



by  
Michael  
Mize

## PRESIDENT

# — Take Notice —



What some people won't do for a COPA donation!

I am asking that each of you take time to take notice, notice of what your body has to say. We are not guaranteed tomorrow. Each of you need to make your visits for preventive health care. We as Postal employees are blessed to have all the Insurance choices we have. We make choices ever year on what type we carry, what medical visits we make.

Making the choice to complete the medical visits for preventive health care could save your life. It is so easy to find ourselves to busy. It is too easy to put it off until next year. All we do is take personal risk for ourselves and our loved ones when we put these things off.

We also realize that there are times Management makes it very difficult to take the time you need for the preventive care. So, you have a right to take leave, including sick leave, to address the health care issues you have. You should absolutely schedule your appointments and submit your leave slips as soon as practicable. If you have any issues with leave denial for this, please request a steward so we can assist you.

I personally have seen where Management has denied someone leave to see a specialist for arthritis and even cancer. This is simply unacceptable and as your Union we want to help you with this. You shouldn't have to wait for months to get an appointment and then reschedule because your manager says so. They are in

many cases being unreasonable.

As mentioned above please also take notice of what your body is tell-

ing you. Since COVID we have seen many with lingering symptoms, long haulers. Make certain you discuss

these issues with your medical provider. Sometimes it may have nothing to do with COVID, but our bodies tell us when there are problems. I would add, if you have a provider that doesn't listen, push a little harder. It is your body talking and your job to listen.

I realize many would say "what does this have to do with my Union?". My answer, as your Union we care about you. You all are our members, yes. But we are a family as well. All of you mean the world to us as representatives. We choose to represent to try to help our Union siblings with their problems. We choose to take our time to assist you because you are family. So as your sibling, take care of yourself!

In Unity.



by  
Amy  
Ridgway

## AREA 5 DIRECTOR

# Knowledge Is Power

chance of backlash. I encourage all clerks to reach out to me whenever they feel isn't right. Knowledge is power! Just the other day a clerk had no idea they were supposed to receive P07 pay whenever there

was no direct supervision in the office. The PM is now paying them.

Postmasters do not know the contract! Double check everything they are telling you!

In unity we are stronger!

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

I am honored to be appointed as the Area 5 Director. I started with the Postal Service in 2011, then became a steward in 2018. I work in a Level 18 office.

I often find in smaller offices that clerks just don't want to rock the boat. They are leery of ruining the relationship with their PM's or of the

# 1970 Postal Strike



APWU Members who were part of the 1970 Postal Strike – (L to R) Gina Favors, Carole Boulware, Yvonne Tatum, & Judy Beard (Not in photo) – All are from the Detroit District Area Local. These women were leaders in creating the foundation of our APWU!

Change of Service Guaranteed

Return to APWU/MPWU  
c/o John Greathouse, Editor  
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by  
**John  
Greathouse**

**EDITOR**

# We're Back!!!

The 2022 MPWU Education Conference and Convention was a welcoming breath of fresh air as we are finally able to have our in-person state convention!

I would like to thank the membership for re-electing me for another term as the Editor of the Michigan Messenger. I do take this responsibility to heart as being the messenger to the members. It is truly a great privilege to work for you, the members.

## MPWU Convention

At the Conference/Convention, there were a whole host of guest speakers as well as several national officers that were in attendance.

To start things off, we had a very special Color Guard composed of Veterans that are part of the MPWU! Keith Combs – USMC, John Smeeken -USA, Thomas Lothamer – USMC, Eric Nelson – West Michigan Color Guard

We were joined in person and by Zoom by numerous legislators from Washington.

**US Rep. Andy Levin** discussed the bill he is sponsoring - HR 3077 Postal Improvement Act., this bill covers several things including paid new family leave, update the fleet and improve performance.

**US Sen Gary Peters Rep** – West Michigan Director, Peter Dickow, W MI – explained to the members that US Sen Gary Peters was the driving force lead-

ing the charge in the postal legislation that was just signed into law.

**US Rep Peter Meijer**, expressed his support of postal workers

**US Rep Debbie Dingle**, expressed her support of postal workers

**US Rep Elisa Slotkin**, is working closely with US Sen. Peters on postal issues.

**Ron Bieber – MI AFL-CIO President** – Explained the “Get out the Vote” program that allows Union members, with the permission of APWU National, to work for the AFL-CIO promoting the upcoming elections. He also spoke about the issues that all unions are facing.

**Charlie Cash, APWU Industrial Relations** – He discussed the issue of hostile work environment. When it happens to you, he stated that you should file a 1767 Safety Hazard Report. Reason is that USPS HQ has stated that they will follow up on all

1723's and they approve of this process... local managers, not so much!

**Judy Beard – APWU National Leg Director** discuss some of the postal legislation that was passed related to COVID leave that almost got cut by the GOP.

**Sarah Rodriguez – APWU Health Plan** briefly discuss the change regarding healthcare, a lot more information will be shared at the National Health Plan Conference.

**Debbie Szeredy – APWU VP** – Congratulated us on hosting our in person convention this year and she looks forward to assisting us with anything we need.

**Mark Dimenstein – APWU President** – presented a lot of information related to the new contract and how it is a good deal for the membership.

Over all, this was a very success-

ful convention and it was great to see everyone in person.

## Elections

The APWU is having elections for National Officers and to help the membership learn more about the candidates.

The first Q&A is for the candidates for President. The race is between Mark Dimenstein and John Marcotte.

It will be educational and show the members where each of the candidates stands on the issues related to us, the members.

I hope to have the same type of interviews with the other offices that the members here in Michigan vote on in the next edition.

## Summer

I hope everyone take some time to enjoy this wonderful, warm (HOT) weather as well as enjoys some time with their families and friends. Stay safe, have fun (I know these done always go together) and enjoy yourself! In Solidarity!



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**Trustee #2**.....Vacant

**Trustee #3**.....Teresa Williams

**MPWU Auxiliary President**.....Vacant

**MPWU Historian**.....Vacant

**MPWU Advisor**.....Vacant

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

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by  
John P.  
Smeekens

## VETERANS' DIRECTOR

# Veterans' Affairs

### Thank You

First off, let me say how much of a pleasure it was seeing so many of you at the M.P.W.U. Convention recently held in Grand Rapids Michigan. It's been a while since we were able to shake hands, hug, or just see each other face to face since this Covid stuff!!! I would like to say **THANK YOU** for your unanimous support in appointing me as your Veterans Director. I will do my best in keeping our Veterans', their Spouses, and their Families aware of the changes and updates made by the V.A. addressing your Benefits and/or other things of special interest in regards to a Veteran, Spouse of a Veteran, or a Family member!!!

### Marquette Veterans Home

The Michigan Elks Association has donated \$11,420 to the Michigan Veteran Homes D.J. Jacobetti campus in Marquette. The donation will fund a new exercise machine to expand physical therapy and new interactive stations for the memory care unit. Michigan Veteran Homes (MVH) operates homes in Marquette, Grand Rapids and Chesterfield Township in Macomb County. To donate, visit **Michigan Veteran Homes – Support**.

### Battle Creek VA

It may become more difficult for West Michigan veterans to get the care they need, according to **WWMT News Channel 3**. A recommendation from the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs to the Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission suggested a series of changes including relocating Battle Creek Veterans Affairs services out of Battle Creek.

The recommendation laid out a plan that could move inpatient, outpatient and mental health services from Battle Creek closer to the Grand Rapids area.

Many veterans actually have moved here just because of the VA being here," said Dave Morgan, a U.S. Air Force veteran. Morgan is also the chairman of the **Calhoun County Red White Blue Foundation**. He said he receives great care at the Battle Creek VA and hopes the facility can stay put. The Battle Creek VA's public affairs officer said this recommendation comes from the need for updated modern medical facilities.

### The Wall That Heals

They are happy to announce that the traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial replica and mobile Education Center, *The Wall That Heals*, is hitting the road! 2022 is a special tour as they celebrate the 40th anniversary of The Wall. Here is Michigan's only stop!!! **7/14/2022 to 7/17/2022 - Battle Creek, MI**

### VA Clinic In Lenawee

VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System

recently opened a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Adrian. The 2,500-square-foot clinic serves veterans in Lenawee and surrounding counties. Services provided at the CBOC include primary care, mental health, social work, dietetics, and blood

retired, or disabled military personnel. This special military benefit is eligible on **any cruise, any time of the year** and can be used to purchase a wide variety of amenities and experiences including Lotus Spa treatments; dining in our specialty restaurants; gifts, jewelry and

offer contact: from the US/Canada 1-800-774-6237

### New V.A. Clinic In Canton

About 12,000 military veterans can save some gas money by visiting a new \$9 million community-based outpatient clinic in Canton Township for a more personal, close-to-home experience. The 44,000-square-foot Lotz Road facility officially opened its doors recently, sparing curious and weary veterans the traffic and parking snarls that come with trips to Detroit and Ann Arbor. Approximately 100 employees have been trying out equipment and running through drills for VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System's largest clinic activation in a decade.

"We're really looking forward to this," Director Ginny Creasman said. "We think that this is just going to go a long way in serving the veterans in a growing population in a growing city closer to home. I'm very proud of the facility (and) proud of the work that's been done."

Appointments already are set for veterans seeking medical services at the pristine facility in the 5900 block of North Lotz Road, north of Ford Road and easily accessible from Interstate 275.

Spokesman Brian Hayes said an official ribbon-cutting ceremony with the renaming of the facility after a decorated Canton resident is being planned for the fall. Besides primary care, veterans can seek medical appointments for women's health, mental health, whole health, radiology, pain treatment, physical therapy, prosthetics, ultrasound, lab services, and pathology.

Creasman said the age range for patients is expansive but the median remains in that 50-60 years of age range.



**Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs.**  
Photo by Staff Sgt. Paige Behringer

draw services to more than 3,000 local veterans. You can also call the MVAA at 1-800-MICH-VET (1-800-642-4838) to learn more about VA health care and other resources for veterans and dependents, including disability benefits and education and employment assistance. As a state agency, all of their services are confidential and complimentary.

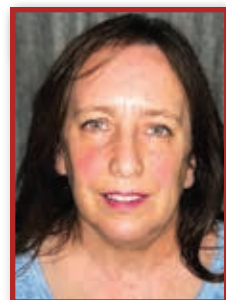
### Princess Cruise

To thank the brave men and women of the American and Canadian militaries for their service, Princess Cruises offers up to **\$250 free onboard spending money** for veterans as well as active,

clothing in our onboard boutiques; and Princess Cruises shore excursions.

### Restrictions

- This offer is valid for a maximum of two military personnel per booking.
- This offer is combinable with other Onboard Credit offers.
- This offer is non-transferable.
- This offer cannot be used for casino credits/charges.
- This offer is combinable with most cruise fares. Some restrictions apply.
- Applications to receive this benefit must be made no later than 14 days prior to the cruise departure date.
- For any questions regarding this



by  
Dana  
Mclean

## AREA 9 DIRECTOR

# My Biggest Challenge

hours and we need to fight for ALL our work. If we keep letting our work get done by postmasters or rural carriers, we are only hurting ourselves. If management gets away with it over and over again, it only makes them look good and makes the clerk craft look like they did it in less hours than before. Believe me this catches up to us and eliminates jobs. Don't give your work away!!

Last month we had our state convention in Grand Rapids. I am grateful to have gone to the training prior to the convention and also to the convention. I always learn something new and it's great to hear other issues going on across the state and how they are being handled. It's also great to

meet other stewards in the union and get their tips, advice and knowledge! We also were able to hear Mark Diamondstein speak to us, which I enjoy every time I do hear him. We also got introduced to Charlie Cash who took over as the Industrial Relations Director. His knowledge on the contract negotiations was very helpful in understanding the process and details that have to be agreed upon . . . literally line for line with the USPS.

I hope I can continue to represent the smaller offices and the clerks that work in them in the future, but I do encourage everyone to get more involved in the union, look out for each other and be kind to one another.

In solidarity.



# Meet The Candidates APWU President Election

## Questions & Answers

Each candidates' answers alternate between questions and are in different color as shown below. Initials are bolded for each candidate at the end of each answer.



**Mark Dimondstein – Candidate for APWU National President (I) - MD**



**John Marcotte – Candidate for APWU National President - JM**

**Please tell our members about yourself. Years of service with the USPS, Union and offices held.**

*I worked as a clerk in Greensboro, NC. I started in 1983 on the old Letter Sorting Machines, then performed a variety of jobs including manual letters, package sortation, and retail window duties. In 1986, I was elected local president and served six terms (12 years). I served as a shop steward for most of my postal career. I have been an arbitration advocate, a labor educator, and have working knowledge of OWCP and EEOC. I worked for a decade as the APWU National Lead Field Organizer during which time I negotiated numerous first contracts after leading organizing campaign victories. Based on that work, I was awarded the "AFL-CIO Southern Organizer of the Year." I was deeply honored to be elected national president in 2013, and am now in my third term. As president I have been responsible for the overall work of the union, was the lead negotiator in the last three contract negotiations with postal management, and instituted a variety of programs that have built the strength of the union, built strong alliances with the public, and protected our jobs and the public Postal Service. MD*

*I want to thank and salute the MPWU for this unbiased attempt for more democracy and participation by the membership in our national elections. Please know as a veteran I use the word salute sparingly and with meaning.*

*I am proud to be the father of three amazing children that I raised as a*

*single parent while working my bid job and serving as a steward/officer in the APWU. Second, I am proud to be a Postal Worker and member of the APWU because without our union, I would have never been able to be there as much for, or support my kids needs as I did, without our union.*

*Prior to joining the Post Office, I honorably served six years in the US Navy as a Nuclear Power Reactor Operator and after that as an Operator/Engineer at the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory at Michigan State University.*

*Shortly after being hired by the Post Office in 1994, I became active in our union, serving as a Steward and then within a year, serving as Craft Director. I went on to hold several different union positions in APWU Local, Michigan Postal Worker Union and Michigan AFL-CIO.*

*I was serving as Local and State President when I decided to run for my first national position, APWU Legislative and Political Director in 2013. I was elected by the membership to that position where I served the members of the APWU before being asked to revitalize the APWU's health plan. I accepted the request and successfully ran for APWU Health Plan Director. From 2016-2019, I worked extremely hard and was successful in stabilizing the health plan and getting it going in the right direction. JM*

**If you win the next election, what are your goals for your term in office?**

*This question was difficult to answer because there are so many things that the APWU needs to change to improve our members work lives. There are some changes that need to take priority due to the time sensitivity and long-term impact on our membership.*

*1. The most important goal is more of a must for our membership, and that is to end the unacceptable and harassing work environment our members are enduring on the workroom floor. This is not a localized problem or limited to "a few bad apples" in supervision. This is a nationwide, systemic, and longstanding issue that continues to get worse and worse. Whatever it takes we must have action on this issue, this was an issue last presidential election.*

*2. I do not know how long the current administration is going to continue to promise improvement on this matter, but I do know that enough is enough with the talk and the empty promises and it is time for action. Listening to the incumbent President talk about working conditions it is obvious he has not worked a bid job in a very long time, and it shows in his administration's slow response to this issue. If elected, I will be a bulldog while fighting for an work environment free from harassment and bullying for all our members.*

*Another particularly important need is to stop the long string of conces-*

*sionary bargaining that has led to substandard wages for postal workers. It is amazing to me that the incumbent has been successful in keeping so many of our members from realizing that their compensation is worse than their counterparts in other Postal unions. Many members do not know that a pre-2011 hired level 6 clerk, at their top step, will effectively make the same money as an after-2012 hired level 4 mail-handler at their top steps. Worse than that, an after 2011 hired level 6 clerk, will make \$1,900.00 less than an after 2012 hired level 4 mail-handler when both are at their top steps and \$3,000.00 less than a level 5 mail-handler at their top step. When did this become okay? There is no defense and no more concise way to highlight the unsuccessful bargaining by the incumbent than APWU higher level members earning less money than other postal unions, lower-level workers, at their top steps. Our members effective dropping 2-3 levels on the pay scale via concessionary bargaining over multiple contracts reduces our members ability to provide for their families, their pensions, and their thrift savings contributions. Creating tough times now and retirement harsher and harder to achieve later. I will work tirelessly to achieve the pay raises our members need and deserve.*

*3. I WILL REMOVE THE MANIPULATION, POLITICS, AND RETALIATION FROM THE CULTURE OF THE NATIONAL APWU. I will restore the office of President to one that is laser focused on serving the membership, as opposed to serving the cause of reelection. I will respond to the concerns of our active and retired members regardless of politics, category of the member, size or voting preference of any Local or the Chapter. The APWU was founded as a union family and that means we are all equal and every one of our members concerns and issues have value, and retaliation, and favoritism cannot be allowed. This is essential in repairing and reuniting our union, and a requirement before it can succeed and grow because the current "political atmosphere" is unacceptable and ultimately for the benefit of very few while coming at the expense of the members on the workroom floor.*

*And to think, this is coming from your former Legislative & Political Director. I believe in getting everything we can in terms of legislation that helps our membership, but I have zero tolerance for internal union politics at the expense of the membership. If this sounds like "campaign propaganda" then you obviously do not know my personality, history, or disgust for the internal politics within the APWU. Call me if you would like to hear more on this subject matter.*

*4. I will work in a concerted effort with ALL national officers at our National Executive Council Meetings when formulating solutions to our prob-*

*lems, developing ways to better serve the membership, and using technology to bring our members into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We cannot solve today's problems, nor can we tailor our union to fit our current and future members, with outdated tools and methods. I will work to not only provide these tools to those serving our membership but also provide more ways to leverage technology so that our membership can have better direct access to information and their officers at the National level as well. This is the same way that I turned the APWU Health Plan around: leverage technology and give direct lines of contact from the workroom floor to the highest position in that department. JM*

*My goals are to continue to build on the great progress made over the last eight years, during which time we moved mountains to successfully defend the public Postal Service and our jobs. We allied with the public, took our issues to the TV and radio airways, negotiated solid new contracts in 2015, 2018 and 2021, negotiated more jobs, and won urgently needed legislation. High inflation underscores that it pays to belong to the union. I am proud that in all three contracts since I took office, we have maintained every COLA. In the past, it was commonplace to have some of them eliminated. Going forward, we need to protect the gains of the past, continue the progress already made on eliminating the divisive two-tier wage system instituted in the 2010 contract (which I opposed at the time and my opponent did not), continue to advance the alliance with the people of the country, and further strengthen our membership ranks and solidarity with all workers. MD*

**Are you running as part of a group/team or not? Please explain your reason for running your campaign this way.**

*I am running on the "APWU Solidarity Team" consisting of every incumbent APWU national headquarters officer. At the local and national level, I have always run as part of a team, which I believe helps elect officers who trust each other and will work together once elected. I am humbled that every incumbent officer, those who know my work up close, fully support my candidacy for reelection. MD*

*I am running by myself. I hope our membership remembers that most of the National officers in DC ran with me, a challenger for president in the last election and were incumbents themselves at that time, something that is incredibly rare if not unprecedented. Those officers, like myself, saw an urgent need for a different leader. Because I supported those National officers 3 years ago when we ran together, it would be hypocritical of me to ask someone to run against them now. I will not do that. I hope that the membership and my supporters*

*continued on page 5*



# Meet The Candidates APWU President Election

continued from page 4

will respect that I value my integrity over increasing my campaign coffers or odds of winning this election.

So yes, I am running by myself, without a "ticket," and that may hurt my ability to have an inside track to some potential voters, but it is the right thing to do and I am confident that our membership is smart, and will see that wages, benefits, and working conditions are not going to improve unless we change who is elected president of the APWU. I am paraphrasing but electing the same person and expecting different results is the definition of insanity. JM

**As both of you have seen a lot of changes over the years, with the USPS and the APWU, what things would you work towards getting changed in order to improve the APWU.**

As mentioned above, restoring accountability and correcting management's horrific personnel actions. These actions, left unchecked year after year, has led to the hostile work conditions our members are forced to endure today. Getting this corrected and not just talking about it at election time is job one.

We must eliminate the two-tier wage scale for career employees, and we must convert the current non-career workforce to career status, thus eliminating the unjust non-career workforce. While we all understand step increases, a union is built on "the same day's work for the same day's pay" principal. These unfair multi-tier classes of our members was put in place in the 2010 contract, and then left in place by the incumbent president for three following contracts, are grossly unfair and corrodes a union from the inside out.

PSEs are not being used as temporary or support employees. They are being taken advantage of and unions do not turn a blind eye to this injustice. If you are working 40 hours a week every week, you are not a support employee. Their families deserve career thrift savings matching, pension contributions, better health care benefits, and wages.

The USPS has hiring problems, high turnover, and retention issues that it has never had before. It is obviously due to a substandard starting wage and benefit package that has replaced the career wage package. A postal worker job used to be highly valued, hiring highly competitive, and with almost zero turnover of employees. This changed with the wrongheaded approach of abandoning the phenomenally successful APWU career wage and benefit package and replacing it with a corporate exploitation of labor model.

Elimination of the non-career workforce not only would massively improve the lives of our members eliminating lost years of work towards retirement contribution and better health care, it makes good business sense for the USPS as it would help solve its high overtime, poor retention, high retraining and burdensome hiring costs. Ending USPS's

anti-worker, failed, non-career PSE experiment is overdue. I will devote all the resources necessary and work non-stop to take care of our own and ensure equality among the membership of the APWU. JM

One important area where we can improve the work of the APWU is to better develop, mentor, and inspire new generations of postal worker unionists. And at all levels of the union, we have to pull together to collectively address the outrageous hostile working conditions that are far too prevalent. We have made some progress in this area, but more work is needed. MD

**What is a long-term goal that you would like to set into motion that may take longer than just one term, yet would be welcomed by your successor?**

See Above MD

An issue that will have great positive impact for our membership but will be a difficult lift and most likely requiring multiple terms is to work with our allied Federal/Postal unions to remove the unfair method of calculation and cap on cost-of-living increases for the FERS retirees pensions. The rounding down of the FERS annuity COLAs ensures a yearly loss of purchasing power and huge losses when inflation is over the maximum 3% cap (as it is now with inflation numbers floating between 8% and 9%). For example, this year, a FERS retiree, at full retirement age, would effectively lose one out of every twenty dollars (or 5%) in their annuity due to the difference between the COLA they receive, and the money inflation takes away from their pension.

This designed reduction of retiree spending power ensures that paying the premiums for USPS provided health care (currently FEHB) and Medicare B premiums will become unaffordable for large number of our members in FERS retirement as premiums for health-care quickly eat up a larger and larger percentage of a FERS annuity as its spending power shrinks with inflation. This is even worse when you consider the recent requirement that our members must pay Medicare B premiums to be eligible for USPS paid health care in retirement. The new law would force a cash strapped FERS retirees who cannot afford both health insurance premiums to give up their USPS paid health insurance. This is because purchasing Medicare B is now a REQUIRED prerequisite for all who retire after 2025 in order to be eligible for USPS paid health insurance in retirement. Of note, Medicare B premiums go up with medical inflation and Medicare A (paid by payroll taxes) is predicted to be insolvent in 2026.

When you think about it, a pension set up to lose money to inflation combined with healthcare costs that are rising at a rate greater than inflation, is a terrifying combination. This is a looming crisis for our active workforce, as well as our FERS retirees, and regardless of how many terms it takes to get this

done, or who is in the office of APWU President, getting full COLAs for postal/federal retirees must get done. JM

**Tell the members something positive about your opponent.**

I have heard him play the banjo at headquarters and I appreciate anyone with musical inclination or ability. JM

No comment MD

**What kind of legislation would you encourage and support getting with Congress if elected? (Please be specific)**

Under my leadership, we worked with both Republican and Democratic Congressional Representatives and many others to achieve historic postal reform legislation. The legislation eliminated the pre-funding mandate that was financially choking the Postal Service, made six-day delivery the law, and established Medicare integration on a prospective basis that will keep everyone in their FEBHP plans and will save both the individual worker and the USPS money on health insurance premiums. We need to continue to work on restoring service standards to July 1, 2012, create an EV postal delivery fleet and public charging station networks at local Post Offices, win postal banking, and correct the injustice of the "wind-fall" penalty where Civil Service retirees lose much of their earned Social Security benefits. The union continues to strive to legislatively make healthcare a human right and to establish full voting rights as the federal law of the land. MD

First off, I would get the critical 2012 service standards codified into law, speeding up the mail. Returning to these standards would better serving the public, increase revenue making more money available for our wages and benefits and force the USPS to finally invest in its workforce. Speeding up the mail would make the USPS competitive again with our private sector competition and if we do not provide faster service, I fear the USPS is facing the real probability of becoming a shadow of its former great self.

This will not be an easy task as PMG after PMG for over a decade have slowed the mail in the idiotic notion that reducing speed and service in a service industry will be good for the USPS finances and future. Time after time, slowing down the mail has in fact accelerated financial shortfalls and driven away customers. The good news is the will of Congress to put these standards into law was proven back in 2015 when the effort by the APWU to return to service standards that the American people and industry need and deserve were bravely championed by representative David Joyce. Mr. Joyce brought key Republicans to our cause and whipped enough votes to get 2012 service standards through committee against the voiced objections of his Republican chairperson. He helped APWU get a clear majority in a Republican dominated House of Representatives to support speeding up the mail. Our

Legislative and Political Department, Mr. Joyce and most critically the APWU membership in Kentucky successfully lobbied then Majority Leader McConnell to include 2012 USPS service standards into the 2016 omnibus budget bill under reconciliation.

The bad news is, after this bipartisan agreement was reached to make speeding up the mail a law, a key Senator was convinced to refuse to allow improving mail service for every American and with that, not allow the USPS to directly compete with speed of delivery against its private sector competition. I was told this Senator did this because he did not want to go against the current APWU incumbent president. Who after the fact, opposed service standards being included in this law. This wrongheaded and non-sensible action wasted incalculable hours of work by members and officers at the local, chapter, state and national levels. Not to mention massive Congresspersons and their staffs time and effort or the impact on APWU jobs, plant closures and consolidations and preventing further slowdowns. It also made the APWU look ridiculous and not trustworthy on Capitol Hill when it comes to legislation. Going back, with a few exceptions, to the same group of law makers and asking again for help speeding up the mail will be difficult knowing what happened in 2015 but speeding up the mail is essential to the survival of the USPS in an ever fast paced world. That is why privatizers have worked hard to slow down the mail and close processing plants repeatedly when it has failed to save money. We must get legislation to speed up the mail and I am uniquely qualified to do just that as I was the APWU Legislative and Political Director the organized and executed the plan that made it a reality in 2015 and I will not abandon our members, congressional allies or the American public when I am elected president of the APWU. I am confident with your help we will get it done.

Secondly, I know that most of our membership does not know that the idea of separating Postal from Federal workers for health insurance was entertained by President Burrus. Then, the delegates at the National Convention, were crystal clear adopting a resolution mandating that postal workers health insurance would STAY IN A GROUP WITH ALL OTHER FEDERAL EMPLOYEES. It is scary to think what may happen to our health insurance costs when you consider that Postal workers are more expensive to insure and if separated from all other federal employees, the smaller risk pool will also drive-up premiums. This is assuming we do not lose our FEHB in the future now that we are separated from the much larger federal workforce. Also, even current retirees will be forced into the postal only health plan options and even if they choose to not purchase Medicare B they will only be able to choose the postal plans and not be able to be able to

continued on page 6



# Meet The Candidates APWU President Election

continued from page 5

return to plans with federal employees. The resolution language was very clear, passed at National convention and must be followed and respected. We need to get with our federal allies and work towards passing legislation that heads off and or repeals the recent law that forces postal workers into a separate group and away from federal workers. In unity there is strength. It is essential to the long-term security of USPS paid health insurance in all of our retirements, no matter how near, distant or current, and it is **REQUIRED** that the APWU follow the instructions of its delegates at convention. If national officers are allowed to ignore or misinterpret direct instructions from delegates at convention, our union democracy is dead. I will fight to protect the benefits you earn and have earned and the ability of postal workers to retire with quality of life and dignity.

Another issue to approach Congress about is to allow federal and postal temporary workers (like our PSE's) who are career be allowed to buy back their PSE time as to count for retirement along the same lines as buyback for military service. This is common sense and would help with members who must have a portion of their time worked at the USPS not count for retirement. A movement to correct this injustice must be created and led by the APWU. JM

**Would you support leveling the election playing field? Each candidate would have access to the same resources, (i.e., mailings, election articles in the APWU news magazine, paid travel to state conventions across the country) so as to not give the incumbent an advantage?**

Yes. I think the current setup prevents the average postal worker from running for an American Postal Worker Union resident officer position. I believe that any APWU member should be able to run for a nationally elected union position without needing \$50,000, \$100,000 or even \$500,000 to do so.

The cost to send ONE POSTCARD, to our entire membership, is > \$100,000. I love using the mail at our house and we all understand that mailings cost money, but think about how many mailings you got from the incumbent, in the last election... 1, 2, 3, 4, 5???

Kelly Press is a company that our union mandates we must use to send out election mail and email blasts to our membership. Each time Kelly Press "hits the send button" to our membership, a candidate must pay around \$3500 for an email. Why is our union allowing such profiteering by Kelly Press, the election committee could easily do this and why not multiple bids to perform these services?

The current election system is the opposite of democracy, and it is not the election committees' fault, this has been a big problem with our union for a long time. I have never heard a union ideal that claimed democracy should come second to money. I am proud that as an **INCUMBENT** officer, I supported the

resolution that requires the national officer ballot and a newly created "election magazine" consisting of the candidates' positions to be mailed together, at no cost to the candidates, as an attempt to level the playing field and educate the membership on the candidates. It was shocking last election when they were NOT mailed together by the incumbent's administration. Again, resolutions, decided by our membership at convention, must be followed by all officers of our union. I will ensure that happens.

Also, you are correct, current incumbents use APWU funds to travel to Local, State, Regional, and National events. While at these events, they can meet potential voters. Whereas challengers must spend money out of pocket to travel to events and facilities. I think it would be easier to limit paid travel for officers in an election year to that of their previous two-year average. Or perhaps, change our election cycle to happen outside the state and local convention period. In any event, I defer to the wisdom of the assembled delegates at convention to decide what is best.

However, one thing I will certainly make a priority when elected is to bring **ACCOUNTABILITY** and **TRANSPARENCY** to the travel budgets of National officers because it is essential our officers can prove our money has been accurately reported and well spent while squashing rumors of corruption. For example, in 2019 (an election year), our officers travel expenses on the LM2, vary wildly and in some cases cannot be true by personal observation. I don't know if some officers travel is being placed in other budget items and why that would be, but I believe in being honest with the membership. A member should easily find out that information and all officers should be able to defend their reported travel budgets just as easily.

There is no doubt we need election reform and I believe a fair and equitable solution resulting in the most highly qualified and able candidates can run for national APWU office. I believe a solution that creates choice without confusion or chaos is attainable if our Local, State, Chapter and National officers all work to achieve it. JM

I have already worked to "level" the playing field for candidates. When I first ran for national president, I took successful action against the union to ensure that every candidate had access to the members' emails in the possession of the union. Now every candidate does. Once in office, I made more prominent the candidate election articles in the magazine. I supported a special election issue of the magazine to be mailed to every member. I do not support the idea that the hard-working, dues-paying member should pay for candidates' unlimited travel around the country to campaign – which could cost into the millions of dollars. Such expenses should be in the hands of the candidates themselves. MD

**Any additional statement that you**

**would like to close your interview. (MAX 500 Words)**

Our union is very democratic, with one person, one vote in our union elections. It is part of what makes us strong. But at election time, anyone can say or promise anything. I urge you to simply make your vote a business decision. Incumbents have to earn your support. I am running on my record of achievements. Many long-term members have identified the new union contract as the "best ever." I was proud to be your lead negotiator and to work collaboratively with our outstanding national negotiating committee. Our legislative victories, where I worked hand in hand with our extremely effective Legislative Director Judy Beard, are second to none with EFEL, \$10 billion of COVID relief to the Postal Service, and historic and urgently needed postal reform. We had a strong health and safety response to the pandemic, including the negotiated liberal leave policy. I led in negotiating the residual vacancy MOU that has led to the conversion to career of 100,000 former PSEs, as well as a series of staffing memos which increased the Clerk complement by 10,000 workers. We have secured new work guarantees for PTFs. We won an all-career maintenance workforce. We achieved an all-career workforce in Motor Vehicle with the exception of "new work." Under my leadership we launched the three-year campaign to stop the Staples privatization of retail scheme. We won the Stop Staples fight and potentially protected tens of thousands of clerk jobs. In addition, we have built "A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service" which proved invaluable when the previous White House openly planned to sell off the public USPS to private companies for private profit. We launched the campaign for postal banking, established closer working relations with the other postal unions around common ground, strengthened the work of the Retiree Department, encouraged the participation of young workers, and worked in solidarity with the general labor movement. We have not won every battle, but overall, as a union we have collectively achieved outstanding results over my three terms. I respectfully ask for your support and vote, and for all the members of the APWU Solidarity Team. Let's keep the progress going! I have always believed and advocated that the union belongs to the members. I continue the commitment to you that I made when I first ran for office in 2013 – I will always be honest with you, the member, and always put the members first. MD

Our national union needs to deliver more value to while being more transparent and in touch with their membership.

APWU members continue to suffer under hostile working conditions on the workroom floor. Our members via bad negotiating, are paid less than other USPS employees at lower levels, going against common sense

and the history of the positions. Also, forced overtime has turned into a way of life instead of for peak periods or volunteers. This is simply the USPS refusing to convert and staff properly. Forty hours a week should be enough to pay our bills. Fixing APWUs unfairly low wages and the working conditions for our members is job one when I am elected. Overtime should be an option, not a mandate. Dignity and respect are never an option.

The incumbent continues to "cheerlead" lousy dollar amount raises, despite Postal workers are being pushed further behind due to COLAs not coming close to keeping up with inflation. The incumbent avoids the subject of inflation because these **TINY PAY RAISES WILL NOT COME CLOSE TO KEEPING UP!** Your purchasing power decreasing means a lower standard of living now as well as an exponentially lower standard of living in retirement, due to more of your paycheck going toward living expenses and less toward your TSP, other investments, or savings. Now and in retirement, this will be devastating.

The incumbent trying to spin these contracts and his actions as a positive, illustrates the disconnect with our members working hard to provide for their families. I know what it is like to struggle financially while raising a family. I will not forget where I came from. When elected I will serve the membership and I **WILL NOT** ignore the struggles of our membership.

The incumbent has had **NINE YEARS AND THREE CONTRACTS** to show what he can do, and he has shown:

1. To be disconnected from our membership
2. He believes to be above the rules of the APWU
3. Money wins elections
4. Lower standards of living for our membership are acceptable

Any honest person that knows me well will say I:

1. Have the energy, drive, and doggedness to get the APWU back on track
2. Will fight for and win for our members
3. Consider myself one of you my union family, always working on your behalf and not being self-interested or above the rules.

Far less than 20% of our membership voted in 2019. The incumbent received less than half of that small percentage. **VERY FEW** Votes are needed to change the APWU's direction. I whole-heartedly believe that without the APWU, me and my family would not have the life we have today. I want to pay that debt back by serving you as your president. So, if you want our union to continue to drive off course then vote for the incumbent or do not vote at all but if you want to turn things around, vote for John L. Marcotte for APWU President this September. JM





by  
Paul  
Browning

## RETIREE PRESIDENT

# Getting The Band Back Together

### Getting The Band Back Together

On May 20, 2022 the Michigan Postal Workers Union held its Biennial State Convention. Local Chapters' officers gave their reports of activities as did the members of the State Chapter's Executive Board. Reports included mostly political actions taken since the 2018 Convention as the 2020 Convention was cancelled due to the pandemic. Activities centered around protests of Postmaster General DeJoy's plans to slow mail delivery and raise rates. State and Local Chapters were also strongly involved in communications with Congressional representatives concerning the now passed into law Postal Reform Act.

The following were elected by acclamation to the respective State Retiree Chapter offices: Paul Browning-President, Joanna Atkinson-Vice President, Jane Duggan-Secretary/Treasurer, Trustees (3)-Teresa Williams, Deb Gorney, Yvonne Tatum. Four (4) of the five (5) Retiree Chapters in Michigan are represented on the State Chapter's Executive Board as APWU Retirees continue to work together for the benefit of ALL APWU members.

The State Chapter Executive Board recommended sending all five (5) Board members to the National APWU Retirees Conference on August 13 and 14 in National Harbor, Maryland with all expenses paid. The Board further recommended sending the same five (5) members to the APWU National Convention in National Harbor, Maryland with limited expenses paid. The Board's recommendations were unanimously approved by a vote of delegates at the State Chapter's Convention. As the duly elected Central Region Retiree Delegate, I will attend both the Conference and Convention with my expenses paid by the National APWU and at no cost to the State Retiree Chapter.

This unprecedented *one time only* move to send our entire Executive Board was made possible simply because of the pandemic caused cancellations of the 2020 State Retiree Chapter Convention and 2021 State Retirees Educational Assembly left the State Retiree Chapter with a surplus of funds. Such a drastic action was deemed necessary by Retirees in an effort to achieve more voice and vote for retirees on the National APWU Convention floor through an APWU Constitutional Resolution. Hopefully, Retirees can attain enough Convention delegate support to gain more than the current negligible voice of equality presently afforded them.

Newly elected officers in the 480-81, Detroit District Area, and Western Michigan Area Chapters were administered the APWU Oath of Office by APWU Retirees Department Director Nancy

Olumekor via Zoom. And a word of note concerning the Western Michigan Area Chapter-after over twenty years as Chapter President and approaching the age of 90, George Hendricks passed the baton to new WMAL Chapter President Ray Novakoski. Ray is a former President of the Western Michigan Local who we trust will continue George's longtime advocacy for APWU retirees. We also thank George for his many, many years of service to the membership.

The MPWU Retiree Chapter Convention is held in conjunction with the MPWU State Convention. The MPWU membership is composed of those still working and those who pay full dues to the National APWU. These two Michigan Statewide Union organizations enjoy tremendous respect, cooperation, and mutual support between them. Sadly, such is not the case everywhere with APWU members. We hope the presence of the "extra" Michigan retirees at the National Convention, even if they can't vote on issues, can act as an example to other delegates there that we are all equal regardless of the amount of Union dues we pay. As I have written and publicly stated before, thousands of APWU retirees have paid the equivalent of over a million years of full dues which literally built the APWU to the Union it is today.

My motto for years has been that regardless of the amount of Union dues an APWU member pays, *We are all in this together*. All of us know the trials and tribulations of working for the Post Office. We can all relate and empathize to the b.s. that Postal Management inflicts upon its employees in the Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Crafts and Support Services. It is an injustice that Retiree Department members are treated as second class Union members at National Conventions yet time and again are asked by our National Union leadership to be community activists in advancing the cause of the American Postal Workers Union. Retiree delegates with their years of experience can vote knowledgeably on issues just as various APWU crafts members can vote for resolutions for other crafts they do not belong to.

Retirees answer the bell when APWU National President Mark Dimondstein calls upon them to act for the benefit of our Union. Many times we have heard words of praise and gratitude from Dimondstein for retirees activism. Such words have been spoken in person, during Telecons, Zoom meetings, and written about in the APWU national magazine. Now, in what is our best chance for Retirees to gain a measure of equality within the Union, we call upon President Dimondstein at the 2022 National Convention to recognize our efforts with more than mere words of platitude. If President Dimondstein is sincere in his often spoken appreciation of APWU retirees, he should leave his

position as Convention Chair Person, descend to a Convention floor microphone, and speak up for Constitutional resolution in support of more than token equality for retirees within our great Union! Dimonstein has talked the talk, now let's see him walk the walk.

### A Job Most Well Done

While it has been four years since the last MPWU State Convention, dedicated State and Local officers stepped up to the task of hosting 200 hundred Union members with nothing but aplomb. MPWU President Mike Mize, Secretary-Treasurer Darren Joyce, Executive Secretary Mike Long, all managed somehow to be in 2 or 3 places at once. WMAL officers Amy Puhalski and Lisa Borchardt smoothly figured out meeting rooms and scheduled times along with running the Hospitality Room, arranging for dinners, and providing something for everybody.

Then they were the always reliable Robin Ely and Wendy Kempke. You couldn't register at a Convention, get your Convention bag with the Convention itinerary and pertinent information, donate to COPA without the Dynamic Duo – as one longtime delegate called them – being there to assist at the table in the Main Hotel Lobby as soon as you walked in. Union Sisters Amy and Wendy graciously made room at the Registration table for Retirees to conduct our own COPA ticket raffle which I proudly note raised almost \$1,000 for our APWU Committee On Political Action. And of course, there were the many unsung member helpers behind the scenes, all working to pull off a long delayed but still most efficient, successful Convention.

### APWU Elections

After the tumultuous 2019 APWU National Officer elections with the various "Teams" of candidates, the declared candidates for National Office that Retirees can vote for is whittled down substantially. Current resident officers are all running on "One Team" which means they will all throw money into the pot to make mailings to members touting their accomplishments. The three National Officer positions which Retirees are eligible to vote for and face a challenger to an incumbent are President, Legislative Director, and Human Relations Director.

The opposition consists of a grass roots campaign by three individuals running on their own without big money behind them.

As always, the top of the election ticket is the office of National President. In sort of a rerun of the divisive 2019 elections (where four (4) individuals ran for APWU President) President Mark Dimondstein is facing off against lone challenger and former APWU Headquarters officer John Marcotte, the second place finisher out of the four President candidates in the 2019 contest. In another rerun, Legislative Director Judy Beard is once again opposed by her 2019 opponent Thomas Benson. Daleo Freeman, recently appointed by Dimondstein to the Human Relations Director position is opposed by Doris Simmons who in 2019 ran for the position of APWU Organization Director. All three (3) of these officer positions are ones that APWU Retirees can vote for.

The 2019 President race was a bit of a debacle as no candidate received a majority of the vote cast. Dimondstein won with a plurality, that is more votes than any of the other four. What is particularly galling to this writer is that with the less than 30% of the ballots mailed out and returned, our National Union President was elected by approximately 15% of eligible APWU voters. Apparently, apathy was the dominant factor among the membership.

I can't tell anyone who to vote for here. What I can do is strongly encourage all members to vote. Our National APWU Elections routinely have barely over a 25% turnout of eligible voters. This is shameful when we hear complaints about "the Union", be they on the workroom floor, social media, or elsewhere. If you are satisfied with the direction the APWU is going in, vote for the incumbents. If you are not satisfied with the present state of the APWU, vote for the challengers.

A national magazine is mailed directly to voters' homes (with a ballot and envelope to return the ballot) outlining the position of each candidate. In less time than it takes to drink one's morning coffee, members can read the statements of candidates in their own words and decide for themselves who to vote for. But do vote, whomever you're for or against. It's your Union and this is your chance to make your voice heard.



MPWU Retiree Chapter Executive Board - L to R - Trustee Teresa Williams, Sec-Treas. Jane Duggan, President Paul Browning, Trustee Yvonne Tatum, Vice President Joanna Atkinson, Trustee Deb Gorney.





by  
Linda  
Turney

## National Business Agent

# Continuing Violations, What Are They?

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

The words "Continuing Violation" is misleading. Continuing Violations is a term that is often unsuitably applied because it is often misunderstood. Grievances filed after the date of occurrence may only receive remedy such as back pay **14 days** prior to the filing of the grievance. We cannot go back for 3, 5, 7 years for payment. We can only go back for **14 days**. Grievances for violations occurring after the initial grievance must be filed every two weeks showing the dates and times of the infractions. In other words, each instance of a violation must be documented and supported by a specific instance. If we say it is an ongoing violation, the local must supplement the file with subsequent dates and grievances every time there is a violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

Normally, violations of our contract require that a New Occurrence for each day specified by the Union be established and filed within 14 days of any violation. Under the continuing grievance principle, remedies such as (but not limited to): back pay for out of schedule, pay for supervisor doing clerk work, pay for carriers doing clerk work, denial of work, overtime must be filed as a new occurrence. The agreement provides for us to go back 14 days prior to the grievance being filed. The Union cannot go back any farther than the 14 days for remedy when claiming a continuing violation.

For example, **back pay for out-of-schedule** shall run only from the date the grievance was actually filed. The following is the reasoning of Arbitrator Eisenmenger where she quotes:

*"The basic principle is stated as follows in Elkouri and Elkouri, How Arbitration Works, Many arbitrators have held that "continuing" grievances in the act of the complained of violations of the agreement (as opposed to a single isolated and completed transaction) give rise to continuing grievances in the sense that the act complained of may be said to be repeated from day to day – each day there is a new "occurrence"; these arbitrators have permitted the filing of such grievances at any time, this not being deemed a violation of the specific time limits stated in the agreement (although any back pay ordinarily runs only from the date of filing). For example, where the agreement provided for filing "within fourteen days of the occurrence," and that a grievance was timely presented, such day lost would be considered timely filed."*

In 1975, before I was even thinking about the USPS, Arbitrator Gamser AB-NAT-2541 in a National Award laid down the rules regarding continuing violations that are still followed today. **APWU** had argued that a unique situation which fully justified an exemption from the general rule that a grievance must be filed within the specified time limitations (14 days) of the CBA. We argued employees should not be penalized because they were ignorant of

the time limits. **APWU** argued that we could not be charged with such knowledge of grievance violations. **APWU** alleged the USPS continued to work these individuals outside of their schedules thus creating a statutory right to process a claim at any time. **APWU** espoused that requiring that the employees who have not filed properly gives the USPS unjust enrichment. **APWU** stated the **employees** should be held blameless because they were held ignorant of the procedures. **APWU** put forth that the Grievants are entitled to progress their claims even if they do not meet the time limits.

Sorry to say that Arbitrator Gamser in a National Award stated that Article 15 language had no special exception to the time limits of the

grievance procedure by the Employees or the Union. It is the Union's responsibility to acquaint the employees with the workings and objectives of the grievance procedure and the CBA. The Union's charge was denied. The Union's charge that the USPS misled employees to sleep on their rights was denied. The USPS's liability for such cases is retroactive for the **14 days** specified in the Agreement. This was decided only 4 years after our first contract was negotiated.

If you argue continuing violation, your work is not done. You must:

Continue to file grievances every time there is the same violation after the initial grievance.

Cross reference additional grievances to the initial grievance.



by  
Debora  
Goodacre

## AREA 11 DIRECTOR

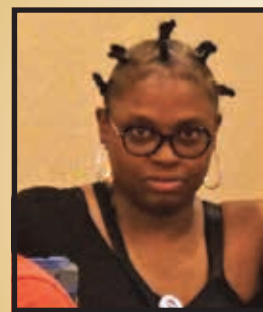
# Your New Zone Rep

Hello to all my brothers and sisters in Area 11, I am your new zone rep.

Just a quick note to let everyone know that I am looking forward to as-

sisting with your issues.

I have worked at the Traverse City P&DF for 21 years. My work schedule is Sunday thru Thursday 0800-1600.



Renee Douglas

**Interview with Renee Douglas, 480-481 Steward, 20 years with the USPS.**

This is her first convention as a delegate. Loves this! Getting to learn more about the political activities that take place behind the scenes and is learning a great deal.

What she enjoys the most about being active with the APWU is helping the members.

# Just say no! to the Postal Pulse

**Financial Health Warning:**  
Management has a history of trying  
to use survey results to limit and  
lower wages for postal workers

**APWU**

# Michigan Messenger

**Deadline for**

# Newsletter Submissions

**August 27, 2022**