

Michigan MESSENGER

Affiliated with: American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, APWU Postal Press Association, Michigan State AFL-CIO & Michigan Labor Press



Volume 47, Number 198
November-December, 2018

In This Edition

Editor's Report.....	2
Maintenance Craft Director.....	3
Human Relations Director.....	3
Veterans' Director.....	4
MPWU Retiree Advisor.....	5
Retiree President.....	6
NBA	7
Turney at the Table.....	8



by
**Michael
Mize**

Every Postal Employee should be concerned about privatization. What can you do?

First things first, you can contact your Representatives in Washington D.C. and explain to them that you want the Postal Service to continue to be the peoples Post Office. You want it left alone and not cut up and sold off to private industry. You want universal service and private industry can't support that ideal.

You can have all your family and friends do the same thing. Make sure

they all understand how important this truly is. Make sure all our Representatives understand that we will not tolerate them attacking the USPS.

You can all continue to do the rock-solid job you have been doing. Without you the Postal employee the Service could not do what it does. In fact, we get the job done in most cases despite the failure of Management around us. Each one of you are a key component in making the USPS successful.

Watch the National web page for any events that may occur. If there is

anything in your area, then get out and help. If not watch for anything that Na-

by Leo F. Persails, Retired Central Region Coordinator

When did we become a one party system to our National News Media? For eight years the republicans whined and stonewalled about Obama, and the news media covered it DAILY. The News Media even bought into the republican attack on the "Affordable Care Act". They continually repeated the republican name change to "Obamacare". That new name was associated to it whenever republicans repeated political rhetoric about it. Their goal was to combine the new name and attacks simultaneously. The news media repeated almost every one of those attacks and name change references. Consequently, the News Media effectively caused the change to Obamacare for the republicans.

Next, for over a year the news media REPEATEDLY carried the attacks on Hillary and her emails and it was daily news without factual content. Over and over they reported trump's name game of "crooked Hillary" for trump. Her ONLY reported News responses to the attacks came from the debates, when they had no other choice.

Now it's NOTHING but trump tweets, and attacks, FOR TWO YEARS. Why are republicans and trump our ONLY main stream news source? Why has the billionaire Na-

tional News Media BLACKBALLED the Democratic Party from interviews and responses to trump? Why is he always given THE LAST WORD, or worse yet, the ONLY words? When did the American National News Media embrace a one party system?

Trump's every move or words are repeated as news without fact or rebuttal of those attacked. American news throughout history has NEVER followed the path it has in the last 2 years, and yet they continue it when he calls them "fake news" and ene-

mies of the people". Politicians love news coverage, good or bad. Trump and the republican party have gotten a daily dose of it for the last two years, but the Democrats haven't. It appears we are a one party system to the main stream news media.



Governor Elect Gretchen Whitmer, Vice President Joe Biden, Elissa Slotkin, the new U.S. Rep for Michigan District 8 and Lt. Governor Elect Garlin Gilchrist II.

PRESIDENT

Postal Privatization



tional APWU may want for membership involvement. The Union is all of us and together we can make a difference.

One good thing for us as Postal employees is having the House of Representatives come back to Democratic control. This is at least a check and balance for the Senate and the President. With the Presidents report on the Service coming from Trump's Postal Task Force we need to be prepared. We have support on both sides of the political fence and need everyone we can get.

Have a great Holiday Season

America's One Party System

EDITOR

We Survived!!!

President Michael Mize
W: (810) 257-1534; C: (810) 444-7578
U: (810) 239-0931; F: (810) 239-6879
e-Mail: president@mpwu.com

Executive Secretary Michael Long
U: (616) 977-1050; C: (616) 822-3443
F: (616) 977-1020
e-Mail: mdiblong@gmail.com

Secretary-Treasurer Darren Joyce
U: (810) 239-0931; C: (810) 444-5142
F: (810) 239-6879
e-Mail: fmal11@comcast.net

Director of Education & Research Ron Krumrie
C: (231) 409-4609
e-Mail: olcubman@aol.com

Editor John Greathouse
U: (517) 337-8753; C: (517) 819-7403
F: (517) 332-4391
e-Mail: the.pacer@yahoo.com

Legislative Director Roscoe Woods
U: (248) 543-3262; C: (248) 709-8249
F: (248) 543-2750
e-Mail: apwusteward@hotmail.com

HRI Injury Compensation Director Keith Combs
U: (313) 532-9305; C: (313) 330-7030
F: (313) 532-5433
e-Mail: kcombs@apwudetroit.org

Clerk Craft Director Wendy Kempke
W: (517) 263-5809; C: (419) 377-4595
e-Mail: kempke.wk@gmail.com

Maintenance Craft Director Sterling Bouier
W: (313) 965-1398; U: (313) 226-8685
C: (313) 575-8254
e-Mail: dapmdn1327@yahoo.com

Motor Vehicle Service Craft Director Joe Wrobel
U: (248) 543-3262; W: (248) 546-7146
C: (586) 201-7356; F: (248) 543-2750
e-Mail: yrubnu@hotmail.com

Veterans Director John Smeekens
U: (248) 543-3262; H: (586) 286-2304
e-Mail: mpwudirect@ameritech.net

Area 1 Director (480/481) Patrick Jones
U: (248) 543-3262; C: (313) 720-6092
F: (248) 543-2750
e-Mail: patjones7752@gmail.com

Area 2 Director (482) Patrick Chornoboy
C: (313) 434-8089; U: (313) 532-9305
F: (313) 532-5433
e-Mail: pchornoboy@apwudetroit.org

Area 3 Director (483) Robin Ely
W: (734) 697-0047; H: (734) 753-0438
e-Mail: relyapwu480-481@charter.net

Area 4 Director (484/485) Sandra Rancour
W: (810) 742-1580; U: (810) 239-0931
e-Mail: fmalcccd@comcast.net

Area 5 Director (486/487) Tom Kindell
C: (989) 418-6061
e-Mail: tkindell@mpwu.com

Area 6 Director (488/489) Joshua Gray
W: (616) 977-1050; C: (616) 822-5627
F: (616) 977-1020
e-Mail: apwusteward281@gmail.com

Area 7 Director (490/491) VACANT
If you know of someone that would be willing to fill this position and represent our membership, please contact President Mize.

Area 8 Director (492) Wendy Kempke
W: (517) 263-5809; C: (419) 377-4595
e-Mail: kempke.wk@gmail.com

Area 9 Director (493/494) Lisa Borchardt
W/U: (616) 776-1489; C: (616) 706-1005
e-Mail: lisa.borchardt@gmail.com

Area 10 Director (496) Vince Nichols
W: (231) 933-1020/4502; C: (231) 499-9333
F: (231) 922-1863
e-Mail: vince00tc@yahoo.com

Area 11 Director (497) Laura Stafford
W: (231) 238-7242; C: (313) 506-0917
H: (989) 448-0181
e-Mail: lauras497@aol.com

Area 12 Director (498/499) Theresa Granquist
U: (906) 774-6303; C: (906) 396-6103
F: (906) 774-7356
e-Mail: tgranquist@att.net

P.O.W.E.R. Representative Tamika Johnson-Smith
U: (313) 532-9305; F: (313) 532-5433
e-Mail: tjohnson-smith@apwudetroit.org

State Retiree Chapter President Paul Browning
C: (231) 275-6016
e-Mail: oldhipster54@hotmail.com

MPWU Auxiliary President Vacant
MPWU Historian Vacant

MPWU Advisor Gary VanHoogstraten
C: (989) 213-3068
e-Mail: hystreet@att.net w



by
**John
Greathouse**

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

It seems we have survived another election and with the rise of Blue candidates to offices both on the state and national level, I think we have an increased chance of surviving, provided the Lame Duck session of Congress and they don't just give into every crazy plan to privatize the Post Office that the lobbyist can throw at them . . . along with a large donation to their reelection campaign.

Election 2018

Here in Michigan, the election had several ballot proposals that are a big step forward in fixing what is wrong with the elections in the state... Gerrymandering and obstacles to absentee voting. Both of these passed with a good majority but the third proposal is one you need to keep clearly in mind (your mind may not be clear if you are smoking some



when you read this) as marijuana is now legal in this state. Not right away but shortly after the first of the year.

One thing you, as a federal employee (yes, in case you did not know, Postal Workers are federal employees), it is against federal law to have or use marijuana, so as a reminder, should you chose to have a smoke of that wacky weed, but you did not inhale, you can be considered to be under the influence while at work and if you are a VMF or Motor Vehicle craft, you may also be subject to random screening. Having a smoke could cause you your job!

I did have the opportunity to attend a political rally for Elissa Slotkin who was running against rep. Mike Bishop. Listening to her speak, she was not a polished politician but a much a down to earth and genuine person who cares about others.

This rally had many others in attendance, Gretchen Whitmer, Debbie Stabenow, and the key note speaker, Vice President Joe Biden and Uncle Joe keep a firm hand on the crowd as he discussed many of the events he experienced as VP for the United

States. I don't care what your political party affiliation is, if you get the chance to attend a rally with him speaking, make the effort to go, you will be exposed to a different kind of person that what you have read about in the papers or online.

Looking Back

It is hard to believe that we are just a couple of months past the National Convention and in my last article I did write about my experience there as it relates to how the retirees were treated.

Well it seems that someone keeps ripping off the band aid off that sore and I am just hoping that it will not cause an infection that might result in retirees getting pissed off to the point that they say "Stick it!" and just go on and enjoy their retirement and let us deal with all of the attacks by the GOP and privatization on our own!

Having coordinated a large rally to fight Staples and the attempt to close the Lansing Plant, I can tell you that I am grateful to the retirees for their support as they made up around 60-70% of the members who were there! They are an incredible resource to our members as



And I won by this much!

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	

The MICHIGAN MESSENGER is published six times yearly, and is the official publication of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, also affiliated with the APWU Postal Press Association.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, the APWU or the Postal Press. Articles and correspondence to the Editor may be sent to MPWU – Michigan Messenger, John Greathouse – Editor, PO Box 27303, Lansing, MI 48909-7303. Articles must be signed to be printed (your name may be withheld upon request). Articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

a whole and as such, should receive the level of respect that is due to them. But the only way this is going to change is for that change to come from the top and then we might be able to heal this fissure and make the APWU just that much stronger, Solidarity is the difference if we survive as a union or not!

Holidays

As we head into the busy holidays season, please make sure to take time for yourself and enjoy your friends and family. Stay safe on your travels and be safe at work too.

In Solidarity.

MAINTENANCE-CRAFT-DIRECTOR

by
Sterling
Bouier

Hello MPWU Brothers and Sisters,

Let me begin by saying "Happy Veteran's Day" to all my fellow APWU Union Member Veterans. It is an honor to have served and a blessing to still dwell among the living. I hope you all had the chance to indulge in all the freebies and activi-

ties held to honor and thank those that served.

A lot going on right now in the maintenance craft. As a whole, we are trying to get settlements or appealing the Line H grievances for the custodial occupational group for the 2018 fiscal year. Ensure that you are requesting all the appropriate materials and documents for your particular facility in order to prove your cases. Also ensure that each step of the grievance procedure is timely.

We need to continue challenging staffing packages that are not accurate and continue trying to increase staffing as a whole. The more work and work hours we can have added, the more jobs we can create.

Also, Management has been handing out a lot of discipline as of late. The majority of it being Attendance related. We need to try as much as possible to avoid unscheduled absences. It is hard to prevail when the argument is that you can not run a business, if employ-

ees do not come to work. If you require a schedule change, leave of absence, or FMLA, do not be afraid to ask!!!

There are so many issues and topics, that I can't touch base on all of them in this one article. So, as always feel free to contact me if there are any questions or if you are in need of my services. I can be reached at 313 965-1398 or via e-mail at sbouier@apwudetroit.org. I am here to serve.

In Union Solidarity.

HUMAN-RELATIONS-DIRECTOR

by
Keith
Combs

This is an example of what your Physician's Report or narrative should read like. I'm addressing how these reports are completed because on a regular basis these reports are not providing the Office of Worker's Compensation with enough information to adjudicate the claimants claim. Also, this report should be on the Physicians Letterhead.

To whom it may concern:

On January 25, 2018 I examined Mr. Keith Holmes. Mr. Holmes who is a Postal Service employee, works 3:30 PM to 11:00 PM at the Eastland Processing and Distribution Center. He stated that on January 24, 2018 at approximately 6:00 PM he was pushing a loaded mail container which weighed approximately 310 pounds up a small incline when it started to tip to the right. Mr. Holmes quickly moved to the right side of the container raising his right arm and placing his right hand at the top of the container. He pushed against the container, preventing it from tipping over and held it upright for a few seconds until two coworkers came to his assistance and helped right the container. Mr. Holmes felt no immediate pain and finished his work shift without incident. However, after sleeping several hours Mr. Holmes woke up with a moderate to severe pain in his right shoulder area. An MRI was performed (see attached report) and it demonstrated a partial tear of the supraspinatus of approximately 1.7 centimeters proximal to the humerus.

The patient will be treated conservatively with physical therapy and ultrasound. He has no other complaints or symptoms. He can return to work but should not use his right arm to lift more than 5 pounds,

THROUGH MEDICAL REPORT:**Traumatic Injury**

nor should he reach above shoulder height with his right arm.

In my medical opinion that the above described traumatic work place incident caused the rotator cuff tear which was demonstrated by the referenced MRI report. Mr. Holmes use of his right arm to keep the container upright caused a sudden loading of the right shoulder rotator cuff, especially the external rotators which were attempting to keep the humeral head centered in the glenoid causing microtrauma to the supraspinatus as described above.

Mr. Holmes has a good prognosis for recovery. I will examine his progress at the end of four weeks of physical therapy.

(signed by a Physician not a Physician Assistant)

**Thorough Medical Report:
Occupational Disease**

This is an example of what an Occupational Disease Physicians Report or narrative should read like and again it should be on the Physicians Letterhead.

To whom it may concern:

On January 25, 2018 I examined Ms. Brenda Sterling. Ms. Sterling, who is a Postal Service Employee, works 3:30 PM to 11:00 PM at the Northside Processing and Distribution Center. Ms. Sterling, who is 5'5" tall, holds the position of automation clerk, she describes the physical activity of a normal work day as follows: for approximately two hours at a time, two times a day, she repeatedly lifts trays of mail, which she estimates as weighing 20-30 lbs., over shoulder height to place them in a storage container and she has been performing this work for approximately three years.

Ms. Sterling complains that for the past two weeks she is awakened at night with moderate to severe pain in her shoulder area. An MRI was performed (see attached report) and it demonstrated a partial tear of the supraspinatus of approximately 1.7 centimeters proximal to the humerus.

The patient will be treated conservatively with therapy and ultrasound. She has no other complaints or symptoms. She can return to work but should not use her right arm to lift more than 5 pounds, nor should she reach above shoulder height with her right arm.

In my medical opinion the above described repetitive work performed at the Postal Service caused the rotator cuff tear which was demonstrated by the MRI report. Ms.

Sterling repetitive lifting overhead caused constant fatiguing of the rotator cuff muscles (especially the external rotators) as they attempted to keep the humeral head centered in the glenoid, resulting in chronic inflammation and micro trauma resulting in the injury to the supraspinatus as described above. Mr. Sterling has a good prognosis for recovery. I will evaluate her progress at the end of 4 weeks of physical therapy

(signed by a Physician not a Physician Assistant)

These examples may not be utilized exactly word for word, but the necessary points outlined in the examples should be a point of information needed to get your claim adjudicated by the Department of Workers' Compensation.

In A Showing Of Solidarity

Munson Medical Center Nurse Karen Card, and Traverse City MI Area Local Vice President Ron Krumrie and MPWU Retiree Director Paul Brownning on Union Gear Day Sept. 13. We were at a rally/picket for the Munson Hospital Nurses who are trying to negotiate a brand new CBA.



by
John P.
Smeekens

Merry Christmas

Merry Christmas to you and your family. I hope it is a blessed, and safe one for you and yours. Keep safe, don't drink and drive, eat lightly, so you don't have to make up some crazy News Years resolution that you're going to exercise and lose weight. And don't forget our troops. Say a prayer, or whatever you do, for them and their families.

Happy New Year

Happy New Year to one and all. Ditto on the words above about being safe and not drinking and driving and those resolutions that are so far out of reach that you can't keep them. Keep our troops and their families in your prayers and thoughts.

Burn Pits

Are Burn Pits the Agent Orange for the Nation's Youngest Veterans? It took Vietnam War veterans nearly two decades to receive compensation from exposure to Agent Orange and now, veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who were exposed to burn pits face a similar battle. Sign up on the BURN PIT REGISTRY.

Homeless Veterans' Decrease

Recently, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie and the Department of House and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson announced a decrease of 5.4 percent in the number of homeless veterans in the past year. They've made great strides in their efforts to end Veteran homelessness, but they still have a lot of work to do, to help those who wore our nation's uniform get access to stable housing. The annual Point-in-Time report estimates that 37,878 veterans experienced, or will experience homelessness in 2018, compared to 40,020 in 2017. The number of women veterans experiencing homelessness declined by 10 percent over the same time period. We encourage homeless or at-risk veterans, who need assistance, to call 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838). And if you know of a Veteran who is in need, please don't hesitate to step up and assist that Veteran!!! Thank You.)

Prioritizing Appeals

The VA has announced that they are prioritizing pending appeals claims for benefits of veterans impacted by recent hurricanes Florence, Michael, Maria and Super Typhoon Yutu. If you know of a Veteran who was impacted by one of these weather problems, please contact them to let them know about this process. Have them contact a VSO, in their area, to seek help with this prioritizing process.

V.A. Milestone

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has recently completed an

VETERANS DIRECTOR

Veteran News

important modernization program, where more than 7 million paper files were removed from numerous locations in less than 22 months, enabling them to be scanned into the VA's electronic claims processing system. This was done by several third-party vendors. This will now lead to faster claims decisions for Veterans.

V.A. And Adoptions

Veterans who have lost their ability to reproduce due to a service-connected disability may now be eligible for adoption expenses to be reimbursed through the VA, or to receive coverage for in vitro fertilization (IVF). The VA also provides infertility evaluation, management, and treatment services to veterans enrolled in the VA health care — regardless of service connection. Veterans interested in infertility services should contact their VA provider or their local VA Women Veterans Program Manager, or contact your local V.S.O. to get more information!

WWL Act Of 2015

Wounded Warriors Leave Act of 2015 is implementing new changes starting January 05, 2019. Eligible employees will receive an allotment of 104 hours of WWL. WWL will continue to be provided to newly hired employees at the beginning of their term of employment as required by the terms of the 2015 Act. WWL is an authorized

absence from work to undergo medical treatment for a service-connected disability rated 30% or more. It is a separate leave category, distinct from sick leave. Approved WWL cannot be adversely used against an eligible employee for attendance and discipline purposes. To request WWL an employee must submit a PS Form 3971 to their appropriate supervisor. If an emergency arises, there is an exception to the advance approval for unexpected treatment that qualifies for WWL. *Although these changes are labeled as a DRAFT, once the Official Postal Language does come out we will inform you!* And don't forget. *The Hoover Act!*

Veterans' Home Groundbreaking

It was called Sebille Manor when it once served as base housing for Selfridge Air National Guard Base. But that was a long time ago when Selfridge was an Active Duty Base. Now with the help of James Redford, director of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, he is being credited with spearheading the project. Michigan has almost 590,000 Veterans, with one-third of them living in the Southeast Michigan area. Ground was broken on Monday October 29, 2018 to build a brand-new Veterans Home to house 128 Veterans when completed in 2021. These Veterans will live in four small hous-

ing units. Veterans will have their own bedroom and bathroom, a common gathering area and kitchen space. The four smaller houses will also connect to a community center with clinical and therapeutic services. The last time there was a gathering like this, to celebrate a new Veterans home, was back in 1885. And everyone arrived by horse and buggy at the site of the Grand Rapids Veterans Home.

2018 Senate Bill #1042

Just received the following information from B. J. Khalifah, of Grosse Pointe Park; Senate Bill # 1042 has been introduced to the finance committee, by Senators Geoff Hansen of Muskegon, co-sponsored by Michael Nofs of district 19 of Barry, Calhoun, and Ionia Counties, and Senator Vincent Gregory of Southfield. This bill, if passed, will terminate some benefits to Michigan's 100% disabled Veterans. The Chairman of the Finance Committee is Jack Brandenburg of Grosse Pointe Shores. Please ask your State Senators and your State Representatives **DO NOT SUPPORT THIS BILL!!!** Those of us who were drafted into the Military, or those of us who joined the Military Voluntarily, have served our Country HONORABLY. We should NOT be used as Political Pawns considering we put our lives on the line for this Country and The Great State of MICHIGAN.

Yes, Voter Suppression Is Real. But Young Voters May Bridge The Gap

The midterms are rigged against people of color and the poor.

by JOEL BLEIFUSS, *In These Times*

Will enough Democratic voters turn out November 6 to overcome institutionalized efforts at voter suppression?

The critical 2018 midterms will determine whether the 116th Congress can put the brakes on President Donald Trump and the Koch-Adelson agenda. The outstanding question is: Will enough Democratic voters turn out November 6 to overcome institutionalized efforts at voter suppression?

In 1789, the U.S. Constitution allowed the states to determine which of their residents would be allowed to participate in elections. Initially, all states extended the franchise only to white men who owned land or paid taxes. Since then, progressive activists have fought — and died — to secure voting rights, while the forces of reaction, presently incarnate in today's Republican Party, have sought to limit who is granted access to the ballot box.

For example, 6.1 million Americans are denied the vote because of a felony conviction, a restriction that dispropor-

tionally disenfranchises people of color and the poor. Not coincidentally, 4.2 million are residents of the 11 states that were part of the Confederacy, all of which currently have GOP-controlled legislatures. In Florida, this restriction bars more than 10 percent of the voting-age population from voting.

Another tactic in the vote-suppression toolbox is to require that voters present specific forms of ID. In Texas, an estimated 600,000 registered voters (and many more unregistered voters) lack the required identification. Again, it is no accident that such laws disproportionately affect people of color and the poor.

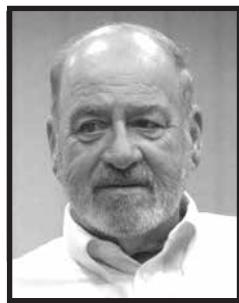
Not to mention periodic purges of the rolls, which the GOP has turned into an art form. Those purges accelerated after 2013, when the Supreme Court, in Shelby County v. Holder, overturned a 1965 Voting Rights Act provision that regulated elections in 15 states with a history of racial discrimination (including nine former members of the Confederacy). Between 2012 and 2016, for example, Georgia purged



1.5 million voters — twice as many as between 2008 and 2012 — under the pretense that it was keeping the voting rolls accurate and up-to-date. Such purges tend to target black people who vote Democratic, and are therefore both racist and partisan.

The security of voting infrastructure is also a concern, with voter registration rolls particularly vulnerable. According to a July 13 indictment arising from the Mueller probe, Russian hackers tried to penetrate the voting systems of 21 states in 2016. In Illinois, they accessed "names, addresses, partial social security numbers, dates of birth, and driver's license numbers" of approximately 500,000 voters.

continued on page 7

MPWU RETIREE ADVISOR

by
Al
LaBrecque

"Just because we're retired, we're NEVER out of the arena!"

Requiem: We mourn the sudden and unexpected passing of retired former MPWU State President **Gary VanHoogstraten** on October 25, 2018. **Gary "Van"**, was a past president of the Saginaw 486-487 Area Local, one-term V.P. MPWU State Retiree Chapter, and past president, Saginaw 486-487 A.L. Retiree Chapter. Gary assumed the office of MPWU president upon the election of Flint's Clyde Hartshorn, Jr. to Clerk Div. NBA, Chicago Region. Gary; along with Leo Persails, Clyde, Lou Schwartz, Jerry Martin, Dave Lenard, and Local leaderships across the state were disciples of the late NBA Frank Kowal, Jr. and the so-called "NBA Mafia" of the APWU formative '70's and '80's. We grew together in those (we didn't know it then) exciting times for the postal labor movement. Gary was more than just a wise leader, he was a close friend and dear Brother in every sense of the word. Gary's passing was personally especially difficult to absorb. We had just exchanged e-mails on Oct. 22nd, 3 days earlier. We also recently lost **William "Bill" Russell** (Flint) retired MPWU Special Delivery Messenger Dir., last of the SDM's, who was a past Flint Local Retiree Chapter V.P. "Eternal rest grant unto them O' Lord, and let Perpetual Light shine upon them. Amen."

Election 2018! Blue is such a lovely color! A mixed bag, but progress! Primary was the retaking of the "People's House", but the U.S. Senate remains blood red. Divided government, gridlock, isn't ideal but throws a block into the emerging dictatorship at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Lessens the specter of privatization. However, **beware the GOP lame duck session!** Michigan is headed in the right direction re-electing our champion, **U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow** keeping Michigan 'Blue'. The MI congressional delegation remains a slim GOP majority, including my 1st District. Bah! MDP and my 1st District Dem leadership leaves a lot to be desired, in my jaundiced view! The three state ballot Proposals 1, 2,& 3 helped to get out a record mid-term vote, helping to elect Democratic Governor, **Gretchen Whitmer**, a Dem Attorney General and Secretary of State. More gridlock, however, with both legislative houses blood red. Key offices 'Blue' again! Will be an uphill grind; but hope springs eternal the hateful "Right-To-Shirk" can be reversed, repeal the pension tax that targeted Baby Boomers and every retiree thereafter, shut down Enbridge Line 5 Canadian oil pipeline across the Straits of Mackinac that snakes across Michigan down across Lake St. Claire to Sarnia, Ont., just for starters . . . and Yes; Fix the damned roads! A step for-

A View From The Mitt

ward in making *Michigan pure* again!

Huge is the adoption of Prop 2. ending gerrymandering of U.S. Congressional, State House and Senate districts that favors the Party in power. We'll have to wait until after the 2020 Census which will have a profound effect on some districts currently carved to favor the GOP. Prop. 3. should take effect for the 2020 election restoring straight Party voting, same day registration, no-reason absentee ballot eligibility. And, of course; Prop. 1. ending prohibition of recreational marijuana, expected to take several months to implement at State level, then local governments to ordain. Let's pool resources and get reversal of RTW on the 2020 ballot. Maybe restoring the prevailing wage rule while we're at it.

Convention Fallout: Barely rating a blurb in the Sept.-Oct. APWU magazine, one wouldn't think there were retiree related Constitutional amendment Resolutions and ensuing contentious debate. Thanks to Bobby Donelson, S.W. Coastal CA Area Local sharing a long list of e-mails from across APWU that belies suppression of the delegate's harsh rejection of Retiree Involvement. Here's a sampling:
"It's really sad when I get these e-mails how people at the national level and different Locals feel about retirees. However, my prayer for you and the rest of retirees is not to give up hope . . ."

"Sad and Ridiculous!"

"So sad. I could not believe what (he) said. As they start taking the P.O. private, they may need the RETIREE'S VOICE."

"What I do not understand is why the top three national officers are turning their backs on retirees. In addition, the Eastern Region (Coordinator Gallagher) spoke against retirees and reward(ed) by Mark by having him chair the convention" . . ."The APWU does not put a premium on its retirees".

And that's some of the milder stuff. There have been various 'suggestions' that retirees withhold their labor when called upon to support an APWU initiative, or to boycott COPA. As yet there's been no serious attempt to implement either.

Make no mistake, the division is deep and bitter. To the credit of beleaguered retiree leadership in the field; Local and State Chapters are undeterred as if to demonstrate to active APWU opposition to Retiree Involvement, that retiree members are still actively engaged vs. privatization while preparing Resolutions addressing existing discrepancies of retiree inclusion in our Union. Our own State Chapter president, Paul Browning, took it upon himself to copy 50 flyers from a 2017 Tax Day rally, handing them out at a busy grocery store on Columbus Day (P.O.'s were closed). Page 13 of the Nov.-Dec. APWU magazine featured a

photo of Browning, Traverse City A.L. V.P. Ron Krumrie at a picket demonstration supporting Nurses fighting for a fair contract at Munson Hospital. APWU retired members have necessarily been put in a position of the 'loyal opposition' with the 2019 APWU national officer elections looming. Retiree leadership are at once angry, yet resolved to forge ahead, giving rise to the adopted slogan; **"We are not the Enemy!"**

2019 APWU Elections: It's already begun with former APWU Exec. V.P. Greg Bell formally announcing his intent to run for that office again. The unconfirmed (still) scuttlebutt that Eastern Region Coordinator Gallagher, yes the same Gallagher who trashed Retiree Involvement from a floor mic, was going to run for the APWU top spot. Lending credence to, at the very least, a crack in NEB solidarity with Pres. Dimondstein reportedly advocating elimination of the N.E. Regional Coordinator position upon the retirement of the current office holder, combining the N.E. Region with Gallagher's Eastern Region, prompting his heated retort in a Facebook posting for all to see. H-m-m-m . . . Are we edging closer to frequent murmurs favoring elimination of all 5 Coordinators? Yes, potential candidates and/or incumbents; "Retirees do Rock!" And yes, Retirees do Vote!

2.8% COLA, Health Plan Open Season, 2019 Medicare Premium Increase: Retiree bread & butter issues! This is what I know; APWU Health Plan (non-postal-retiree) Self+1 going up \$55.89 per month. Medicare premiums increase to \$135.50 (X 2) per mo, up from \$113.10. Don't forget; the IRS will also take their slice of annuity and Social Security COLA increases. Guess I'll wait for the OPM Notice of Annuity Changes, and S.S. calculations before I fret whether we stay even or fall further behind. A further case for legislating senior's COLA based on a CPI-E reflecting more accurately senior's "market baskets".

Missed Opportunity: During a telecom to promote membership participation in the planned, to be NALC led Columbus Day rally to bring public attention to the threat of USPS privatization, Pres. Dimondstein passed up a unique opportunity to heal raw emotions left by the particularly harsh delegate rejection of retiree initiatives, even to the questioning the validity of retiree APWU membership per APWU Constitution, Art. 3. The Philly PA Local Retiree Chapter president weighed in expressing exactly what I was thinking. The Sister's inquiry/statement that; on the heels of the Convention slap down, now we're being asked to step up? . . . got curtly short-stopped by Mark who refused to address the Sister's query. A unique opportunity to pour oil on troubled waters ignored. For me, at least; it demonstrated a thinly veiled disdain for retiree involvement. Why do I feel we're just being used when convenient to the

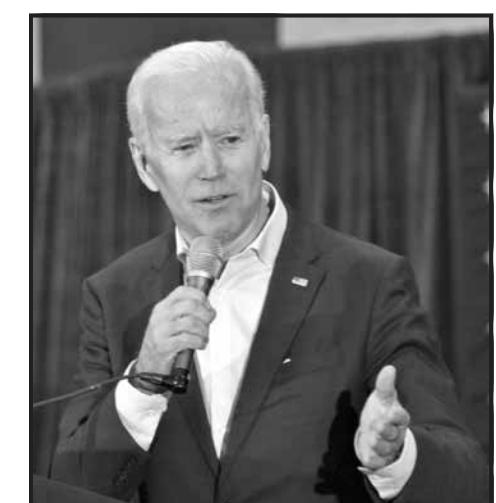
leadership? For example: I cringe when APWU boasts a membership of 200,000 when the devilish details reveal a full dues-paying membership of 160,000 and 40,000 more or less APWU \$36. dues-paying Retirees Dept. members. Truth in packaging! A little respect for the retired Mothers and Fathers of this Union will go a long way toward solidarity of purpose for everyone aboard the leaking USPS mothership.

Flop! Thud! What happened?! Essentially, not much. Nothing organized in Michigan I know of. Where was the much emphasized NALC led coordination with APWU and MHU? No coordination, no communication, no flyers or organized materials. Questionable plan beginning with the decision to hold a nationwide postal unions' demonstration on Columbus Day when P.O.'s were closed! A postal worker holiday weekend, need I go on? Yet, there were APWU retiree leaderships out there, like Brother Browning, doing their level best to fulfill the APWU call to arms. So, tell me **who** is truly Union-minded?!

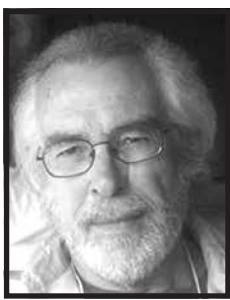
APWU Health Plan Seminar - Bits & Pieces: Several sources who were at San Antonio offered little consolation over the spike in premiums or status quo coverage for retirees. Still retain Express Scripts as the Plan prescription provider. Just got my \$96 out-of-pocket billing for a supply of insulin pens. Seems like nearly every mail-order script has a \$20 co-pay. Thank God for LBJ and Medicare! I still have serious issues with rural Cigna's questionable methods to recruit preferred providers. Until rural retired members attain Medicare at 65, the APWU Plan remains a tough sell.

Two interesting issues emerged during the Seminar. An inquiry as to how many NEB officers belong to the APWU Health Plan. The sparse response was "some" did not. National Executive Board officers plus Plan Dir. comprise the APWU Health Plan Board of Directors. The issue being; concern is that NEB officers making Plan direction decisions with no stake in the outcome. Years ago, a convention decreed that all national officers must belong. A subsequent con-

continued on page 8



Vice President Joe Biden



by
Paul
Browning

With elections over, a divided government and a ballooning Federal budget deficit, no doubt talk in Washington will again turn to so-called entitlements. And when most politicians use that word they are talking about Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and even Federal pensions.

Of course that deficit was certainly increased by the Trump/Republicans tax cut for the wealthy legislation. While those of us not in the top 1% may have got a few dollars a week more take home pay, the high income earners and corporations got a helluva bundle of money. Regardless

RETIREE PRESIDENT

Yes, Retirees Are Entitled

of whether you think this is good or bad, someone has to make up for less money not going into federal coffers. Naturally you hear Mitch McConnell and Republicans—the self-proclaimed political party of small government—talking about spending less money on “entitlement” programs. (Can someone from Kentucky please explain to me why one of the poorest states in the country keeps voting in politicians who seem to not give a damn about helping its residents? Seriously, coal mining is not going to make a comeback.)

Americans are fond of referring to the United States as the richest country in the world and rightfully so. I’m sure we have more millionaires plus billionaires than anybody else. You would think with their fair tax money, stop laughing here if you can,

the taxes out of the average person’s paycheck plus our payroll tax money (payroll tax being Social Security and Medicare deductions from your paycheck, the money you are supposed to get back when you retire in entitlement programs) there would be plenty to go around. And that payroll tax? That’s the deal we have with the Federal Government. That money is taken from us now with the promise that we will get it back later. It’s not as if we retirees are getting something for nothing. If I put money in the bank with a written agreement from the bank that I will get a certain amount of interest paid to me by the bank, can the bank renege on that agreement and say I’m not owed that amount of interest? Of course not. We have a deal and I am entitled to the money. So, can we please stop using entitlement as if it were some kind of dirty word?

(The same demonization also happened to the word “liberal” which the dictionary defines as broad-minded, favoring reform or progress. What’s wrong with that?)

Meanwhile, I don’t think nothing much is going to happen legislatively with our divided government. There’s this thing called a lame duck Congress. Up until January 3rd when newly elected U.S House of Representatives Congressmen and Congresswomen take office, Republicans still hold a majority control of Congress. In the past we’ve seen all kinds of shenanigan legislation voted on by defeated office holders who no longer care about getting re-elected and just go with their personal agenda. So cross your fingers and hold your breath APWU members. The President’s Postal Privatization plan is still waiting in the wings.

Mackinac Bridge Authority - In No Hurry To Consider Line 5 Tunnel Deal

ST. IGNACE — Mackinac Bridge Authority members asked no questions Thursday as Michigan officials unveiled a plan to allow the state and Enbridge Energy to construct a tunnel to protect Line 5, the Canadian company’s 65-year-old pipeline beneath the Straits of Mackinac.

But former members of the independent, seven-member agency that oversees the Mackinac Bridge were among dozens to voice opposition to the linchpin of proposal: Having the bridge authority agree to oversee and own the tunnel that is expected to cost \$350 million to \$500 million.

“Create an independent tunnel authority, if that’s your wish,” William Gnodtke, the longtime authority chairman who stepped down late this year, told his former colleagues.

“I can’t speak, and I won’t speak as to whether or not there should be a tunnel. I’m only saying it does not belong under the auspices of the Mackinac Bridge Authority.”

Gnodtke also circulated a statement expressing opposition he signed with seven other former authority members.

The meeting inside a packed conference center 2 miles north of the iconic bridge was the first public airing of term-limited Gov. Rick Snyder’s proposal for the bridge authority to oversee a tunnel protecting Line 5.

The pipeline transports up to 540,000 barrels of light crude oil per day from Superior, Wisconsin, to Sarnia, Ontario – and runs beneath the Straits.



William Gnodtke, the longtime Mackinac Bridge Authority Chairman who stepped down late this year, spoke to his colleagues in opposition of a plan to give the bridge authority ownership of a proposed tunnel to surround Line 5 in the Straits of Mackinac.

(Bridge photo by Jim Malewitz)

Environmentalists and other concerned citizens fear a rupture, however slight the possibility, would create a catastrophe in the Great Lakes.

“We do need to get this right. We need to make sure we separate commodity and resource,” Keith Creagh, director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, told bridge authority members.

Snyder, a Republican set to leave office in January, wants to swap out twin pipelines in the Straits for a new pipe that would be protected in a bedrock tunnel 100 feet below the lake bottom.

Enbridge and the state announced a deal in October to pursue the tunnel, but the plan is fraught with controversy and legal uncertainty.

The plan hinges on the bridge authority owning the 4-mile, 12-foot in diameter tunnel, under the October agreement, and leasing space to Enbridge for 99 years.

The proposal follows Tuesday’s election of Democrat Gretchen Whitmer to succeed Snyder and Dana Nessel, also a Democrat, to replace Republican Attorney General Bill Schuette.

Both Whitmer and Nessel have called for a Line 5 shutdown, and some critics say Snyder is trying to tie their hands during his final days in office.

The board did not vote Thursday, and it’s unclear whether it would before Snyder leaves office. The authority scheduled its next meeting for Feb. 12 in Lansing.

Patrick “Shorty” Gleason, who was elected authority chairman on Thursday, told Bridge Magazine his colleagues would act on their own timeline and “I don’t feel any pressure at all” from the Snyder or an incoming Whitmer administration.

“I have a lot of confidence the two administrations are going to talk, and they’re going to offer us some good solutions,” he said.

If built, the tunnel—or “utility corridor” in bureaucrat speak—would shield Line 5, electrical lines, broadband cables and other infrastructure. Enbridge would pay all costs, and the project is expected to take up to 10 years to complete.

“In the event of a leak of a pipe, there is virtually no way for any product to leak out of this tunnel. It’s completely sealed,” Michael Mooney, director of the Colorado School of Mines’ Center for Underground Construction and Tunneling and a state-hired consultant on Line 5, told authority members.

The plan falls within standard tunneling practice, he said, listing three completed or ongoing tunnels that are larger, more complicated or in deeper waters: The Eurasia Tunnel in Istanbul, Turkey; Lake Mead’s water intake for Las Vegas; and the Hudson Tunnel between New York and New Jersey.

The authority board includes two members Snyder appointed days before announcing the October agreement of Enbridge: Mike Zimmer of Dimondale and Kirk Steudle of South Lyon.

continued on page 7

NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

• • •



by
Michael
O'Hearn

A good witness or grievant statement can make a grievance. Sometimes the only evidence you can use to document a violation of our contract is a good witness statement. For instance, if the supervisor or manager is performing our work, the best evidence is a good witness statement. Unfortunately, not all witness statement are good statements. A good witness statement will answer the questions "who, what, where, when, why, and how." These are the questions they teach journalist to answer when writing a good news article. An example of a statement that answers these questions might be "On September 29th of this year, I, Mike O'Hearn, saw Supervisor John

Blow sorting mail into PO boxes in the box section from 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM. Not only does this violate our contract, but also, he was doing a poor job of it, making a lot of mistakes." Then, the statement should be signed and dated. The who is Mike O'Hearn and Supervisor John Blow. The what is sorting mail into PO boxes. The where is the box section. The when is September 29th from 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM. The why is violating our contract. The how is poorly. Not every statement will need to answer all these questions. In this example, the why and how will probably not need to be answered to have an effective grievance. However, answering all these questions will not hurt your grievance. I have seen statements like "I saw the supervisor doing clerk work." This statement is worthless. It does not prove anything. Who is the

supervisor? When did this happen? What kind of work was performed? Where did it happen? How long did the supervisor work clerk work? Therefore, always get statements that address the key questions. If your witness does not convey a clear message about what happened, talk to the witness and suggest how they might improve her/his statement.

Another problem with witness statements, is creditability. You have to ask yourself, "Was the witness in a position to actually see the event described?" Check the clock rings of your witnesses. If they were not even working that day, then you cannot rely on that statement. Also, if their statement says somebody told me the supervisor was doing clerk work. This type of statement is no good. If the statement says they saw

something in the box section, but they worked on the dock all day, this will be a problem. Can they explain how they saw this event? If the steward witnessed the event, they can write a statement. However, the most creditable statement should come from the rank and file members.

Don't write a statement and then send it around for others to sign. These types of statement are not creditable. Have each member write their own statement. Each person will see the event a little differently. This is usually not a problem as it lends creditability to the statements. A witness statement can make or break your case. Therefore, look each statement over and objectively evaluate it. Improve a bad statement if possible. This will result in better grievances.

Yes, Voter Suppression Is Real. But Young Voters May Bridge The Gap

continued from page 4

J. Alex Halderman, a University of Michigan computer scientist, told the electronic industry magazine, *EE Times*, "Russia was in a position to do more damage than they did. They could have changed voter registration data, but they didn't."

On a related note, in July, the FBI reported that the private company that hosts Maryland's voter registration system is controlled by Vladimir Potanin, a

Russian oligarch with close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

All that is the bad news. The good news is that on the Left, electoral politics is being enthusiastically embraced, particularly by young people. According to Pew Research surveys, 2018 will see a record turnout of 18- to 34-year-olds for a midterm election. What's more, 57 percent of millennials who are registered to vote plan to vote for Demo-

crats, and only 37 percent for Republicans. Voting habits and political commitments are established when people are young. Given the enthusiasm among youth for the common sense social democratic proposals of Bernie Sanders and rising stars like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, we have reason to hope that 21st-century America, marked thus far by lawless wars and hideous inequality, may break its fever and begin a turn toward something like common decency.

Mackinac Bridge Authority - In No Hurry To Consider Line 5 Tunnel Deal

continued from page 6

Steudle, who recently retired as director of the Michigan Department of Transportation, wrote in an opinion column for Bridge Magazine on Thursday that the deal "makes sense" for the bridge authority.

"The MBA should seize the opportunity to assist in safeguarding the bridge, the Straits of Mackinac and the state," he wrote, offering a similar argument to what state officials offered at Thursday's meeting.

In a dueling Bridge Magazine column, Barbara J. Brown, Steudle's board colleague and granddaughter of its first chairman, accused Snyder of handing

Enbridge — a "private, foreign corporation, access to our powers and authority through a 'shotgun wedding'" that is not in the board's interest.

Valerie Brader — who in February resigned as Michigan Agency for Energy director and is now a paid private consultant to the state on Line 5 — said the Mackinac Bridge Authority has unmatched expertise in the Straits and a bipartisan record of success.

She said Snyder's agreement would protect the authority from legal and financial liability should something in the tunnel go awry.

The deal sets Dec. 31, 2028, as a

shut off date for the dual pipelines if the tunnel project isn't going as planned, Brader said.

"The MBA would not be required to accept the tunnel if the technical specs were not met," she said. "You would be sure that this is constructed right."

In a statement Thursday, Enbridge spokesman Ryan Duffy said "working with the authority is a constructive and logical way to pursue a replacement segment of Line 5 in a tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac."

Dozens of residents voiced objections to the deal during a public comment period.

Bryan Newland, council chairman for the Bay Mills Indian Community, accused Snyder of shutting Michigan tribes out of Line 5 negotiations and urged the bridge authority to rectify the oversight.

"There are going to be consequences for this action. We are going to get our seat at the table," he said.

Jim Larsen, CEO of Upper Peninsula Power Co. in Marquette, said Enbridge is one of his company's top customers and shutting down Line 5 would force other customers to make up for lost revenue.

But Gnodtke, the former bridge authority chairman, said that governing body has no business overseeing the pipeline.

In emotional testimony, he recounted a phone call from former Gov. John Engler, who appointed him to the authority in 1997 and instructed him to "look after the Bridge."

"That's what I'm asking you to do," Gnodtke said. "Look after this bridge."



Michigan APWU Officials at the RI-399 Training in Atlantic City, NJ

DEADLINE
The deadline for articles for the
January-February issue of the
***Michigan Messenger* is January 5, 2019**

NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

by
Linda
Turney

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

Pregnancy Discrimination

I am happy to report that an Illinois Resolution which was forwarded to the 2018 APWU National Convention in Pittsburgh PA to end Pregnancy Discrimination passed. Under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, signed into law by President Carter, women must be allowed work if work is available within their restrictions.

Our PSEs are often told to go home because Article 13 does not cover light duty. However, Pregnancy is covered by the law. We often forget that Pregnancy is covered by law so stewards and managers both need to be reminded of the language that covers Pregnancy. There is no up to date language in our present contract that establishes a policy concerning pregnant women. EEOC has criteria for the

enforcement of accommodation for Pregnant Employees, but our contract also needs to reflect this now urgent need for our little sisters, our female PSEs. Recently, I have represented NON-FMLA employees who could not come to work due to illness before, during or after the birth of a child.

Our stewards need to be aware that:

1. They can let supervisors know the USPS cannot fire a woman because she's pregnant.
2. The USPS cannot refuse to hire a woman because she's pregnant -- or because she may become pregnant in the future.
3. New mothers have the right to pump breast milk at work in a safe place. A company cannot fire or discriminate against a woman because she's lactating.
4. In some cases, pregnancy-related conditions may entitle women to special accommodations.
5. The USPS cannot force you to

take time off or change jobs, if you're still able to do your job.

6. Non-medical leave must be equally available to both women and men.

7. Employees can't be harassed based on pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions.

8. Employees cannot be fired for having an abortion or considering having an abortion.

These 8 items are based on the Pregnancy Discrimination Law of 1978. Do not allow for your pregnant PSEs to be removed from the USPS without an argument regarding this law.

Investigation

One of the most basic requirements of due process is the right to an investigation. An investigation means not believing the rumors that are going on at the PO, but rather finding out the facts first hand. In order to prove that management did an investigation that is proper, thorough, and objective, you as the steward must also do an investigation. Our grievants have a right to know with reasonable detail the charges against them and an opportunity to defend themselves. This language is so important that stewards **must** take a moment **before** a Pre-Disciplinary Interview (PDI) to discuss in detail with the Grievant the reason they are being called in for the PDI. Stewards should not assume anything, ask for the time to meet.

In a recent decision by Arbitrator Harry McClean (J15C-1JD 17422697) in which I was the Arbitration Advocate, the arbitrator ruled in the Union's favor on a last chance agreement (LCA) where management was in too much of a hurry to allow the steward to

interview the Grievant prior to the PDI. The steward testified that he was not the steward on the LCA and needed a moment to discuss the terms of the agreement and whether or the Grievant had applied for FMLA. The supervisor also stated she only allowed for a few minutes for the steward and the grievant to meet and discuss the matter prior to the PDI. The Grievant claimed during the PDI that the absences were covered under FMLA. The USPS knew that FMLA had applied for and received some FMLA coverage. The supervisor stated the PS Form 3971s did not show a request for FMLA and the required documentation had not been submitted. The Grievant said that his doctor had submitted the FMLA forms. The USPS did not conduct a proper investigation to determine if the absences were FMLA.

Both the Union and the USPS stated the steward and the Grievant were allowed about 2-6 minutes for the steward to conduct a pre-disciplinary consultation. This short time was not adequate and thus it was a meaningless right.

Article 17 page 5 or page 155 in the JCIM discusses the Weingarten rule which requires that a pre-interview consultation take place.

The Weingarten rule includes the right to a pre-interview consultation with a steward.

Federal Courts have extended this right to pre-meeting consultations to cover Inspection

Service interrogations. (Postal Service v. NLRB, D.C. Cir. 1992).

In order for a PDI to be effective adequate time must be given to the Steward and the Grievant before the PDI. Do that investigation.

A View From The Mitt

continued from page 5
vention overturned the requirement when it was ruled APWU would have to pay the full amount of the premiums.

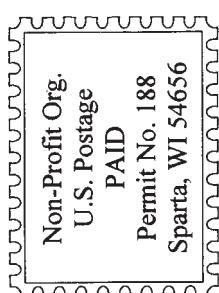
Reportedly, a proposed Resolution that only those NEB officers who belong to the APWU Plan are eligible to serve on the Plan's Board of Directors with voice and vote. Sounds reasonable to me!

Another was an explanation for the increase in premiums. The Trump corporate tax cuts gave Big Insurance Companies a huge tax break designed to adversely affect the Affordable Care Act. Only big insurance like BC/BS benefited

from this break, and thus able to absorb health care cost increases. APWU Health Plan did not receive the tax break. It's somewhat more complicated, calculating weighted increases with BC/BS not going up much, caused APWU H.P. to hit the maximum percentage of the weighted cost which is passed on to you and me . . . or something like that. What I do understand is the effect on my bottom line and level of coverage.

Holiday Season: Peace, Joy, and Blessings however you and yours observe and celebrate December secular and religious traditions, and **A HAPPY & HEALTHY 2019!**

Solidarity Forever!



Return to APWU/MPWU
c/o John Greathouse, Editor
P.O. Box 27303
Lansing, MI 48909-7303

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