



**PRESIDENT**

# Not Alone



by  
**Michael  
Mize**

Problems at work? You are not alone.

I have just completed the National Presidents Conference (NPC) in Washington DC. We discuss many issues the APWU faces at these conferences. One issue that we discuss regularly at the conference is the workplace environment issues. We discuss the things we can do and new methods to try. One thing that is unfortunate for everyone is the clear indication that hostile environment issues is a widespread problem. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

We need to be clear; it is Management's responsibility to provide a safe workplace for everyone. If you are mistreated or harassed while at work, management has failed to do their job. Yes, it is still a management failure even if a co-worker is the person performing a hostile act or comment toward someone.

Far too many members are surviving in an atmosphere that is just not acceptable. As stated, you are not alone. Only you can get it corrected. What can you do? You must stand up and fight for your right to a safe working environment. We will help you.

What should you do?

- Start with keeping a good record of the things that happen. Every day write down the things that happen in your office. I call it a workplace environment diary.

- Tell the person to stop. Not easy I know, but sometimes that alone can help.



**Thousands of Union workers fight to stop the Right-to-Work bill being pushed through the Michigan Legislature.**

— December 2012, Photo by J. Greathouse

- Inform Management of the issues and ask them to fix it.
- Request a steward. Let us help you with the problem. File a grievance.
- File a 1767, health and safety form. Keep your copy and send a copy to your steward.
- File an EEO. Some hostilities clearly fall into discrimination.
- Contact the EAP, the USPS covers some visits for employees and family members. If you are struggling and/

or feel harassed, you should talk with someone about it.

- Write a statement, sign it, and get it to the Union.
- Support the person that is being harassed. Write a statement for them and send it to the Union.
- Request that an IMIP (investigation) be conducted.
- Take the APWU survey. There will shortly be a survey concerning this issue in the mail to you. Please, take this survey to let the Union know about the issues you face.
- Stand up for stopping the harassment.

We as a Union and the leadership of it know there is a huge problem that must be addressed. Management at many levels just do not believe there is a problem. They do not see the issues. They do not believe what the Union leadership tells them. They do not see long lists of grievances, EEO's, 1767's or OIG investigations. They just think that everyone is happy. They believe the issues are infrequent and not enough to be concerned about. We

know this is not true, as we hear you. Unfortunately, we need to prove it. We need to document the problems.

We as a Union need to choke Management with the proof that they have an issue that spans the Nation. An issue that is going to cost them. The Union needs to, that means you too. There is no Union without you. As a Local and State President I would love to be able to fix all the problems myself. The facts, I can't prove there is an issue without you as a member standing up. I can't testify to what someone said to you, only you can.

The Union is starting several new things to work on this issue. Very close to the time you will receive this paper the survey will be in the mail to you. Certainly we want every APWU member to tell us about the problems they face, but others could take the survey as well. If another employee has issues, they should also complete a survey. If we all Unite on this issue, we can incorporate change. Together we are strong!

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE!!!**

Please help us address this problem.

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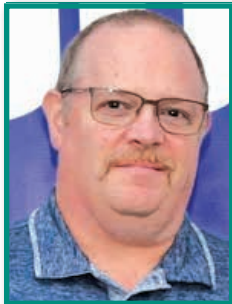


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Return to APWU/MPWU  
c/o John Greathouse, Editor  
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EDITOR



by John Greathouse

We All Need To Get Along!

With the latest new from NYC and the arrest and arraignment of the former President, resulted in some folks being ecstatic, yet others are angry and screaming at each other!

I watched a news clip where a red hat MAGA supporter was flipping off a person on camera . . . just because of a different view? A new law passed in Florida that grants any person the right to carry a concealed weapon, no permit or background check required . . . this is going to end well. This goes on and on but to what avail?

When are folks going to learn, Right Wing/Left Wing politics . . . Same freaking bird!!!! As crazy as things are, everyone needs to take a step back, catch our breath and TALK about the issues, not scream in to each other's faces . . . you both might learn something!

I feel that this issue comes from one not seeing the whole picture, this very same thing is going on here in the PO as well. Newsweek just ran a "wonderful" article polishing up PMG DeJoy that made him look like the savor of the USPS, yet when you look at the latest news article, the USPS is deep in debt and it makes you ask . . . why?

The simple answer is his 10yr plan, while it has some good ideas, many of them come at a huge costs in-order to make them happen. Building huge

mail processing facilities, Consolidation of cities & towns carriers into a central delivery office. This plan is here in the Lansing area and will add additional 500,000+ miles of travel for these carriers, that number does not include the additional routes that will need to be established. Raising postage prices every 6 months is helping to bring in more money but our letter mail volume keeps declining

(no cause and effect going on here). And I won't get into the slowing down of the mail by lowering the delivery standards so that, on paper, it will look like we are getting the mail where it needs to be, on time . . . but we are not because of the changes he has made.

How can we do anything about any of this . . . simple, talk to one another, share our thoughts and ideas and work together

to affect change in a positive way. Next, contact your US Senators and ask them to get the folks who have been selected to be on the Board of Governors approved and allow them to make the changes that are needed and fix the USPS . . . starting with the removal of DeJoy. I hope everyone has a safe spring and try to stay dry! In Solidarity!

— Union Hitchhikers —

We have employees that choose not to pay dues. They give weak excuses as to why they are not paying dues. You do not have to participate in the business of the local, but by paying your dues you help us to fight for the rights, protection and benefits that we are all receiving. These non dues payers are relying on the welfare of others to protect their wages, benefits, and conditions of employment. These selfish individuals are hurting themselves and the remainder of us who pay our dues.

Dues are used to bargain contracts, to arbitrate grievances, to administer the affairs of the local, and to train officers and stewards. Dues are not used for contributions to political candidates. Encourage those who are not signed to join.

We need everyone's help to fight to maintain our benefits. Educate



them on what their wages and benefits will become if they do not stand up to Corporate Greed.

We see what the company has done to those without representation. Ask these individuals if they would volunteer to take a pay cut, to take the next surplus package, to give their pension back to the company. Remind them that without their strength we ALL lose. Below is a written passage that will put

things in perspective: Have you ever driven down the road and run upon a hitchhiker? Most of the time, their thumb is giving a clear message: We have hitchhikers in our Union too. In one way or another they're saying: "If you supply the protection of a contract, negotiate that contract, protect me at work, get me fair and decent wages, health benefits and hours of work, I'll ride. But you're crazy if you think I'm going to get involved and help you make this a better place to work. And by the way, if anything happens that irritates me, you'll hear from me." Think about it – are you just thumbing a free ride? Or can you do a little more to help us all? — Author Unknown, the Communication Workers of America – CWA 3682

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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

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.

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







by  
Roscoe  
Woods

## LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

# Right-to-Work – Repealed!

Elections have consequences and I am proud to say the newly elected legislative majority here in Michigan has started to move a repeal of the Snyder era Right-to-Work law that the GOP shoved down our throats during a lame duck session of our State Legislature back in December of 2012.

I have been following this issue pretty close for obvious reasons and I wish I could say I was shocked at the hypocrisy of those on the right who are railing against the Democratic majority doing exactly what it campaigned on.

I posted recently on my own Facebook page that if the GOP is so adamantly opposed to Unions as well as those working in union shops being forced to pay dues then they cannot stand against:

Fair use fees, those fees which non-members would have to pay when they do in fact need to services of the union they choose not to be a member of.

The GOP had plenty of time to enact legislation that could also bar those working for a union shop from receiving any of the benefits gained as a result of the union representing the bargaining unit.

The GOP had plenty of time to pass legislation that made it clear if you choose to work in a union shop and not pay dues, then the union has no obligation to represent you.

But the GOP agenda was to break unions, not give rights to those who choose not to pay. Their agenda was to allow some to reap the benefits of others who paved the way and paid their dues. Right to Work was about destroying unions and giving others the right to free load, all while still reaping the rewards of working in a union shop.

Also, the GOP colors this as if being forced to pay dues is somehow impinging on the freedoms of those workers who do not wish to pay dues. Well freedom is an amazing thing. In this case any worker who does not wish to pay his or her dues can simply use their freedom to find another job that is not represented by a union.

There is a reason union shops have higher retention rates than other jobs.

Union jobs have typically higher wages and better benefits, they have certain protections providing for due process and just cause ensuring we are not a state of at will employees.

Unions are democratic organizations and it is the members who select their representatives, it is the members that determine what they will or will not accept at the bargaining table, it is the membership that votes whether to accept a contract that is negotiated, and in the end for some unions it is the membership by majority vote that decides whether to with-hold their labor or not.

It is my opinion that the GOP here in Michigan and elsewhere across this nation abhor voting when it does not work out their way but democracy can be messy, democracy is making your case and living with the vote.

I truly wish the GOP would just admit they hate unions, they despise the middle class, and they do not believe that there is any intrinsic value to labor. Just admit that you believe human beings are disposable assets to be discarded if they get injured, if they get older, if they actually believe they ought to have a voice or if they actually ask to be fairly compensated for the labor that actually creates the wealth.

Maybe they ought to admit that if an employer treated its employees well, paid them well, provided them afford-

The law stops employers from making the payment of some union dues a condition for employment.

Democrats have been eying its repeal, often calling it anti-union, since Republican legislative majorities passed it into law in 2012.

Representative Regina Weiss (D-Oak Park) sponsored the legislation. She said Right to Work creates a free-loader problem where non-union workers can still benefit from union representation without paying their dues.

“Union dues are an important stream of revenue that help pay for critical contract negotiations, staff and support of members. When unions have decreased dues, they have less power to improve working conditions,” Weiss said from the House floor.

raised red flags about draft versions of changes to the bill they had received. Democrats quickly dismissed those drafts as being sent in error.

But the final versions of the bills that did pass included the addition of million-dollar spending appropriations that leadership said was for “education” – related purposes about the new policies.

The tactic of adding spending into those bills makes them immune to change by voter referendum.

Republicans used a similar strategy when first passing Right to Work in 2012.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer has in the past spoken out against the strategy, issuing an executive directive during her first term pledging to veto such bills.

“We support restoring workers’ rights, and will be watching the legislation closely as it continues to move through the Legislature,” Whitmer spokesperson Bobby Leddy said when asked for a comment on the referendum-proof appropriation.

Republicans framed the Right-to-Work repeal as a step far.

House Minority Leader Matt Hall (R-Richland Twp) said it’s both unpopular and would be costly.

“This is the beginning of the Democrat overreach that’s going to lead to their demise and the Republicans taking back the House. It starts here today,” Hall told reporters.

Earlier in the day, the House Labor Committee held hearings on both the Right-to-Work repeal and a bill to require government contractors to pay union-level wages.

Associated Builders and Contractors of Michigan CEO Jimmy Greene spoke against both pieces of legislation. He described it as an economic issue.

“The union contractor is one of the best contractors here in the state. But it doesn’t erase the fact that . . . when you bring back mandated prevailing wage, you take away a fundamental right of local communities. And local communities should govern tax dollars,” Greene said.

House Democrats ended up passing the prevailing wage bill out of the chamber Wednesday night as well.

Sponsor Brenda Carter (D-Pontiac) said paying workers well would save money in the long run by leading to better constructed projects.

“We must ensure that our hard-working residents receive wages in line with the values of their skills, what they were trained to do. Not somebody that’s come on the job because it’s cost-effective to your business,” Carter said.

House leadership has said getting both a Right-to-Work repeal and prevailing wage legislation to the governor by the time lawmakers go on spring break later this month is a priority. The bills go next to the Senate, where they can be taken up as soon as Tuesday.



Michigan Postal Workers join with thousands of their Union Brothers and Sisters fighting against the Right to Work bill.

— December 2012, Photo by J. Greathouse

able health care, maybe a decent retirement option they might not seek the right to organize at all?

The hypocrisy is heard loud and clear, these GOP reps here in Michigan are the definition of snowflakes. The passage of Right to Work in the lame duck session back in 2012 was a gutless stab at the heart of working people and it had nothing to do with freedom and everything to do with greed.

The Democrats here in Michigan last election cycle ran on a platform of repealing RTW and other anti-worker legislation, they did so in plain sight and for the first time I believe in some 40 years the Democrats secured a full majority in the MI Legislature and Governors mansion. As far as I am concerned they are pressing forward with the support of the majority here in Michigan and this repeal of Right to work is a promise made and it is a promise being kept.

The following article appeared on the Michigan Public Radio web site and is shared for you all to read.

Michigan Radio | By Colin Jackson  
Published March 9, 2023

Legislation to repeal Michigan’s “Right-to-Work” law passed the Michigan House Wednesday night.

Several Democrats made the case that unions are the main ways to improve worker pay and workplace conditions.

Democratic Floor Leader Abraham Aiyash (Hamtramck) gave a full-throated defense of unions.

“What choice do you have when the greedy corporations try to put employees against one another in a race to the bottom? Why do folks in here sometimes get so angry that we’re trying to push people out of poverty?” Aiyash said.

The bills passed along party-line votes.

Republicans voiced concerns that repealing Right to Work would make Michigan less competitive economically.

In his floor speech detailing his opposition, Rep. Graham Filler (R-St. Johns) said repealing Right to Work would make Michigan a less competitive state for jobs.

“People sent us here to help them make ends meet and find good paying and long-lasting careers. Why exactly, then, are we making laws to make Michigan a worse place to work and live and grow business,” Filler said.

Ahead of the vote, Republicans



## MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR

## Marti's Maintenance Messenger

by Marti Jablonski,  
Maintenance Craft Director

Welcome to spring my fellow maintenance employees. How many of you put in for the Maintenance in-service registry testing? I know I did! I already have a passing MM 7 and BEM 9 but I still want to make sure I am keeping all my options open until I retire, because with all the changes happening with the new Postmaster General and his super center Planning one always needs to keep your options open!

That being said have any of you paid attention to what is happening around the country with all the new planning? I have, I try to stay aware of what's happening with our fellow brothers and sisters, because that way I am one step ahead when they come knocking on my door. For instance, when I questioned what our office is supposed to do when we have to add more routes and don't have the space to do so, what is the game plan. The reply I was given was, and I quote, 'haven't you heard what they're doing with the combining of offices into super distribution centers,' And of course I said yes but that's 10 years out, they responded with no . . . like in the near future, so put them in the parking lot for now . . . now my immediate response and what I wanted to say were far different from each other, so I just said this is a Joke. However, I am actually a little concerned. The only good news I have read is that even if they are consolidating carriers' delivery areas to these super centers, they are not getting rid of the retail window units. So, for me, I see security in the fact that I am the only maintenance custodian in my building and it's postal owned which would make it harder to just close up shop and send me elsewhere!

Also, if any cared to notice level 7's are no longer an option to test for? Little crazy if you ask me, for a company to want to save money, why wouldn't we want to keep a few handy level 7's coming up in our ranks, instead of paying top dollar level maintenance mechanic's, 9's and 10's. My feelings are still concerned with what direction we are headed in. That being said, the best way to protect our work and our jobs for now and into the future are work orders and documentation.

Now onto the follow ups of your 4776's that you are being handed or shall I say not handed. Let's not be blind sheep. Don't do managements job, if they give you directions then follow them, but if they don't, then don't go seek out their information. Just grab a notebook and document! If you are handed the 4776 pay close attention to what it is saying. Some of them are stating US (utility specialist), RS (restroom specialists), or VS (vacuum specialist) in the top left corner within the top section. Which for those of you that have no clue why this means,

it tells you that they have deemed your office a TL5 office and that the routes they are handing you are just for those positions of jobs. You see the TL5 CTC in layman's terms means, Custodial Team Cleaning, one person goes through and vacuums, the next goes through and empties the trash, no one sweeps because dust brooms are no more. Just their useless floor swiffer's, the vacuum they want you to haul around on your back, and all your cleaning tools fit in one little pouch cleaning tray. Let's also keep in mind your supervisor is supposed to hand you your route sheet, little tray with gloves, cleaning pouches, erasers, towel, and scrapers. This program was set up for a team, and for instance they had tried this in my facility but it is team of 1. So, if I was to do what they are suing then I would go through do one job, go back to the start, do the next,

and repeat. Do I think this would be efficient? The answer would be NO F'n way, but then again, we are not paid to think we are told to do the job we are directed to do. So don't think for management, if they do this to you, just do it and they will see how useless it is. I know we wasn't to take pride in our work and be respected for the work we do, but those days are slipping away. You see this company is being run into the ground by the upper echelon that has never doesn't he work we do and have no clue what happens at your office every day as with every office and building we all have our own idiosyncrasies to Have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. For instance, again my office has fish flies every year and they require additional time to clean the inside and the outside of the buildings. They smell, they rot, they stick to the ground and the outside of build-

ing, while lasting anywhere from 1-2 months or longer!

You see when offices have these nuisances that come yearly and require that time, your Postmaster can put this into the custodial allotted hours and times so you are given credit for the work, just like and other daily or monthly tasks. Also, with spring here that means we will be back out cutting lawn soon and trimming ditches, fence lines, retention ponds, and etc. Same as if you haven't done so, request a copy of your custodial package and look to see if you have a riding mower or push, we're you given time for tree trimming or hedges? What about brooming the parking lot or do they say you have a riding sweeper? Please pay attention to the finer details and document!

Once again stay tuned, document, and stay the course! Gotta "bolt"!

## AREA 4 DIRECTOR

## Where Oh Where Have My Window Clerks Gone?

by Sandy Rancour,  
Area 4 Director

We are all dealing with short staffing at most of our Post Offices, and this seems to be the norm now. Also, what comes with lack of help, is the window operations sometimes have only 1 clerk working the window. I have heard from many clerks that the change needed to run the window has also become a problem with no one able to run to the bank. Some clerks have taken it upon themselves to make change from their personal monies or asking other employees etc. to make change for them. This is not only improper but detrimental to your job. Some offices, the managers are okay with this and other offices, people are being disciplined and fired. I know we all feel bad for the customer in not having the proper tools, change etc., to serve the community, but we cannot do these things that can cause us to be fired.

The problem lies with management to figure out what is needed in their office and give our clerks the proper tools to do their job efficient-

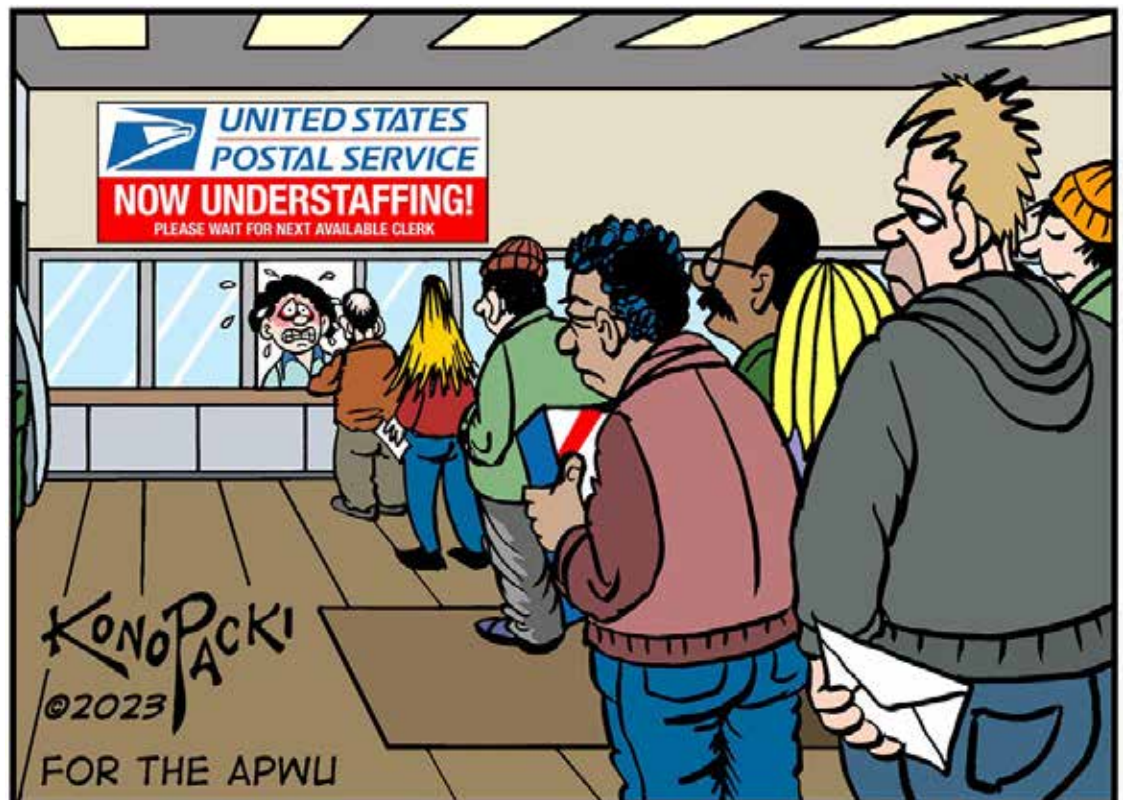
ly. It is unfortunate that most of the clerks know more than management on what is needed to run an office, but we must let management do their job. The tool we have is to ask for a steward and possibly file a grievance. Please do not get caught up in "I'll just do it myself" because this can come back to cause you some major issues.

Another issue we are having is shared passwords for our window access, TACs access, and ACE, along with working out of another clerk's drawer on the window. Training 101 we were all taught do not

share any of your postal passwords. You are responsible for any activity on postal computers. Also, if you let someone use your drawer on the window, you and you alone are responsible for any shortage. You are never required to let a supervisor or clerk have your password. Think of your password like your personal passwords for banking, you would never let your neighbor have access to your bank info, the same goes for your work passwords.

As always, please contact your steward with any questions or problems

In unity





RETIREE PRESIDENT



by  
Paul  
Browning

# Education And Solidarity

In conjunction with the Michigan Postal Workers Union, the MPWU State Retiree Chapter will be holding its biennial Education Assembly on May 18, 19, 20, at the Delta Hotel and Conference Hotel in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Classes will be available for all APWU members whether they belong to the APWU Retirees Department or are still a working member.

We are fortunate in Michigan that retired and still working members of our Union have enjoyed a mutual recognition and respect since the creation of the Retirees Department through a APWU National Constitution resolution authored by the late Flint Area Local activist Al LaBrecque. This trust between the two groups sadly does not exist universally within the APWU. Some members have even an almost disregard of each other's membership.

As I've written way too often, We're all on this together. Anything that is to the detriment of currently working APWU members will eventually come back to bite APWU retirees. And the same is true for presently retired members . . . Something that negatively affects them will obviously be bad news for future retirees.

Below are the particulars for our 2023 Education Assembly which will be open to ALL APWU members whether working or retired.

**DATES:** May, 18, 19, 20

**LOCATION:** Delta Hotel and Conference Center,  
2747 S 11th Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
269-375-6000

**MPWU RETIREE CHAPTER CLASSES (OPEN TO ALL APWU MEMBERS)**

**Thursday, May 18 1:00 ELDER LAW** – This class will be presented by an attorney and have to do with legal issues concerning Social Security, wills, probate, Trust Accounts, etc.

**Friday, May 19 9:00 MEDICARE AND MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS** – A representative from the Michigan Medicare Assistance Program will discuss Medicare coverage and how various supplemental plans apply to costs not covered by Medicare. A representative from the APWU Health Plan will also discuss APWU's new Medicare Advantage Plan. Latest updates on how the 2022 Postal Reform Act affects current and future retirees will also be discussed.

**Friday, May 19 1:00 THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN** – An Administrator of the TSP from Washington D.C. will discuss how TSP works, how to make changes, etc. This class should be of particular relevance to currently working members as well as those retired who have money in the presently volatile financial market.

**Saturday, May 20 9:00 RETIRE-**

**MENT** – Nationally trained Joe Gordon (480-81 Area Chapter President) will present his class on what to expect when you get ready to retire and the USPS retirement administrative process as well as aspects of post-retirement decisions.

ALL CLASSES WILL HAVE A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION

**ASSEMBLY REGISTRATION FEE AND THOSE EXEMPT FROM PAYING IT**

Registration fee is typically \$100 for classes sponsored by the MPWU Retiree Chapter to cover costs incurred. However, the pandemic cancelled State and National Union events of 2020 and 2021 have left the State Retiree Chapter in the unique position of having more than normally available funds for the time being. Consequently, the Chapter's Executive Board voted to provide certain classes and EXEMPT THE BELOW GROUPS OF EMPLOY-

EES FROM PAYING A REGISTRATION FEE AS THE STATE CHAPTER WILL PAY IT.

- Each Local Retiree Chapter shall be entitled to one (1) member to attend the Retiree classes at no cost, viz. no registration fee will be charged that member.

- Any APWU Retirees Department member from the 490-91 area who wishes to attend any class on a commuter basis shall be exempt from paying the registration fee. All that is necessary is for the attendee to provide their APWU Retirees Department membership card. If you do not have your card, you can contact the APWU Retirees Department in Washington at 202-842-8584 for the latest instructions on how to print your card on the computer.

PROOF OF APWU MEMBERSHIP IS REQUIRED TO ATTEND CLASSES.

**REGISTERING FOR THE ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE**

As the State Chapter on this one time only occurrence will be covering registration costs, it will be necessary for all attendees to give their name and Local Chapter affiliation or 490-91 address. This will allow us to reimburse the Michigan Postal Workers Union for their costs. Registration tables will be in the lobby of the hotel so make sure you have checked in with the Union and obtain authorization for your class.

Any questions may be addressed to myself at:

Paul Browning, MPWU State Retiree Chapter President  
231-275-6016  
oldhipster54@hotmail.com

Jane Duggan, MPWU State Retiree Chapter Sec.-Treas.

313-312-1515 (H)  
313-682-1005 (C)  
jane\_duggan@sbcglobal.net

## — Workplace Bullies —

We spend a great deal of time at work . . . sometimes we feel that we spend more time with our co-workers that we do with our families.

As with personal relationships. It's also important to balance and maintain our workplace relationships. At times, however, we may encounter an individual who makes work life difficult, and interferes with the day to day flow of the workplace environment. This individual may be aggressive or domineering, closed-minded or selfish, verbally abusive or mean-spirited, or any combination of these characteristics. In short, this individual is a workplace bully. Let's examine the characteristics of a workplace bully, describe the effects of the bullying and detail ways to counteract bullying behavior.

### What Defines Workplace Bullying???

Workplace bullying is defined as negative acts directed toward another person. It can take the form of:

- Threatening the individual's work status.
- Threatening personal standing( for example, through ageist or sexist comments)
- Isolating the individual from information, opportunities, outing, etc.
- Giving impossible deadlines, over-work and undue pressures
- Undermining the individual by demeaning the standard of work, not giving credit, setting up projects to fail and reminding the individual of mistakes

While the reasons that a workplace bully acts out may vary ( for example, the bully may seek to intimidate as a way to gain power over another, or may believe that the work climate demands aggressive behavior). It's clear that bullying impacts the workplace.

### A Few Sobering Statistics

Dr. Gary Namie, a former psychology professor at Western Washington University and co-founder of the Workplace Bullying Institute offers these statistics:

- Workplace bullying affects one in six workers
- 41% of those bullied are diagnosed with depression
- More than 80% suffer loss of productivity to severe anxiety, lost concentration and sleeplessness
- 31% of women and 21% of men suffer post-traumatic stress disorder due to workplace bullying

The workplace bully can also provoke any number of emotions, from anger at having such a presence imposed on you to dreading going to work to fearing that you are in emotional and/or physical danger. You may also feel isolated or intimidated, or that you are powerless to cope with the workplace bully. It should also be noted that, though the workplace bully may focus on only one individual, his or her actions may affect the entire workplace by creating morale issues, decreasing production and increasing absenteeism and or/higher staff turnover rates.

### Ways To Counteract A Workplace Bully:

- Stop listening to the bully's lies and verbal assaults; you have done nothing wrong and don't need to feel ashamed. Always remember that demeaning behavior directed at another person is never acceptable.
- Remain calm and focus when dealing with the bully. Choose your words carefully in order to convey clearly your responses to the bully.
- Break through your fears of the bully for at least one week; deciding

to procrastinate when addressing the bully may create more feelings of anxiety, potentially leading to an outcome worse than the most feared.

- Assert your right to be treated with respect, regardless of who you are and where you rank. Make your worth and value known.
  - Demand respect directly from the bully whenever you interact.
  - Document the bully's misconduct. Because the bully may be especially adept at manipulating or distorting information. It's beneficial to collect proof of the bully's actions.
  - Rally witnesses to help defend you. The more people there are to corroborate the bully's abuse, the better the chances that the negative behavior will be addressed.
  - Report the bully to HR, Union, etc.
- Your EAP is here for you!**  
**We're available to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**  
**CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968**  
**800-EAP-4YOU/ TTY: 877-492-7341**  
**WWW.EAP4YOU.COM**

— The Tarheel Postal Worker



**HARASSMENT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ILLEGAL TO BE WRONG**

Postal policy declares not every instance of inappropriate behavior may fit the legal definition of harassment. However, such behavior at work violates the Postal Service's standard of conduct.

**STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS**  
Make the Postal Service commit to their policy of providing a harassment-free work environment!

Text HARASSMENT to 91999, or scan the QR code below, for more information.

✓ **REPORT IT**  
✓ **PURSUE IT**  
✓ **DON'T TOLERATE IT**

CONTACT YOUR UNION REPRESENTATIVE

PLEASE POST **APWU** apwu.org/fighting-workplace-harassment



# Why Veterans In Labor Should Not Be Ignored

by Steve Early,  
March 3, 2023. Portside

Even in the era of identity politics, one category of identity has largely been ignored: what UK journalist Joe Glenton calls “veteranhood.” 19 million former soldiers – most of them working class – share a strong sense of personal identity as vets, but the media usually notices them only when they are involved in right-wing militias, white supremacist groups, and other MAGA-land formations. Some have noted their over-representation in U.S. law enforcement, which does reinforce militarized policing, along with the better known Pentagon-to-police equipment pipeline.

Largely ignored is the positive role veterans from working-class backgrounds have played in key labor and political struggles since the mid-20th century. In the heyday of industrial unionism in the 1950s and '60s, tens of thousands of World War II veterans could be found on the front-lines of labor struggles in auto, steel, electrical equipment manufacturing, mining, trucking, and the telephone industry. Today, about 1.3 million former service members work in union jobs, and women and people of color make up the fastest growing cohorts in these ranks.

Veterans are, according to the AFL-CIO, more likely to join a union than non-veterans. In a half dozen states, 25% or more of working veterans belong to unions. Vermont AFL-CIO President David Van Deusen sees veterans as “an underutilized resource for the labor movement,” particularly in high-profile organizing campaigns. No one, he believes, is better positioned to “expose the hypocrisy and duplicity of ‘veteran-friendly’ firms like Amazon and Walmart, who wrap themselves in the flag, while violating the rights of working-class Americans who served in uniform and the many who did not.”

That’s why former SEIU organizer Jane McAlevey recommends that unions today learn from the example of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the post-war era . . . CIO organizers understood that former soldiers have “strategic value” in strike-related PR campaigns. Veterans also have “experience with discipline, military formation, and overcoming fear and adversity,” all very useful on militant picket-lines.

Tony Mazzocchi was a good example. After World War II, he became a catalyst for change within the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) and the broader labor movement for five decades. A survivor of the Battle of the Bulge, Mazzocchi spearheaded labor’s fight for the 1972 Occupational Safety and Health Act, which now provides workplace protections for 130 million Americans. During his storied career, Mazzocchi also campaigned for civil rights, nuclear disarmament, labor-based environmentalism, and single-payer health care.

Mazzocchi also helped found the Labor Party in the 1990s and popularize the demand that public higher educa-



NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, 11.09.2022  
Photo by: Lance Cpl. Emma Gray, II Marine Expeditionary Force

tion should be free for all. He was inspired by the liberating experience of veterans from his generation, who were able to attend college as a result of the original GI Bill, which he regarded as “one of the most revolutionary pieces of legislation in the 20th century.” According to his biographer Les Leopold, Mazzocchi believed that an all-inclusive 21st-century version of the GI Bill could plant the “seeds of the good life” for millions of poor and working-class Americans today.

Today’s veterans continue to fight to make college accessible for more people. For example, Will Fischer, who served in Iraq as a Marine before becoming director of the AFL-CIO Union Veterans’ Council, was able “to graduate from college and do so without the yoke of student debt.” Fischer favors universalizing such benefits. He’d like all student debt canceled and public higher education, including vocational schools, made tuition-free. As Fischer sees it, this would free lower-income young people from having to choose between “putting on a uniform and participating in never-ending U.S. wars or taking on crushing debt.”

Vets have also worked within organized labor to create and promote targeted job opportunities. Fischer’s successor at the Veterans Council is Will Attig, a member of UALocal 160, Plumbers and Pipefitters in southern Illinois. He helps fellow Iraq and Afghanistan combat veterans find building trades jobs through the Helmets to Hardhats program. Attig also introduced the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the IBEW to Common Defense, a post 9/11 veterans group, which has helped train members of CWA’s “Veterans for Social Change” network. Unveiled three years ago by CWA President Chris Shelton, a former telephone worker who served in the Air Force, this program seeks to “develop and organize a broad base of union activists who are veterans and/or currently serving in the military.”

As CWA notes, veterans, active-duty service members, and military families “are constantly exploited by politicians

and others who seek to loot our economy, attack our communities, and divide our nation with racism and bigotry so they can consolidate more power amongst themselves.” CWA hopes to counter this on-going right-wing threat by encouraging veterans in its own ranks to engage in grassroots campaigns with community allies.

## Bottom of Form

That includes working with veterans fighting privatization in two of the federal agencies that employ many former soldiers, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which serves nine million patients in the nation’s largest public healthcare system, and the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), which delivers mail to 163 million homes and businesses. Both have long been the target of corporate-backed efforts to reduce their staff, downsize their operations, and outsource their functions to politically connected private firms.

During the Trump Administration, right-wing political appointees at the VA launched a major assault on the workplace rights of 300,000 workers represented by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), National Nurses United (NNU), and other unions. A White House advisory panel on the future of the Post Office called for the elimination of collective bargaining to help pave the way for privatization and job cuts that would affect more than 100,000 veterans.

Like privatization foes at the VA, the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) have tried to counter-out-sourcing threats through a grassroots campaign which declares “The US Mail Not for Sale!” As part of their collective resistance to Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, a Trump appointee still on the job under Joe Biden, postal unions and their allies are fighting for better utilization of public infrastructure, rather than its dismantling and sale to the highest bidder. And among the leaders of that effort is a former Marine, Keith Combs, president of a Detroit-based

APWU local with 1,500 members.

One-fifth of the postal workers threatened by privatization efforts are Black, like many who belong to Combs’ local, for them and other participants many other workers in these labor-community campaigns, multiple identities come into play in their labor activism. NNU member Mildred Manning-Joy is a VA nurse in Durham, N.C. and, like one-third of the VA’s care-giving workforce, a veteran herself. She’s also the mother of a VA patient. Multiple tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq left her son with “the invisible scars of his time in combat.” Last spring, Manning-Joy was among the many unionized VA care-givers around the country who enlisted patients and their families, veterans’ groups, and other labor organizations in a successful fight to block President Joe Biden’s proposed closing of many VA facilities.

Similarly, 38-year-old Iraq war veteran Adam Pelletier transitioned from the Marine Corps to public sector union jobs – becoming a shop steward, AFGE local president, and then labor council leader in Troy, N.Y. After using the GI bill to finish college, Pelletier joined the Social Security Administration, where he and his co-workers assisted retired and disabled Americans who depend on federal benefits. Meanwhile, as a VA patient himself, he was active in AFGE’s campaign to “Save The VA” from would-be privatizers.

In upstate NY, Pelletier has confronted members of Congress who favor VA out-sourcing and has become a valued advisor to the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute, a Bay Area-based research group that works closely with AFGE and Veterans for Peace (which Pelletier has joined, along with Democratic Socialists of America).

“Congress continually votes to out-source VA services, pushing people into more expensive and less effective care,” Pelletier said, in a message to fellow Labor Council members last year. “They do this instead of adequately funding the VA and looking at it as the model by which we could all, someday, enjoy universal health care. We must mobilize to stop this!”

Just as Tony Mazzocchi was a key builder of late-20th century alliances between labor, peace, environmental, and healthcare reform groups, younger post-9/11 veterans like those profiled above are following in his footsteps, by forging similar connections to broader social movements. Their example shows that progressives should recognize the important role that former soldiers can play as a working-class counter-weight to right-wing “veteran hood” and its malign discontents.

Steve Early has been active in the Communications Workers of America since 1980 and is the co-author (with Suzanne Gordon and Jasper Craven) of *Our Veterans: Winners, Losers, Friends and Enemies on the New Terrain of Veterans Affairs* from Duke University Press. He can be reached at [Lsupport@aol.com](mailto:Lsupport@aol.com)





# — Who Stole Social Security? —

by **Leo F. Persails, Retired  
Gen. Reg. Coordinator**

Former Republican Senator Alan Simpson from Wyoming, some time ago was quoted for calling Social Security a “milk cow”. His attack on Social Security is really unconscionable when you consider what he and his fellow cronies in the Senate have done already to destroy Social Security as it was created. I don’t intend to debate his ignorance of the issue, Americans don’t need to be told about how they paid into a system that they now have EARNED to receive payment from. No, my intent is to define how Simpson and his fellow Senate cronies destroyed the fund.

How does this affect you as a Postal Worker? Well to begin with FERS is directly connected to Social Security and the majority of Postal Workers are in FERS. To those still left in the Civil Service Retirement System, you also are directly related to the S.S. fund. All of them need to be funded annually by Legislation now, because their individual funds no longer exist. A majority of a party in Congress has continually chipped away at it, The S.S. fund affected everything, FERS, CSRS, MEDICARE, those already retired, those still working, their children, their grandchildren, and every American. You need to know who is attacking and who has attacked your retirement fund, and the rules that govern it . . .

First and foremost, Social Security was started and designed to repay seniors that retired and had paid into the fund for years. Based on a formula of retirement payments established by years of deposit. The Social

Security fund was a simple formula established during Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s time in office in 1935. It was a means to prevent poverty of seniors by them paying for that timeframe while working. The fund was self-sufficient until Simpson and his cronies began to dip into it. Their first act was to eliminate themselves from the REQUIRED formula and permit them to be eligible

ously helped fatten the S.S. fund for income without any pay out.

The S.S. fund continued to grow until it became a target. There had to be a way for politicians to tap those funds without an outcry from the public. In 1954 with republican President Eisenhower in office, the republican party found it, and began the Legislative changes to use S.S. funds for purposes other than originally designed . . . There

problem is Eisenhower thought and acted like a republican supporting the rich in this issue, and not like a war hero. Those other great worthy causes are needed, but should have been funded from the GENERAL FUND, because they had nothing related to the Social Security Retirement Fund.

Now the S.S. and CSRS are all but depleted, and funds have to be approved by Congress every year. Worse yet, Rick Scott, a Republican U.S. Senator from Florida, just proposed a new law to require Congress to even include S.S. and CSRS in every new budget and eliminate the present law that automatically included those entitlements. If that was to pass it could Sunset or END S.S. and CSRS at ANY TIME. If someone had done this in the private sector with private retirement funds, someone would be in jail. Scott withdrew his attack part in the bill after it became known, but the attacks are still out there by some politicians. Changes like retirement age requirements, and others, are still being floated.

Simpson was right, Social Security is a “milk cow”, but it’s a “milk cow” for his political cronies because their changes made it that way. Americans that paid into the fund have been robbed of that which they paid for. Simpson and ALL those that are robbing Americans of the Social Security fund should have been called out by the news media at the time S.S. funds first became a target of the republican party. That didn’t happen, and now we are seeing ads by republicans blaming Democrats for the S.S. attacks. These are the facts, not rhetoric or political propoganda, you decide.

In Union Solidarity.



after ONE TERM of office. They covered that by creating an OFF SET for all OTHER government employees. The offset meant non politician government employees with outside employment that paid S.S. in addition from other lifetime jobs, would have any earned benefits offset by 50% of every dollar paid to them from the Civil Service Retirement System. This resulted in thousands of government employees drawing nothing from S.S even though they had paid thousands into it. This obvi-

were billions in funds being paid to handicapped, injured, disabled, surviving children, and several other causes from the GENERAL FUND every year. Why not divert those expenses to S.S. and save the general fund to provide tax cuts to the top 1% of rich Americans. The end result was a drastic change to S.S. entitlements and a great drain on the S.S fund. Now I know as well as you that Eisenhower is a great American hero. I also know every cause added to the S.S. fund are GREAT causes and worthy of Government support. The



## Workers’ Memorial Day

# TAKE ACTION!



**On Friday April 28, 2023, postal workers will observe Workers’ Memorial Day with a day of action.**

It is a day when we remember workers killed or injured on the job and to renew the fight for strong safety and health protections. Fifty-three years after the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970

(OSHA) was passed, many of us are still exposed to unsafe working conditions. Understaffing often leads to hostile work environments, which are a major cause of workplace safety hazards.

Find out more about how you and your local can take action on Friday, April 28 at [www.apwu.org/safe](http://www.apwu.org/safe). It is up to us to make sure management is taking its responsibility for our safety at work seriously. ■



# A Rush To Judgment

by Loren Adams

Walking casually down the hall at work, a co-worker turned around and yelled at me with her back turned, "You had it coming!" I asked what she meant, and she turned around and replied, "Because you've been so damned active in the union and stood up for people that don't deserve it."

Well, that was her take on the situation. However, a few weeks later when it came her turn to be called on the carpet, there was no doubt in her mind she was innocent and deserved representation unconditionally. How things change when it involves oneself! But isn't this how human nature works? I was under fire for made-up charges that were easily dismissed in minutes. But what lasted in my memory was the loud opinion of a fellow employee who was only impulsively expressing what many believed at the time.

Guilty until proven innocent, a union leader/activist carries a target on his or her back whether they recognize it or not. I call it "caught between a rock and a hard place." It's the condition high blood pressure comes from. One cannot be an advocate or defense lawyer without being silently or openly associated with the client along with all his/her baggage. Over the years, I had to file some of the toughest grievances that, on the outside, looked questionable, but, upon closer inspection, were totally with merit and which, in the long run, prevailed. Proof is in the pudding.

Being "union" means being loyal to one another; the two words – loyal and union – are inseparable. You're not at work to only do your job, clock out, and go home. You're at your place of employment to work WITH co-workers. And if you're unwilling to work with people, pretty soon others will work against you; it's that simple. Karma's not kind to those violating her basic principles.

If every time a union rep automatically assumes a member is guilty and, as a result, vocally reprimands that person to his/her face in an embarrassing fashion, plus dismisses circumstances and the member's account, the rep is

guilty of a rush to judgment. The consequence is alienation from the Union and what is called "disenfranchisement" – a fancy term meaning: "A feeling of disappointment and separation resulting from the discovery that something is not as good as one believed it to be". Pretty soon, the member becomes inactive, or worse – asks for his/her anniversary date.

Probably most of us have been at the receiving end of a "rush to judgment". On my 28th birthday in 1978 as I was bicycling to classes at the U of A, I suffered a massive stroke. I didn't understand, at first, the reasons – either medically or spiritually – why something so horrible would happen to me. Doctors informed my family I was not expected to survive.

After a few weeks at WRMC, I finally recovered enough to where family and friends could visit – although I was still unable to speak clearly and my right side was paralyzed for almost 6 months.

One "friend" whispered in my ear, "What did you do wrong, Loren? God must not be pleased with you."

Talk about adding insult to injury! There I was – unable to move and barely talk, and, to compound the horror, I was looked upon as guilty until

proven innocent. A rush to judgment. I felt the "friend" was not speaking as a representative of a loving God, but as a critic. With friends like that, who needs enemies?

There was a man in antiquity who faced judgment from so called "friends" because he was going through tough times. His narrative went something like this: Job was a wealthy man who had many children. One day the devil accused God of protecting and spoiling Job. "If that protection is lifted," Satan theorized, "Job will turn his back and curse you." So, God allowed the test to begin. Job's wealth and health were taken away – as were Job's wife and children. He was left homeless in abject poverty, but still Job refused to blame God.

Soon his so-called "friends" came by to visit and bring "comfort" to their impoverished, sick "buddy". A few hours later they counseled Job that he must have done something wrong to deserve such shocking disasters. One "friend" called Job a liar for defending himself; another blamed Job's children for bringing evil on the family. All of them had nothing but negative to say – trying to explain Job's circumstances. They were the ultimate fault-finders, which left Job isolated

and alone in his misery. His "friends" only added fuel to the fire and were thus the worst kind of "advocates." Yet they put their derogatory words in the most logical forms – like sharp knives in the back.

The story contains such a lasting principle; it's been assigned a universal definition: Job's Comforter – "A person who aggravates distress under the guise of giving comfort."

Loyalty to one another is the glue that holds a union together, not just paperwork or some obscure contract that changes from time-to-time. "Solidarity" is the term unions use to put its purpose in a nutshell, and "Semper Fidelis" or "Semper Fi" is the Marine Corps slogan of a similar vein. Translated from Latin, the slogan means "Always Faithful" – which is defined as being always loyal to one another with an eternal commitment to fellow Marine comrades-in-arms.

Finally, to build up the Union – whatever is true, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is positive, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or worthy – focus on such things. Never rush to judgment, especially on one's own. Stick together. Be a friend to win a friend; that's union.

— The Arkansas Postal Worker

## Look How Far We've Come

### The Great Postal Strike of 1970

We know what great benefits we have now through collective bargaining, but where did we start?

Described by Time magazine as "the strike that stunned the country," the great postal strike of 1970 led to what we know now as collective bargaining which has brought us the benefits that we have today.

In March 1970, approximately 210,000 workers defied the law, stood in solidarity, and withheld their labor. Although the strike only lasted 8 days, they won better pay, better benefits, and job security. This led to our first contract and collective bargaining agreements for years to come.

Low wages and poor working conditions brought about the "want" for change, but Congress giving themselves a 41% wage increase while giving federal postal workers a 4% wage increase, was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.

Postal workers were the only federal employees that qualified for food stamps and welfare. Working 11 and a half hours per day, 89 days in a row, earning less than \$2 an hour, forced to work in unsafe, poor conditions, the employees had had enough. The NY City letter carriers walked off the job and formed a picket line. It wasn't long before postal workers from all crafts, from other states across the nation joined in the strike, demanding better wages, benefits, and safer working conditions. Striking was illegal. These employees risked going to jail, but believed in what they were fighting for. One person yelled out "Put me in jail. They haven't got a jail large enough to put all of us in."

President Nixon sent in the National Guard to work the mail. The country came to a screeching halt. It was said that the strike brought wall street and corporate America to their knees.

Eight days after the strike began, Moe Biller, President of what we now know as APWU, announced to the workers that they had won and it was time to go back to work. It was stated that the mail almost reached the ceiling.

Before the strike employees were making less than \$2 an hour and after the strike, \$6 an hour; 6% retroactive pay increase; 8% pay increase in 1970, pay scale step compression, collective bargaining rights, respect. The contract in 1971 contained average 18% pay increases, COLA, no lay off protections, overtime after 8 guaranteed hours, and rights to the grievance procedure. No postal worker was disciplined, fired, fined, or arrested because of the strike.

Years later, retired employees described what it was like to work for the postal service during the time that led up to the strike. One described that employees would be at the clock to start their shift only to be told "you are not punching in, you are going home." If there wasn't enough work, management would make you punch out and sit in the swing room until they needed you, if they needed you, and if they didn't get someone else who they liked better than you. Talk about favoritism.

To this day, we continue to reap the benefits through struggle over collective bargaining over wages and benefits. This is a right that other federal employees do not have.

Negotiate "not just what is good for you, but what is good for all of us." (Please see video on [apwu.org](http://apwu.org))

In Solidarity.

— The Tarheel Postal Worker

Michigan Messenger  
Deadline for  
Newsletter Submissions  
June 3, 2023