

# Michigan MESSENGER

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## PRESIDENT



by  
**Michael  
Mize**

# Making More \$\$\$\$

That's right, the new contract is finally in and you are making more money. I know you have most likely already seen the National announcement and know about the contract. I felt as your State President I should tell you my feelings about it. I am going to give you my take on the good and the bad. Then I will discuss issues that I know have our PTF members unhappy.

The good. Obviously, the pay raises are good. But you must look a little deeper for the gold stars. The pay raises are retroactive. One back to November 2018 and the other November 2019. They are per hour raises for our members that will make a difference on every day and all the way through retirement. The COLA! The arbitrator awarded keeping our COLA the same, not a lump sum and not less for new employees. These were also done retroactive. Huge GOLD STAR there. PSE's were awarded additional raises as they do not receive COLA. These pay benefits make every penny we pay for Union membership worth so much more.

In my opinion the best thing we gained in this award is additional steps for employees hired after 2011. We started the march to eliminating the two-tier wage system for career employees. This gets the level 5 to 8 employee hired after 2011 closer to the top pay of those of us hired prior to 2011. As an Officer of the Union I am proud to say we accomplished that. Yes, there is more to go, a win is a win.

There are other gains as well, like clothing allowance gains, work environment, no lay-off etc. The above represents the things I believe are membership top desires. It is noted however that the work environment task force could play out to be one of the best things. That will take time to determine.

The bad. We will pay 1% more toward health care next year. Keep in mind a 1% raise on our wages is much more than a 1% raise on our health care. This was expected as it has been the trend for some time. Should be noted that there is only a change for one year.

The Contract is only for 3 years. It would have been nice to get at least a 4-year contract. Since we are already about halfway through this new contract, we will be preparing for the next one almost immediately. On the bright side it is 3 years and not a 2 year.

The worst thing about the Contract is the Line H adjustments. These are terrible for the Maintenance Craft or specifically the Custodians. There are some definitions that the parties must discuss further but the language concerns me either way. We will have to push the use of 1767's if facilities are not cleaned.

We did not get any steps back for the level 4 employees. What we did get is great but its sad that the Custodians got left out on this. To make it even worse the Line H language is a hit to the Custodians as well. Just keep in mind some of the gains above do go to Custodians so its not all doom and gloom.

The PTF issues. As a President that represents many PTF's, in fact more than FTR's, I am aware of the issues that PTF's want changed. I know that PTF's want to make regular, they want

Holiday pay and they want to be able to transfer to better positions. To be clear I did not expect these issues would be changed in an arbitrated



contract. If any of these issues are going to change it will most likely happen through regular negotiations or through a grievance at National Level that we win the work.

Making a regular 40-hour position in most of our small offices is hard to prove with the hours we must work with. I do know that as a Union we would like to see Management unable to perform any bargaining unit work in these small offices. I believe that is the best goal we can continue to work for hoping to attain the goal of more traditional 40-hour positions.

Holiday pay for PTF's is something that comes up on a regular basis to our Officers. To explain, the PTF wages are higher and that is in part to account for the Holidays. There are times that I wish the pay was lowered and Holidays were paid to PTF's, then the argument might go away.

I do believe there is good reason to have it this way. I understand the complaint I just want to inform the PTF's that have not been given this information.

Transferring to another office for Full Time! There has been language at the National Convention several times to change the transfer

language to allow for easier PTF transferring to FTR. Most times the language is not accepted and gets turned down. While I agree the language needs to be adjusted in some manner, the body has not agreed on how to do it. We will continue to take new language forward in the attempt to get something passed about changing the transfer language to favor the PTF more. We will continue to explain to the National Officers what your concerns as small office PTF's are. I believe that we will get agreement on some changes and then the Union

*continued on page 2*

## Requiem

### Jerrold 'Jerry' Clairmont

**Jerrold "Jerry" Clairmont**, Saginaw, MI died unexpectedly sometime Saturday pm/Sunday am at a nursing facility in Saginaw. Unable to locate an obituary via **MLive.com**, It is with a heavy heart and countless memories that I convey this sad news.

I was just informed today by my daughter, an Occupational Therapist, where Jerry has been living the past few weeks. She was unable to notify me sooner due to HIPPA Law restrictions. Daughter Laura, worked with Jerry who she called "A really sweet man." It was like old home week when Jerry learned Laura was my daughter. He rattled off names; Clyde, Leo, me and really 'took' to Laura. She was unaware of Jerry's passing until she came to work Mon. and went to his room, finding it empty. She was informed that something occurred during, or

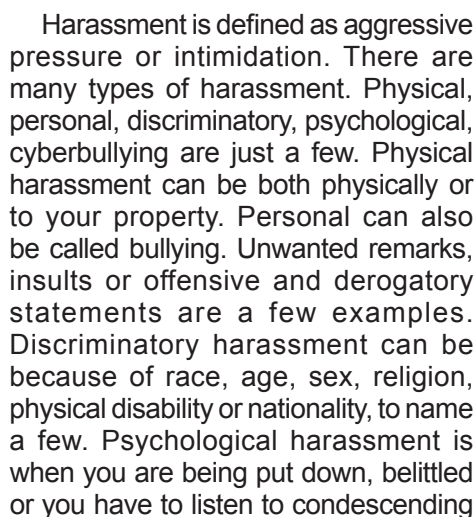
connected to dialysis. Laura really liked Jerry and took it pretty hard too. Sketchy info so far. Jerry was about 86, born in 1933. No further details so far.

Jerry's last held elective office was MPWU State Retiree Chapter Secretary-Treasurer. He was former President, Saginaw MI Area Local. MPWU Area Director, MPWU Director Research & Education, President Saginaw A.L. Retiree Chapter, among other Local offices held in his long, distinguished, dedicated Union career. Our most sincere condolences to Jerry's wife Barbara and Family on the loss of their husband and father, our dear Brother and friend.

*"Eternal rest grant unto your servant Jerrold, O' Lord, and let Perpetual Light shine upon him."*



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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.

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1. You should tell the harasser to STOP
2. Tell your supervisor
3. Tell your union

The USPS has policies on harassment

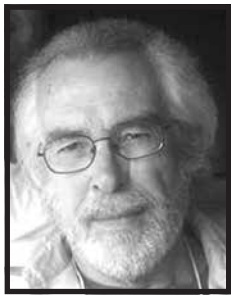
I know working in small offices can make it hard to confront a harasser. Chances are if they are harassing you, other people know. Working under these conditions can be very stressful. It can affect your job, personal life and even your health. No one wants to work in these conditions.

Overall, I believe the arbitration award is good. We got some things I didn't expect to get. We lost some things that sting. I believe this was a good award for the Union overall. I believe the Headquarters team, and all involved deserve a thank you for their efforts and a push with our support behind them to do better next time and keep moving the Union forward.





RETIREE PRESIDENT



by  
Paul  
Browning

# APWU National OWCP Representative Retires

Sue Carney, APWU National Director of the Human Relations Department, retired from her elected position in Washington D.C on February 29, 2020. Sue's duties at National consisted of administering the Postal Employees Relief Fund (PERF-a program of donated funds to assist Postal employees adverting affected in National Disaster areas), working with Disability Retiree applicants, Veterans Issues, Employee Assistance Programs, and most time consuming of all-Postal Employee Workers Compensation claims, problems, and the Education of in the field OWCP Representatives. Sue was first elected to her position in 2001, and reelected six times, the last being in 2019 when she ran on an election ticket against National President Dimenstein's hand-picked candidate for her job. In a lengthy public resignation letter expressing her deep thanks to the members for electing her, Sue cites recent events and other contributing factors in her abrupt decision to retiree only months after getting reelected in 2018. Sue is known throughout the country

for her utmost dedication to her job and APWU members. Stories abound of Sue answering and returning phone calls at all hours of the day and days of the week from employees in the field seeking her help. Sue was also pro-APWU Retiree rights as evidenced by her words at the 2018 APWU National Convention. To say that she will be greatly missed is an understatement.

In her Retirement letter, Sue recommends either of two individuals who she considers to have outstanding qualifications for Human Relations Director-Bob Romanowski, Clerk Craft NBA or Kathleen Kaplan of the Manasota FL Area Local. Sue considers both individuals to be eminently qualified in Workers Compensation matters and other aspects of the position. Here's hoping that President Dimondstein takes her advice.

I join the many, many, APWU members on social media in wishing her a long and happy Retirement and giving grateful thanks for all she has done for the Membership in her long APWU career.

It would be remiss of me though to not address a discordant voice from the field concerning the Human Relations Director position. The lone voice of an elected APWU Convention Delegate from the Eastern Region has publicly called for eliminating the position and assigning the duties to the APWU Organization Director. With all the duties encompassed in the job, it would be ludicrous to assign them to another APWU full time officer. President Dimondstein himself formerly held a full time APWU Organizing position and personally knows the work involved in both positions. Hopefully he will see the utter fallacy in doing away with a Nationally elected full time APWU Officer position that is of so much importance to so many members.

**MICHIGAN STATE RETIREE CHAPTER**  
**10TH Biennial Constitution Convention**  
**Friday, May 15, 2020**  
**Doubletree Hotel**  
**Grand Rapids, Michigan**

**MPWU STATE RETIREE CHAPTER CONVENTION – CANCELED!**

The 10th Biennial Constitution Convention of the Sate Retiree Chapter, Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO have been canceled due to the COVID-19 virus. More information will be coming in the next edition related to Election of Officers.

**RESOLUTIONS:** Due to a 2019 decision by the National Executive Board of the American Postal Workers Union, Retiree Chapters may submit APWU Convention resolutions directly to the National Office of the APWU. Details for such submission will be published in an upcoming issue of the APWU National magazine. Resolutions to be considered by the State Retiree Chapter for submission, shall be submitted to the State Chapter Trustees no later than noon, May 15, 2020. I f you have any further questions, concerns, or need more information, please contact State Retiree Chapter President Paul Browning at phone# (231) 275-6016 or email **oldhipster54@hotmail.com**.

## Stay Involved As A Retiree Member

You helped build the union. You were there when the APWU fought for — and won — better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Now, as a postal retiree, you rely on the retirement benefits and healthcare coverage the union negotiated to enrich the quality of your life. Although you have moved on to a new chapter in your life, we hope you will remain involved with the union as an active member of the APWU Retirees Department.



You will also receive a certificate for a free \$5,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance policy, a continuing subscription to *The American Postal Worker* magazine, and access to the *Members Only* pages on the APWU Web site.

Joining the APWU Retirees Department is also a great way to stay in touch with old friends and make new ones! Participating in union activities is a great way to get involved.

- For only \$36 per year (which can be deducted in \$3 increments from your monthly annuity check), your membership entitles you to a voice in union affairs and to participate in:
- The APWU Health Plan
  - The APWU Mastercard
  - Voluntary Benefits Plan programs (Including Group Legal Services, Hospital Indemnity Insurance, and the Basic Care Hospital Plan).
  - APWU Accident Benefit Association protection against temporary disability, dismemberment, or death as a result of a covered accident. Remember, Accidents Never Retire!
  - Union Plus discounts and services

## Union, Management Agree To Local Implementation Timeline

In the wake of the arbitration award on the new Collective Bargaining Agreement, the APWU and USPS have agreed to a timeline for local negotiations, Director of Industrial Vance Zimmerman announced.

Local unions or management can open bargaining over changes to local agreements, in accordance with the schedule outlined in the March 11 Memorandum of Understanding [PDF]:

- Written notice of intent to negotiate by must be provided not later than **May 24, 2020**.

- Negotiations occur for 30 consecutive days within a 60-day period, commencing on **May 10, 2020**, and ending **July 9, 2020**.
- Initial proposals must be exchanged within the first 21 days of the 30 consecutive-day period.
- All negotiations end **July 9, 2020**.
- Appeals to impasse must be filed not later than July 30, 2020.
- APWU appeals must be sent to Labor Relations Service Center.

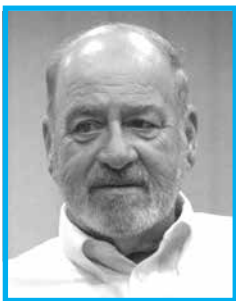
- USPS appeals must be to the APWU Regional Coordinator.
- APWU Region/USPS area impasse discussions end **September 22, 2020**.
- Appeals to arbitration must be filed no later than **October 13, 2020**.



Has your name changed? Are you moving? If so please fill our form below and drop by Union or call the Union Hall at ??? so we are current on your mailing address.



M.P.W.U. RETIREE ADVISOR



by  
Al  
LaBrecque

# A View From The Mitt

**Can't We All Just Get Along? MPWU Constitution & By-Laws; Art. 11. Duties of Officers. Sec. 14, [A] & [B]:** *"[A] The MPWU State Retiree Chapter, as a subordinate\* body to the Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, shall serve as a continuing link to the active State Union and Labor Movement for APWU/MPWU retirees to provide retired members the opportunity to participate in social, legislative, political, and educational activities, to serve the needs of retired members and their survivors, and to support and direct the efforts to organize Michigan APWU Local Retiree Chapters."* *"[B] The Michigan Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, shall assist the MPWU State Retiree Chapter in carrying out its objectives to provide retired members a strong, continuing voice in this Union and Labor Movement, subject to the requirements of the MPWU Constitution & By-Laws."*

**So, What's The Point?** Well, it's two-fold. First, to recognize the solidarity enjoyed between the MPWU and State Retiree Chapter and most Chapters with their Local Unions. Secondly, the smoldering animosities between some prominent APWU Locals and their Local Retiree Chapters that's a continuing wedge adversely affecting harmony within our Union, and retiree rank & file advocates for Retiree Involvement in the Union we helped build.

It's way past time to credit the State Union for the respectful, completely cooperative relationship with the State Chapter over the past nearly 25 years. Oh, sure, we've had some bumps along the way as in any good marriage. In around '98-'99, feeling my oats from being part of the structuring process in the infancy of the Retirees' Dept. as one of the "Original Five" elected National Retiree Delegates; we proposed organizing a Michigan State Retiree Chapter. From the outset, we received nothing but enthusiastic support from MPWU State E-Board. Right off the bat we were offered whatever financing we needed to get off the ground. Being cautiously frugal, not wanting to take advantage of their generosity, we only took necessary seed money and/or supplies to get

started. What we sought is the support of our State Union to piggyback with the MPWU State Conventions with our biennial, usually one-day, State Chapter Conventions and off year 3-day MPWU Education Assemblies. Critical was the State Union's support for our ambitious Retiree Involvement initiatives via Resolutions running the gauntlet of going through a Local Union submitting a resolution to the MPWU Convention delegates for debate and a vote, to then be sent on to the APWU National Constitution Committee for consideration by delegates to the APWU Convention. By the time a resolution reached the final step, it had been scrutinized, debated pro and con, and most importantly an **educating process** on the subject of the proposed constitutional amendment by those making the ultimate determination in convention. It should be noted that a subsequent NEB ruling now permits Local and State Retiree Chapters to submit resolutions directly to national . . . a two-sided coin.

An example of a "bump-turned-blessing" in our relationship came at a State Convention when the resolution to afford APWU Retirees' Dept. members eligibility to vote for certain national officers, the fifth attempt to attain, when we got word the Resolutions Committee had non-concurred without affording us an opportunity to address the committee. It was reported to the convention delegates who, after considerable debate, voted to accept the committee's non-concurrence. In past conventions the Chair had permitted us to address the delegates when such a hot-button resolution came before them, taking a vote to allow us to speak. Not that time, We had no idea what occurred as we were in our own business session. To my eternal regret, I'm afraid I made a real ass of myself upon learning of this rejection, ignoring all protocol, charging onto the MPWU Convention floor going-nose-to-nose with the Res. Committee Chair and dear Brother, Pat Combed bellowing; "What do you mean non-concurrence!" About that time the Chair was announcing our State Retiree Chapter hosted "Pizza For COPA" hospitality night while a shocked Pat was trying to explain and I roared; "I hope you choke on the damned pizza!", stomped to the back of the room muttering they can take this job and shove it among other expletives. I can still see the late Gary VanHoogstraten, who had just been

elected State Chapter V.P., sitting by the doors shaking his head and saying; "Geez Al; don't do this to me." Call it the infamous; "Choke on the damned pizza incident."

What resulted from that unfortunate event is exactly the point of this account. While I sputtered and sulked that evening, several people came to me saying it's going to be okay. Wait until tomorrow. Sitting back in the observer's section the next day, the convention reconvened. To my profoundly humbling and grateful surprise; a motion to reconsider the resolution was made by 480-481 Area Local President, Roscoe Woods, who had voted on the prevailing side the day before. A vote to reconsider was passed, the resolution read again, a two-thirds vote taken and adopted to forward to national. I don't recall if there was a dissenting vote, humbled by having witnessed the true meaning of solidarity in keeping with the MPWU Constitution language cited above.

Another prime moment came at the 2014 Chicago National Convention in my last hurrah as Central Region, National Retiree Delegate, when I took the mic making an impassioned plea for delegate support for a retiree related Resolution I had authored. When I finished and turned around to leave. There stood a virtual phalanx of Michigan Local and State delegates, Mike Mize and Roscoe front and center in a demonstration of solidarity to having my back. The rush of emotions that hit me in the chest defies description. Admittedly, these being the more memorable displays of our mutual respect, there's countless less dramatic instances of cooperation between the State Union and State Chapter that's been the hallmark of our philosophy of mutual assistance.

Flip that coin and we've got some serious adversarial situations in some prominent and large APWU Locals and their Local Retiree Chapters that tends to bleed over into National Conventions and joint APWU events that contaminates the internal climate between working delegates, field leaderships, and advocates for Retiree Involvement . . . that's a damned shame, if not totally unwarranted. A common thread in those instances seems to be Chapter leadership involved are full-dues pay members of their Locals with voice, vote, and eligible to hold Local office, some with the Local even paying their APWU full dues. Inter Local personality clashes, political differences, self-serving ambitions that tear mutual interests asunder are rampant in those Locals and Chapters. I gained some insight when going to several Michigan APWU Locals, usually by invitation, to deliver a pitch for organizing a Local Chapter. In a couple instances I was told in no uncertain terms that they had gotten rid of certain potential Chapter participants when they retired and didn't want them back where they could interfere in the

Local's business. One president of a large Local in another state banned the Local Chapter and president from the Local's facilities after a disgruntled Chapter president used the Local's equipment and supplies to produce material criticizing the Local administration. After an ongoing adversarial relationship, I had with that Chapter president, the Local president said; "Now do you see what I mean, Al?" Indeed, I did.

While some may disagree, I'm a firm believer that Chapters, although autonomous, serve at the pleasure of our parent Local, State, and National Unions. To respect our mutual, but separate roles of responsibility, and put ego's aside. Answer the call to boycott a Staples, or lobby for a crucial legislative issue such as H.R. 2382, which retirees in the field recently joined with APWU leadership bombarding their Congresspersons to vote favorably. Exercise prudence before sticking one's nose into internal Union business that's unrelated to retired member's interests. Keep that olive branch handy when and if we overstep our bounds, always try to be gracious even if you don't mean it at the time. It will pay dividends in the long run. Where there's enmity between Locals and Retiree Chapters, try it. You might like it. To keep internal differences between Locals and Chapters in front of a national audience serves no one's interests, let alone spilling over with vitriol in national conventions when debating and voting on constitutional amendments espousing Retiree Involvement. Bury the hatchet for the common good, or hang dirty laundry in the back yard. Looks really bad, ya' know?

I can't adequately express the pride I have in the relationship enjoyed between the MPWU and State Retiree Chapter, or our deep gratitude for it. It was time to share (beat our own drum, if you will) and publicly state as an example of success. I can likewise state the same spirit exists in my home Flint Local as an example of when we finally recognize and accept that; **"We Are ALL In This Together!"**

**Michigan Absentee Balloting:** Michigan is now a "No Reason" Absentee Ballot mail request State. All **any registered voter** has to do is call or write your City, County, or Township Clerk to mail you an **Application for an Absentee Ballot**. Upon receipt, complete and return mail to the Clerk. You will receive your Absentee Ballot, and the really neat thing about the new law is; unless you relocate you will automatically receive an Absentee Ballot each election cycle without having to reapply. No more excuses for failing to exercise your obligation to vote!

(\*\*Just received the sad news that Jerrold "Jerry" Clairmont died unexpectedly Saturday, February 29th in Saginaw. No further details at this writing. Requiem.)

Solidarity Forever!

— DEADLINE —

for articles for the next issue  
of the *Michigan Messenger*  
is May 9, 2020

# We Have A New Contract!

The big news is in – 200,000 postal workers represented by the APWU have a new union contract!

Neutral Arbitrator and Interest Arbitration Panel Chair Stephen Goldberg issued his binding decision on the terms of the new union contract between the American Postal Workers Union and the United States Postal Service.

The Award was the product of 20 months of preparation, member and local union input, negotiations, mediation, a strong contract campaign and a well-prepared and presented arbitration case. Thirty-two workers testified about their work. Officers and subject matter experts testified for the union. A team of economists presented our case and rebutted management’s presentations for union concessions.

“No interest arbitration is ever totally in favor of one side or the other,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “But we have achieved a number of our major goals including retroactive annual pay raises, maintaining of full (and retroactive) COLA, narrowing the gap between the lower and higher career pay scales, the career conversions of thousands of PSEs and maintaining tremendous job security. We should all be proud to be union!”

“We also succeeded in stopping management’s deeply concessionary demands to end no-lay protections, increase percentages of non-career employees and create a new lower third tier of career employees,” shared Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman. “I want to thank the many officers, witnesses, staff, attorneys, specialists and the members for their many efforts in this long battle that helped bring it to a strong conclusion.”

Unless specifically changed by this Award, all rights and benefits in the previous contract carry forward into the new one. These include seniority and bidding rights, protections against unjust discipline, the grievance procedure, annual and sick leave, holiday and overtime pay, health and safety protections and so many of the important rights and benefits won over many decades of struggle.

**LENGTH OF CONTRACT**

- Three Years: September 21, 2018 to September 20, 2021

**CAREER EMPLOYEE GENERAL WAGE INCREASES**

- Three annual general wage increases totaling 3.4% over the life of the Agreement.
- 1.3% effective November 24, 2018 (Retroactive)
- 1.1% effective November 23, 2019 (Retroactive)

- 1% effective November 21, 2020

**COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS (COLA)**

Semiannual COLAs for career employees will continue under the current formula. Management pushed, but failed, to convert COLAs into one-time lump-sum payments.

- \$624 or \$.30/hour COLA will be applied retroactive to August 31, 2019

- \$166 or \$.08/hour COLA will be applied retroactive to February 29, 2020
- Future COLAs will be applied in September 2020, March 2021 and September 2021

- COLAs to date add \$790 annually or \$0.38 per hour to base pay.

The APWU is now the only postal union that has protected and maintained full COLA.

**INCREASED COMPENSATION – GENERAL WAGE PLUS COLA INCREASES**

Adding the 3.4% in General Wage Increases plus the known COLAs, compensation for a level 6 Step O employee will increase \$2,855 over the life of the Agreement. With three additional COLA increases, the total increases over the life of the Agreement will likely come to \$3,600 annually, an increase of about \$1.75 per hour. In addition, those not yet at the top step of the lower career wage scale will gain new step increases with each Step representing an approximate \$.50/ hour raise.

**STEP INCREASES**

APWU argued for the return of higher steps to the lower tier schedule. In response, Arbitrator Goldberg narrowed the gap in the two-tier career pay schedules by adding additional top steps in Grades 5-8 for employees hired after May 23, 2011 (There is no lower tier for Grades 9 and above).

- Grade 5: One additional top Step Increase (Step K).
- Grade 6-7: Two additional top Step Increases (Steps K & L).
- Grade 8: Two additional Step Increases (Steps L & M).
- Depending on Grade, each additional step increase approximates \$1,000 per year based on full-time straight-time hours of work.

**PSE WAGE INCREASES**

Since PSEs do not receive COLAs, they receive larger annual general increases:

- 2.3% effective November 24, 2018 (retroactive)
- 2.1% effective November 23, 2019 (retroactive)

- 2.0% effective November 21, 2020

PSEs will receive an additional forty cents per hour raise as follows:

- \$.20 per hour effective May 23, 2020, and
- \$.20 per hour effective May 22, 2021.

Over the life of the Agreement a Level 6 PSE pay will rise from the \$17.19 to \$18.69 per hour.

**NO LAY-OFF & JOB SECURITY PROTECTIONS**

- The no lay-off protections of Article 6 for career employees with more than six years of service remain unchanged. Management argued for increasing the six years to 15 years for current employees with no protection for future hires.

- In addition, no lay-off protection is extended for the life of the Agreement to all career employees on the rolls as of the date of this Award who have not yet qualified for protection under the six-year rule.
- A ban on subcontracting of any existing PVS driving work during the life of the contract.

- No employee can be excessed out of an installation beyond a 50-mile radius.

**CAREER EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFITS**

The FEHB Health Plans and benefits remain in effect for career employees.

- No change in employee share of premiums in 2019 and 2020.
- In 2021, the USPS contribution level for health premiums will be reduced from 73% to 72% and then remain the same in 2022. 72% is the share federal agencies pay for federal employees and the Postal Service pays for annuitants and EAS employees. This 1% shift represents a cost to an employee of between \$75 and \$165 per year depending upon health plan options.
- The USPS contribution level of 95% of the weighted average to the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan option will remain in effect for 2021 and 2022.

**PSE HEALTH BENEFITS**

Improvements in USPS payments of PSE Health Insurance premiums gained in a June 13, 2018 grievance settlement will be incorporated into the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Specifically, the Postal Service will make a bi-weekly contribution equal to 65% of the total premium in the USPS Non-career Health Care Plan for either self plus one or family coverage during a PSE’s initial year of PSE employment.

And thereafter 75% of the total premium for either self plus one or family coverage. PSE share of premiums can be made on a pre-tax basis. The Postal Service will continue to contribute 75% of the total premium for PSEs electing the APWU Consumer Driven Plan in FEHB.

**WORKFORCE STRUCTURE**

- One-time PSE conversions: All PSEs in 125 work year and larger offices with 30 months or more of service in the installation as of the date of the award will be converted to career. Over 4,000 PSEs will be converted under this provision within 60 days of the Award.

- Maintenance will remain an all-career workforce.
- MVS will remain an all-career workforce, and maintain the exception that PSEs may be hired to perform some of any “new work” returned to the bargaining unit.
- No increase in PSE percentages in the Clerk Craft.

APWU is now the only postal union that has not increased non-career percentages.

**UNIFORM & WORK CLOTHES ALLOWANCE FOR ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES**

- 5% increase in the uniform and work clothes allowance in 2020.

- 2.5% increase in allowances in 2021.
- Compression socks, gloves and overalls will be covered as available items for purchase.

- Full uniform allowances for eligible Clerk PSEs will now be incorporated into the CBA. Similarly, any “new work” MVS PSE meeting eligibility requirements would be entitled to a full uniform.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT**

- The Union and Management established a joint task force to address hostile work environments.

**WORK RULES**

- For the first time, pregnancy is now included in the Non-Discrimination language of the CBA.
- The Filling of Residual Jobs Memo, which since March 2014 has led to 70,000 PSE conversions to career, continues in full force.

- Arbitrator Goldberg reaffirmed that custodial positions should be fully staffed. However he changed under certain conditions what hours apply in calculating “Line H” violations of staffing. Hours associated with long-term absences and excessing events can be exempted from calculations when fully staffed.

continued on page 8



VETERANS' DIRECTOR

Veteran News



by  
John P.  
Smeekens

2020 Michigan Freedom Tour

2020 is the 75th Anniversary of Victory in World War II. Michigan played a vital role in this victory. Not only did over 600,000 Michigan residents serve in World War II, the entire state of Michigan played a critical role in our victory as the Arsenal of Democracy. To commemorate the preservation of our freedom through the sacrifices of the people of Michigan, the MI Freedom Center and the Yankee Air Museum are teaming up to launch the Michigan Freedom Tour! The Michigan Freedom Tour will give veterans across Michigan a special opportunity to fly aboard one of the Yankee Air Museum's vintage WWII aircraft – the Yankee Lady (B-17 Flying Fortress), the Yankee Warrior (B-25 Mitchell), or Hairless Joe (C-47).

Flights are set to launch from a total of 9 sites across Michigan:

- 1. May 14: Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti/Canton – Willow Run Airport (B-17)
- 2. June 24: Detroit/Grosse Pointe – Coleman Young Municipal Airport (B-25)
- 3. July 1: Midland/Bay City/Saginaw – MBS International Airport (B-17)
- 4. July 15: Escanaba – Delta County Airport (B-25 or C-47)
- 5. July 16: Iron Mountain – Ford Airport (B-25 or C-47)
- 6. July 18: Muskegon – Muskegon County Airport (B-17)
- 7. August 6: Pontiac/Clarkston - Oakland County International Airport (C-47)
- 8. August 14: Grayling/Traverse City – Cherry Capital Airport (B-25)
- 9. September 2: Grand Rapids/Grandville - Kent County Airport (B-17 or B-25 or C-47)

If you would like to learn more about how you can give a veteran that you love the opportunity to fly for free on one of these amazing aircraft, we would love to hear from you! Also, please note that these flights are made possible via our generous tour, site, and flight sponsors. Proceeds from these sponsorships will not only provide flight opportunities for our veterans of all eras, they will also help build a permanent home for these vintage aircraft. We are still seeking sponsors and would love to add you to our list. If you would like to recognize the service of our veterans and provide a home for these classic warbirds, we would love to promote your organization as a sponsor!

We can be reached via phone at

(313)744-7507, via email at [Freedom@MIFreedomcenter.org](mailto:Freedom@MIFreedomcenter.org) or via the web at MI Freedom Tour.

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Sang Open House

The Selfridge International Open House will be held on June 06 & 07, 2020. Once I get more information, I will post it here in THE VETERANS' REPORT!!!

Vietnam Navy Blue Water Claims

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun deciding claims for the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 at 12:01 a.m., Philippine Standard Time, Jan. 1, 2020, as the Philippines is the farthest east VA regional benefits office.

Blast Exposure Bill

Recently introduced, H.R. 5739, was the *Blast Exposure Protection Act of 2020*. This important legislation would establish a presumption of service-connection for disabilities associated with blast exposures, which will make it easier for veterans to prove that health conditions are related to their military service. Traumatic brain injury and other conditions associated with blast exposure are very serious health issues. Service members go untreated for blast injuries while in service, which makes it difficult to prove that these conditions were caused by an event in service. Please ask your Representatives to support the *Blast Exposure Protection Act of 2020*, which would ensure that veterans who were exposed to blasts during military ser-

vice receive the care and benefits they desperately need.

Student Veterans' Relief

THE VA has recently implemented Sections 107 and 501 of the Forever GI Bill. The law requires student veterans to receive their monthly housing allowance based on the zip code of the school where they actually take the majority of their classes, not the zip code for the main campus. This change could cause student veteran's monthly housing allowance to be decreased. THE VA is offering impacted individuals the opportunity to apply for one-time relief to help with the transition to a lower rate. Those affected will need to fill out VA Form 22-10204, and submit the form through the Ask a Question Portal, or mail the form to the Regional Processing Office of Jurisdiction, or call the Education Call Center at 1.888.442.4551.

National Park Pass

As vets scour online listicles in search of some of these well-deserved Nov. 11 freebies, it's worth repeating that an excellent offer has been and will remain on the table courtesy of the National Park Service.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of the Interior and Fish and Wildlife Service, among others, the NPS continues to offer free lifetime access passes to over 400 national parks and 2,000 recreation sites nationwide to any veteran with at least a 10 percent disability rating.

Vets can receive the lifetime pass on the spot at any federal recreation area where passes are issued by presenting a form of government-issued identification (driver's license, state ID, passport,

birth certificate) along with documentation proving a service-connected disability.

For a \$10 processing fee (which includes shipping), veterans can also order a pass online. But due to a backlog, online orders are currently expected to take up to four to five weeks to deliver once necessary paperwork is submitted. Mail orders can also be completed by downloading an application directly from the United States Geological Survey website.

Veterans can prove eligibility for the lifetime pass by providing a Veterans Affairs Summary of Benefits, VA award letter, or documentation showing Social Security Disability Income.

The pass grants access for a driver and any passengers entering a park in a non-commercial vehicle and includes a number of discounts on park amenities such as camping or guided tours.

Active duty military, meanwhile, remain eligible for a free year-long version of the access pass, which includes the same perks, for that year, as its lifetime counterpart. Current personnel can apply onsite at any of the aforementioned locations by providing a military ID.

So, go enjoy the great outdoors.

**Important Web Site**  
<https://www.michiganveterans.com/>

Searching for a VSO? Here's the place to go!!! There is a ton of information at this site for our Veterans and their families. This is the HOME page for the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. Check it out!!!

The SAFETY Of Our Membership Is The First Priority

After participating in a Teleconference on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, this is the latest information from our National APWU. Keep in mind, by the time this is printed, things could change.

As always, the SAFETY of our membership is the first Priority.

The President, Donald Trump, has told America to try and avoid gatherings of any kind with more than 10 people. The Postal Service has indicated that this is only a guideline and not a requirement. So at this time we will not be closing. Management should provide DISINFECTANT WIPES, HAND SANITIZER and MASKS when asked by any employee. I have heard from Management that they are out of masks and trying to get more.

APWU and Management have agreed on a LIBERAL LEAVE POLICY. Absences related to COVID-19 will Not be held against employees. LWOP will be granted. Manage-

ment has also agreed to a LIBERAL Change of Schedule Policy as related to COVID-19. This is more directed at employees who have children and day care problems. With all of Michigan schools closed it may be very difficult for individuals to work their current schedule. Management has agreed to grant a change of schedule LIBERALLY. Any employee who has a problem getting a change of schedule approved should contact me immediately. These actions are to be reported to National, through your local President, ASAP.

There are currently 5 Postal employees nationwide, who have tested positive for the COVID-19. The breakdown is as follows:  
2 in New York  
2 in Washington state  
1 in North Carolina

There is 1 city Carrier, 2 Mailhandlers, and 2 Supervisors. They are currently

QUARANTINED and on Administrative Leave.

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, they are entitled to 14 days of Administrative Leave for the quarantine.

There are links to all updates concerning COVID-19 both on the APWU Webpage and LITEBLUE.

From the CDC Website  
Watch for symptoms

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.

The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure:**

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

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# Are You Sick?

The coronavirus has everyone on edge. We do not want anyone to panic. What we want is our membership to take the precautions and keep their risk as low as possible. Please watch the National webpage and listen to the service talks the USPS is giving. What should be happening?

1) You should be receiving regular service talks.

2) The Postal Service should have gloves & masks available.

3) The Postal Service should have disinfectant wipes available.

4) You should stay home if you are sick.

5) We all need to stay vigilant about our health.

6) The Service should have Hand Sanitizer of 60% alcohol or more available.

7) Wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds.

8) Proper facility cleaning must be done. See the attached list.

What should you do if these things

are not done? Follow them if you can. File a 1767. Contact a Union representative.

If you or someone in the office is sick with the symptoms of coronavirus management should be following their directives. You should be seeking medical advice and reach out to us if you have any issues at work.

STAY SAFE, STAY HEALTHY

## USPS Ministry Of Propaganda (M.O.P.)

by **Al LaBrecque**

FINALLY! The long anticipated Winter Quarterly USPS Retiree Newsletter has arrived! At first blush; 4 pages of fluff and page 5 the USPS motive for preparing retirees for drastic financial measures due to revenue foregone . . . etc. Not so subtle message that we retirees can expect to be sacrificial lambs in their quest to stabilize their bottom line on our backs . . . so, hitch up your britches and like it! Check the boxes at the top of page 2. "Your Frequently Asked Questions".

**The Answer:** "Great question! Contact OPM at 1-888-767-6738 to update your address. OPM provides the Postal Service with the addresses of all retirees." And, there it is. Question asked with the advent of the first mailings finally answered, like it's a big frigging surprise. And, 'SO very glad' you asked to demonstrate their policy of transparency. Unabashed attempt to CYA. Reminds me a lot of the President's shell game, of lie & deny. More as I scrutinize on and in between the lines closer. Handling with rubber gloves, not so much out of concern for the virus as for the condensed crap in/ on it.

ATTACHMENT 2		
FOMITE CLEANING TASKS		
TO CONTROL THE SPREAD OF INFECTION		
Table 2-1. CLEANING TASKS		
Locations	Items to be Cleaned	Frequency
Operational Work Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work surfaces</li><li>• Keyboards</li><li>• Computer mice and trackballs</li><li>• Monitors and touchscreens</li><li>• Pens and pencils</li><li>• Portable scanners</li><li>• E-Stops</li><li>• Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) equipment controls, steering wheels, seats, seatbelts</li></ul>	EACH OPERATING TOUR
Cafeterias/Lunch rooms and Break rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Door knobs or handles</li><li>• Paper towel dispenser knobs or handles</li><li>• Refrigerator door handles</li><li>• Microwave door handles and buttons/keypads</li><li>• Vending machine buttons</li><li>• Table tops</li><li>• Drinking fountain</li><li>• Faucet handles</li></ul>	EACH OPERATING TOUR
Work Room Floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Door knobs or handles</li><li>• Employee entrance turnstiles</li><li>• Drinking fountain</li><li>• Time clock buttons</li><li>• Elevator call and operating buttons</li><li>• Handrails (frequently used)</li><li>• Telephones (shared)</li></ul>	DAILY
Lobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Door knobs or handles</li><li>• Table tops</li><li>• Handrails</li><li>• Vending machine buttons</li><li>• Automated Postal Centers (APC)</li><li>• Scales</li></ul>	DAILY
Rest Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Door knobs or handles</li><li>• Paper towel dispenser knobs or handles</li><li>• Faucet handles</li></ul>	EACH OPERATING TOUR
Locker Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Door knobs or handles</li></ul>	DAILY
Meeting Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Door knobs or handles</li><li>• Table tops</li></ul>	DAILY

# Is ‘Fake News’ Really The Issue?

by Leo F. Persails, Retired, APWU Central Region Coordinator

Arbitration 101 will establish “Framing The Issue” as a primary factor in arbitration presentation. I learned that early on, and found its extreme importance multiplies, as I presented in excess of 500 arbitration cases. I presented those cases as Michigan State President, and also as a National Officer for the American Postal Workers Union. In the course of that process I represented members, and interpreted contract language, for a large variety of issues. In almost every case management would attempt to attack the issue. The stronger our case was the more they would attempt to convince the Arbitrator to view the case under their new issue. Bringing the Arbitrator back to the real issue wasn’t always easy, but it was the most important thing, especially in contract cases. I lived with this daily as an APWU Officer either at the table or in preparing post hearing briefs. When I retired, it slipped from importance because I had left the arena. Well, I thought I had left it.

I recently was jarred back to reality about “Framing The Issue” when I watched the impeachment hearings on Trump. Something kept tugging at

me, and suddenly I realized it was the issue. Trump was being impeached for asking a foreign country to investigate Biden, a political opponent, and for obstruction of witnesses and documents. The Republicans and lawyers defending Trump pursued several other issues. Trump lawyers claimed problems with the House hearings, witnesses, hearsay, bias, speed of the process, and several other things that didn’t involve the real issue of the impeachment hearing. It was the same thing I had fought with management hundreds of times.

Suddenly it was obvious this was the same thing Trump had perfected to avoid EVERY issue. Every time something or someone had pointed to an issue that claimed Trump had lied about or done, he would change the issue. He would NEVER deny or even address the real issue. Trump would instead attack the character of the person and call it a Witch Hunt or a Hoax. With the help of the mainstream news media, his character assassination of his accuser, would be repeated over and over until that became the new issue. In the end, he never addressed or answered any of the real issues. He’s good at it, but couldn’t have succeeded, “if the news media hadn’t

repeated his rhetoric”. Then something else jumped out to me. What if Trump was changing the issue about the mainstream news media when he labeled the news media “fake News”. Was he disguising the fact some networks really supported him, and did so by repeating his rhetoric 24/7? The fact is Trump would have been just another “voice in the crowd” without the 24/7 news media coverage.

While Trump was getting his 24/7 rhetoric coverage, there were many news items that were ignored, or maybe just, “one and done”. What happened to his porn star issue? What about the Veterans charity he spent from, or his fake real estate college? Why didn’t the media define his divorces and bankruptcies? They would have done that with other candidates, and even Presidents. His income tax may define Russian involvement, why was that forgotten so fast? Finally, what about the pictures with young girls and Epstein that were not followed up on? Are the networks afraid of trump, or is it part of the issue change? Finally, history, good or bad was lived at the impeachment hearings, but the only network to broadcast them totally was PBS. Trump got more repeat coverage in attacking the hearings and witnesses afterward, than the hearings did live. One example was Trump’s character assassination, when Romney voted his conscience. Others were Trump’s alleged “perfect call”,

his witness attacks, including the firing of Vindman and Sunderland. With news media help, that became Trump’s new issue.

Why would the news media repeat false statements frequently made by Trump without fact check and corrections? There are several possible reasons for that. One may be a loss of millions of dollars in commercials and ads from corporate America if they did. There’s also the fact that news networks are owned by billionaires like Trump, and they like their tax breaks. Unions or working-class Americans don’t own or control News Networks, therefore they have no input. Finally, and as stated above, what about Trump’s ability to change the issue. If he calls the news media “Fake News”, would that divert from the fact their actions are EXACTLY what he wants?

Truth is always important, but often it has lost the issue to repeated news coverage of Trump’s rhetoric. The fact is its too often to be accidental. Americans and APWU members expect the truth from the news media, but fake issues full of “Fake News” has become the hidden rule. Where can you find the truth in today’s politics? It’s out there, but it takes time and effort, and unfortunately you have to dig for it. You can also look to your union, they aren’t driven by income from commercials, or tax breaks for the rich.

## We Have A New Contract!

continued from page 5

- Improvement in maintenance training selection.
- PSE overtime rules from a June 13, 2018 settlement will be incorporated into the CBA; specifically, time and one-half after eight hours of work in a day and double time over 10 hours in a day or 56 hours in a week.
- Small Office Local Memorandum

of Understanding is renewed.

The union and management are meeting to determine the exact dates when the new pay rates will be reflected in the paychecks and the date when workers will receive the backpay retroactive checks.

The national APWU will be printing and mailing an updated version of the new union contract to every member as soon as possible. — *apwu.org*

## The SAFETY Of Our Membership Is The First Priority

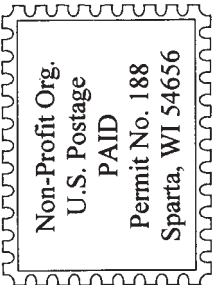
continued from page 6

If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include\*:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse

- Bluish lips or face

\*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.



Return to APWU/MPWU  
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*Change of Service Requested*