



# The Hi-Lites



The official publication of Milwaukee, WI Area Local APWU, AFL-CIO

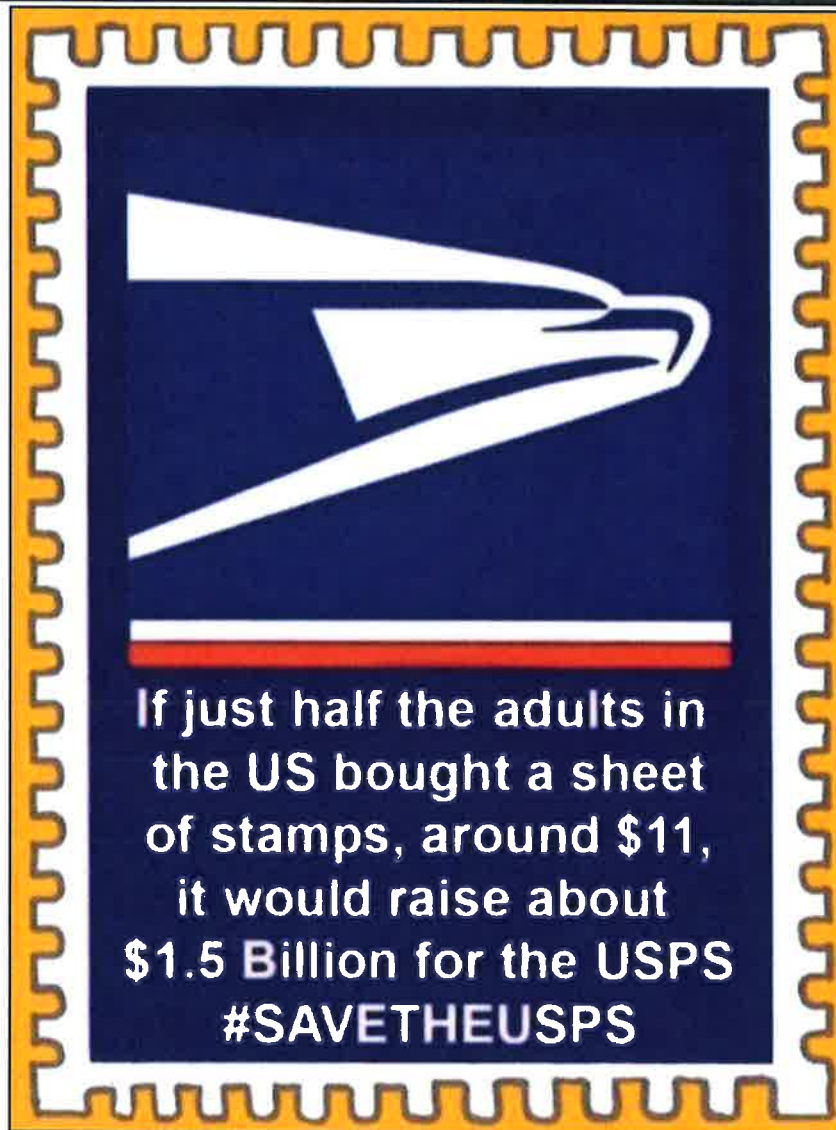
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## Milwaukee Wisconsin Area Local

Big Bend Brookfield Burlington Butler Cedarburg Cudahy Darien  
Delafield Delavan East Troy Elkhorn Elm Grove Franklin Fredonia  
Germantown Grafton Greendale Hales Corners Hartford Hartland  
Jackson Kewaskum Lomira Milwaukee Menomonee Falls Mequon-Thiensville  
Muskego Mukwonago New Berlin Oak Creek Oconomowoc Oakfield  
Okauchee Pewaukee Plymouth Port Washington Salem Slinger S. Milwaukee  
Sussex Wales Walworth Waterford Watertown Waukesha Whitewater



**Glenn Griggs  
President**

First, I would like to once again congratulate the new Executive Board and the stewards that will be representing your local union for the next 2 years. As I start this journey as your local president I can honestly say, it has been a busy one so far.

Some of the big concerns I have been hearing and, addressing from our members are management and craft employees not wearing mask. Even though the governor mask mandate has been overturned, keep in mind the postal service still has a mask mandate policy as well as the city of Milwaukee. It is for the safety and well being for everyone that we all continue to wear mask until a different policy comes out stating otherwise from the postal service.

Another issue or concern we have been working on is the Emergency Federal Employee Leave. There has been some questions or concerns what documentation is needed if any right now. The (OPM) which is the Office of Personnel Management should be releasing their guidelines soon as to what documentation is required, if any. In the meantime, if you request leave under the Emergency Federal Employee Leave and you are denied, request to see a steward.

If you are told to request a different type of leave because it was denied, our recommendation is to put what-

## Documentation Beats Conversation

*" Please make sure to fill out a 3971 when requesting this leave.  
Do not give a verbal request."*

ever leave type you request in lieu of emergency federal employee leave and see a steward asap, so they can investigate the issue and file a grievance if needed.

Please make sure to fill out a 3971 when requesting this leave. Do not give a verbal request. Documentation beats conversation. Your 3971 should state you are unable to work because of one of the 8 qualifying reasons listed below.

**Is subject to a Federal, State, or Local quarantine/isolation order related to Covid-19**

**Has been advised by a health care provider (HCP) to self-quarantine due to concerns related Covid-19**

**Is caring for an individual who is subject to such an order as in (1) or has been so advised as in (2)**

**Is experiencing Covid-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis**

**Is caring for the employee's son or daughter if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, requires or makes optional a virtual learning instruction models, or if the child-care provider of the son or daughter is unavailable, due to Covid-19 precautions**

**Is experiencing any other substantially similar condition**

**Is caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care,**

**without regard to whether another individual other than the employee is available to care for such family member, if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to Covid-19**

**Is obtaining immunization (vaccination) related to Covid-19 or is recovering from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization.**

I have also been getting several calls from the city station clerks with concerns that management is requiring everyone to take a lunch after years of not taking one. If you have a history of not taking lunches and suddenly management issues a blanket policy of forcing everyone to now take a lunch you should write a statement and contact your union rep so this can be addressed.

Wondering about the move from the old annex to the new one? We continue to get several questions and concerns about how the transition will affect day to day scheduling, overtime and what tours will be making the advance move prior to everyone moving.

As of today, we are still working on getting additional responses to those questions. We have had several discussions with management, with more to come. By the time you read this article we may have answers to these questions, as soon as we do we will keep everyone updated.

FYI, if management tells you in a service talk or just in general that the

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union said something or agreed to changes that may affect your working conditions, please verify that with an officer or steward before believing the statement. I am mentioning this because we have had several members come and tell us, management is saying the union agreed to something that is not true. I can promise you if the union agrees to anything...we, the union will put something out letting you know what agreements have been made. Lastly, to all my union brothers and sisters...thank you for all you do, and thank you for being a union member!

\* \* \*

## **Clerk Craft Prepares For National Negotiations**

APWU News

The APWU will begin negotiations for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) in June. The current CBA is set to expire on September 20, 2021. As such, the Clerk Craft officers have begun preparing for negotiations on issues related to our craft. We are currently reviewing all resolutions that were adopted by the delegates at past National Conventions applying to Article 37. These resolutions involve issues such as bidding, assignment of unencumbered regulars, 204-B restrictions, higher-level pay, PTF work hour guarantees and conversions to full-time regular status, and additional rights for PSE clerks.

Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks also invited suggestions from the National Business Agents (NBAs) across the country and received their input regarding possible changes to our craft article. The NBAs are the direct link to our local members because they see the grievances appealed to their level and know what issues are problematic at the local level. In the meantime, the craft officers are continuing to meet and discuss possible improvements and modifications to present during contract negotiations.

The COVID pandemic has made it impossible to conduct state conventions and the national convention, during which your officers at the headquarters level normally receive recommendations from local and state-affiliated delegates and members regarding improvements in the contract that they would like to see. Nevertheless, we look forward to a successful round of negotiations in support of the Clerk Craft members of the APWU.

## **National Executive Board Votes Unanimously To Cancel The 2020 National Convention**

APWU News

While we all cannot wait to gather together again, the leadership of APWU takes the health and safety of our members seriously.

As a result, in an effort to keep our members safe, the National Executive Board voted unanimously to cancel the 2020 National Convention. However, the All Craft Conference will be held virtually. Additional information will be published in the near future.

We look forward to seeing you virtually for the All Craft Conference and in person in 2022.





**Chris Czubakowski**  
**Local Business Agent**

### **EFEL**

*Effective March 12, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (Act) provides postal workers with up to 600 hours of paid Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL). This leave is available to employees beginning on March 12, 2021 and continuing through September 30, 2021—or until the funding established in the Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund (Fund) for reimbursement is exhausted.*

Following the effective date, OPM was not prepared to implement EFEL and began the process of writing the guidelines for leave usage (including the finalization of guidelines that deal with documentation requirements). Doug Tulino, Vice President of USPS Labor released a March 18th, 2021 memorandum to help clarify USPS procedures until those guidelines were released.

During this interim period, requests for EFEL should be submitted directly to your supervisor. If your request for EFEL is denied, members should request another form of leave on a 3971 and write the following in the remarks box, "Management denied request for EFEL. Requesting (AL, SL, or LWOP) in lieu of EFEL." A grievance should then be immediately filed with the Union in order to get you paid and restore your leave balance. Please remember you have 14

## **Updated On Issues**

*"You have 60 days from your conversion date to sign up for your benefit plans."*

days to file a grievance or you forfeit your right to the grievance process.

### **PSE CONVERSIONS**

Recently converted PSEs can sign up and designate beneficiaries for retirement, health and life insurance benefits plans offered to postal employees. I encourage all newly converted PSEs to take advantage of this golden opportunity that comes with your conversion to career employment.

You have 60 days from your conversion date to sign up for your benefit plans. This is a hard deadline. If you fail to enroll in a health care plan prior to the 60 day deadline you will not be able to do so until the next health plan open season (unless you have a qualifying life event). Please also keep in mind that if you fail to enroll in the FEGLI life insurance plan you may not get another chance for quite some time as the last open season for that program was in 2016.

Upon conversion, PSEs will receive a book from HRSSC that will include instructions and forms to enroll in these programs, designate beneficiaries and receive these benefits. You may also enroll in retirement, health and life insurance plans online. If you need assistance enrolling in these benefit programs or designating beneficiaries please contact a steward. You may also contact me at 414-273-7838 and I will be more than happy to assist you.

### **LIBERAL LEAVE POLICY**

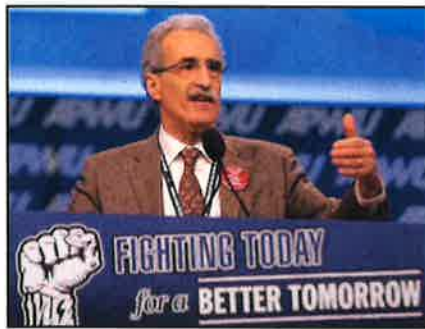
The Union has been notified that certain managers and supervisors are continuing to sow confusion by telling employees that the liberal leave policy is no longer in effect. This is not true. The liberal leave policy was extended by APWU National President Dimondstein and USPS Headquarters through June 4, 2021.

## **Thousands Of Walk-in Vaccinations Are Available At The Wisconsin Center**

It's never been easier to get a Covid-19 vaccine in Milwaukee. Last week all Wisconsin residents age 16 and up became eligible for the vaccine. There's now plenty of vaccines to go around. Wisconsin Center's site has the capacity to vaccinate 4,000 people per day. As a result, it is now offering walk-ins. The vaccination site at 400 W. Wisconsin Ave. is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays. Appointments can still be made online for those who prefer them. No photo ID or insurance required. There's even free parking, and workers are available to assist anybody who needs help with mobility, transportation or language barriers.

## **Delivering For America, A 10-Year Plan For The USPS**

*Statement By APWU President Mark Dimondstein*



Delivering for America, released today by USPS management, lays out a strategy for making the postal service more modern and financially sustainable, a worthy goal. The plan contains some positive attributes but also includes proposals that should be of concern to postal workers and customers.

On the plus side, this 10-year plan recognizes that the United States Postal Service's strength resides in the people who provide the service. It calls for more career opportunities for postal workers and a greater emphasis on recruitment and retention. USPS senior managers should be given credit for already acting on those recommendations by hiring 11,000 additional career workers to staff sorting facilities at the start of 2021 and adding 1,700 more this month.

The plan recognizes that six-day and increasingly seven-day delivery is key to the USPS' future growth. It also calls for the creation of more community-based services to provide fast local delivery and for equipping the neighborhood post office to serve as the local hub for government at all levels. This plan is an acknowledgement that many USPS customer service offerings are outdated. In response, Delivering for America includes long overdue proposals for upgrading local post offices and enhancing products and services. The plan calls for investing \$4 billion in improving the lobbies of local post offices, and adding shipping consultants for small businesses. Postal workers and our customers would welcome all these enhancements. The plan also calls for opening 46 new annexes to handle the ever-increasing number of packages the USPS processes. This too is a positive step.

We also unite with management's appeal to Congress to take the long overdue step of addressing the 2006 pre-funding mandate and other measures to stabilize postal finances. But we have deep concerns about other elements of the plan that, if implemented, would fail to meet its stated goal of providing 'service excellence.' The APWU will stand united with the people of the country to ensure they receive the 'prompt, reliable and efficient' service that the law requires.

Any proposals that would either slow the mail, reduce access to post offices, or further pursue the failed strategy of plant consolidation will need to be addressed. The APWU will proactively engage with USPS's managers, the Postal Regulatory Commission, leaders in Congress and the public to address these issues.

We welcome the opportunity this plan affords to start a discussion about the future of the USPS. Over the coming months, we will work with management, the PRC, Congress and others to put into place the elements of the plan we support and to address the areas where we disagree. We will continue to advocate for expanded and enhanced services, particularly postal financial services. We urge the Postal Service and Congress to move swiftly to address the continuing crisis of poor service performance and to pass much-needed postal reform legislation and financial relief.

There is strong bipartisan support for relief from the burdensome and unnecessary financial constraints of the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. There also is strong support on Capitol Hill for other financial reforms that would benefit the postal service. Every effort should be made to pass postal reform and stabilize the USPS' finances so that we can truly plan for a strong and secure future for this vital service.



**Nikki Anthonasin**  
**Manual/Mechanization**  
**Director**

*It may seem like a good idea to take LWOP instead of using your leave. For some of you, that Annual Leave and Sick Leave can burn a hole in your pocket as quickly as you get it! You are then forced to use LWOP when you run out. I have been in both scenarios at some point in my career, sadly! I am here to tell you, from my experience and knowledge that I have gained to save your leave whenever you can, because you never know when you may need it.*

I unfortunately was diagnosed with Lupus about 10 years ago. That is when I really realized how important it is to have your leave there for you when you need it. I cannot predict when a bad flare up could put me out for the count. It is also a huge reminder that your FMLA is there for your serious health condition, if you abuse it or even use it liberally; it may not be there when you really need it! If you feel like calling in or going home...ask yourself if it is worth it. Are you too sick to work? Remember that you only get 480hr of FMLA to use per leave year. If you have a chronic condition that is flaring up a lot, that time can go quickly.

Any career or non career employees may qualify for protected leave if they meet the eligibility requirements at the time the leave starts; that is, they have been employed by the Postal Service for an accumulated

## LWOP Is Not Your Friend... It's More Like Your Frenemy!

*"Keep in mind that extended periods of LWOP may affect your health and retirement benefits..."*

total of twelve (12) months over the past seven (7) years (including any prior career or non career service) and have worked a minimum of 1250 hours (including any prior career or non career service) during the 12-month period immediately preceding the date the leave begins. The 1250 work hours includes over-time, but excludes any paid or unpaid absences. Hence the 2-words...WORK HOURS!

Where a qualifying condition causes a series of intermittent absences, the 1250 work hour eligibility test is applied only once during the 12-month leave year, at the beginning of a series of intermittent absences. You will remain eligible throughout that leave year for that condition, even if you were to later fall below the 1250 work hour requirement.

The 1250 work hour eligibility requirement is then recalculated upon the first absence related to the FMLA certified condition in the new leave year. However, this does not mean that you are required to recertify your serious health condition. Rather, the certification from the previous leave year remains valid for the duration indicated by the health care provider, unless management requires a recertification in accordance with the provisions of the statute or regulations. Postal support employees (PSEs) are eligible for FMLA provided they meet the necessary requirements that I described above.

*and may be tempting, but think again my friends!*

Article 10.6 provides that you as an employee may request LWOP (unpaid time off) by submitting a PS Form 3971. Under this article of the contract and the ELM Exhibit 514.22, you need not exhaust your annual leave and/or sick leave before requesting leave without pay.

**For all CAREER members**  
**(including those in NTFT duty assignments)**

Keep in mind that extended periods of LWOP may affect your health and retirement benefits, future pay adjustments, and your leave accrual. For retirement benefits, the years of service (creditable service) calculation is not affected until you would spend an aggregate of six months in a LWOP status in a calendar year.

High-3 average salary computations are based on periods of creditable service. Thus, periods of non-pay status of 6 months or less in a calendar year that fall within your average salary period are included in the calculation of your average salary using the rate of basic pay in effect during the period of non-pay status. Example: if your annual rate of basic pay is \$52,000 per year when you are placed in non-pay status for 3 months, that 3-month period would be credited in the average salary calculation using the \$52,000 basic pay rate. (If the rate of basic pay changed

**LWOP may seem like a good idea**

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to \$62,000 per year after 2 months of the non-pay period, the first 2 months of the non-pay period would be credited in the average salary calculation using the \$52,000 basic pay rate and the last month of the non-pay period would be credited in the average salary calculation using the \$62,000 basic pay rate.)

Your Health and life insurance coverage continues, subject to specific cutoff requirements in both programs when you have accumulated a year in of LWOP status. If you are in a non-pay status for an entire pay period, the TSP, the agency and your own contributions are not made for that pay period. This is true even if you are receiving benefits from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP). TSP contributions, including the Agency Automatic (%) Contributions made to your account (covered by FERS), are based on the basic pay that you earned for that pay period. Because your basic pay in that pay period was zero, that would mean that the TSP contributions are zero as well. Generally, you cannot make up your TSP contributions that are missed during any periods in a non-pay status. An exception does exist, however, this would be if you happen to be a civilian employee who is placed in non-pay status to perform duties with the uniformed services.

LWOP can be used regardless of whether you have sick or annual leave remaining, but if you were to accumulate more than 80 hours you will have BOTH your annual and sick leave balances reduced by the amount that you would have earned during the pay period when the 80-hour mark was crossed. Then, if you have been on leave without pay (LWOP) for thirteen weeks or more during the waiting period for your next periodic step increase, it gets even BETTER! The scheduled date for your next step increase will be deferred! The length of the deferral period will be based on the total number of weeks that you have been on LWOP.

**\*Please note:** That if the time that you carried in an LWOP status for military furlough, official Union business or while on the rolls of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, it is exempt from this provision. Only whole days of LWOP are counted for step deferral purposes; so, on a day on which you work part of the day and use LWOP in lieu of annual or sick leave for the remainder of the day, that would not count, you lucked out on that one! However, ALL hours (even partial days) would count for the 80hr threshold, when your leave balances would be affected, so do not get too excited!

### ***MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!***

Besides the obvious that you do not get paid when you are in a non-pay status (LWOP), and that you are not contributing to your TSP. It affects your OVERTIME pay as well!

### ***PENALTY OVERTIME***

The penalty overtime rate is two (2) times the basic straight-time hourly rate Article 8.4.E establishes that, excluding December, part-time flexible employees and postal support employees are paid at the penalty overtime rate for all work in excess of ten (10) hours in a service day or fifty-six (56) hours in a service week. Article 8.4.D provides that full-time regular employees are paid at the penalty overtime rate for any overtime work in contravention of the restrictions in Article 8.5.F. overtime worked on more than four (4) of the employee's five (5) scheduled days in a service week; work over ten (10) hours on a regularly scheduled day; work over eight (8) hours on a non-scheduled day; or work over six (6) days in a service week.

Employees in non-traditional full-time (NTFT) duty assignments are paid at the penalty overtime rate in accordance with the overtime rules for non-traditional full-time (NTFT) duty assignments. A full-time employee is entitled to receive penalty overtime pay for work beyond the limits stated in Article 8.5.F. - Work hours and paid leave are both considered "work" for the purposes of administering Article 8.5.F and 8.5.G. Article 8.4.E also applies to part-time regulars. These are just the negative effects that LWOP has on you! That should be enough in itself to think twice before using too much. I hope I helped you better understand it so that you can have a successful career!





**Larry Brown Jr  
Vice President**

*First off, I would like to say congratulations to Paul McKenna on his retirement and congratulations to Mark Ferrari on his non-retirement, retirement.*

When I first became a Union Steward, I had no idea that I would end up in the role of Vice President of the Milwaukee Area Local. My heart was set on just being a steward, that was it. I never wanted to deal with the politics of running for an officer position or being in that role at all. It was Mark Ferrari that kept telling me that I should run for Automation Director. I eventually did and have served in that role for 3 terms. Thanks Mark. I was going to say this at the last GMM but I would've had to follow up your report. Thanks for the encouragement, the help with all the questions and just everything you have done to lead this local to where it is today.

Paul and I had a conversation after I did become the Automation Director. This was probably in term number 2. Apparently, someone was in Paul's ear telling him that I was making plans to run against him in the next election. I caught wind of this and just felt like clearing the air. I always try to clear the air because unchallenged lies become the truth. Anybody that knows me and Paul know we used to argue, and I wouldn't say it in the terms of actually arguing but for lack of a better word, about eve-

## All Jokes Aside

*"Let us not forget, WE are the Union..."*

rything concerning Automation. So I can understand how hearing that I wanted to be his opponent in the upcoming election could have made him feel. (...I'm sure he was unbothered...) In our short meeting, I just told him that I had no intentions on running against him. Paul said in return, that if I wanted to it was my choice, and that he felt I would make a great President. Thanks Paul.

To be complemented by someone that you don't always see eye to eye with is one of the best compliments one can receive. You were a great Local President, and will continue to be a great State President until you decide to call it quits there also. My answer to Paul was, I didn't want the job of President. People don't understand the role of a President, of anything! That is a job that someone has to WANT to do. Glenn Griggs, wants to do the job. That's the reason, in my humble opinion, that he is going to make a great President. Chris Czubakowski is going to make a great Local Business Agent. Why? Because we all know that is a position that he has coveted for a long time. He wants to do that job. *It is also the position I want so maybe I should start the rumor that I will be running against him next term???*

All jokes aside, and no I'm not running against you Chris! I am happy to be in the role that I am. No, I never saw myself in this role, but this is exactly the role I need to be in. If you read the Constitution and By-Laws of the local, the Vice-President position reads like the President's position and the Local

Business Agent's position combined. I offer my full support to both of these guys; knowing that we can carry this local, successfully, into its next chapter. When I ran for Automation Director, 6 years ago, I put out a flyer, in it, I talked about some of the reasons that I felt membership should vote for me....

***"...hard work, commitment and the willingness to put in the long hours associated with the position. The job will not stop just because I ended my tour for that day!"***

Fast forward to today; I feel I have lived up to everything I said in that flyer. The reason I can say this is because I still have copies of it in my drawer in the Union office. I still read it back from time to time to make sure I am keeping with everything I promised in that flyer. That doesn't change just because I'm transitioning into my new role of VP.

Chris Paige will carry on as Automation Director and I will offer my full support to him also. Let us not forget, WE are the Union; every member on the workroom room. Not just your officers or stewards in the office.

Let's all work together...  
Thank You, in advance!





**Chris Paige jr**  
**Automation Director**

*First and foremost, I would like to thank all of our members that voted for voting. The importance of voting in any election is the start of resolution which opens up opportunities for change. I'm looking forward to assuming my new role as Automation Director and serving on the executive board for these next 2 years.*

I hope to play a key part in our general membership moving forward. I will always be available for all of our members that have any questions and concerns. All you have to do is contact me in the office, or approach me on the workroom floor.

Moving forward let's all start being part of the solution and not part of the problem. We can't just complain and blame. If this were to happen, we can all benefit for the duration of our postal careers.

I would like to add that Management has started to establish better staffing and the Union will continue to address the "1 person to a machine" issues in Automation. I will be closely monitoring this moving forward until it is a thing of the past.

The recent agreement at the national level, has created more job positions, and it also will create a more stable career employee workforce. Which in retrospect should help eliminate the possibilities of 1 person working

alone.

I have also had discussions with Management regarding refresher training for employees on the machines. It has been voiced to me that we may have employees that may need this. For quite some time, Management has developed the practice of just "throwing" newly hired employees on the machine with a regular, expecting you to train them and still get the mail out in a timely fashion. This is a blatant disregard to the importance of providing a good service to our cus-

tomers, and also you as a craft employee. It is something that will be addressed along with the refresher training I previously mentioned. I hope to get this started at some point in the upcoming months on all tours.

I want to encourage the membership to continue doing your part by informing your tour's stewards of any questions or concerns you may have.

## Moving Forward

*"The recent agreement at the national level, has created more job positions..."*

PDF

A/L  
CARRYOVER



**Greg Becker**  
**South Sectional Director**

*In my years as a Steward in the Milwaukee Area Local, I have frequently been told by Station and now A.O. Clerks that they are hesitant to request a Steward because their Supervisor, Manager, Postmaster, etc. will find out and make their days difficult.*

As a Clerk, I understand how this intimidation works in some Stations and A. O.'s if the management personnel is unprofessional. The Clerk feels that once the Steward/Union is requested, their Supervisor will let them know that "they shouldn't have gotten the Union involved!" If management retaliates in any way in response to your request for a Union Steward, this action could lead to another grievance and/or to a National Labor Relations violation of Section 7 or 8 of the National Labor Relations Act.

Perhaps some management personnel have the Clerk's best interest at heart, but unfortunately, many do not.

On many occasions, Clerks have informed me that their supervisor has discouraged them from requesting a steward by telling the Clerk that they "don't need the Steward/Union" and that the Supervisor will take care of the Clerk's problem/question. This is a clear violation of the contract! If the clerk requests a Union Steward, Management must contact the Union/ Steward to arrange for the Clerk to

## Always Assert Your Right To A Steward

*"Clerks are not obligated to tell the Supervisor any more than a "general nature" reason for their request."*

consult with his/her Steward in a timely manner. Sometimes, the Supervisor will demand to know the details of why the Clerk is requesting a Steward. Clerks are not obligated to tell the Supervisor any more than a "general nature" reason for their request. Responses such as...problems with "wages," "hours," or "working conditions" should be sufficient to satisfy the "general nature" requirement. No further explanations may be required under the contract.

Supervisors cannot require you to divulge confidential information that you would tell your Steward. If management asks, inform him/her that your Steward will divulge what he/she deems necessary at the Step one meeting of the grievance procedure. Let your Steward know that your Supervisor is demanding to know information that he/she does not have a right to know.

Furthermore, if you are requesting a Steward in regard to a health related issue, management would be violating the law by requesting to know the diagnosis or prognosis of your medical condition. A Clerk must never divulge any diagnosis (what's medically wrong) or prognosis (probable course of an illness) to someone in management. Only health professionals (nurses, etc.) have a right to know when warranted and can see medical documentation that includes a diagnosis or prognosis. FMLA certifications do

not require a diagnosis or prognosis because management personnel have a right to request your FMLA certification.

The role of a Union Steward is to investigate whether a grievance exists in regards to wages, hours, or working conditions in accordance with the National Agreement, Handbooks and Manuals, and the Local Memorandums of Understanding. Members should always request a Steward whenever a question and potential grievance over wages, hours, and working conditions develop at your Post Office.

In summary, it is always advisable to request a Steward if you believe that your rights have been violated. Never allow your contractual rights to be minimized by any management personnel or allow your supervisor to make the determination if you need a Steward.

Additionally, never give information on your medical diagnosis or prognosis to anyone other than the medical professionals. And most important, if you are ever called into a meeting with management that you feel could possibly lead to discipline, you should state the following...better known as your Weingarten right: "If this meeting could in any way lead to me being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my

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Union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting." Upon your request for a steward, management must arrange for you to be represented by a Steward or forgo/terminate the meeting.

Do not participate by answering questions until your steward is present. You may ask to meet privately with your Steward before the meeting takes place. If you have any questions about this article or any other topic, contact me at 414-530-3449. Thank you.

\* \* \*



**Kenni Liggan**  
**Customer Service**  
**Director**

*I would like to introduce myself. My name is Kenni Liggan. I have been a steward for our local for almost 20 years. I am your new Customer Service Director. First off, I am looking forward to serving all of our members at the City Stations, CFS, the Main Office Window, the AMC and Bulk Mail.*

I have found that these units and installations I have just mentioned, IF fully staffed...that a lot of the grievances that I see as far as carriers and management doing clerk work would decrease.

So, one of my main goals is to make sure that these units and all the stations are fully staffed. In order for me to do that, I need YOU the member at these facilities, to be my eyes and ears of the Union.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you see any contractual violations or

## Honor To Serve You

*"...I need YOU the member...to be my eyes and ears of the Union."*

even just to ask me a question. My contact number is 414-305-6523. Please leave me a message and I will get right back with you.

One quick contractual explanation, former PSEs that are newly converted regulars, remember that for the first 90 days you CANNOT take any annual leave. The system won't allow it. Please keep that in mind when you want to take off.

Once again, I look forward to serving the members as Customer Service Director. With your help, I believe we can get a lot of good things done.

**THANK YOU ALL  
IN ADVANCE!**

### **Union Contract Survey, Let Your Voice Be Heard!**

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (aka CBA or union contract) between the APWU and the USPS sets the wages, hours, rights, job security and working conditions of postal workers. The current contract expires on September 20, 2021. Preparations are already underway with the official negotiation period beginning this June. The APWU National negotiating team wants to hear from you. Let us know what your priorities are for a new union contract. You have the choice to complete the survey in writing and return it via mail, scan a code to open the survey website to complete the survey, or a simple link you can enter to reach the survey for. In the alternative you can choose to text and receive a link to participate in the survey on a smart device. Contract Negotiations are most challenging with management always trying to chip away at our wages, rights and benefits and the union always pushing forward to improve the well-being and job security of postal workers. Please take five minutes and complete the survey and help the APWU negotiate the best contract we can in 2021!



**John Miceli**  
**Treasurer**

( FedSmith.com )

**Retirement Myth #1: My cost of everyday living and leisure spending will be less in retirement.**

When helping federal employees plan for retirement, one of the most common concerns we see is the desire to be debt free before retirement. The goal is to have one's house, car, credit cards, and other substantial debt paid off before retirement. This supports the common theory that being debt free allows one to spend less in retirement. While being debt free is a great place to start, what about unknown expenses? Listed below are a few examples of unplanned costs in retirement.

**Children and/or grandchildren** – Some federal hires—such as Special Provisions employees—are eligible to retire as early as age 50. Due to this young age, many retirees find themselves paying for children's college education or grandchildren's living expenses.

**Federal Employee Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)** – Many federal employees do not plan for the increasing cost of FEGLI coverage in retirement.

**Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB)** – In 2020, average total FEHB premiums increased by 4%

## Common Retirement Myths Exposed

*"When planning how much to spend in retirement, it's important to evaluate your current lifestyle."*

while federal retirees received only a 1.6% COLA on their annuity. Also, federal employees pay their portion of healthcare costs with before-tax dollars, but federal retirees pay their portion with after-tax dollars.

**Travel** – After years of delaying trips due to work obligations, getting out and seeing the world is a desire of many federal retirees. It is common for them to want to enjoy traveling in retirement, from RV or tent camping to treks around the world; however, an increase in excursions also means a rise in travel expenses.

**Inflation** – One of the greatest attributes to your federal pension is that it generally receives Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs). As a CSRS retiree, you will begin receiving COLAs immediately in retirement, whereas a FERS retiree will begin receiving COLAs at age 62. One of the most common retirement myths is that the impact of inflation will be eradicated by COLAs. With the help of COLAs, the impact of inflation is reduced, but rarely is it totally eliminated.

When planning how much to spend in retirement, it's important to evaluate your current lifestyle. Are you currently living below your means and allotting a sizable amount to savings every pay period? If so, you might expect your retirement income to cover most or even all your base expenses. Or, are you currently spending most of your salary every month? The answer to these questions will help guide you in the di-

rection you need to go to plan for retirement, but don't just blindly embrace the retirement myth that once you've retired your spending will decrease. A wise consumer would begin planning now for the known and unexpected expenses applicable in retirement.

**Retirement Myth #2: I will fall in a lower tax bracket in retirement due to a decrease in income.**

Based on RBI's experience working with federal employees, we have found that depending on age and years of service, retirees will receive between 40-80% of their salaries in retirement. This leads to the expectation of having reduced taxable income that will result in a lower tax bracket in retirement. If you have made this assumption in your retirement planning, rest assured; you are not alone. Here are a few tax implications that you may see as a retired federal employee.

**Addressing the Income Gap**

A wise consumer should evaluate one's net income in retirement and compare it to net pay while working. Often a retiree finds a financial gap that needs to be filled to maintain the same standard of living. Where will these funds come from? Options may exist to begin drawing Social Security or the Special Retirement Supplement benefit. Some may choose to begin accessing funds that were contributed throughout employment to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). While Traditional TSP is a great savings vehicle, it is tax deferred. Employee

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contributions, the government contributions (for FERS only), and any growth made during the lifespan of the Traditional TSP, will be taxed upon withdrawal. Although we cannot predict future tax brackets, we can take a look at the current and ever-changing national debt. Many would assume that taxes may increase for prospective taxpayers.

### **Taxes Now or Later?**

At Retirement Benefits Institute (RBI), we generally find that federal employees are at the top of a tax bracket while working. Then they find themselves at the bottom of that very same tax bracket in retirement before any withdrawals from TSP are made. As a result, they are required to pay additional taxes and have the need to make withdrawals from their traditional TSP. This proposes a few questions for the future retiree:

\*Would you rather pay taxes now, or in retirement when your bring-home pay is less?

\*How can you help reduce the impact of taxes in retirement?

Educating yourself on the investment vehicles available to you before retirement may be beneficial and help answer these questions. As a federal employee, you also have the ability to contribute to a Roth TSP account. This account contains the same funds as the Traditional TSP: G, F, C, S, I and L. You may distribute your contributions throughout the funds as you please, while not exceeding the contribution limits. For FERS employees contributing to Roth TSP, your government match will be contributed to your Traditional TSP, but nonetheless you will still receive your match. Roth contributions are made with after-tax dollars and your contributions, as well as your gains generally may be withdrawn tax free! This allows you to pay taxes on the dollar now as opposed to waiting until retirement.

### **Retirement Myth #3: You should stop saving and investing in retirement.**

The years while you're working are frequently viewed as "a time period of savings." You set goals to eliminate debt and send allotments to savings and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) accounts. The working years are generally thought of as a time to build up the nest for use in retirement. As you transition into retirement, you enter into a period of spending in which you live off of your accumulated assets. So, once you reach retirement are you free to stop growing your nest egg and simply spend down your assets?

The answer to this question depends on exactly how long will you live in retirement? Let's do an exercise together. The number of 'Years in Retirement' is an estimated period when you must sustain your lifestyle solely on your pension and assets. As shown in the chart below, we find in our training events that this number may range anywhere from 20-35 years, which in most cases is close to the same amount of years that an individual worked for the Federal Government. "Should I stop saving and investing in retirement to live exclusively on these funds?" The answer to that question really depends on the answer found in the above exercise.

If you don't continue to invest and decide to draw on your assets, is that sustainable for twenty or thirty years? This is a great question to look at with a financial professional and certainly deserving of your time. While the future is uncertain, we can predict that you will have to live on your savings in retirement. Plan to invest carefully so that your money may grow and be protected throughout retirement.

One savings vehicle that serves federal employees well is a Roth TSP/IRA account. This type of tax-advantaged account allows you to pay taxes on your contributions now while it grows tax free. You have immediate access to your contributions, but the gains may not be accessed until you reach age 59.5 and the account must have been open for five years. Once these two requirements have been met, you have complete access to your full funds and can withdraw from it tax-and-penalty free. This account helps federal employees with robust pensions have more control of an outside asset as needed while in retirement.



**Jeff Worden**  
**North Sectional Director**

*On April 28th of every year the unions of the AFL-CIO unite in observance of "Workers Memorial Day". One of the notable times in Wisconsin history associated with Workers Memorial Day is the Bay View Massacre, also referred to as the Bay View Tragedy.*

On May 4, 1886 there were 7000 Building Trades Workers and 5000 Polish Laborers gathered at the Milwaukee Iron Company (Rolling Mills) in Bay View, Wisconsin. The workers had organized a strike against their employers DEMANDING an 8-hour workday.

Wisconsin Governor Jeremiah Rusk had given orders to the Guardsmen that if any strikers entered the "mills" they should shoot to kill! Sadly enough, 7-people died that day including a 13-year-old boy. Several more were injured in one of the bloodiest days in Wisconsin history.

The historical marker site is at Superior street and Russell Ave. which is in view of the former Rolling Mills location.

The First Workers Memorial Day was observed in 1989. April 28th is also the anniversary date of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 went into effect, and when the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was formed (April 28, 1971).

## Workers Memorial Day

*"Each year more than 700,000 workers are injured... killed due to work related hazardous."*

It is the date set aside to remember those who have been injured or killed from "on the job" accidents. Each year more than 700,000 workers are injured and of course some are killed due to work related hazardous.

The union continues to fight for safer workplaces and to enforce the already existing rules and regulations concerning workplace safety.



This day should be more than a remembrance, it should be a time to renew our fight for strong safety and health protections. It is important that we stand firm to enforce the current safety and health rules for ALL workers. Former/Late APWU National President William Burris stated, "Workers Memorial Day is an opportunity to focus on reducing the toll of job injuries and deaths and on keeping good jobs in America".

This year's theme from the AFL-CIO for Workers Memorial

Day is. "RENEW THE PROMISE-SAFE JOBS FOR ALL"

Here in Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Area Local union hall has been the headquarters for this event for many years. In the past Madison, Green Bay, Wausau and the other large cities throughout Wisconsin have had some type of prayer vigil / activity to commiserate this event.

This year (again) WILL BE DIFFERENT! With the threat of the Coronavirus and the rules of meetings/gatherings having no more than 10 people in a group, the Workers Memorial Day festivities may possibly be postponed. If this happens the event will be held (most likely) later, to be announced.

There will be a live "ONLINE" EVENT on April 28th. Just go to [Wiscosh.org](http://Wiscosh.org) and look for the link.

What every union member should be concerned about is Staying Healthy while keeping their family healthy too! We are living in unprecedented times and must take the necessary steps to decrease the chances of acquiring the Coronavirus.

If have any questions, you can call me directly at (414) 530-7186. Please stay safe and as always, Take Care.



**Dr. Jonathan Saigh**

## Scheduled Award

### Advanced Care Specialists



If you have been injured at work as a federal employee, you are entitled to filing your injury for medical and financial benefits. Often times, an injury at work can be somewhat confusing or intimidating. However, if you reference the CA10 you may find the process to be less taxing than anticipated. To simplify reporting the injury as much as possible is to utilize a CA1 for any traumatic injury and a CA2 for an injury that occurs over the course of time. For example, if a federal employee were to slip and fall, strain your back, or any injury that occurs as a one-time event, you would file a CA1. An injury that occurs over the course of time such as carpal tunnel, tendinitis, or arthritis one may file a CA2. Filing these notices of injuries is your RIGHT as a Postal Employee, in fact if your supervisor is unwilling to recognize or file your injury, it is a federal crime.

Once your injury is filed it is also your right to use a qualified physician of your choice. When you chose your physician, be sure to emphasize that you are a federal employee to ensure proper medical documentation is filed. You are able to begin treatment prior to your case being accepted but if your case is not accepted, you are responsible for your treatment. This is why it is important to not gamble on a physician that does not specialize in DOL injuries. Again, be sure to mention you are a federal employee and treatment should be pre-authorized. If pre-authorized, your office visits will be at no cost to you. You should never pay for medical treatment as an injured federal employee with an accepted work injury case.

Upon maximal medical improvement, or when you have healed from your injury, you are able to file what is known as a scheduled award. This step is commonly overlooked but may be the most beneficial to you as an injured worker. In a recent experience with a local Postal Employee in Milwaukee, an award of \$70,000 was paid for his work injuries sustained while on the job. We were able to complete a scheduled award for his new injury and correctly document a 10-year-old injury for him to increase his scheduled award to the \$70,000 mark. This is 100% tax free money to you, the injured federal employee. Your choice of physician directly effects your scheduled award- not getting your case accepted and having your scheduled award denied could cost you thousands of dollars that is due to you.

Keep in mind, if you have an accepted injury from years ago and have not exercised this step of collecting your scheduled award, you can still file a CA-7 for scheduled award. This process is simple - find the CA-7 via the OWCP website, fill out the first section, check 'Box D' in section 2, sign the bottom of the first page, and return the CA-7 to your supervisor. Once this step is complete you will need an exam by a physician for your disability rating. This rating must be done using the AMA 6th edition. After this step if performed properly and reviewed by DOL-OWCP, you will receive your scheduled award via direct deposit.

Rest assured this entire process is not as complicated as portrayed for our office as we have helped hundreds of patients receive their awards totaling well over \$1 MILLION. If you have any questions or concerns related to scheduled awards, don't hesitate to contact our office at 262-898-9000.