

# THE DETROIT APWU POSTAL WORKER

DETROIT DISTRICT AREA LOCAL AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

March, 2019

2011 POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARD WINNER  
2017 POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARD WINNER

## The Voice of the President . . .



From The President

Keith Combs, Sr.  
President

## 2019 State Of The Union Address For The APWU-DDAL

Greeting brothers and sisters, it is a humbling experience to have your continued support for three more years. It has come to my attention that our membership would like the officers of the local to be more visible on the workroom floor and in the facilities. We are in the field often and as we walk through the various locations you may not always see us. However, that doesn't mean we aren't there.

In 2016 we achieved many goals that we set for the year. I will say to the membership that we could not have achieved any of those goals if we had been in the field more than we were in our offices.

In 2019 with the foundation of our administration set on leveled ground, I believe that you may see a little more of us. It has always been my intention to provide the very best representation for this membership.

### Finances

Our incoming finances for 2019 are almost always less than the year prior and that will continue this year as well, because as you know we have members who decide to get out of the union for whatever reason. Also members that get promoted to supervisors and of course we have a few non-members mostly in the maintenance craft. I will say to all non-members and I quote "that when you decide not to join your local union you than sign a silent proxy with management to help them further their agenda." It is a fight that at some point you may have to choose a side.

We can achieve many of our finance goals just by getting our non-members to join. It is only \$29.00 a pay period to help further the union. Our administration have not raised your dues while we have been in office, simple because we don't want to put that burden on the membership, so your officers and our budget committee has come up with strategic ways to cut cost in other areas to balance our budget.

We have decreased each and every utility bill that your union utilizes, and of course as you know from past years that the huge bill owed to our attorneys has been paid. I stated last year that we starting to pay the Retirement benefit again after it was stopped. We have paid roughly around 20 retired employees amounting to \$6,000.00. It isn't the amount we wanted pay, but it sure does bet \$0.00 for over 6 years. We have to become creative in ways to boost our finances such as

door could have actually been push over, not even a bolt was holding it together. We have purchased a new furnace, but our building has a total of three furnaces, and the other two are aging and need to be replaced as well. We have replaced the outside steps and installed a banister. We have installed a new hot water heater. Two new copiers were purchased because the old machines were constantly breaking down and we would have to wait weeks in some cases on parts to be

ordered. 'A new speaker system had to be purchased because the old system was very old and no longer working properly. These are just some of the upgrades that have been completed and it could not have been done without the members support and cooperation.

The repairs that we need to focus on, is a new roof for our building. We have tried to patch our current roof several times in the past year, but it is not providing us with a tight seal and we still must continue to address roof leaks. Our estimates are around \$20, 000.00 and this is something that must be addressed very soon. We need to replace our windows all around the building. Electrical issues are a concern as well as ceiling

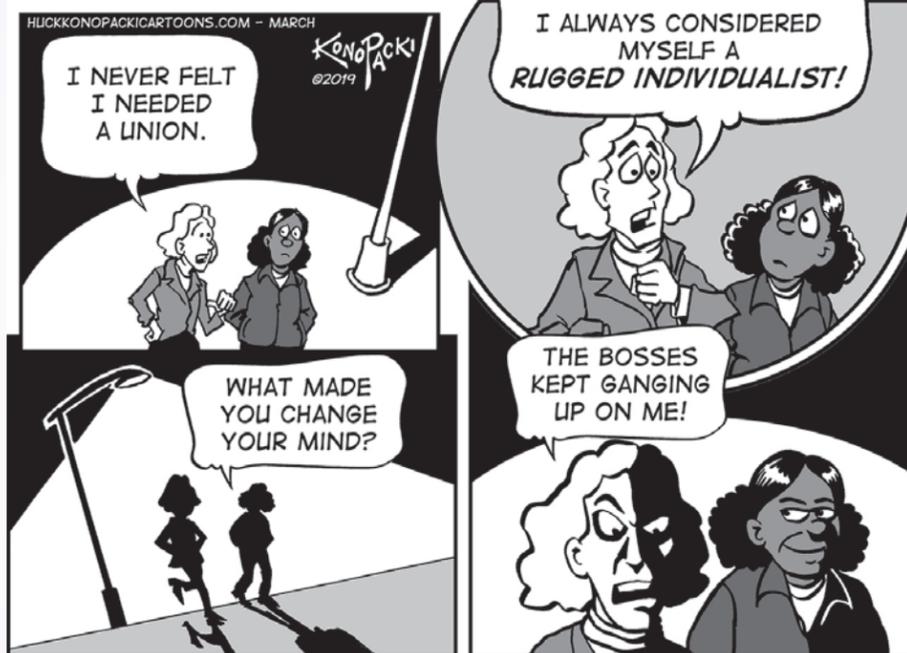
panels or new ceiling. The lower level kitchen needs upgrading and the outside fence and automatic gate needs replacing too just to give you some idea of where we stand today.

### Union Goals

It is very important to me that we grow as a Local Union. We must begin the process by enabling and fostering access to the union for new and younger members. It is necessary to get our older members to understand our access to one another too. Our stewards and the members are the eyes on the workroom floor and both are needed to grow our agenda and our ability to sustain and forward the union's position locally.

A huge goal is to be inclusive and available to all members. The digital divide has caused many to think that we don't hear their concerns. I believe inclusiveness will entitle all members to feel included and will ensure ev-

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auctions, functions, events, raffles. Our local needs your help to stay on top of our economics.

### Building Upgrades And Repairs

We have in the last 3 years painted some parts of your union hall. We will continue to address other area of the building. It is amazing how just a little paint on the walls will warm up our decor. I would like to make our building appearance look good. This will hopefully give our members a warm feeling when visiting. It will also be a statement to the community that we have pride in our business ownership, and we want to be an example to the entire 8 mile area.

We have made several repairs to our aging building. I realized 3 years ago that our union hall had been severely neglected. For example, our front entrance was literally hanging on by caulk. When our new secure door was installed the installer said the old



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**Detroit Postal Worker**

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Associate Editor's Report

David Watkins  
Associate Editor

Who doesn't like being entertained?

I love good singing, good dancing, good comedians, good acting and good musicians. These are the entertainers today's audiences have probably seen the most on shows such as America's Got Talent. But what of those talented people who are not billed as any of the aforementioned? There are plenty of acts that fall into different categories (which is not to say that these other entertainers do not include some comedy or song in their performances). With the exception of sports, I have listed two dozen of my favourite forms of entertainment.

Of course I shall first list a few acts that I would not care to see (or hear):

- Sword swallowing
- Puppeteers (including Muppets)
- Hog callers
- High wire artists
- Contortionists
- Clowns (I really enjoyed them decades and decades ago--especially Milky — but not anymore)
- Guessers . . . of weights, ages, etc.

I am not saying for one moment that the above listed are not talented, just that I have no desire to see them. In the Top 24 List which follows, I shall not necessarily be touting one talent over another. I would not say, for example, that The Nicholas Brothers were better at dancing than Louis Armstrong was at playing his trumpet (that may even sound like a silly comparison to some folks). Ah, but I could say that I would prefer to see one over the other — a tough call in this example.

Here are a few talents which almost made the list . . . quick change artists, pool table trick shooters, destroyers/wreckers. When I was ten, I'm pretty sure that the destroyers would have been at the top of the list. Have you seen the two guys on television who destroy offices and rooms in minutes!? Free runners would be at the top of my list today if their venue were a bit more contained and I could see them on stage as opposed to over an expanse of territory and property . . . talk about an exciting skill.

**Twenty Four Acts That I Enjoy**

- 24. Caricaturists – I enjoy watching a good ten-minute rendering
- 23. Animal Tricks (some...and not in a circus)
- 22. Whistling – an underrated skill which we seldom witness anymore
- 21. Cheering – not until I met a competitive cheerleader did I realize the intricacies of cheering (and did you know that Samuel L. Jackson and George Bush were cheerleaders?

# That's Entertainment

Well, Halle Berry and Madonna, too) 20. Jumping Rope – have you seen boxer Mark Breland jumping rope? Treat yourself

- 19. Jugglers
- 18. Yo Yo masters – Steve Brown and comedian Tom Smothers are excellent . . . I was fairly good with a Duncan Imperial back in middle school (it was junior high school back then)

17. "Invulnerability" – various stages of imperviousness to pain incredible

16. Balancing and Stacking Objects (now they're flipping water bottles)

15. Cowboy Tricks – including lariat tricks (Will Rogers started this way), fast draws and trick shots (Sammy Davis, Jr. was an expert)

14. Human Statues – the skill this takes, wow – my wife and I saw a guy so good that he looked like an actual statue; we witnessed something terrible as a couple tried unsuccessfully to make him move before putting out a cigarette on his hand of course, he moved then – and in anger

13. Tumbling/Acrobats

12. Fast Eaters, one name: Kobayashi I won three fast eating contests in my youth; the funniest incident was when my brothers and I came in first, second and third in a backyard picnic watermelon eating contest. Our mother was not proud, but embarrassed – go figure

11. Fast Talkers – Clio Award winner and world record holder, John Moschitta comes to mind. His 586 wpm clip became well known in commercials in the eighties

10. Mimes – quite the opposite of the last entry; I especially liked Shields and Yarnell, who had their own television show

9. Target Hitting – be it arrow or knife, bullet or playing card, this activity hits the bulls eye for me

8. Yodeling – my wife and I may be the only ones I know who appreciate yodeling it can be considered a form of falsetto singing, but it is also utilized as a communication technique in parts of Central Africa and in the Alps Bette Midler is one of the few (recent) stars I've heard yodeling

7. Magic – I've seen so many magicians that I usually bypass them these days, but some of them are still pretty incredible the sleight-of-hand pickpockets are out of sight (pun intended)

6. Feats of Strength – not strong-

man contests (which are great, but considered sports contests)...rather individual feats are the type of act I mean to include here

5. Martial Arts demonstrations – especially swordplay no board breaking here

4. Memory Tricks – David Farrow memorized 59 decks of cards in random order (world record) one performer on stage had audience members stand up and say their names – he then told them their telephone numbers; he had memorized the local telephone book . . . and I would love to meet Jill Price, who is not a performer but has a most advanced form of hyperthymestic syndrome wherein she remembers virtually everything (and I thought I was doing something when I memorized the first 100 digits of pi – you know, 3.14159, etc.)

3. Ventriloquists – remember Willie Tyler and Lester, Paul Winchell, Shari Lewis . . . what remarkable talents; Jeff Dunham is one of the few modernists with whom I'm acquainted

2. Sound Effects – Herb Dixon is great, but I've never seen anyone to match Michael Winslow (from Police Academy fame). I saw Winslow in Detroit in the nineties: one of the best shows I've ever attended.

1. Impersonations – There have been many fantastic impersonators: Frank Gorshin, Rich Little, Sammy Davis, Jr. (yes, he was great in so many areas), Marilyn Michaels. Eddie Murphy is very good also as is Frank Pisani. But there is one special entertainer who was an excellent impersonator as well as a comedian, singer and dancer. His name was George Kirby. He could sing like Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan-wow. (He was a voice impersonator, not a female impersonator/incidental and coincidental) Kirby's tale a bitter-sweet one. But, treat yourself – he's on YouTube for the modern audience.

Although I'd rather see an excellent tumbler, for example, than a poor ventriloquist (Edgar Bergen), what I am trying to convey is that 'all things being equal' (which they are not), I'd prefer an excellent voice impersonator to an excellent "anything else".

Now, if only I could see a ventriloquist who did impersonations and sound effects . . . there goes my paycheck, 'cause THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT.

[www.apwudetroit.org](http://www.apwudetroit.org)

Lots more information and pictures are available at your website [www.apwudetroit.org](http://www.apwudetroit.org).

Questions concerning the website can be directed to our web designer "Dale Zanardelli" at [webmaster@apwudetroit.org](mailto:webmaster@apwudetroit.org)



## Vice President's Report

Patrick Chornoby  
Executive  
Vice President

Greetings, Union Brothers and Sisters. I have to begin my article with a sincere "thank you" for your continued support in our December 2018 Officers Election. I began working for the union in 1978, over 40 years ago, and there has been no greater privilege in this world than to serve the membership of this union. I am forever grateful and thankful that you have the faith and confidence in me to represent you for another term of office. Thank you.

### Your Union Made History – AGAIN APWU vs. Hollingsworth MTESC

Greetings, Union Brothers and Sisters. The title of this article should read "THEY" made history. "THEY" meaning Hollingsworth employees, and we, the American Postal Workers Union Detroit District Area Local, made history AGAIN as well, as we organized a MTESC plant for a second time.

MTESC is an acronym for Mail Transport Equipment Service Center. Our MTESC services our 482 District, as well as central Michigan and other connecting states with repairing, sorting, stacking, emptying and supplying equipment for our post office employees to use. The APWU has been in negotiations with Hollingsworth, the current USPS MTESC contractor, for over a year now, attempting to negotiate a fair contract for the workers in the plant.

It has been very difficult dealing with the Hollingsworth Company, as it is known as an anti-union company. This is evidenced by their refusal to hire any of our APWU members when they acquired the USPS MTESC contract in 2016. After we filed a National Labor Relations Board charge against the company, Hollingsworth offered to settle and offer employment to all of the APWU members. There was a monetary settlement awarded as well. After a year had gone by, still no contract negotiated, one of the companies' anti-union employees filed a petition with the NLRB to decertify the American Postal Workers Union as their representative. The employer spent a lot of money and time meeting with the employees, trying to convince them that the American Postal Workers Union was not for their best interests. There was a very uncomfort-

able atmosphere in the plant.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) held a vote in the facility on December 12, 2018. The result of the vote was that the Detroit District Area Local American Postal Workers Union (APWU), AFL-CIO was once again certified as the bargaining representative of the Hollingsworth employees. SUCCESS was achieved from the hard work of the union and the many employees in the facility who spread the word that the union was there to help them, and to negotiate a fair contract, with fair wages and benefits. Many thanks go out to the employees who put their jobs on the line to support the union. They faced bullying from their co-workers, harassment from many, threats of closing the plant if the union got in, losing their jobs and cuts in pay. But there were a lot of supporters who rose to the challenge of making their workplace a better place for everyone. We may not understand it today, but the few employees who jeopardized their jobs to support the

Postal Workers Union, we postal employees would be making about half of our current salaries, and we would be the ones required to work without pay during a furlough. Think about it. I am thankful for the Union every day, and this is just another reason why our countries' workforce needs unions.

### Letters Of Demand File That Grievance

Every craft employee could be subjected to being issued a letter of demand from the postal service. It could come from your supervisor, manager or even your postmaster. Most of us think 'Letters of Demand' are issued for shortages in a window clerks' accountable stock. However, Letters of Demand can include any shortage that the Postal Service determines you are responsible for, and it covers employees from ALL crafts.

Think about that for a minute. You and I being required to go to work, not being paid, and at the same time being prohibited from seeking other employment, simply

The postal service has issued Letters of Demand to Motor Vehicle Craft employees and Maintenance Craft employees as well. If the Postal Service makes a mistake and over pays you, they give you a Letter of Demand. If the Postal Service doesn't

***"It is tragic that our government would allow federal employees to go any amount of time without a paycheck, while still requiring them to go to work."***

union did it for unselfish reasons, and must be recognized.

Thank you, Monique Harris. You never gave up the fight in making the plant a better, safer, fairer and decent place to work. It was truly an honor to have you stand by my side during the negotiations and union vote. Thank you, Keith McConnell. You fought for honesty and fair treatment of all workers as well. Making sure the "truth" got out to the employees, dispelling the negative message of the employer. Thank you, Willie Henderson. Although we didn't always see eye-to-eye, you fought for honesty and integrity in the plant. You condemned the employers' favoritism and displayed strength. Thank you, Uno Mahone. Although you have left the plant to pursue better employment, you started the ball rolling in requiring the employer to treat all employees fairly. Last, however, not least, thank you, Petra Coronado. You were instrumental in spreading the word to co-workers about unions – answering their concerns regarding the purpose of unions.

So many have not been mentioned here, and there are many more who helped organize the Hollingsworth plant. Yes, you made history again! Now, let's get this contract implemented!

### USPS Employees Thankful For Their UNION

By now, we have all heard of the current climate between the Presi-

dent of the United States and the Federal workers who had been on furlough from their jobs recently. It is tragic that our government would allow federal employees to go any amount of time without a paycheck, while still requiring them to go to work. As postal employees, you may wonder why I am even addressing this issue as part of my current article. Let me tell you why. Prior to the great postal strike of 1971, we, as United States Postal Service employees, were in the same position that all of the other federal employees are in. We would have been furloughed just like the other federal workers if we hadn't organized. If we didn't organize back in 1971, go on strike, and put our jobs on the line, we would be the ones today being forced to deliver the mail and not get paid for it.

Think about that for a minute. You and I being required to go to work, not being paid, and at the same time being prohibited from seeking other employment, simply because we were federal employees. It sounds a little unrealistic, doesn't it? Sounds like our government was operating under a dictatorship, doesn't it? Well, it would be the case today if it weren't for the American Postal Workers Union and our forefathers who banded together to fight for us to have collective bargaining rights...and for us to break away from the other federal employees, their government rules and regulations, so we could negotiate our own futures.

We once had, like other federal workers, what was called "collective begging". This is where we would have to go to the United States Congress to negotiate our raises, working conditions, and benefits. Now, we have "collective bargaining", where we negotiate our contracts with the Postal Service, and if we cannot agree to a contract condition, we go to an arbitrator to determine our contract.

When the news interviewed some of the federal agents who work security at the airports, I was surprised to hear that their salaries were about half of what postal employees make. They went further to say that they weren't receiving their pay checks, continuing to say that they were being forced to work because they were Federal employees, and part of homeland security.

properly collect your health premium deductions from your paycheck they will issue you a Letter of Demand. If the Postal Service pays you a continuation of pay, and later Injury Compensation denies your claim, they will give you a Letter of Demand requesting you pay back the overpayment.

What are your rights if you receive a Letter of Demand? First, immediately file a grievance within fourteen calendar days of your receipt of the demand letter. Even if you believe the postal service is correct in issuing you the Letter of Demand, file a grievance. The reason is this: the Union can help negotiate payments on the demand that you and your family can afford. Additionally, if you do file a grievance, the postal service cannot unilaterally take the money from you until your grievance is adjudicated, even if it takes several months.

One last important piece of information, never give your supervisor or postmaster any money when they tell you that you owe them money. Even if your window drawer is short fifteen dollars, NEVER hand over the money without a written Letter of Demand. Every request for payment to the postal service MUST be in writing, and you MUST be given appeal rights. This is covered under the Debt Collection Act, and Article 28 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Stay safe, my union Brothers and Sisters.



Clerk Craft  
Director

John Merritt  
Clerk Craft  
Director

As I contemplate ending my most recent term in union office, I would like to pass on some advice and information to the newer generation of postal employees who may not have read any of my articles from the distant past; and to the older generation who may have forgotten what I wrote way back then.

**Schedule Your Leave.** The Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELRM), the main manual (among dozens of manuals) by which life in the Postal Service is regulated, requires all employees to “make every effort to avoid unscheduled absences”. This includes sick leave. The ELRM reads as follows:

*“Except for unexpected illness or injury situations, sick leave must be requested on PS Form 3971 and **approved in advance** by the appropriate supervisor.*

*An exception to the advance approval requirement is made for unexpected illness or injuries; however, in this situation the employee must notify appropriate postal authorities of his or her illness or injury **and expected duration of the absence as soon as possible.**” (emphasis added)*

Now, it is true that we often get sick unexpectedly. That does not mean that every day you take off sick needs to be “unscheduled” — or as many supervisors and employees say, a “red mark”. A lot of scenarios where sick leave is appropriate can, and should, be considered “scheduled” leave. Many employees simply don’t make the effort to get sick leave scheduled.

#### SCENARIO #1:

**Wrong way:** Employee knows she’s having a root canal performed on an abscessed tooth next week. She doesn’t say anything about it to the supervisor, then calls in on the day of the procedure saying she can’t work due to pain and bleeding, and takes the next day off as well. Both days are recorded as “unscheduled” (red marks) and can be held against the employee’s attendance record for possible disciplinary action in future.

**Right way:** Employee knows she’s having a root canal performed next week. She asks the dentist how long she can expect to be off, and the dentist says probably two days depending on how fast she recovers. She gets a note from the dentist before leaving the office, stating she’s having a root canal next Wednesday, and that she will be unable to work for two days.

# Some Advice From An Outgoing Craft Director

She takes in the dentist’s note that night to work, gives it to the supervisor, fills out a PS 3971 requesting two days of sick leave right then and there. Since the request was made in advance and supported by documentation, the sick leave is considered “scheduled” leave and cannot be held against the employee’s attendance record.

#### SCENARIO #2:

**Wrong way:** Employee is out shoveling heavy snow before work — badly injures back, slipping a disc; limps back into the house and calls in sick. He can’t get a doctor’s appointment for three days, so he lies around the house in pain, calling in to the system each day requesting sick leave. He’s seen by the doctor (on that third day), who prescribes pain and anti-inflammation medication, tells him he needs to be off for at least a week and refers him to a chiropractor. Employee calls in sick that night again.

He sees the chiropractor (the next day), who adjusts his spine and gets the disc back in place, confirming that the employee should take the rest of the week off. Both treating medical professionals give the employee certificates with a diagnosis, stating he would not work for another week. The employee calls in for sick leave each night for the rest of the week, returning to work with his doctors’ notes after the week is over. Every single day of his absence is considered “unscheduled” leave (red marks) and can be charged against his attendance for possible disciplinary action. Why? Because he did not schedule a single day of the sick leave in advance.

**Right way:** Employee is out shoveling heavy snow — wrecks back. He limps back into the house and calls the doctor, who gives an appointment for three days later. Employee now calls the call-in system (or supervisor) and requests sick leave for that day *and the next four days*. He has now notified management that he will be off for the next four days. The first day, of course, is still “unscheduled”, but the next three should be considered scheduled because he requested them in advance and so notified management.

When he sees the doctor on that third day (having already requested *four* days sick leave), the doctor gives him a note stating the employee needs to be off another week. The employee then calls the system or supervisor back that day and requests a further week of sick leave. If speaking to a real person, the employee should advise that he has a medical certificate covering the need to be off a further week.

Then, if at all possible, the employee should FAX, scan, deliver or mail the doctor’s note to management. This substantiates his request for leave with medical documentation. If no delivery of the note is possible (and frankly, it is always possible), then the employee must bring the doctor’s note(s) in with him when he returns to work. This way, there is only one “red mark” for the unscheduled first day of the injury, and the rest of the days off sick should be considered “scheduled” and not held against the employee’s attendance.

(Also, by the way, the leave in Scenario #2, the back injury, should be considered Family Medical Leave — FMLA — since it involved medical treatment plus an absence of three days or more. Absences determined to be FMLA-covered cannot be charged against your attendance whether scheduled or not. The supervisor in the situation of the employee with the injured back is supposed to know this, and is supposed to designate the leave as FMLA if he has enough information to make that determination, or otherwise is supposed to notify the employee of his right to apply for FMLA. However, I caution everyone that supervisors are notoriously unaware of their legal obligations to designate leave as FLMA-protected when appropriate and/or to advise employees of their right to apply for FMLA protection.)

There are several forms that can be used for this purpose, including one which was jointly developed by USPS and APWU. You can obtain this FMLA form on the National APWU website at [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org). You can also contact your steward if in doubt. FAR TOO MANY OF OUR MEMBERS FAIL TO CLAIM FMLA PROTECTION WHEN IT IS APPROPRIATE AND JUSTIFIED.)

So the lessons here with sick leave are: 1) schedule it to the extent possible and don’t just call in and stay off work, 2) claim FMLA protection when appropriate, which is probably more often than you think, 3) don’t count on your supervisor to tell you any of the information I just gave you above, and 4) if in doubt about 1), 2), or 3) above, SEE OR CALL YOUR STEWARD.

“Deems Desirable” list. This is really a related subject concerning sick leave, or any other leave type taken when you are off due to illness or injury. Management, for many years now, has been either telling people that they are on the “deems desirable” list, or flagging them in the automated call-in system (eRMS) so that whenever the employee calls in for sick leave (or any other unscheduled leave in

some cases) the automated message tells the employee that documentation is “deemed desirable” for the absence. A lot of people don’t even understand what “deems desirable” means, and no wonder.

“Deems desirable” is a term taken out of context from one sentence in the ELRM which states that a supervisor may require medical substantiation for an absence if the supervisor “deems” such documentation “desirable” for the “protection of the interests of the Postal Service”. Taken in proper context, that would be a situation wherein the supervisor has reasonable cause to believe that your request for sick leave (or other emergency) is untrue or at least suspect. For example, you inform your supervisor that you need the day after tomorrow off to attend a concert, and the supervisor disapproves your request due to half the staff already being off on vacation. When the night of the concert arrives, you call in sick, and your supervisor, having reasonable cause to believe you are not sick (since you already requested the time off and got turned down) requires you to substantiate your sick call with medical documentation.

In practice, putting employees on the “Deems Desirable” list happens whenever a supervisor decides that somebody has a “suspicious pattern” (often called “hooking”) of calling in sick before or after N/S days, always the day after payday, before/after holidays, and so forth. Other times a supervisor will put the whole pay location on “Deems” just because average sick leave use is high. Still other times the supervisor puts an individual or an entire pay location on “Deems” because the supervisor is too lazy or scared to take people aside and address their attendance issues one-on-one.

THERE IS NO “DEEMS DESIRABLE” LIST!!! For absences of three days or less, the ELRM says the supervisor should accept the employee’s word that he/she was too sick to work. For absences of more than three days, the ELRM *already requires* medical or other acceptable documentation to cover the absence. For employees who display excessive sick leave use or a suspicious pattern of sick leave usage, then management may place the employee on Restricted Sick Leave. However, there is a specifically described procedure for restricting any employee’s sick leave, which involves reviewing the employee’s sick leave *for a full calendar quarter*, discussing it with the employee, then reviewing the *sick leave for another quarter*,

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every voice is heard. We must have sustainability for future years to come. One way to sustain our union is again to get our younger members involved. This will allow our children, and their children to survive in the United States Postal Service for decades to come.

Innovation and partnership will provide much needed leadership for improving as well as adapting new technology in our workplace for our members.

The local officers and stewards continue to do an amazing job filing grievance and receiving settlements. The arbitration advocates have made huge accomplishment in winning arbitrations that the union and management can't seem to agree on. I intend to improve our locals success rating when it comes to doing our very best for the Detroit District Area Local.

It has been said that our officers

could be more visible in the station, branches and plants. I will tell you that I think that we have been very visible, but that doesn't mean we can't do better. I would just remind you that we accomplished a great deal of work and reached all of our goals in past years. It would have been difficult to complete those missions if we didn't apply the time to fix the problems.

It is our goal to further the process of paying those who retired the \$300.00 that our Local Constitution instructs us to do. It has been difficult because the list we received went back to 2012. However, we are trying to do the right thing and take care of this debt as well.

It is true my friends that we fight every year to balance our budget because every year we receive less funds to function and of course every line item on the budget is going up. As you all know with that

being said this administration has not asked you to pay more dues. We have looked over things once and sometimes twice and we have found other ways to cut cost.

### Officers And Stewards Appreciation

We have been told by many of our members that we are doing a great job. I personally want to say thank you to every Advocate, Officer and Steward for all your hard work in making sure you provide good representation for our members. It is because we work together that the members are seeing the success stories. All of us together are smarter than any one of us, and that includes the members as well.

I have to say thank you to all the men and women that have decided to become a union representative of our historic local. I must give credit where it is due. The Officers and Stewards are doing an awe-

some job. This is what the TEAM is all about.

### Union Support

I have to thank our entire membership for your support. It is important to understand that none of this could have happened without you. It is also true that some dishonest and very untrue things have been said, but I'm very humbled to see that most of our members didn't let the propaganda change your mind and you did the right thing. It is very much appreciated. It has been truly been a pleasure to represent your local as one of your elected leaders. I can't say thank you enough. I believed we need to get back to be the historic local that we once were, and thanks to this membership we are on the path to restoring our local. Thank you, thank you, thank you, and have a prosperous New Year.

## Some Advice From An Outgoing Craft Director

*continued from page 4*

then discussing with the employee again if there is no improvement. If no improvement is seen in the third quarter, then management may consider placing the employee on Restricted Sick Leave. That is the way Restricted Sick Leave can be imposed on an employee — it must be done by giving the employee a *written notice*, not by clicking a button on a keyboard to insert an electronic flag into the automated eRMS call-in system. If an employee is given a notice of Restricted Sick Leave, that employee has been advised that he/she must bring in medical or other acceptable documentation for any leave taken due to illness or injury, and no further notice has to be given.

Of course, a notice of Restricted Sick Leave is subject to the grievance procedure like any other matter concerning wages, hours and working conditions. You cannot be put on Restricted Sick Leave for absences documented as FMLA, it is the union's position that is a violation of the law. If you are put on Restricted Sick Leave for absences covered by a current FMLA certification, you should not only file a grievance, but file a written complaint with the U. S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hours Division, which has jurisdiction over FMLA violations.

If you are not on Restricted Sick Leave, and are required to provide medical documentation for an absence of three days or less, by the automated system or a supervisor, you should file a grievance on this unreasonable requirement to provide documentation. Record your mileage to and from the doctor, the time you left for the doctor's office and the time you got back home, and get a receipt for the cost of the

appointment. When you return to work, you then file a grievance, requesting that you be paid mileage for the trip to the doctor, and that you be paid at the overtime rate for the time spent at the doctor's office, and for the costs of the appointment itself.

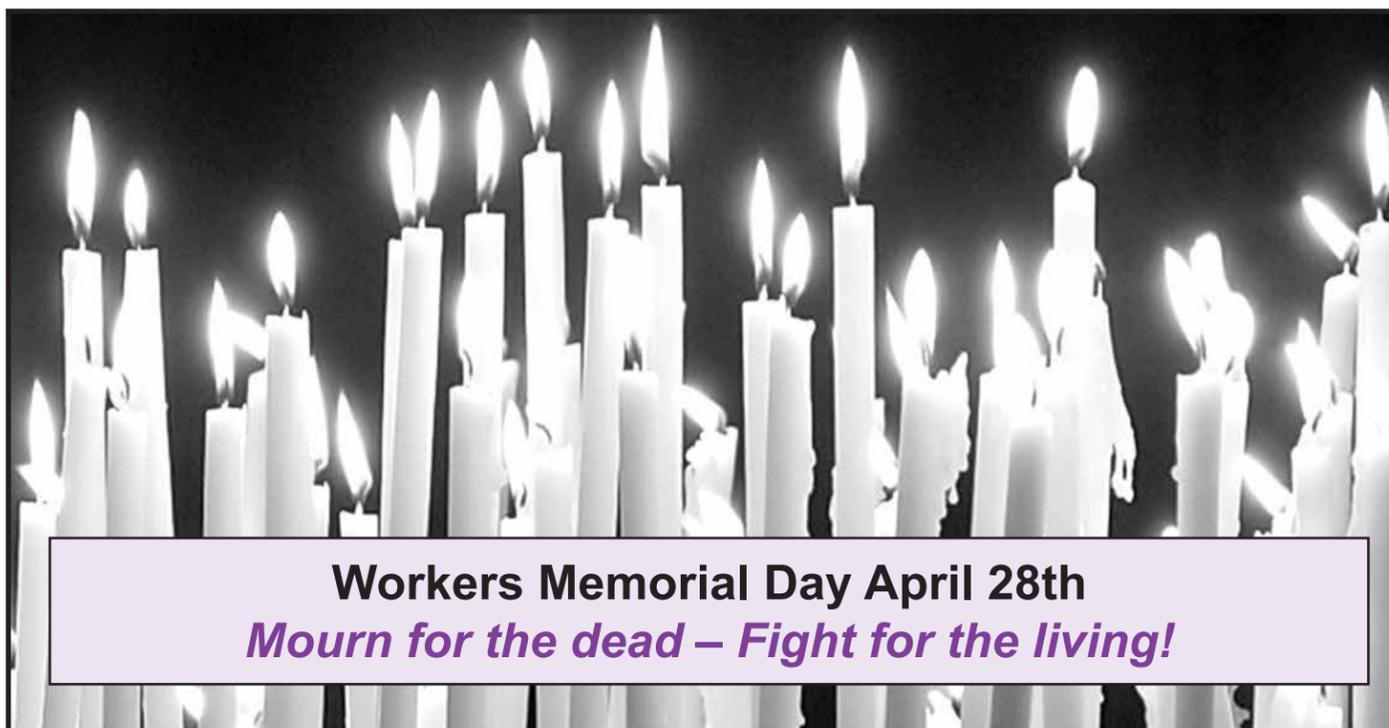
**Other situations concerning scheduling of leave.** There are other situations where people create unscheduled leave situations where they could manage the situation better. You may be feeling ill while at work, and wish to leave. You may ask your supervisor if you may leave because you are feeling ill, stating that you will stay if you have to, but would like to take sick leave and go home. Under these circumstances, the supervisor has the option to approve or disapprove the leave in advance. If the supervisor says he/she can spare you and you may

leave on sick leave, this should be "scheduled" sick leave. Many supervisors tell me that sick leave is automatically "unscheduled" or "in red". This just goes to show that the standard of supervisor training gets worse and worse over the years. They think you have to give "24 hours notice" before leave can be scheduled, and that simply is not the case. I've even heard of incidents where the supervisor is canvassing people to go home early due to light mail (hasn't happened for quite a while, of course) and those people who decide to take the chance to leave early have their leave marked "unscheduled". Ridiculous; that situation is an example of "scheduled" leave.

Another scenario where leave, with no advance notice, should still be considered scheduled. You're at work and an old friend

calls, having flown into town unexpectedly. You go to the supervisor, say you'd like to leave early to go see the old friend, but you'll stay at work if you can't be spared. Supervisor looks around, everybody came to work for a change and mail is under control, so the supervisor can spare you. That leave is "scheduled" leave because the supervisor had the opportunity to approve or disapprove in advance. "Advance" does not mean "24 hours" in advance, simply "advance". Of course, if you are determined to leave without permission, the leave would be considered "unscheduled" and may possibly be charged against you in a potential future discipline if your attendance is otherwise unacceptable.

The point here is to schedule all leave to the extent possible, and avoid "unscheduled" absences.



**Workers Memorial Day April 28th**  
**Mourn for the dead – Fight for the living!**



Legislation  
Director

Regina 'Gina' Favors  
Legislation Director

Welcome back sisters and brothers. I am hoping that your holiday season was all that you wished for and more. Let me begin by saying a great big THANK YOU for allowing me to continue as your APWU-DDAL Legislative Director. I will do all in my power to live up to your expectations.

So, let's begin with the November 2018 elections: as hoped we did get that "blue wave" in Michigan. I am happy to say that we had a much better turnout than previous mid-term elections. And now that our new administration has been sworn and installed, we cannot just sit back and wait on the next election. We must stay vigilant and we must continue to let them know that we support them. We asked for restoration of democracy, civility, integrity and transparency but we must also do our part to make sure that restoration takes place. You know who the Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State and District attorney are, but I am asking that you also please take the time to get to know your Senators and Representatives. Please go to their town hall meetings or coffee hours. Get to know your District

Chairperson, meet those sitting on the executive boards and attend those district meetings when possible. We often complain a lot about the state of our education system (or lack thereof) so please get to those who sought your vote for the different school boards, talk to them and see what they are (or not) doing or what they plan to do to improve things and let them know your concerns. The transition for some of the newly elected was not an easy one. As you may know, the Republicans leaving office did as much damage as they possibly could before they left. Also, some did not divulge all the necessary information. They made it as difficult as possible and that, to me, was despicable. Pray for a better Michigan!

By the time this issue comes out the Michigan Democratic Party Convention will be over and done. The event is scheduled for February 2, 2019 and its purpose is to elect one (1) Chair of the MDP and two (2) Vice Chairs each of a different race and

# Legislative News & Views

## Happy New Year!

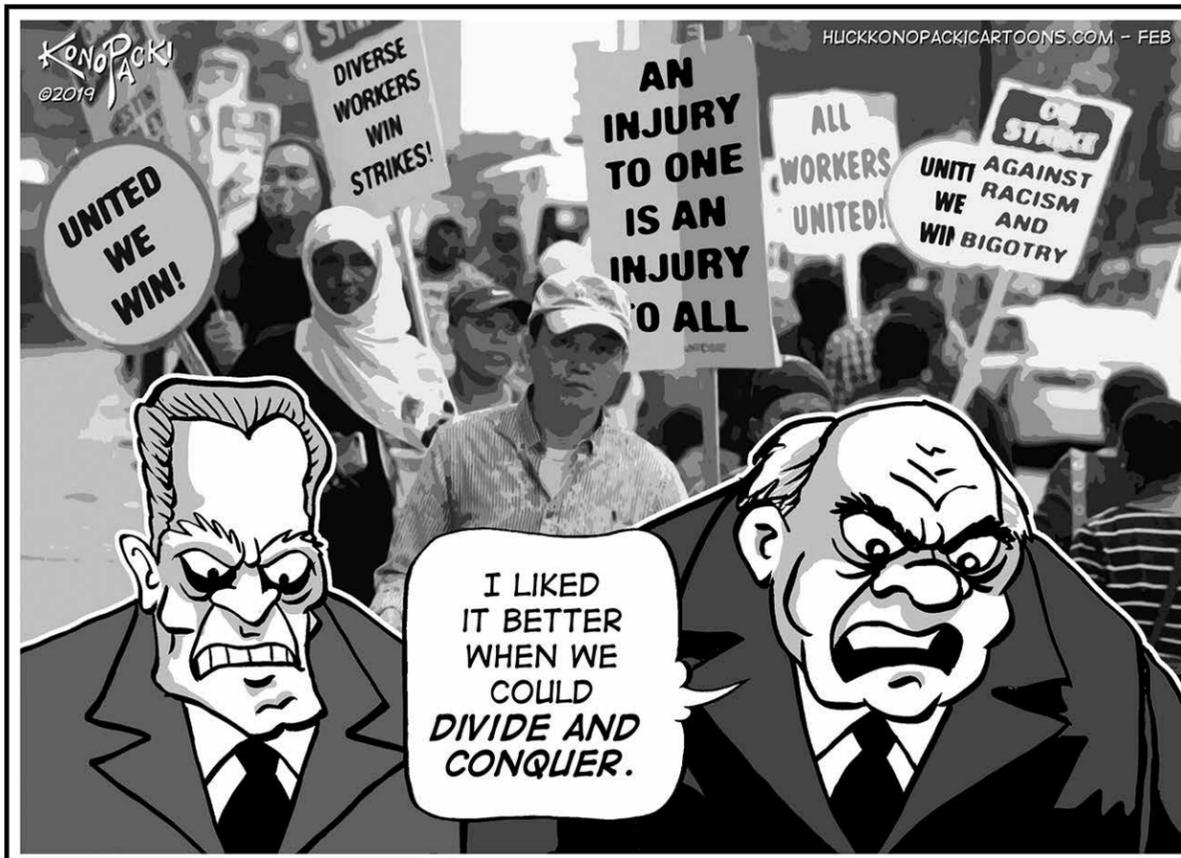
gender. Each Congressional District Caucus shall also elect one (1) District Chair, one (1) Vice-Chair (of a different gender from the Chair), one (1) Secretary, one (1) Treasurer, at least fifteen (15) Members of the District Committee and the number of Delegates and Alternates of the Democratic State Central Committee allocated to each district. I know that Brandon Dillon is not running for re-election as chair, so whoever wins the election, I wish them well. I often hear a lot of complaints, dissension and talk about what the party DOES NOT DO but seldom (if ever) do I hear those individuals talk about how they do anything to make it better. Remember, the goal SHOULD be to strengthen the party,

fall in, I am sad that we now rest in the hands of an arbitrator, and I can only pray that we get a fair and decent contract out of it. I also know that in this climate of union busting, that may be a bit difficult, but we must stay strong and keep "fighting the good fight"! We are stronger together! That being said, there are a number of bills that I believe are still in Congress as I write this: H.R. 6076 – Postal Reform Act; H.R. 760 – Postal Service Financial Improvement Act; H.R. Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act; S. 1804 and H.R. 67 – Medicare for All Act; H.R. 1205 – Social Security Fairness Act. These are just some of the supported APWU supported Legislation.

I don't believe that space will per-



know that 2020 is right around the corner, so our moment for resting has ended. The Struggle Continues  
Your Legislative Director,  
Gina Favors



to make sure that we get qualified candidates and then work to make sure those dedicated, quality individuals get elected. Then, once they are in office, we need to constantly let them know not only what we THINK they are doing wrong but just as importantly what they are doing right. In all things, communication is key! So please let me suggest that the next election cycle begins now, we cannot stop, we cannot rest because after 2018 results you can bet the Republicans are coming at us with a vengeance!

Now – on to our news. I am hearing that a lot of you (us) are not happy with the way negotiations for our contract went. Some folks have expressed dismay and/or displeasure with leadership. I can only hope that is not the case. I am only surmising from comments I have read or heard. In any and every organization there is good and bad. Our fight should be to keep striving for the good of all. Whatever category you

mit me to list them all, so I will try to have them scanned in with my article but if they are not, please look them up or contact me and I will get the list to you. I don't have the current status on them, but I hope that you will try to stay engaged and call/write your Senators and Representatives to let your feelings be known. One piece of Legislation that has been passed into law is S.873 and H.R. 3031 – Thrift Savings Plan Modernization Act. Brother and sisters, we have much work to do. We cannot stop striving for peace, justice and equality for all. We cannot let our Democracy fall into dictatorship. We cannot and MUST NOT allow tyranny and authoritarian rule to take us over. I ask you to please join in unity with our other union sisters and brothers as they struggle to survive as we fight for our own survival. Please fight/oppose any further Government Shutdowns. Please pay attention to what is being said to you and by whom. Just

the Postal Service to modestly raise postage rates immediately, generating roughly an additional one-billion dollars in annual revenue.

### H.R.760 – Postal Service Financial Improvement Act

Requires the U.S. Department of Treasury to invest up to 30% of the available funds within the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefit Fund (PSRHBF). Investment of funds modeled after those established by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. Allowing USPS to invest a portion of the PSRHBF would enable the USPS to significantly reduce future liabilities.

### H.R. 173 – Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act

Permanently repeals the 40% excise tax on high-cost employer-sponsored health benefits - which is incorrectly known as the "Cadillac tax." This tax needlessly punishes  
*continued on page 7*

### AMU APWU AFL-CIO APWU Supported and Opposed Legislation

Learn more about the issues! Use the guide below to [learn more about the specific bills that APWU supports and opposes. **Contact your elected representatives** to let them know where you stand!

### Supported Legislation H.R.6076 – Postal Reform Act

Comprehensive and bipartisan postal reform legislation which largely solves the disastrous pre-funding mandate while at the same time treating our retirees fairly. The bill would also allow

# Legislative News & Views

*continued from page 6*

many workers, especially union workers, for their hard earned and collectively bargained health benefits.

## **S.1231 and H.R.2669 — Vote by Mail Act**

APWU believes that voting in every election should be as convenient, fair, and secure as possible. The Vote By Mail Act requires every state to provide registered voters the opportunity to vote by mail. By utilizing America's most trusted government agency, voting by mail can reduce election-related expenses and provide much needed relief to thinly stretched state and local budgets. Voting by Mail encourages working people to exercise the most fundamental right of every citizen and is proven to increase voter participation.

## **S.1804 and H.R.576 — Medicare for All Act**

Ensure that all Americans will have access to the highest quality and most cost-effective healthcare services regardless of their employment, income, or health care status. Guarantee quality healthcare for all Americans through expanded Medicare program. Fully cover primary care and hospital stays for all Americans, without co-pays or deductibles, and provides maternity, prescription drug, vision, and dental benefits. Leverage power of single-payer system to eliminate administrative waste and reduce overall cost of American healthcare spending. S. 1804 would codify into law the moral truth that healthcare is a human right.

## **H.Res.31 — Restore Service Standards**

Calls for USPS to restore 2012 mail service standards. Prompt and reliable nationwide mail service is critical to retaining business, growing business and satisfying customers. Delayed mail will continue to drive business away from USPS and to its competitors. Requiring the mail to be transported further distances, USPS' mail slowdown plan has increased costs and actually costs the agency money.

## **H.Res.28 — Protect Door Delivery**

Converting existing door-delivery to centralized delivery points is wildly unpopular among small business and residential delivery customers. The USPS' brand is its best asset. That brand is trusted by the American people at their door and inside their businesses, not at a neighborhood cluster box. Revenue is generated every day by Letter Carriers who connect with business owners and other customers at the door.

## **H.Res.15 — Protect Six-Day Delivery**

The Postal Service is delivering in some places 7 days a week now and is offering same-day delivery through partnerships. Eliminating Saturday delivery is counterproductive to the thriving e-commerce business the Postal Service is part of. Eliminating Saturday delivery will drive business and revenue away. USPS provides affordable last-mile delivery for UPS, FedEx and Amazon to every delivery point in the country, partnerships that have been extremely successful. Without Saturday delivery these companies will find alternate, more expensive means of delivery.

## **H.R. 1205 — Social Security Fairness Act**

Repeals the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), which penalizes those who meet the requirements for Social Security benefits but have previous employment under CSRS. The GPO reduces benefits to spouses or widows by two-thirds if they are currently receiving a retirement or disability pension based on prior employment, during which they did not pay into Social Security. The WEP affects those who receive a pension from employment where they did not pay into Social Security but did qualify for Social Security benefits from other employment.

## **H.R.1251 — CPI-E Act**

Social Security COLAs are currently based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners (CPI-W). This measure of inflation does not adequately take into consideration the spending habits of seniors. CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for the Elderly) has been calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics but has never been applied. Using the CPI-E would more accurately reflect what seniors spend the bulk of their money on, such as healthcare.

## **S.427 — Social Security Expansion Act**

Extends the solvency of the Social Security trust funds while providing much needed and reasonable increases to benefits. Scraps the payroll tax cap on income above \$25,000. Applying a 6.2% Social Security tax, treats investment income for high-earning households the same as payroll income for working families.

## **[Passed into law] S.873 and H.R.3031 — Thrift Savings Plan Modernization Act**

Previously, upon reaching age 59, active postal employees could only withdraw from their TSP once. Similarly, retirees could only partially withdraw from their TSP a single time. This inflexibility often led retirees to fully withdraw their

TSP funds and move them into private investment plans with pricier maintenance fees. The TSP Modernization Act provided much needed flexibility to retiring postal workers, lifting the current restrictions and allowing them to make multiple, partial post-separation withdrawals from their TSP savings. It also gave TSP contributors the choice of quarterly or annual payments.

## **Opposed Legislation H.R.1344 — Official Time Reform Act**

Official time improves working conditions and protects employees from discrimination and management retaliation. H.R.1364 would devastate union stewards' retirement security by eliminating accrual of pension credits while on official time advocating for their co-workers. This needless and reckless bill would both undermine workplace protections and negatively impact the performance of our essential federal agencies. While this specific bill does not address the Postal Service, it is one of many legislative attempts to undermine federal and postal collective bargaining rights.

## **S.545 and H.R.785 — National Right to Work Act**

When a worker joins a unionized workplace, they benefit greatly from the wages and benefits collectively bargained for thanks to their union representation. National Right to Work seeks to devastate the union movement across the country by outlawing fair share agreements - allowing those who do not join a

union to freeload without paying a fee for the representation the union nonetheless is required to provide them under the law.

## **H.R. 1259 — VA Accountability First Act**

All but eliminates critical workplace protections for civil servants at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Virtually reduces VA employees to "at-will" employment able to be fired or demoted at managements whim. Instilling a politically-charged culture of fear and reprisal, H.R. 1259 will only lead to worse care for our nation's veterans.

## **H.R. 1461 — VET Protection Act**

Undermines the union representation of federal employees and limits the use of official time in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Needlessly extends "at-will" probationary period from 12 to 18 months, during which time management is able to fire new employees for any reason.

## **[Not adopted into law] H.Con. Res.71 — Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Resolution**

This resolution had disastrous implications for postal and federal employees. it targeted our hard earned pensions and FERS retirees' vital annuity supplements for big cuts. More egregious was the assault on the USPS by calling for the Postal Service to be placed "on budget." This would have made the USPS subject to federal government shutdowns and turned it into a piggy bank for non-postal related government expenses.



## Welcome Mat

The APWU-DDAL would like to give a big round of applause to the following new members. As we all know, there is strength in numbers. We appreciate and acknowledge all who make the endeavor to become unionists. We invite you to come in and play an active role in helping this union flourish!

We would also like to acknowledge those that signed the new brothers and sisters. Remember, any member can sign a new member and it's \$20 in your pocket!

CAROL BELLARD BRIANNA BENNETT DUVON BENON DESTINY CANTELL LAURA CHACON BRITTNEY COOPER PATIENCE DOTSON SUMMER DRAGGS BOBBY EDWARDS JEREMY FRAZIER RICHARD HANNA DONALD JOLLIFF DREW JOHNSON JENNYCE JOHNSON JOSEPH JOHNSON-BRAXTON DOMINIQUE JONES GARY JONES	JASMIN KING LAMECHTRIA LEWIS KAREN MARSHALL JAQEE MOORE TYRA MOORE ETHAN NYBERG JADE PAIGE ARDIS ROBERTS ANTONETTE ROCQUEMORE-KING KANWAL SANDHU RAYNARD SIMMONS LETITIA SNOWDEN JALESA STEVENS BRITTANY TATE CARMON TILLMAN PEARL WILDER CHLOE WISE KAILYN ZOURE
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# How To Protect Your Rights

by Tracey Thorns, NDC Facility Director

Greetings Detroit District Area Local!

I, Tracey Thorns, the newly elected NDC Facility Director would like to thank the membership for their support and giving me an opportunity to serve as your representative at the Detroit Network Distribution Center. The stewards that are certified at the DNDC are Tonya Lawson (Asst. NDC Facility Director), Teresa Dickerson (Clerk Craft), Nicole Cobb (Clerk Craft), Marshanda Poole (Maintenance Craft), Selina Jackson (MVS Craft) and David Schomberg (MVS Craft) whom are all proud and eager to represent. I ask that you please welcome the stewards that have

dedicated their time to "protect and preserve the rights of employees."

The current issues at the DNDC are attendance and members knowing how to protect their rights in the workplace. If you have health issues and need Family paperwork there are forms available in the union office. A grievance has been filed on management trying to make a blanket policy and place employees on a Deems Desirable List when they call off work. The women's locker room has a tentative date of being ready the second week in February. Every break area has an Absopure water machine. Management is installing a new Universal Sorting System (USS) machine at the

Detroit NDC. The union has been successful in getting working over (60) hours pay outs for employees, and a conversion from PSE to full time.

Did you know that a PS form 1767 (Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice) can be filled out for a supervisor that is abusive? And a grievance can be filed at Step (2) under article 14 (Safety). The zero tolerance policy applies to all United Sates

Postal Service employees' even supervisors and upper management. If you are having issues with a hostile supervisor please see your shop steward immediately.

Lastly, I look forward to representing everyone and wish everyone a blessed and prosperous year as we continue to fight for the rights of employees in the workplace.

In Union Solidarity.

**With Deepest Sympathy**

We regret to announce the passing of our fellow employees, one of our own. **Sara McGruder - SPBS operator at the GWY, Varnessa Patterson - Clerk at Oak Park, Regina Stevens - Clerk at Grand Shelby and Eugene Coleman, Retired SPBS Clerk and former APWU Vice President.**

*Our condolences go out to these families on their loss of a loved one.*

**2019 Membership Meetings**

*The meetings are held at your union hall:  
20530 Southfield Road, Detroit, MI 48235.*

**???, 2019**

*Meetings are held between 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.*

**ADDRESS CORRECTION**

Please help us to maintain our membership mailing list. The form printed below should be completed and sent the Local office whenever you make a change of address. This will allow us to continue our mailings to you without interruption.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ EID # \_\_\_\_\_

New Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Post Office \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_



**DETROIT DISTRICT AREA LOCAL APWU, AFL-CIO**  
20530 Southfield Road  
Detroit, Michigan 48235

*Change Service Requested*

**If blood be the price of all your wealth,  
Great God, we've paid in full.**

**Workers Memorial Day  
April 28**

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