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PRESIDENT

Election Consequences



by
**Michael
Mize**

One thing we hear about all the time is overtime reductions or they took "my overtime" away. This can be an extremely dangerous financial pitfall for us all. This pitfall is one that has come up recently and that is why I felt it necessary to write about it.

With the recent changes in Postal operations and the statement made that overtime will be reduced or eliminated we all need to think about what that means. We are accustomed to that extra-large paycheck that is fat with overtime.

Management has made it extremely easy for us to get here with the failure to staff properly and increase in packages. But, one thing is clear, the changes could cause a decrease in hours. Why? If we are just going to delay the mail a day or two or ?? then why overtime? If we cannot get the mail done and no overtime is worked, how long before we lose the customers?

I do not believe I have ever seen a time that overtime was not needed and today is no different. But, ask yourself

a question, if we do not care about the mail being timely, if we just hold it until tomorrow or some later date? If we just work until our time is up and send what is done, leave the rest? No overtime is necessary under that crazy thought pattern.

What if Management staffs the operation to the proper amount? I know that is humorous, but it is possible.

So why am I writing to all of you about this? We need to be certain that our members are prepared in anything we can help with. We see a possible cut in hours coming and some may already have it. If you cannot pay your bills and your family is not prepared it is devastating. I am asking you all to make the moves necessary to not need the overtime. If you are a full-time employee, set a budget on the full time pay. If you are a PTF, set a budget for less hours than you ever expect to get.

If your hours stay high and no cut is received it only means you will have extra money. If you count on the extra money and lose it, it could have devastating consequences for you and your family.

Please take the time to protect yourself from a pitfall that can be avoided.



Mike Mize, MPWU President



U.S. Senator Gary Peters





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Can You Hear Me Now?

The Eargo Hearing Aid
by Al LaBrecque

Sisters & Brothers: ALERT!
Perhaps you have seen ads for **Eargo**, a hearing aid device, on cable TV. It got my attention when the ads stated **Eargo** is free to **FEHBP** enrollee's plus I found an ad for **Eargo** in the **NARFE** bulletin.

I reached out with this information for Sister Rodriguez. She attempted to contact the company but was only able to make contact through their website. Here is her response to me:

Hi Brother,
They didn't answer when I called. I registered through their website for their free hearing test. Literally you put ear buds in your phone, the test reads sets 3 numbers while different frequencies of noise masks

them. Then you type the 3 numbers you heard on your phone, hit enter, and then listen to the next set.

They don't have brick and mortar stores so that is how you get tested and then they program the hearing aid "ear buds" and mail them to you.

The * after "No Cost", is **Your out-of-pocket costs may vary depending on plan benefits, eligibility, deductible, co-insurance, and model of device chosen. Benefit is not available through all insurance plans. Please consult your plan for coverage details.

It's only free if your health insurance has a hearing benefit that covers the cost in full, but they have a handy dandy financing program if not.

I'm pretty sure our "APWU Health Plan", normal hearing benefit would cover this up to the \$1500 every three years with the applicable deductible, coinsurance etc. but it wouldn't get the same negotiated discounts we have with American Hearing Benefits.

The * after "no cost" made me skeptical and it does sound too good to be true.

Sarah Rodriguez, APWU Health Plan

My assessment is that **Eargo** is just another outfit targeting FEHBP benefits, much like the predator outfits that target Medicare beneficiaries. **Buyer Beware!**

Solidarity.

"To Wear A Mask Or Not To Wear A Mask" . . . That Is The Question!

Not wearing a mask increases your risk of catching COVID-19 by 65%. COVID is increasing everywhere and you have the power to stop it in the Post Office.

"Wearing a mask is an effective and low-cost way to protect ourselves and our families from a deadly disease. It should be — and is — the responsibility of every Michigander. This order reiterates that individuals are required to wear a face covering whenever they are in an indoor public space. It also requires the use of face coverings in crowded outdoor spaces. Most significantly, the order requires any business that is open to the public to refuse entry or service to people who refuse to wear a face covering. No shirts, no shoes, no mask — no service."

https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309.7-387-90499_90705-534169--00.html

This is the requirement for everyone in the State of Michigan.

The Postal Service has agreed to follow the regulations of the State and Local government.

The workplace is a public space

"Public place" means any enclosed indoor area used by the general public or **servicing as a place of work** containing two hundred fifty or more square feet of floor space, including, but not limited to, all restaurants with a seating capacity greater than fifty, all retail stores, lobbies and malls, offices, including waiting rooms, and other commercial establishments; public conveyances with departures, travel, and destination entirely within this state; educational facilities; hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and other health care and medical facilities; and auditoriums, elevators, theaters, libraries, art museums, concert halls, indoor arenas, and meeting rooms."

<https://definitions.uslegal.com/public-place/>

stating that masks are not required on the workroom floor. This includes rural carriers, letter carriers, clerks and supervisors too!

In addition, the Governor's order states:

"To protect workers, shoppers, and the community, no business that is open to the public may provide service to a customer or allow a customer to enter its premises, unless the customer is wearing a face covering as required by this order."

No window clerk should be given a direct order to wait on a customer who is not wearing a mask.

The Postal Service needs to follow the Governor's orders to help prevent the employees from getting sick.

If your Postmaster or Supervisor is not enforcing the wearing of masks, contact your Steward or Area Director.

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.

Don't be left in the dark . . .

Keep up-to-date with union news! Read your Michigan Messenger



E·D·I·T·O·R



by **John Greathouse**

We Will Not Fail

Brothers and Sisters, it has been a very busy couple of months to say the least, so let's get started!

245 Birthday of the Post Office

On July 24th in Lansing, at the Michigan AFL-CIO, a Michigan Governors Proclamation was unveiled by Michigan House Representative's Kara Hope and Angela Witwer honoring the dedication and service by Postal Workers for the past 245 years.

U.S. Senator Gary Peters attended and congratulated all of the Postal Workers on the 245th anniversary celebration in Lansing.

In his remarks he said, "I'm fighting against efforts to dismantle the Postal Service or limit service. Communities are depending on postal workers now more than ever for critical home supplies, medication & connection with distant loved ones."

Afterward, the Senator was asking about the PMG's plan of delaying the mail, removal of mail processing equipment as well as the story that ran on CBS

Morning News that day, about a mail test that was done by a news agency.

Covid-19 and Management

Right after I typed that line I thought . . . They are both a virus! And now you are shaking your head with that thought . . .

Having watched management's response to the Covid-19 outbreak and the response (or lack of one) back in April and now are two very different kinds of events. We got almost no information as to who they were or where they worked and we had to play a guessing game based on the folks who are not at work to figure it all out . . . Kind of the same game now except the willingness to inform us as to when there is a positive case is even less now than only a few months ago.

In this edition, there is an article discussing what you should do related to filing a CA-1 if should have been exposed to Covid-19.

MISSION POSSIBLE!

Your Mission, should you chose to accept it, is to protect Americas Mail! (insert music here . . .)

With the new PMG in place now

and the directives that he has put in place, we know that will obviously slow the mail. WE will not stand idly by and let these new procedures harm the service you all proudly provide to the people in the United States and around the world.

We are asking all of you join in to this fight by providing as much information as you can.

APWU has set up an email box that we would like you to send any information on delayed mail.

This email box is: **DELAYED-MAIL@APWU.ORG**

We would like you to send any items that you come across that is related to delayed mail including:

ANY OFFICIAL REPORTS OF DELAYED MAIL

ANY UNOFFICIAL REPORTS OF DELAYED MAIL LOCAL UNIONS OR EMPLOYEES MAY HAVE

COPIES OF FORM PS-1571

ANY STAND-UP TALKS YOU ARE GIVEN ON CHANGES TO DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURES AND

DELIVERY PROCEDURES

ANY INTERNAL DOCUMENTS LIKE MANAGEMENT EMAILS YOU GET YOUR HANDS ON

COPIES OF CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES/EDITORIALS THAT MAY APPEAR IN YOUR LOCAL PAPERS

LINKS TO ANY LOCAL NEWS STORIES

EVIDENCE OF FRAUD — FALSIFIED SCANS, ETC.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU BELIEVE IS RELEVANT TO DELAYED MAIL

When you send the email, be sure to include the following information:

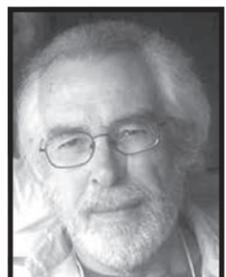
Name of the Local Union:

Name of the Postal Installation or Office

Name of the APWU Region the data is from: Central Region

Together, WE can show the PMG that we fight as one to protect Americas Postal Service!

R·E·T·I·R·E·E·P·R·E·S·I·D·E·N·T



by **Paul Browning**

Show Me The Money

Here's some startling numbers for you — according to *Forbes* magazine there are 630 BILLIONAIRES worth almost three (3) Trillion dollars in the United States. That's \$3,000,000,000,000. Even more amazing, there are 18.6 million people who are MILLIONAIRES in the U.S. That's over 18 million people worth a million dollars or more. Whew, wrap your head around that if you can. Granted that is total net worth and not yearly income. Heck, with Overtime Desired List USPS freaks and TSP investments, there could even be some Postal worker millionaires. (full disclosure – I might have earned a total of 1 million dollars in my entire lifetime but most of it went to paying bills)

So, there is quite a few people out there with a lot of dough and more doing ok anyway with plenty really struggling. Throw in the current pandemic and the United States as a whole is in the worst economic situation since the Great Depression. Plus you have some rather poorly designed/imple-

mented stimulus packages that have really ballooned the once worried about National Debt. With COVID-19 and the Economy cratering it seems like the Apocalypse is just around the corner for most of us (billionaires and millionaires excepted). What is to be done?

Back in the 1930's, Americans elected Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt to get them out of what was then the worst financial crisis the Country had ever been in. FDR had all kinds of radical ideas from Social Security to Civilian Conservation Corps camps (CCC) where the Federal government paid individuals to work on environment and infrastructure projects. A lot of Republicans went nuts screaming about socialism (go back and see the word before "Security" in the previous sentence). But Roosevelt's plans eventually worked and the Country recovered. And don't forget later Democrat President Johnson's 1965 Medicare legislation which provided "socialized" medical care for over 65 age Americans.

Today, the United States is not going to recover from the pandemic and job losses without a vaccine and some current and future big time

government spending which obviously requires big bucks. Now, back to all those folks with a lot of zeroes behind their worth. Raise their taxes! *The Feds* can even raise mine. I'll give back the \$25 a month I got under Trump and the Republicans' 2017 tax cut legislation. If more Americans have more money to spend on goods and services manufactured and provided in this Country, its got to be better for everybody, right? I know its income redistribution-a radical idea and only the beginning of a solution to our crisis but these are desperate times and desperate times call for desperate measures.

There are all kinds of public work projects out there that really need to

be done. Not everybody is a construction worker of course, but if those men and women are working, they are spending money here in the U.S. putting other people to work. Let's get another Civilian Conservation Corps back together. Highways, bridges, dams, alternative energy, environmental projects need work on right now. And how about some money for the good old Post Office which provides universal service at the cheapest and most affordable rates in the world? If Americans can brag about being the richest country in the world, let's put our money where our mouths are.

And remember, FDR and LBJ were Democratic Party Presidents!



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.

L·E·G·I·S·L·A·T·I·V·E·D·I·R·E·C·T·O·R



by
**Roscoe
Woods**

Voting By Mail

My thought, if it is good enough for the US Military, well then it's good enough for me!

I was reading an article on line by the Brookings Institute and thought I would share some of the findings of their review of what is an ever growing call for an increase in the access to vote in all elections using the USPS and a mail in ballot.

The entire article can be found at: <https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020> but I wanted to share a couple of insights from their review of this issue. Given the risks associated with COVID 19 the idea we can vote securely and safely via the US Mail may be an idea whose time has come.

From the article:

How does mail balloting work?

In states that allow absentee mail balloting, the voter writes, calls, or goes online to request an absentee ballot from their local election authority. In some places, voters need an excuse for the absentee ballot such as being sick or out of the state on Election Day. In other places, voters do not need to have a specific reason for the absentee ballot or the state provides the option by mailing absentee ballots to all registered voters. Many states are moving to this system, generally referred to as No-Excuse Absentee balloting.

In making their request, voters have to provide their name and address. After receipt of the request, local election authorities send a ballot to the voter at the home address and provides one security envelope for the ballot that keeps the vote choice private and another envelope into which the sealed ballot is placed. The voter signs the outside of the second envelope to certify he or she is a registered voter.

Upon receipt of the mailed ballot, local election authorities check the name of the voter to make sure the person is registered to vote and is casting a ballot from the address registered with the election authority. After certifying those facts, they remove the sealed ballot from the outside envelope containing the voter signature so that the voter's preferences remain confidential. On Election Day, states count the mail ballots and add the results to the votes of those individuals who cast their ballots in person.

How popular is mail balloting with voters?

In 2020, there has been considerable party contentiousness over mailing balloting provisions. For example, a

plan to have mail ballots sent to every California voter has been challenged in court by the Republican National Committee. The party's stated concern is that mail balloting will undermine election integrity and increase fraud.

Yet mail balloting generally is popular with voters because they don't have to stand in line to cast ballots and they can vote at their convenience in the weeks leading up to Election Day. Fifty-nine percent support holding elections by mail. That reform saves people time and, at a time of a major pandemic, protects their health. The growing use of mail ballots shows how substantially the election environment has changed in recent years and why voters should pay close attention to voting reforms in their particular states.

Does it increase electoral fraud?

If candidates believe there has been voter fraud, they can present evidence regarding a particular race to the election board or file a lawsuit in a local court. Authorities review the evidence and decide if there has been actual fraud. If there is sufficient evidence, local prosecutors can indict the relevant people for mail ballot fraud. It is a criminal offense to forge a name on a mail ballot, impersonate someone else, steal ballots, or deceive someone about their mail ballot.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University, there is no evidence that mail balloting increases electoral fraud as there are several anti-fraud protections built into the process designed to make it difficult to impersonate voters or steal ballots. These provisions include requiring people requesting absentee ballots to be registered voters, mailing ballots to the official address listed on voter registration rolls, requiring voter signatures on the external envelope, and having

by **Mike Mize**

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Management has made it extremely easy for us to get here with the failure to staff properly and increase in packages. But, one thing is clear, the

election authorities make sure the ballot came from the address of an actual voter. If a ballot appears questionable, some states use a signature matching technique to verify the signature of the voter.

These steps make it difficult to engage in fraud on a widespread basis. You can't request a ballot for a person that is mailed to your address as opposed to that person's official address with the election authorities. Even if someone wanted to wait by a mailbox for the absentee ballot to be sent to the registered voters so you could steal their ballot, you would never know what day the absentee ballot would arrive because voters can request them for several weeks prior to an election and election authorities send them out as the requests come in.

For years, military personnel stationed abroad have voted by absentee ballot with virtually no claims of election fraud. The procedures that already are in use safeguard against abuse and ensure the integrity of the voting process.

The few cases of voter fraud that have been documented tend to be quite localized. For example, in 2018, North Carolina Republicans were cited for election fraud involving mail ballots. A campaign staff member who worked for Mark Harris in his Ninth Congressional district race was indicted for mishandling mail ballots and directing others to engage in election fraud. The evidence was so widespread that a federal judge invalidated the election and called for a special election.

What are the political consequences of mail balloting?

Republicans fear mail balloting will increase votes for Democrats. They worry that individuals who are part of groups that typically vote in lower numbers will

cast absentee ballots because of the ease of doing so. This includes young people, low-income people, minorities, and those without access to transportation.

Yet one group that benefits from absentee ballots is senior citizens, who often skew GOP. Those who are incapacitated or sick can request mail ballots as can those who cannot drive or lack access to mass transit. Mail ballots represent a way for those individuals to exercise their constitutional rights at election time.

Republicans have won in legislative districts having a large number of mail ballots. In a 2020 California special election for Congress, for example, Republicans captured a seat that previously had been held by Democrats. They did so by getting out the vote and making sure their voters had access to absentee ballots.

A major study of California, Utah, and Washington state conducted by Daniel Thompson, Jesse Yoder, Jennifer Wu, and Andrew Hall of Stanford University for elections between 1996 and 2018 concluded there was no partisan advantage to either party based on voting by mail.

Closing...

There are a variety of studies done but I believe this is the future of voting and in the end as well the security of our mail system provides an opportunity for all Americans to participate in our democracy that is a good thing.

I remind all of our members that this union has always used vote by mail for elections and has never been an issue with the security or the availability of our members to cast their ballots using the USPS.

My Overtime

by **Mike Mize**

changes could cause a decrease in hours. Why? If we are just going to delay the mail a day or two or ?? then why overtime? If we cannot get the mail done and no overtime is worked, how long before we lose the customers?

I do not believe I have ever seen a time that overtime was not needed and today is no different. But, ask yourself a question, if we do not care about the mail being timely, if we just hold it until tomorrow or some later date? If we just work until our time is up and send what is done, leave the rest? No overtime is necessary under that crazy thought pattern.

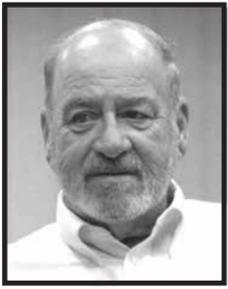
What if Management staffs the operation to the proper amount? I know that is humorous, but it is possible.

So why am I writing to all of you about this? We need to be certain that our members are prepared in anything we can help with. We see a possible cut in hours coming and some may already have it. If you cannot pay your bills and your family is not prepared it is devastating. I am asking you all to make the moves necessary to not need the overtime. If you are a full-time employee, set a budget on the full time pay. If you are a PTF, set a budget for less hours than you ever expect to get.

If your hours stay high and no cut is received it only means you will have extra money. If you count on the extra money and lose it, it could have devastating consequences for you and your family.

Please take the time to protect yourself from a pitfall that can be avoided.

M.P.W.U. RETIREE ADVISOR



by Al LaBrecque

A View From The Mitt

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

In Limbo! Life in a cocoon. Outside world shrunken. Discretion has become the better part of valor, at least for those of us who believe in medical science and advice of medical and scientific experts to be our most reliable guides through this ongoing viral pandemic that’s claimed a staggering amount of lives. Dispel the talking head TV quacks, and White House briefings by POTUS that should scare the bejesus out of any rational human being. I seriously doubt we’re anywhere near the end, not even half-way to developing a vaccine in billions of doses. So, get used to it, otherwise it can drive you nuts. Here’s the exercise; mask in public, maintain 6’ social distancing, and wash/sanitize often. Now, what’s so damned hard about that? Minor inconvenience to protect one another’s lives. A matter of respect for others even if you believe you’re invincible. I’m not! Only repeating what the medical experts and scientists are saying in unison, while Trump-Pence & cohorts’ practice and preach the opposite.

While Cooped Up - Not just us ‘chickens’, but APWU HQ. pretty much quiet as a tomb. Officers and staff working from home, sheltered in place. Not a lot of communication. Been busying myself contacting Members of Congress on our critical legislative agenda, beginning with **S.2965 The USPS Fairness Act** to repeal the 2006 PAEA, accounting for 92% of this manufactured USPS debt! Legislation to relieve that ridiculous financial burden to preserve the USPS as we know and enjoy its service. **JOBS! H.R. 141 The Social Security Fairness Act**, to repeal the patently unfair Windfall Elimination Provision [WEP] - Government Pension Offset [GPO] which severely reduces the S.S. benefits of eligible CSRS retirees. Despite a virtual hounding of my 1st District Rep Jack Bergman-R to co-sponsor H.R.141, neither he nor his staff will so much as furnish a response, which motivates me even more. On the positive side; **both Michigan Senators; Gary Peters-D and Debbie Stabenow-D** have co-sponsored the companion bill **S.521** to repeal WEP/GPO. We KNOW who our friends are.

“The Grand Announcement” - by APWU Sec.-Treas. Liz Powell that the APWU National Convention will be held in Las Vegas, Oct. 4-7, 2021, preceded by the All-Craft Conferences Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2021 [**what’s up for Oct. 3rd?] setting in motion renewal of ‘hot button’ Retirees’ Dept. internal issues brought to the fore at the last All

Craft Retiree Conference, and raised during the immediate past national officer elections. **They didn’t go away, just COVID-19 delayed. Lest we may have forgotten; let us recount the items:**

****The Paramount Retiree Resolution; REPRESENTATION;** Constitution; Art. 6. Sec.1(c.) granting Retiree Local and State Chapters 1 (one) National Convention delegate per 100 members, or fraction thereof. [Let no other retiree Resolutions come before it]. The previous Retiree Conf. decreed it’s the retiree member’s **#1 Priority!**

****Referred to NEB proposing modification of the 3 Local Chapter requirement to organize a State Chapter.** (TN)

****Determine eligibility of non-bargaining unit retiree paying Chapter dues, to hold Chapter office, or delegate status with a voice and vote.** (OH)

****Status of estimated 6,000 dues delinquent ‘cash pay’ Retirees’ Dept. members, including those enrolled in APWU Health Plan.**

****Current balance in the Retirees’ Dept. Organizing Fund and expenditures.**

****Update actual Retirees’ Dept. member numbers by category and total Dept. membership per LM-2.**

****Up-to-date accounting of Retirees’ Dept. members-in-good-standing enrolled in the APWU Health Plan.**

****Reject attempts by Resolution in Convention to arbitrarily increase monthly Retirees’ Dept. dues in any amount.**

****Let’s not forget the deluge by mail of the “Dear Postal Retiree” Newsletters and postcards, from the USPS Ministry of Propaganda (M.O.P.)**

Time to wake up ‘Little Susie’ to get our ducks in a row again! Refresh, Review, Prepare! Let’s get back to business, even if under necessary restrictions of the day. Improvise. I’ve learned to do ZOOM on the laptop. Imagine that! Very cool! Where there’s a will, there’s a way.

USPS IS AT A CROSSROADS! The COVID-19 crisis exacerbating the USPS financial plight even further, causing a \$25 billion shortfall prompting a recommendation by the USPS Board of Governors to Congress to provide necessary short-term relief. It’s a matter of survival, and that ain’t crying wolf. POTUS has a special disdain for the U.S. Postal Service for two political reasons. POTUS is scared stiff of universal Vote-By-Mail as a threat to his re-election. A deliberate

starvation of stimulus funding for the USPS to justify its sell-off to POTUS’s corporate privatization cohorts in Congress under the thin cover of his wrangle with Jeff Bezos, Amazon CEO. **Legislation is where it’s at! S.2965! Contact your Senators before it’s too late!** All our livelihoods are at stake here! Okay, so you’ve heard these alarm bells before and nothing happened. Not because they were false alarms, but because our Unions stood between us and them! Never before as appropriate for retired members than at this moment is; **“Just because we’re retired, we’re NEVER out of the arena!”** We’re definitely “in the arena”, surrounded with multiple challenges. Consider the appointment of **PMG DeJoy**. Does anyone really believe this huge Trump reelection campaign financier was selected by the 3-2 GOP USPS Board of Governors to **SAVE** the USPS? While I’d rather be wrong than right; in my considered view; **‘Looie’ DeJoy is POTUS’s “Hatchet Man”, the USPS “Judas Goat” to Perdition!** Honestly, if I’m this concerned, maybe you should be.

S.2965 USPS Fairness Act to repeal the 2006 PAEA pre-funding mandate accounting for 92% of the manufactured USPS deficit is imperative to put the USPS on a firmer footing. At best, it’s still a long slog out of these woods. We all have a role and that’s to contact our U.S Senators, demand a response. Be respectful, but firm. Write! Call! E-mail! Visit their district offices. Be emphatic, enough with the condescending! They work for US, not the other way around. This isn’t cat and mouse anymore. It’s a struggle for survival. So, what ARE YOU going to do about it?! Be a vocal dual-purpose advocate for universal Vote-By-Mail.

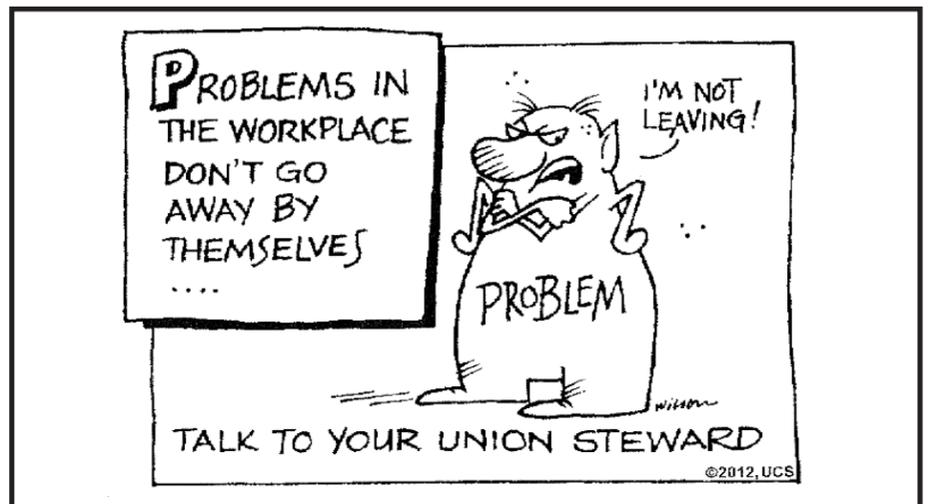
NEXT! Election Day - November 4, 2020! Never in my lifetime, beginning with FDR, has a presidential election been as crucial to preserving our democracy, OR the U.S. Postal Service! 2016 should have cured us of complacency, if not the track record of the current occupant of the White House these past nearly 4 years of agony. The ‘Donald’, Puppet Pence, Mouthpiece Mitch, and the new guy; **PMG ‘Looie’ DeJoy are NOT your**

‘friends’, I don’t much give a damn what your traditional political preference is. GOP leaning postal workers have to come to grips with this is not your father’s, or grampa’s Republican Party, or GOP Statesmen in the mold and dignity of an Alan Simpson-WY, a Jacob Javits-NY, Everett Dirksen-IL, and more recently; John McCain-AZ. POTUS and his mob have hijacked the Grand Old Party, divesting it of ethics. Time to admit it, accept it as fact, and vow to take it back, painful as that may be. Vote your pocketbook, your bread and butter. The ultra-wealthy do! Advocate for universal Vote-By-Mail at every opportunity. Not voting is the same as a vote for the Incumbent-In-Chief. Can we stomach another 4 years of this morass? It’s going to take nearly that long to repair damages done. It’s not just about the Presidency; it’s up and down the ballot, stem to stern! Federal, State, County, City, Village, Twp., to Animal Control. Keeping the U.S. House, and taking back the U.S. Senate; critical! **VOTE November 4, 2020! VOTE-BY-MAIL! VOTE BLUE! VOTE As If Your Livelihood Depends On It . . . IT DOES! VOTE Smart! Make It Emphatic - VOTE Democratic!** **“Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote!”** (Or, those sorry souls who continue to vote against their own self-interests; For What?! Only God knows why.)

??Question?? Did I miss something? A double check of the May-June, 2020 *American Postal Worker* magazine lists; **“Human Relations Director: Sue Carney”.** Wait! Didn’t Sister Carney retire when? **Feb. 29, 2020**, nearly five months ago? At least two (2) sterling recommendations for appointment to the vacancy, and **it IS a vacancy.** Begs the question; who’s handling the OWCP load during the pandemic? What’s the holdup? Just wanting to wonder.

Church Message Board: *“Staying 6’ Apart Today, Will Keep You From Being 6’ Under Tomorrow”* **Please! Mask, Distance, Wash/Sanitize Hands.** The lives you save may be that of loved ones, friends, or your own. Be Well, Stay Well.

Solidarity Forever!



VETERANS' DIRECTOR

Veteran News



by
**John P.
Smeekens**

U. S. TROOPS VOTE BY MAIL

Given the fact that the nation will most likely be dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic well past the upcoming presidential election in November, it is important that the Congress allocate federal funding to States so they can implement a robust vote-by-mail option and other measures to ensure all Americans can safely and effectively vote. The reasons for this are obvious. Large numbers of people voting in person makes it hard to follow the CDC guidelines on social distancing. Moreover, during a presidential election many polling locations are more crowded than usual, and people vote with widely shared machines. At least **50 voters and poll workers** who were at polling places during the recently-held Wisconsin presidential primary are now infected with COVID-19.

If Trump had not avoided military service in Vietnam in 1968, he would have known that the U.S. military and their families have been voting by mail in large numbers since the Civil War, that Congress has been supporting it these past 150 years, and that there have been almost no instances of fraud.

WHITE HOUSE & THE UNION

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently announced that it has expanded clinical and office space for serving Veterans by more than 150,000 square feet, while saving taxpayers more than \$1.4 million annually. The expansion and savings are the result of VA's implementation of the May 2018 **Executive Order 13837 (EO)** which prohibits free or discounted use of government property for union business. VA notified more than 330 local bargaining units late last year that under President Trump's order, they would be required to either vacate VA property or begin paying rent for any VA-owned office space that was being used for union business. In the first quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2020, employees spent 135,000 hours in "official time." But the second quarter of FY 2020 ending in March saw a 56% drop, as just 59,000 hours of "official time" were logged by VA employees. Faced with the prospect of paying fair-market rent for the VA space they had been using for free, 244 local union bargaining units notified VA they plan to vacate VA premises. VA facilities will use this space for administrative staff in some cases, but in other cases it will become space where Veterans receive care. For example, space freed up under the EO is being used to provide mental health care in Massachusetts, suicide prevention counseling in

Pennsylvania and care for homeless Veterans in North Carolina.

Additionally, 77 local union bargaining units have signed yearlong leases with VA and are paying rent to retain space located on VA property, which will result in a total of more than \$1.4 million per year in rent payments that will be directed back to the U.S. Treasury. VA started collecting those rent payments in March. The order also calls for reductions in the use of "official time," which is time during the workday federal employees engage in union activities. VA has made significant progress in this area to ensure VA employees are focused on serving Veterans. What do you think???

BUDDY TO BUDDY VETERANS'

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency is putting out a call for volunteers for its new Buddy to Buddy Veteran Mentorship Initiative, which is designed to support service members and veterans of all eras in Michigan in linking them to resources that address a variety of issues. The initiative, which replaces the University of Michigan program of a similar name, is intended to be active in all **Michigan Counties** and ultimately help service members and veterans thrive in the communities they live, work and play. Their initiative requires a group of volunteers who are passionate about veteran advocacy and can provide service members and veterans one-on-one mentorship. MVAA will provide training on veteran resources and best practices to better troubleshoot a variety of issues from transportation to accessing federal benefits. This initiative is about one veteran helping another. Using mentors to help link fellow veterans to resources is an effective method in breaking down barriers that prevent veterans from engaging in services and care they have

earned through their service. If you know a veteran who may be interested in volunteering with MVAA's new Buddy to Buddy Veteran Mentorship Initiative, please have them contact the Michigan Veterans Resource Service Center at 1-800-MICH-VET to have the application mailed to them.

CVSF EMERGENCY RELIEF

Osceola County will become the latest county to distribute state-appropriated emergency relief aid to veterans. The county is working with the MVAA to secure \$4,200 in Meijer grocery vouchers for veterans and their families through the MVAA's County Veteran Service Fund Emergency Relief (CVSF-ER) program. Through mid-June, 22 Michigan counties had either secured or were working to secure CVSF-ER grants, for a working total of \$1.35 million. The deadline for counties to apply was June 30. Other counties involved in the program so far are Calhoun, Cheboygan, Eaton, Genesee, Gladwin, Gogebic, Ionia, Iosco, Isabella, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lenawee, Marquette, Mecosta, Midland, Missaukee, Muskegon, Oakland, Roscommon, Wayne and Wexford. Veterans can find the Veteran Service Office in their county and learn more about CVSF-ER requirements and what may be available in their area by going to the MVAA web site @ <https://www.michiganveterans.com/> and checking for your VSO in the County you reside in. Contact your VSO for more information.

TRI-CARE DENTAL BENEFIT INCREASE

United Concordia, the TRICARE Dental Program contractor, announced it will be raising every enrollee's annual maximum an additional \$300. For the contract year that runs from May 1, 2020, to April 30, 2021, the annual

maximum will be \$1,800. The change is automatic. Enrollees do not need to take any action for this to apply.

VA & THE POSTAL SERVICE

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced, during national Post-traumatic Stress Awareness (PTSD) month, VA's National Center for PTSD will fund more research about PTSD. This is thanks to the proceeds from the Healing PTSD stamp, which was issued in December 2019 by the U.S. Postal Service. More than 7 million stamps were sold from December 2019 to May, garnering upwards of \$717,000 which have been disbursed to VA.

"Thanks to the millions of Americans who purchased the Healing PTSD stamp, VA will continue to study, create awareness, educate and develop policies which better the lives of Veterans with PTSD," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "The stamp not only raises awareness about PTSD but will provide funding for needed research and education about trauma and PTSD treatment."

Anyone who has seen or gone through a traumatic event, such as war, sexual assault or a serious accident, can develop PTSD. As a result, they may experience problems sleeping, trouble concentrating, recurrent dreams about the trauma, intense reactions to reminders of the trauma, disturbances in relationships and/or isolation. However, PTSD can be treated. VA offers personalized effective treatments for PTSD including talk therapy and medication. During PTSD Awareness Month and all year round, VA encourages Veterans to find out more about PTSD and treatment. For more information about PTSD, visit www.ptsd.va.gov

— Editorial —

by **Al LaBrecque**

POTUS in press briefing as this is being sent. POTUS "went off" on universal vote-by-mail with denigrating scenarios demonstrating his disdain for the U.S. Postal Service, and revealed once again his abject fear of ballot-by-mail as a threat to his reelection. Afraid of the most democratic form of voting; one person — one vote by referendum ballot by mail. He's already setting up his justifications for rejecting the election results. Unless Nov. 3 is a Biden landslide, or tRump's (God forbid) re-elected, transition may prove to be of unprecedented proportions.

Casinos could make a bundle on this; "Will he"? Or, "Won't he"? On Jan. 20, 2021? Will he sue to declare Joe Biden's election invalid? It would

be a first. Can't put ANYTHING past this megalomaniac! The remedy is to make it a Biden landslide! However, that doesn't guarantee he won't have to be dragged out of the White House kicking and screaming; "It's rigged!" "Mail fraud!!" "I'm your

commander-in-cheat . . ."

Don't know about you; but to even having to even contemplate such a scenario, is nuts! Never before! VOTE EARLY & OFTEN!! 🇺🇸 Solidarity Forever!



A mask is not a political statement. It's an IQ test.

AREA 12 DIRECTOR

by
**Theresa
Granquist**

COVID-19 Cleaning Changes

My sincere sympathy to anyone and everyone who has been affected by Covid-19. All our lives have forever been changed by this pandemic. Plans for our future are on hold, graduations, weddings, deciding to send our children to school or to visit elderly or sickly friends and relatives because with us all working we do not want to risk infecting anyone we love. Therefore, it important we all do our part to keep ourselves and our work environment safe. We need to actively practice social distancing, wear a mask (not just for ourselves but for the safety of others) and wash our hands with soap and water and when not able to wash our hands use hand sanitizer.

There have been regular Main-

tenance Updates and floor talks on Covid-19 hopefully everyone is receiving these talks. These talks are too important not to receive. Please check with a shop steward or management if you have not received any of the talks on Covid-19. In some offices members tell me, management posts the information on a board, but they do not have time to read them. I am not a fan of talks being posted on a board or handed to an employee and told read this when you get time as often, they do not get read. The 'drive by method' also does not allow for any group interaction or questions. Brothers and Sisters, if you are told to read the talks you must take the time and read them, these topics are too important not to take seriously. I am going to discuss 2 talks that ALL custodians should have read and should be following:

A change in the green CTC cleaner was mentioned in Maintenance Update Volume 22, No. 57 Special

Covid-19 Edition, Covid-19 CTC Training Material Changes. It states: 'In response to the requirements in MMO-031-20, HQ MP & S has modified and released several Custodial Team Cleaning (CTC) Specialist training materials and procedures.' It also states ...'start using the new chemicals and remove all PortionPac 102 from facilities'. The new cleaner is PortionPac Germicidal Green 232. Has anyone received the update information on this new cleaner? Do you have the new cleaner? Did it just show up without instructions to the proper usage? Ensure your office has this new cleaner and you have been trained on where and how to use the new cleaner. Ensure labels on the bottles have been changed to reflect the new cleaner and the SDS (safety data sheets) have also been updated.

The same Update refers to MMO-031-20 which is a Maintenance Management Order from February 3, 2020.

This MMO is a replacement to the previous Influenza and coronavirus cleaning MMO-109-09. MMO-031-20 can be found on the covid-19 page at APWU.ORG. I encourage everyone who is not familiar with this MMO or who has not read it to read it, so you know what is required and the purpose. This MMO is required fomite cleaning established using the guidance from the CDC (Center for disease control). This MMO identifies frequently touched items in different areas and gives guidance on whether the items should be cleaned daily or frequently. A few items identified include e-stops, door handles, pens, pencils, scanners, time clock buttons and anything frequently used and shared with others. The custodians are our front line of attack during this pandemic, disinfecting frequently, but the rest of us still need to do our parts and be socially responsible.

Yours in solidarity.

Peters Launches Investigation Into Postal Service Delays After Postmaster General Fails To Provide Answers

Following Reports of Slow Mail Delivery, Cuts to Postal Workers' Overtime, & Lack of Transparency from USPS Leadership, Peters Seeks Firsthand Accounts of Postal Problems.

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senator Gary Peters, Ranking Member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, is launching an investigation into reported delays at the U.S. Postal Service that are preventing Americans from receiving critical mail on-time, including prescription drugs, business mail, and mail-in ballots. Despite repeated inquiries from Peters, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has failed to provide answers when pressed for details on reported service delays following recent changes directed by Postal Service leadership that could undermine delivery service during a pandemic and ahead of the general election. Peters is seeking additional information from Americans who have seen unexpected changes to their mail delivery to help shed light on the impacts these reported changes are having on the dependable, timely service people count on from the Postal Service.

"For 245 years, the Postal Service has worked to provide reliable, consistent and on-time delivery that keeps Americans connected no matter where they live – especially in rural areas," said Senator Peters. "Unfortunately, in recent weeks, I've heard firsthand from constituents, postal workers and local officials in Michigan who have encountered problems with the timely

and dependable service they count on to conduct business, get prescription medications and critical supplies, and even exercise their right to vote. As Ranking Member of the committee charged with oversight of the Postal Service, I will be working to get to the bottom of any changes that the new Postmaster General may be directing that undercut the Postal Service's tradition of effective service."

As part of his investigation, Peters is asking for individuals, small businesses and organizations who are directly affected by Postal Service

delays or operational changes to share their stories. Members of the public can report problems by visiting www.peters.senate.gov/postal. Peters also wrote to his Senate colleagues this week asking them to share reports they receive from constituents on challenges with on-time mail delivery. The next steps of Peters' investigation will include requesting information from those who may have experienced changes firsthand, including senior advocacy groups, state and local officials, local postmasters, postal workers and officials, small businesses and chambers of commerce.

Peters' goal is to ensure that any changes happening at the Postal Service are transparent and do not negatively impact deliveries. Unacceptable changes to service, made without oversight or public input, could harm seniors, veterans, small businesses and people in rural areas who often have less access to other services and rely on the Postal Service for access to medications, emergency information, and home supplies. As increasing numbers of Americans plan to vote by mail in upcoming elections, the Postal Service must also ensure that any operational changes do not limit voter participation.

APWU Members Make Almost 30,000 Calls To Congress

On Thursday, July 23, APWU members and our allies made an incredible 28,156 calls to the senate. That's a phone call every three seconds! Together with calls made direct to Congress, not through the APWU Legislative Hotline, the total was likely closer to 30,000.

This is exactly the kind of pressure we need. Congress holds the key to solving the Postal Service's financial problems during this Coronavirus crisis. We need to work together to make sure the Senate approves at least \$25 billion in aid to keep the USPS running.

We are starting to see this crisis hitting our day-to-day work. The Post-

master General is using it as an excuse to slow the mail. The new PMG policies include reducing hours in retail units including Saturday closings, delaying mail, slowing down service, further removal of mail processing equipment, arbitrarily reducing work hours and eliminating overtime.

With an already understaffed operation, reducing hours and overtime can only lead to severely delayed mail and packages.

There will be more for us to do in the coming days. Here are some thing we can do right now.

- If you haven't called both sena-

tors already, make the call. Ask your co-workers to do the same at 844-402-1001.

- Find out whether your local has a Collective Action Team and get involved. Talk to your stewards and officers about organizing events or actions to save the Postal Service.

- When you suspect the mail is being delayed, report back to your stewards and local officers to help build a picture of how the service is being affected across the country.

We made sure the people we elect heard our voices clearly. Let's keep that pressure up.

NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

Keep Fighting Back



by Devendra "D" Rathore

As you all may have heard by now, the 37.3.A1, National Das award came out regarding creating new duty assignments by using PSE's hours.

As per Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks, the last email states to NOT withdraw or close any level related to the Das Article 37.3.A.1 award until after the Clerk Division analyzes the award and determines our position going forward. This also applies to

cases held in abeyance, awaiting the outcome of this decision.

I want to assure you that the APWU team put a perfect case in front of Arbitrator Das. Obviously, we are disappointed and disturbed by the outcome.

However, I ask you to please place your feelings regarding this matter to the side and start fighting back; we are going through a tough time due to COVID-19, letter and flat mail volume has dropped, and we have a new Postmaster general who wants to make changes at the post office to slow down services to the public.

We must continue to move forward and fight for every reversion position, abolishment position, and reposting job by using PSE's hours, overtime hours, crossing craft hours, and supervisors working at bargaining unit hours to demonstrate that duty assignment still exists.

Furthermore, I want to remind you once again that all the documents sent to the Step 3 APWU NBA's must also be sent to the Labor Rela-

tions, US.PS Tampa, FL.

Finally, please follow the appropriate safety precautions necessary for staying safe during this pandemic. Wear masks, keep social distance, and wash your hands more often.

If you need COVID-19 MOU's Please visit www.apwu.org/coronavirus. Stay safe!

In Solidarity.

DEADLINE for articles for the next issue of the Michigan Messenger is October 6th, 2020

Don't Give Them Your Postal Pulse

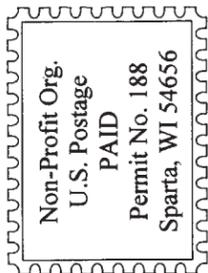
The USPS is once again starting their attempts to get their employees "engaged". It is Postal Pulse time again! Most likely you have received emails, direct mailings, stand-up talks, and have seen wall postings encouraging you to take the survey.

represent in the bargaining processing. Postal Service surveys are not in our best interests. Collectively, our voices are stronger when we fight together to improve wages, benefits, and the working conditions at the Post Office.

The APWU wants to remind all employees that we advise against participating in surveys that the Postal Service conducts.

The Postal Pulse has now been conducted for multiple years and the APWU does not believe the survey has been beneficial to the membership. Do not let the promise of a pizza party or the promise of some inexpensive "award" lure you into participation. You have the right to refuse the survey and you cannot be instructed to participate.

Recent surveys besides the Postal Pulse have be used to attack our jobs. In the past surveys have been used against the APWU and those we



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

Michigan Postal Workers Union American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO Nominations for Michigan Postal Workers Union (MPWU) Executive Board and Retiree Chapter 2020 - 2022