

# Michigan MESSENGER



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## PRESIDENT



by  
Michael  
Mize

# My Postmaster Is Dumb

Is this true? Well there are some APWU members out there that believe this is true. In fact, there may be times that I would be inclined to agree with such an opinion. Even if you believe this to be true or if it is true, they are the Postmasters. There is no rule that states only the smart ones, right ones or good ones get promoted. We all have the opinion that in some cases the wrong person got promoted. Why do I bring this up?

I have been a Postal Employee for over 20 years. I have not received any discipline in this 20 years. I have however followed some incredibly stupid orders. I have filed grievances

or had them filed for me for some orders that were violations. I have seen things fail because the supervisor did not know the right way to do the job that they were directing. Now I am not suggesting that we should let things fail. But, should we argue with a supervisor about the way to do things? No! If the supervisor is willing to listen to your opinion, then have that conversation. If they are not, what should you do?

The best advice I can give on what to do, **FOLLOW THE ORDER**. There are supervisors and managers that think they know everything. These employees of the Service will not hear what you say. They will interpret your opinion as an attack or challenge on their position or them personally. So, don't argue with them. If you can get the order written or overheard by another employee (bargaining unit)

great. If not, still do not argue. What if the order is dangerous?

That would be a great question. If the order would be dangerous and could cause harm to you or someone else's personal safety, you should not follow the order. Safety is the first concern and we do not want anyone hurt. You should at that point explain why it is dangerous and explain that you can't follow that directive. You should also ask for a steward if it is not resolved with that quick explanation. We can file grievances on safety issues and all too often these issues are not addressed. Work safe and follow orders. Is the Postmaster or supervisor dumb?

Well, they may be. But, they are the person in charge and they, Management, have the right to do things in a manner that we believe is wrong.

It may be the dumbest way of getting there but they are in charge. Do not risk your employment with the Service because the order was dumb. Just follow the dumb order given by the person in charge. Keep a record of the order or in your eyes mistake in case there is anything that goes wrong. Ask if they will hear your question, to let them hear your position. But then do things the way they want. As a bargaining unit employee there is only way thing you can do to fight this and not cause yourself grief, request a steward.

If there was only one thing that I could wish for every APWU member, I would wish for a great Postal career to end in a retirement when you are ready. I don't get wishes so we must work together to make that happen.

In Unity.

# White House Plan To Privatize The Postal Service

by Mark Dimondstein,  
APWU National President

The White House proposal on restructuring the federal government released on June 21st, "Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century," delivered nothing but misinformation and, if implemented, would end regular mail and package services at an affordable cost to 157 million addresses every day. Furthermore, the White House plan is an attack on many federal agencies and the public services they provide.

The White House's plan states, "Like many European nations the United States could privatize its postal operator . . ." What's left unsaid is European nations charge substantially more for mail services delivered in a much smaller area. They also regularly raise the cost of delivery. For example, the cost of sending a letter in the United Kingdom has increased 80 percent over the past decade. By comparison, the U.S. has the lowest postage rates in the industrialized world.

Eliminating the universal service obligation, as the plan suggests, would hurt business and individuals alike, and

would be a dagger aimed at the heart of rural America and undermine e-commerce.

The draconian plan uses "burdening the taxpayers" as justification to promote the privatization of the U.S. Postal

Service when the truth is USPS is self-supporting and receives no tax dollars for postal operations.

And, while letter mail volumes are lower, package delivery is up substantially. No institution is better suited for

the e-commerce revolution than USPS. The public postal service serves each and every person and belongs to the people of this country. According to recent surveys by Gallup and the Pew Research Center, it enjoys the highest level of satisfaction and trust of any government service or agency, rating the highest among young people.

Privatizing the Postal Service is not in the public interest or the interest of postal workers and would be nothing more than a raid by corporate pirates on a national treasure.

This outrageous White House plan should be a wake-up call to every postal worker and APWU member. The threats of postal privatization, the threats to decent union jobs, the threats to good services, are real.

The American Postal Workers Union stands with the people of the country and our many allies in the ongoing fight to ensure a vibrant public Postal Service for generations to come.

More information and calls for action will be forthcoming.



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**EDITOR**

# It's A Mad, Mad World Out There!



by  
**John Greathouse**

Greetings Brothers and Sisters.

**Focus, Focus, Focus...**

This is my 3rd draft of my article and well, with the events this past week... I could go on a rant and I won't for many reasons, mainly that this is only an 8 page newspaper!

**History Repeats Itself**

One of the most important parts of learning is remembering your history. Looking back to an article from the Illinois Postal Worker, Illinois State APWU;

*"Labor is here, in its hundredth year, to deliver a simple message to the administration and to the Congress: We have come so far, struggled too long, sacrificed too much, and have too much left to do, to allow all that we have achieved for the good of all to be swept away without a fight. And we have not forgotten how to fight! We are out front and we shall not fall back to hid and wait for better political weather. But the winds are changing as they always do. The winters chill is*

*approaching, and the bloom is fading from false mandates. Today is just a start, but solidarity is more than just a day. As our brothers and sisters in Poland have shown the "world, it is a quality of the human spirit that can never be defeated."* The Illinois Postal Worker, Illinois State APWU (1980-1981).

This sure has the ring of what is going on right now, not 38 years ago! History has this nasty habit of repeating itself and if you don't see it coming, you will get bitten!

**Contract**

As we go into our current contract talks, we need to stay informed as to events that are going on in Washington DC, as well as what the President has to say about the Post Office that can and will affect us.

President Trump proposed a plan to "Privatize the Postal Service". Let's just say this, a good number of GOP Senators came out and said no, that just will not work at all. My district needs the Post Office. My money is on a lame duck session of Congress just before all of the GOP member leave

who lost their bid for reelection is when something kind of ugly will get rammed through like the PAEA was in 2006.

**PSE**

The PSE's just got a great settlement for better pay and more. I just hope that this contract makes some changes on both PSE's and PTF's. Many PTF's are feeling left out in the cold by the Union and PSE's are gaining more and more to the point that PSE's have it better than the PTF's. In Lansing the PSE's were being worked like dogs, with OT almost every day. After this settlement came out, PSE hours were cut, dramatically! And managements only response was that they got this big settlement and the Post Office just can afford to pay out that much OT so we need to make sure no one goes over 8 hours a day or 40 hours in a week. It gets crazier and crazier everyday!

In closing, stay alert, be safe, and enjoy the rest of the summer because before we know it, we will have to deal with that wet white stuff again that shall not be named!

In Solidarity.

**MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR**

## We Must Protect Our Jobs!!!



by  
**Sterling Bouier**

Hello MPWU Brothers and Sisters.

My name is **Sterling Bouier** and I serve as the **Michigan Postal Workers Union Maintenance Craft Director**.

I cannot say it enough. **We MUST PROTECT OUR JOBS!!!** We have a lot of work ahead of us. Throughout the state, the postal service is **trying**

to do more work with less workers. **Staffing packages** are being drastically reduced and **must be challenged**, if not accurate. **Custodial Team Cleaning (CTC)** is being implemented on paper, but not followed in actuality.

We must follow it and if tasks take more time to perform than allotted, then they must be challenged and changed to reflect actual time. The route sheets must be accurate. The equipment provided must be used. Do not go above and beyond, trying to correct these problems that the postal service has created. Do not put yourself or your job

at risk. **Follow the program** and report all deficiencies and errors to management. Ensure that you are **receiving route sheets daily** and that all the work that you perform is **documented** on that **route sheet** or with a **work order**. If you are performing tasks regularly that are not in your staffing package, then file a grievance to have those tasks and more importantly time added. Document through the work orders they should be creating. Also, file grievances and 1767 Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice when appropriate or necessary. **We MUST PROTECT OUR JOBS!!!**

Also, **Open Season** is coming to a close. By August 3rd, 2018 all those that chose to participate should have received their results (Tests/Interviews/etc...) and added to the appropriate registers. **Ensure that you keep a copy** of your test and final results (after the interview) for **your personal records**.

As always feel free to contact me if there are any questions or if you are in need of my services. I am here to serve. I can be contacted at 313 965-1398 (maintenance office @GWY Detroit) or by email at **sbouier@apwudetroit.org**. Thank you all for allowing me to serve.

The Michigan Postal Workers Union proudly represents the Members at Large within the Great State of Michigan. The following locals have also affiliated with the MPWU for training, education and information sharing between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

Battle Creek	480-481	Jackson	Stevensville
Central MI	486-487	Ludington	Traverse City
Cheboygan	498-499	Muskegon	Troy Local
Detroit District	Gaylord	Roger City	Western MI
Farmington	Great Lakes Area	Sault Ste Marie	
Flint	Mail Haulers	Southwest MI	

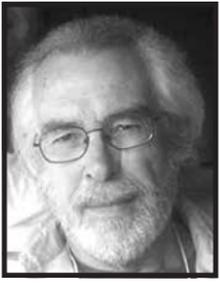
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**RETIREE PRESIDENT**

by  
**Paul  
Browning**

# And The Beat Goes On

for ourselves, how are we supposed to take care of others?

So if you live outside the D.C. Beltway of wealthy politicians and lobbyists, take a look at all the things Democrats have given us, from Union recognition to Worker Safety and Health laws to regulations cleaning up all kinds of pollution. The list goes on and on. Hey, it was even Democrats who were responsible for legislation forcing automobiles with defects to be recalled and fixed by the manufacturer. Come on, responsible Government regulation can be a good thing. So please vote with your head and not misdirected emotions. Get out and vote Democratic in these all important mid-terms elections which will decide our future as postal workers and retirees for better or worse.

### APWU National Convention In August

2,000 APWU delegates will descend upon Pittsburgh as the voice of the membership and highest authority of the APWU to tell our National Officers what we want. There will be proposed resolutions concerning all important

Contract language, Legislation and Political issues, the APWU Health plan, Human Relations, social and economic issues of consequence, the Retirees Department and of course any changes to the National APWU

APWU Retirees Department is self-sustaining with enough dues money left over to kick into the general "pot" for the good of all, and glad to do it. It is All for One and One for All so let's make retirees an equal part of the "All". At the 2016 National Convention almost half of the delegates voted in favor of increased voting rights for retirees so we do have many friends out there who recognize the contributions retirees made to the Union during the decades we worked at the Post Office. And yes, we continue to support however we can, those brothers and sisters still



Constitution. The last one being about how we run our Union house. As one of the five (5) National Convention Delegates in a sea of 2,000, I will be on a Convention floor microphone speaking forcefully for full Convention voting rights for ALL retirees.

Some have questioned such rights based on the much reduced per capita tax retirees pay to our National Union. I say since when has how much money you pay in taxes been a deciding factor in this country on whether you get the right to vote? The

working be it through boycotts, Contract Action Teams, informational pickets, influencing and educating our family friends and neighbors on postal issues, anything we are capable of to help everyone. Whether an employee has worked a month or 30 years at the Post Office, we are all equal and in the struggle together. Unity is our strength and it takes all 200,000 members of the APWU to be strong.

In Solidarity With All APWU Members.

In the latest Postal News the administration of President Donald Trump proposed a plan on June 21st to privatize the U.S. Postal Service. His proposal sends a chilling message to postal workers just ten days before the opening of negotiations between the APWU and USPS. Obviously Postal Management will feel stronger at the bargaining table using the White House privatization threat as leverage in attempts at a regressive contract. And you can bet that if the parties have to go to binding Arbitration, USPS will be throwing out that privatization document on the table to bolster their arguments for "takeaways" on wages and benefits. Meanwhile in Congress, a bill similar to H.R. 756 (we all remember that one from last year-the bill to force an estimated 40,000 or more postal retirees into Medicare with subsequent premium payments) was introduced into the House of Representatives as a companion to the bill already introduced into the Senate. Plus the American Association of Retired People (AARP) is already speculating that the next Congress may make changes in Medicare which would increase premiums and/or co-payments. Doom and Gloom appears to be the outlook for postal workers and retirees. Welcome to Life Under the Republicans.

Of course there are those nay-sayers, many of whom are postal employees and retirees that voted Republican, who will refuse to believe that the USPS could ever be privatized. It reminds me of a postal worker I once knew who had served in the Military and told me that the Postal Service would never be privatized because it was a huge money laundering operation for the CIA. Supposedly he learned this information during some clandestine assignment in his Military Service. I told him to not tell me any more details as I was afraid he might have to kill me. All kidding and ridiculous ideas aside, can we please get our heads out of the sand?

Mid-term elections in Congress are only a few months away. As a postal worker or retiree, are you satisfied with the way things are as I cited in my first paragraph? Are you like the individual I cited in my second paragraph? If you are, then you're living in some alternate reality that I'm unfamiliar with. Now I know that people have some differences in various principles or ideals they believe in that are contrary to mine. I understand the influence that might have on their vote. But pie in the sky promises doesn't put food on the table or a roof over our heads. Voting with your wallet or purse may sound like a selfish idea but if we can't provide



by  
**Lisa  
Borchardt**

**AREA 9 DIRECTOR**

# It's The Little Things . . .

While visiting my offices last month I inquired about custodial duties. Back in 2016 a settlement was made between the USPS and the APWU. When 2 hours or less of custodial work cannot be combined with other maintenance duties to create a duty assignment, then the clerk craft can perform those duties. Each office is given a number of minutes or hours per day/week of custodial duties that need to be done. PTFs and PSEs can perform the custodial duties in the facility that they are assigned to. OSHA training should be received based on the duties that the clerks are expected to perform. Also clerks are not required to perform the custodial duties between waiting on customers. There should be specific time set aside to perform the custodial duties.

In January of this year the post office expanded MyPO access to include a clerk role. There are 6 tasks in MyPO that a clerk can now do.

1. Hold for Pick-up/COD
2. Expedited Packaging Supplies
3. Retain Inventory
4. 3849-Second/Final Notice
5. Return to Sender Items
6. PO Box Sampling

Clerks can request MyPO access through eAccess. The supervisor can train you on the 6 roles in office. The supervisor will oversee the assignment and completion of the six clerk roles. So if your office uses MyPO get access and start doing these clerk tasks.

Also in January of this year a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the APWU and the USPS. This MOU is about PSE Hiring and 1 day break. This MOU does not apply to reappointments within the same installation. Those reappointments still require a 5 day break. This MOU concerns PSE clerks who wish to be employed in another installation. All PSEs who have applied and been selected off the appropriate hiring list

at another installation shall start at the beginning of a new pay period. Their one day break will be the last day of the previous pay period (Friday). The PSE will start a new relative standing on the PSE rolls in the new installation. If the PSE is in their first appointment, all time spent will be credited towards their 90/120 days.

Everyone should go to the APW-ABA (American Postal Workers Accident Benefit Association) website and check out your new benefits. It is a brand new benefit provided by the Michigan State Postal Workers union to all our members at large.

We have a large contract and we sometimes concentrate on the bigger picture. Days off, seniority and pay are part of that big picture. But sometimes we overlook the little things. The above are some of those little things that may just mean a lot to some of you!

Have a great summer!

## VETERANS' DIRECTOR

## Veteran News



by  
John P.  
Smeekens

### H.M.S. Pets For Vets

The Michigan Humane Society has recently launched a new program that offers free pets for Vets! This standing order offers over 150 animals at eight different locations, in three different counties, for adoption by Veterans' and members of the Armed Forces for FREE!!!

Matthew Pepper, President and CEO of MHS has said "soldiers deserve to return home to a grateful country and loving companions." He also said "it's the least we can do given the Freedom they provide us and the support we enjoy from our community." This program may be the first of its kind in the nation according to MHS. MHS also partners with Pets for Patriots, which helps Veterans' adopt discounted pets nationwide. For more information call 866-MHU-MANE or visit [MichiganHumane.org/mhsformilitary](http://MichiganHumane.org/mhsformilitary). The 3 counties are Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb, but you DO NOT have to be a resident of these 3 counties. You can reside in any County in Michigan, all you need is a valid I. D. annotating the fact that you are an Honorably Discharged Veteran, or an Active Duty I. D. Card!!!

### The Wall That Heals

The Wall that Heals, an exact replica of the Wall in Washington, DC, from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, is coming to Howell at the Livingston County Spencer Hardy Airport August 23rd thru 26th. This event is hosted by DAV chapter 125. Help is needed with set-up, Honor Guard, teardown. If you can be of help call Anne Marie at 313-898-1086.

### Get Your V. A. ID Card

For those vets not receiving medical benefits from the VA but would like the new ID Card for discounts at stores & shops, etc., contact your local V.S.O. or go to the V. A. Website.

### National Desert Storm

The National Desert Storm War Memorial Association (NDSWMA) announced in June that final approval had been given for the memorial to be constructed at 23rd Street NW and Constitution Avenue NW in Washington, D.C., very close to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial in what is known as Area I. According to the U.S. Code, Area I is only approved if "the subject of the commemorative work is of pre-eminent historical and lasting significance to the United States." A statement on the NDSWMA website reads, in part: "This has been the longest, (most) daunting and most enduring part of our endeavor so far; it has also been a very rewarding one. It has allowed us to research many aspects of several sites in D.C., and we have acquired an utmost apprecia-

tion for many of them. And, of course, the site we acquired was the most appropriate and deserved to construct the memorial and provide its ultimate mission: for remembering those who served, honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and educating current and future global citizens about the importance of operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm." Fundraising efforts continue; no tax dollars or government money will be used for construction.

### Blue Water Navy Veterans'

H.R. 299, The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, passed unanimously out of the House June 25, with a vote of 382-0. The legislation will extend disability benefits covering medical conditions associated with Agent Orange to Blue Water Navy veterans. Veterans who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange if diagnosed with a medical condition associated with the herbicide, according to the Agent Orange Act of 1991. However, this act applied only to veterans who served on land and in Vietnam's inland waterways, excluding those who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam known as "Blue Water" Navy veterans. H.R. 299 will extend these benefits to the Blue Water Navy veterans. This bill is critical to our nation's Blue Water Navy veterans, as it ensures they receive benefits for any condition they may have developed as a result of exposure to Agent Orange. The bill has been years in the making. H.R. 299 will now go before the Senate for a vote!

### VEText REMINDERS

VA now reminds Veterans of their

**appointments by text.** The goal is to offer a quick and easy way to confirm or cancel appointments and then schedule another Veteran into that time slot if possible. Just since the program began in March, the national no-show rate has declined from 13.68 percent to 12.22 percent. Beginning October 1, Veterans throughout the nation will be **receiving interactive VEText appointment reminders** on their mobile devices.

### North Korea POW/MIA Remains

Remains of U.S. service members who died in North Korea during the Korean War, and have been in limbo for years, may be starting their final journey home very soon.

President Donald Trump made the return of the remains, believed to be about 200 individual sets, **part of the agreement he made with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un**, in Singapore. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) **stated on its Korean War website** that "on several occasions in the past, (North Korean) officials have indicated they possess as many as 200 sets of remains they had recovered over the years. The commitment established within the Joint Statement between President Trump and Chairman Kim would repatriate these. More than 35,000 Americans died on the Korean Peninsula during the war, which lasted from 1950 to 1953. Of those, 7,700 are still listed as missing in action, with 5,300 believed to be on North Korean soil.

### DEA Program

Effective August 1, 2018, the entitlement available under the Survivors' and

Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) program will be reduced from 45 months to 36 months, but in October, the monthly allowance for eligible recipients will increase. These changes are part of the **Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017**, aka "Forever GI Bill".

The DEA program offers education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, or of Veterans who died while on active duty or from a service-related condition. DEA benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeships and on-the-job training. Surviving spouses can use benefits for correspondence courses and remedial, deficiency and some approved refresher courses. If you're already taking classes, or will start taking classes by July 31, 2018, you remain eligible for up to 45 months of education entitlement benefits. But beginning Oct. 1, 2018, all students will see a significant increase in the monthly benefit. Eligible DEA recipients will be entitled to a monthly allowance of: \$1,224 for full-time coursework, compared to \$1,041 currently as of Oct. 1, 2017; \$967 for three-quarter time coursework, compared to \$780 currently as of Oct. 1, 2017; \$710 for half-time coursework, compared to \$519 currently as of Oct. 1, 2017. These increases will go into effect Oct. 1, 2018. If you have further questions about your entitlement or eligibility, please call 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551). If you use the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the federal number is 711. You can also visit the Forever GI Bill website at **FGIB website**.

## Vigilance And Awareness Required To Protect Our Freedom, Rights

by Richard Kline, President  
Union Label and Service  
Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Most of us go about our daily lives with little concern for the broad events that affect our lives. Oh, yes, occasionally some particularly egregious act will catch our attention and rile us.

Typically, we move along with our lives oblivious to trends. We become accustomed to our realities, personal, familial and societal. This acceptance can be a philosophical strength when we face illness or personal loss.

But it can be a serious problem when society is changing around us for the worse and we are bound up in our limited concerns. And society is certainly changing.

Leaders in government are enriching themselves and their friends. Constitutional protections and legislated safeguards are being ignored or overridden by executive order. Children are being separated from their parents.

it because our attention is focused inward.

As a country, we are being subjected to propaganda, misinformation and outright lies. The danger is that we may become accustomed to and accepting of this environment of deceit, corruption and cruelty.

**"It was written long ago that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. Now is the time to be vigilant, determined and active."**

The free press is constantly maligned by the least transparent federal administration in history. Workers rights and union rights are assaulted. The power of the pardon is being abused. Environmental protections of our air and water are undermined. Workplace safety is in jeopardy. The value of science is derided.

Yet, it is possible to live in the midst of growing evil and to be unaware of

In the current situation, Americans need to be vigilant and aware of what is happening. This is no time for complacency. Who could have guessed that our basic institutions, freedoms and rights could have come to be so threatened?

It was written long ago that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. Now is the time to be vigilant, determined and active.

AREA 10 DIRECTOR



by  
Vince  
Nichols

# Sleeping Bear Dunes

On June 14th the Empire Michigan post office, which falls under the Michigan Postal Workers Union, as a MAL Installation, held a special stamp unveiling ceremony. The ceremony honored the new \$24.70 USPS express mail stamp, which features "Sleeping Bear Dunes" Na-



Empire Post Office Clerk & MPWU Member Janelle Pelky.

tional Park located in Empire, Michigan. Described as below on the USPS site;

*"With this new Priority Mail Express stamp, the U.S. Postal Service celebrates the Sleeping Bear Dunes, which take their name from a Native American legend. Rising 450 feet above Lake Michigan, the dunes are the highest perched dunes in the Great Lakes region and are protected within Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The stamp art celebrates the grandeur and serene natural beauty of the dunes and surrounding park. Dune grasses mark the beach in the foreground, as gulls dive and soar in the breeze. Art director Greg Breeding designed the stamp with original art by Dan Cosgrove."*

I decided to attend this special event as a representative of the MPWU. It was a beautiful day out and



Boy Scouts from Troop 107 and NPS Rangers at Flag Raising.

the area set aside for the stamp dedication was approximately 3 blocks from the post office near a public park on the shore of Lake Michigan and overlooking Sleeping Bear Dunes. Volunteers and USPS Maintenance employees from the Traverse City Installation helped clean the park and set up the area prior to this public event. I was surprised by how many people from town and the surrounding area were present, coming out to attend and support this event. On hand was the Boy Scout troop Local #107, who had the special privilege of raising the American flag. In attendance also were several US Park Rangers from Sleeping Bear National Park Service and Postal Service representatives from Greater Michigan District, led by Empire Postmaster Linda Gurka.

Janelle Pelky, clerk for the Empire post office and current MPWU and APWU member, was working the event and



Vince & with Janelle and the new Sleeping Bear Dunes Stamp.

helped coordinate the activities. A special tent was set up for the public to purchase the Sleeping Bear Dunes postage stamp along with special first day issue post cards and the special event commemorative cancellation mark.

The event went very nice, and it

well represented the USPS, Empire, and most of all Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park.

I would encourage all Union members and families that venture to Northern Michigan, please spend a day checking out wonder of Northern Michigan, Sleeping Bear Dunes.

NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT



by  
Linda  
Turney

## Turney At The Table

**When you read, you empower yourself. When you write, you empower others.**

**Past Discipline For PSES**

The ELM or the Employees Labor Relations Manual can reward stewards with much knowledge and many ideas concerning your grievances. One portion that can be focused on in discipline cases is the principle that PSEs discipline cannot be carried over and considered a part of the employee's record after conversion to a career employee. The career employee is a new employee and when he or she begins their careers, they also enjoy benefits and privileges that are presently not achieved by PSEs.

**ELM 421.4 Definitions  
421.41 Appointments**

The types of appointments are as follows:

- a. Career appointment — a new hire for an appointment without time limit requiring the completion of probationary period that confers full employee benefits and privileges. . .

This new career appointment as defined in the ELM clearly states that a career appointment is a "new hire"

who has full employee benefits allowing stewards to argue the converted employee starts with a clean slate.

The PSE MOU dictates the rights of PSEs who are disciplined. The USPS always argues that PSEs who are disciplined do not achieve the "full range of progressive discipline", clearly a different standard than for a "new hire" in a career appointment as defined by ELM 421.4. Stewards may argue that it is fundamentally unfair to consider discipline that was imposed under a different standard under the PSE rules. PSE rights have not have been granted the full range of discipline that is required under Article 16 of our contract for career employees.

Stewards can argue that there is nothing that connects non-career and career employees in terms of disciplinary actions. If management cites PSEs discipline on a disciplinary record for a newly converted career employee, grieve that citation under ELM 421.4.

Stewards can also argue that PSEs converted to career status are entitled to begin their career employment with a clean record. PSEs are non-career and hired for a limited term. There are no guarantees for PSEs to be rehired. PSE rights are limited as they are not covered under all Articles of the contract. For example, PSEs do not receive sick leave.

When PSEs are converted, they are then considered "new" employees under the contract. This entitles them to go back to a new, clean slate of discipline.

These arguments are based on Arbitrator Cenci's award.

**Past Elements  
Page 150 2017 JCIM**

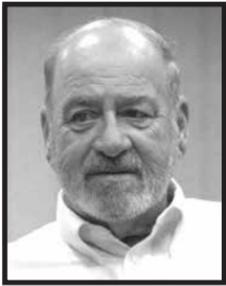
While management may put past elements listings in disciplinary actions, argue they cannot add the disciplinary letters into the file. They may LIST, but not include prior actions. Only the final action resulting from modified disciplinary action will be included. When actions are modified by management or agreement of union and management only the modification should be listed.

Look closely at Page 150 of the JCIM as it protects an employee from having their past records considered for disciplinary.

In the past element listings in disciplinary actions, only the final action resulting from a modified disciplinary action will be included, except when modification is the result of a "last chance" settlement, or if discipline is to be reduced to a lesser penalty after an intervening period of time and/or certain conditions are met.

Have a Safe Summer.

## M·P·W·U·R·E·T·I·R·E·E·A·D·V·I·S·O·R



by  
Al  
LaBrecque

# A View From The Mitt

“Just because we’re retired, we’re NEVER out of the arena!”

*The road to Hell is paved with good intentions . . .* My apologies for not getting an article in the last edition of the *Michigan Messenger* but I just wasn’t up to it, even though, as most of you do, I had and will have a lot to say!

So first and foremost, I would like to wish a Happy Belated 90th Birthday to my dear Brother Byron C. Denton (CA), USMC, who celebrated his 90th with a pilgrimage to the Korean War Memorial in Washington, DC, that was provided by his son. Byron a Marine who was part of the Inchon Landing, and one of the “Chosin Few” in the battle of the Chosin Reservoir, was honored for his service every step of the journey. Quite a story of this Purple Heart vet’s recollections, and he’s one of us. I’m privileged to be called Byron’s friend.

## Medicare

A report from Kaiser Health News that as of Jan. 1st, Medicare is removing the money caps for physical,

occupational, and speech therapy. That’s huge! The gist of the article is that therapies are no longer limited by reaching a money cap but can be extended to **maintain or prevent decline**. As with most ‘good news’ announcements, the devil’s going to be in the details. Since I’m the ‘poster boy’ for P.T. & O.T., this has gotten my undivided attention. I expect I’ll be finding out some of those details as a ‘test case’ in the near future.

**It’s in the mail!** Medicare is issuing new cards! Beginning on the west coast and working east, will be the mailing of new cards with new I.D. numbers to 59 million Medicare recipients. Upon receipt, we are to thoroughly destroy the old card, and present your new card to all your providers. S.S. numbers will no longer be used to I.D. Medicare beneficiaries.

## Retiree Representation

Finally, and it’s NOT the least; is the paramount APWU retiree resolution to amend the APWU Constitution at the 2018 National Convention; **Retiree Representation** in convention, and reasons why its time has come best expressed in an e-mail posting by SW Coastal Area Local & California State Retiree Chapter officer, Bobby Donelson, (His quotes in *Italic*), that I will be plagiarizing and expanding upon to

show all the reasons why it’s a good idea to adopt the Retiree Representation resolution initially submitted by our own, Paul J. Browning.

*The APWU as an organization does not truly support retirees. The APWU likes to involve retirees in campaigns and in the legislative area. The APWU does want retirees fully involved locally or nationally.*

*Many local, state, and national APWU officers fear retirees and they should not. Many retirees in the APWU Retiree department were active local, state, and national leaders prior to retiring from the Postal Service.*

*The APWU retiree department was formed for one major reason, COPA donations. The union became aware of a fact the union could only get COPA donations from members.*

It’s long past time to state the NALC-APWU comparisons on the treatment of their respective retired members, like their 50-year gold card members! It’s long past time to debunk the internal APWU reluctance to embrace its retirees with the tired mantra that; “Retirees run the NALC! That ain’t gonna happen in APWU!” Uh, well then; **look around you!**

There’s some in APWU leadership would say the COPA “roots” of the APWU Retirees’ Dept. is irrelevant old news. Byron & I were present at the ‘96 National Convention when the late Moe Biller stated the reason “we have 5 retiree delegates in convention is so we can collect their COPA money”. That eliminated all doubt then, and don’t think for one minute that COPA doesn’t remain a primary reason APWU leadership tolerates us in 2018.

*I ask each of you “Why should a retiree join the APWU?”*

*Our retiree brothers and sister who are letter carriers are treated better and respected. The same cannot be said by the APWU.*

*That is why we ask all of you to support the Retiree Representation resolutions being submitted by the retirees. They involve the right to speak and vote at National Conventions and the right to submit resolutions for discussion during the National Convention. **All we need are two-thirds!***

## NALC Knows How To Treat Their Retirees

Letter carrier’s union believes in a united fraternally.

Dues “Check-off Provision” must be signed by all retiring members within the NALC who wish to retain

their membership in said organization, effective October 1, 1982.

How much are letter carrier retiree dues?

National per capita dues for retirees are \$7 annually. This is established in Article 2 Section 7b of the NALC Constitution. Some state associations and some branches charge additional dues. Branch retiree dues, if any, are established in each branch’s by-Laws.

Why does the NALC encourage retirees to maintain membership?

Both active and retired members benefit greatly from the direct participation of retirees in the governance of the NALC. Retirees provide a conduit for the history and the traditions of both the letter carrier craft and the NALC to new generations of letter carriers. They provide a focus on the fight to obtain, preserve and improve retirement benefits — a fight that profits both retirees and current employees. They play a prominent role in legislative outreach, and have done so since 1939, when the Hatch Act was enacted. (Although the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993 repealed some of the more onerous restrictions on active letter carrier political activity, retired members remain completely free from those restrictions.)

So, there it is. Otherwise, as I’ve stated to Byron; we’ve done our job. It’s up too those following us to carry on advocacy for greater retiree inclusion in the Union we helped build.

In Solidarity.

Al

PS: **We are “Family”!** The postal family, particularly the postal **Union** family, is a close-knit bunch when it comes to rallying, praying for, and genuinely concerned when one of ours is in need. I have been the deeply grateful recipient every time I’ve hit a rough patch in recent months. That same moral support was never so evident as when on Father’s Day weekend, my 46-yr. old NALC past Branch officer; Son Noel, suffered a life-threatening event that landed him on an air-lift to University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor where, for 10 hours, skilled surgeons saved his life. We’re pleased to report that he is home recuperating nicely, thankful to be alive. All the kind offers of prayer and support are treasured beyond expression. Especially heartwarming were the expressions from Michigan State & Local APWU officers who served with Noel on joint APWU/NALC L-M Safety & Health Committees in the District. **May God Bless this FAMILY!**

## What To Do In Case Of A Death!

Does your spouse know what to do or where to go if you passed away? Sit down and make a file together on what your wishes and arrangements you would like. Make a list of the people you need to contact. Your spouse should contact the Postal Service immediately. Make it a point to jot down phone numbers like the postmasters, personnel, and the union office. If you are a veteran, the phone number to the nearest Veteran Affairs Office. Copy down all bank and credit union accounts and sources of income you now receive.

You will want to contact the Social Security Administration. Jot down your social security numbers. Also any insurance policies that you have. At some point, you may want to contact the Internal Revenue Service and the State Department of Revenue.

Choose a mortuary and discuss your arrangements and wishes with them. It is wise to shop around. Update your personnel records. If you were previously married, check and update your beneficiaries on all insurance policies. A last will and testament will eliminate costly court procedures. Make sure to have copies of your birth certificates, marriage license, divorce decrees and mortgage papers. Have the mortuary obtain at least five (5) copies of death certificate. If you are employed by the Postal Service, your spouse must apply for death benefits, they are not automatic.

Personnel can help with the following:

- SF2800 — application for death benefits
- SF1155 — Claim for unpaid compensation.
- SF1153 — Claim of designated beneficiary for Unpaid compensation.
- Claim for benefits, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance.

Veterans are entitled to a \$150 for burial expense. If the cause of death is due to a job related injury, the Office of Federal Employees Compensation (OFEC) will play up to \$800 burial expenses. The survivors, in case of a job related death, may also apply for an annuity from OFEC.

Once you obtain all this information, put it in a safe place. For about \$25 you can purchase a fireproof file box or contact your bank or credit union and inquire about a safety deposit box. Share the location with your children and/or relative.

By taking a couple afternoons to collect all this information, you will help lessen the burden and pain.

# The Good Old Days

by Ed Hasenbalg, October, 1987  
Former PPA Editor

Working conditions stink! Things couldn't be worse. Sound familiar? Comments I hear on the workroom floor every day – that I have heard every day since I hired in, back in 1961.

Well, let's examine these statements. Please bear with me because I rely strictly on memory and some statements might miss the mark by a bit, but not by much.

When I hired in you were known as a sub. PTF's to you newer employees. I subbed for just under five years. I think the rate of pay was around \$1.89 an hour, NO OVERTIME PAY! You might work as many as 76 hours, or as little as 12 to 20 hours (no guarantees). This was all done at straight time.

You were required to make yourself available by phone every day, no starting time (if any) until you were called. You might work as little as two hours or as many as twelve hours. At a minute or two before the hour a supervisor would come up and tell you, "Go home", or "One more hour".

Your work schedule consisted of 13 days on and one day off per pay period, with every other Sunday off. In actuality, you would probably work upwards of two or three months without a full day off. Subs worked afternoons. Every other Saturday you reported at 4 a.m., no matter if you had worked until 12:30 or 1:30 in the morning the previous night.

I hired in with a group of 24, ALL MEN! No women were hired at that time. The only women working at the Post Office at that time were a group that had been hired about the time of the Korean War (early 50's). Your indoctrination began with City Schemes to learn. This amounted to three City Primary Schemes and at least two Secondary Schemes. You were not allowed to work "city side" until you had learned all of the city primary. To learn your schemes you were given a deck of cards and were required to fill them out and study them at home on your own time. You were required to learn 18 cards per day and review your progress each day in scheme study class. Flunk your scheme and you were history – right now!

When you reported to work, you worked the "outgoing section". When outgoing mail was worked up you reported to "incoming mail" and worked city mail (unless you haven't completed your city schemes, in which case you went home).

No breaks!!! The union had no standing under federal law at the time. The union couldn't even represent you unless management allowed it! Get on the wrong side of a supervisor and he simply made it so miserable for you

that you either punched him out or quit. Either way, you were done at the post office.

The break rooms were a joke. Filthy and drab, few employees used them. The restrooms were likewise a joke. There were no doors on the toilet stalls! After all, there's no way of telling what illegal acts you might be up to while in there. Inspector's windows glared

down on you as you performed your bodily functions.

At this time we were just closing out the Eisenhower administration. Eisenhower had vetoed seven out of eight federal pay raises. Clerks were at Level four pay. At this time you were paid according to the dictates of Congress and the President. The one raise we received under Eisenhower

was slipped through by Congress by giving everyone in federal employment a step increase instead of a percentage raise thus bypassing a probable veto. When Kennedy entered office one of the first things he did was to give the union officials standing under Federal law. This was the true beginning of the Federal union movement.

*continued on page 8*

**DO WE STILL NEED UNIONS?**

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT UNIONS LATELY. PEOPLE SAY WE DON'T NEED THEM ANYMORE, AND I'M NOT SURE IF I AGREE. I KNOW THAT UNIONS WERE REALLY IMPORTANT--BACK IN THE DAYS OF CHILD LABOR AND HORRIFIC SWEATSHOPS. BUT IT'S DIFFERENT TODAY...

YEAH, BUT THINK ABOUT IT. BACK IN THE 30S, 40S AND 50S, MANY MORE WORKERS BELONGED TO UNIONS. WAGES AND BENEFITS WERE BETTER, AND NEW LAWS WERE PASSED TO PROTECT OUR SAFETY AND RIGHTS AT WORK.

BUT ABOUT 40 YEARS AGO, SOME CORPORATIONS LAUNCHED AN ALL-OUT ATTACK ON UNIONS TO MAKE THEM WEAKER. UNION DENSITY BEGAN TO DECLINE, AND SO DID WAGES AND BENEFITS.

YEAH, BUT ONLY FOR UNION MEMBERS, RIGHT?

NO, FOR EVERYBODY. GOOD UNION CONTRACTS LIFT UP THE WHOLE WORKFORCE, BECAUSE NON-UNION EMPLOYERS HAVE TO MATCH THE UNION WAGES AND BENEFITS IF THEY WANT TO GET THE MOST TALENTED WORKERS.

NOW LOOK AT TODAY. UNION MEMBERSHIP HAS CONTINUED TO DROP AND INCOME INEQUALITY HAS GOTTEN WORSE AND WORSE, WITH MOST NEW WEALTH GOING TO THE RICHEST 1%.

AND THAT'S NO COINCIDENCE.

WORKING PEOPLE ARE LOSING GROUND IN TODAY'S ECONOMY BECAUSE CORPORATE SPECIAL INTERESTS ARE SYSTEMATICALLY DISMANTLING OUR MIDDLE CLASS.

I, FOR ONE, AM GRATEFUL FOR OUR UNION. DO YOU THINK WE'D BE GETTING RAISES EVERY YEAR IF WE DIDN'T HAVE UNION REPRESENTATION?

THAT'S RIGHT. STATES THAT HAVE AGGRESSIVELY WEAKENED UNIONS USING SO-CALLED "RIGHT TO WORK" LAWS HAVE FEWER UNION MEMBERS, LOWER WAGES, WORSE BENEFITS, AND MORE WORKPLACE FATALITIES.

WHEN YOU GUYS PUT IT THAT WAY, I CAN SEE WHY UNIONS ARE STILL IMPORTANT. HECK, MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER!

THE ONLY THING THAT STANDS IN THEIR WAY IS WORKERS STANDING TOGETHER IN UNIONS.

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NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT



by Michael O'Hearn

# Holiday Pay

The next holiday is coming up. I am sure everyone is looking forward to having the day off and getting paid for not working. Perhaps you are looking forward to working on this day and earning some extra money. You too will receive holiday pay in addition to the pay for working on this day. However, two things could prevent you from receiving your holiday pay. If you are scheduled to work and call off on the holiday, you will not receive your holiday pay. Article 11 section 6. C states "An employee scheduled to work on a holiday who does not work shall not receive holiday pay, unless such absence is based on an extreme emergency situation and is excused by the Employer." I would not count on management approved your absence on a holiday. The other circumstance that could prevent you from receiving your holiday pay is in Article 11 section 1. 2. Here it states "To be eligible for holiday pay, an employee must be in a pay status the last hour

of the employee's scheduled workday prior to or the first hour of the employee's scheduled workday after the holiday." Therefore, don't be taking LWOP before or after the holiday or you could lose your holiday pay. Your union fought hard to get you holiday pay. So, don't forfeit this great benefit if you can possible avoid these two

circumstances that will cause you to miss out on your holiday pay.

A mistaken concept is that PTFs don't get anything for holidays. This is wrong. The Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) at the start of Article 11 states "Only full-time and part-time regular employees re-

ceive holiday pay. Part-time flexible employees do not. Instead, part-time flexible employees are paid at a slightly higher straight-time hourly rate to compensate them for not receiving paid holidays." This is why PTFs are paid more than a full-time regular who is at the same level and step rate of pay.

## The Good Old Days

continued from page 7

Christmas time. You might have to work from the middle of November thru Mid-January without a day off at 12 hours a day. In December the place was flooded with Christmas help.

How about vacations? Forget it! Subs didn't get on the list and if they had the chance, they usually couldn't take advantage of the opportunity because they usually used up vacation hours to fill out skimpy paychecks thru the year.

Now, I certainly agree with the attitude of the employees today as to how

bad conditions are today, BUT, things are by no means as bad as they were. However, if you wish to return to conditions such as I have related, don't support your fellow employees when they have a grievance that doesn't directly affect you. If you think you can make private deals with management

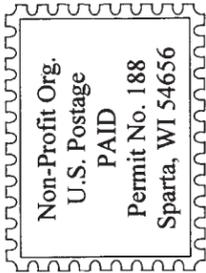
and not weaken the contract which is your only protection from management dealing with you as it sees fit, you are sadly mistaken. "Those who do not learn from history, are doomed to repeat it."

That's all I have to say.

**DEADLINE**  
 The deadline for articles for the September-October issue of the Michigan Messenger is September 8, 2018

**\*Stop Wasting America's Money on Privatization**

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