



# The Hi-Lites



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

(Proud Postal Press Association National Awards Winner)



JANUARY 2018

Volume 40 Issue 1

## New Year Resolutions



**Local Settles 204b  
Grievances for over  
\$1.3 million dollars**



**New Years Message  
from  
President Dimondstein**



**Pre-Trump America:  
Right versus Left  
Post –Trump America:  
Right versus Wrong**

## USPS Announces Voluntary Early Out Retirement (VERA)

### 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



**Paul McKenna  
President**

*Since May of 2017, we have been reporting in the Hi-Lites and at our union meetings that management was planning to excess over forty employees out of the Milwaukee Installation and additional employees from some of our Associate Offices.*

The union has been talking on a daily basis and meeting on a weekly basis with them regarding their excessing plans. During these discussions, we have been telling management that they are actually understaffed, not over staffed as their reports show. We presented them with evidence that there were many full-time jobs that actually needed to be created, not reduced, but management continued with their plans of excessing. Throughout these meeting, however, we kept insisting that their numbers were wrong. We showed them that through attrition, the excessing could be reduced dramatically, if not totally.

After many meetings and phone calls, they realized that the union's arguments had some merit and slowly the excessing numbers have been reduced. Right before the New Year, management notified the union that the excessing was going to be reduced. At the time of the writing of this article, the excessing for the Mil-

## Excessing Reduction & 204b Payout

*"Even with these grievances being settled in the unions favor, management continued to violate our National Agreement..."*

waukee Installation stands at only eight employees, and we expect that number to go down even further.

Of the dozen or so Associate Offices that management was going to excess from, that number has been reduced to only one office. I know that if your one of our members that is still scheduled to be excessed, this news still isn't great, but we are hoping that management will still come to their senses and stop all the excessing before the February excessing date. We will keep you posted as more changes happen.

The other big issue that the union has been dealing with for the past three years is management's continuous violation of the use of 204b's.

We started to file grievances over this issue in 2014, and had been very successful in creating new lead seven positions, as well as winning a case in arbitration for a monetary award. Even with these grievances being settled in the unions favor, management continued to violate our National Agreement by using 204b's outside of the parameters of the contract, and we continued to file over 100 grievances on the violations.

We settled some of those grievances for the Milwaukee Plant and Annex back in July of 2017 for over \$467,000, which was paid to Clerks in the entire Milwaukee Installation.

However, we still had continuous violations at the Milwaukee City Stations and a few of our Associate Offices.

After months and months of meetings, and hours and hours over going over dozens and dozens of grievance files with Labor Relations, the union and management have finally reached an agreement to settle all the remaining grievances for the Milwaukee City Stations and all the Associate Offices where we had grievances filed.

This settlement, which was signed off on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017 is for NINE-HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$900,000.00). This money will be split up among the Clerks at the Milwaukee Installation, Waukesha/New Berlin, Menomonee Falls, Burlington and Mukwonago Offices. The actual payments will vary from office to office, as it's based on the length of the 204b violations and when they were reported.

The total amount that was won from grievance settlements over management's 204b violations was in excess of...

**ONE MILLION  
THREE HUNDRED SIXTY  
SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS  
(\$1,367,000)**





January 4, 2018

Mr. Mark Dimondstein  
President  
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO  
1300 L Street NW  
Washington, DC 20005-4128

Certified Mail Tracking Number:  
7016 2070 0000 1715 8874

Faxed

Dear Mark:

As a matter of general interest, the Postal Service has received a Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to offer voluntary early retirement (VER) to eligible clerk craft employees.

To be eligible to retire under the VERA, an employee must:

1. Have completed at least 20 years of creditable service and be at least age 50, or have completed 25 years of creditable service and be of any age;
2. At least five (5) years must be creditable civilian service, not military service. Employees may use military service to meet the balance of service required for eligibility;
3. Have been continuously employed by the Postal Service for at least 31 days before the date that the Postal Service initially requested OPM approval of the VERA (August 22, 2017);
4. Hold a position that is not a time-limited appointment;
5. Have not received a final removal decision based on misconduct or unacceptable performance;
6. Hold a position covered by the Postal Service's VERA;
7. Retire under the VER option during the Postal Service's VERA.

Eligible employees who wish to retire under the VERA may choose one of three effective dates – January 31, 2018, February 28, 2018, or March 31, 2018. There will be no separation incentives associated with the VER offers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Alan S. Moore".

Alan S. Moore  
Manager  
Labor Relations Policies and Programs





**John Miceli**  
**Treasurer**

*On November 17, 2017, the TSP Modernization Act was signed into law, making a number of changes to the Thrift Savings Plan to assist federal employees.*

This bipartisan measure will make the TSP more responsive to the needs of its participants, and give federal employees the retirement flexibility they deserve.

Under current TSP rules, participants may only elect one partial age-based withdrawal after they turn 59½ or one partial post-separation withdrawal after separation from federal employment. The TSP Modernization Act would eliminate these restraints by allowing for unlimited age-based or post-separation withdrawals.

For federal employees over age 59½ who are still working, the bill will allow multiple age-based withdrawals. Employees who have left government can make multiple partial post-separation withdrawals. The bill also allows election of quarterly or annual payments, and permits periodic withdrawals to be changed at any point during the year.

The new law directs the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB), the body that oversees the TSP, to prescribe such regulations as

## TSP Modernization Act

*"This...will make the TSP more responsive to the needs of its participants, and give federal employees the retirement flexibility they deserve."*

necessary to carry out the new changes no later than two years from the date of enactment.

The TSP issued the following statement on its website about the new law: On November 17, 2017, President Trump signed into law the TSP Modernization Act of 2017, which will provide TSP participants with more flexible withdrawal options.

The law eliminates the statutory prohibition on multiple post-separation withdrawals and multiple age-based withdrawals while a participant is still working. It also removes the restriction that participants cannot take partial post-separation withdrawals if they've already taken an age-based in-service withdrawal. Though it has no effect on required minimum distributions mandated by the Internal Revenue Code, the law also allows separated participants who are over age 70½ to remain in the TSP, eliminating the requirement to make a withdrawal election on an entire account balance.

Participants will also be able to stop monthly payments, change payment frequency, or elect to purchase an annuity while receiving monthly payments.

The Executive Director of the FRTIB has the authority to establish parameters regarding this new ability to take multiple withdrawals, and the law gives the FRTIB up to

two years to make the regulatory and operational changes necessary to enact these changes.

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB), the agency that manages the TSP, examined data in 2014 and 2015 and found that many participants were withdrawing money from the TSP after leaving federal service due, at least in part, to the restrictive withdrawal options.

According to the House Oversight Committee's report, the FRTIB said that taking money out of the TSP is harmful to participants because the higher fees found in private sector financial institutions are "reducing a participant's net returns and negatively impacting his/her retirement readiness."

The TSP has advocated in the past that participants keep their money in the TSP after leaving federal service.

*contributor : (FedSmith.com)*





**Larry Brown jr**  
**Automation Director**

*Happy New Year to all the members. The number one concern on the minds of many members is the excessing that we are currently going through.*

The excess number started off at 43 junior career clerks. Currently, the number has reached the single digits. Hopefully, more clerks will have their name removed from this excess list before the move date, which is scheduled for February 3. This reduction of the employees impacted is an important thing, not only for the junior career people that received rescinding letters, but also for the PSEs that are looking to become career sometime in the future. Now, any residual vacancies, that don't get reverted, have the possibility of having a PSE converted into it instead of an excessed employee using their retreat rights on it. As stated earlier, we still may have some careers being excessed and if so, any potential grievances will be filed to get them back as soon as possible.

#### **ROTATIONS**

Are there concerns about staffing in Automation and the FSMs? I was notified that we are having issues with a "rotation" on the FSMs on tour 2. I understand that some of you may have no issues with the "rotation" but, others are. The Tour 2 Stewards have brought up this issue from some

## **Don't Play Games**

*"This is crazy, but not surprising because it came from managements lips."*

of the members. Mike Schepp has been dealing with it for a while, and then the problem was passed on to Bryon Holland.

Now, I am hearing about it on a constant basis. A wise person once told me, "When in doubt, just follow the contract." Anyone that knows me, knows, that I am a firm believer in allowing people to make their own decisions as to how they want to approach situations. I believe that if you want to volunteer to do something, you should be allowed to volunteer...especially, if you are volunteering in the place of someone affected that may not want to perform said task.

*(...Just think if Katniss Everdeen was unable to volunteer for her sister, we wouldn't have had any of The Hunger Games movies! Just a little bit humor for the new year....)*

If I must get involved with this rotation thing, the senior people are going on the machines all the time instead of any rotation that is in affect right now. *(...As they should, per the contract...)* Management has already threatened to start putting employees on standby if they are forced to staff the machines this way. This is crazy, but not surprising because it came from managements lips. Go figure! Most importantly though, it gives the Union our retaliation argument for simply asking management to abide by the contract. I certainly would rather everyone go about their day as they have been doing because no matter what is decided someone will still

be unhappy. I've learned that from my brief time of being a director. The only answer, if the constant bickering continues, will be to abide by principle assignment area guidelines on the FSMs just as we do in Automation. I just want everyone to know where I am on this issue and why this stance will be taken.

#### **BACKUP CARDS**

The use of backup cards is getting out of hand. The number of disciplines I have seen this year for employee's improperly filling out backup cards are ridiculous. For those of you that do not know, when you fill out a backup card, you should be writing the number that you see on the time clock, just as if you were punching in with your time cards.

Management runs a report of the time your badge scan says you entered the building. So, when you write down 10:00pm and your badge says you entered the building at 10:05pm...be expecting to have a day in court to explain why you're incorrectly adjusting that time. I suggest putting your time card in a spot where you can always find it. Mine is in my cell phone case, as I will never lose my cell phone. *(...I lose everything else but that...and I did misplace that one time also...smh...)* In the event you must use a backup card make sure it is filled out correctly, and make a copy of it, as the copy will be your only proof when your Supervisor screws up your time.

Recover from all that Christmas overtime. Have a wonderful year and be safe.!



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

*In past reports, I have mentioned grievances that I have filed at Level 6 & 4 RMPO's regarding Cleaning or Custodial duties at Small Offices. There continues to be much confusion over this issue at Small Offices amongst Clerks and Management. I will attempt to clear this up.*

In accordance with the MS-47 handbook, management is responsible for maintaining a clean and healthy environment. This doesn't mean that management should wax the floors or maintain equipment, this simply means that all facilities must be clean and healthy.

In larger offices, custodians and maintenance personnel perform this work. However, in installations of around 18,000 square feet or less, management may contract this work out depending on the exterior space. The proper decision is based on the MS-47 and the "staffing package," which contains the PS Form 4852. This form will ultimately determine how many hours of cleaning is needed at an office/installation. Management cannot automatically contract out a office/installation if it measures less than 18,000 sq. ft.

The following contractual language is an exception to the rule for contracting out of cleaning \ custodial duties.

## When Cleaning Is Work

*"The Pre-Arbitration questions and answers clearly define what is required by management in charge of offices..."*

In the National Agreement, the U.S.P.S. and A.P.W.U. agreed that when in small post offices there are two hours or less of contracted out custodial duties in a day that cannot be combined with other maintenance duties to create a duty assignment, those duties will be assigned to an existing APWU bargaining unit duty assignment. This language could apply to any small office whether a level 18 or 20, or level 6 and 4 RMPO's. Management must schedule a Clerk up to two (2) hours more per day to perform custodial duties at offices that would otherwise be contracted out to non-postal employees.

Management frequently understands that these offices must be cleaned, but fails to require cleaning or directs the Clerk to perform custodial duties between customers on the window. These directives by management are violations of the contract.

The A.P.W.U. filed a National Level grievance on the interpretation of the aforementioned Memorandum of Understanding and resolved the grievance at Pre-Arbitration with 5 questions and answers on this issue. Question #5 asks "Will Clerks be required to perform custodial duties between waiting on Customers?" Answer #5 is "NO". Answer to #1 states in part, "...and the custodial duties will be in addition to the clerk craft duties that are part of the bid duty assignment." Furthermore,

question #3 answers "yes" to the question, "Can a PTF or PSE assigned to the facility perform the custodial cleaning duties?"

Lastly, answer #4 reiterates that the employee performing custodial duties will receive required OSHA training based on the duties expected to be performed.

The Pre-Arbitration questions and answers clearly define what is required by management in charge of offices with 2 hours or less of custodial work in a day that cannot be combined with other maintenance duties to create a duty assignment. In order for the cleaning duties to be performed in accordance with the contract, these duties must be performed outside of the Clerk operations, including working on the window.

In other words, cleaning/custodial duties must be performed outside of your Clerk craft window duties, sorting of box mail, closing, etc.

Management shall direct the clerk to clock in to operations 747 or 748 while performing custodial duties and require the appropriate OSHA training for the duties to be performed.

If you work at an office that is not being cleaned by anyone, contact me or your steward. Management personnel should never be performing

*(next page please)*



(continued from previous page)

custodial duties at offices Level 4 RMPO and above. Furthermore, management should never direct a Clerk to perform cleaning duties between customers while working the window. If you have experienced the above actions or you are performing custodial duties without receiving the required OSHA training, contact me or your steward. Management is obligated to maintain a clean and healthful environment. Also, Clerks may receive extra hours every week to contribute to that clean and safe workplace.

\* \* \*

## Hi-Lites EDITORIAL: Free Riders

With the Local's recent 204b settlement that generated a \$1.3 Million dollar payout...almost two thousand dollars has been recently awarded to each and every USPS employee within the Milwaukee Installation and surrounding Associate Offices over the last few months. Even though that equates to over two years worth of union dues there still remains far too many free riders among us. These free riders continue to enjoy union benefits without ever paying a penny into the pot that "keep the lights on". There is a cost to carrying non-members in an organization such as ours. Every dollar in dues saved by that non-member is made up for by the dollars paid by those of us paying our fair share. Furthermore, expecting to get something for nothing is simply neither ethical or honorable. Throughout the years, we have heard every reason under the sun from non-members as to why they don't belong. None of those reasons, however, has ever justified your continued free ride on the backs of the rest of us. If we all had their attitudes we all would suffer tremendously from the ensuing loss of representation. Therefore, we urge those who do not belong to the Union to either join and/or reconsider joining the rest of us that remain committed to supplying the basic and essential funds required to uphold and enforce our contractual rights for everyone.



## APWU FREE RIDERS CLUB CARD

If you know someone who is laughing their way to the bank with the "free" money by NOT being a Union member and is always badmouthing the Union and blaming the woes of the world on organized labor, share this card with them and ask them to sign it. You'll see just how strong their "convictions" really are.

**"I am opposed to all unions, therefore as a Postal Worker I am opposed to all benefits the APWU has won for me through the years such as: annual leave, sick leave, seniority, wage increases, safety, insurance, overtime pay and job security. I refuse to accept any APWU benefits that were won by the APWU and authorize the USPS to withhold the amount of all union benefits from my paycheck and donate them to charity."**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



**Chris Czubakowski**  
North Sectional Director

## Putting Workers First? The Year In Review

*"Below, are some of the key policy choices made by the Trump administration and the 115th Congress in 2017."*



*Donald Trump campaigned on the lament that, under past presidents, "our workers' loyalty was repaid with betrayal," but that "It doesn't have to be this way. We can turn it all around—and we can turn it around fast" and "Under a Trump presidency, the American worker will finally have a president who will protect them and fight for them." About that...*

The National Employment Law Project has lined up some of Trump's key actions on workers in 2017 and it should not surprise you to learn that his promises were lies. Workers had a tough 2017, thanks to the Trump administration and the GOP-controlled Congress. The year began with some warm rhetoric for working people, at least, with President Trump promising in his inaugural address that every decision he makes would be to benefit workers. Yet, President Trump has repeatedly broke his promise to put workers first by siding with wealthy corporations and Wall Street over working families at virtually every turn. The president and his administration, with assistance from the GOP-led Congress, launched initiatives to take money out of workers' paychecks, roll back on-the-job protections that keep workers safe, repeal the Affordable Care Act and make it harder for workers to count on their own hard-earned retirement savings, just to name a few of the year's *lowlights*. Below, are some of the key policy choices made by the Trump administration and the 115th Congress in 2017. The inescapable conclusion is that our nation's top elected leaders, including the President, have not only continued to prioritize wealthy corporations and Wall Street over workers but have doubled down on it.

**January:** Anti-Worker Fast-Food CEO Nominated to Lead Labor Department. The U.S. Labor Department is charged with promoting the welfare of workers, improving working conditions, and increasing opportunities for workers to earn good wages. But the Trump administration nominated Andrew Puzder, a wealthy fast-food CEO with a documented history of labor violations, anti-worker philosophy, misogyny, and sexual harassment, to fill this important post.

**March:** Protecting Large Federal Contractors That Endanger Workers and Steal Wages. The Trump administration teamed up with congressional leadership to invalidate the regulations implementing President Obama's Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces executive order. The Obama executive order simply required federal agencies to consider a potential large contractor's record of employment law violations when deciding whether to award it a contract. The rules would have helped ensure that taxpayer dollars do not go to contractors who are skirting the law and creating jobs that don't even meet the bare minimum legal requirements.

**Drug Testing People Who Lose Their Jobs.** Instead of helping people who've lost their jobs get back to work, congressional leadership and the Trump administration repealed a 2016 Labor Department rule, thereby making it easier for states to drug-test unemployment insurance claimants. The 2016 rule had implemented a narrow legislative compromise allowing two types of claimants to be tested: those who were discharged from their last jobs due to unlawful drug use; and those whose only "suitable work" is in an occupation that regularly conducts drug tests. But congressional leadership and the Trump administration complained that this rule was too narrow, leading to its repeal. A broader rule, however, would not only be unlawful, it would also waste taxpayer dollars on expensive drug tests that have already proven to be ineffective, and only serve to stigmatize unemployed workers who rely on unemployment insurance to survive until they can find their next jobs.

*(next page please)*



(continued from previous page)

**Broken Promises on Coal Jobs.** As a candidate on the campaign trail, President Trump regularly promised he would bring back coal jobs. But when it was time for the president to release his budget—the first formal iteration of what the White House’s priorities will be—coal miners were caught off guard. Instead of putting money behind coal country, his budget cut funding for Appalachia, and even his coal industry backers balked.

**April:** Allowing Employers to Hide Dangerous Working Conditions. One major challenge to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s efforts to investigate and remedy unsafe working conditions is that some large employers in dangerous industries like poultry and construction have failed to retain accurate records of workplace injuries and illnesses even though they are required by law to keep accurate records for five years. In 2016, OSHA finalized a rule that would have allowed the agency to hold employers accountable for failing to keep accurate records for the full five years. But in April, Republicans in Congress passed and President Trump signed a resolution invalidating the regulation, drastically limiting an employer’s liability for failing to keep accurate records to six months after the failure to record. This opens the door for employers to hide injuries that reveal unsafe conditions and will further jeopardize workers in high-hazard workplaces.

**Undermining Retirement Security.** The Labor Department delayed key enforcement provisions of a regulation that simply required that financial retirement advisors put their clients’ interests before their own when providing investment advice. The Labor Department’s Employee Benefits Security Administration has since announced further delay of these provisions until mid-2019. The Economic Policy Institute projects that this delay would cost retirement savers’ accounts between \$5.5 and \$16 billion over the next 30 years. **Endangering Worker Safety and Health.** Worker safety regulations do not kill jobs, they prevent jobs from killing workers. Yet the Occupational Safety and Health Administration under President Trump bowed to industry pressure and inexplicably delayed rules intended to protect workers from exposure to deadly silica dust. Moreover, in an unprecedented move, OSHA proposed in June to strip away critical protections for construction and shipyard workers against cancer-causing beryllium.

**May:** House Republicans Pass a Bill that Undermines Overtime Pay: The so-called “Working Families Flexibility Act” passed the House solely on Republican votes. President Trump registered his support of this bill. Rather than providing any real flexibility, this bill would allow employers to replace overtime pay with compensatory time off, without adequate protections against worker coercion to accept come time rather than overtime, and without adequate guarantees that workers could even use comp-time when they wanted to.

**40%** of low-wage workers  
rely on overtime wages.

**Proposing a Wholly Inadequate Paid Leave Plan.** Instead of supporting the FAMILY Act, which would provide real and adequate paid leave, both in terms of duration and the amount of wage replacement, to many of our nation’s workers, the Trump administration proposed a mere six weeks of paid leave for birth or adoption of a child, and would only replace about one-third to one-half of a worker’s wages during that leave. Not only would the administration’s plan leave out 75 percent of workers who need family or medical leave, but it would not cover the full amount of job-protected leave under the existing Family and Medical Leave Act, which grants many workers the ability to take up to 12 weeks of *unpaid* leave in certain circumstances to care for themselves or a family member after the birth or adoption of a child, or because of a serious illness. The administration also proposed to pay for this leave by raiding the unemployment insurance trust funds, and using illusory savings that would never offset the costs of even this stingy plan.

**June:** A Pay Cut. The Trump Labor Department’s Wage and Hour Division preannounced an effort to roll back the 2016 Obama Administration new overtime rules that promised to give 4.2 million salaried workers around the country a long-overdue raise or more time with their families. The rule would have forced employers to pay overtime to most salaried workers earning less than \$47,476 annually. The salary cutoff for overtime pay now stands at \$23,660.

\*\*\* (continued on page 12)



**Jeff Worden  
Vice President**

*Years ago, when I first took over the position of West Sectional Director I discovered that some of the most common infractions had to do with supervisors performing bargaining unit work (Article 1.6) and employee classifications, carriers performing clerk craft work. (Art. 7).*

The sad fact is that supervisors continue to perform bargaining unit work throughout the United States Postal Service (especially at the associate offices). Ironically, this is the biggest issue that our members fail to file grievances on.

One of the most recent complaints I heard was that management was "SCANNING" mail/parcels to make a route for the letter carriers to deliver. This is WRONG! The duties of Scanning have historically been and are that of the clerk craft! Also, questioning management allowing carriers who are unable to drive performing clerk craft duties is again WRONG!

I've heard members say, "I can't possibly keep track of the work the supervisors (as well as letter carriers) at my office perform on a daily basis. It would only amount to a few minutes here and there." Well, those few minutes here and there will ADD-UP

## File That Article 1.6

"First off, you must supply the Union with a statement..."

to BIG MONEY in your pocket. However, if left unchallenged, they will add up to lost hours, lost days and ultimately a LOST BID JOB!

In order to file a 1.6 grievance, the Union needs several things from you to be successful First off, you must supply the Union with a statement containing the **date**, the **type** of work being performed, the **location**, and the **amount of time** the supervisor was doing the bargaining unit work. Don't forget to include **the name** of the supervisor doing your work.

This includes all 204-B's doing bargaining unit work as well! Place your name on the statement and give/mail to your Union steward.

Statements that read "A co-worker of mine saw the boss doing our work" are useless unless THAT PERSON ACTUALLY WRITES A STATEMENT stating what they observed. "He said" & "She said" statements don't go very far especially if the grievance needs to be appealed to Step 3.

Most members keep track of the supervisors and/or carriers doing our work for 7-10 days and then notify a steward .

**Remember, the union  
has only 14-Days  
from the initial infraction date  
to file a grievance!**

I've learned that the best way for keeping track of all the bargaining unit work being performed by supervisors/carriers is to keep a log. The union has a sheet for keeping track of supervisors and letter **carriers perform clerk craft work**. If you would like one of these sheets, let me know and I will mail one to you.

Article 7 also covers situations where management is utilizing employees other than APWU represented maintenance craft (custodians) employees to perform maintenance/custodial work at those associate offices that have APWU maintenance craft custodians already assigned there!

**This is our work and I'm sure  
as hell not going to give it away!**

**It's your move -**



**Protect your job.  
Protect your future.  
Get involved in your  
Union!**



**Mark Krueger**  
**Motor Vehicle Director**

As we complete the peak season for 2017, safety issues are things we all need to be aware of. One of the hot topics is the fact that MVS just received new leased "Fleet Vans" which are 45' and 48' long and are true 102" wide. A major concern is that none of these trailers have "stake pocket holes" in the floors for "Drop a pin, Load a bin" operation.

Mail handlers at the Christmas Annex in St. Francis had to be extra careful to make sure that once the

"load straps" were released, that the BMC's and wire cages (which weren't secured into the floor of these trailers) didn't roll out and hit or injure them due to the down hill incline of the loading docks.

When asked why they don't have holes in the floor, management said the costs to install would be quite excessive per trailer to do so. So safety is a concern only until it requires financial expenditure. Does that mean health and safety isn't valued in our workplace?

It's noted that MVS and dock personnel must wear a safety vest when we are in the dock maundering areas but it seems that contrac-

tors and their staff are given a pass. Most contractors fail to give the right of way to others, use their flashers or horns, and don't chock their tires in the dock. We are told to be professional, courteous and cautious in our workplace but it seems that this is just another double standard applied to only us.

We all need to be working safe and doing our best to report issues that we feel will cause problems or harm in our workplace. The use of the 1767's is the best way for all to let management know that you feel something is wrong and want the issue addressed. Let's not wait until an accident happens before we decide to take action.

## Safety Is Our Right

*"...report issues that we feel will cause problems or harm in our workplace."*

## New Year Message from President Dimondstein



Please go to  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNsnw\\_T\\_L3I&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNsnw_T_L3I&feature=youtu.be)  
to watch President Dimondstein's important  
New Year message to APWU members

### Reminder: Nabisco boycott

A reminder to check all packages of Nabisco products before purchasing to find out where the product is being made. The boycott of Mexican-made Nabisco products as a result of the company moving hundreds of union jobs to a plant in Mexico is still in effect. There are two ways to find out if the Nabisco product is made in Mexico.

### On the Package:

Check for the words "Made in Mexico" or check the Plant I.D code. If the plant identification code located on the "best when purchased by" date line is MM or MS it was made in Mexico.



**Czubakowski**

\*\*\**(continued from page 9)*

**June:** Stacking the Deck Against Worker Voice. The Trump Labor Department's Office of Labor Management Standards proposed eliminating the "persuader rule," a common-sense reform that gives workers a window into shadowy anti-union campaigns targeting them. Unions already operate under strict transparency rules, and rescinding the persuader rule stacks the deck even more for employers who pull out all the stops in blocking workers from exercising their right to form unions and bargain collectively.

Making it Easier for For-Profit Colleges to Take Advantage of Students While Failing to Prepare Them for Gainful Employment. President Obama implemented two rules during his presidency that protected students from predatory for-profit colleges that employ deceptive practices and that often does not lead to "gainful employment." Under this standard, a program does not lead to gainful employment if graduates typically make annual loan payments beyond 20 percent of their discretionary income or 8 percent of their total earnings. The Trump administration suspended these rules, opening the door to mountains of student loan debt for students who attend for-profit colleges that place students into jobs that don't pay enough meet their financial obligations.

Denying Workers Their Day in Court. The Trump administration takes steps to defend "forced arbitration" clauses that deny consumers and workers alike their day in court when they have a legitimate claim against a large corporation, going so far as to switch sides on the matter in a case before the Supreme Court. Today, more than half of all non-union private sector workers—and two-thirds of those employed by large corporations—are bound by these take-it-or-leave-it clauses to which they must agree in order to get a job, according to the Economic Policy Institute. The Trump administration wants to change the rules to make it even easier for business to take away individuals' right to have their day in court.

**August:** Invalidating Tools to Identify Gender and Race-Based Pay Gaps. In a move that undermines pay-practice transparency, which is the first step in eliminating gender- and race-based pay gaps, the White House in August halted an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission initiative to collect better data on what companies pay workers by race and gender.

**November:** The House Passes a Bill Making It Harder for Workers to Hold Employers Accountable for Violations of Labor Standards. As the economy changes and more and more businesses restructure business operations and employment arrangements, workplace rights are meaningless if workers can't enforce them against all the employers who control the terms and conditions of employment. But a bill passed by the House of Representatives will make it all-but-impossible to hold all the employers they work for accountable for their basic rights to wages and the right to organize.

**December:** Taking Workers' Tips. Many workers in service industries like restaurants depend on tips to get by. The Labor Department has now proposed rescinding a rule that ensured that tips belong to workers. This proposal would give employers the chance to redistribute and even steal a portion of tips. It's a prime example of an attempt to redistribute money from working people to employers, including large corporations.

Trump Promised to Protect Steel, Layoffs Are Coming Instead. According to the American Iron and Steel Institute, which tracks shipments, steel imports were 19.4 percent higher in the first 10 months of 2017 than in the same period last year. That surge of imports has hurt American steel makers, which were already struggling against a glut of cheap Chinese steel.

Tax Cuts for Corporations. Congress and the president frantically passed a tax overhaul that would pay for permanent tax breaks for corporations and wealthy investors by raising taxes on working people, kicking 13 million people off healthcare, and exploding the deficit by 1.5 trillion dollars over 10 years.

“ Ryan has set the trap in this tax plan by programming in a \$1.5 trillion loss of revenues. Once tax revenues shrink – as early as 2018 – Republicans will demand spending cuts to clean up the fiscal mess they created. Any hope of preserving programs like Medicare and Social Security are being dealt a death blow by Ryan. This tax plan must be stopped. ”

Jerry Hanson  
Elkhorn, WI

*(next page please)*

(continued from previous page)

We've seen this act before—and no one should be fooled by it. Rushing to deregulate, dilute and destroy core labor protections doesn't create new jobs; it only helps large corporations make the jobs that already exist less safe, more scarce, and of lower quality. And frantically trying to pass massive tax-cuts for corporations and wealthy investors that will be paid for by raising taxes on working people is not putting workers first; it's rigging the game and looting America's treasury one more time in favor of corporate America and the super-rich.

Jeff Sessions rolls back disability rights at work. Attorney General Jeff Sessions' Department of Justice rescinded 25 guidance documents that the department found "unnecessary, inconsistent with existing law, or otherwise improper." The list included 10 texts on disability rights, including one as recent as 2016 (i.e. hardly out of date). This recent document codified the labor rights of disabled people as they move from sheltered workshops paying sub-minimum wage into the integrated economy. Its deletion represents the latest effort of the Trump administration to roll back disability protections in the 21st century.

The faux populism of the Trump administration must be thought of as nothing more than a carnival magic act. Trump is the bright shiny object in one hand, it mesmerizes your attention to it while the other hand is quickly and quietly putting the rabbit into the hat. For all of his clownish buffoonery, very serious and long term damage is currently being done to our international relations, government institutions, environment, civil rights and much more. But all of that is not getting enough attention, because nobody ever notices the guy with the shovel and the broom as long as the clown is capering around. Indeed, House Speaker Paul Ryan has made it clear that 2018 is the year the GOP will go for his long-term dream of eviscerating Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.



Many APWU members have organized at the grass roots level and spent the last year fighting the Trump administration's repeated attempts to undermine workers, repeal the Affordable Care Act, target immigrants, and cede the planet to the greed of the fossil fuel petrol-billionaires. But with the passage of the so-called GOP tax reform bill last month, it's clear we need to continue to organize now more than ever. We know what it will take to win back public office in 2018 and return our government to serving the many, not the few. While the political establishment and beltway insiders laughed off Trump's first steps towards the Republican nomination in the summer of 2015, working people who came from communities that had been left out or left behind, like many of us, recognized him for the threat that he posed and the divisions he sought to exploit.

As such, we must continue to remind others that Trump is a symptom, not the disease. For more than forty years, the corporate and political alliance of lobbyists, consultants, wealthy donors, and politicians have advanced an agenda that shoved wealth higher and higher up. Both parties have participated in and benefited from this arrangement, while tens of millions of ordinary Americans who have been financially strip mined are left out. Our job is to expand the circle of opportunity beyond the privileged few and get true populists who will fight for workers elected. **It's not so much about right versus left anymore, its about right versus wrong!**

Brothers and Sisters, we believe in "We The People". As such, we have much work to do in 2018 !!!

## Sources:

- **Laura Clawson:** "Donald Trump promised to 'protect and fight for' American workers. Here's how that went in 2017."
- **Murfster35:** "Thanks to Trump, forget about olive oil on your shrimp. How about some nice crude instead?"
- **NELP:** "Putting Workers First? The Year in Review."
- **Our Revolution:** "Building for 2018"



## Faust on the Potomac

By Paul Krugman



I haven't yet read Wolff's book – do I really have to? — but the basic outlines of his story have long been familiar and uncontroversial to anyone with open eyes. Trump is morally and intellectually incapable of being president. He has also exploited his office for personal gain, obstructed justice, and colluded with a hostile foreign power. Everyone who doesn't get their news from Fox has basically known this for a while, although Wolff helps focus our minds on the subject.

It seems to me that the real news now is the way Republicans in Congress are dealing with this national nightmare: rather than distancing themselves from Trump, they're doubling down on their support and, in particular, on their efforts to cover for his defects and crimes. Remember when Paul Ryan was the Serious, Honest Conservative? (He never really was, but that was his public image.) Now he's backing Devin Nunes in his efforts to help the Trump coverup. As Brian Beutler says, Republicans have become the Grand Obstruction Party. Why? The answer, I think, is that the cynical bargain that has been the basis of Republican strategy since Reagan has now turned into a moral trap. And as far as we can tell, no elected Republican – not one – has the strength of character to even attempt an escape.

The cynical bargain I'm talking about, of course, was the decision to exploit racism to advance a right-wing economic agenda. Talk about welfare queens driving Cadillacs, then slash income taxes. Do Willie Horton, then undermine anti-trust. Tout your law and order credentials, then block health care.

For more than a generation, the Republican establishment was able to keep this bait-and-switch under control: racism was deployed to win elections, then was muted afterwards, partly to preserve plausible deniability, partly to focus on the real priority of enriching the one percent. But with Trump they lost control: the base wanted someone who was blatantly racist and wouldn't pretend to be anything else. And that's what they got, with corruption, incompetence, and treason on the side. Nonetheless, aside from a handful of Never Trumpers, just about everyone in the Republican establishment decided that they could work with that. They knew what Trump was, but were willing to overlook it as long as they could push their usual agenda. What about the populism? They guessed, correctly, that this wouldn't be a problem: Trump didn't even hesitate about abandoning all his campaign promises and going all in for cutting taxes on the rich while slashing benefits for the poor.

Early on, some speculated that this would be a temporary alliance – that establishment Republicans would use Trump to get what they wanted, then turn on him. But it's now clear that won't happen. Trump has exceeded everyone's worst expectations, yet Republicans, far from cutting him loose, are tying themselves even more closely to his fate. Why? The answer, I'd argue, is that they're stuck. They knowingly made a deal with the devil, and can't back out. More specifically, Trump's very awfulness means that if he falls, the whole party will fall with him. Republicans could conceivably distance themselves from a president who turned out to be a bad manager, or even one who turned out to have engaged in small-time corruption. But when the corruption is big time, and it's combined with obstruction of justice and collaboration with Putin, nobody will notice which Republicans were a bit less involved, a bit less obsequious, than others. If Trump sinks, he'll create a vortex that sucks down everyone involved.

And so we now have the Republican party as a whole fully complicit in Trump's crimes – because that's what they are, whether or not he and those around him are ever brought to justice. What this means, among other things, is that expecting the GOP to exercise any oversight or constrain Trump in any way is just foolish at this point. Massive electoral defeat – massive enough to overwhelm gerrymandering and other structural advantages of the right – is the only way out.





# Valentine's Day

Be sure to look for these union-made products for your sweetheart this Valentines Day.

## SWEETS AND TREATS

- ♥ Allan Candy Company
- ♥ Brown & Haley
- ♥ Dare Foods Limited
- ♥ Frankford Candy & Chocolate
- ♥ Ghiradelli Chocolate Company
- ♥ Parrson's Candy Company
- ♥ Hershey Foods Corp.

*(Hershey operates a number of non-union manufacturing facilities in the U.S. and Mexico that produce Hershey products, including Reese Peanut Butter Cups and more)*

- ♥ Scorza Candy Company
- ♥ See's Candy
- ♥ Jelly Belly Candy Company
- ♥ Nestle USA
- ♥ Tootsie Roll Industries
- ♥ Russel Stover
- ♥ Necco

## WINE

- ♥ Andre Champagne
- ♥ Chateau Ste. Michelle
- ♥ Columbia Crest
- ♥ Saddle Mountain
- ♥ Farron Ridge
- ♥ Scheid Vineyards Inc.
- ♥ Balletto
- ♥ Charles Krug
- ♥ C.K. Mondavi
- ♥ C.R. Cellars
- ♥ Gallo of Sonoma
- ♥ Gallo Estate
- ♥ Turning Leaf
- ♥ Arbor Mist
- ♥ St. Supery
- ♥ Tott's Champagne

- ♥ Almaden
- ♥ Berelli Creel
- ♥ Bartles & James
- ♥ Black Box
- ♥ Carlo Rossi

## FLOWERS AND GIFTS

*These union supermarkets offer flower arrangements created by union workers.*

- ♥ Vons
- ♥ Safeway
- ♥ Pavillions
- ♥ Gelson's
- ♥ Costco
- ♥ Ralphs
- ♥ Giant
- ♥ Teleflora

*(Offered through Union Plus, union members save 20% on orders when the shop through the [www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org) website.)*