



The Hi-Lites



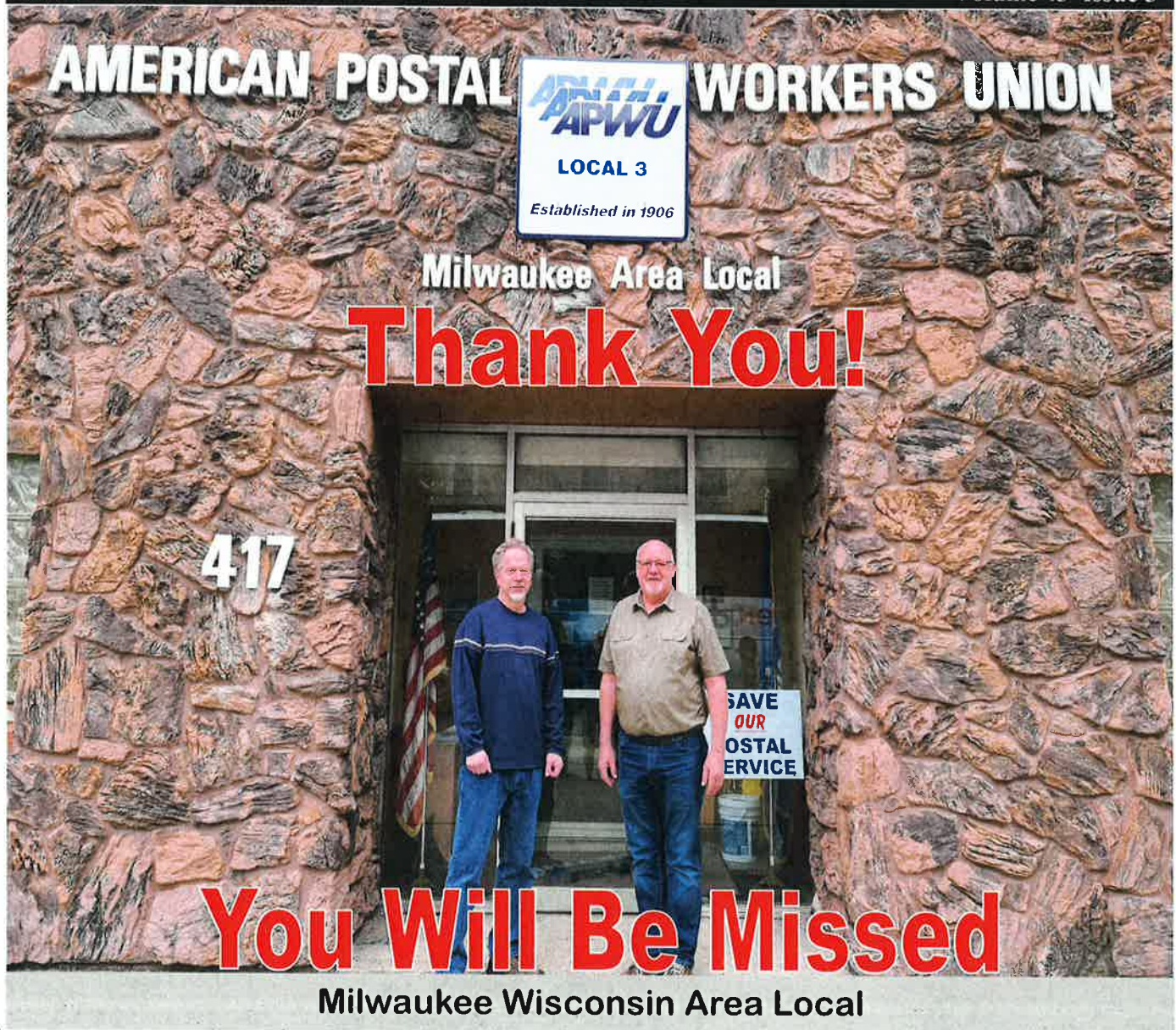
The official publication of Milwaukee, WI Area Local APWU, AFL-CIO

(Proud Postal Press Association National Awards Winner)

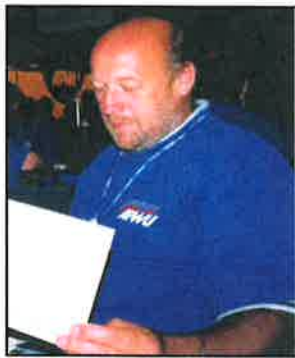


MARCH 2021

Volume 43 Issue 3



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
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Sussex Wales Walworth Waterford Watertown Waukesha Whitewater



**Paul McKenna
President**

As my final few weeks of being President of this great union winds down, I would like to thank the membership for the confidence you had in me over the past 22 years of being your local union president. It has been a true honor for me to serve in this position.

I could have never imagined that when I started my postal career thirty years ago, that it would have been spent the way it was. I could not have asked for a better job and I enjoyed coming to work almost every day. A person cannot ask for a better job than that!

Over the past 30 years, we have had many improvements in our contracts, both in our National Contract and our Local LMOU contract. I truly believe that our National Contract is one of the best contracts in the labor movement, and our local LMOU is the best in the country.

This local has had some great officers and stewards over the past 50 years or more. All of them were dedicated to serve our membership and to make things better for all of us. They fought long and hard to make all our lives a little bit easier when we come to work. That is what a union does. A union official should always have the best interest of the union in mind. It should never be about themselves. However, its getting harder and harder to find someone from our member-



Thank You !

"It was a good run while it lasted".



Congrats

ship to step up and take their turn to make things better for all of us. Our contract was not given to us by the USPS because we are a bunch of nice guys. Everything that we have in our contracts was fought for by your union officers and stewards.

We need to thank many of the past officers and stewards for their commitment to our union. Many of you probably do not know some of the "old timers" like Pat Johnson, Ed Peters, Dale Enk, Jeff Conway, Bob Wood, Greg Preuss, Gary Basch, Dale Weinman and Susie Pederson. (There are many more that also deserve recognition) These people were true unionist who worked tirelessly to make our jobs easier. They also made my job easier as president, by laying a great foundation to build the benefits that we have today.

I also need to say a big thank you to all the officers and steward that I worked with over my career. Without the support of the officers and stewards, the president's job is awful hard. Over the past 20 years, there have been some officers that this local or I could not have survived. Without Dale Enk, Bob Wood, John Miceli, Chris Czubakowski, Glenn Griggs and especially and most recently Mark Ferrari, I could not have done my job. The other person that I owe a lot of gratitude to and kept the union office running smoothly and made all of us look good was our office secretary Jennifer Madsen.

Most APWU members have no idea who their National Business Agents are, or what they do, but as a local president, I relied on them sometimes daily for their knowledge and experience. Take my word for it, over my career we have had, and continue to have the best National Business Agents in the country. Going back to my friends John Akey and Lyle Krueth, to our current NBA's Willie Mellen, Martin Mater, Curtis Walker and William Wright. Thank you, guys, for all your help and guidance.

Most importantly, I cannot thank my wife Cindy enough for supporting me in this job. Times when I would come home from having a really crappy day at work, she reminded me what was most important in life...family! She is always there for me and is the person who keeps our family together. We are really looking forward to the next journey in our lives... Retirement.

As my friend Martin Mater says,
"It was a good run while it lasted".



**Mark Ferrari
Local Business Agent
& Health Plan Rep.**

Over the past 27 years I have had the honor of being a Steward, Clerk Craft Director, Vice President and Local Business Agent for our local and have written many articles for the Hi-Lites newsletter during that time.

A while back I decided I was not going to run for office again and decided to go back to being a full time Clerk on the workroom floor for my remaining time in the postal service. Therefore, this article will be my last.

I would like to congratulate all newly elected local officers including President Elect Glenn Griggs, Local Business Agent Elect, Chris Czubakowski and Vice President Elect, Larry Brown, Jr. Please join me in giving them your support as they lead our membership into the future.

Moving forward, I would like to ask our union members to get involved in THEIR UNION. Paying union dues is great but is only the first part in having a successful union.

We must remember, the union doesn't run itself. It takes dedicated members volunteering to work for our membership and help fight for the contractual rights we have and that have been fought for over the past several decades. Remember, the union is only as good as the members

My Final Article

"...I would like to thank the members for putting their trust in me ..."

make it - because the members ARE the union.

During my time as a union representative since 1994, I've worked with many people. There are too many to mention them all by name so I would like to give a quick thanks to the following:

Local President, Paul McKenna, who I credit for helping make us one of the best locals in the nation.

ALL of our current and past representatives at the local and national levels - including the awesome National Business Agents in our region.

Previous Union Hall Secretary, Jack Miller; Jennifer, our current Union Hall Secretary; and, John Miceli for his work as Editor of the Hi-Lites newsletter and for helping make my

submitted Hi-Lites articles look their best.

Lastly, I would like to thank the members for putting their trust in me since I first became a union representative in 1994. Whether it was helping someone with a problem, filing large class action grievances that affected many employees or working to improve our local contracts - it was always satisfying to help our union members any which way possible. Our members have always had high expectations in their union representatives, and I hope I was able to meet those expectations on your behalf.



Mark Ferrari is pictured with former APWU President, William Burrus.



**Jennifer Madsen
Office Secretary**

*Hello, I'm Jennifer, the voice behind
"Hello ! APWU, may I help you?"*

If you have ever called the downtown APWU Union Hall on 3rd street, you more than likely have talked to me, requested my help or asked me to assist you in reaching out to your representatives. I've been lucky enough to have been employed by the union for over 21 years. As you may or may not realize the end of the 2019 - 2021 term is right around the corner for the Milwaukee Area Local officers and stewards.

Although we excitedly welcome new officials, new challenges and new members...we also sadly say "Goodbye" and "Good Luck" to mister Paul McKenna and Mark Ferrari.

Good luck to you Mark! You've done a lot for our local from the various board positions you held...eventually settling in as the Local Business Agent and ending your Union career in the office across from my desk. I will miss how you looked out for everyone, always made yourself available to help others understand, and had more patience then some deserved whether it was dealing with individuals, teaching group classes or listening to someone just vent.

On a more personal level I will miss our chats about anything and everything from current news, social me-

dia, entertainment, our views and beliefs and most importantly our "Debbie Downer" inside jokes. (Wuuh)

Mister Paul McKenna, you held the President position in the office 19 out of my 21 years of employment as the "Bossman", the "Headcheese", the "Big Wig" and President of this Union.

I've tried my hardest to help keep you organized and the union office as organized and functional as possible to the best of my ability. Your ability to talk and remain composed under stressful situations, and with not so pleasant people, is the one thing I admire the most about you.

I will miss the office jokes, office games, and the giggles and laughs

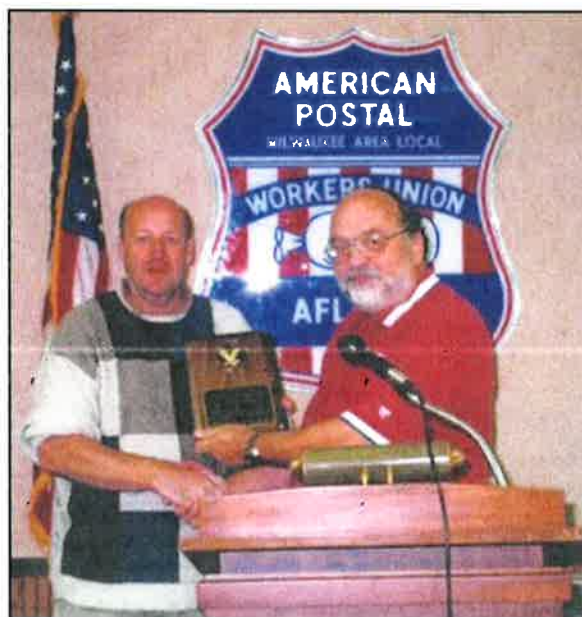
that somehow would brighten up the atmosphere. I want to thank you for everything you have done for me inside and outside the office. You are not only a great boss and coworker, you are also a great friend.

Please enjoy your next chapter in life and don't forget about us "peons" you're leaving behind.

Good luck to the both of you and from the bottom of my heart. A big thank you for allowing me to be a part of this Union family we call APWU. You both will be missed!

You Both Will Be Missed

*"...we also sadly say "Goodbye" and "Good Luck"
mister Paul McKenna and Mark Ferrari. "*



Paul McKenna
pictured with
former APWU
National
Business Agent,
Lyle Kreuth



Glenn Griggs
Customer Service
Director

Hello to all my union brothers and sisters. I hope everyone is staying safe from this virus. I want to say thank you for allowing me to represent you as your customer service director for over the last 8 years or so. I've met a lot of new faces and some familiar ones while traveling to the city stations.

As I start this new chapter as your local's president, I promise to carry that same energy, if not more, into this position as I did as your customer service director, making sure the rights of all bargaining unit employees are protected.

With several new faces of officers and stewards on our executive board, the two faces that will be missed the most are Paul and Mark.

Working with these two for over 24 years has been an honor. While working with Paul and Mark, I learned a lot. We are talking about over 50 years of experience between the two of them. Lol.

I will be the first to tell you that all of their knowledge and experience will be missed. I am confident though that Chris, Larry, and myself are up for the challenge. I am also confident that the entire executive board, and all our stewards are ready to lead this

union into the 21 century.

I can honestly say Paul and Mark have always carried themselves professionally while representing our local union. They have always represented this office with integrity, honesty, and most of all... respect.

For that I salute these two on their next journey in life. Whether its full retirement or going back to the workroom floor...for over the last 20+ years knowing your local union was in good hands, I will work twice as hard to make sure it stays that way as your new local president.

One of the things I appreciate the most about these two, was their patience when dealing with various issues. Making sure they had the right answers before making tough decisions and returning phone calls to our members to make sure they were being fully represented. These will be big shoes to fill, but as I stated before, this new administra-

On To The Next Challenge

"...this new administration is ready and up for the challenge."

tion is ready and up for the challenge.

I would also like to congratulate the rest of the executive board who ran unopposed, and good luck to the ones that are in a race. My last official day as your customer service director will be March 31, 2021.

A congrats is in order to Kenni Ligan, as he will be the new customer service director. He can be reached at 414-305-6523.

Thanks again for allowing me to serve as your customer service director! Thank you in advance for having the trust in me to lead this local as your new president on April 1, 2021.

And finally,
thanks for being
a union member!!!



Paul & Mark
pictured with
fellow officers
and stewards...

picketing for our
Union, Members
and Customers
in our "Save
The Service"
campaign



Chris Czubakowski
Vice President

After spending decades fighting the good fight for the labor movement and this membership, President Paul McKenna and Local Business Agent Mark Ferrari will be retiring from the Union and riding into the sunset on March 31st, 2021. I have fought with and worked alongside both in this Union for the past twenty-one years and it is hard to imagine our workplace and Union without them. To say they will be missed is an understatement.

Paul and Mark made a formidable team because they both took an authentic, thoughtful, steady, and methodical approach in guiding our Union's affairs and communicating with others. Both are slow to anger, patient to listen and quick to offer their knowledge, help and encouragement. Their continued leadership and guidance throughout the years, both pro-

Saying Goodbyes To Goodguys

"Paul and Mark made a formidable team...you will never be forgotten."

fessional and personal, has positively educated and influenced a generation of hard-working union officials and guided many of us through the stressful and demanding circumstances that come with the job.

The Milwaukee Area Local has weathered a lot of storms under their leadership. Yet, whether we shared in the joy of victory or the agony of defeat it has always been a reassuring comfort to know that we had two hard working leaders at the helm of the ship. Both have a work ethic second to none and both are unafraid of getting their own hands dirty.

Paul and Mark were committed to the mission of improving the lives and working conditions of all of our members. It's not by accident that during their tenure as full-time officers the Milwaukee Area Local and our Local Contract have both become widely recognized as being one of the strongest in the country.

It has been an honor and a privilege to learn from and work with two of the most dedicated and committed unionists that I have ever known. The loss of these Union leaders to retirement leaves those of us who remain with BIG shoes to fill.

I am confident that President-Elect Griggs, I and the rest of the Executive Board and stewards will put our best foot forward in order to honor their hard work and build upon their success.

And while I'm personally saddened to see them retire, I am confident they will find the same level of success and happiness going forward as they did while working here. I have immensely valued both as mentors, colleagues, and good friends. I will miss their senses of humor and frequently seeing, learning from, and strategizing with them.

So, with a final tip of the hat to you fellas, here's to staying in touch down the road and to knowing that while you will be missed, you will never be forgotten.

GOOD



GUYS





John Miceli
Treasurer

As their long tenured journey reaches this final chapter on March 31st 2021, there are no shortage of words to describe these two unionists. Paul McKenna and Mark Ferrari have provided us with the stability and leadership that was second to none.

I am proud to be a member of this local and an executive board officer. It has been my pleasure and honor to have worked side by side with these guys for 20+yrs.

The "TEAM" we have assembled,



Mark & Paul pictured outside the Downtown Post Office walking in a Union Protest in the 90's

Stepping Up ? Dedication, Responsibility, Commitment

"We have all been a part of how a successful local is governed."

emulates how a successful local is governed. We have basked in the many victories and experienced the occasional defeats...but that is what has brought us to the successful path that our experienced board will carry on into the next decade.

Both of these full time officers have shown professionalism for each union member that has had a need for representation. The patience to sit down and listen with a member making them feel they are just as important as the next is second nature.

Each of them has their own niche. Mark usually has an abundance of appointments with PSEs, patiently explaining the business side of being a Union member. Whether it be picking out a health plan or explaining the benefits and wages that go along with our employment.

He is also our webmaster for our Milwaukee Area Local website... **apwumilwaukee.org**. Make sure to visit our site and check out everything that is available for you to utilize.

I have been blessed with the partnership that Paul and I have tailored as President and Treasurer of this local. Many discussions and decisions have been broached in that office. I especially admire the respect and trust Paul has given me in allowing me to structure the Treasurers duties as it is ran today, mak-

ing sure this local has followed every tax law, IRS obligation and D.O.L. criteria running the local as a "business".

Going forward...Glenn Griggs, Chris Czubakowski and Larry Brown jr, definitely have the passion and skill in continuing with the fruits of labor that Paul and Mark have left us. They have been through enough battles, fighting for your rights. We will be in great hands!

Which leads us to this conundrum... Where are our members? We don't see you at our general membership meetings. You are the ones that make a difference in your local.

At this very moment, in our general workforce, we are at 40% retirement age. This membership could dwindle to nothing all at once. The same goes for your local reps. Most of us will be gone in 5-8 yrs. Who of you will step up and lead your co-workers into the next generation of qualified APWU officers and stewards.

THIS IS YOUR UNION!

BECOME A REPRESENTATIVE.

Ask one of us how to get engaged. The Union is only as strong as our membership.



Larry Brown jr
Automation Director

First and foremost I would like to say congratulations to the 70 plus number of PSEs that were converted on March 12th. You know something must be going right when you have recent converted PSEs questioning why the newly converted PSEs are being turned over so fast?

Don't be upset about growth. When PSEs were first introduced to our contract language in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, I remember some of the grievances and issues that I had to deal with trying to represent them. I'm sure the regulars at that time also remember. Many of them were saying the only thing we as the Union cared about were the PSEs. There was just so much grey area in our contract at that time, that it required most of our attention because everything about PSEs was being challenged.

PSEs in the plant started out only working 3 days a week, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. They only got overtime pay under the Federal Labor Standards Act guidelines. Now they work six days a week, not sure if they like that too much to be honest, but they do get Postal Overtime now. Just like a regular employee, they are now afforded overtime pay after 8 hours of work and penalty overtime pay after 10 hours of work. Back then, not only was the overtime pay different, but so was everything else

Part Of The Solution... Part Of The Problem?

"We will have new members here that need to get up to speed. It would be great if everyone helped to get these newly converted regulars trained..."

concerning the PSEs. They didn't get Holidays that they get now. Although they don't get paid for all of them, it's better than none of them.

Discipline was also drastically different for the PSEs. One of my first grievances concerning a PSE was for attendance. Management claimed that PSEs didn't get official discussions. They believed that they could just say they had an official discussion at orientation and thought that would just go over easy with everyone.

When it was determined that they did indeed get official discussions, management decided that they would not offer PSEs any probation on any discipline issued to them. That was ruled out of order. So, management attempted to give Notice of Removals to PSEs with only a letter of warning on file and fire them on their five day break, believing the CBA gave them that right.

Why am I stating all of this? Most of the PSEs converted over the last several years don't know any of the trials and tribulations the Union dealt with before they were hired. They just know what they know now; just as the previous PSEs before them don't know what the casuals went through that were here before they came.

Let me tell you what else I remember. All of our members in Automation coming together for a common cause. I remember that none of the regulars at that time would train an incoming PSE, because our friends

and co-workers were being exsessed to the carrier craft. I was one of those co-workers exsessed.

Management said they didn't need us, but at the same time, they brought in non-careers to replace us! It didn't sit well with us. You showed them how you felt about it. That Was Wrong!!! Those same PSEs that replaced us eventually made regular, and to this day we still hear the horror stories from them, as to how they were treated.

With that being said, I witnessed one of those same original PSEs, "OG PSE" if you will, refuse to train a newly hired PSE saying, "No one trained me when I came, so I'm not training nobody." This circle is not beneficial to anyone. Why would you refuse to train someone that you could possibly end up working with? A knowledgeable partner makes your night easier. Am I right? We literally have 2, maybe 3 certified trainers on Tour 1.

We will have new members here that need to get up to speed. It would be great if everyone helped to get these newly converted regulars trained that may have never worked in automation before. A little help goes a long way when it comes to learning their jobs. Also, the new incoming PSEs that will get hired, or just come into the building to replace some of the new conversions will need help also. You don't have to go all out...a couple of little suggestions can help in their training. Things like, where to throw out used labels, ties and rubber

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bands so that they don't end up on the floor causing a safety hazard. Show them the proper side where to put a header on a hamper so you don't have to constantly change the label at dispatch because it was put on the wrong side. Every little bit helps everyone, not just the person being trained. Everyone in the section!

As stated earlier...I've been in talks with management concerning some of the training that needs to take place in Automation. I literally had a supervisor come to me and say how great of a job this new employee was because it was their first day and while working by themselves all night, they knocked out big DPS that normally requires two people.

***That is unacceptable. No one should be working alone Period!
Let alone their first day on a machine or week for that matter.***

Let's all play our part. We cannot keep complaining that people don't know what they are doing. We can't continue to say we don't want to work with people that don't know what they're doing if we won't act on the opportunity to assist them to help them learn. We all heard the saying if you're not part of the solution you're part of the problem. Be the solution.

* * *

Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying

Maintenance Director, Jim Arneson

This Month, I am going to address a subject that is sensitive and may hurt some individuals feelings. On Tour 1 at the Milwaukee P&DC we have a certain management official that is being allowed to allegedly harass workers. Sometimes to the point where the employees are forced to try and leave their work area. This management official does not just allegedly harass maintenance employees but any employee he can tower over.

But is anything done to this management official? It would appear not. This just encourages this management official to continue his bullying and intimidation (allegedly). Other supervisors see what he does (allegedly) and how upper management protects him from any consequences. They see how the "end justify the means" in the eyes of the upper management. This causes line supervisors stay silent on anything about him because it is above their pay grade so to speak. This management official has been through enough harassment charges that he now uses it as a weapon against employees. He has learned that if he allegedly harasses an employee, and then claim he was harassed, his word will be the only one that is truthful.

So, what can you do if you're on a machine and this manager approaches you? First, give yourself an escape route, do not be put in a situation where you would have to physically touch him in order to get out of your work area. Second, call your supervisor immediately and let them run interference for you. You are doing your job troubleshooting a machine and do not need further distractions. Third, if possible, go in pairs to the machines he oversees in order to make sure that there is a witness to his actions. Forth, make a note of any interaction you have with this management official and share it with your supervisor and/or your union steward and for the future.

Sexual harassment can be levied on men and women, but unfortunately other then putting out well sounding stand up talks, management will allow this to continue. We must protect ourselves. Lastly, if this management official, or any management official for that matter, does harass you, notify your union steward and supervisor immediately.

Lastly, I would like to thank the members for having confidence in me to allow me to serve the members for another 2 years.



Mark Krueger
Motor Vehicle Director

The USPS uses Highway Contractor Routes (HCR) to transport mail from point "A" to "B." An HCR route is where contractors are given specific delivery destinations from which they transport mail. These, routes, which are "outsourced" to transport mail to specific locations on a time schedule is either: daily, weekly, or for one designated trip.

These HCR contracts allow the USPS to have a fixed cost for the delivery of mail to each of these locations. The routes are designed to handle all aspects of the delivery of the mail from equipment, employees, benefits, environmental conditions, and any of the unknown factors that could be associated for the service provided. This makes the HCR contractor totally responsible for the delivery on these routes. It makes the contractor responsible to maintain these commitments for the transporting of the mail, regardless.

What has been occurring is that the USPS has been experiencing a large number of "Contract Failures" by HCR contractors. These failures can range from delivery schedule delays to not doing the routes at all.

The reasons for these delays are:

- Shortage of APWU drivers; contractors employed drivers
- Drivers running out of available "Hours of Work" per the FMSC/ DOT regulations

Consequences For HCR Failures

"...there seems to be speculation that these companies aren't even being penalized...due to their failure to deliver these runs."

- Lack of equipment/ wrong type available by the company to transport the mail/ route
- Equipment failure for what they do provide.

This causes delays in mail delivery to our locations. These delays also increase the cost of delivery of the mail for these routes by having to subcontract out the same route to other contractors, which incurs additional expense due to higher costs than was originally committed to this contract.

If the only solution to move the mail is that the USPS uses it's own employees, on Overtime, to get this delayed mail transported then it must be done. Which then causes a "funnel down" affect that the USPS resources are then being over taxed? This effect then continues at the stations, when more hours are needed to break down the mail, and longer hours for carriers on the street due to our commitment to deliver mail to every address in the country.

The consequences for these HCR failures were that each time it would occur that the contractor was issued a "5500" for Contractor failure. The company then was to give the USPS an explanation for this occurrence. It was then reviewed by USPS and if these incidences continued to occur the contract for these routes were terminated and bids for a new company were put out for these contracts. Well, that doesn't seem to be happening because the amounts of these fails

have been increasing. We haven't seen any HCR contract cancellations done in a long time.

Plus, there seems to be speculation that these companies aren't even being penalized or having their compensation for doing these contracts withdrawn due to their failure to deliver these runs.

What needs to happen is that the USPS needs to get back to the business of working to get our service levels increased from these contractors to a level that meets our needs. That means that there should be more commitment to stay in direct communication with these contractors to see what can be done to reduce these issues and if contracting out this work is the best for the specific routes. If not, then we need to get this work back to MVS. Seeing that we are currently doing these routes to cover these failures then let's put the responsibility of the delivery of the mail back onto the USPS and reduce the delays that are occurring to our service.

USPS needs to do whatever it takes to get this work done in a timely manner. The more that we can add to the security of our jobs in MVS the better we will be as a service to our customer... YOU!



Jeff Worden
North Sectional Director

When I first became a Sectional Director, I had found out that some of the most common issues were Article 1.6 (Supervisors performing bargaining unit work) and Article 7 (Employee Classifications, Carriers performing Clerk Craft work).

The fact is, this issue of supervisors performing bargaining unit work is alive and well. Throughout the United States Postal Service (especially at the Area Offices) and the biggest problem is getting our members to file a grievance. To be fair, I do have some offices that write/call me when a supervisor or Letter Carrier is performing CLERK CRAFT WORK!

I've heard members say, "I can't possibly keep track of all the work the supervisors (as well as Letter Carriers) who perform our work on a daily basis, even though it would only take a few minutes here and there. That few minutes here and there WILL ADD-UP to \$money\$ in your pocket. If left unchallenged, it will add up to hours, days and ultimately a LOST BID JOB!

I have learned that the best way for keeping track of all the bargaining unit work done by supervisors is to keep a log. The Union needs several things from you the member in order to be successful in winning an Article 1.6 grievance. First off, you must supply the union with a statement

How We Keep Our Jobs

"...you must supply the union with a statement containing the date, the type of work being performed and the amount of time..."

containing the date, the type of work being performed and the amount of time the supervisor is doing the bargaining unit work, (i.e.) from 0500-0525 hrs. the supervisor was throwing mail at the hot case... etc.

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! Write your name on the statement and give/mail to your union steward.

Statements that state "a friend of mine or a letter carrier saw the boss doing our work". These statements are pretty much useless, unless THAT PERSON ACTUALLY WRITES THE STATEMENT stating what they observed the supervisor(s) doing! "He said" & "She said" statements really don't go very far especially if the grievance is appealed up the chain.

It really doesn't have to be anything

elaborate, just the basics. 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 only has 14-Days from the 1st date of the infraction to file a grievance! The union has a sheet for keeping track of supervisors doing our work. This sheet can also be used for keeping track of Article 7 violations when Letter Carriers perform clerk craft work.

This is our work and I'm sure as hell not going to give it away! If you want me to mail you some copies of this form, just give me a call and I'll be more than happy to have some copies mailed to you. Take Care.



Paul McKenna
pictured with
former APWU
WI State
President,
Steve Lord

Why We All Need To Care About The Postal Board Of Governors

What is the Postal Board of Governors and what does it do?

The Postal Service has a Board of Governors that is responsible for major decisions about the Postal Service's operations, policies and expenditures. The Board's responsibilities also include hiring and firing the Postmaster General. The Board is usually made up of nine members who are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Why should we care about the Board?

President-Elect Joe Biden can fill four positions on the nine-member board when he comes into office. Strong nominees to the Board should fight for the Postal Service we all deserve. They should defend and expand postal services, not cut them. They should promote speedier delivery, not mail slow-downs and post office closures. The Board has real power. Don't forget, it was a previous Board of Governors that supported plans to eliminate Saturday delivery, close processing centers and privatize our work to Staples. And it was the current Board who hired Postmaster General DeJoy and supported his mail-delaying policies. A Board with a pro-postal majority can hold the PMG accountable and keep the Postal Service committed to vibrant, public and universal postal service.

How do we get a postal Board that will fight for the people of the country?

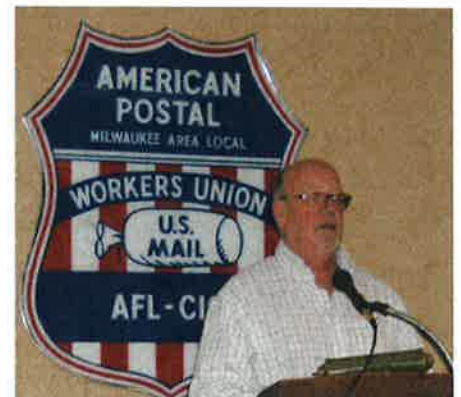
Together with many of our allies, the APWU is petitioning the incoming Administration to quickly fill the vacancies on the Board with diverse and community-based members who will be strong advocates for the public Postal Service. Together, we can send a clear message that postal workers, together with postal customers around the country, urge the Biden Administration support the Postal Service by quickly appointing Governors who will support the People's Post Office.

USPS Board of Governors - Organizing Works!

Last week, we were part of a coalition that delivered more than 400,000 signatures to President Biden, asking that he nominate diverse, pro-postal members of the Board of Governors. President Biden delivered. His three nominees - Anton Hajar, Amber McReynolds, and Ron Stroman - include a former lawyer for the American Postal Workers Union, a voting rights advocate and a former Deputy Postmaster General. Each time we have taken action since the launch of the U.S. Mail Not For Sale campaign in 2019, it has made us stronger. When we rallied for the Post Office last summer, it showed just how important saving our public Postal Service is to communities across the country. When we kept the pressure up after the election, it showed that we aren't going anywhere until we have secured and expanded the U.S. Mail. With a stronger voice for universal services at the top of the U.S. Postal Service, we have taken a big step forward. That step could not have been taken without you and the work of hundreds of thousand of people, just like you, across the country.

It is important to celebrate this success and recognize that we still have much to do together!

In the coming months, we will have to fight against a plan to permanently slow the delivery of first class mail. The new Board nominees will have to be confirmed by the Senate to take up their places. We will have a real opportunity to pass crucial legislation to secure and expand the work of our public Postal Service. There is still much to do and we are excited to work with you to create more positive change in this next phase.



The Final Chapter, 3/31/21,
Paul's last time representing
Local #3 in front of our shield!

Postal Bills Introduced

Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney, the Chairwoman of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, has introduced new postal bills:

The Vote by Mail Tracking Act will make it easier for election officials and voters to track the status of their ballots and for the Postal Service to identify, process, and deliver ballots more effectively. The legislation has been included in an amendment to H.R. 1, the For the People Act.

The Nonpartisan Postmaster General Act would designate the Postal Service Board of Governors, the Postmaster General, and the Deputy Postmaster General as “further restricted employees” under the Hatch Act to prevent them from holding any political position while in office and to ensure that these positions are filled by qualified experts rather than political operatives.

In addition to these two bills, Chairwoman Maloney continues to work on draft legislation to place the Postal Service on a more sustainable financial footing, with provisions on Medicare integration, repealing the requirement for the Postal Service to pre-fund retiree health care, and enhancing transparency for service performance standards.

At a hearing on February 24, 2021, Mark Dimondstein, the President of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, testified in strong support of Medicare integration, saying it “would be good for workers, good for the Postal Service, and good for the future.” He also said postal workers support eliminating pre-funded retiree healthcare, calling it “unfair, draconian, and unprecedented.” Other postal labor leaders also support the bill:

National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE): “Together, the changes to the Medicare integration provisions and the repeal of the prefunding mandate significantly improve upon past postal reform bills. Furthermore, the discussion draft as written would provide much-needed financial relief to the U.S. Postal Service. NARFE urges members of Congress to maintain these improvements. We look forward to reviewing the final bill and hope to support the committee’s postal reform bill once it is introduced.”

National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC): “The inclusion of [prefunding] repeal would be a major victory for NALC. As letter carriers recall, the USPS Fairness Act passed the House with a strong, bipartisan majority last year, paving the way for its inclusion in this year’s postal reform efforts.”

Maloney, presented draft postal reform legislation incorporating provisions NARFE has long advocated, including Medicare integration that preserves current postal retirees’ choice regarding whether to enroll in Medicare Part B. In advance of a hearing reviewing the legislation and other postal reform solutions, NARFE National President Ken Thomas submitted a statement for the record outlining the association’s views on postal reform.

In a press statement, Thomas applauded the draft bill’s Medicare integration provisions. Specifically, current retirees age 65 and older would have the option to enroll in Medicare Part B without penalty; retirees ages 55 to 64 would be automatically enrolled at age 65 with a three-month window to opt-out. The integration would save the Postal Service tens of billions over the next decade.

Beyond Medicare integration, the bill would end the requirement that the agency fully prefund the future health insurance benefits of its retirees. This mandate has cost tens of billions of dollars and is the driving force behind the Postal Service’s recent financial losses.

The draft bill would also maintain USPS service standards by requiring the agency to meet annual performance targets and consult the Postal Regulatory Commission before slowing mail delivery times.

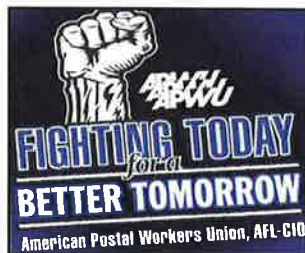
Forget Sliding Into DMs, TikTok Teens Are Writing Pen Pals To Save The USPS

by: Caroline Edwards, CULTURE

The wholesome summer camp activity has been radicalized in an attempt to save the Post Office — one stamp at a time.

It's safe to say that 2020 has been full of unexpected and old school trends, but the latest wholesome craze taking over our feeds is fully analog. In a world of sliding into DMs and sending voice notes, what's old is new again, and sending snail mail to a pen pal is the cutest new hobby taking over social media.

The latest take on pen palling returns to a pre-Internet era of creating collages, making friendship bracelets and putting together the perfect mix CD to include with a hand-written letter. Recently, the act has taken on a new political role as part of the campaign to save the United States Postal Service (USPS), which many believe was being openly dismantled by President Trump to rig the 2020 election. "Writing to my first penpal" reads the opening text on one of TikTok's thousands of #penpal videos, which have over 59.7 million views.



Sitting at her desk, a girl writes a long letter to a stranger with an instrumental rendition of Billie Holiday's "Until The Real Thing Comes Along" playing in the background. A montage of clips depict the thoughtfulness that goes into the hobby — from the detailed letter with precise penmanship (adorned calligraphy and doodles) to the addition of pressed flowers, stickers and trinkets. Everything gets wrapped in a neat parcel, finished with a bit of string, before finally being enclosed in a homemade envelope and sealed with a wax stamp.

The resurgence of the traditional summer camp activity has appeared on Tumblr and Pinterest over the years, but it gained traction right before lockdown, with hundreds of videos and accounts about the subject popping up under the tags on Instagram and TikTok. Ziona, a 17-year-old from Illinois, began pen palling in February and is one of the hundreds of teens and twenty somethings who recently joined the community to build human connections and fight loneliness in isolation. "It was something that definitely kept me sane and also gave me a routine, too," she explains, noting that others felt the same and her account quickly racked up 7,000 followers over the past couple months. "It set a schedule [of writing] one letter a day at least so that I could get back to people and still be communicating with people in some way." Ziona connected with her first pen pal, a teen girl in California, back in February on one of the many "find a pen pal" posts. After DMing for safety reasons, the two decided to start exchanging notes because they seemed like a good match. "In the letter, we did go back and kind of introduce ourselves again, but we also went in-depth about our interests and discussed what makes us, us," she shares. Along with a letter, Ziona includes a neutral-toned array of vintage goodies, ranging from playlists to washi tape and collages, and has completed 144 letters to date.

Pen palling is far more than scribbling some thoughts down on a Hallmark card or on a scrap piece of notebook paper — it's closer to a care package or mini-scrapbook. Kaitlyn, a 21-year-old veteran pen pal, explains, "The whole purpose is to form true, deep connections with people who you don't see, who live continents away," she says. Kaitlyn first joined the community six years ago when she struggled to make friends at school, but found she could connect with teens around the world. "You're reminded of just how real and human these people are when you receive their own words, written down on paper, in your mailbox," she explains. Kaitlyn's TikTok is one of the few accounts on the app that has a page dedicated solely to pen palling, where she creates strawberry or 90s-themed "pen pal with me" videos, opens letters and gives tips on how to join the community, hoping to inspire others to take part. "From the time I downloaded TikTok at the beginning of the lockdown, it was so cool to see the idea of 'quarantine pen pals' pick up more and more traction over the next months," she explains. "It's exciting to see videos about mail when they crop up. Hopefully, as my followers' pen pal hobbies grow, some of them will start posting more and more snail mail content."

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Snail mail's renaissance is partly due to the ongoing pandemic as people started searching for a wholesome and heartfelt activity to fill their time, but it's also been gaining traction as a political hobby. The USPS' crucial role in the November election has made it one of the hottest talking points, as Trump continued to spread conspiracy theories about mail-in voting and threatened to dismantle the vital service by blocking the \$25 billion emergency bail out. With a lack of funding and resources to keep the agency afloat, the USPS warned voters that mail-in ballots might not arrive by election day, November 3.

"The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations," explains Sara Martin, senior public relations representative at USPS Corporate Communications. As part of #SaveTheUSPS, countless TikTok users are doubling down on their efforts to find pen pals, so they have a reason to buy stamps, send letters and support the agency directly.

In the pen pal community on Instagram, pages like @thesnailmailbox and @writtenconnections were established to raise support for the USPS. They also match and connect people to new pen pals, since it can be intimidating for newcomers to the community. "We were inspired to start Written Connections after a late-night video call turned into a discussion about how vital a service USPS is, and how heavily we rely on them to deliver our pen pal letters to friends all around the world," says Breana, one of the page's three co-founders.

With the newfound interest in the hobby, the collective had 400 sign-ups from around the world, which the team matched by grouping pen pals based on age groups and interests. "Our hope is that we can help our participants form genuine connections and friendships through good ole snail mail," adds another co-founder, Tiffany. "It's been really heartwarming seeing people's excitement when they share on social media that they sent or received a letter." But it's not just gen Z pen pal-ers who are creating snail mail collectives, it's artists of all ages, too. Christina Massey, a mixed-media artist who created Artists for the USPS last April, is putting a creative spin on snail mail and pen palling. The project was inspired by the Artists Support Pledge in Europe and is a collaboration between two artists—one starting an artwork then sending it through the USPS for the other to finish.

"I live in NYC, and at the time it was really intense, our hospitals didn't have the equipment they needed, and I felt a strong desire to do something for the community at large," Massey explains. "I think it was NPR that first started encouraging people to start buying stamps, and I had one of those lightbulb moments where I thought, 'Oh, I know what artists can do!'" With over 600 collaborations so far, pieces range from sculptures to mixed media and painting, and some are even shown at exhibitions. "As artists send artworks to each other, then send them again to the galleries, which then mail them again to collectors or to the next exhibition, one piece of art actually raises a decent amount for [the USPS]."

Sending a text or liking someone's Tweet might be the easiest way to get someone's attention, but pen palling can truly make a difference for the USPS — and it's Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez-approved. "I've seen more and more people online buying stamps and sending mail to help out the USPS, which has caused the pen pal community to grow even more," Kaitlyn says.

"Saving the USPS isn't about saving pen palling so much as it is about preserving American democracy. It just so happens that the pen pal community cares about both."



As Paul transitions from his usual busy, organized office desk, to his comfy recliner...

We send you and Cindy well wishes in enjoying your Retirement!

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