

THE AMERICAN **Postal Worker** **APWU**

September/October 2023

SPEAKING OUT ON THE TOXIC ENVIRONMENT

**APWU Members
Paint a Stark Picture
of Hostile Workplaces,
Understaffing, and
Mismanagement**

CAUTION



**Toxic
Workplace**

APWU Member Survey Results, see pages 8 and 9



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25

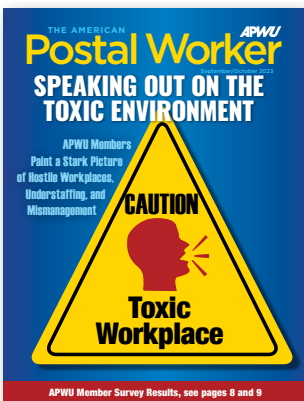
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ABOUT THE COVER:

An APWU workplace survey of more than 10,000 members has painted a stark picture of hostile work environments, low morale, and under-staffing overseen by poorly trained, ineffective, and disrespectful managers. See our member survey results on pages 8 and 9.

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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

The APWU is Launching an Important New Campaign and Every Member Can Help

Every postal worker knows it. Mail is changing. There are ever fewer letters and flats, and increasingly more packages. First-class mail, the main historic driver of postal revenues, has been significantly reduced with the advent of the internet. Fewer customers actually come into post offices to purchase stamps and other services. Birthday cards with stamps are often replaced with text messages. Bills are paid with the click of a mouse or right off a smartphone.

Much of the future for a strong and vibrant public Postal Service, and our job security, depends on capturing and performing new and expanded services, especially through the massive postal retail network. Some examples could include new financial services, various licensings, voter registration, electric vehicle charging stations, and motor vehicle registrations.

A significantly negative aspect of the 2006 *Postal Accountability Enhancement Act* (PAEA) was to largely restrict the USPS from providing “non-postal” services.

One area where the USPS can and does perform “non-postal” services is in relation to the federal government. Passport services negotiated with the U.S. State Department is a prime example.

Now the passage of the historic 2022 *Postal Service Reform Act* (PSRA) opens the door for new opportunities to expand non-postal services to local, state, and tribal governments.

The Act says in part, “... ***the Postal Service may establish a program to enter into agreements with an agency of any State Government, local government or tribal government to provide property or nonpostal services to the public on behalf of such agencies...***”

I have asked and encouraged APWU local and state organizations to form committees to advocate for new local, state and tribal government services. These

committees will reach out to various city councils, mayors, county commissions, state agencies, and governors’ offices to discuss potential services that could be performed through the Post Office, by postal workers. (One caveat is that we will not be seeking to perform any work currently performed by other unionized workers.)

Where these committees find real interest on the part of the various government entities and agencies, the committees can build popular grassroots support and share any ideas with the APWU national leadership. Since only national postal management can finalize any agreements with the government agencies, the APWU national will then press top management to move forward with concrete plans and action. We cannot rely on postal management to take advantage of the new opportunities for expanded work. It is incumbent on us to be proactive, take initiative, and build the movement to win new work and services.

One of our great strengths as a union is that we have members everywhere and across the wide political spectrum. Many members and leaders have strong relationships with elected officials of all political affiliations at the local and state levels. We also have strong ties with community organizations that would benefit from various new and expanded services, and can be rallied to join us in these efforts.

Every member can volunteer in this effort and can make a positive difference. Let your local leaders know you want to help. Share your ideas for new and expanded services. Reach out to elected officials you know, and discuss possible new local, state, and tribal government “non-postal” services.

Let’s get to work with the new opportunity created by the 2022 PSRA and take advantage of our broad reach and connections throughout the country. A better future for postal workers and postal customers depends on it! ■

APWU Leadership Institute Comes to Life!

“After five years of planning, interrupted by the pandemic, we are excited to announce the formation of the National APWU Leadership Institute,” shared APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “The national APWU recognizes our responsibility to help strengthen the work of current leaders, and [to] develop our future leaders who are so critical to the continued and future success of the APWU.”

What is the APWU Leadership Institute?

The Leadership Institute is an intensive three-week educational program, held one week at a time over a three-month period. The program will focus on topics ranging from organizing, bargaining, and representation, to legislation, community alliances, and building the APWU and union movements. It will help strengthen and enhance the leadership skills of local and state leaders, and union activists across the country.

The Institute will be organized and overseen by the national president's office, and will include the participation of many national officers. The national APWU will cover all the costs, including lost compensation, of the participants.

What Will the Institute's Educational Program Include?

- * Leadership skills, including: communication techniques, public speaking, negotiations, working with the media, team building, organizing public events, membership education, and holding effective union meetings.
- * Boosting member participation at all levels of the union to build a culture of collective action.

APWU LEADERSHIP Institute

- * Empowering members to demand safety, dignity, and respect on the job.
- * How to build the union's committee structure, including: safety, education, and legislative committees.
- * How to strengthen leaders' relationships with our members and our communities.
- * Organizing and mobilizing the public in support of postal worker issues, and issues of concern to all workers.
- * Our union's history and our successful campaigns, including: the 1970 Great Postal Strike, the *Stop Staples!* campaign, the passage of the *Postal Service Reform Act* of 2022, as well as lessons from labor history.
- * Various topics, such as: How to Build an Activist Union; Who Controls our Economy and Who Benefits; the Importance of Labor Solidarity; and What is Privatization, and How to Fight it and Win.
- * And much more!

Who is eligible to attend?

The Institute is open to all full dues-paying APWU members in good standing with demonstrated involvement in the union. Each three-week session will consist of a diverse group of approximately 30 APWU members from all five regions and all crafts. Participants will be chosen via an impartial selection process. Although the 2024 Institute is limited to 30 participants, there will be opportunities to participate in future Leadership Institutes. Our current plans are to hold Spring and Fall sessions.

When will the 2024 Leadership Institute be held?

Week One: **March 4 - 8, 2024**

Week Two: **April 1 - 5, 2024**

Week Three: **May 13 - 17, 2024**

Where will the 2024 APWU Leadership Institute be held?

The Institute will be held at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum, MD, close to the BWI Airport.

How Can One Apply to Attend?

1. Visit www.apwu.org/LeadershipInstitute or use the QR code below to complete the application form. Submit the form online or mail it to the APWU headquarters address on the application.
2. All applications must include a recommendation from a local, state, or national officer. Recommendations from community leaders are also welcome. The Recommendation Form is available online.

Key Application Dates:

Sept. 18, 2023: Application Process Begins

Nov. 10, 2023: Application Deadline

Dec. 15, 2023: Notification to Accepted Applicants ■

Scan to apply online.



In accordance with the 2021-2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), career employees represented by the APWU will receive a \$0.48 per hour cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), effective Aug. 26, 2023. Separate CBAs covering IT/AS, HRSSC, and other workers provide COLAs but on a different cycle.

When calculated for a full-time career worker, the COLA boosts pay by \$998 annually. It will appear in paychecks dated Sept. 15, 2023 (Pay Period 20-2023).

The increase is the result of a rise in the July Consumer Price Index (CPI-W).

Because Postal Support Employees (PSEs) do not receive COLAs, they have received several additional increases beyond the annual general wage increases that all employees receive under the 2021 contract. However, when PSEs convert to career, the COLA increases are also included in their wages going forward.

Total cumulative COLAs under 2021 Contract equal \$2.39 per hour, or \$4,971 annually

The COLAs are separate from, and in addition to, annual general wage and step increases. This is the fourth cost-of-living increase under the 2021 CBA.

The first COLA, effective in February 2022, amounted to \$0.63 per hour or \$1,310.00 annually. The second, effective in August 2022 was \$1.18 per hour or \$2,455.00 annually. The third, effective March 11, 2023, was \$0.10 per hour, or \$208.00 annually. The total cumulative amount received so far in COLAs during the 2021-2024 CBA is \$2.39 per hour, or \$4,971 annually.

"After two years of high inflation, our union-won COLA is more valuable to postal workers and our families than ever," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "Postal Workers are some of the few U.S. workers who receive these increases, and no one should take these benefits for granted. Even in the postal world, the APWU is the only postal union that has maintained full COLA in our contracts." ■

Fourth COLA

Pay will increase by \$0.48 a

MEMBER MESSAGES ON OUR COLA



With gasoline costs rising again to [nearly] \$4 a gallon, my 123 miles round trip commute is more expensive. I have a good job as far as pay and duties, but the expense has to come from somewhere in the already stretched budget to get here. This is a much-needed boost for sure!

Bobbye Fancher, 604-605 Area Local (IL)

It is great! Everything in the world is increasing and to get an increase helps my family tremendously, I'd like to thank APWU for helping its members.

Michael Thomas, California Area Local



My husband is retired, and therefore, on a fixed income. We own a farm with rescue animals, and it would go a long way towards helping with feed and other expenses.

Candyce Horne, Western New York Area Local

I am already a shop steward and fighting the good fight for the love of it since we do not get paid. This helps stash extra money away for my daughter's college fund. Though she is only 5 years old, this is definitely a huge jump, and greatly appreciated.

Korrey Hughey, North Jersey Area Local



Announced

an hour for career workers

This week, APWU members receive the fourth COLA increase of the 2021-2024 union contract. *The American Postal Worker* asked for your reaction and here are just some of your replies.



This raise will help me support and help some of my elderly friends. I have a blind friend that has no family and is on her own. I love to take her out for lunch and dinner to get her out of the house, and also like to rent a carpet cleaner and clean her carpets as she has a seeing eye dog, and an emotional support pet in her apartment.

Susan Berry, Louisville Local (KY)

This raise will help me and my family because it helps to keep up with the cost-of-living increase. It helps to not live paycheck to paycheck every month.

Petra Rayphand, Eureka Local, (CA)



Great news for us. [As an] APWU member it will help as my family tries to navigate through this difficult inflation with everything just too expensive and I believe this will help. Thank you, team.

Erick Sanchez, Northwest Illinois Area Local



I live in Pennsylvania along the snow belt. This raise will help during the cold weather months. It will help pay heating costs. This will be a big help this year.

TJ Burke, Trenton Metropolitan Area Local (NJ)



Now is the Time to Continue to Build our Union!

Having a full COLA is a big deal that benefits us all, and maintaining it is no small feat. Our COLA comes from our union-negotiated contract, but the contract is only as strong as our membership. Next year, (2024) the APWU will be in negotiations for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement.

We All Have a Role to Play!

Building union power makes us all stronger. Every new member of the APWU is a new postal worker's voice speaking up for good jobs at the USPS, whether it be a voice for better pay, better benefits, better service, or demanding a better work environment with respect. Our strength is in our numbers!

By stepping up and committing to organize for a strong APWU, you are helping build a better tomorrow for us all.

What Can You Do to Build Our Union?

- * You can talk to your non-union co-workers about why they should join the union – and sign them up.
- * You can attend a union meeting and other union activities -- and encourage your co-workers to join with you.
- * Join a union committee within your local/state organization, or consider becoming a shop steward.

For more information visit:
www.apwu.org/join or scan the QR code.



APWU Members Paint a Stark

An APWU workplace survey of more than ten thousand APWU members has painted a stark picture of hostile work environments, low morale, and understaffing, overseen by poorly trained, ineffective, and disrespectful managers.

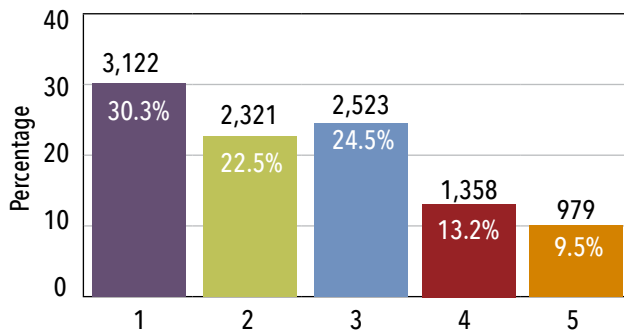
The survey was launched in March 2023, and an incredible 10,375 workers responded. Almost 78 percent of surveyed members said that they have witnessed or

experienced a toxic work environment in the past two years. Sixty-two percent of responders gave poor ratings for workplace morale, while only 18 percent rated morale positively.

“This survey shows just how deep the problem is,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “Across the country, managers are disrespecting workers and creating a

Postal workers rate their workplace environment and morale very poorly

On a scale of 1-5, how do you rate your workplace environment? (One being the most unsatisfactory, five being the most satisfactory).



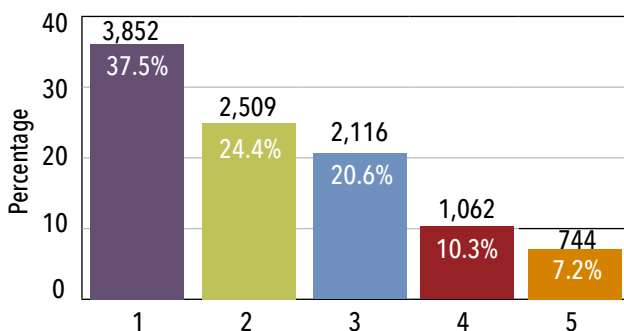
Total: 10,303

Percentage (%) that answered question: 99.3%

Blanks: 74/ 0.7%

Total Surveys Received: 10,377

How would you rate worker morale in your workplace? (One being very poor, five being very good).



Total: 10,303

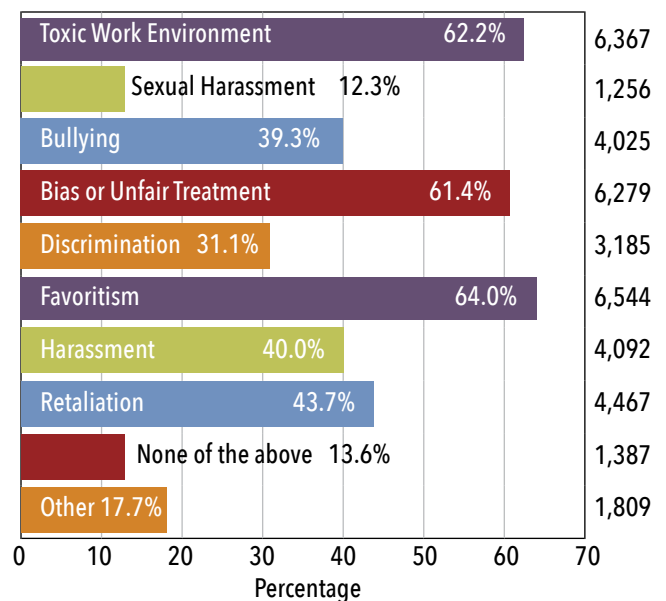
Percentage (%) that answered question: 99.1%

Blanks: 94/ 0.9%

Total Surveys Received: 10,377

Toxic work environments affect large majorities of postal workers

Do any of the following affect morale in your workplace?



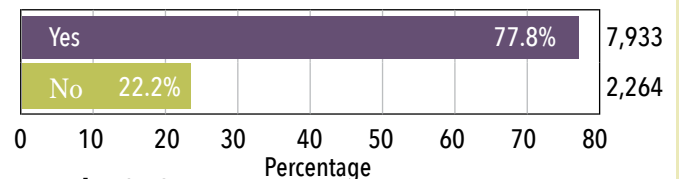
Total: 10,299

Percentage (%) that answered question: 98.6%

Blanks: 148/ 1.4%

Total Surveys Received: 10,377

Have you personally experienced or witnessed a toxic work environment in the last two years?



Total: 10,197

Percentage (%) that answered question: 98.3%

Blanks: 180/ 1.7%

Total Surveys Received: 10,377

Picture of Toxic Workplaces

toxic work environment. For the good of our members, and for the good of our public Postal Service, this has to stop, and we are determined to make it stop.”

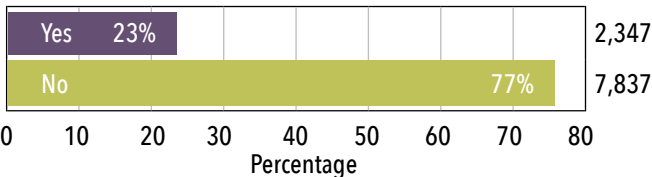
Warnings about a hostile climate at the Postal Service are not new. The Kappel Report, which contributed to the 1970 *Postal Reorganization Act*, observed that an authoritarian style of supervision had become the rule in the

Post Office. In the years since, warnings from the General Accountability Office, university studies, and postal unions have gone unheeded.

On April 28, Workers Memorial Day, members across the country rallied, organized and wore stickers to draw attention to the problems. See page 11 on how members in Long Island took action against a physically abusive manager. ■

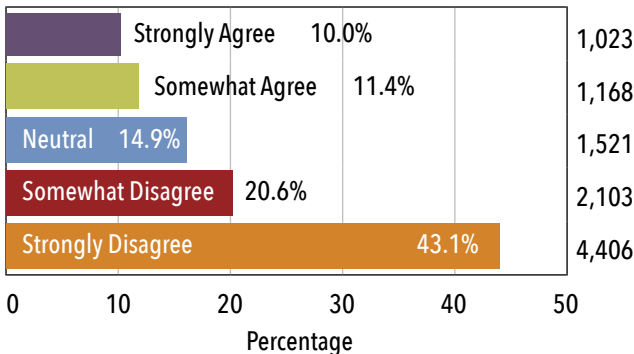
Poorly trained managers are hurting morale in understaffed workplaces

In your opinion, is your workplace properly staffed?



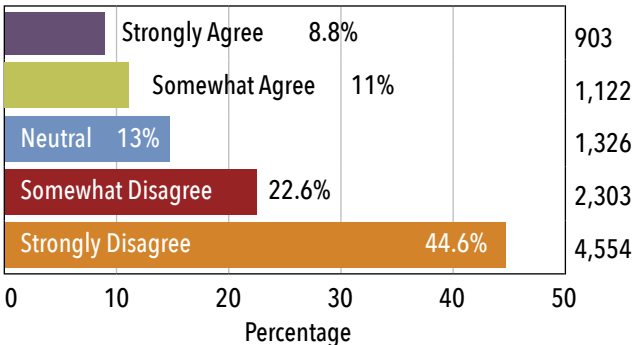
Total: 10,184
Percentage (%) that answered question: 98.1%
Blanks: 193/1.9%
Total Surveys Received: 10,377

Management in my facility has been properly trained to carry out their duties:



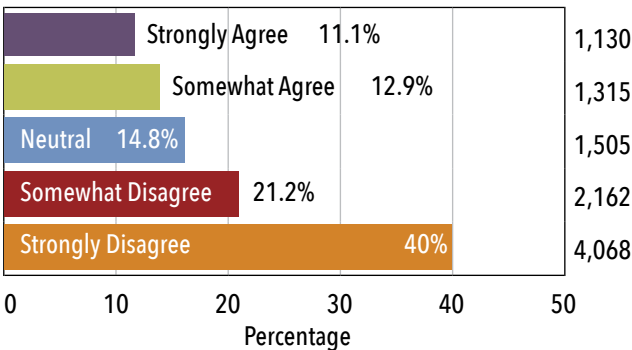
Total: 10,221
Percentage (%) that answered question: 98.5%
Blanks: 156/ 1.5%
Total Surveys Received: 10,377

Management in my facility are fair and effective supervisors of the workforce:



Total: 10,208
Percentage (%) that answered question: 98.4%
Blanks: 169/ 1.6%
Total Surveys Received: 10,377

Management treats employees with dignity and respect:



Total: 10,180
Percentage (%) that answered question: 98.1%
Blanks: 197/ 1.9%
Total Surveys Received: 10,377

Communicating With You, The Member - APWU Podcast from the President

President Dimondstein Launches Informative New Podcast:

APWU members can now enjoy their union news on the move, as the union launches our new podcast *Communicating With You, The Member - APWU Podcast from the President*.

Aimed at sharing updates about our union work and news from the APWU, the podcast is a unique source for members to get meaningful updates about the challenges we face as a union, our campaigns for postal

workers, and to preserving our public Postal Service.

The podcast will share the latest news and updates about our union's fights for the welfare of postal workers, and will highlight the pivotal roles we play in delivering vital public services.

Hosted by APWU President Mark Dimondstein, the podcast is one of the growing number of ways for members to keep abreast of the latest developments. It reflects

the many ways that members receive news in today's media environment.

You can download the podcast on all streaming services, including: YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you listen to podcasts regularly. New episodes will be available monthly. ■

Download the APWU Podcast from the President

...a new podcast hosted by union president Mark Dimondstein. The podcast will share updates about our union work and news from APWU. Find out about our latest campaigns for postal workers and to preserve our public Postal Service.

Tune in on YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you listen to podcasts!

Find the feed at apwu.org/podcast



Long Island Postal Workers Organize a Spirited Response to Attempted Assault by Manager

Members of the Long Island Area Local led a spirited protest in July after management failed to take action against a USPS Labor Relations Specialist who attempted to physically assault the local's vice president.

Nearly 250 attendees braved the 95-degree heat, including many from other APWU locals, the New York Labor Federation, sister unions, and allied organizations. The loud, animated rally received extensive press coverage, reflecting the seriousness of the incident.

More than 100 members of the Long Island Area Local were joined by members of the New York Metro Area Postal Union, the Brooklyn Local, the Southern NY Area Local, the Western Nassau Area Local, the Rockville Centre Local, and the Flushing Local, to challenge the management abuse. They held signs in front of the Long Island P&DC in Melville, NY that read, "zero tolerance means all employees" and "Postal Workers Demand Dignity and Respect." Tiffany Foster, the Northeast Regional Coordinator, and National Business Agents, Peter Coradi, Liz Swigert, and Rick White, also participated in the rally.

"On May 5, 2023, a Labor Relations Specialist from the New York-2 District physically lunged at me with her hand raised to hit me," said Long Island Area Local Vice President Michelle Nadeau. "The United States Postal Service has a zero-tolerance policy. They do not treat managers the same way as they do postal employees."

"We are here to send management in the New York Postal District Number 2, here on Long Island, a clear message that the zero-tolerance policy throughout the Postal Service not only pertains to craft union members, it pertains to management too," said Long Island NY Area Local President Peter Furgiuele.

(See Members in Action on pages 18 & 19 for photos from the rally.) ■

HOW EVERY STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATION CAN FIGHT BACK

Holding a public rally or other kind of event or protest empowers members, builds public support, and increases pressure for change from management. Here are some steps to consider when planning an event through your local or state's democratic process.

KNOW YOUR OBJECTIVE

Know what you want to achieve with your protest. Do you want media interest to pressure management? Do you want a smaller event to build awareness and support among members?

THE PROGRAM

Are there speakers? If so, then who? How long will they speak for, and about what?

ALLIES

Look to your State Labor Federation, other locals, or the state organization. Think of the other postal unions, whose members likely experience the same issues. Remember community allies, too.

MOBILIZE MEMBERS

All communication is important, but face-to-face conversations are best. Divide the membership among organizers and agree on a commitment goal for each organizer. Check in regularly on progress. Reconfirm with attendees, and remember, not everyone attends on the day of action.

LOGISTICS

Scope out the best location that tells the story. Make sure you have all permits or permission. Get it in writing. Appoint rally stewards and people to roles like media greeter, chant captain, master of ceremony (MC), and police liaison. Remember to make signs and flyers well in advance.

MEDIA

Contact the local media several days before the event to let them know it's happening. Include emails with the event information, and call the day before. Have a press release prepared and spokespeople ready to speak.

RESPECT T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE

Respect campaign t-shirts will soon be available at apwu.org/store.





Save Our Post Offices and Branches

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

Be on the lookout for **Suspensions and Discontinuance of Post Offices**. If you are the employee being affected or are a customer and hear or read about a post office possibly being suspended or discontinued/closed, contact your local union as soon as possible. Your union can investigate the situation and may be able to file a grievance.

The *Postal Reorganization Act* (Title 39) of the U.S. Code protects the public from losing post offices. Any decision of the Postal Service to close or consolidate a post office or facility triggers legal requirements that must be strictly followed. The law requires that the Postal Service consider that it “must provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities, and small towns where Post Offices are not self-sustaining; the economic savings to the Postal Service; and any other factors the Postal Service determines necessary.” “The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal service to bind the nation together through personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people. It shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to all communities.”

The *Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act* Sec. 3691 also requires the Postal Service to reasonably assure Postal Service customers delivery, reliability, speed, and frequency consistent with reasonable rates and best business practices.

But the Postal Service cannot just close an office to avoid complying with the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* (OSHA) and it must give affected communities advance notice and a chance to be heard on shutting down their post office. Employees and the Union have rights too, to discuss the impact on employees.

It is important to protect our communities’ postal services and encourage their right to due process, a public meeting, and a challenge to the Postal Regulatory Commission, whenever they are losing a post office that they value. Their fight is also our fight to preserve good postal jobs within their communities.

There are legally required rules that the Postal Service must follow before suspending or discontinuing a post office. Communities have the right to advance notice and to voice their opinions at a public meeting. They can also challenge a closure before the Postal Regulatory Commission. If a post office is unsafe and cannot be repaired, an alternative post office must be researched within the same town to provide services within the community. The community has a voice in making sure the Postal Service knows how valuable a post office is, and that they want a local post office to provide mail and postal services with ease, convenience, and security.

BUT THE POSTAL SERVICE CANNOT JUST CLOSE AN OFFICE TO AVOID COMPLYING WITH THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT (OSHA) AND IT MUST GIVE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES ADVANCE NOTICE AND A CHANCE TO BE HEARD ON SHUTTING DOWN THEIR POST OFFICE. EMPLOYEES AND THE UNION HAVE RIGHTS TOO, TO DISCUSS THE IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES.

The Postal Service is a service not a business. An example of a suspension that needed to be investigated recently, was where the Postal Service said it was suspending the office due to health and safety and structural issues identified in the building. The union was notified two days later of this notice. According to a newspaper article the lessor said he never heard of any complaints from the Postal Service, nor did he know of the building being unsafe, as his son lives in the upstairs apartment. The Code Enforcement Officer of the town said he had not made any reports at this time. Every suspension or discontinuance of a post office needs to be investigated to make sure the rights of the community and the rights of postal workers are considered and upheld. ■

National Officers Keep a Careful Eye on Openings

With management's plans to create and open new Regional Processing and Distribution Centers (RPDCs), and Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs) APWU national officers have visited some of the newly opened or soon-to-be opened buildings. Such visits give national officers the opportunity to meet with local leaders, speak with postal workers, observe the status of the buildings and operations, gather information, address concerns, and keep members informed on the latest developments.

National and local officers recently visited the newly opened Annapolis, MD S&DC and toured the Athens, GA S&DC earlier in the Spring. In addition, national staff has also been assigned to visit some of the S&DCs, starting in Owensboro, KY and Kokomo, IN.

Meanwhile, on August 15, a delegation of national officers toured the massive million square foot Atlanta South Regional Processing and Distribution Center at the Atlanta RPDC in Palmetto, GA. In an earlier visit to Gastonia NC, national officers and staff joined the Charlotte local leadership to the tour the Regional Sort Center under construction. ■



Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell, Industrial Relations Director Charlie Cash, Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks, Maintenance Craft Director Idowu Balogun, MVS Director Michael Foster, Regional Coordinators AJ Jones, Tiffany Foster, and Omar Gonzalez were joined by National Business Agents Doris Orr-Richardson and John Gearhard tour the Atlanta South RPDC.



A Matrix Regional Sorter (MaRS) Machine, at the Atlanta South RPDC.

APWU UNION YES!



ORGANIZING EXPRESS

Workers from 10 Roads Express in Brandywine, MD are celebrating a win after voting 27 - 3 in favor of joining the American Postal Workers Union.

The Maryland-based drivers, who perform mail transportation services for the Postal Service, are the fourth 10 Roads Express location to unionize with the APWU since 2022. They petitioned to join the union because of management disrespect, favoritism, lack of safety, and not being paid for all hours worked.

During the organizing campaign, management sent union busting consultants to their job sites in an attempt to intimidate workers from joining the

union. However, the workers prevailed with an overwhelming majority voting to unionize with the APWU.

"Congratulations to the workers of [the] 10 Roads Express company for taking this monumental step to unionize. It has been a pleasure meeting with and learning from each of you, while planning your election through the APWU Private Sector Organizing team," said Nation's Capital Southern MD Area Local President, Dena Briscoe.

"10 Roads management must get the message that we no longer want to [be] disrespected, treated as expendable, and dismissed at will," said 10 Roads Express driver and organizer, Elias White. "As a union driver

10 Roads Express Drivers Vote "Union Yes" in Brandywine, MD

protected by the union... we have an equal playing field to voice ourselves without being easily replaced... I am glad that I was part of this movement that [is] taking place around the country with 10 Roads drivers."

"I congratulate the 10 Roads Express drivers in Brandywine on this overwhelming victory, and welcome these new members into our union," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "I'd like to thank lead organizer Rich Shelley and Nation's Capital Southern MD Area Local President, Dena Briscoe for their efforts in supporting this campaign for dignity, respect, and protection against unfair decisions made by management. There is power for workers when they join together collectively and form a union." ■



APWU Scholarships

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

The 2023 scholarship committee met and reviewed all applications received by the May 31 deadline. The committee verifies the criteria and documents outlined in the application, with primary emphasis on the knowledge and understanding of unions displayed in the essay. The committee received 122 scholarship applications and awarded 10 recipients the E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship. Two recipients received the Vocational Scholarship, and one recipient received the scholarship for Best Essay.

With the cost of higher education consistently rising, scholarship awards continue to be a necessary addition to subsidize the financial commitments in covering college or vocational institution costs. For a vast majority of children and grandchildren of our members, obtaining a college degree or vocational skill is a pathway to providing economic stability for their future endeavors. In each postal region, two deserving applicants – one male and one female – are awarded \$2,000 annually for four years to use toward an undergraduate program. Recipients must attend an accredited college or university and must maintain a “B” average (or “Pass” if on a “Pass/Fail” system).

ALL APPLICANTS ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A 350-500 WORD ESSAY ON ONE OF THREE TOPICS PROVIDED IN THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION. THE AUTHOR OF THE BEST ESSAY WINS A SPECIAL ONE-TIME AWARD OF \$2,000 TOWARDS THEIR FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE TUITION.

Vocational Scholarship winners receive up to \$3,000 to be used for three years of study in a specific trade, technical, industrial, or vocational school. The APWU awards vocational scholarships, if submitted, to recipients selected from the five postal regions. Recipients must attend an accredited community college or vocational school and must maintain a “B” average (or “Pass” if on a “Pass/Fail” system), or a positive evaluation from a counselor or instructor.

All applicants are required to submit a 350 - 500 word essay on one of three topics provided in the scholarship application. The author of the Best Essay wins a special one-time award of \$2,000 towards their four-year college tuition. The recipient of the 2023 Best Essay award, pursuing an engineering degree, wrote in her essay the following excerpt.

“As I envision my future union, I hope it embodies the practices and principles of the APWU, allowing for a supportive environment for those from all communities. By embracing union membership, I hope to contribute to creating an inclusive workplace for engineers from all backgrounds and address any concerns they may have.”

Each year, the APWU awards academic vocational scholarships to children and grandchildren of our members and retirees. Winners are selected by qualified individuals in academia who have no personal ties to the applicants. (See page 36 for information about the scholarships and this year’s winners.)

Congratulations to all the 2023 scholarship winners and best wishes as they pursue their career goals. ■

Secretary-Treasurer Training September 29 - October 1, 2023

I am looking forward to seeing all who will be attending the Secretary-Treasurer Training and All-Craft Conference in Las Vegas, NV. Preparations are finalized to ensure all conference delegates are able to maximize their time attending the various trainings and conferences. Whether you are attending the All-Craft, Young Members, Retiree or Legislative Conferences, there will be a wealth of information to gain and share with your members.

In addition to the scheduled training opportunities, local unions can also schedule virtual training. Please contact Annette August-Taylor, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer, at 202-842-4215 or via email to aaugust@apwu.org.

I remain yours in union solidarity, and if there is anything we can do to assist you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.



Three lucky winners of the *American Postal Worker* quiz will receive a \$50 coupon

for the APWU store so that you can gear up and show your APWU union pride. To enter the quiz, email your answers to communications@apwu.org, together with your EIN by Friday, Sept. 29, 2023. Winners will be randomly selected among those who correctly answer the following:

The lucky winners from the July/August 2023 edition of the *American Postal Worker* were:

Chellappa Narasimhan, Central Massachusetts Area Local

Tamara Sparrow, Jacksonville BMC Local

Kimberly Jackson, Fort Wayne Area Local

APWU September-October QUIZ

1. Each year, the APWU awards the following academic scholarships to children and grandchildren of our members and retirees: E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship, Vocational Scholarship and the Scholarship for Best Essay. How many scholarship applications did the Scholarship Committee receive in 2023?
2. Lifting objects is a routine task in many workplaces and daily activities. However, improper lifting techniques can lead to painful injuries that impact your quality of life. What is the first step you should take before lifting an object?
3. Bulk Mail Centers (BMCs) were established in 1974 to process large parcels that use mechanized equipment, which creates working conditions unlike those at other postal facilities, such as involuntary transfers and excessings. What year did the BMC locals submit and unanimously pass a convention resolution that established regular BMC meetings to address the unusual problems faced by the members working at BMCs?

APWU Crossword Puzzle

Across

2. Barbara Smith Warner is the Executive Director of the National Vote at "_____" Institute, which advocates for nationwide vote-by-mail.

4. The passage of the 2022 Postal Service "_____" Act opens the door to expand non-postal services.

6. The E.C. "_____" Memorial Scholarship is one of three academic scholarship programs supported and administered by the APWU.

7. The Alternative "_____" Resolution Process (ADRP) addresses violations outside of the normal grievance-arbitration procedure.

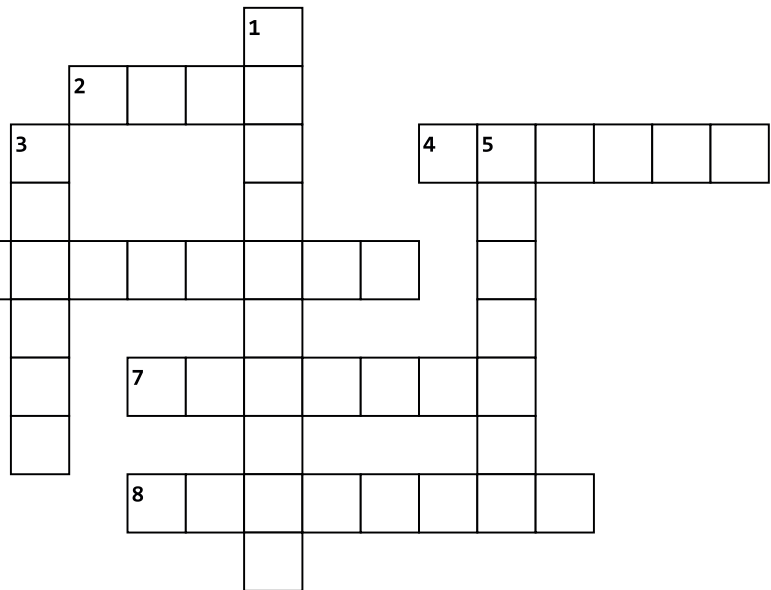
8. If passed, the Social Security "_____" Act would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset.

Down

1. The APWU announced the formation of the National APWU "_____" Institute to ensure the current and future success of the union.

3. Members of the "_____" Peace Brigade were among those arrested during the Occupy Wall Street movement in NYC.

5. Workers from 10 Roads "_____" in Brandywine, MD recently voted in favor of joining the APWU.



ARE YOU A LUCKY WINNER?

APWU members - Do you want another chance to **win a \$50 gift card** to use in the APWU store? Whether you want a shirt, a hoodie, or buttons to show your union pride; or a new copy of the contract to make sure you know your rights.... check the list below. If you see your name printed, email us at: communications@apwu.org by Friday, Sept. 29, 2023 and we'll send you a promo code worth \$50 to use towards gear at apwustore.org

Seth Brubaker (NC)

Latosha Harris (TX)

Eric Vargas (CO)

ANSWERS: Across: 2. home; 4. reform; 6. Hallbeck; 7. dispute; 8. fairness
Down: 1. leadership; 3. granny; 5. express



Making Sense of Change in the Postal Service

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

It is no secret that the Postal Service is making changes. One constant that I have experienced throughout my career with the USPS is that the Postal Service evolves and changes. I am a fourth-generation postal employee. When I was a young boy in the early 1970s, I have memories of my father taking me to the Post Office in Salt Lake City and seeing nothing but clerks sorting mail by hand in letter cases. Today, that building is full of automated machines. Automation has changed the Postal Service over the decades.

Today, the Postal Service is in a state of change. Mail type is shifting from letters and flats to parcels. Overall, all mail volume is down. But no matter the shift in mail type or decrease in volume, the public deserves a Postal Service that meets its universal service obligation, delivers mail on time, and functions as a true public service.

The current Postmaster General (PMG) is making decisions that are putting APWU-represented employees in a state of flux. He believes that his plan will increase volume (at least parcel volume), speed up parcel delivery (and therefore speed up all mail delivery), and put the USPS on a sounder financial footing. He is calling his plan "Network Modernization."

WE KNOW THAT THE POSTAL SERVICE IS NOT BEING FULLY TRANSPARENT ABOUT THEIR PLANS. EVEN THOUGH THEY DO MEET WITH THE APWU AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL REGULARLY, THEY REFUSE TO PROVIDE THE MOST BASIC INFORMATION WE REQUEST. WE HAVE FILED CHARGES WITH THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD (NLRB) TO COMPEL THEM TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION WE HAVE DEMANDED.

As the PMG continues to push these changes, the APWU continues to demand that our contract is followed, that the Postal Service be transparent, and that the Postal Service allow the public to have input, and more.

As the PMG changes are implemented, the Postal Service has sought to excess employees from their installations

to other offices. Your Regional Coordinators have led APWU efforts to minimize the impact and disruptions on those who could be excessed. Even in the face of postal management that uses tactics that at best can be described as inaccurate, Regional Coordinators have reduced the numbers of employees excessed overall. They prepare for each event and work relentlessly on your behalf.

We know that the Postal Service is not being fully transparent about their plans. Even though they do meet with the APWU at the national level regularly, they refuse to provide the most basic information we request. We have filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to compel them to provide the information we have demanded.

For some of these network changes, the Postal Service is required to inform the public and allow their input on changes to the network. The Postal Service must follow guidelines outlined in the PO-408 manual. We have insisted that the Postal Service follow this manual. Of course, management pushed back against our demands. The Postal Service did eventually capitulate and agree that the PO-408 would be followed. But rather than follow the process, they chose to change the rules and make significant changes to the PO-408. After extensive review and coordination with our legal counsel, we have filed a national dispute on these changes.

Finally, it is important that your national officers get out and see these new facility types, talk to the workers at these new facilities, and learn all we can about the new facilities. Recently, we visited with the new Sortation and Delivery Center (S&DC) in Annapolis, MD. This was the first of our visits to the S&DCs that are currently operating around the country. National officers and headquarters staff are currently planning more visits to both the S&DCs and the Regional Processing and Distribution Centers as they come online.

Your union officers will continue to work hard during these changing times to protect your rights under the CBA, and to take the fight to the streets with our public allies to protect our right to an effective and efficient Postal Service.

Solidarity! ■



Lifting Safety: Techniques to Safeguard Your Physical Well-being

Lifting objects is a routine task in many workplaces and daily activities. However, improper lifting techniques can lead to painful injuries that impact your quality of life. Whether you're at work, at home, or engaging in recreational activities, it is essential to protect your back and overall physical well-being by understanding and practicing proper lifting techniques. This article delves into the importance of lifting safely, and provides practical tips to help you lift objects without risking injury.

1. The Importance of Proper Lifting

Improper lifting can strain muscles, ligaments, and spinal discs, which leads to back pain, herniated discs, and other serious injuries. By mastering proper lifting techniques, you can significantly reduce the risk of these injuries, and maintain a healthier and more pain-free lifestyle.

2. Preparing for a Lift

Before lifting an object, take a moment to assess the situation:

- **Evaluate the Load:** Check the weight of the object. If it seems too heavy to lift on your own, ask for help or use mechanical aids like dollies and carts.
- **Clear the Path:** Ensure the pathway is clear of obstacles to prevent tripping hazards.
- **Wear Appropriate Footwear:** Wear comfortable, supportive shoes that provide good traction.

3. Proper Lifting Techniques

- **Bend Your Knees:** When bending down to pick up the object, bend your knees rather than your waist. This engages the stronger muscles in your legs, which can handle the load more effectively.
- **Maintain a Wide Stance:** Keep your feet shoulder-width apart to provide a stable base of support.

- **Grip the Object:** Use a firm grip and hold the object as close to your body as possible. This reduces the strain on your back.
- **Tighten Core Muscles:** Engage your core muscles to support your spine and maintain stability.
- **Lift Gradually:** Lift smoothly using your leg muscles, not your back. Straighten your hips and knees as you lift, keeping the object close to your body.

4. Avoid Twisting and Turning

Twisting while lifting can strain your back muscles and lead to injury. If you need to change direction while holding a heavy object, move your feet instead of twisting your torso.

5. Set Down Safely

Lower the object with the same principles you used to lift it. Bend at your knees and hips while keeping your back straight. Avoid dropping or jerking the load, as this can strain your muscles and increase the risk of an injury.

6. Team Lifting

For heavier objects, enlist the help of a co-worker. Communicate and coordinate your actions to ensure that you both lift and move the object in sync.

7. Listen to Your Body

If you feel any strain, discomfort, or pain while lifting, stop immediately. Continuing to lift under such circumstances can exacerbate the issue and lead to serious injuries.

Lifting safely is a fundamental skill that applies to various aspects of life. By mastering proper lifting techniques, you can safeguard your back and reduce the risk of injuries. Remember to bend your knees, keep the object close, engage your core muscles, and avoid twisting while lifting. By following these guidelines and always prioritizing your well-being, you can make lifting a safe and injury-free part of your routine. ■

MEMBERS



Long Island: A large animated rally took place in Melville, NY after a manager attempted to assault the Long Island Area Local Vice President, Michelle Nadeau. Management refused to take disciplinary action against the manager involved. See page 11 for more.



Iowa Postal Workers Union President Kim Karoll and members rallied in Des Moines with postal customers to call attention to the impact of slowed mail services on the public.



Albany, NY Area members including Local President, Rev. Ibrahim Pedriñán, showed solidarity at a Teamster practice picket. The Teamsters settled their UPS contract with a tentative agreement on July 25 – see Labor News, pages 22 & 23.



The Postal Press Association's biennial convention took place in Madison, WI. Editors left the conference to join the weekly "Solidarity Sing Along" at the state capitol. The tradition was born on March 11, 2011, to protest then Governor Scott Walker's attack on trade union rights.

IN ACTION

San Francisco Local President Cindy Datangel and David Yao, Vice President, Greater Seattle Area Local advocate for postal workers at the biennial conference of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), AFL-CIO.



Ashley Dale



Jeremy Scilling, Southern Oregon Area Local

Postal workers and sister union members took action in Medford, OR to protest a planned consolidation that would move local mail processing hundreds of miles from the Pacific Northwest city.



APWU members took part in the National Council of State Legislatures 2023 summit. Members joined volunteers from the nonprofit Comfort Cases to prepare backpacks for donation to children in foster care.



APWU Auxiliary Members raised money for COPA at the New England Convention.



Colorado State President Shelly Lucido and Steward Anthony Lucido (not pictured) recruited new member Sherry Pribble (left) at Naturita Post Office as part of a sweep of post offices across the state.

Anthony Lucido, Colorado Postal Workers Union

If you would like to see your event on action featured in the Members in Action pages, email your high resolution photos and a description to communications@apwu.org

VOTING-AT-HOME:

The Convenient and Safe Way to Boost our Democracy



Barbara Smith Warner (Right) with APWU members at the National Council of State Legislatures 2023 Summit.

Barabara Smith Warner is the Executive Director of the National Vote at Home Institute (NVAHI), which advocates for nationwide vote-by-mail initiatives. She is the former Majority Leader of the Oregon House of Representatives, where she co-led the 2015 passage of Oregon's Automatic Voter Registration legislation.

Warner spoke with the *American Postal Worker* in August 2023.

With members in every state and territory, APWU members are well positioned to help expand vote-by-mail. What are some ways that members can get involved to make it happen?

You can keep an eye out as we continue to work more closely with APWU, we will send out, through your information networks, news about when we are working in specific states in order to pass legislation to change to a full vote-at-home system, or to go to what we call "single sign up," [where a voter signs up once to receive mail ballots for all future elections].

There are still about 14 states where you need a very specific legal excuse in order to get an absentee ballot, but most states now, you don't need an excuse. You can just ask for one. What we think of as a way to get towards full vote-at-home is to move from just, "OK, you don't need an excuse, but you have to ask for it every time" to single sign up.

And as I said, we will continue to send out information as we are working in states to move those states up the scale.

We would love to have APWU members come and testify, write letters to the editor, engage on social media, all of that, because your members really do know both the ease and the convenience and the safety of voting at home.

"The setup of the postal system we already have, you've got mail going to every home in America every single day, and that just vibes so well with being able to vote at home."

Find out more at [voteathome.org](https://www.voteathome.org)

What is the National Vote at Home Institute?

Our goal is to increase voters' access to, use of, and confidence in voting at home.

The whole point of voting at home is you get your ballot mailed to you by the U.S. Postal Service a couple weeks before the election, the same way that people have discovered that they really like having their groceries delivered to them. You have time to do research to really make up your mind about your ballot, and then you can return it in a number of ways. You can mail it back, you can put it in a dropbox, you can return [it] in person, but the whole point is you, the voter, are the center of the voting. It takes away lines that you have to wait at the polling place. Basically, it centers the voter in the voting.

As postal workers, we're proud of our role in elections. What do you see of the benefits of voting-by-mail?

Postal workers are ranked as the most trusted government workers that there are among anybody, right? And the Postal Service is considered the gold standard of safety and security. So, the combination of postal workers and the mailing system is just a great combination.

It's an organization that is used to getting things easily and quickly and efficiently to every American, every day. And that's how we all want voting to be, right? We want as many people as possible to be able to vote. And the setup of the postal system we already have, you've got mail going to every home in America every single day, and that just vibes so well with being able to vote at home.



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.

"Union members, we can't stop fighting for what's right, for our rights, and for our jobs. Resting is not an option; I am happy to announce there are many requests, [as] of late, of members wanting to join the fight and become union stewards. Stronger together, we need everyone on board. When you see a non-member, speak to them, don't avoid them. Make non-members aware of what the union has already provided. We are the union, which includes everyone who wants to be a part [of it]. We, the union, will accomplish more together. WE, THE UNION!"

— Reggie Maddox
Tampa Area Local Clerk Craft Director
Tampa Mailbag News

"We need more people to get involved in the union. We need members, especially in the associate offices, to get involved, come to the meetings and become stewards. When we educate our members to stand up for themselves and know the contract, it makes it harder for management to abuse their rights. There is a committee called Young Members and it's for our brothers and sisters 18-35. If you are in that age group, YOU are the future of the APWU and we need more of you to get involved."

— Dana McLean
Western Michigan Area Local Steward
WMAL Voice

"Freedom of assembly – why is this taken so lightly? Only a miniscule percentage of members even show up for the local's monthly general membership meetings. Membership participation is essential to the strength of the union. Your voice matters! You are needed! Don't be that member on the sideline talking about what the union isn't doing, when you can be on the front line standing up and speaking out. The union is calling on each member to become more involved. Your interests, ideas, and suggestions [for] making our union stronger are welcomed. ... Remember, WE are the union and it takes all of us to continue to fight for the freedom and rights that have been afforded us!"

— Debra Harris
Central Arkansas Area Local
Executive Vice President
Local Items

National Postal Press Association Conference in Madison, WI Bids Farewell to Longtime President



National Postal Press Association (PPA) President Tony Carobine addresses PPA members at the annual conference in Madison, WI

The National Postal Press Association (PPA) Conference was held July 20 through July 22 in Madison, WI.

Editors who attended the conference participated in series of workshops.

Participants sang labor anthems with activists at the Solidarity Sing-Along outside the state capitol (see Members in Action on pages 18-19). APWU President Mark Dimondstein held a "press conference", in his

tradition of taking editors' questions at the podium.

This was also the last conference organized by long-serving PPA President, Tony Carobine, who has announced that he will retire once the special election for a replacement is complete. Carobine has been president of the PPA for 36 years. He was only 19 years old when he joined the APWU. He served as local steward and president of the 498-499 Area Local, as well as the local and state editor in Michigan.



Tony Carobine was introduced by his daughters, who paid tribute to their father at the NPPA banquet.

"It's been an honor to serve as president of this great organization for the past 36 years," said Tony Carobine. "Tonight, I remember the many unionists I met over the years who not only became dear friends, but also my mentors that taught me so much... My union life and personal life have been one heck of a ride, all because of the American Postal Workers Union. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for the opportunity to serve as president."

Pres. Dimondstein paid tribute to Carobine, saying: "I have been impressed with his day-to-day work, his union spirit of solidarity, and conferences like these that he has organized and led over the years. I thank him for his many years of work for our union and wish him a long and happy retirement." ■



Writers, Actors Strike for Better Pay, Limits on Use of Artificial Intelligence

Members of the Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) and the Writers Guild of America (WGA) have been on strike this summer, in ongoing labor disputes with the production companies in the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP). The WGA have been on strike since May, and SAG-AFTRA since July.

Both unions are demanding a larger share of “residuals,” which are long-term payments made to actors and writers for the sales, re-runs, and other airings of movies and television shows, after the initial release. Residual payments have dropped sharply since streaming services have become more popular than DVDs, and broadcast or cable television.

The unions are also calling for transparency and limits on the use of artificial intelligence (AI), which they say could potentially replace workers using technology from

apps such as ChatGPT for writing, and from the technology that could potentially replace or replicate the likenesses of the actors in movies and television shows.

A recent nationwide poll conducted by Data for Progress shows that a strong majority of voters support the strikes and agree with their key demands. For example, 67 percent of likely voters support striking workers, while only 18 percent oppose. Additionally, 86 percent of people who support the strikes would maintain their support even if the dispute interrupts their favorite shows. Lastly, 74 percent think studios should be prohibited from replacing human writers with AI.

“What happens here is important because what’s happening to us is happening across all fields of labor, when employers make Wall Street and greed their priority and they forget about the essential contributors that make the machine run,” said SAG-AFTRA President Fran Drescher.

Academic Workers in Maryland and Washington State Organize with United Auto Workers

On June 1, nearly 4,800 early-career researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) filed a petition to form their union, the NIH Fellows United-UAW. The union would be the first within the U.S. federal government for research fellows.

“Fellows don’t have any voice or power in this institution, so it feels like we’re cheap labor rather than equal members of a team,” said Travis Kinder, a Research Fellow at the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences. “The changes we need at the NIH and in the world cannot be done alone and require us to work collectively.”

Additionally, more than 1,100 Educational Student Employees at Western Washington University voted in favor of joining the Western Academic Workers United-UAW in a 98 percent “Yes” vote. The teaching and research assistants organized to improve wages that, with the exception of minimum wage increases, haven’t been adjusted in decades.

UPS and Teamsters Deliver Contract to Members, Averting August Strike

On Tuesday, July 25, the United Parcel Service (UPS) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters announced a tentative five-year contract for 340,000 workers, one week before they were set to strike. The contract was ratified on August 22, and provides historic wage increases, an additional paid holiday, as well as air conditioning in package delivery vehicles. The contract also eliminates the two-tier pay structure, as well as forced overtime for delivery drivers. ■

Workers at SEGA of America Win Union Vote

Following their petition to join a union, SEGA of American workers at the Irvine, CA office voted on June 16 to officially form the Allied Employees Guild Improving SEGA with the Communications Workers of America (AEGIS-CWA). Seventy-eight percent voted in favor of joining the union. The unit will represent more than 200 workers in the marketing, product development, and quality assurance fields.

“We are overjoyed to celebrate our union election win as members of AEGIS-CWA,” said SEGA of America translator Ángel Gómez. “From the start of this campaign, it has been clear that we all care deeply about our work at SEGA. Now, through our union, we’ll be able to protect the parts of our jobs we love, and strengthen the benefits, pay, and job stability available to all workers.” ■



United Auto Workers Contracts with “Big 3” Detroit Auto Companies Expire on Sept. 14

On Sept. 14, contracts between the United Auto Workers (UAW) and General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler-owner Stellantis, are due to expire. The worker demands include eliminating the multi-tiered wage system, reinstating cost-of-living adjustments, and restoring defined-benefit pension plans that were previously eliminated for new hires. If deals are not reached by the September deadline, nearly 150,000 workers could walk out on strike.

BARNES & NOBLE

Bookstore workers at the Park Slope location of Barnes & Noble (B&N) in Brooklyn, NY voted overwhelmingly in favor of joining the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). The Park Slope location is the fourth to unionize in New York and follows the recent victory at B&N’s flagship location in Union Square, Manhattan. ■

Utility Workers in Kentucky Vote in Favor of Retaining Their Union

More than 40 workers from the Kentucky Utilities Company in the Earlington, KY operations area voted 60 percent in favor of retaining their union affiliation with the United Steel Workers in July, following a petition to decertify. As a result of the “yes” vote, the workers may continue to collectively bargain with company.

The Union is Calling – Starbucks Workers Mobilize Cross-Country Bus Tour, Hold National Day of Action

Starbucks Workers United (SBWU) kicked off a 13-city bus tour from Buffalo, NY to Portland, OR, on July 26 to show management the strength of worker power. Workers handed out flyers and picketed in front of Starbucks stores and held craft fairs and solidarity rallies across the country.

On August 7, SBWU held national day of action asking customers and allies to “adopt” a non-union store to support workers in their communities by holding small flyer actions to engage their customers and passersby in the campaign through in-person connections.



Governor Mandates Paid Time Off for Workers in Illinois

Illinois has become the third state in the nation to mandate paid time off for private sector workers. Governor JB Pritzker signed the historic SB208 measure into law, providing employees with up to 40 hours of paid leave per year. The historic legislation allows workers to accrue one hour for every 40 hours worked, up to 40 hours per 12-month period, effective March 31, 2024, or 90 days after the commencement of their employment. ■

Surviving the USPS “Alphabet Soup” with the Help of RI-399



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

The number of changes and additions to the USPS dictionary of acronyms can be overwhelming, such as S&DC, RPDC, LPC, and Transfer Hubs, to name a few. This is nothing new and we have survived these types of reorganizational movements in the past – SCFs, GMFs, AMFs, AMCs, and AMPs. Mail processing is still mail processing, even though it is more mechanized than before, and the provisions of RI-399 and the contractual agreements are still controlling. But we still have to fight to protect our work.

The June 26, 2018 RI-399 Update MOU – what does it mean locally?

It is imperative that we are vigilant as clerks. Often, we hear complaints that clerks do not want to perform certain tasks, and maintain that the work is mail handler work. All work can be considered clerk work. We must stay vigilant and not give our work away.

One of the most important issues resolved in the Update MOU was the opportunity to update the local RI-399 inventories. A completed and agreed upon inventory sets the guidelines for work assignments by operation numbers and functions. A completed and agreed upon inventory is binding on all three of the local parties represented in the Local Dispute Resolution Committee (LDRC).

Paragraph 13 of the Update MOU provides for the required LDRC meetings each month. The LDRC members have the authority to reschedule the meeting, but not totally ignore it. We must enforce the language of paragraph 13a. If either of the two parties fail to meet this obligation, then the APWU LDRC representative should file a local dispute with the LDRC. And if management fails to schedule the monthly meetings, an Article 15 grievance should be filed for noncompliance. Paragraph 13a also provides language that protects time limits. If this monthly meeting does not occur because one or two of the parties refuses to meet, any party may refer this refusal to meet to their Regional Dispute Resolution Committee (RDRC). If the monthly meeting does not occur, the disputing union has the right to appeal the dispute to the RDRC without time limits.

If there are violations of the local jurisdictional assignments per the inventory, the violated union has the right to file Article 7 cross-craft grievances. A completed and agreed upon inventory is controlling and should resolve these issues at the local level. The Update MOU also provides protection so these issues cannot be improperly referred to the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP), unless properly done so at Step 3.

MAIL PROCESSING IS STILL MAIL PROCESSING, EVEN THOUGH IT IS MORE MECHANIZED THAN BEFORE, AND THE PROVISIONS OF RI-399 AND THE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS ARE STILL CONTROLLING. BUT WE STILL HAVE TO FIGHT TO PROTECT OUR WORK.

We are currently experiencing “excessing” in the Clerk Craft with the creation of the S&DCs. These facilities have been determined by USPS management to be Function 4 (F4) facilities. The RI-399 DRP provides us with arguments to protect our work. Two issues that will be challenged in these F4 facilities are the Small Delivery Unit Sorter (SDUS) and spreading the mail to carrier routes. The USPS has issued a national jurisdictional determination on the SDUS in F4, giving that work to clerks. Our position on spreading the mail to carrier routes is that if clerks are being excessed into the S&DC, the jurisdiction of spreading the mail should follow them. Going back to 1992, the DRP RI-399 provides guidance, jurisdictional assignments shall not be changed solely based on moving operation(s) into a new facility. If jurisdictional assignments existed in a previous facility; they shall be carried forward into the new facility, except where operational changes result.

Local leaders must be familiar with the RI-399 process and the training manual that the Clerk Craft has provided. USPS management is improperly reverting clerk bid duty assignments. Contract enforcement and our vigilance are our best protections of clerk work. ■

2023 Bulk Mail Centers (BMC) Conference, Kansas



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

The Bulk Mail Center (BMC) Conference convened on Monday, April 17, 2023, at the Argosy Casino Hotel & Spa in Riverside, MO. The conference was chaired by Terry B. Martinez, BMC Coordinator, and hosted by Michelle Fitzpatrick, Kansas Kaw Valley Area Local. Twenty of the 21 BMCs were present, and 120 delegates attended. All national officers and delegates were recognized.

On Sunday, April 16, there was a Welcome Reception Dinner. Music was provided by local talent DJ Donald Bayliss, BMC Clerk Craft Director. On the first day, National President Mark Dimondstein, Vice President Debby Szeredy, Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell, and Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard addressed the delegates.

We received a total of 62 agenda items: eight Clerk, four Maintenance, 17 Motor Vehicle, and 33 General/All-Craft items. Division Directors, Lamont Brooks (Clerk), Idowu Balogun (Maintenance), and Michael Foster (Motor Vehicle), participated and represented their respective crafts. We recessed the day one session at 2 p.m. to take a trip to the local BMC. We spent about an hour at the BMC.

On day two, hospitality was provided by the local, offering several types of Kanas City BBQ. Industrial Relations Director Charlie Cash discussed Network Modernization and Regional Processing and Distribution Centers (RPDCs). We continued addressing the BMC agenda items and were finished by late afternoon. In the morning, we announced that we were able to collect \$3,200 in COPA contributions. Thank you for all your contributions.

BACKGROUND

Established in 1974 to process large parcels, BMCs require mechanized equipment that created working conditions unlike those at other postal facilities. BMC employees faced other unusual circumstances: when the parcel sorting operations were moved from other facilities, a large percentage of the original BMC employees were involuntarily transferred, or exceded, into their assignments.

In 1980, BMC locals submitted a resolution to the APWU biennial convention. Passed unanimously, the resolution established regular national BMC meetings to address the unusual problems faced by members. For 25 years,

BMC representatives have met each year to discuss issues of special concern.

We represent Clerk, Maintenance and Motor Vehicles craft employees at 21 Bulk Mail Centers in metropolitan areas around the country.

BMCs' Uncertain Future

Under the Postal Service Modernization plan, the BMCs, also known as National Distribution Centers (NDCs), will undergo a massive restructuring. The Postal Service is planning to create 60-65 potential RPDCs, and plan to convert all but one of the BMCs into an RPDC, with the ability to process letters, flats, and parcels under one roof. They also plan to eliminate origin processing of BMC products at NDCs; merge marketing, periodicals and package service into FC Mail stream; eliminate NDC-to-NDC Network; and use NDCs for Priority and FC Package processing. This will require the deployment of several plants with automated equipment, the likes of the Matrix Regional Sorter (MaRS), Parcel Sorters, and Flat Sorting Machines (DBCS, DIOSS, and conveyor System). The APWU is battle-ready to protect our members as we face this assault on our jobs. We would love to hear what is going on at your BMC. ■



Terry B. Martinez: BMC Coordinator



Conference Host Local President Michelle Fitzpatrick



Committee Members (L-R) LaCretia Young, Mark Giddens, Donald Bayliss, Octavia, Sherron Payne, Tinika Watson, Denisha McGowan, Stephanie McGhee, Janequa Robinson, Keith Maxey, Skylar Wessly, Pam Byrd, Lisa Byrd, Michelle Fitzpatrick.

2010 MVS Jobs MOU Arbitration Decision



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Garrett Langley

The Motor Vehicle craft has received National level Arbitrator Brent's ruling in case Q10C-4Q-C 4256800, interpreting the language from the MVS Jobs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In this MOU, the parties agreed to return a minimum of 600 Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) routes to the MVS craft, along with other work guarantees, in exchange for billions of dollars in work-rules changes and salary concessions made by the union in the 2010-2015 contract.

After the contract was ratified, the USPS took the position that "600 PVS routes" meant 600 PVS duty assignments. The APWU interpreted the language that the "600 routes" were 600 Highway Contract Routes (HCRs) converted to PVS that would be more than 600 individual duty assignments. Arbitrator Brent agreed with the APWU position regarding the bargaining history and other national level arbitrations interpretations. We will continue to report on the implementation of this award.

Postal Vehicle Operators Pilot MOUs Expanded

The national parties have agreed upon additional MOUs for establishing and developing Postal Vehicle Operators (PVOs). The PVO position is intended to assign to the MVS craft the transportation of bulk quantities of mail without driving a vehicle that requires a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The parties have agreed that these are career bargaining unit positions, and have agreed on the position description and qualifications standards.

The parties agreed to establish 63 PVO positions at the Richmond, VA S&DC, 38 PVO positions at Charlottesville, VA transfer hub (future S&DC), 14 PVO positions at the Hampton, VA transfer hub (future S&DC), and 25 positions in Athens, GA. These will bring work to the craft that had previously been performed by contractors. The PVOs in the Richmond facility should not perform bargaining unit work that is performed by the Richmond Motor Vehicle Operators (MVOs), and Tractor Trailer Operators (TTOs).

The PVO candidates will be certified by Driver Safety Instructors (DSIs) that they can safely operate the vehicles. The parties also agreed that, during the pilot program, the Postal Service will make available the required training to obtain a CDL for interested PVO employees who volunteer to be trained. Once CDL training has been completed, and a CDL license has been obtained, those PVO employees will be considered qualified for promotion to MVO and TTO positions. This language strengthens our position that the training of our CDL license holders and those Postal Service employees seeking a CDL license should be performed by our DSIs.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Process (ADRP)

As part of the PVO expansion and integration MOU, alleged violations will be handled through the Alternative Dispute Resolution Process (ADRP) and the normal grievance procedure. We are negotiating an MOU to further define and identify which violations will be handled by the ADRP and which alleged violations will stay within the normal grievance-arbitration procedure. We expect management's compliance with these MOUs, but from the disputes, problems, and experiences from the OKC PVO Pilot, the ADRP and grievance processes remain necessary.

MVS Dispatch Coordinator

The Postal Service recently provided an Article 19 notification of a new MVS bargaining unit position, the Dispatch Coordinator. This position has a variety of duties and responsibilities, as proposed by the Postal Service, however those duties greatly overlap with other duty assignments in the MVS and other crafts. We do not agree with certain components of the position, and have initiated a National Dispute on the notification regarding this position, which would make it difficult to track the work being performed by the bargaining unit and would shift bargaining unit work to supervisors.

We continue to fight to bring additional work to and retain the work in the MVS craft. We ask all of you to join us in that fight and stand up for our work. ■

Contracts Negotiations Update



Director Arrion Brown

Earlier this year, I wrote about the contracts the Support Service Division would negotiate this year. We are currently in the heart of “negotiations season” with one ratified contract, one tentative agreement, and three ongoing contract negotiations. This article will update everyone on the status of our completed and ongoing negotiations.

The APWU members who were formerly covered under the *Pat Salmon and Son, Inc.* agreement have ratified a new contract with the successor company, 10 Roads Express LLC. The bargaining committee for this contract consisted of leaders from the Texoma U.S. Mail Carriers of Arkansas, and the Memphis and Shreveport locals, who all worked very hard with national leadership to develop proposals to improve the contract for the members. The committee solicited ideas from members, and went over the entire contract from beginning to end to develop proposals. Those efforts produced over 90 suggested changes, of which the company agreed to 41 proposals for change.

The key proposals that we came to an agreement with the company on are new, unscheduled layover language that pays drivers for all unscheduled layover time, minus any mandatory Department of Transportation (DOT) break hours. We agreed to end management’s ability to deny vacation time when they are below the five percent contractual threshold that limits time off, and we also agreed to language that allows drivers on six-day routes to take the sixth day off, if the time off is submitted on the first day of the workweek, and the company can cover the route. These working condition changes will positively benefit our drivers, and we are proud to have been able to negotiate them into the contract.

The APWU has negotiated a tentative agreement with 10 Roads Express for the Harrisburg 10-4 APWU local. Their tentative agreement gives them the rights to seniority, progressive discipline, and discipline procedures that they did not have before. The existence of an official agreement, once ratified, offers protections and security for drivers who were at-will employees prior to their decision to join the APWU. The Harrisburg tentative agreement includes unscheduled layover pay that allows drivers to be compensated for all unscheduled

layover time, minus mandatory DOT break hours. The tentative agreement has been approved by the bargaining committee and will be sent out for ratification by the membership.

In June, the APWU began to meet with USPS officials to negotiate for the National Postal Professional Nurses (NPPN). Currently, we have submitted proposals to improve training and working conditions. An area of concern we have for the NPPN is the understaffing that has existed for several years. There are 27 vacancies in the craft that management has not been able to fill. We have ideas that would allow management to attract applicants to fill the current vacancies and to retain Occupational Health Nurses (OHNs) that are already on staff. We will submit those ideas as proposals to management.

THE KEY PROPOSALS THAT WE CAME TO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE COMPANY ON ARE NEW, UNSCHEDULED, LAYOVER LANGUAGE THAT PAYS DRIVERS FOR ALL UNSCHEDULED LAYOVER TIME, MINUS ANY MANDATORY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT) BREAK HOURS.

We will continue negotiations for the NPPN contract throughout the fall to make these gains. The Aug. 11, 2023 expiration has been extended to Oct. 11, 2023.

The APWU began negotiations for the Des Moines/Kansas City APWU 10 Roads Express drivers in July. These negotiations are ongoing and we will keep the membership updated through the local bargaining committee.

In August, we resumed negotiations for the United Drivers of Peoria. We made significant progress towards an agreement when we met earlier in the year, and look forward to the first tentative agreement for our Peoria drivers.

Once negotiations season is completed, the Support Services Division will focus our time and energy on building the division and training. We look forward to the opportunities that are in our future. ■



Omar Gonzalez, Western Regional Coordinator

LEAVE MY LEAVE ALONE

You earn leave, it's yours! Pursuant to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Articles 3,5,10,19 management must comply with the leave regulations outlined in Chapter 510 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manul (ELM). Far too often, managers ignore or misapply those rules. Here are some common misapplications that must be challenged:

THREE ABSENCES IN 90 DAYS TRIGGER DISCIPLINE: There is no such rule. It's the supervisor's review of the attendance record on a case-by-case basis in light of "all" relevant evidences and circumstances, NOT any set number of absences that determine whether discipline is warranted. (JCIM 10 page 3)

NEEDS OF THE SERVICE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR LEAVE REQUESTS: The supervisor must also consider your individual welfare. Failure to do so likely violates the CBA. (ELM 511.1)

PS 3971s ONCE ISSUED BY eRMS CALL IN SYSTEM CAN'T BE CHANGED: It is your leave request. You complete the form when you return. You need to review and change the Leave Type, Remarks, Hours boxes then sign and date the form. Not being permitted to do so likely violates the CBA (JCIM 10 page 12; F21Ex 142.31)

MUST SIGN THAT FORM INSTRUCTIONS WERE ISSUED AND UNDERSTOOD: Bosses cannot require you to sign or initial that you read and understand instructions or face discipline. (Step 4 N4N-5C-11608)

COVID POLICIES EXPIRED, ABSENCES FOR COVID NO LONGER PROTECTED: COVID has not disappeared, nor have protections under the CBA for contagious diseases. Ignoring the conditions for authorizing leave for contagious diseases likely violates the CBA. (ELM 513.32)

YOU MUST USE LITEBLUE OR APP TO REPORT AN ABSENCE: What is required is to notify management of the inability to report as soon as possible. Calling the 877 number is the recommended method. Be

Warned: when using the apps, you agree to waive your right to privacy and your device may be monitored. If the boss requires you to use the apps, the CBA is likely violated. (JCIM 10 page 4,5)

DEEMS DESIRABLE ALLOWS SUPERVISORS TO DEMAND DOCUMENTATION FOR ALL ABSENCES: An absence of 1 to 3 days can be substantiated by an employee's stated explanation. Demands for medical documentation deemed desirable for protection of the service can not be unreasonable or arbitrary and must be stated by the Supervisor in eRMS. (JCIM pages 4;13)

NOT REPORTING AS SCHEDULED IS AN AUTOMATIC AWOL: There are exceptions to reporting as scheduled. Documentation may be submitted later. AWOL is serious but not automatic. AWOLs must be challenged. (ELM 665.42)

ALL CALL-INS ARE UNSCHEDULED ABSENCES: An absence of more than one day does not mean all the days are automatically marked unscheduled depending on when notice was given. The first "may" be unscheduled, but subsequent days could be marked as scheduled, and challenged when marked or listed in discipline. (EL 510-83-9; APMG Gildea '84 policy)

IT IS LEGITIMATE TO HAVE EMPLOYEES SIGN PS 3971s AT AN INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW: 3971s are to be completed upon return from an absence and acted upon "approved or disapproved." If disapproved, a reason must be stated, and a copy issued to the employee. (JCIM 10 page 12; ELM 513.342)

There are many more misapplications. Stewards need to fully investigate and document facts to determine if CBA violations occurred. **Do not let bosses abuse your leave, challenge violations!**

ON ANOTHER NOTE, Regional Coordinators Tiffany Foster, AJ Jones, Yared Wonde and I welcome Central Regional Coordinator Amy Puhalski to the NEB and wish Sister Sharyn Stone the best in retirement! ■



Judy Beard, Director

Fighting for the Issues that Matter: Social Security Fairness, Citizen Power, and More!

Social Security Fairness Act Call Congress Day of Action

Your Legislative Department continues to press forward on the *Social Security Fairness Act* (H.R. 82/S. 597). The *Social Security Fairness Act* would repeal both the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). These two provisions negatively impact individuals under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) who qualify for Social Security benefits, as well as their spouses.

The WEP formula reduces the Social Security benefits of those with pensions from employers who did not withhold Social Security taxes, but still qualify for Social Security benefits through secondary non-federal employment. The GPO is similar to the WEP, but affects the spouses, survivors of those receiving pensions from employers who did not withhold Social Security taxes. The WEP reduction can total up to fifty percent of the pension amount, and the GPO reduction can total up to two-thirds of the pension amount.

The bill, introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Representative Garret Graves (R-LA-06), has bipartisan support. As of the start of the August recess, H.R. 82 has obtained 289 cosponsors in the House, just one cosponsor short of our goal of 290, which would require the bill to be marked up in committee. While we are almost at our goal, it is important that we continue to obtain cosponsors well past our goal to ensure that the bill has enough support to make it all the way to passage.

Sometimes the strategy of a bill's sponsors is to hold off on promoting the committee's vote until the bill has as many cosponsors as possible. To help facilitate this, I am happy to announce a legislative call Congress day of action which will occur on September 27. On this day, call the legislative hotline at (844) 402-1001 to be connected to your representative. Once connected, please ask them to cosponsor the *Social Security Fairness Act* and pressure House Speaker McCarthy to place the bill on the floor for a vote!

Every Election Matters - Issue 1 Defeated in Ohio!

Democracy prevailed on August 8 when the people of Ohio voted down State Issue 1, which would have raised the threshold to pass a state constitutional amendment to 60 percent from a simple majority, and would make the placement of citizen-led issues on the ballot significantly more challenging. More than 100 years of majority rule would have been eliminated in favor of special interests.

A large, bipartisan coalition worked together to educate the public on the dangers of moving the goalposts for citizen-led issues, and the Legislative and Political Department is proud of the work our Ohio members put in to defeat Issue 1. Every election matters, and we are focused on ensuring that democracy, and "one person, one vote," is protected.

We want to thank our Ohio state leadership, especially President Steve Charles and Administrative Vice President Vance Zimmerman, for their commitment to this fight. We also want to thank our members across the state who stepped up and got involved, whether by volunteering, or simply voting this issue down. ■



APWU member Lisa Vest helping write postcards and educating Ohioans about the dangers of passing Issue 1.

ORGANIZATION



Anna Smith, Director

Organizing is Essential to Secure the Future of Our Union

How many opportunities in a day do you let pass by without organizing a non-member? Every day on the work room floor we talk to our coworkers, but do you know if that coworker you're speaking with is a member? Next time you're having a casual conversation, take a moment to ask if they are standing with you or against you. If they are not a member, you have set the stage for a conversation about the benefits and importance of being in a union.

We have an abundance of benefits provided by the years of negotiations between the APWU and the Postal Service. Many of our non-members look at the APWU as just a grievance machine, and have somehow convinced themselves that they have never needed the APWU, so why should they pay dues? We must take the opportunity to explain to them that, although they may receive their paycheck from the USPS, all of the contractual raises, step and cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) increases exist because of negotiations by the APWU.

OUR ONLINE PROCESS HAS MADE JOINING THE APWU EASY FOR BOTH NON-MEMBERS WHO WANT TO JOIN, AND FOR THE MEMBERS LOOKING TO SIGN UP THEIR CO-WORKERS.

The fact that we have paid annual and sick leave, an APWU health plan consumer driven option, where the Postal Service pays 95 percent of our premiums, seniority rights, and two-year conversion for Postal Support Employees (PSEs) are ALL benefits negotiated on their behalf as a result of the APWU membership. The more educated our coworkers are about our benefits, the more likely they are to see the importance of joining the union and standing with us to increase the strength and bargaining power of the APWU.

We often hear, "whether or not I pay dues, the union still has to represent me." The problem with that theory is that if everyone felt this way, there would be no APWU. And without the union, all of the benefits negotiated over decades would start to disappear. It takes the collective power of our membership to continue to negotiate and

move our union. Without members, we have no negotiating power, and management would no longer provide the benefits that our union brothers and sisters have fought so hard for.

Never miss an opportunity to organize! Educate your coworkers, organize your non-members, and secure the future of the APWU.

With our recent COLA increase, now is a great time to remind our non-members of what we can achieve by standing together, and how much stronger we would be if we all stood together.

Our online process has made joining the APWU easy for both non-members who want to join, and for the members looking to sign up their co-workers. The entire process takes minutes to complete. Take a picture and save the QR image below on the left to your phone. Once saved, you can easily have your non-member coworker scan the code with their phone so they can complete the process of joining online. If we weren't unionized, everyone one of us would be nothing more than casual employees, lacking the benefits, wages, and working conditions that we enjoy today. Make the commitment today and ask at least one non-member coworker to stand with you.

Gearing up for the Peak Season Hiring

Local leaders, please remember Peak Season Hiring is just around the corner. So be sure to get your organizing material orders in. You can now scan the Order Form QR code on the right to order materials online. ■



JOIN APWU



SCAN ME



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Effective Leaders Needed

What makes an effective leader? What sets them apart from other people? Is it their educational background, financial status, age, race, sex, or occupation? No, it is their awareness of the challenges they face, and the enthusiasm for creating new opportunities.

An effective leader must be able to influence and inspire other people. An effective leader possesses many qualities that sets them apart from the crowd as they face many challenges; they must be able to rise to the occasion.

What are the Challenges Leaders Face?

Being an effective leader requires discipline, patience, and the ability to work well with others, in order to accomplish a common goal. Other challenges include:

- **Accepting Criticism** – One must learn to sort out the constructive, from which one can learn, and the malicious, which one must ignore.
- **Withstanding Adversity** – Things will not always go well; failures will happen. A good leader will bounce back.
- **Delegating Authority** – Making assignments and following up on the results. No one can do it all by themselves.
- **Speaking Before a Crowd** – Talking at meetings and/or speaking during pickets or demonstrations.
- **Standing up to People in Powerful Positions** – Not afraid to file a grievance when the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) or employee's rights are violated.
- **Always Doing What's Best for the Organization** – Never allowing their personal feelings to interfere with what is best for the union.
- **Sharing the Credit** – Learning to praise others and to give credit where it is due.
- **Concentrating During Stressful Times** – Able to concentrate under difficult circumstances, always keeping the union's goal in mind.
- **Accepting Responsibility for Mistakes** – Assuming responsibility for their mistakes and the mistakes of others.

Qualities Effective Leaders Should Possess

Effective leadership requires essential qualities.

Effective Leaders should be:

- **Honest** – Are clear on what their values are and are consistent in applying them. Do the honest thing and never allow personal feelings to cloud their judgment.
- **Confident** – Know where they are going, have outlined specific and obtainable goals for the organization, and stay the course.
- **Respectful** – Treat all people in the organization with dignity and respect.
- **A Motivator** – Have the confidence to make decisions and instill confidence in others.
- **Compassionate** – Care not only about the organization, but also about the people, and demonstrate that through their actions.
- **A Visionary** – Understand what is needed and how to achieve it. Solicit input, so that everyone feels that their opinion is important.
- **Knowledgeable and Humble** – Keep abreast of current issues confronting the union. Are aware of the resources available to aid union members. But do not claim to know everything.
- **Levelheaded** – Do not lose their cool under pressure. Rather than panic, they work harder and are not afraid to take risks or make mistakes.
- **Self-Aware** – Know their own strengths and weaknesses and how to best utilize the strengths of others for the good of the organization.
- **Committed** – Leads by example and work alongside everyone else, showing that the organization is more successful when everyone works together.
- **Diversity Orientated** – Recognize the importance of diversity when appointing committee members or when making assignments. Understand that appreciating different points of view helps the union tap into the varied talents and resources of all its members.

Do you think you have what it takes to become an effective leader? If so, the APWU needs you! Join us in our fight to stop harassment, enforce the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and to save postal jobs and benefits. Contact your local president, and become involved.

Text for this article is from APWU's Leadership Development Handbook. ■

Calling All Service Members in the APWU

Hello Family,



We are continuing efforts to make sure that we strengthen our movement to mobilize and engage our family as it relates to economic and social justice issues. We can remain successful and build on our unity by persistent-

ly staying in tune with current issues to determine what we can do to fight against anyone who attempts to dismantle our rights. We must also persist towards securing more rights and benefits due to our service members.

This is a call for a national mobilization of everyone who has served, or is in the military, to connect with us to bolster our network as a vehicle to preserve the rights of our military family. Also, if you're interested, attend our gathering at the All-Craft Conference where we will activate and engage our service family members across the country.

One military issue highlighted in an *"American Prospect"* article notes that the apparent truce in Congress over veterans' rights and benefits is over, and a fight over funding the budget for health care will be revived. According to Suzanne Gordon and Steve Early (2023), the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee is set to begin considering a new bill that would make the Veterans Health Administration divert billions of dollars from the annual budget to privatized services.

A National Public Radio article highlights the benefit of keeping public Veterans Health Administration Hospitals. A nationwide Medicare survey revealed that veterans rated VA hospitals higher than private health care facilities in all 10 categories of patient satisfaction, which confirms the hospital's usefulness. Lastly, an article from the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute discusses the full report that confirms that severe staffing shortages threaten to obstruct the VA's top healthcare and benefits systems.

More details about these issues are below:

- prospect.org/health/2023-07-11-gunning-for-more-va-privatization/
- www.npr.org/2023/06/14/1181827077/va-hospitals-health-care
- www.veteranspolicy.org/post/vhpi-releases-illuminating-report-on-va-s-severe-staffing-shortages

THIS IS A CALL FOR A NATIONAL MOBILIZATION OF EVERYONE WHO HAS SERVED, OR IS IN THE MILITARY, TO CONNECT WITH US TO BOLSTER OUR NETWORK AS A VEHICLE TO PRESERVE THE RIGHTS OF OUR MILITARY FAMILY. ALSO, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, ATTEND OUR GATHERING AT THE ALL-CRAFT CONFERENCE WHERE WE WILL ACTIVATE AND ENGAGE OUR SERVICE FAMILY MEMBERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

In summary, education on the issues will aid veterans in our continued fight to stop the assault on military and veterans' rights. The APWU has gone on record as being against privatization, and the attack on the VA represents another example of why we must fight against selling off public institutions. The fight for the public good extends to the Postal Service as well. Unity in action will help us succeed.

Thanks again for your service. See you soon.

(Disclaimer: Articles cited above are for educational purposes only and do not represent the APWU's endorsement of the organization or its policies.) ■



Daleo Freeman, Director

Promoting Unity Within, and Among, our APWU Family

The Human Relations Department strives to demonstrate that a progressive union goes beyond the necessary and important responsibilities of negotiating and enforcing our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). I am pleased to be able to direct the programs of the department, which are aimed at fulfilling members' needs, for solutions that are outside of the scope of the CBA.

The department is committed to promoting unity within, and among, our APWU family. We understand that diversity includes differences in opinion. Diverse views are expected and welcomed, and should be handled with respect for others. Our goal is for everyone to work to handle issues with a collective approach that is intended to benefit all of us. Unity is one of the guiding principles of our work in the department, and the work that I will report on in this article.

Most of you know that one program under the jurisdiction of the department is intended to assist APWU members with Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) matters. I have been keeping the newly established Regional Resource Assistants (RRAs) busy with this task. I extend my thanks to the RRAs and their dedication to the membership of this great union. I thank them for helping with achieving the progress that we have accomplished. I thank all state and local members for supporting the new program, which involves training and presenting information that is vital for success in OWCP matters.

We have received an overwhelming amount of feedback from members who attended the training sessions, and the vast majority of the responses have been positive. We have done so much work since the implementation of this program, and there is much more work to be done. We are working on the next steps. Don't hesitate to contact the Human Relations Department with any requests or questions concerning OWCP.

We missed everyone who was not able to attend the Human Relations Assembly that took place in Baltimore, MD. It is our hope that someone from our APWU family who attended the Assembly made the effort to update you. We also intend to reach you directly in the future.

To recap on the sessions held at the Assembly, for the first time on my watch, we held an Assembly that proved

to be a significant educational and empowering family gathering. We were overjoyed by the engagement of members from across the country who were able to attend the training. We encouraged members to take the information given on OWCP, Civil Rights, Civic Participation, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the Postal Employees Relief Fund (PERF), Veterans Resources, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and more back to their respective areas and educate members on these issues. It was an honor and extreme pleasure to train and assist in training our fellow family members.

THE DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROMOTING UNITY WITHIN, AND AMONG, OUR APWU FAMILY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT DIVERSITY INCLUDES DIFFERENCES IN OPINION. DIVERSE VIEWS ARE EXPECTED AND WELCOMED, AND SHOULD BE HANDLED WITH RESPECT FOR OTHERS. OUR GOAL IS FOR EVERYONE TO WORK TO HANDLE ISSUES WITH A COLLECTIVE APPROACH THAT IS INTENDED TO BENEFIT ALL OF US.

At the beginning of the Assembly, I warned attendees that some of the subject matters might make some members uncomfortable, and I acknowledge that a few members voiced that they did indeed feel some agitation. Rest assured that the agitation was not arbitrary. The purpose of presenting challenging content is to foster understanding and unity going forward. We cannot solve problems that are not known, are ignored, or misunderstood. We look forward to better assisting locals as we continue to move forward.

The initiatives and efforts coming from the department aim to equip all members in an equitable manner. If you would like to schedule a training on areas that are under the jurisdiction of this Department, please contact my office. We will coordinate dates and times. *The Struggle Continues.* ■

Still Fighting for The Social Security Fairness Act



Nancy Olumekor, Director

The Social Security Fairness Act, H.R.82 and S.597 will repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).

According to the Congressional Research Service report dated Feb. 13, 2023, and entitled *Social Security: The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO)*:

“The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) are two separate provisions that reduce regular Social Security benefits for workers and their eligible family members if the worker receives (or is entitled to) a pension based on earnings from employment not covered by Social Security.

The WEP applies to most people who receive both a pension from noncovered work (including certain foreign pensions) and Social Security benefits.

**SENATOR SHERROD BROWN (D-OH) SAID,
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RETIRE FROM A LIFE OF DEDICATED
SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITIES.”**

Although participation in Social Security is compulsory for most workers, about 6% of all workers in paid employment or self-employment are not covered by Social Security. Noncovered workers include state and local government employees covered by alternative staff-retirement systems; most permanent civilian federal employees hired before January 1, 1984, who are covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or other alternative retirement plan; employees covered by the Railroad Retirement system; domestic, election, or farm workers with earnings below certain thresholds; people with low levels of net earnings from self-employment; and certain nonimmigrants. As of December 2022, about 2.0 million people (or about 3% of all Social Security beneficiaries) were affected by the WEP. More than 1.9 million of those affected were retired worker beneficiaries, which was about 4% of the entire retired-worker beneficiary population.

The GPO reduces the Social Security spouse’s or widow(er)’s benefits of most people who also receive a pension based on federal, state, or local government employment not covered by Social Security. In December 2022, 734,601 Social Security beneficiaries, or about 1 % of all beneficiaries, had their benefits reduced by the GPO.”

Over the past 40 years, public service employees, who work “For the People” at the local, state, and federal levels and living in all 50 states, have been penalized by the WEP-GPO.

Now is the time, during this 118th session of Congress, to pass the Social Security Fairness Act. This bipartisan legislation would ensure that public sector workers and their families will receive full Social Security benefits.

As Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) stated, “Public servants from across the country have dedicated their professional careers to the service of their country, yet many face reduced retirement benefits due to the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset,” and regarding the Social Security Fairness Act she continued that, “it would also give current public sector employees the peace of mind to know that they will be able to receive their full Social Security benefits when they reach retirement age.”

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) said, “This small fix will help these families have the peace of mind that their Social Security benefits will be there for them when they retire from a life of dedicated service to our communities.”

Almost 300 Representatives in the House and nearly 50 Senators have co-sponsored this legislation. We must work together to convince additional representatives in the House and Senate to repeal the WEP-GPO.

On Sept. 13, 2023, bi-partisan legislators held a press conference on Capitol Hill expressing the importance of passing the Social Security Fairness Act. In addition, on the same date, the National WEP-GPO Repeal Taskforce held an event on Capitol Hill in support of the Act.

Keep the pressure on, contact Congress at 202-224-3121 or send letters, postcards and emails asking them to vote for the Social Security Fairness Act.

This is an important issue for everyone, “We are union, an injury to one is an injury to all.” ■



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

APWU Health Plan Chief Operating Manager Has Retired

Carroll “Rocky” Midgett, Chief Operating Manager of the APWU Health Plan, will retire after almost 42 years of service. Mr. Midgett began his career with the APWU Health Plan in 1981 as Senior Systems Programmer. He quickly rose through the ranks, holding the position of the Division Manager of Operations Support, before being appointed as the Chief Operating Manager in 1991.

During his tenure as Chief Operating Manager, he oversaw the growth and success of the APWU Health Plan. He led the development of innovative new products, like the first Consumer Driven Plan in Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB), improved customer service, and reduced costs.

Mr. Midgett is a highly respected leader in the healthcare industry. He is the Chairman of the Association of Federal Health Organizations (AFHO). He is also esteemed by his colleagues for his leadership, expertise, and sense of humor. The APWU Health Plan is grateful for Mr. Midgett’s many years of service. He has made a significant contribution to the success of the Health Plan, and he will be missed by his colleagues and members. On behalf of the Health Plan Board of Directors, I would like to express that Rocky Midgett has been a tremendous asset to the APWU Health Plan. He has helped to make the Health Plan what it is today, and we are grateful for his many years of service.

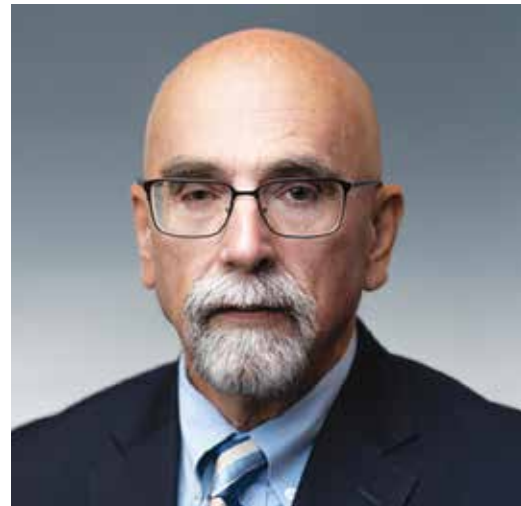
A gathering in honor of Mr. Midgett’s retirement was held on Aug. 03, at the APWU Health Plan headquarters in Glen Burnie, MD. The APWU Health Plan wishes him all the best in his retirement and he will be missed.

Randy Griffin has been appointed the new Chief Operating Manager. Mr. Griffin will assume the role on Sept. 05, 2023.

Mr. Griffin is a graduate of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, with a degree in Public Policy and Health Policy Administration. He brings nearly 25 years of experience in the health insurance industry to the APWU Health Plan. He has held a variety of leadership positions at other health insurance carriers, including Director of Market Facing Systems Integration, Project Delivery and Support, and Manager of Vendor Integration Delivery and Support. In these roles, he was responsible for overseeing the integration of multiple systems and vendors, as well as the delivery of large-scale enterprise-wide projects and initiatives. Most recently, Mr. Griffin served as the

Manager of Member Services at the APWU Health Plan. In this role, he was responsible for a wide range of operations, including enrollment, public relations, member service, provider operations, and project management.

The Health Plan Board of Directors welcomes Randy Griffin to his new role as the Chief Operating Manager. Mr. Griffin has a proven track record of success in the health insurance industry, and he is a highly skilled and experienced leader. We are confident that he will be a valuable asset to our Executive Leadership team and will help us continue to provide our members with the highest quality of care. ■



Carroll “Rocky” Midgett



Randy Griffin

2023 APWU SCHOLARSHIP

The APWU proudly presents the winners of three scholarship programs: The E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship, Vocational Scholarship, and Best Essay Award for 2023!

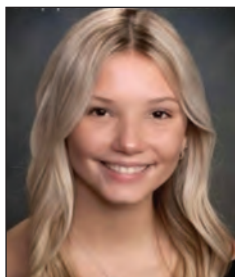
When the five predecessor craft unions merged to form the APWU in 1971, the new union decided to maintain an academic scholarship program created in 1969 by the United Federation of Postal Clerks (UFPC) as a tribute to UFPC president E.C. "Roy" Hallbeck.

HALLBECK WINNERS

Brooke Pavelka,
Daughter of **Jessica Pavelka** of the Nebraska
Postal Workers Union Local



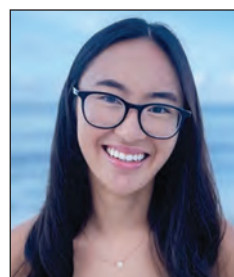
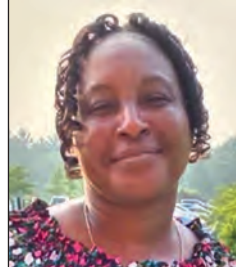
Colton Richard Czubakowski, Son of
Chris Czubakowski of the Milwaukee Area Local



Angelina Scalise,
Daughter of **Robert Simonson** of the Long
Island Area Local



Ethan Mitchell,
Son of **Adonna Mitchell** of the Central
Massachusetts Area Local



Hillary Tran,
Daughter of **Paul Tran** of the Fort Worth Texas
Area Local



Zachariah Joseph
Son of **Bobby Joseph** of the Texas Postal
Workers Union

Jedda Lusk,
Daughter of **Thomas Lusk** of the Colorado
Springs Area Local



Derek Sadorra, Son
of **Anthony Sadorra** of Redwood Empire Area
Local, California



WINNERS

The APWU Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship program provides financial assistance to children of APWU union members. It awards \$2,000 per year for four consecutive years of college to one male and one female high school student from each of the five postal regions.

The APWU Vocational Scholarship was established by the National Executive Board to help students interested in programs of study leading to trade, technical, industrial, or vocational occupations. Five recipients, one from each of the five postal regions, will receive up to \$3,000 to be used for up to three years of study in a specific trade, technical, industrial, or vocational school.

The Best Essay winner receives an additional one-time award of \$2,000. This year's Best Essay winner is Ladan Hashi, of the Northern Virginia Area Local.

"As she is a first-generation college student, winning this scholarship means so much to my daughter and also to me and my husband as immigrants," said Nimo Osman, the mother and sponsor of the Best Essay winner. "I am a proud APWU member and supporter, and I am so happy to know they will be helping my daughter's college journey and to learn her essay won." ■



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

Are You Interested in Applying for a Scholarship in 2024?

The deadline to apply is May 31, 2024. Eligible applicants are encouraged to submit materials well before the May 31 deadline. For more information, visit: apwu.org/scholarship-programs.

VOCATIONAL WINNERS



Shyanne Seeliger,
Daughter of **Timothy Seeliger** of the Madison, Wisconsin Area Local



Dawone Diggs, Jr., Son
of **Dawone Diggs, Sr.**, of
the Winston-Salem Area Local

BEST ESSAY WINNER



Ladan Hashi, Daughter
of **Nimo Osman** of the
Northern Virginia Area Local

IN MEMORIAM ■■■■■

Charles Logan Wilcox, 1945 – 2023



Charles “Charlie” Wilcox, former Maintenance Division National Business Agent (NBA), Northeast Region, passed away on July 3, 2023, in Ipswich, MA.

Brother Wilcox was born in Colonial Heights, VA on May 2, 1945. At the age of 18, Wilcox enlisted in the Navy, and served aboard the USS Springfield from 1963 to 1967. After leaving

the Navy, Wilcox moved to the Boston, MA area, where he received an associate degree in business administration at the University of Massachusetts. While in Boston, he met his wife Pam Howard, who was a nursing student. They moved to Ipswich, MA in 1977, where they raised their four children.

Wilcox joined the Postal Service as a maintenance craft employee in 1973. He held various positions, including electronic technician, mail processing equipment mechanic, stationary engineer, and engineman. He was also a member and steward of the Boston Metro Area Local.

In 1980 Wilcox was elected as the Regional Representative for the Maintenance Division (Boston Region), and in 1983, he was elected Maintenance President of the Boston Metro Area Local.

Wilcox was elected as the Maintenance Division NBA, Northeast Region, in 1986, and held the position until his retirement in 2007. After his career with the Postal Service, Brother Wilcox enjoyed hosting parties, traveling, and spending time with his friends and family, including his nine grandchildren.

“I was honored to serve with Charlie for several years as a fellow National Business Agent and as a member of the Maintenance Council,” said National Maintenance Craft Director, Idowu Balogun. “I fondly remember him as an easygoing, yet no-nonsense advocate. Thank you, Charlie, for a lifetime of service.” ■



Neil Edmund Goham, 1942-2023

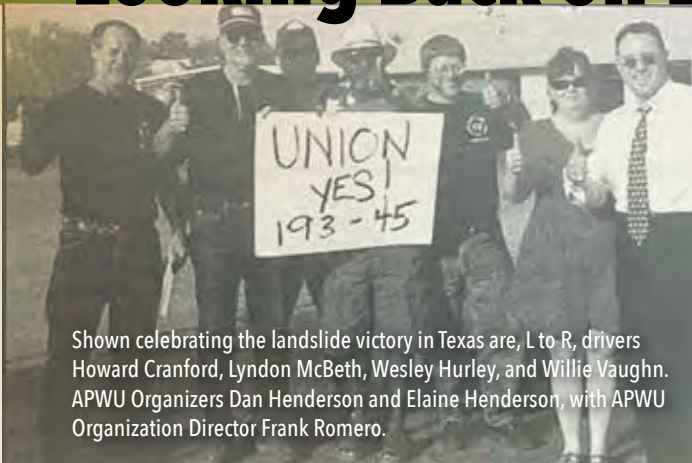
Neil Edmund Goham, former Clerk Division National Business Agent (NBA), New York Region, passed away on Aug. 8, 2023.

Brother Goham was born in Harrison, NJ on Nov. 27, 1942. He attended Harrison High School, where he was named the most athletic student, and developed a love for soccer.

In 1963, Goham joined the U.S. Army, and was stationed in Germany. After leaving the army, he began working as a clerk at the Postal Service and was an active member of the New York Metro Area Local. He held the positions of shop steward, craft representative, chief steward, and arbitration advocate. Goham was elected as an NBA in May 1983 and served until his retirement in November 2001.

Goham is survived by his partner, Sharon Tyrrell, as well as his former wife Regina, their children, and grandchildren. ■

Looking Back on Labor History



Shown celebrating the landslide victory in Texas are, L to R, drivers Howard Cranford, Lyndon McBeth, Wesley Hurley, and Willie Vaughn. APWU Organizers Dan Henderson and Elaine Henderson, with APWU Organization Director Frank Romero.

Drivers Win Landslide “APWU Yes” Votes in Growing Private Sector Organizing Campaigns

September/October 2000 – mail haul contract drivers in Texas and Tennessee won in landslide elections to join the APWU. Drivers from six trucking firms throughout Texas, owned by the Latisha Farrell Mail Haul companies, voted 193-45 to join the APWU. The drivers cited concerns with a lack of health benefits, an inferior pension plan, as well as issues with pay when their runs took longer due to poor weather or road conditions.

The following month, drivers in Memphis, TN, who were employed by Pat Salmon and Sons and cited similar issues with management, voted 85-15 to join the APWU. The Memphis win was the fourth private sector organizing success for the Memphis Tennessee Area Local.

In 1999, then APWU President, Moe Biller, established the National Organizing Committee to better respond to the union's convention mandates. The creation of the committee followed the union's successful campaign in Greensboro, NC - led by then local president, and current National President Mark Dimondstein – to organize drivers from East Coast Leasing. After the successful campaign, Biller appointed Dimondstein as Lead Organizer for the APWU, and who would become the field organizer responsible for the Texas and Tennessee wins.

The APWU continues to organize the unorganized in the private sector.

Wilmington Teachers Strike

September 2, 1975 – members of the Wilmington Federation of Teachers (WFT) in Wilmington, DE voted to strike after contract negotiations with the local Board of Education (BOE) broke down over pay. During the strike, over half of the 800 members of the WFT were arrested. More than 200 were charged with disorderly conduct. The workers eventually voted to ratify a new contract after securing concessions from the BOE. The teachers won an 18 percent increase in pay over the course of three years – 6 percent each year for three years – as well as the reinstatement of more than 500 teachers and 44 administrative staff, who were fired for participating in protected strike activities.

Occupy Wall Street



September 17, 2011 – hundreds of activists began a two-month takeover of Zuccotti Park in the Financial District of New York City, known as Wall Street, protesting

income inequality and corporate corruption amidst a global financial crisis. Organizers had originally planned to camp out in front of Wall Street's Charging Bull Statue, as well as One Chase Plaza, but the police were aware of these actions and erected barricades to block protesters from the city-owned parks.

The months-long action from hundreds of participants attracted thousands as the #occupywallstreet hashtag went viral, and the police response grew violent. On Sept. 24, unprovoked officers of the NYPD sprayed mace into a group of women and violently arrested 80 “protestors,” which included journalists, passers-by, and even members of the anti-war Granny Peace Brigade.

While the Wall Street protest ultimately came to an end on Nov. 15, 2011, after police forced protesters out of the park and arrested more than 200 people, the “Occupy Movement” would continue to spread across the country and around the world, calling for financial reform, and an end to income inequality, consumerism, and corporate corruption. ■



APPLY TODAY

Attend the APWU Leadership Institute, a three-week educational program that will focus on topics ranging from organizing, bargaining, and representation, to legislation, community alliances, and building the APWU and union movements. It will help strengthen and enhance the leadership skills of local and state leaders, and union activists across the country.

Course Schedule:

Week One: March 4 - 8, 2024

Week Two: April 1 - 5, 2024

Week Three: May 13 - 17, 2024



How Can You Apply?

1. Visit www.apwu.org/LeadershipInstitute or use the QR code below to complete the application form. Submit the form online or mail it to the APWU headquarters address on the application.
2. All applications must include a recommendation from a local, state, or national officer. Recommendations from community leaders are also welcome. The recommendation form is available online.

Key Application Dates:

Application Process Begins: September 18, 2023

Application Deadline: November 10, 2023

Notification to Accepted Applicants:
December 15, 2023

Scan to Apply Online

