a priority, it's probably not happening.

4. Don't be afraid to ask for help

Whether you're a member who wants your local to do more or a local officer, steward or activist who needs support to make it happen, you can *always* ask for help.

There are resources available for you at apwu.org/organization. Start with your local officers. Then your NBAs and the Organization Department can help make your local's union-building work a success.

This is everyone's job

It's up to all of us to keep the momentum up. 5,000 new members is just the start. Let's work together to build a stronger union – it's how we keep fighting for good jobs now and far into the future. ■



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Mental Health Conditions and the FMLA

The text in this article is from the U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet # 280: Mental Health Conditions and the FMLA.

In May of this year, the Department of Labor updated the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to address mental health conditions. FMLA requires the employer to: Provide 12 work weeks of FMLA leave each year; continue an employee's group health benefits, and restore the employee to the same or an identical position at the end of the leave period. FMLA leave is available to eligible employees if they have worked for the USPS at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months before the leave is taken, and work at a location where the employer employs 50 or more employees within 75 miles. The USPS requires an employee to submit certification from a health care provider to support the employee's need for FMLA leave.

FMLA REQUIRES THE EMPLOYER TO: PROVIDE 12 WORK WEEKS OF FMLA LEAVE EACH YEAR; CONTINUE AN EMPLOYEE'S GROUP HEALTH BENEFITS, AND RESTORE THE EMPLOYEE TO THE SAME OR AN IDENTICAL POSITION AT THE END OF THE LEAVE PERIOD.

Leave for Mental Health Conditions under the FMLA

FMLA may be taken for an employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform their essential job duties, or to care for a spouse, child, or parent because of a serious health condition. This includes: Conditions that incapacitate an individual for more than three consecutive days and require ongoing medical treatment, either multiple appointments with a health care provider, including a psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, or clinical social worker, or a single appointment and follow-up care (e.g., prescription medication, outpatient rehabilitation counseling, or behavioral

therapy); and Chronic conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, or dissociative disorders) that cause occasional periods when an individual is incapacitated and require treatment by a health care provider at least twice a year.

FMLA and Disability

FMLA uses the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to define disability. According to the EEOC, conditions include major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and schizophrenia. Periodically conditions are considered disabilities if the condition would substantially limit a major life activity when active.

Military Caregiver Leave for Mental Health Conditions

FMLA provides up to 26 work weeks of military caregiver leave in a 12-month period to care for a covered service member and veterans with a serious injury or illness. Eligible employees may be the spouse, child, parent, or next of kin of the service member. Current service members serious injury or illness either incurred in the line of duty that made the service member medically unfit to perform the duties of their office, grade, rank, or rating or may also result from the aggravation of a condition that existed before the member began service.

For a veteran, a serious injury or illness is one that made the veteran medically unfit to perform their duties, or an injury or illness that qualifies the veteran for certain benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs or substantially reduces the veteran's ability to work. This includes injuries or illnesses that were incurred or aggravated during military service but that did not manifest until after the veteran left active duty. An employer may require that a request for military caregiver leave be supported by a certification.

For additional information, go to the apwu website at www.awpw.org, see Our Union in blue and go to Departments, click on Industrial Relations, stroll down to Load More and click on to Family and Medical Leave Information, go down to A Guide to the Family & Medical Leave Act [PDF] download the booklet and the FMLA Forms. ■



Daleo Freeman, Director

“Moral March” Unites Labor & Civil Rights Movements

On June 18th, just before the Juneteenth holiday, The Poor People’s Campaign held the “Mass Poor People’s and Low-Wage Workers’ Assembly and Moral March on Washington.” The Moral March brought thousands of people together to draw attention to the many problems facing working class people in this country.

I was proud to take part in the march alongside President Dimondstein and other union activists. We were inspired by the energy of the event and the enthusiasm the attendees, of many different backgrounds, shared for building a better country together.

I’M PROUD THAT APWU HAS BEEN A PART OF THIS MOVEMENT FOR YEARS.

The focus of the March was broad. From lack of health-care, to poor wages, from the attack on our democratic rights, to rising white supremacy, the perils of the climate emergency— all of these issues disproportionately affect poor and working-class people. While the array of issues being highlighted could easily feel dizzying, underneath it all was a challenge for working people, and our union, on how to address those issues and build a better country. So how do we do it?

Reverend Dr. William Barber, the leader of the Poor People’s Campaign, draws inspiration from the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King. Like the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Dr. Barber seeks to build a broad movement of religious organizations, civil rights organization, labor unions and other community leaders. Like Rev. Barber, I believe it’s going to take all of us, and postal workers have a special role to play.

I’m proud that APWU has been a part of this movement for years. But the march drove home that we can do more to deepen our ties with the Poor People’s Campaign and other similar movements across the country. That, of course, is part of the work of the Human Relations Department. But let it also be a call to action to you, the APWU member, to be involved in the struggle

to build a better country, grow power for working people, and lift all of us.

That work can start by making our union stronger, as we’ve called for all of us to do in the recent *Building Union Power* organizing drive. Or it can start by attending a meeting a union meeting or participating in your Central Labor Council or State Federation. But it should also be about building our ties with other organizations, like attending an NAACP event or participating in a civil rights struggle in your hometown. Show up, not as an individual, but as an APWU member, seeking to join arms for a cause that’s much bigger than yourself. Dr. King said in 1965, “The two most dynamic movements that reshaped the nation...are the labor movement and the civil rights movements. Our combined strength is potentially enormous.” Let’s honor those words by deepening our ties to the broader movement and each of us playing our part.

For more information on the Poor People’s Campaign, or to connect with a local chapter near you, visit poorpeoplescampaign.org. ■

File OWCP Claims with ECOMP!

The Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs at the Department of Labor has created an online portal to facilitate workers’ claims. It is called the Employees’ Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP). CA-1 claims for COVID-19 are also accessible through the ECOMP program. While it is not mandatory to file using the ECOMP program, we would like to encourage all our members to use this system when filing a claim for injury. For more information on ECOMP, visit, apwu.org/ecomp.

Toxic Burn Pit Exposure Bill



On Thursday June 16, 2022, the U.S. Senate passed a landmark burn pits bill, bringing millions of veterans, who are dealing with a range of issues resulting from toxic exposure during their military service, one step closer to getting healthcare access and benefits. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has openly stated it is the most significant piece of veterans' legislation in history.

The bill is an amended version of the Honoring Our PACT Act that passed the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year. A wide bipartisan majority in the Senate approved the long-awaited bill by a vote of 84-14.

An estimated 3.5 million veterans have been exposed to burn pits – massive fires used in war zones to incinerate trash, ranging from plastic bottles to computers to Humvees, that emanated hazardous particles in their billowing soot – along with other airborne hazards while serving.

Currently, veterans must prove to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that their disease is linked to their time in uniform, a difficult task amid scant Defense Department records, allowing the VA to deny most claims under arguments that there is not enough evidence linking the diseases to military service.

The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act bill is named in honor of the late SFC Heath Robinson who died at the age of 39 in May 2020 from a rare lung cancer caused by breathing in toxic fumes from burn pits while serving in Iraq as a member of the Ohio National Guard.

Under the legislation, 23 respiratory illnesses, cancers, and other airborne hazards will now be presumptively linked to a veterans' exposure to burn pits while on deployment. The bill effectively unlocks benefits from VA for former service members who have struggled with those ailments for years.

This means service men and women who have returned home from serving their country and developed one of

these conditions will be given automatic access to healthcare and disability benefits.

In addition to creating a presumed connection to military service for the 23 diseases and other conditions that the PACT Act covers, the bipartisan compromise negotiated by the leaders of the Senate Veteran's Affairs Committee would create a framework for connecting future ailments to toxic exposure. It would also broaden coverage for Vietnam-era veterans exposed to Agent Orange by adding Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Guam, American Samoa and Johnston Atoll to the list of places where veterans were exposed to chemical defoliant, and so are eligible for benefits.

According to a new estimate from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the bill to grant these benefits to millions of veterans exposed to toxins during their military service could cost \$278.5 billion over a decade.

One major difference between the Senate bill and the original bill, H.R. 3967, which previously passed the House 256-174, is that the Senate's version would take longer to phase-in some of the benefits and presumptive illnesses, pushing some costs outside the 10-year window covered in the CBO's estimate.

Additionally, the Senate bill would authorize the VA to lease 31 new medical centers across the country.

The bill now goes back to the House for a vote before it can be signed into law by President Joe Biden, who has promised to sign the bill "immediately" after it hits his desk.

The White House welcomed the advancement of the bill, calling it a "critical step towards delivering health care and benefits to veterans and survivors impacted by toxic exposures... America's veterans are the best of us. Delivering for our veterans is a key pillar of the Unity Agenda the President outlined at the State of the Union – because we can all unite around supporting veterans who have served our nation." ■

Source(s): Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
Military.com

The PSRA and Postal Retirees



Nancy Olumekor, Director

This time of the year we recognize the anniversary of Medicare, signed into law in July 1965 and Social Security, created in August 1935.

We celebrated the April 6 passage of the 2022 *Postal Service Reform Act* (PSRA) after over 15 years of legislative activism, and we achieved this legislative success by working together for the good of all workers, retirees, and the public. While signing the Bill into law, President Biden said “Today, we enshrine in law our recognition that the Postal Service is fundamental.”

The PSRA addresses the finances and operations of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). This bill repeals the requirement that the USPS annually prepay future retirement health benefits, which created a liability for USPS. It also requires the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish the Postal Service Health Benefits Program (PSHBP) within the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), under which OPM may contract with carriers to offer health benefits plans for USPS employees and retirees. In addition, the bill also provides for coordinated enrollment of retirees under this program and Medicare.

Effective January 1, 2025 current postal employees who become Medicare eligible as retirees, will enroll in Medicare. Medicare then becomes their primary insurance and their postal-only FEHBP plan becomes their secondary insurance; these changes are projected to save the USPS nearly \$50 billion over the next decade. All postal workers and postal retirees will be able to keep their current FEHBP and participate in the annual FEHBP open season.

Beginning April 1, 2024, during a six (6) month special enrollment period, those current postal retirees age 65 and over with Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP) who did not join Medicare Part B will be able to join Medicare B and have the “late enrollment” penalty waived. These changes are expected to save postal retirees money by eliminating out-of-pocket medical expenses and by mitigating future premium increases. In coordination with OPM, and no later than 18 months after enactment (April 2022), the USPS must establish a Health Benefits Education Program to notify and provide information about the PSHBP to annuitants and employees as well as respond to any inquiries.

The PSRA also ensures that the USPS will continue to provide six-day-delivery long into the future, and the USPS can provide certain nonpostal products and services, that reasonably contribute to the costs of the USPS and meet other specified criteria, by entering into agreements with state, local, or tribal governments in other areas.

Celebrate The Anniversary of Social Security

Tell Congress to Pass the “Social Security Fairness Act” now, during the 117th Congress, before the end of 2022! *The Social Security Fairness Act* repeals the Windfall Elimination Provisions (WEP) enacted by Congress in 1983 and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) enacted in 1977. The WEP and GPO continue to adversely impact millions of retired federal, state, and local public servants who are not reaping the full retirement benefits that they paid for during their working life. These retirees qualify for Social Security benefits by working and paying the required rate into Social Security for least ten (10) years and they also receive a federal or state pension from other employment that did not pay into Social Security. Unfortunately, these retirees are denied an equitable social security benefit for their contributions because WEP and GPO greatly reduces their social security benefits.

Contact your representative on Capitol Hill - write letters or postcards, and call 1-202-224-3121 or use the APWU line 1-844-402-1001, to speak to your congressional representatives. Tell Congress that retirees deserve fair returns on their investment in the Social Security system.

Ask your congressional representatives to co-sponsor these and move these Bills to the Floor in order to vote for passage of H.R. 82 in the House and S.1302 in the Senate.

Remind your congressional representatives that older Americans also vote – there is power in our vote. ■

Join APWU Retirees Department online at Retirees Department webpage. Dues are \$3.00 monthly.

Print your membership card.

Retirement questions contact us by email at RetireeQandA@apwu.org.

Send all other inquiries for the Retirees Department to Retiree2@apwu.org.



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

COVID-19 At-Home Tests

You've probably heard of COVID-19 at-home tests but what are they exactly, when are you supposed to use them, and what do the test results mean?

An at-home over-the-counter (OTC) test is a rapid antigen test that offers a quick and easy way to screen for COVID-19. These diagnostic tests are FDA authorized for self-testing at home. This means you collect your own sample, perform the test, and read the result yourself without the need to send a sample to a laboratory.

When to Take an At-Home COVID-19 Test

Test yourself if...	Timing
• You have any COVID-19 symptoms	• Immediately
• You were exposed to someone with COVID-19	• At least 5 days after your exposure • If you test negative for COVID-19, consider testing again 1 to 2 days after first test.
• You are going to an indoor event or a gathering	• Members are covered for up to 8 tests per covered family member per month

How to Get an At-Home COVID-19 Test

You'll be happy to know that COVID-19 at-home tests are 100 percent covered when you're enrolled in an APWU health plan!

If you're enrolled in the High Option:	If you're enrolled in the Consumer Driven Option:
• Claims for at-home OTC COVID-19 tests will automatically process at \$0 copay when members order through the Express Scripts Pharmacy or check out at an in-network retail pharmacy counter.	• Claims for at-home OTC COVID-19 tests will automatically process at \$0 copay when members order through the Optum Store or check out at an in-network retail pharmacy counter.
• Members may also purchase an FDA authorized at-home COVID-19 test at any in-store or online retailer. This option will require the member to pay upfront and get reimbursed after. *Maximum reimbursement of \$12 per test.	• Members may also purchase an FDA approved at-home COVID-19 test at any in-store or online retailer. This option will require the member to pay upfront and get reimbursed after. *Maximum reimbursement of \$12 per test.
• Members are eligible for up to 8 tests every 30 days for each covered family member.	• Members are covered for up to 8 tests per covered family member per month
• Visit www.apwuhp.com for a list of in-network pharmacies, reimbursement forms and additional details.	• Visit www.apwuhp.com for a list of in-network pharmacies, reimbursement forms, and additional details.

If you are enrolled in the Medicare Advantage plan enhancement:

- Medicare Advantage members are covered for up to 8 tests per covered family member per month.
- Please visit www.uhcretiree.com/apwuhp or call 1-855-383-893 for complete details.

You can also order free at-home COVID-19 tests through USPS. Go to <https://special.usps.com/testkits> to get up to 8 free tests delivered straight to your home.

It is very important to **read the complete manufacturer's instructions before using the test.** If you do not follow the instructions, your test result may be incorrect.

What Your Test Results Mean

If your test is POSITIVE:	If your test is NEGATIVE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The test detected the virus and you have an infection. • Tell your healthcare provider or begin a telehealth virtual visit as soon as possible to discuss the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation and quarantine guidelines • Masking protocol • Possible treatments that may be available for you • Age and underlying conditions • Watch for symptoms. If you have any emergency warning signs, seek emergency care immediately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The test did not detect the virus, but doesn't rule out an infection. • Some self-tests are designed to be used in a series (also known as serial testing). Consider repeating the test 24 to 48 hours later. Multiple negative tests increases the confidence that you are not infected with the virus that causes COVID-19

Check out our website at apwuhp.com or the resources below for more information!

Sources: cdc.gov; covid.gov; fda.gov

5,000
NEW MEMBERS!

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO



APWU

BUILDING UNION POWER

2022 ORGANIZING DRIVE

Congratulations! We have recruited
5,000 new members through our
Building Union Power organizing drive!

ADAM
ADAM
APWU



But the work continues.
Scan this QR code
to sign up your non-
member coworkers.