



The Hi-Lites



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Milwaukee Wisconsin Area Local

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**Glenn Griggs
President**

Hello everyone! I hope everyone had a wonderful summer so far. I decided to write this article a little different than normal. The title really should read, "Put me in coach! I swear I can do it." As the fall season approaches us, and basketball is getting ready to start back up, (which is great by the way), the Milwaukee Installation has a new Plant Manager.

Sticking with the basketball analogy, this new Plant Manager is now the New Coach for the post office here in Milwaukee. Although we have a new coach/plant manager for our installation the play book is still the same.

I've worked for the post office for about 31 years and have been a steward or officer for over 27 of those years. I have seen probably around 10-15 different plant managers/coaches here in Milwaukee and I can tell you that most of their playbook are the same.

Let me elaborate on this for a minute. The previous plant manager came in with the same play calling duties of ending no lunches for our Union brothers and sisters. Of course a grievance was filed and we eventually won reinstatement of those no lunches, because that has been a practice here in the Milwaukee installation for over 20 plus years of management giving employees a no lunch. I will admit at the time I was

Different Coach: Same Play Calling

"Our livelihoods were now centered around no lunches."

skeptical because this was something that management wanted really bad, and I didn't understand why. As the time went on I later understood their play calling on this one.

Management was reverting jobs left and right so they needed a three point shot at the buzzer in order to stay in the game. That three point shot was giving every employee that wanted one, a no lunch. One of their reasons behind giving employees a no lunch was because their team General Manager which is the Postmaster General wanted to cut their roster so they didn't have enough players to work with, or run their machines.

The benefit of management giving no lunches to their players solved a major problem for them, which was not having to substitute players/employees when people were taking lunches. Back then they were using a relief crew as subs.

As the time went on just about every one of my teammates/members got accustomed to management giving us no lunches. Our livelihoods were now centered around no lunches. Whether it was getting our kids up and ready for school in the morning after work, taking care of our elderly loved ones, or just getting out of work a little early. A no lunch was now part of our routine schedule. As I stand in front of my teammates/union brothers and sisters I am confident that we will be champions of taking no lunches once again when the buzzer rings and the final decision is made.

I'm asking everyone to be patient,

we are working hard to get this issue resolved ASAP.

Medical Documentations

We had a meeting with the new plant manager and her staff. We all agreed that medical documentations need to be turn into the medical unit or a medical staff member. If any union brother or sister is still having supervisors or someone in management requesting that documentation go to them first, please contact a steward immediately.

The USPS medical department fax# is 650-578-4734...Please make sure you keep a receipt or confirmation of your fax for your records.

Clean Bathrooms

We also had some discussions about the how dirty and nasty the bathrooms are. I must say, she is probably the first plant manager that we had here in the Milwaukee installation that has taken this issue seriously. She made it very clear to her team that bathrooms are to be cleaned and in working condition. I applaud her on this. We have brought this issue up to several different management officials for years, and this plant manager is the only one to address this issue promptly. If you see a bathroom not properly maintained, please let us know ASAP.

New Employee Orientation

When new employees are hired in most areas they were not properly given a tour of the facilities where they are working. Every employee should know where the bathrooms are, where all the exits are at, the

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union office etc. We have a commitment from management that every new employee will receive a check list that should be completed, which consists of a tour of the building, where the bathrooms, break rooms, telephones to use in an emergency are located. During this tour we agreed that if an APWU rep is available they will be invited along for the tour.

Pay Adjustments

We are aware that it has taken entirely too long for some pay adjustments to be completed by management when a grievance is resolved, or someone's paycheck is screwed up. I have addressed this issue with the new Plant Manager and she has informed us that she is putting a plan in place to make sure our union brothers and sisters no longer experience these unacceptable delays in getting paid. For now, till that plan is developed, all past due pay settlements and adjustments will be forwarded to her so that she can keep track of it and make sure it will be paid out without any further delay. This has been an ongoing issue here in Milwaukee for sometime now. I'm willing to give this process a chance however, we will not continue to wait on our union brothers and sisters to get paid. We will take whatever steps necessary to ensure timely pay adjustments are completed and our members get paid correctly. This may take a little time, but we will keep working until we get this fixed.

Retiree Gathering

We are looking at starting up the retiree social again. I put something out a few months ago, asking retirees to send in your yearly dues and provide contact information to make sure we have your correct information on file. We have had a few people call or come down to the hall. I would like to get feedback from the retirees, if you want the social to start back up and when. Thanks.

Reminder, this month's general membership meeting is Wednesday, September 28, 2022 @ 7pm. Hope to see you all there. Once again, thanks for all you do, and thanks for being a Union member!

APWU Union Pride Day

APWUNews

Join APWU Union Pride Day on Sept. 15 to celebrate our new Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in paychecks beginning Sept 16, and show our APWU solidarity in the fight to keep it! Wear your buttons, wristbands, stickers shirts, hats and other union gear to show that you're "Union Strong, All Day Long!" and a proud part of this fight for a strong union and solidarity. Snap a selfie and send your images to ncc@apwu.org! You may see yourself in the APWU magazine or on the website!

Thanks to our new 2021 union contract, career employees will receive a record-breaking \$1.18 per hour COLA, that amounts to an annual increase of \$2,455, and the hourly rates for part-time employees will be adjusted accordingly. The \$1.18 rate adjustment, effective Aug 27, will begin to show up in paychecks starting Sept 16.

APWU is the only postal union that has maintained full COLA, and is the best protection we have against rising inflation! So don't forget to show your union pride on Sept. 15 to celebrate our COLA in paychecks Sept 16 and to show that we're "Union Strong, All Day Long!"

Talk to your non-member coworkers and ask them to become a member of the APWU union.



Chris Czubakowski
Local Business Agent

There have been recent problems and situations when an employee bids from one tour to another. It is management's responsibility to notify the employee of their options and make the transition to their new tour as easy as possible.

The following are guidelines that should be followed as soon as possible after an employee secures a bid that is on a different tour.

From Tour Three To Tour One: Remembering that Friday night is Tour one's Saturday, depending on the new SDO's, the employee should be offered a change of schedule (PS Form 3189), annual leave, or LWOP. (This would not be necessary if the new SDO's are Sat/Sun service).

From Tour Two To Tour One: The same options would be available as number one above, with the exception that if the employee wanted to finish their tour two shift on Friday, and report to Tour One that Friday evening, if scheduled. That would be strictly at the employee's option.

From Tour Three To Tour Two: The same options would be available as number one above, with the exception that if the employee wanted to finish their tour three shift on Friday, and report to tour two on Saturday, if scheduled. That would be strictly at the employee's option.

Changing Tours After Bidding

"The following are guidelines that should be followed..."

From Tour One To Tour Two: Management is required to inform the employee that their last work day would be Thursday/Friday Service, and the employee should report on their first scheduled day on tour two the following week.

From Tour Two To Tour Three: You would need to inform the employee to report on their first scheduled day on tour three the following week.

From Tour One To Tour Three: Same as number four above

FALL RETIREMENT CLASSES

The Milwaukee Area Local has scheduled retirement classes for Saturday, October 8th, from 9am - 11am and Wednesday, October 12th, from 7pm- 9pm. Greg Johnson and Brandon Littleton from Union Financial Inc. will cover FERS, CSRS, TSP and how to manage your money after retirement. Your questions are always welcome.

Any current APWU or NPMHU member and their spouse/partner are invited to attend. If interested in attending please contact the Union hall to reserve your spot. APWU Union hall: 414-273-7838. Deaf/Hard of hearing members should contact the Union hall two weeks prior to the classes in order to request an interpreter.

These retirement classes have been held for many years and have helped many of our members transition into retirement and financial security.

If you are looking forward to retirement, we are looking forward to you joining us.

FEHB OPEN SEASON APPROACHING

The dates for postal and federal employee health benefits enrollment Open Season are from the Monday of the second full work week in November through the Monday of the second full work week in December.

This is a great time for APWU members to review, join and save big money with the APWU Health Plan.





Greg Becker
South Sectional Director

*As we approach another midterm election, many voters assume that because this is not a presidential election, it is not important to vote. Typically, voter turnout is lower during midterms than during presidential elections. However, voting **IS** just as important during midterm elections as during presidential elections. As Postal Workers and APWU Union members, any federal election is important to our career and our Union rights.*

This year, the November election in Wisconsin has a senate seat and congressional seats at play, as well as the governor of the state. Because we are Federal workers, I will focus on the federal races. As Wisconsin is known as a “battleground” state, these elections could shift the balance of power in congress. As voters, we must weigh the issues and not get distracted by the “wedge” issues that are frequently hyped to sway voters. We must weigh the issues most important to our families, our careers, and our Union, and decide which candidates will support the issues most important in our lives.

As middle/working class voters, we must decide which candidates will protect our way of life, our careers, and our best interests. And tune out the “noise” of misleading campaign commercials and social media information that seek to influence our

Just Vote !

“Our Union is a true democracy where each member has an equal voice and vote...”

feelings and emotions. Look at how candidates vote on issues important to our lives, and what they vote against. Each voter should seek out trusted sources of information that conforms with their belief system, and determine if you are being influenced by misleading sources of information.

As a Union member, my APWU is a trusted source of information because the Union solely exists to benefit my wages, benefits, and working conditions as a Postal Worker.

Our Union is a true democracy where each member has an equal voice and vote, and is not influenced by moneyed interests (unless they are taking sides against our Postal Service and Union). The APWU takes a stance in issues that effect the USPS or Unions, but does not weigh in on other issues. Because using dues money for lobbying congress is illegal, the APWU Committee on Political Action (COPA) lobbies congress on behalf of all members to influence congress.

The APWU COPA fund is a non-partisan fund that seeks the member’s donations and contributes these donations to a member of any party that supports our USPS and Union cause that is important to our career and our Union. Our nation’s democracy is a “pay to play” capitalist government and we must play the game. The COPA fund does not get involved in issues that are not germane to our working lives. You can get more information on

what COPA does on behalf of the APWU at APWU.org.

So, coming this fall, research the issues and vote in November... or request an absentee ballot to vote prior to election day. There are many issues important to our careers and union that hang in the balance based on which politicians win or lose in November.

Research those issues on APWU.org and get in the game. Laws like the Postal Service Reform Act (PSRA) were passed on a bi-partisan vote in 2022, and relieved the USPS of its debt burden that crippled the Postal Service after the PAEA was passed in 2006 (see my last article). This law became possible because of who was elected in previous elections.

We voters have a say in the future of our country, our careers, and our Union. Be a part of it. VOTE!



State Of The Union

Mark Dimondstein, President



On Monday, APWU President Mark Dimondstein delivered the 'State of the Union.' He highlighted our successes and struggles and gave an outlook for a bright, while challenging, future. Reflecting on the moment, Dimondstein said, "the pandemic has made it crystal clear what we always knew – it is we, the workers, who make the world go around."

Dimondstein condemned the current wave of voter suppression and the former U.S. president's attempt to hold onto power in a coup. He said "we must never accept as normal the rising white supremacist torrent of race hatred and bigotry that divides workers and led to the despicable racist massacres in Charleston, Pittsburgh, El Paso and Buffalo – all reflecting a dangerous drive toward fascism."

On the condition of the APWU, Dimondstein said, "together we are marching forward and building an activist, winning union. I submit to you that the state of our union is indeed 'Union Strong, All Day Long!'" Dimondstein applauded the success of the 'U.S. Mail, Not for Sale' campaign and the defeat of the 2018

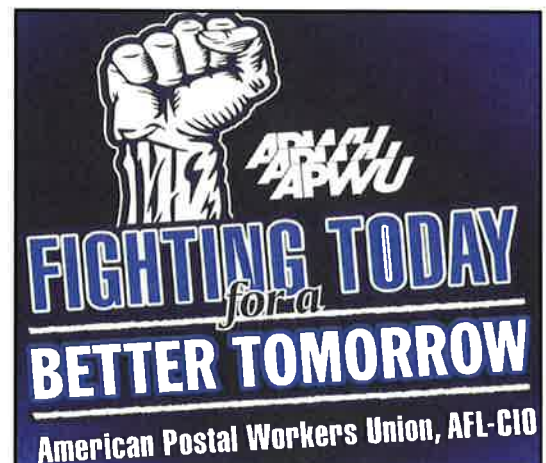
Presidential Task Force recommendations, which attacked collective bargaining rights.

This year, members ratified a new main union contract with a 94 percent "yes" vote. "The new contract secured annual wage increases, full COLAs, new work guarantees for PTFs, new career conversion opportunities for PSEs, restored Level 8 to the high career pay scale, limits on subcontracting of existing PVS driver work, maintained and enhanced job security no lay-off provisions and generally uplifted postal workers of all crafts," Dimondstein said. It also maintains the Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA). The new contract's second COLA amounts to \$1.18/hr; it follows the \$0.63/hr COLA in January.

In Congress, after 16 years of organizing, the Postal Service Reform Act was passed. Among other provisions, this law eliminates the prefunding retiree health benefit mandate of 2006. Other accomplishments included winning liberal leave and COVID safety memos; securing \$10 billion in postal COVID aid; 100,000 PSE conversions; 10,000 new clerk jobs in mail processing; improved member communications; joining struggles for racial and social justice.

Dimondstein also lauded the recent organizing campaign, which brought on 5,000 new members, as well as private-sector organizing wins. "Our approach to sticking to the issues and never shying away from a fight has served our members well," Dimondstein said. "A solid new contract, historical postal legislation, improved staffing, a better path to career status and an openness to new and enhanced postal products. However, we must and will remain ever vigilant." He stressed that, while the privatizers have been kept at bay, "Wall Street is still Wall Street" and the threat of privatization continues to rear its ugly head.

"Yes, the dangers are great but so are the opportunities," he said. "The weather will be stormy at times. But we have the good and sturdy ship called the APWU built with many hands over generations of struggle."



The APWU National Convention

“The Struggle For Justice Continues”

As delegates arrived in Maryland’s National Harbor for the 26th Biennial National Convention, the Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Services, and Support Services Divisions held their respective conferences, alongside the APWU Retirees conference.

At the Clerk Craft Division Conference, Director Lamont Brooks led members in discussion of how to continue to protect and expand craft jobs, remove the multi-tiered wage system, and how to be proactive against workplace harassment and safety issues. Delegates heard about the creation of an RI-399 training manual, a “PSE conversion opportunities decision tree,” and the intent to mentor new national officers to help retain institutional knowledge and help future generations in their battles with management.

At the Maintenance Division Conference, led by Director Idowu Balogun, members discussed the new Collective Bargaining Agreement, upcoming resolutions, and updates since the last convention. Delegates from across the country raised the impact of management understaffing of maintenance jobs. The lack of job vacancies, availability of training classes, testing procedures, workplace safety, and promotion possibilities within the craft were all debated.

The MVS Division Conference, led by Director Mike Foster, focused on resolutions that addressed delays in job postings, conversions, and the need for training for workplace safety.

At the Support Services Division Conference, Director Steve Brooks and delegates discussed newly ratified contracts, how to go about negotiating a new contract, and the differences in negotiating in the private sector compared to bargaining with the USPS. The conference also included a Questions and Answers (Q&A) session on what it’s like working in each of their different bargaining units.

APWU MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOPS

Over 1,000 members took part in twenty educational workshops and trainings on Friday, August 12. The workshops were organized by the Research and Education Department and its director, Joyce Robinson.

The workshops and trainings covered a wide range of issues, including contract enforcement, innovative organizing, fundamentals of labor law, communications for locals from the Postal Press Association, as well as social justice and racial equality. Members left the trainings with new tools and information to stand up for our members on the shop floor and in the streets.

Union Strong, All Day Long!



**Today Is Labor Day. This Year, It's Truly A Day
For Workers To Celebrate. We Have A Lot
To Be Excited About.**

We celebrate our union movement that is delivering results, with workers coming together and organizing to make our jobs better, across the country. We celebrate the progress working people have made through decades of advocacy to create better lives for ourselves and our families, ensure safer workplaces and build a stronger economy.

It's no wonder that unions are more popular today than at any time in more than 50 years! A record 71% of Americans now say they approve of unions.

We are celebrating the Biden-Harris administration that puts working families front and center in everything it does. Look at the victories we've had just this year, from the bipartisan infrastructure law to the CHIPS Act to the Inflation Reduction Act to student loan forgiveness. These laws are investments that will change working families' lives, by creating new jobs, making prescriptions more affordable and lifting the burden of debt.

These are victories we achieved thanks to your activism, organizing and advocacy. Working people are recognizing the power we have when we join together to form unions. We are seeing every day the strength of workers coming together—from sheet metal workers in Alaska to REI workers in the Bay Area, from workers at the Milwaukee Art Museum to nurses in Coral Gables, Florida—and it is truly inspiring.

But we can't stop here. After we celebrate, our job is to take that momentum and use it to go all in on this election, so that we can protect our pro-worker majority and keep building on these victories.

Because so much of the progress we've fought for—and so many of our most fundamental freedoms—is at risk. And so after we celebrate, we're going to keep fighting.

We're going to fight to protect the freedom to organize—to fight back against unfair pay and unsafe workplaces. We're going to fight to protect the freedom to access health care. And we're going to fight to protect the freedom to vote.

The stakes are high, but we can do it. Workers know better than anyone how powerful we are when we join together to make our voices heard.

Today is Labor Day. Today, we recognize all of our hard work. And tomorrow, we'll keep organizing, keep fighting and keep winning, because that's what America's workers do.

In Solidarity,

Liz Shuler,
President, AFL-CIO



President Joe Biden Addresses Laborfest Crowd In Milwaukee, Praises Labor Unions

Five thousand people were expected to attend Laborfest, which is the first event being held since 2019 because of the pandemic, but once the President's trip was announced that number is expected to rise between five and ten thousand. In a visit to Milwaukee Monday, President Joe Biden spoke about the importance of labor unions and called out "extreme MAGA Republicans."

Biden was the first president to visit Milwaukee's Labor Fest since former President Barack Obama spoke at the parade and rally in 2014. It was also Biden's first visit to Wisconsin since he visited Superior in March to tout infrastructure legislation. For the majority of his remarks at the Labor Day event, Biden discussed labor unions. He pointed to labor union endorsements as a key part of helping him get elected to the United States Senate at the age of 29. "Look the middle class, the middle class built America. Everyone knows that," Biden said. "But unions built the middle class."

Biden spoke about the Inflation Reduction Act, which he signed on Aug. 19. The White House says the roughly \$700 billion package will address inflation by lowering prescription drug costs, health care costs and energy costs. "It wasn't easy to take on big drug companies, but we did," Biden said about the bill Monday. The Democratic president's visit comes two months before the closely contested midterm elections, with Wisconsin's U.S. Senate race critical to Democrats' chances of holding a Senate majority. It also comes as an August Marquette University Law School Poll found Biden had a 40 percent job approval rating in Wisconsin.

Democratic Gov. Tony Evers, who is running against Republican construction executive Tim Michels in the gubernatorial race, also made an appearance at the event. "I am the only candidate for governor who has actually bargained for a public sector union," Evers said. "The only one."

Absent from the visit was Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, who is running against Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson. A spokesperson for Barnes said he was attending Laborfest events throughout Milwaukee, Madison and Racine. Barnes is also set to host an event with members of the UAW Local 578 in Green Bay Tuesday. Even so, Biden told the crowd Barnes was going to "be your next United States Senator." Biden also called out what he called "extreme MAGA Republicans" as well, following his primetime speech last week when he spoke about the extremism of Trump supporters. "The definition of democracy is you accept the will of the people when the votes are honestly counted," Biden said. "These guys don't do it. Name me a democracy in the world where a leader argues to engage in violence."

Elizabeth Shuler, president of the AFL-CIO, spoke at the Milwaukee event. The first woman to lead the organization, she represents the 57 unions and 12.5 million members of the AFL-CIO. "We deliver results," Shuler said. "That's why unions are more popular than ever." A Gallup poll found that 71 percent of Americans now approve of labor unions.

Shuler pointed to Biden as part of the reason for that figure. "That's because this president is not afraid to say the word 'union,'" Shuler said.





John Miceli
Treasurer

MarketWatch

Question: I had \$225,000 in my 401(k) and then I rolled over \$125,000 to an annuity at 7%, as I wanted income. I just turned 65 and want to retire in six months, but I don't know what to do with the other \$100,000. What should I do? Should I hire a financial adviser to help

Answer: Congrats on your impending retirement — and know that it's totally normal to feel like now may be the time to hire a financial adviser. As for whether you need one or not, that really depends on your preferences and how comfortable you feel about dealing with your finances.

Have an issue with your financial adviser or looking to hire a new one? But first, to figure out how to deploy the \$100,000, you first need to understand the big picture of your life and finances, and what you need that money to do for you. Look at your other income sources, spending needs, how much you'll withdraw from various accounts when you retire and the tax implications of all of that. Determine how much money you need to live on per year and then you can break that down into how much you'll need every month, taking into account any income from Social Security or any other sources like a pension. This guide can help you figure out some other financial

Are You Ready To Retire? Here's How To Tell

"it's a good idea to look for a fiduciary who has a legal obligation to work in your best interest..."

things you need to figure out to see if you're financially ready to retire.

Once you know that, understand that your \$100,000 can be utilized in many ways — you can withdraw it, transfer it to another retirement account or keep the money in your 401(k), among other options. And what's right for you depends on how you want to use that money.

To determine the right decision for you, an adviser will gather your financial information and ask questions about yourself. They'll analyze your current financial situation and determine the best place for your money.

Of course, you can do this yourself too — though that will require understanding how much money you're going to need to retire, and how much risk you're willing to take with that \$100,000, and more. Note that since you have the option of keeping the money in your 401(k) and letting it grow, unless you need the cash for essential living expenses, you likely wouldn't want to withdraw it, pros say.

Another part of the puzzle? It would help to know more about the annuity, such as whether or not it's a single-premium deferred annuity (SPDA). An SPDA is an annuity funded with a single lump sum that offers guaranteed income with a tax-deferred growth on the investment. This can be beneficial because you're offered a guaranteed rate of

return, which can make retirement planning easier and you don't have to pay taxes on the annuity until you begin taking distributions.

If this sounds like a lot, an adviser may be helpful if you opt to work with a financial adviser, it's a good idea to look for a fiduciary who has a legal obligation to work in your best interest and can't recommend products or services just because they'll receive a financial kickback for doing so.

Whether you decide to go it alone, or hire someone, remember that financial planning is so much more than just handling investments. It's about reducing potential risks to your retirement, tax-efficiency, asset protection, estate preservation and more.

If you don't have a long-term care plan, the risk to your nest egg is greatly increased compared to if you had one. Not having a proper, proactive care plan can devastate a lifetime of savings.





**Larry Brown Jr
Vice President**

As I write this article on the eve of Labor Day, it is only right that I give you my Labor Day article for this issue of the Hi-Lites. I have always authored an article in September that attempts to reflect on the reasons why we should be happy that we have a Union job. This September issue will be no different.

Since Glenn Griggs, Chris Czubakowski and I have taken up our new roles of President, Local Business Agent, and Vice-President, respectively, we have had our minds set on increasing the participation of our members. We are constantly looking for new stewards to fill the roles that may become vacant in the upcoming years. We are constantly looking for the individuals that understand that, although it can be a thankless job, someone must be the steward.

I was talking to a young lady while working on the machines with her the other day, she was explaining to me about her life at Amazon. Close to 4 years ago, she was offered a job with the Postal Service and a job at Amazon. She chose Amazon. She lost out on three years of seniority with that decision. Since she is now working alongside us, I asked her what made her give up the Amazon job and come to work with the Postal Service. It was more than one thing, but one of her major reasons was, in those 3 years working at Amazon,

Everybody Hates Chris

"...your actions and explanations are unacceptable and cannot be condoned..."

she had already reached her cap in pay. She was at the top of the pay scale in 3 years. Any other raises she got would be a just because raise. Nothing contractual, nothing guaranteed. I have heard many stories from previous Amazon workers, such as being fired for restroom breaks, and even being fired by a computer, but the biggest Amazon story to date is about a man named Chris Smalls.

Chris Smalls is a 33-year-old man from New Jersey, who took on Jeff Bezos to create the first Union at Amazon. During one of his numerous interviews, Chris Smalls spoke about why he wanted to organize the Amazon plant that he worked for in Staten Island.

During Covid, he and his co-workers were deemed essential workers, yet they received no personal protective equipment. He spoke of how he went to upper management and explained to them how his co-workers were coming in fatigued and dizzy, vomiting at their workstations and how he knew something was very wrong. They ignored him, upper management just wanted to continue doing business as usual. He continued to take further action which led up to the walkout that was held on March 30th. This walkout garnered national attention partly because previous attempts to organize an Amazon facility had failed. One of the most recent being in Alabama, failed at its second attempt to Unionize, although the ballots are being challenged.

Chris Smalls spoke about the tactics

that Amazon used to prevent the Staten Island plant from unionizing. Like the stories that I wrote about in my American Factory article last year, except this was not in China, it was in the United States. "They plastered the building with Anti-Union propaganda..." said Smalls, "They brought these Union busters in, that we call Union busters. They pay these people anywhere between \$3,000 and \$10,000 a day to pretty much walk around the building and demonize me and what the Amazon Labor Union was trying to do. Every 20 minutes they have these classes where they would bring 50 to 60 workers into a classroom and pretty much grill them to vote NO to the Union."

One of the interviewers raised a question to Mr. Smalls, if the stories they heard were true, of employees being forced to relieve themselves in bottles because they were too afraid to walk to the bathroom. He responded by saying they are on productivity as soon as they walk in the building; required to pick somewhere between four hundred, or more, items per hour for ten to twelve hours a day. They had a hard time going to the bathroom because the restrooms are so far away. These buildings are massive, about 1 million square feet, 14 NFL football fields, so to walk from one side to another is going to take you some time. Now imagine the same company spending \$10,000 a day to convince you that you do not need a Union when this is happening. That is a slap in the face.

When I am challenged by PSEs as to why they should pay Union dues, I

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Everybody Hates Chris...

(continued from page 11)

give the same answer to all of them, because you were hired as a PSE. Casuals and PSEs are night and day. PSEs do not even know what casuals went through, and some disregard it when you try to explain it to them. Your Union is right in front of you. You do not have to worry about relieving yourself in a bottle because the restrooms are so far away. (... Hello, Milwaukee Processing Annex...)

You do not have to do that because in 1970, 210,000 postal workers withheld their labor and won better pay and benefits, job security and collective bargaining for the generations to come after them. YOU CAN GO TO THE WWW.APWU.ORG AND WATCH THE VIDEO OF THE GREAT POSTAL STRIKE OF 1970. The strike was illegal and many of them feared they were going to jail, but they still did it and it was out of this strike that the APWU was born.

When I gave the new stewards training class back in June, I made it a point to ask the attendees what they would do if all the officers of the local retired. Who would be the ones willing to step up and represent the membership? It sounds farfetched, everybody gone, but it is not. Years fly by. Look at how fast the first year and a half of our first term went. You can easily look up and that's three years gone. That is three years of training you could be getting from knowledgeable people willing to teach you.

Chris Smalls traveled the country protesting in front of Jeff Bezos' mansions and penthouses. Chris Smalls was terminated, even arrested, fighting for respect and his rights.

As one Amazon executive wrote in a meeting briefing Jeff Bezos: "He's not smart or articulate.... We should spend the first part of our response strongly laying out the case for why [his] conduct was immoral, unacceptable, and arguably illegal, in detail, and only then follow with our usual talking points..."



And there you have it. Management explained concisely. The explanation for your actions is always considered unacceptable. Any reason that you have ever given management for anything that you were disciplined for is normally followed by management stating that your actions and explanations are unacceptable and cannot be condoned, followed by management's usual talking points.

Example, I had a member disciplined for failure to be in regular attendance. He only had four (4) call-ins. His explanations were:

- communicative disease, medical documentation was provided to the supervisor long before the employee was brought in for a day in court.
- car accident, police report was provided.
- FMLA condition, was in the process of having his condition approved.
- A snowstorm, in which the whole building called in. Management gave this person a notice of removal, which stated: your response is unacceptable, and your actions cannot be condoned or tolerated.

Who is the employee that management hates the most? The employee that knows their rights! The employee that is not just going to sit idly by and watch as anything is done on the workroom floor, all in the name of just getting the job done. Management wants you to care about your job, but it is the employees that show they care about their job that are always getting into it with the Supervisors. When you are constantly on management asking them why I don't have this in order to do that efficiently, or why are you processing this, this way, you should be doing it like this because the end result is better for our customers, they hardly ever listen to you and proceed to become annoyed with questions. Now make those questions a safety issue, or an abusive supervisor issue and couple that with an employee that is ready and willing to speak up for their co-workers and you have just introduced public enemy number one to management.(next page please)

(continued from previous page)

That was the reason I named this article Everybody Hates Chris. I suggest that we all become some version of that Chris. I am not saying that you need to go and get arrested or fly across the country protesting in front of your bosses' homes. What I am saying is, you can read your contract. You can ask more questions. You can attend more meetings. You can vote more in the elections. You can write more statements addressing violations of our contract. You can support an employee that you know is being wronged instead of refusing to get involved because no one is bothering you. It is a reason companies work so hard to keep their employees from unionizing. Fortunately, your Union is already here.

The Pandemic showed just how important Unions are. People don't even want to go back to work after what has happened. Organization attempts are happening all over the country, from the aforementioned Amazon, to places like Starbucks. All of this is great, but please keep in mind, you can establish the greatest Union in the history of all Unions, and it will mean nothing if no one is willing to step up and continue the fight!

Get informed. Happy Labor Day.

Second COLA Increase Announced

APWUNews

In accordance with the 2021-2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement, career employees represented by the APWU will receive a \$1.18 per hour cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), effective August 27, 2022.

The increase is the result of a rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W). It will appear in paychecks dated September 16, 2022 (Pay Period 19-2022). The value of the COLA for full-time employees in each step and grade will increase by \$2,455.00 annually, and the hourly rates for part-time employees will be adjusted accordingly. The COLAs are in addition to general wage increases. This is the second cost-of-living increase under the 2021 contract. The first, effective in February, amounted to \$0.63 per hour or \$1,310 annually. The COLAs received so far during the 2021-2024 National Agreement total \$3,765.00 this year.

In light of the fact that Postal Support Employees (PSEs) do not receive cost-of-living increases, they have received several additional increases beyond the general wage increases for all employees in the APWU bargaining unit under the 2021 contract. Rising inflation underscores just how important the continuation of our negotiated Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is in our outstanding new union contract. The COLA is our best protection against inflation. Postal Workers are some of the few U.S. workers who receive COLA increases. Even in the postal world, we are the only postal union that has maintained full COLA in our union contract.

"At times of high inflation, our union-won COLA is invaluable to ourselves and our families," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "It pays to be union! It's always a struggle to keep these COLA provisions and every postal worker should be proud we fought hard and prevailed to keep full COLA in our latest contract."

Go to apwu.org/pay-information to view pay scales.



Kenni Liggan
Customer Service
Director

[Art. 1.6 a] : Collective Bargaining Agreement reads as follows:

“Supervisors are prohibited from performing bargaining unit work at post offices with 100 or more bargaining unit employees”, except:

- In an emergency;
- For the purpose of training or instruction of employees;
- To assure the proper operation of equipment;
- To protect the safety of employees; or
- To protect the property of the USPS.

[Art 7.2 a] : Collective Bargaining Agreement reads as follows:

“Normally, work in different crafts occupational groups or levels will not be combined into one (1) job. However, to provide maximum full-time employment and provide necessary flexibility, management may establish full-time schedule assignments by including work within different crafts or occupational group after the following sequential actions have been taken:

- All available work within each separate craft by tour has been combined.
- Work of different crafts in the same wage level by tour has been

Management / Non-Clerks Performing Work At City Stations

“This undermines the compliment of clerk positions at the city stations.”

combined.

The appropriate representatives of the affected Union will be informed in advance of the reasons for establishing the combination full-time assignment within different crafts in accordance with this Article. “

These 2 Articles of the Collective Bargaining Agreement are very important when it comes to maintaining clerk position at the city stations. Management has continuously been performing bargaining unit work as well as having non-bargaining employees performing clerk duties.

This undermines the compliment of clerk positions at the city stations. Upper management only looks at the work hours perform by clerks to determine the amount of clerk that are needed at each station.

By allowing management or non-bargaining unit employees to do our jobs, in the long run it will cost us all, clerk positions.

That is why I am strongly encouraging that all clerks at the city station that see management and or non-bargaining unit employees performing clerks duties.

WRITE A STATEMENT !!!

Get it to your APWU steward or any APWU Union official IMMEDIATELY. That way, the Union can file a grievance on each violation.

We need to show management that instead of reducing the compliment of clerk positions, they need to add more clerk positions at the city stations.

Remember, the job you save may be your own.

Thank you.





Mark Krueger
Motor Vehicle Director

Washington Examiner

The country is learning about the special-interest handouts in the Inflation Reduction Act. In one particularly concerning provision, the act gives the struggling, financially irresponsible United States Postal Service \$1.29 billion for the purchase of electric delivery trucks and an additional \$1.71 billion to build out supporting infrastructure such as charging stations.

While the idea of electric delivery trucks sounds like a win for the environment and a proposal that might reduce operations costs in the long term, the Postal Service's track record indicates that it is in no position to oversee such a massive overhaul of infrastructure.

It is no secret that the USPS has been on the brink of financial ruin for decades, constantly seeking bailouts at the expense of the taxpayer.

In 2021, its operating revenue was \$77 billion, an increase of \$3.9 billion despite reporting a net loss of \$9.2 billion in 2020 and a net loss of nearly \$100 billion since 2007.

This doesn't even take into consideration the \$50 billion in bailout funding that Congress pushed

through last year, which was supposed to set the Postal Service on a path of solvency as is required by law.

Top line: The Postal Service needs to get its financial house in order before it takes up an extremely costly, taxpayer-supported program.

It currently lacks the proper infrastructure to support a massive switch of the postal fleet.

To complicate things further, it has already placed an order with federal contractor Oshkosh Defense for an entire fleet of next-generation delivery trucks.

The current purchase order is for 165,000 New Generation Delivery Vehicle trucks, 40% of which were already slated to be electric, which was already increased from the initial order of 10% EVs.

Electric Vehicle Bailout That The Postal Service Will Likely Waste

"The Postal Service's original plan had a higher potential for success."

The Postal Service's original plan had a higher potential for success: Prior to congressional meddling, it was set to roll out EV trucks in a tiered and more precise process.

By increasing the number of EV trucks in the fleet all at once, the Postal Service is setting itself up for failure.

A better course of action would be to make this change over time. That would allow infrastructure to get into place and time for these never-produced-before trucks to be road-tested.

In turn, this would allow for future modifications down the road with traunched orders.





Jim Arneson
Maintenance Director

Premium Regulations

"Out-of-Schedule is different then Overtime. "

This article will be about Out of Schedule and a bit of overtime. "Out-of-schedule premium regulations are contained in Section 434.6 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual and provide that out-of-schedule premium is paid at the postal overtime rate to eligible full-time bargaining unit employees for time worked outside of, and instead of, their regularly scheduled work day or work week when working on a temporary schedule at the request of management" JCIM 2020.

As the previous sentence says, this is for hours outside your regularly scheduled workday/week as required by Management. If you have ever wondered why I ask you when you turn in a 3189 "Is this for your con-

venience or is management asking you to do this?", it is for this reason. If you are on a personal change of schedule with a 3189 you are not entitled to Out-of-Schedule pay.

So what management likes to do sometimes is have the employee fill out a 3189 so they do not have to pay them Out-of-Schedule premium. Instead management should be putting the employee on a 1723 and checking off the box in ERM's that indicates that out of schedule pay is to be earned.

There are a few exceptions to this rule of course. But if you are asked to work outside of your normal schedule and you do not see Out-of-Schedule pay in the next pay period, please request to see a Steward. It is better to be safe the sorry. Out-of-Schedule is different then Overtime. While the pay may be the same the circumstances and rules behind them differ. Again if you

have questions please contact a Union Steward.

One thing to note is that it says FULL time employees.

So in maintenance we have PTR custodians. They would not be eligible for Out-of-Schedule pay. This is because, they are supposed to work their schedule unless unusual circumstances happen.

This does not mean that a co worker called in or some supervisor wanted something special done.

If you are a PTR and are asked to work outside your normal schedule please comply with the instructions but ask to see a Union Steward.

The New IT/AS Contract is Ratified

APWUNews

On Wednesday August 17, 2022 the ratification vote count for a 36-month Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Information Technology/Accounting Services (IT/AS) was conducted.

"I am proud to announce that the terms of the agreement were overwhelmingly ratified with a 388-17 count," stated Support Services Director Steve Brooks. That represents a 96% voting percentage in favor of the terms.



Chris Paige Jr
Automation Director

PS Form 3971 Request: Notification Of Absence

"...always make sure you retain a copy for your record."

During my 26 years of postal service, I've seen Management misguide employees of their right to request leave for one's own convenience. It is important that you, the member understand your right.

You can in fact request any type of leave you desire to fit your need if it is feasible. Management should NOTIFY all requests if possible and pro-

vide employees with a signed copy. It is up to Management to get back to the employee prior to the date of your request with a disapproval and state their reason for the disapproval.

If it is disapproved, the granting of an alternative leave type should in fact be explained if feasible. When any employee calls-in, you should responsibly submit a 3971 upon your return to work and a copy for one's own record. You have the right to change whatever type of leave as well, just as long as it's feasible. There are many ways to use the PS form 3971. One can use

to request to be excused from overtime or holidays, for blood leave, for military leave, for maternity leave, for court leave/jury duty, death in the family, FMLA, etc.

Again, always make sure you retain a copy for your record. If you are uncertain on the use of a PS form 3971, or if you feel Management is not addressing your request on a case by case basis; reach out to your tours' stewards for questions and concerns.

Free COVID Tests From USPS Have Stopped: How Else Can You Get Free At-Home Tests?

CNET

The government program that shipped free COVID-19 tests in the mail has run out. A federal program that has delivered millions of free at-home COVID-19 tests to American households through the US Postal Service has now ended, due to a lack of supply.

USA Today first reported on Aug. 26 about the limited supply of tests. Soon after, USPS updated its page for at-home COVID tests to say the free at-home COVID-19 tests program would be suspended on Sept. 2, 2022. On Friday, the site updated again to announce it is no longer accepting orders for tests.

The original website that the government launched in January -- CovidTests.gov -- now has a banner that reads, "Ordering through the free at-home test program was suspended on Friday, September 2 because Congress hasn't provided additional funding to replenish the nation's stockpile of tests."

If you're not insured or covered by Medicare, you still can get free COVID-19 tests. As part of the Biden administration's National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, the Department of Health and Human Services has provided millions of free COVID tests to community health centers and Medicare-certified rural health clinics. You can search for a local health center or clinic with free COVID tests near you using a tool on the HHS website.



Pam Walker

Attention Retirees

"We are looking into bringing back hosting the socials..."



Greetings Brother and Sisters,

Congratulations to all of our Brothers and Sisters that are enjoying retirement. The Milwaukee Area Local hopes that you all will remain local retiree members. We will continue to make it easy to join, very inexpensive, and very worthwhile.

Your \$10.00 membership fee ensures that you will receive the *Hi-Lites*. It also remains your "ticket" to six retiree socials.

We are looking into bringing back hosting the socials on the second Thursday of the designated month. (January, March, May, July, September & November) . During those months the retirees may hold the social but it may not necessarily be on the second Thursday.

I would like to remind all retirees that any retiree dues paid during the 2022 calendar year will be applied to the 2022 calendar year. The current calendar year must be paid before any payment is applied to future calendar year(s).

Please contact the APWU Union Hall with any questions.

To remain a local retiree please mail your \$10.00 retiree dues to :

APWU Retiree Dues
Attention: Pam Walker
P.O. Box 1995
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1995

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

I need a APWU membership card

☐

Reminder: If you belong to the National APWU, this does **NOT** cover your local \$10.00 dues.



Dr. Jonathan Saigh

Advanced Care Specialists

Choosing A Doctor After You Have Been Injured



One of the most common issues we have seen with initial claim denials at our office pertains to lack of proper documentation from physicians of choice. By no means is the lack of documentation a reflection of their status as a doctor – the OWCP denials tend to stem from lack of causal relationship and proper diagnosis. If the proper documentation doesn't get submitted it can lead to a slippery slope of claim denial, medical bills, and loss of wages.

I get it, you were injured at work and the process should be easy – and it can be if you see the right physician first. But here is the thing: it takes time, effort, and extensive training to know the ins and outs of DOL/OWCP paperwork and in the majority of cases nationwide, doctors and their staff aren't well versed on the details. Claims examiners typically take 30-60 days to open a case if all paperwork is done right the first time. If there are any issues, this timeline can extend by months, resulting in increased time, money, and potential leave without pay (LWOP) on your part. In the event your claim is denied it can take an additional 90 days to file for reconsideration – that is three additional months of possibly not getting weekly pay and piling up of medical bills.

The facts: Many injured federal employees think the worst-case scenario will never happen to them, but nationally, only three percent of federal employees are awarded accepted injury cases, and the vast majority of injured employees give up fighting after the first attempt at opening their case.

The logistics: If you happen to be eligible for continuation of pay (COP) and miss work due to the injury, you will continue to receive a paycheck for the first 45 days after the accident. After those 45 days, and if your case is unopened, any missed time will come out of your sick and/or annual time. If you have exhausted those two categories, you will be assigned leave without pay (LWOP). Using built-up paid leave does not normally cause an issue unless the case remains unopened and you run out of paid leave. The standard timeline for fighting an initial denial is anywhere from 30 days to nine months, and sometimes even longer.

Not seeing a DOL/OWCP specialist when initially injured can put you in a position to not receive the benefits you need and are entitled to. This situation can, and has, put many federal employees in serious financial hardship. Don't take a chance on not getting the benefits you deserve when hurt on the job. Call Advanced Care Specialists to give yourself the best chance of opening your case and making reconsiderations a thing of the past.

Advanced Care Specialists, with a multidisciplinary setting and specialties ranging from rehabilitation and massage to chiropractic and family medicine (MD), is the only clinic in Wisconsin that stands behind their knowledge of DOL/OWCP cases. So much so that they will not charge you out of pocket if they cannot get your case opened. ACS will also start treatment right away to ensure injuries do not worsen, even if the case is not accepted, and they offer free claims help. With DOL/OWCP reimbursing driving miles for medical appointments related to work injuries, Advanced Care Specialists is the right choice for all of your DOL/OWCP needs. Visit advancedcarespecialists.com to learn more and set up an appointment.