



PPA President Tony Carobine Retires

After serving the members for 36 years as President of the Postal Press Association, Tony has decided to retire.

Tony started working in 1974, at 17 years old at the Iron Mountain Post Office, in Iron Mountain, Michigan, as a Postal Assistant and immediately joined the APWU. He became a PTF in December of 1976 and wasted no time in becoming active in the APWU in 1977.

Over the years, Tony has served the 498-499 Area Local as a Steward, Editor, President as well as the ABA Representative. He went on to become the State Editor for the Michigan Postal Workers Union and held the office of President of the Michigan PPA for 5 years before becoming the President of the National Postal Press Association.

In the past 36 years, Tony has developed a training program for the PPA Editors that is second to none. He brings in top notch professionals from across the



country to teach in every subject that will help editors produce publications that will help to educate the members.

During this time, Tony has worked with other unions at the local and state level by serving on the Executive Council of International Labor Communication Association, AFL-CIO for 11 years serving as Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer, resulting in Tony being widely respected by his peers in the labor media.

I was honored to have the opportunity to present to Tony a Special Tribute from the State of Michigan at the PPA's Awards dinner for his 49 years of service with the American Postal Workers Union as well as his 36 years as President of the National Postal Press Association.

Congratulation to Tony on his service to the membership of the APWU and PPA members. Best Wishes for a long and well-earned retirement.



by
Michael
Mize

PRESIDENT

— CHANGES —

Postal Service changes are always occurring. We know change is difficult and when the change is forced on us it can turn our lives upside down. Many times, when changes come we do not agree with the change. Those that have been in the Service for many years have seen modernization of the Service. We have seen new machines come and some go. Sometimes the new plan works well and sometimes the plan fails. What we know is there will always be a new plan.

The current plan involves Sorting

and Distribution Centers (S&DC's). This plan has Carrier Units being moved to one location and package mail being sorted on a machine at the one location. The plan has hundreds of these across the Nation. We have some listed in Michigan. We have seen some delayed or postponed. Again, we must recognize that there will be change.

What I want to address is the rumors and often bad information that is being put out. Please do not believe every rumor you hear. If you are informed that your office will be moved or some other rumor about this, please reach out to your Union representative. Some rumors may be accurate, but some may not, and

no one needs extra stress.

I have been informed that some Management has told people they won't have a job, or they will have to move. Again, please reach out to the Union. Let us inform you to the best of our ability of the facts we know and how it would work. While I won't say that Management is outright lying about some of these things, I will say that what I have heard is Management using scare tactics to push our members into making decisions how management wants. If this happens to you, please contact the Union.

Know your rights. We also want everyone to know that the APWU will do our best to protect as many jobs as possible and protect each of you the best we can. We have great language in our Contract in Article 12

that requires specific notifications and actions. Our Regional Office has already been in touch with us, and we will work together with the Regional Office on all aspects of the S&DC's.

Please!!! DO NOT make a life altering decision from the rumors.

What we need to get through to each person seems simple but seems to elude us time after time. If we don't hear from you, it is difficult to assist you. ASK FOR A STEWARD!! Go to your management person and say "I have some questions about XXXX and I would like to have a steward provided to me for clarification on this issue." If they clarify, "Thank you, please provide me with a steward so my Union can inform me of their position on this issue".

In Unity.



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

EDITOR

What If There Was NOT A Union?

Folks complain about work or too much overtime. Well just a few years ago, postal workers enjoyed (not) a much different experience!

Let's jump back to 1970, just before the strike. You might come into work and be sent to the swing room (our break room) and wait to be told to punch in to work! Yep, that's right, you don't just come in and swipe in and go to a machine, you might have to wait for a truck to arrive, then the supervisor will come in and grab a hand full of employees to go and empty the trailer then go back to the swing room to wait until you are called again. You might be at the PO for 12 hours yet only work 4 or 5 hours! You could also have to work 6 or 7 days a week! Did I forget to mention, you only got paid for the hours you were on the clock, not the hours you were waiting!

Without a Union . . . well you might show up ready to work and the supervisor doesn't like you. Guess what, you might be in the swing room for 8, 12 hours and not get any hours! Or worse, that supervisor could just fire you and there will not be anyone to fight for you!

Say you are working on a machine and your partner is a "brown-noser" and gets away with doing nothing and the boss doesn't say or do a thing, but you stop to wipe your nose and you could be fired!

Heaven forbid you get sick! When

you come back to work, your job might be getting done by someone else and you are fired!

Many of the things we take for

be that small town in Wisconsin!

These benefits and rights have been earned by blood, sweat and tears of our fellow union brothers and sisters who

you got the raw deal on a grievance? Wanting to quit the Union? Quitting will not solve the issues, that will only make the issues grow worse. You see, each and everyone of you has the power to make a difference. How you ask, voting! That's right, voting. You see, the CMAL Election are coming up soon and you could choose to step up and be a part of it to make a difference.

So instead of complaining, start doing something about it! Learn how to be a steward. Ask of there is any projects that need help. Step up and run for office in the union. You can do little things or big things, it is all up to you!

Being a union member is a privilege not a right, use that privilege and help to make thing better than they are now! Solidarity for Everyone!

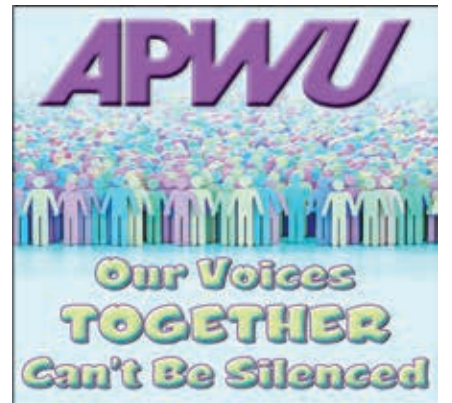


Photo credit: Chuck Zlatkin, NY Metro Local

granted like vacation time, sick leave, fare day work for a fare day pay could be gone! It could make working at a burger joint seem like a good thing! And OSHA, it just might

went on strike in 1970 with a strong chance that they might lose their job!

I ask each of you . . . why are you complaining? You don't like something that the Union is doing? Think



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- 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 | Great Lakes Area |
| Central MI | Mail Haulers |
| Detroit District | Jackson |
| Farmington | Muskegon |
| Flint | Southwest MI |
| 480-481 | Traverse City |
| 486-487 | Troy Local |
| 498-499 | Western MI |
| Gaylord | |

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AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO
 MARK DIMONDSTEIN, PRESIDENT
 JUDY BEARD, LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL DIRECTOR



APWU LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES IN THE 118TH CONGRESS

Bill Information	Why We Support This Bill
The Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82, S.597)	It would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) to end earned benefit reductions for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees who have qualified for Social Security, and their spouses.
The Social Security Expansion Act (H.R. 1046, S. 393)	It would increase benefits by \$200 a month, raise COLAs, bring back student benefits, and lift the cap on Social Security taxes so that the rich will begin to pay their fair share into the program.
The Equal COLA Act (H.R. 866)	It would end the disparity in COLAs for those who retired under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and those who retired under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).
The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (H.R. 20, S.567)	It would make it easier to join unions, allow workers to get rid of anti-union "right-to-work" laws, and increase worker protections.
The Vote at Home Act (H.R. 1439, S.700)	It would require that every registered voter in the nation receive their ballot via USPS with prepaid postage.
The USPS Shipping Equity Act (H.R. 3721)	It would fully remove the current prohibition on the Postal Service shipping beer, alcohol, and wine direct to consumers, allowing USPS to compete with private carriers in this sector.
House Resolution 277: Service Standards	It would express the sense of the House of Representatives that USPS must restore its service standards to those in effect as of July 1, 2012.
House Resolution 439: Anti-Privatization	It would express the sense of the House of Representatives that USPS take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Postal Service is not subject to privatization.



MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR

Preventative-Custodial Maintenance Routes

by Marti Jablonski,
Maintenance Craft Director

Maintenance members. Well by the time you are reading this it is probably that time of year again, and a couple months away from making it to the end of fiscal year 23. By now you should have a stack of work orders, 4776's, (aka Route sheets), personal notes, signed slips, and all other helpful facts to make your Line H grievance not only complete but winnable!

This year management thinks they have it all figured out and in some cases with your assistance they just may. You see they created a team, and I mean team, of HQ level supervisors that think they have this Line H number calculating and form following down to a science. Their only job has been to follow, track, chart, calculate, and make sure all the custodial hours and 4776's that you have or have not signed and given to management are input into their program so they do not have to pay out anymore Line H grievances.

However, their scheme forgot to one little thing, to teach these nimrods what exactly is a 4776, what should be on it, how those numbers and items are found, and the importance of them filled out accurately. A proper 4776 doesn't show just that you started your day at such a time and ended it at such a time. A proper 4776 (picture includ-

ed) should show and tell you what your job duties for that day are, when you should be doing them, how long they should take you, and when your lunch and breaks are, plus any other idiosyncrasies of your day!

It is coming to our attention that management is going behind you and things you may have marker "IC" (incomplete), have now become C . . . complete! Weird, did you know you had your very own work fairies to help? I mean hell, that would be fabulous, because I know I have fish fly season coming up and I will just send them out to shovel them up and power wash the building . . . Oh what are fish fly's aka (May-fly's) you ask? Well, you see they're these nasty smelling insects that come in droves in the middle of the night, smell like dead fish, rot in the sun and get maggots if not cleaned up, smash and pop into the ground when stepped on, get brought into the building, last approximately a month and a half or longer, and are altogether a pain in the ass of added work! And... yes you guessed it, they are not listed on a 4852, but after years of documentation and work orders I'm hoping to have changed that. Yes, you read that right, I can get fish fly clean up added to my 4852. You see there is a step 4 settlement that specifically says, that only work included in the staffing package can be counted! I can guarantee fish flies are not found in mine and so my

hr. or 2 a day will be subtracted, and if they then don't change the package for the next year again, it will continue.

As with every office and building, we all have our idiosyncrasies to deal with daily. You see, all offices have regular nuisances that require additional cleaning time. Your Postmaster can include these anomalies in the custodial staffing package or assign these duties on a work order. That's how you are given credit for the work. It is how Line H hours are appropriately recorded. They cannot fudge the numbers if we accurately document what is being done.

With spring here, we will be back out cutting lawns and trimming ditches, fence lines, retention ponds, etc. The same applies here, too: request a copy of your custodial package and see if the form says you have a riding mower or push, were you given time for tree trimming or hedges? What about brooming the parking lot? Does your staffing package say you have a riding sweeper? Again, please pay attention to the finer details and document! With custodial staffing and Line H, the devil is in the details.

The postmaster can change the package every year with just a click or a tap here and there. Do not let them tell you differently!! It's just they don't want to have to deal with it. Their boss are on them to cut cut cut . . . not add add . . . which is truly the problem! The only way to make them pay attention is to make them pay pay pay! You can get the recycling you do added, picking up of trays and tubs, oh you didn't know that's not your job? Well trust me it's not, but you can get that added! Get a work order from your supervisor or PM and have them sign and date it every time you pick them up! Make them accountable for all the beck and call jobs you do!

Even if it is your daily job to run express at noon, grab lunch for the boss, run vehicles to a carrier annex, DO LOCK CHANGES, whatever the case may be that is what should be on your route sheet AKA 4776!

Now for some I understand you have had this nice little gig where your boss leaves you alone and you do whatever it is you want and that you would rather not have to follow along with this day-to-day accountability but guess what, you have a job and it is their responsibility to make sure it is done.

It is not your job to throw parcels, that's why we have clerks, it is not your job to deliver mail, that's why we have carriers, but it is your job to provide a full day's work for a full day's pay, and if we want our jobs, we need to protect them. I know not many see the big picture of what management is doing and how if we give into to this signing their sheets and the work isn't done, then guess what on paper you have shown it is and then when you are gone, they

cut, because you have helped them show that position is no longer necessary. This company is coming down to numbers, micro management, excels, and spread sheets. If you haven't noticed that your supervisor, postmaster is never out walking around but sitting at their desk and on zoom after zoom, then wake up.

Follow up on the 4776's that you are being given daily, or shall I say - not given. Let's not be blind sheep. Don't do management's job. If they give you routes/directions, follow them, but if they don't, don't seek out their information. Just grab a notebook and document what you accomplish!

If you are handed the 4776, pay close attention to the listed duties. Some of them indicate US (utility specialist), RS (restroom specialist), or VS (vacuum specialist) in the top left corner within the top section. For those of you that have no clue what this means, it indicates that management has converted your office into a TL5/CTC office. And those routes they are handing you are for specific cleaning tasks. You see, the TL5 / CTC, in layman's terms, means Custodial Team Cleaning. One person goes through and does the vacuuming specialist duties, and the next person goes through and may get the trash or wipe the flat surfaces.

No one sweeps because dust brooms are not used anymore. Instead, we are supplied with useless floor Swiffer's, a vacuum they want you to haul around on your back, and pouch cleaning trays. Remember, your supervisor or team leader, are supposed to hand you your route sheet, little tray with gloves, cleaning packets, erasers, towels, and scrapers every day. Those are your new tools.

I know we once took pride in our work and were occasionally respected for the work we did, but those days are slipping away. You see, this company is being run into the ground by the upper echelon that has never done the work and has no clue what happens at your office every day.

As I have been saying in my previous articles those 4776 sheets should have items that are done daily and those items cannot be bypassed, for instance, bathrooms. Say you are the only custodian in a building and you call in sick, that doesn't mean when you come in the next day you have to work 10 or 12 hours to make up that work, it means that management has a responsibility to cover you when you are off and cover the jobs in which you would have had to do on that given day. At bare minimum the daily work.

I don't know about you but when I take a week's vacation and come back and have to work 12 hrs just to get the building back in a moderate shape it is beyond frustrating, because when a carrier takes a day off, guess what? Someone else carries their route and

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Item No.		MPE-Building Equipment Identification	Time	Pri- or- ity	Check List(s) Nos. Amount to be Serviced Including Work Units or Square Foot	Instructions
Numbers	Class	From	To			
1			800	805		FOLLOW ALL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS/ GET SUPPLIES & PROCEED TO WORK AREA.
2			805	830		POLICE MENS LOCKER AND RESTROOM; SWEEP, WIPE SINKS CHECK PAPER TOWELS & TOILET PAPER, CLEAN TOILETS
3			830	850		POLICE WOMENS LOCKER & RESTROOM; SWEEP, WIPE SINK CHECK PAPER TOWELS & TOILET PAPER, CLEAN TOILETS
4			850	700		POLICE UNISEX RESTROOM; SWEEP, WIPE SINKS, CHECK PAPER TOWELS & TOILET PAPER, CLEAN TOILETS
5			700	800		CLEAN INNER LOBBY, SUPERVOR AND POSTMASTER OFFICE SWEEP & MOP FLOORS, CLEAN COUNTERS AND DESKS, CLEAN DISPLAYS, LOBBY WINDOWS AND GLASS DOORS.
6			800	815		BREAK
7			815	835		TRAVEL & CLEAN NORTH STREET POST OFFICE; CLEAN WORKROOM AREA, COUNTERS, LOBBY AREA, SWEEP & MOP FLOORS, CLEAN UNISEX RESTROOM, DUMP ALL TRASH
8			835	935		TRAVEL & CLEAN BIRCHWOOD MALL POSTAL STORE; CLEAN WORKROOM AREA, COUNTERS, LOBBY SWEEP & MOP FLOORS, CLEAN UNISEX RESTROOM, DUMP ALL TRASH WASH WINDOWS, CLEAN PO BOXES.
9			935	1215		TRAVEL TO PORT HURON POST OFFICE AND CLEAN POSTAGE DUE WORK AREA AND CAGE; CLEAN OUTERLOBBY; SWEEP & MOP FLOORS, CLEAN COUNTERS AND DESKS
10			1215	1245		LUNCH
11			1245	1400		FOLLOW ROUTE 3 TUE, THUR, FRI WORK ORDER
12			1400	1415		BREAK
13			1415	1425		CLEAN JAN CLOSET; RESUPPLY CABINETS
14			1425	1430		WASHUP
15			1430			END TOUR

PRC Rejects USPS To Shut Down Public Injury Into Delivering For America

by Steve Hutkins

The Postal Regulatory Commission has denied the Postal Service's Motion for Reconsideration of the order creating a Public Inquiry docket into the Delivering for America plan (Order No. 6548). The Commission has also issued its first information request about the plan.

In its motion, the Postal Service had argued that the Commission was acting outside of its authority in establishing the public inquiry. "The Commission should use established mechanisms to ensure adequate oversight, consistent with its past decisions and its statutory authority," wrote the Postal Service. "An open-ended PI docket that encompasses review of all possible initiatives under the Plan is wholly unnecessary, unwarranted, and contrary to the Commission's statutory authority."

In denying the motion for reconsideration today, the Commission states that the motion was premature: "The Commission has merely opened a docket, creating a forum to learn more about strategic plan initiatives that may have a significant impact on the postal community. The Commission has not issued any orders or directed the Postal Service to take any action in this proceeding. By opening this inquiry, the Commission has not required the Postal Service to delay the implementation of any DFA Plan initiatives or required the Postal Service to postpone further strategic planning."

As for the scope of the Commission's authority, today's order says, "39 U.S.C. § 503 grants the Commission general authority to take any action that is 'necessary and proper' to carry out its 'functions and obligations' under

Title 39 of the United States Code."

And as for the Postal Service's claim that Section 503 does not allow the Commission to open this docket because this inquiry is not related to another Title 39 provision, the Commission states flatly, "The Postal Service is mistaken."

Also today the Commission issued its first information request about the DFA plan, some of which integrates questions posed in an information request submitted by PostCom back in April.

The Commission asks the Postal Service to provide a schedule of planned facility activations, including Sort and Delivery Centers (S&DCs), Regional Processing & Distribution Centers (RPDCs), Local Processing Centers (LPCs), Destination Hubs (DHUBs), and any other facility contemplated as part of the DFA Plan, with the location, facility type, planned date of activation, and existing facilities that will be affected and how.

The Commission also asks the Postal Service to provide details about the \$34 billion in cost savings promised in the DFA plan, with "documentation with any analysis or study the Postal Service prepared to estimate the cost savings associated with that initiative."



The Commission then notes the apparent contradiction in the Postal Service's statements about post office closings. The DFA plan itself refers to closing some stations and branches, but the Second Year Progress Report (as well as other Postal Service statements and the Postmaster General's testimony to Congress) says that no post offices will be closed as a result of the Sorting & Delivery Center plan.

The Commission therefore asks the Postal Service to "confirm that no post offices will be closed as part

of the DFA Plan" and "customers will not experience any changes to their local post office retail operations."

Finally, the Commission's information request asks the Postal Service to explain why it has determined seeking an advisory opinion was not necessary prior to the implementation of its new facilities and corresponding processing and logistics network realignments.

It's not clear what will happen next. The Postal Service could proceed to participate in the proceeding and, as *continued on page 6*

Preventative-Custodial Maintenance Routes

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when they come back, they don't have a week's worth of mail to case and carry. Or a window clerk calls in they don't just shut down the window, they move heaven and earth to find someone to go and sell those stamps. Well guess what, your job is just as important and necessary.

Have you forgotten what we just went through with covid? Where they added all kinds of extra cleaning on custodians, to make it sanitary and healthy? Well, that hasn't changed! Granted Covid has come under control but there are just as many germs and such that are our job to tackle! Granted monthly work can be done any day but it is still monthly and should be done accordingly and you should be noting such and if you have been reading carefully and following along. You will notice a lot of this falls directly on you to ensure that the paperwork is being

filled out properly and done every day, and then guess what. It also means that filling out the paperwork is not in the custodial Line H and should not be considered time towards Line H.

When they finally get it together and create proper custodial packages then all this won't even need to be grieved, because they will have the clean buildings the employees deserve, you will have the time and tools to do it. You see the whole custodial Line H contractual memorandum came to be necessary because management wasn't filling the custodial positions when they became vacant and some employees had to work in absolutely unhealthy and filthy facilities and for that our union created a calculate and make the postal service pay for their failure to fill the positions. Steve Raymer was a great NBA and found a way to make the postal service accountable for the health and well being of the employees

within the post office and to protect our jobs in maintenance.

Let's stay that course, do our due diligence in preserving our jobs and feel free to write down on that 4776 the work you did do, exactly HOW long, and what you DIDN'T do, because at the end of the day it is the postmas-

ter job to make sure to add any time of frequencies, they have requested us in the 4852 if it is going to be ongoing and continuing, or it will be subtracted.

As always stay true to you and yourself and we will win this fight!

It's Hammer time!
Gotta Bolt.



Michigan Messenger
Deadline for Newsletter Submissions
Sept. 16, 2023

RETIREE PRESIDENT



by Paul Browning

— Slow Going —

With the dog days of August sweltering on, Congress heads for summer recess and leaves the swamps of Washington D.C. behind to join millions of fellow Americans on vacation. Bills that would repeal penalties on Postal retirees and their spouses under the Civil Service Retirement System, change the COLA formula for older Americans to more truly reflect their actual cost of living on a yearly basis, eliminate the COLA differential in raises for CSRS and FERS retirees, all languish in Congress despite hundreds of lawmakers being in favor of them. (Note to self-ask APWU Legislative Director Judy Beard exactly how many Congressional Committees these bills have to go through. And subcommittees too. No wonder Judy is on the move 24/7.)

At USPS, Postmaster General DeJoy's 10-year plan of Super Consolidation trudges on albeit with an APWU negotiated Memorandum of Understanding limiting some of the crazier proposals. Retail operations will remain at current levels in small post offices. Distribution duties at the Sorting and Distribution Centers will be Function 4-clerk work. Nonetheless, both USPS and APWU acknowledge in the memo, there are a ton of issues to be discussed and addressed yet concerning job duties, job postings, and the paramount problem almost everywhere-Staffing.

So APWU members retired and still working find themselves wondering what next?

Well, for retirees the COLA for 2023 is on a pace for 3% increase for Social Security and CSRS, 2% for FERS. When Congressional representatives do return to Washington, hopefully they will pass some laws about governing the country instead of holding endless hearings (see above italics) with nothing more than a lot of finger pointing, accusations without proof, name-calling, etc. If they can actually go to work, there is a piece of proposed legislation called the Social Security Fairness Act. The bill was introduced in the Senate by a Democrat from Ohio and in the House by a Republican from Louisiana, hardly hotbeds of radical socialists. Indeed, in the House, 282 Representatives from both parties have signed on as co-sponsors in favor of it. In the Senate, the number is 45. With Congressional reps supposedly back home, here's retirees' chance to contact/look them up and let them know how you feel. You can tell them you what something done that is actually beneficial to their constituents instead of symbolic posturing.

Emasculated GOP Speaker McCarthy also has made noises about

Social Security reform legislation. Anyone remember not too long-ago Republicans calling Joe Biden a liar when he said the R's were in favor of cutting Social Security? Apparently, they count on voters' short-term memories as they attack distractions like what they call "cultural Marxism" Huh? Or "wokeness", a word the dictionary describes as "being aware, especially of social problems such as racism and inequality". Republicans continue to follow the P.T. Barnum school of politics-there's a sucker born every minute. Even ones who will give money to a self-proclaimed billionaire who said he would spend his own money to run for President.

For those still under the yoke of Postal management, the huge issue will be the Collective Bargaining Agreement that ends in September of 2024. It's a year away but before you know it, APWU and USPS will be sitting at the table to start negotiations. With the very recent landmark United Postal Service-Teamsters Union contract that has finally taken a huge step towards eliminating the dreadfully unfair two-tier wage system, Union negotiators across the board have a new weapon to bring to the table. Sure, the Teamsters had the threat of a strike and APWU does not. But, if no agreement is reached with USPS, an Arbitration Panel decides the Contract. Traditionally wage issue arguments are made by APWU with comparisons to similar occupations and...

Voila! There is a prime parcel delivery service example to compare to PMG DeJoy's parcel delivery service. Apples to apples Mr. Arbitrator.

It sounds simple to this writer and whether it is or not should soon be proven as to what happens with the contract negotiations between the Postal Service and the National Association of Letter Carriers. As I write this and do a Google search of USPS-NALC, the NALC website tells me that their contract expired in May of 2023 but the parties continued to negotiate during a 60-day mediation period that expired July 19. No further word on their website.

Speaking of DeJoy, Local Union officers seem to have much more distaste for him than National officers higher up. I written copiously before about the National APWU Local Presidents Conference and the delegates to the 2022 APWU National Convention calling for DeJoy's removal. The subject may have gotten to the point of a yawner with the average postal employee. That is, if the average postal employee is still around. Between workers grabbing the retirement ring* as soon as possible and with the reported turnover rate of almost 60% for new non-career workers, one has to wonder exactly how many in the middle workers are left.

*A caveat to those thinking of retiring-it looks like average time to get the accurate annuity calculated by the Office of Personnel Management is around three months. In the

interim, a guesstimate monthly annuity is usually paid that is considerably short of the actual dollar amount due. Also, keep in mind that Medicare and a FEHB plan for a married couple is going to cost around ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) a year for the retiree plus spouse. And for anyone trying to contact OPM, SSA, or even VA, all those government departments are woefully understaffed just like the Post Office. When the federal budget gets cut, so do people who work for the government and provide services.

As for the newbies sticking it out, the good news is that APWU has been successful in getting thousands of Postal Support Employees converted to career. Evidently, the carrot DeJoy has held out to National Union leaders has been his willingness to increase the number of career employees. Does it make up for ridiculous short staffing and excessive overtime hours plus oppressive workroom floor supervisors? Of course, not and that's the tightrope APWU National President Mark Dimondstein tries to walk with DeJoy's 10-year plan, which as Mark calls it, contains "the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly". Still, with the aforementioned contract negotiations coming up, it's time to not just talk tough but be tough. I'm sure APWU activists await with baited breath for the tone and result of the NALC contract. It's just too damn bad we aren't negotiating together like we used to. Whatever happened to strength in numbers?

PRC Rejects USPS To Shut Down Public Injury Into Delivering For America

continued from page 5

the Commission observes, simply object to individual questions or request non-public treatment of particular responses. In a footnote in the first information request, the Commission also invites the Postal Service to request an informal, off-the-record technical conference to address some aspects of the DFA plan.

A third possibility is that the Postal Service will appeal the Commission's order denying its motion for reconsideration. That would send the matter to the DC Circuit, where it will take many months before the issue is resolved.

It's entirely possible that the Postal Service will take this third route since the Postmaster General believes, as he testified to Congress, the PRC's interference "is not helpful. It is going to put this whole plan in jeopardy."

If the Postal Service does take this issue to the DC Circuit, it would presumably refuse to respond to information requests while the matter is before the court. The Commis-

sion has the power to issue subpoenas, but the Postal Service has already warned the Commission against doing so. As the Postal Service stated in its motion for reconsideration, "An attempt to use the Commission's subpoena power as a legal basis to initiate Docket No.

PI2023-4 would be mistaken."

The Commission has given the Postal Service until June 28 to respond to the first information request, so we shouldn't have to wait too long before we learn where this is all headed.

— SavethePostOffice.com

Affiliate Website Directory

- American Postal Workers Union www.apwu.org
- APWU National Postal Press Assn www.apqupostalpress.org
- APWU Auxiliary www.apwuauxiliary.org
- APWU Health Plan www.apwuhp.com
- APW Accident Benefit Association..... www.apw-aba.org
- Postal Employees Relief Fund www.postalrelief.org
- AFL-CIO www.aflcio.org
- Union Label www.unionlabel.org
- Union Plus..... www.unionplus.org
- Labor Start www.laborstart.org
- Economic Policy Institute..... www.epi.org
- APWU Voluntary Benefits Plan www.voluntarybenefitsplan.com



by Eric
Chornoby

Steward
Customer
Care Center
APWU 480-481
Area Local

Management's New Unreasonable Accommodations

For as long as I have worked at the Post Office a clear divide exists in the minds of all employees. It is 'Us' vs 'Them'. Most often, 'US' (the bargaining units) and 'THEM' (Management). Management is quick to say any request we have to do our job safely and healthily is unreasonable and only approves a request when it benefits THEM. Recently, Management has made every effort to drive this point home.

The Testing Grounds

I work at the Call Center, and we tend to be the testing ground for Management's new ideas. Since we work directly under headquarters, it is far quicker to roll out a new policy change, directive or program. The original intent of the Call Center is a place for injured employees to go. We have a complement that requires a significant number of jobs that must be rehabilitation. For years, the Call Center was treated as the last place you can go. Management was consistent that no further accommodations could be made. Several former Carriers joined our craft, and injured clerks returned to work.

For many, the Call Center aggravated their conditions. Carpal Tunnel from sorting mail? Typing does not help. Lower back pain from a fall? Sitting for eight hours and being unable to move becomes extremely uncomfortable if not painful. But this is your only job option for many. Many of the remaining employees volunteered due to other facilities beginning to excess or after conversion to FTR from PSE, this is where we went.

When I became a Steward about five years ago, I was instantly hesitant to recommend people turn in medical / doctors notes. I am old school, and do not trust Management. I always feared Management would use a note, or request for additional non-work time against an employee. Whenever you admit you can't work an 8-hour day, your job is in jeopardy.

Managements Plan of Action

Now, years later, Management has slowly begun walking to that goal. My fellow Call Center Agents were told by Management that if you had a Doctors Note for Restroom or off the phone activities, you are more

than welcome to do so and it would be allowed. If you need to go to the bathroom five times a day because you drink water to be able to talk on the phone, Management will encourage you to get a note.

It did not start overnight. It started by documented discussions about frequent restroom use. We, the Union, fought this and received an agreement that restroom use is not tracked and would only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

it does not violate the contract.

The Union used the Grievance procedure to fight this, but Article 34 is clear. OSHA has rules for bathroom access, but not for time to use it as long as you have access - which paid breaks cover. And the Department of Labor has rulings on work hours and actual work, which basically concludes that work hours are time spent doing your job function. Once you turn in a note and ask for time not working, the Contract and

A Supervisor will try to 'be your friend' and recommend you get a note to prevent discipline, and then suddenly you are notified that someone from HR needs to talk to you. You get interviewed and granted an accommodation. Two weeks later you realize your paycheck is short. I have Grieved this and lost, as Management is not violating the contract by honoring your medical documentation.

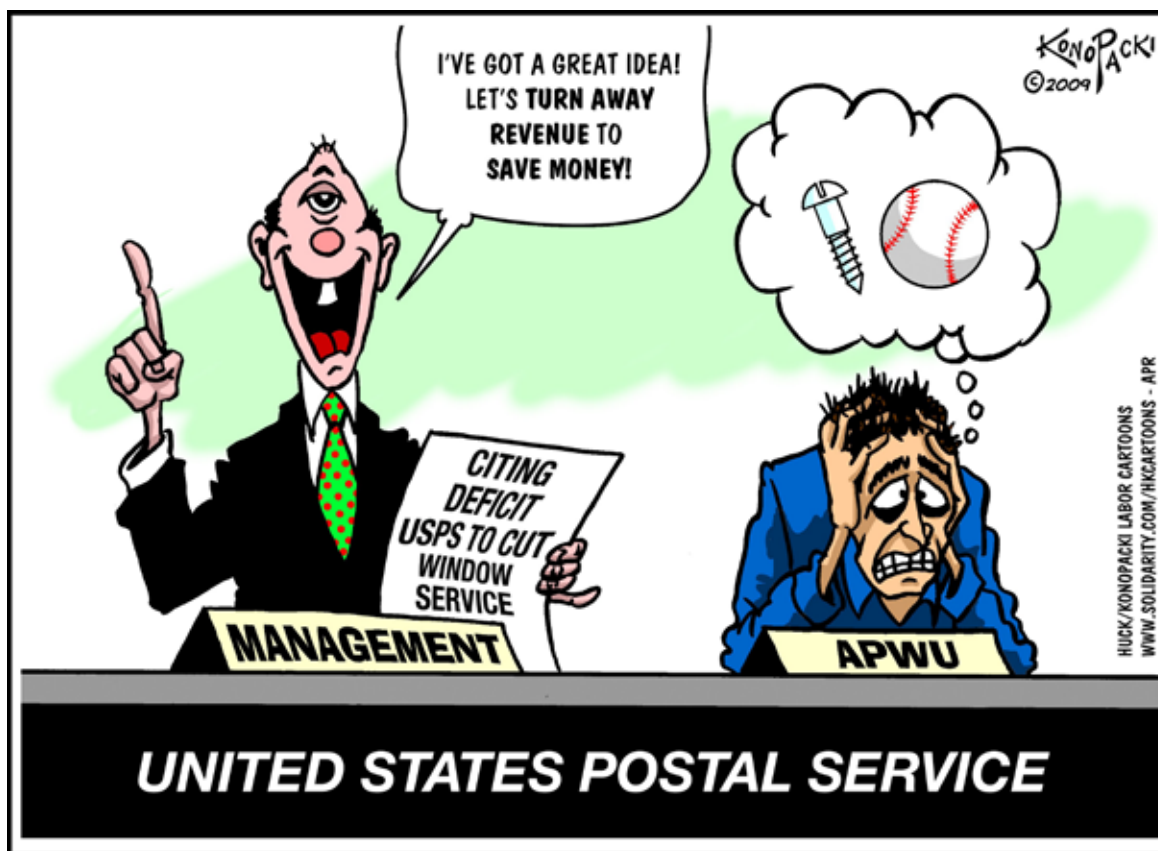
At no point in time does Management say you may not be paid, and no one recommends you speak to a Steward. In fact, after all the cases I handled related to this, only one person even informed the Union they were spoken to by Management in advance before pay stopped. As the Steward, I didn't find out until pay had stopped for weeks. Dozens of our coworkers just went along with what Management said.

At the Call Center I fight this by convincing Management to now involve the Union in meetings involving a Reasonable Accommodation. We also push back with what language we have under Article 13 and Article 19 (Through the EL 307) to allow the employee to voluntarily rescind the Accommodation request. These were not

contractual rights, but something we had to fight for.

As an APWU member, if at any point you are in a meeting with multiple members of Management, you need to ask for a Steward. One is bad enough, two is digging your own grave. I don't care if the Supervisor is a childhood friend, and the Manager went to college with you. If Management tries to convince you to provide documentation which includes restrictions not outlined in the ELM, you need to speak to a Steward immediately. Any Steward can guide you through the process, explain the consequences, and help navigate a way out of this. Sometimes notes are good, but only when they protect you.

A Reasonable Accommodation is a modification you need to perform your job. That is perfectly fine and encouraged. An Unreasonable Accommodation is an accommodation that benefits Management, and can put your job or pay in jeopardy. The Union is only as strong as our membership, us. We have fought for years to have the protections in our contract. Management will always try to take back OUR rights when they can, and WE can't let them.



Then, Management began attempting to cite long periods of restroom as work avoidance. Discussions and negotiations later, Management switched tactics - they asked for a note. Management would completely stop asking you about restroom use if you turned in a note. At this point I recognized Managements game plan - if you can't win through discipline switch to Reasonable Accommodation.

Not Exactly Reasonable

Management began referring employees to RAC, the Reasonable Accommodation Committee. Unlike other facilities covered by a District, the Call Center had their own RAC. Your Request will happily be approved, and the accommodation is to allow you to punch out and use the restroom to take care of personal business. All the kindness you were shown feels like a slap in the face after you learn that now your paycheck is impacted. If you go to the restroom once a day, for five minutes, Management will still punch you out after you submit a Doctors Note. That is your Reasonable Accommodation. The worst part? You asked for it and

Law has no defense to automatically reverse that decision.

I have called the Department of Labor for clarification on actual work and if this is permissible, and it is perfectly acceptable to not pay you for not actually working. The nuance here is that at the Call Center you have dozens of reasons to need a minute 'not working'. You may need to use the bathroom. Or walk to stretch your leg that goes numb to do an on-the-job injury. Or you may need five minutes after getting cussed out by a customer. None of that matters once you turn in your doctor's note.

When Management Wins, They Continue

I hear it now, 'Eric, I don't work at the Call Center, why should I care?' This could be happening in your office and you just don't realize it. We all know once Management learns they can get away with something they continue and expand into trying it elsewhere. We need to be proactive as a Grievance will not resolve an issue like this - we must all be educated on the process. You could be several steps into this process and not realize it.

NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT



by
Linda
Turney

The Interview – Why Are You Irregular In Attendance?

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

There is an old joke, “When did you stop beating your wife?” The structure of the question is funny to some, disturbing to others. Any response condemns you. Studies show that most people do not see through a question like this. A question such as this is a deliberate attempt to characterize the responder’s actions with a negative answer no matter what they say.

In an Investigative Interview (II) or a

Pre-Disciplinary Interview (PDI) management will ask, “Why are you irregular in attendance?” The answer will always imply guilt. You then are considered irregular in attendance.

Answer—My mother is ill and I have to take care of her.

Answer—I have difficulty with child care.

The way the question is framed can alter a person’s opinion, not just shading it with bias but changing the way past events are remembered by both the Grievant and by Manage-

ment. Your Grievant is not irregular in attendance because attendance is based on the individual’s situation. It is not based on the particular number of absences a Grievant may have had. Stewards: do not allow this type of questioning in a PDI/II. Object.

The supervisor asking the questions is deceptively coercing the Grievant to admit the underlying charge. Management is not asking the grievant a question. Management is accusing the Grievant through the question.

The Grievant and the Union Steward do not want to agree with an implication which imposes guilt during the Interview. The answer is, “I am not irregular in attendance.” I may have some issues that I am working on correcting.

Our stewards must know to recognize these questions. All the questions are not the same. We must first recognize the question as being misleading. Then stop the Grievant by objecting and removing the ambiguity and vagueness of the question. Such as, “I have not been irregular in attendance.” This should require management to go through each and every absence such as: you were absent on January 15 — answer I had to get a COVID test and documented that date to management. You were absent on February 20 — answer I had to take my child to the doctor. You were absent on March 7 — I had a car problem. A requirement to address every absence with a reason that will show the mitigating circumstances of the individual’s situation.


The steward needs to speak up and reject any assumption that is made in an interview question. State, I object that your questioning is making an assumption of guilt.

The steward needs to call out any faulty assumption. Tell the supervisor there is an assumption of innocence until the Grievant is proven guilty. Respond with a question, what information do you have that shows us the Grievant did not have cause to be absent.

The steward can respond by stating, the assumptions that you are making are leading to false conclusions. These are leading the Grievant into an admission to something that she/he/they will be making an admission unless the steward stops it.

Our stewards must know to recognize these loaded questions with false assumptions and stop the Grievant by objecting and removing the ambiguity of the question. Tell management this question is filled with ambiguity. I am advising not to answer until you reform the question.

Stewards be prepared and aware that this type of questioning **will** happen in your Interviews. Tell them to stop using a leading question in an attempt to force your Grievant into unconsciously admitting to guilt. The language that management uses communicates more effectively that we consciously think it does. Beware, the statistics for falling prey to creating unconscious guilt is great. These types of questions are used by management in order to get the Grievant to say what they want to hear in order to issue discipline.



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