



# The Hi-Lites

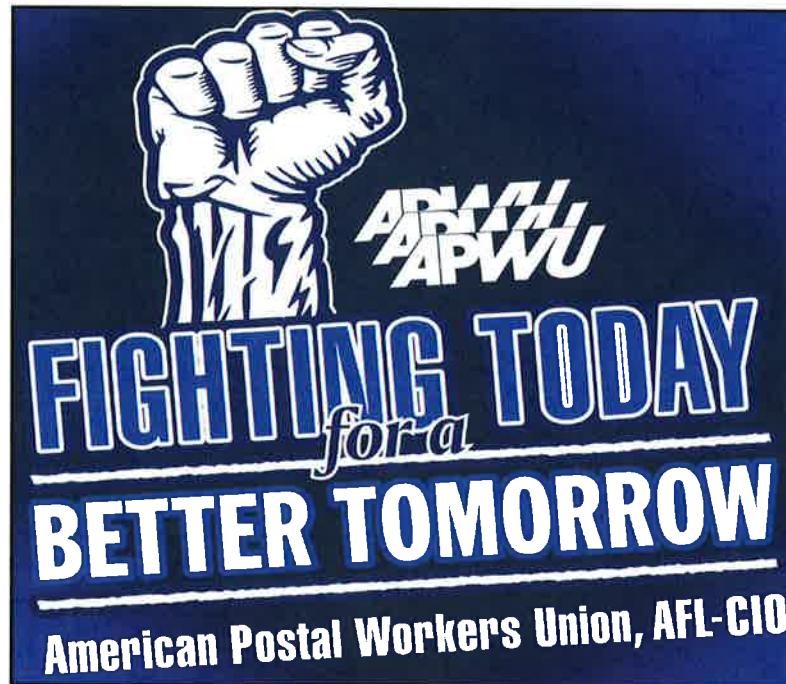


The official publication of Milwaukee, WI Area Local APWU, AFL-CIO

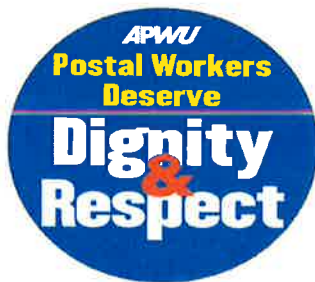
JULY 2023

Volume 45 Issue 5

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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**

*The choice vacation period shall be from January through the first full week following the last Friday in November.*

Employees requesting annual leave should make their selections in triplicate on form 3971. All three copies of PS Form 3971 will be dated and mark notified. The top two will be retained by management, the third and bottom copy, which is notified, will be returned to the employee.

Prior to commencement of the leave selection, the request will be finalized in accordance with the employee's current leave balance, if you don't have adequate annual to cover your selection the request could be denied. If your annual leave is denied because you don't have adequate leave, the slot should be released immediately.

Keep in mind if you don't have annual leave to cover your absence chosen during the choice vacation period, you may request lwop to cover the absence. However, by choosing this option it's at the discretion of management.

Management should be posting an annual leave calendar in each section with the current and next month for

## Annual Leave Procedures

*"The initial selection period is from December 1 through December 31 of each year. "*

review. The remaining months will be made available for review so that everyone can determine the availability of unused or canceled annual leave slots.

***The majority of the annual leave procedures in this article are for full-time regulars in the Milwaukee installations, which include the plant, annex, airport, city stations, and cfs unit. If you work in an associate office I recommend checking out your specific local agreement or contact the steward/officer for your office.***

The initial selection period is from December 1 through December 31 of each year. The vacation schedule is to be completed by January 2.

When making your selections for vacation picks employees are entitled to one (1) choice. The choice may be split, at the employee's option into a maximum of three (3) parts of five (5) day increments consistent with his/her entitlement under the national agreement.

***For those of you who are wondering how your annual leave calculated. Here's the breakdown...***

Less than 3 years of service employees get 4 hrs for each full biweekly pay period which is 104 hrs for the annual leave year = 13 days per 26 period leave year = (10 days) 2 weeks you can choose for your initial pick, the remainder of your annual leave should be granted at

other times during the year, as requested by the you.

More than 3 years, but less than 15 years you get 6 hours for each full biweekly pay period plus 4 hrs in the last full pay period in calendar year which totals 160hrs for the year (20 days) per 26 period leave year. 15 days you will be able to choose during your initial pick, which is 3 weeks. The remainder of your leave can be used during the year at your request.

If you have 15 years or more you get 8 hrs for each full biweekly pay period, which totals 208hrs (26 days) per 26 period leave year. You will also get to choose up to 3 weeks during your initial picks and also be able to use the remainder during the year.

Once you have selected your vacation, and the selection is scheduled. You retain that annual leave period even if you bid to another section, unless you cancel. If by some chance your off-days or schedule changes, you may amend your 3971 to reflect your new schedule. If you do bid to another section and the annual leave slots are open for the weeks you took from your previous section, then the annual leave should be charged against the quota for your new section, and thereby showing a cancellation in the losing section. Management is supposed to make these changes ASAP within 7 days of posting results.

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I have been getting a lot of question particularly from new converted full-time regulars on how the annual leave works. I hope this clears up some of those questions. If you have any questions pertaining to this, or anything else please don't hesitate to call me @ 414-273-7838

***A Quote from Coach Prime (Deion Sanders):***

***Why do many of us focus on what we don't have instead of what we have? What we have is oftentimes what we need& what we want is oftentimes the catalyst of causing u to lose your focus. Don't allow a want to cause you to forfeit what u already have.***

A friendly reminder,

- If you haven't picked up your state fair tickets yet. You have until August 1, 2023
- Next General Membership Meeting is schedule for July 31, 2023 @ 6p.m

***Once again, thanks for all you do, and thank you for being such dedicated union members!***

# Congratulations !!!

APWU Milwaukee Area Local #3

2023 Scholarship Winners

- Jacob Christjohn is the recipient of the \$500.00 Milwaukee Area Local's Scholarship



GOOD LUCK  
Jacob !

- Colton Czubakowski is the recipient of the \$500.00 Milwaukee Area Local's John Akey Memorial Scholarship



GOOD LUCK  
Colton!





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

*Due to the recent conversions of PSEs, there are many clerks who are now Unencumbered (Unassigned) and who are working in new pay locations/sections. As such, we have been receiving many calls regarding the certain rules that apply as far as far as overtime, annual leave, etc. when it comes to unencumbered clerks. Hopefully, the following information will help with questions regarding this issue.*

**Overtime:** Unencumbered clerks should be placed by seniority into the overtime rotation(s) for whatever section they have been assigned. Bid status does not matter. The contract does not stipulate bid clerks must be called prior to unencumbered clerks. It states full time employees should be called by seniority on rotating basis by section.

**Annual Leave:** Any annual leave that was submitted in the unencumbered clerks former section, must be honored. Per the local any annual leave will be charged against the former section unless the gaining section can include it within the quota. Once you arrive in the new section any picks made would obviously count against the new section's quota. As with overtime, seniority is the governing factor regardless of bid status as the

## Unencumbered Clerks Steward Vacancies

*"New leaders from the workroom floor must reach out and grab the baton..."*

contract makes no stipulations that clerks with a bid get preference.

**Right to work assignment:** Since unencumbered clerks do not hold a bid, they have no contractual right to work an assignment prior to clerks holding a bid in that section regardless of their seniority. The national contract specifies this in Article 37.3.F.10, the LMOU in Article 30 and it is also specified in the Mail Processing MOU. The pecking order for sending clerks out of a section/principal assignment area during the scheduled tour would be: 1) PSEs 2) Unencumbered clerks by juniority 3) Bid clerks by juniority.

### **APWU- The Next Generation**

Across the nation, many local APWU leaders are retiring or getting close to retirement. New leaders from the workroom floor must reach out and grab the baton in order to ensure that the rights of future postal workers are enforced. Without new blood coming up through the Union ranks, postal workers will have to put their trust solely in the hands of management to do the right things. Current APWU leadership is ready, willing and able to train you but it's up to you to take that first step.

In order to become an APWU union steward you must complete three steps; 1.) Attend a steward's class that is currently taught by Vice

President Larry Brown Jr. 2.) Have your name read by an APWU Craft Director or President 3.) Participate in an informal interview before the Executive Board prior to your stewardship being voted upon. It also helps to frequently attend general membership meetings and/or volunteer to be on one of our local's many committees.

Please contact President Glenn Griggs if you are interested in becoming a union steward.

### **Did you know our APWU local has a website?**

Finally, I just wanted to remind the membership that the Milwaukee Area Local has one of the most comprehensive local websites in the country. There are countless links at the website that allow members to access helpful information and electronically view documents such as the monthly vacancies/ results, seniority lists and the "Hi-Lites".

There are also many resources and forms, including FMLA and 3179s/3189s, available for download. If you haven't taken the time to check out the local website, you don't know what you are missing. The website address is <http://www.apwu.org>.

It's a great resource for  
APWU members!  
Check it out!



**Jim Arneson**  
**Maintenance Director**

*I hope you all had a good vacation this year. Remember the Annual leave we get is a benefit and unlike most other companies the Union has made it possible to have the Annual leave that we will earn for the year advanced at the beginning of year.*

Speaking Annual leave and Vacations. Recently an employee was put into a position they did not want because they had not turned in a new PER form with the new position on it. The contract allows an employee to request, in writing, that the Service send out the Notice of Intent (the postings) to the employee while they are on Vacation. I would advise people to do this anytime they go on vacation, so this situation doesn't happen to them. Also, check the postings when they are posted. If you are not certain what you have on your promotion rejection form, or preferred assignment form, please ask for a copy.

***Any time you see a posting with "New Position" make sure to update your Promotion rejection form and preferred assignment form.***

For the custodians out there... When you are assigned work for the day, the routes cannot equal more than 7 hours per the MS-47. The only exception to this is "senior" routes that

## Your Maintenance Update

*"Please be accurate with the time and if it takes longer to do the route then put that correct time on the sheet."*

are supposed to be split up during a much longer period of time. So if you see that you are being assigned more than 7 hours of work, please contact the Union.

Management claims that it is only estimated and that they "know" it takes less times. That is irrelevant, as the MS-47 has assigned these times and local management cannot just make up their own times for these routes. Also with the Covid-19 MMO's mostly no longer in effect. The times that you put on the

work assignment sheets is important. Please be accurate with the time and if it takes longer to do the route then put that correct time on the sheet.

If management is telling you to put it somewhere else, contact the Union. Also if you do not complete the entire route, then you must put down either partial if it's a daily or working if it is a senior route. This is very important in the future for Line H remedies. If this is not done then the Service can skip routes and not staff the buildings properly.

## Changes In MVS Leadership

*Kenneth "Ken" Prinz, Assistant Director of the Motor Vehicle Service (MVS) Division at APWU national headquarters, has retired, effective July 1. Brother Prinz is a member of the Philadelphia PA Area Local, where he began serving as a steward in 1986. He was elected as the Assistant Director of the MVS division of his local in 1990, and would later serve as Director of the craft. In 2010, Prinz was elected to the position of Eastern Region National Business Agent (NBA) for the Motor Vehicle craft. He was the region's NBA for ten years until he was appointed as the Assistant Director of the MVS Division. Brother Prinz was the lead officer in an arbitration over the contracting out of vehicle maintenance facility (VMF) work, which the USPS settled for \$8 million dollars.*

*Garrett Langley, the former Philadelphia Region NBA, and member of the Lancaster Area Local, has since been appointed Assistant Director, MVS. Shana Parker, former MVS Craft Director of the Philadelphia PA Area Local has been appointed to the NBA position formerly held by Langley.*

*"I want to congratulate brother Prinz on a long and distinguished career, and his many accomplishments as a member and officer in the Motor Vehicle Service Division. Ken's selfless attitude and teamwork will be greatly missed," said MVS Division Director, Michael Foster.*

*"As we look to the future generations of MVS leadership we welcome brother Garrett Langley as the Assistant MVS Director. Garrett has proven himself as a fighter for the craft and willing to go above and beyond.*

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### ***What Are the TSP Investment Options?***

The Thrift Savings Plan offers a limited range of investment options, including traditional stock and bond funds and life cycle funds that adjust asset allocations as you advance in your career. Life cycle funds are similar to target-date balanced funds that adjust their equity and bond weightings over time to become more conservative. Life cycle fund options currently range from 2025 to 2065 as well as an income fund choice. TSPs also offer individual TSP funds in five focused yet diversified fund choices to choose from: a U.S. government securities fund, a U.S. fixed income (bond) fund, a U.S. large-cap stock index fund, a U.S. small-cap stock index fund, and an international stock index fund.

Thrift Savings Plan fund options include:

- ◆ G Fund: Government Securities Investment Fund (a stable value fund).
- ◆ F Fund: Fixed Income Index Investment Fund (a bond fund).
- ◆ C Fund: Common Stock Index Investment Fund (a large-cap stock fund).
- ◆ S Fund: Small Cap Stock Index Investment Fund (a small-cap stock fund).
- ◆ I Fund: International Stock Index Investment Fund (international stock fund).
- ◆ L Funds: These are life cycle (or target-date) funds, which automatically adjust asset allocation based on the plan holder's projected retirement date.

Additionally, in 2022, TSP rolled out the *Mutual Fund Window*, which allows plan participants to transfer cash from a TSP account through the mutual fund window and open a separate investment account offered by an approved fund provider. Once the mutual fund account is up and running, the plan participant may buy, sell and exchange mutual funds. This allows TSP participants to choose from more than 4,000 mutual funds of all types. TSP investors should be aware that some of these funds are actively managed with much higher expense ratios than traditional TSP funds, and that TSP levies various trade and administrative fees for using the Mutual Fund Window.

### ***What Is the Difference Between a TSP and a 401(k)?***

TSP and 401(k)s share much of the same retirement planning vehicle DNA, but there are some variables. In most ways, they operate identically both during the accumulation phase and later when the federal employee is retired. This is especially true now that TSP allows investors to invest beyond the traditional mutual funds, and expense ratios for widely available 401(k) index mutual funds and ETFs have narrowed the cost advantage that TSP used to enjoy. In recent years, TSP has made it easier for retirees to take distributions flexibly, removing one of the pain points that annoyed many participants. However, there remains an important difference between 401(k)s and TSPs that retired federal employees should be aware of. When taking distributions, a TSP investor who is invested in multiple funds can't specify the source of the distribution.

***EARNING: "Never depend on single income. Make investment to create a second source".***

***SPENDING: "If you buy things you do not need, soon you will have to sell things you need".***

***SAVINGS: "Do not save what is left after spending, but spend what is left after saving".***

***INVESTMENT: "Do not put all eggs in one basket"***

***EXPECTATIONS: "Honesty is very expensive gift. Do not expect it from cheap people".***

**Warren Buffett**



**Larry Brown Jr**  
**Vice President**

*In the collective bargaining agreement, Article 16 defines our discipline procedure. It clearly states that a basic principle will be that discipline be corrective in nature and that no employee may be disciplined without just cause. It also states that for minor offenses by an employee, management has a responsibility to discuss such matters with the employee. These "official discussions" are not considered discipline and therefore are not grievable.*

If management brings you into the office for a day in court, more than likely they will request discipline. If this is your first time being disciplined, this request will result in you receiving a letter of warning. The letter of warning will need to be grieved. At the issuance, they will ask you to sign the letter of warning. Sign it.

Signing it does not mean you agree with anything you were being charged with, it only acknowledges that you received the letter of warning on the date you signed it. After that, you have 14 days to file a grievance on the discipline.

A letter of warning is just that, a letter of warning. It is a piece of paper that informs you that if you do not

## Don't Sweat The Warning

*"If management brings you into the office for a day in court, more than likely they will request discipline...  
80% of all the disciplines I file grievances on are attendance related."*

correct whatever deficiencies management is disciplining you for, you may be disciplined further. If for some reason you get a letter of warning and have to accept some form of probation because on it, because you have already had an official discussion, that is not the time to talk about how the Union failed you. It is not the time to talk about how, you can't believe the Union couldn't get the discipline thrown out. It is not the time be upset that management disciplined you in the first place. At the end of the day, you are getting upset over a sheet of paper. That is all it is. The simplest thing to do in this situation is correct the issue, then you have nothing else to worry about.

80% of all the disciplines I file grievances on are attendance related. It used to be 90% but management hasn't really disciplined anyone for their attendance since March of 2020.

Think about that, because we all know some people that have horrible attendance and management hasn't said a word to them. When I see people that have called in, upset about having to do a 6 month probation on a letter of warning, all that tells me is that you have no intentions on coming to work. You want to keep calling in, and that is the issue. You're only upset because you know your "deficiencies" are not going to be corrected. Mak-

ing a 6 month probation is not that hard to accomplish and when you do, the discipline will be removed from your record anyway, so it's like you have never been disciplined. So, what is the real issue. Why are you so upset with a sheet of paper that says you need to come to work? Especially when need to come to work in the first place!

I still get grievances for people working alone on the machines. This is something that I have been fighting ever since I've been a steward. When I see forty people call I because we got 2 inches of snow, it tells me that as soon as snow was predicted in the forecast, no matter how much snow fell, they weren't coming to work.

That's why you called in. You stayed up all day preparing for the "blizzard" and when the blizzard didn't come you called in anyway. Then, you have no explanation as to why you called in when management questions you. What are you going to say, snow emergency? Two inches of snow in Milwaukee is not a snow emergency.

Discipline that is issued in accordance with Article 16 is issued to correct your deficiencies. Whatever that issue is, you are getting a chance to correct it; that is how it should be looked at. Regulars and PSEs, now for that matter, have a long process

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before they reach the Notice of Removal phase, by way of properly progressed discipline. For PSEs it used to be, letter of warning and your next progressive step was removal, but your Union changed all that. Now, you get just as many chances to correct your deficiencies as a Regular employee does. If you can't get it together with the letter of warning and fail to make that probation, you'll get a 7-day Suspension, then a 14-day suspension before you end up with a notice of removal.

That's a lot of chances to correct whatever it is going on with you. So, if you do end up walking yourself to the point of no return, own it. Yes, I'm using my words carefully as this comes off as being insensitive as everyone is dealing with something in their personal lives. The Union is tired of getting blamed when people lose their jobs, especially for attendance. The Union can't make you come to work and there is no reason to be late every day. Furthermore, management tells you they are about to start issuing discipline to employees and they still call in and come to work late.

I was one of those employees. I came to work every day, never called in, but never came in on time. I was disciplined; that was my deficiency, but I corrected it. I've seen people get disciplined and blame everyone but themselves. It's management's fault for writing them up in the first place. It's the Unions fault for not getting it thrown out. It's the 2 inches of snow's fault, it should have snowed more. At the end of the day, coming to work is your responsibility.

I had a young man that was fired because of his FMLA protected disability. That sounds crazy right. He had numerous FMLA conditions and no matter how many FMLA papers I gave him; he would not go to the doctor and have the paperwork filled out. His immediate supervisor liked him, the supervisor scheduled him when he was late, because the supervisor knew the young man really had issues going on. The Supervisor had FMLA papers sent to his house, but this young man would not get the paperwork filled out. He had health care because the Union helped him fill his paperwork out. When this young man was eventually terminated, guess what he did? He filed an EEO on another Supervisor that had nothing to do with him, because this other supervisor was harassing other employees but never had a run in with this young man. He tried to get his job back off the backs of other employees that really had to deal with discrimination and harassment issues. Not cool at all!

I'll end my article with words from my favorite athlete of all time, who just passed away in a tragic helicopter crash. I wanted to do a whole article on the Mamba Mentality and how it could be related to the everyday worker, but I didn't feel the Hi-Lites was the appropriate platform. So, with the story of the young man in the aforementioned story, I will end with this quote,

***"I have nothing in common with lazy people who blame others for their lack of success. Great things come from hard work and perseverance." —Kobe Bryant.***

I wrote this article in March of 2020, right before management stopped disciplining employees because of their attendance due to the Covid epidemic. It's been three years and management has just now started to discipline employees once again, and once again, employees are going crazy over these letters of warnings that are more than likely about to be reduced to official discussions. Correct the deficiencies. Come to work, leave the house 5 minutes earlier so that you are on time. When you get to work, follow your supervisors instructions. Following that simple advice will help you to never have to worry about being disciplined ever again.

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**Consider cutting out this wallet-sized card and keeping it on you just in case you need it.**







**Dr. Jonathan Saigh**

## OWCP / DOL Claims

### Advanced Care Specialists



## Filing Injuries

"Hello all,

It has been a while since our last article, I hope all is well and everyone is preparing for the warmer weather ahead. Since the last time we have talked there have been a few changes or trends in regards to OWCP/DOL claims. The first being is the reliance on ECOMP to report injuries and to file CA7s. I know many are not privy to the use of computers but rest assured the DOL has finally made something easy. Simply use your EIN and/or social to login and create your login. Once the DOL has verified the specs of your account you will be able to log in very easily and check the status of your claims, file a claim, wage loss claims, etc.

The other trend we have noticed as of late is partially due to the move towards ECOMP – many supervisors are either very slow to file injuries OR they are not filing them at all. This is easily solved by using the ECOMP portal to file your CA1 or CA2.

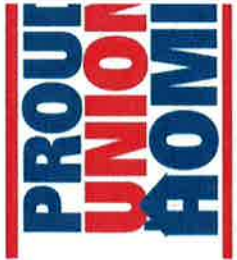
**QUICK REVIEW IN FILING INJURIES:** As an injured employee you are required to file an accident report if you are injured at work. These work injuries include traumatic incidents such as falling, one time events such as lifting causing a back injury or twisting and causing a knee injury. These one time event injuries require the filing of a CA1. The remainder of injuries are often overlooked due to them being caused overtime by repetitive actions. These injuries include but are not limited to arthritis, carpal tunnel, rotator cuff, tendonitis etc. These repetitive use injuries require the filing of a CA2.

It is important to file these injuries immediately and despite the move to ECOMP it is still imperative to notify your supervisor as well. Once your claim is filed go ahead and seek care as soon as possible – on CA1 claims you have 120 days to get this done or your claim will be closed. The importance of choosing a doctor may also be essential in the approval of your claim. In order for your claim to be approved, finding the right doctor to supply proper documentation is required – the good news is we can do all of this for you at our office.

I hope that this information may help some of you find your way through filing a new injury. For those who have not filed promptly that is o.k. but now is the time. Federal Employees have up to three years from the date of injury to file a CA1 or CA2. I do not recommend waiting that long as there are several complications which come into play but we have made our way through claims like this in the past.

I will go ahead and wrap up. If anyone has any questions about injury related issues that have happened while working for the Post Office feel free to give us a call at 262-898-9000. I know everyone is excited for summer but don't forget about your health.

Monday, 6:00 pm  
July 31, 2023



2023 GMM Meetings
January 30 - 6pm
March 29 - 7pm
May 26 - 7am
July 31 - 6pm
September 27 - 7pm
November 17 - 7am

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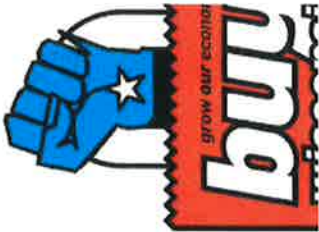
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