

Merit System Protection Board



By **Tony D. McKinnon, Sr.,**
President

Sisters and Brothers,
Merit System Protection Board
The USPS has a significant number of Veteran Preference Eligible employees within their ranks in ever increasing numbers. Postal employees have the right to elect to exercise their rights of appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board. The following information is for those employees that may be eligible to appeal adverse actions within the purview of the Board.

The Merit System Protection Board was created through the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 and one of its primary responsibilities is to adjudication of employee appeals. The Act replaced the former Civil Service Commission with the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB); The office of personnel Management (OPM); and the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA). The procedures of the Merit System Protection Board, which is in Washington, D. C. and has eleven (11) serving regional offices where initial appeals may be filed.

Eligibility To Appeal To MSPB
Employees of Postal and/or Federal Agencies classified as “preference eligible” are governed by the Veterans’ Preference Act of 1944 which provides as follows:

Preference eligible are certain classes of veterans and the survivors of veterans who have completed one (1) year of continuous service in the same or similar position.

1. Ex-servicemen and women who have served on active duty in any branch of the armed forces of the United States and have been separated therefrom under honorable conditions and who have established the present existence of a service connected disability, or who are receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension by reason of public laws administered.*

2. The wives or husbands of such service-connected disabled veterans as have themselves been unable to qualify for any civil-service appointment.

3. The unmarried widows or widowers of deceased veterans who served on active duty in any branch of the armed forces of the United States during any war, or in any campaign, or expedition (for which a campaign badge has been authorized), and who were separated therefrom under honorable conditions.1

4. Ex-servicemen and women who have served on active duty in any branch of the armed forces of the United States during any war, or in any campaign, or expedition (for which a campaign badge has been authorized) and have been separated therefrom under honorable conditions.2

5. Mothers of deceased ex-servicemen or ex-servicewomen who lost their lives, under honorable conditions while on active duty during any war, or in any campaign or expedition (for which a campaign badge has been authorized) or of service connected permanently and totally

continued on page 2



Eligibility To Appeal To MSPB

continued from page 1

abled ex-servicemen or ex-servicewomen who were separated from such armed forces under honorable conditions if,



***NOTE: A retired member of the armed forces holding the rank of Major or above at time of retirement is not considered a preference eligible under the Act.**

1 Widows or widowers should notify USPS of Veterans Preference Status

2 A veteran that has served 20 or more years of service is not accorded preference eligible status under the Act.

the father and,

- 1.) has not remarried, or
- 2.) has remarried but (I) her husband is totally and permanently disabled, or (ii) she is divorced or legally separated from her husband, or such husband is dead at the time preference is claimed.

When in doubt concerning whether an employee is considered a preference eligible under the Act the employee should be advised to process the appeal to MSPB for their determination.

Employees Rights

No preference eligible employee who has one-year current continuous employment in the same or similar position can be

- (1) discharged
- (2) suspended for more than 14 days
- (3) reduced in grade
- (4) reduced in pay; or
- (5) furloughed for 30 days or less

except for such cause as will promote the efficiency of the Postal Service.

DEFINITION

Definition Of Terms

(1) "employee" means-

(A) an individual in the competitive service who is not serving a probationary or trial period under an initial appointment or who has completed one year of current continuous employment under other than a temporary appointment

continued on page 6

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NORTH CAROLINA STATE

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A Proud 100% Union Firm for over 45 years.

*In Loving Memory
of our
Union Brother & Friend*

Peter J. Gilmartin

The North Carolina Council APWU lost an incredible union leader and friend on October 21, 2021. Reading the memorials, it is clear that Pete not only had an impact on our lives but on the lives of many others. He was a wealth of knowledge and never hesitated to help whenever and wherever he was needed. Below are just a few of many who reflected on the impact that Pete had in their lives:

“Pete was a union man through and through.”

“Pete had the patience of Job”

“The light that kept this Local going”

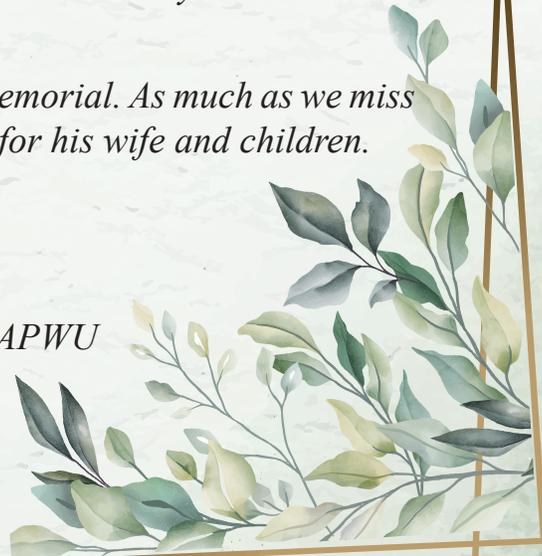
“Pete was a fountain of knowledge, always sharing that knowledge with anyone who had the desire to learn.”

“We were only second to his beloved Linda and the boys who were the center of his universe.”

These sentiments echoed throughout the memorial. As much as we miss Pete, we know that the loss is much greater for his wife and children.

Rest easy our friend until we meet again

The Officers of the North Carolina Council APWU



Fill Out Your Own 3971s



By *Sandra Hill*,
Vice President

Once again, the Union is cautioning employees to pay attention to and take control of your 3971s. These forms are your requests or notifications for absence not

management's. It's your leave, and your business; and should not be left up to the Service which, more often than not has a conflict of interest with your needs.

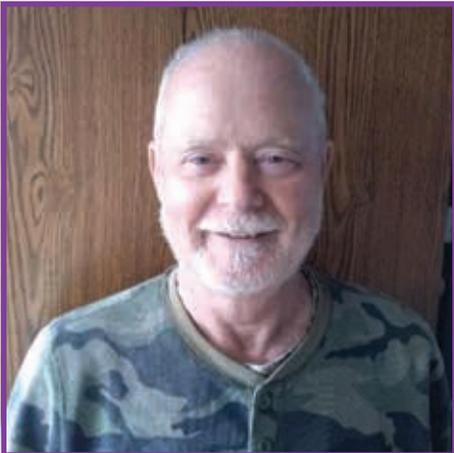
We get lazy with the automated call ins. We get trusting of management. Then we suffer the consequences. If you return, and the slip does not indicate what you requested, or has some remarks that you do not agree with or doesn't apply, **DON'T SIGN IT**. Make a new one out and submit that. Put in applicable comments in the remarks section. It is especially important now.

If there is a problem, your signature on these defective slips makes everything harder or impossible to fix. Check your slips, make sure they are returned and

correct. We do it on the clock, so you are being paid to make sure you are being paid.

It is sheer laziness, or blind trust that, I assure you, you will pay dearly for, when you don't take control of your own leave, reasons for, and pay. Demand the 3971 slips back, check them for accuracy. Fill out new ones to correct. Any problems, ask for a steward. If you don't, you will be victimized for not acting diligently, and securing your rights, leave and pay. It seems trivial . . . until it happens to you. It is always easier to fix sooner, than have to reverse after the fact, once you have allowed management distort reality with their rendition of your leave notifications.

Weingarten Rights



By *Glenn Meadows*,
District 1 Representative

Federal labor law gives each employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview which the employee reasonably believes may lead to discipline. This right originated in *NLRB v. J. Weingarten*, U.S. Supreme Court 1975, and is commonly called Weingarten rule" or "Weingarten rights. The Weingarten rule only applies to an investigatory interview when management is searching for facts relevant to determining an employee's guilt or deciding whether to impose discipline. Weingarten rights don't apply when management issues a

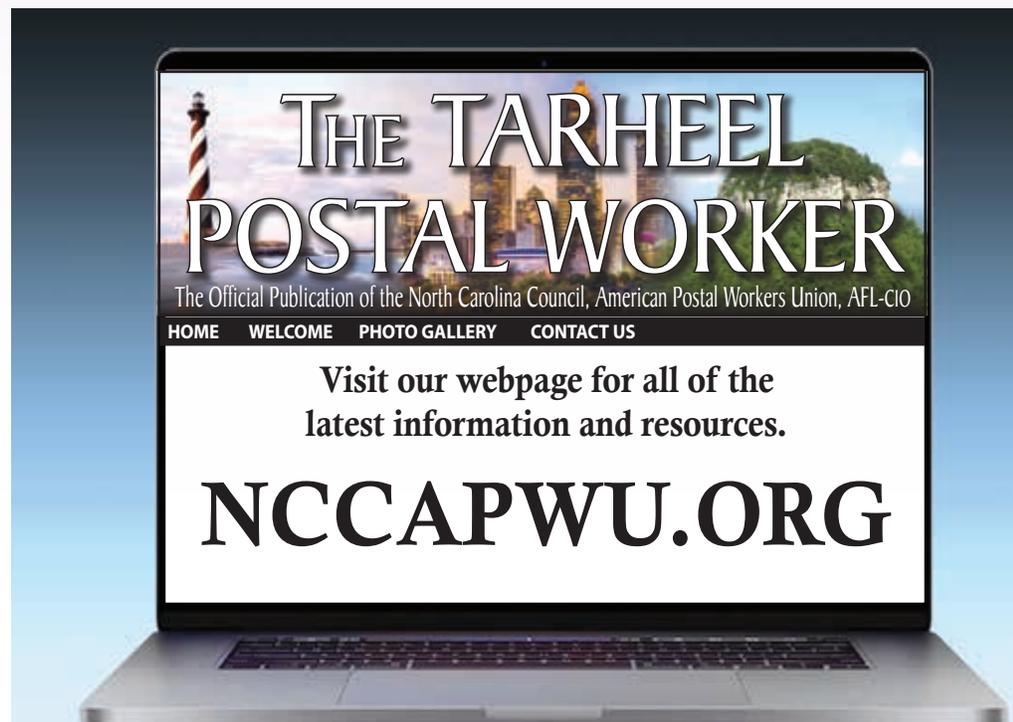
disciplinary action to an employee (for example, handing an employee a letter of warning).

Weingarten representation rights apply where an employee reasonably believes that discipline could result from the investigatory interview. Whether or not an employee's belief is "reasonable" depends on the circumstances of each case.

The steward cannot exercise Weing-

arten rights on the employee's behalf. Unlike "Miranda rights," which involve a criminal investigation, management is not required to inform the employee of the Weingarten rule.

The Weingarten rule includes the right to a pre-interview consultation with a steward. Federal Courts have extended this right to pre-meeting consultations to cover Inspection Service interrogations.



Is Your Union In Compliance???



By Jamie Ayscue, Secretary-Treasurer

There Are Five Golden Rules When Spending Union Funds

As union officers, we have a fiscal responsibility to operate our organization within the guidelines that we are bound by. There are 5 rules that allow us to spend money within our organization. Mind you, we must also be fiscally responsible when making those decisions and have to be able to provide

proof and reasoning for our expenditures. Maintaining records and documentation should be a major part of our duties as officers. Below you will see the five spending authorities. Every purchase we make as union officers **MUST** fall under one of these categories.

- The Law
- The Constitution
- A Motion passed by the membership
- The Executive Board or Officers, as permitted in the Constitution or by the membership
- The Budget, as adopted by the membership

Below is an excellent resource from our APWU accountability newsletter. It shows exactly how and when the union is able to spend money. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions on financial issues within in your union.

ACCOUNTABILITY **\$**

The 5 Golden Rules for Spending Union Funds Explained

As officers, we are in charge of ensuring our union's financial viability. It is our duty to be fiscally responsible with our union's funds. It is not only the president and the treasurer who are responsible, the law states in Section 501 (a) of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, as amended (LMRDA): "The officers, agents, shop stewards, and other representatives of a labor organization occupy positions of trust in relation to such organization and its members as a group."

LMRDA

We have all been elected or appointed to positions of trust. The membership trusts that we will run the organization with their best interest in mind and maintain the financial viability of the union. The LMRDA further states: "It is therefore the duty of each such person...to hold its money and property solely for the benefit of the organization and its members..."

We need to remember that every penny we bring in and spend belongs to the membership. Therefore, we must always act with the interest of the membership in mind, not our own personal interests.

The law tells us specifically how we derive the authority to handle the union's money and property: "to manage, invest, and expend the [money and property] in accordance with its constitution and bylaws and any resolutions of the governing bodies adopted thereunder." It is from this language that we derive our "Five Golden Rules for Spending Union Funds."

- 1. The Law**
This is a given. We must pay taxes and have workers compensation insurance. No motion or approval is needed to write a check for such expenditures.
- 2. The Constitution and Bylaws**
This is a union's governing document. It is a living document that was created by the membership and may be changed by the mem-
- 3. Motion passed by the membership**
The membership is the highest ranking body of a union. The membership may pass a motion for expenditures, but they should be made aware of the financial status of the union so that they may make wise decisions and not put the union in financial peril.
- 4. The Executive Board or Officers, as permitted in the constitution or by the membership**
The union's constitution may give the executive board or certain officers the authority to spend. These officers are to be held accountable for these expenditures and submit proper documentation, including receipts.
- 5. The Budget, as adopted by the membership**
The budget is an essential document that each union should have. It helps the leadership plan for the coming year and allocate funds appropriately. The budget should be adopted by the local union at the end or beginning of a fiscal year. This will allow the president and treasurer to take care of necessary and regular occurring expenses without needing the membership to vote on such expenses each month. For example, isn't it easier to vote on paying for operating expenses such as utilities and rent just once a year as opposed to every month? Even expenses such as these need approval of some sort and the best way to go about it is to have the membership adopt a budget. Since the president and the treasurer are the two (2) positions who hold the most responsibility when it comes to the union's finances and being the signatories on checks, it is important that they are knowledgeable about the above. All officers should have a good understanding of the above so that everyone is on one accord.



The North Carolina AFL-CIO held its state convention in Wilmington, NC, in October 2021. Again, the North Carolina Council APWU was well represented, as you can see. As the President of the NC Council, I was honored to be elected to a 4-year term of Vice-President on the NC AFL-CIO Board. I previously served on the Board for more than 15 years as VP and appreciated the support of our delegation in allowing me to serve once again. I will do my best to uphold the strong tradition of the APWU while working on behalf of all workers in North Carolina.

COVID-19 Leave/Liberal Leave Policy

continued from page 2

pointment limited to one year or less; and

(B) a preference eligible in an Executive agency in the excepted service, and a preference eligible in the United States Postal Service or the Postal Rate Commission, who has completed one year of current continuous service in the same or similar positions.

(2) "suspension" means the placing of an employee for disciplinary reasons, in a temporary status without duties and pay.

(Postal Service v. NLRB D.C. Cir. 1992)

The employee has the right to a steward's assistance, not just a silent presence, during an interview covered by the Weingarten rule. An employee's Weingarten rights are violated when the union representative is not allowed to speak or is restricted to the role of a passive observer.

Although ELM, Section 665.3 require all postal employees to cooperate during investigations, an employee with Weingarten rights is entitled to have a steward present before answering questions. The employ-

ee may respond that he or she will answer questions once a steward is provided.

COVID-19 Leave/Liberal Leave Policy

The USPS and the APWU agreed to extend the liberal leave policy through December 30, 2021. What this means is if you have a COVID related issue with proper documentation you will be able to take care of yourself or your family with out penalty. As stated in the last issue all Full-time and PTF employees will be able to use dependent care leave up to 80 hours and or annual, regular sick leave or leave without pay.

The PSE's have been authorized 80 hours of dependent care leave that can be taken all at once or over a period of time with concurrence with your managers. However, if you used the 80 hours back in 2020 you are not eligible for an additional 80 hours.

If the PSE has not used the complete 80 hours the employee is eligible to take the 80 hours or any part of the 80 hours left with proper documentation being provided to your manager. If you have encountered problems getting paid for COVID-19 related issues please contact your district Rep for assistance.

Please Join Your Executive Board in Welcoming Leonard Dennison, and Richard (Rich) Abramovitch to the NC COUNCIL Executive Board

Leonard has been a staple in the American Postal workers Union in North Carolina for Decades. He is the President of the Greensboro NDC, National Maintenance Craft staffing advocate, National Regional Safety Representative and prior North Carolina Vice-President. Leonnard will become the NC Council Maintenance Craft Director. We are so very blessed to have his talents on the board and in North Carolina.

Richard (Rich) Abrampvitch, has accepted the position of District 5 Representative on the NC Council Board. He will be responsible for the 280-282 area. Rich, has been a union member for all of his 23 years in the Postal Service. He started as a shop steward in

continued on page 7

NC COUNCIL APWU ABUSIVE MANAGER INCIDENT WORKSHEET

Your Name _____ Date _____

Supervisor's Name _____ Duty Station _____

Date of Incident _____ Time of Incident _____

Location of Incident _____

Date Union Notified _____

Victim(s) of Incident _____

Witnesses to Incident _____

Description of Abusive Incident _____

Provoked or Unprovoked _____

EEO Previously Filed? _____ EEO for this Event? _____

NATURE OF ABUSIVE EVENT (Check All That Apply)

1) Overly Demeaning _____ 2) Demeaning _____

3) Sarcastic Remarks _____ 4) Yelling _____

5) Threats of Discipline or Discharge _____ 6) Threats to take Victim off Clock _____

7) Other Specific Threats _____ 8) Profanity _____

9) Physical Threats _____ 10) Physical Gestures _____

11) Physical Contact _____ 12) Other Specifics _____

OTHER COMMENTS

Signature _____ Date _____

Return completed form to your District Representative or NC State President

Research/Education/Application Keys To Success



By Bob Stutts, Director
Research and Education

Contract Terms and Misunderstandings

Last NCCAPWU paper I broke down Articles 3 & 5 and debunked management's position on their powers under Article 3 and urged members to utilize Article 5 as found in the JCIM as opposed to just in the CBA. I found out not only our members in NC, but other states read the articles our officers put in the paper. Also, many managers read it. Some experienced stewards and officers had never used 5 at all.

Many asked me to do something similar on other Articles I felt were not being used like the Union should and management had misled them on the intent of the articles. There were also some good comments about other officers' articles also. One really made me think how lucky we were to have our recently departed Maintenance Director Pete Gilmartin. While we sincerely thank his family for sharing him and his time with us, we join in the sorrow of his loss. A caller said Pete's Article in our Jan/Feb 2021 paper was one of the best articles for making sure we have the right staffing and what to do if we do not. Even in our sorrow we welcome Leonard Dennison, appointed to the position, who will return to our Eboard as a great asset. For those that do not know Pete was also Raleigh local president and a great one. Our sympathy to the local and to the really good officers who will carry on.

Article 15.2.Step 2(e)

How many times have you been told

Step 2 Decisions are not citable based on the above reference? I have heard many Union officers teach that along with virtually all management saying that every time the issue is raised. I have over the years said that is not always true. In fact, when the original language was put in, it was to stop the need to file grievances on the same subject. The reason is the last dozen words are not read. "or develop an agreement to dispose of future similar or related subjects". That is why wording is so important. I regret the fact that our JCIM completely ignores all of the reference article cited above and goes from (C&D) to (f). No wonder our new stewards are not aware of the language. The thing to do is to have your settlement with broader language. Not, "The employees improperly scheduled in this grievance will be paid" How about, "Employees not scheduled properly should receive the hours they missed. In this case employees so and so will be paid."

While the above is a simple example there are numerous opportunities to get

forward gong language without making it obvious why you are doing it. Since I am often asked for a good reference on Search look at AIRS 61005. A case from our state where the district sent labor from 250 miles away to present their case and they must have said a dozen times Step 2s are not citable. The arbitrator also believed that since that is all he had ever heard. When I read the last part of the paragraph, he said no one had ever made that argument before. Not only did we get agreement that was valid in the contract we got an amazing remedy.

But there are other ways to get the same results. I tell stewards do not let grievance be the first word out of your mouth. When it is, the manager usually puts their defenses up. A better relationship is to discuss the situation and what happened. Settle it with a signoff or settle it in Labor/Management meeting as in the contract (17,5) They have no restrictions as to future cites.

continued on page 9

COVID-19 Leave/Liberal Leave Policy

continued from page 6

his office in Long Island, New York in 2007. He was then elected to an Area Representative position and sat on the Executive Board for his local from 2013 until he relocated to Mooresville, North Carolina in May of this year. In that position, he was responsible for 25 Associate Offices, from level 18-level 22. He attended 2 years of the APWU summer school program ran by **Jeff Kehlert** and have been step 2 representative for 75-100 grievances. Currently, I am the shop steward in Mooresville. Attended 2 years of the APWU summer school program run by Jeff Kehlert and have been step 2 representative for 75-100 grievances. Currently, He am the shop steward in Mooresville. The NC Council Welcomes our brother from New York and we look forward to working with him and assisting the members of NC council.

The NC Council meets once a month to chart our plans to benefit

the membership and grow the council. Since January of 2021 we have held training each month for the state members, local leadership, and have plans to expand in 2022 as we are able to congregate together again.

One of the goals we have implemented and are proud that several members have step up to the plate is the certification of stewards in several of our AO offices. We are proud to say that several members have stepped up to assist: **Randy Roof from Lewisville, NC, Stacy Haynes, Shelby, NC, Eva Arrigo, Murphy, NC and Lucasa Beverly, Mount Airy, NC.** We welcome each one and look forward to working with them.

With all we have endured over the last year and a half on behalf of the NC council Executive Board we do wish each and everyone a safe, prosperous, an health holiday season. Be blessed and we will speak again on the other side of 2022.

In Union solidarity, I remain.

Open Season Plans For 2022



By Louis P. Forrisi,
Human Relations Director

Brothers and Sisters of NCCAPWU. I want to wish you all a healthy and safe holiday season. Thanksgiving Christmas and New Years please be safe we do not want to lose any of our people to the Roads. This is also Open season for Health care enrollments. I am attempting to attach the rates and Codes of APWU health plan in

this Article for 2022. We have done very well in keeping costs down for our members as you will see NO INCREASE FOR CONSUMER DRIVEN OPTION AND ONLY 1% INCREASE FOR HIGH OPTION. In this day and age, it is a great accomplishment for our Health plan people to achieve.

Another topic I want to talk about is OWCP. When filing for a claim try to keep emotions out of it. I know it is easy to say the Postmaster has it in for me but that does not hold water to the examiner in Jacksonville. The only thing they care about is the facts of the case, the statement by you how it happened, a doctor that is a qualified physician to give a diagnosis and prognosis and all the dots of the case connect. You know Management does not want you to claim for it or pay for your health, but they have no say in it. THE DOCTOR AND YOUR FACTS IS THE KEY. I cannot stress this enough people seem to think that the Post Office gives a damn about them. NO, THEY

DON'T, you're a number. The examiner does not have a dog in the fight except they make sure they do not give away free money to people who play the system. A lot do but that is why they are accountable for approvals and disapprovals of claims. Please if you can please get a steward if you get hurt or call me 919 616 3170 so we can start the process early and right. Another thing, make sure you save everything. Nothing is trivial when it comes to OWCP. Give the Doctor a copy of your JOB DESCRIPTION so he knows what you do. He is a doctor not a window clerk. Get ahead of the curve so he can process your paperwork easier. Make sure you check COP continuation of Pay. Well I've been doing this for over 20 years and I still get the same problems because people don't adhere to the process. Let the system work for you. OWCP is not the enemy they are only covering themselves for their job. God Bless and Hope to see you all soon. My number is 919 616 3170 my email is unionapw@embarqmail.com



CHOOSE A HEALTH PLAN THAT PUTS YOU FIRST.

OPEN SEASON 2021
NOVEMBER 8 - DECEMBER 13
OPEN SEASON HOTLINE:
800.PIC.APWU
virtualopenseason@apwuhp.com
www.apwuhp.com

100% COVERED SERVICES

- ✓ Preventive care and treatment
- ✓ Lab tests (covered blood work performed at LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics)
- ✓ Maternity care
- ✓ Accidental injury outpatient services within 72 hours
- ✓ Diabetes generic oral medications
- ✓ Visits to a registered dietician/nutritionist
- ✓ Tobacco cessation and weight management programs
- ✓ Breast cancer screenings for women (starting at age 40)

HIGH OPTION 2022 PREMIUMS

APWU Career Biweekly and Retiree Monthly					
Self Only enrollment code 471		Self Plus One enrollment code 473		Self & Family enrollment code 472	
Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly
\$106.39	\$230.51	\$212.96	\$461.41	\$268.83	\$582.46

100% COVERED SERVICES

- ✓ In January, the Health Plan funds a Personal Care Account (PCA) members can use for covered medical services. Members are covered at 100% until the PCA is exhausted. The Plan funds the PCA at \$1,200 for Self Only and \$2,400 for Self Plus One and Self and Family.
- ✓ Preventive care and screenings
- ✓ Well-woman care
- ✓ Maternity care
- ✓ Healthy pregnancy and tobacco cessation programs



Together.
Better Health.

CONSUMER DRIVEN 2022 PREMIUMS

Biweekly and Monthly No Rate Increase!					
Self Only enrollment code 474		Self Plus One enrollment code 476		Self & Family enrollment code 475	
Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly
\$69.65	\$150.91	\$151.38	\$327.99	\$165.14	\$357.81

APWU Special Rates Biweekly ★ Reduced Rate								
APWU career less than a year	Postal Support Employees \$69.65	APWU career greater than a year in FEHB \$13.93	APWU career less than a year \$151.38	Postal Support Employees \$151.38	APWU career greater than a year in FEHB ★ \$30.28	APWU career less than a year \$165.14	Postal Support Employees \$165.14	APWU career greater than a year in FEHB ★ \$33.03

Hello Everyone



*By Leonard Dennison,
Maintenance Craft Director*

First off let me say that I among many others was deeply saddened to hear about the passing of our NC State Maintenance Craft Director Peter Gilmartin on Oct 21, of this year. I have known Peter for several years and was very happy when he decided to run for the Maintenance

Craft Directors position of the NCCAPWU. Pete was knowledgeable and at times outspoken, a friend and a teacher. Those qualities are part of what made him good at his job. He will be missed by many and that includes myself.

Shortly after Pete's passing, I was asked if I would consider stepping up and taking over the Maintenance Craft Directors position, at first, I agreed to temporarily, then finally agreeing to try and fill this vacancy left by a friend.

If you notice I said fill this vacancy,

not take Pete's place, and that is because I cannot take Pete's place. That cannot be done, because Pete was a one-of-a-kind individual with his own way of doing things.

But I will do the Best that I can to fill the vacancy, the Maintenance Craft Directors position of the NCCAPWU.

With that said it is bittersweet to have been offered this chance and given the choice, would rather have my friend back among us.

R.I.P Peter Gilmartin

Research/Education/Application Keys To Success

continued from page 7

Doing it that way, you can tell managers no grievance activity to report or paperwork to file. We do not need to educate unknowing management, but L/M meeting summaries carry the equal strength of contract language on Line 11 of the Step 2 Form.

The moral here is just because you always heard the same thing over and over does not make it true.

Use Your Available Resources

We have on the web site apwu.org a plethora of information. You can download on your computer or thumb drive both the CBA and JCIM. I suggest every member and especially stewards take the time and read the 42 Q&As in JCIM at the end of Article 8. At least half the questions I am ask would be answered there and it is easily shown to management. You might also, when needed, show them the very first page where management at the headquarters level signed off stating the document is to be followed.

"The 2020 APWU/USPS Joint Con-

tract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) update is provided as a resource for the administration of the National Agreement. Jointly prepared by the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, and the United States Postal Service, this manual provides a mutually agreed upon explanation on how to apply the contract to the issues addressed. When a dispute arises, the parties should first go to the JCIM to determine if the is-

sue in dispute is addressed. If it is, the parties are required to resolve the dispute in accordance with this manual. The JCIM will continue to be updated with additional material as we continue to narrow our differences and expand our joint understanding of the National Agreement. We encourage you to use the JCIM to ensure contract compliance and to foster more professional working relationships."

Meeting

Monthly Training Sessions held on the Third Tuesday of Every Month. Register online at NCCAPWU.org

What Is The Purpose Of A Union?



By Tonya Freeman,
District 3 Representative

Hello, Sisters and Brothers.

I recently held an orientation for newly hired PSEs. Under my local, the Organization Director holds the orientations, but I was asked to fill in that day in her absence. So, I was winging it. Just after I introduced myself, someone raised their hand and asked, "What does a union do?" I was so glad that was my first question. And by the time I finished answering it, so many hands were raised asking for an application to join our American Postal Workers Union. Yes, this Union is **ours**.

Collective Bargaining

This is the heart and soul of the labor union. This occurs when the membership bands together to increase its negotiating power. With a strong union, we are able to negotiate a contract with strong language to ensure that the employees keep

their rights, have workplace safety, higher wages and benefits, equality, job security, and so much more.

Build Power For Working People

There really is power in numbers. Labor unions join workers together, allowing the voices of individual workers to be heard and made into a goal of the whole union. Example: A single employee may feel that bending over into a gaylord to pick up heavy letter trays is unsafe and could potentially hurt her back. That employee may be intimidated to speak with the supervisor or postmaster about it. Or that supervisor/postmaster may just tell the employee to "suck it up" and "get the mail out." Because of our Union, safety is a part of our contract, specifically Article 14. That employee is not alone, and with the Union backing them, **their voice will be heard**, and the safety issue will be handled and corrected.

Workplace Safety

Unionized workplaces are safer. That is because unions will not let workers put their lives at risk to meet production targets or save the company money. When workers are taken care of, everyone benefits. But when employees are considered disposable (without a union), businesses can become less interested in protecting them. Without union representation, employees may lack someone to intervene on their behalf with management.

Higher Wages And Better Benefits

It is proven that workers who are trade union members earn more than non-unionized workers. Trade Unions use their collective muscle to bargain for better salaries, pensions, holidays, health insurance, sick pay, overtime and more. (Power in numbers.) Unions hammer out negotiations with management to get the best possible deal for employees. In terms of wages, union workers get about 20% more compared to similar jobs that are not supported by a union. Employees enjoy consistent pay raises on a regular basis as well. With a non-union job, the employer can set the wage without any formal bargaining process or input from the employee.

Equality

Union's champion equal rights and equal pay. They fight discrimination. They foster respect and dignity in the workplace.

Job Security

Both career and non-career (PSEs) enjoy job security by being backed by our union. PSEs have rights too. Over the past few years, I have had about a dozen PSEs tell me that their job was threatened when a supervisor or postmaster would tell them that they "would not be returning from their 5-day break". I would chuckle and reassure them that

continued on page 11



This picture is from a national convention in the late '90s or early 2000. A Blast from the past- How many people can you identify?

We Are All PSEs At The End Of The Day!



*By Brenda Nolan,
District 4 Representative*

Postal Support Employees (PSE) are dedicated employees that perform the same assignments as career employees; however, their pay is not reflective of that. They are paid less and sometimes treated as less by management and others. They deserve the same dignity and respect that

we, as career employees, have witnessed some PSEs being harassed by other career employees and this is unacceptable. We must come together as a whole to reap the benefits of a strong work environment and fair wages. It is critical that we support PSEs. At the end of the day, we are all Postal Support Employees in union solidarity.

Let Me Introduce Myself . . .



*By Rich Abramovitch
District 5 Representative*

Good day brothers and sisters,
My name is Rich Abramovitch and I am the new representative for District 5. I just recently transferred to the Charlotte area from Long Island, New York. Like many northerners, I made the move to enjoy warmer weather and lower prices. I have 23 years in the post office as a retail sales associate, and got involved with the Union as a shop steward in 2007, and then as an Area Representative covering 40 some odd Associate Offices.

I have been to several state and national conferences and conventions, and have been trained by some of the best unionists in the APWU. As soon as I came down here, I was appointed a shop steward as there was none in my office. But enough about myself, as anyone who may be reading this is well aware, our jobs, wages, and working conditions are continually under attack by Management at the USPS. This may not be happening in all offices, but it is happening in many, and at all levels. Issues like residual duty

assignments being left vacant, jobs being arbitrarily reverted, Management performing bargaining unit work, 204-b's being used improperly in the clerk craft, abusive supervisors/Postmasters, and a lackadaisical attitude towards the proper cleaning of the facilities that we work in, are just some of the small office issues that I dealt with in New York and have seen down here in North Carolina as well.

Unfortunately, the simple fact is that Management often does whatever they want, without regard to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and were it not for the Union, workers would have absolutely no voice in the workplace. While it is a daunting task sometimes, we have tools at our disposal, including the CBA

and some tremendous officers at the State and National levels who are always willing to help us in our struggle. The message that I ask of you, is that if any of these things are happening in your office or something else that you think is improper, please exercise your voice and contact your representative. If you have a shop steward, speak to them. If you don't, maybe consider becoming one, but until then, contact the district representative.

Communication is the key in this struggle, and it all starts with the voices on the work room floor. I hope to hear from any member who has questions or interest in becoming involved with the APWU.

Fraternally.

What Is The Purpose Of A Union?

continued from page 10

they would be returning. Then I would contact that management official, and their boss, instructing them to cease and desist from harassing, bullying and intimidating the employee(s). I would also send the applicable contract language. Although, supervisors and postmasters sometimes don't provide a written response to me, (because they know I'm right), the PSEs enjoy their 5-day break before returning for duty.

Your Representative

One key benefit of a union is having a representative to work with you on your behalf. Your shop steward can

tell you your rights and make sure that your rights are not violated. **Always remember to request your shop steward**, if you are called into the office, or if you feel that the "conversation" with management may lead to disciplinary action. Management is not required to get you a shop steward **unless you request one**.

It was at this point that the new hires were raising their hands asking me how they can join the American Postal Workers Union.

If you are ever asked about what a union can do, please feel free to use this for your response.

In Solidarity.

Change Service Requested



What Is Advanced Sick Leave?



*By Craig Ayscue,
District 6 Representative*

Per the Employee Labor Manual (ELM), Advance Sick Leave is sick leave that “may be advanced in cases of serious disability or ailment if there is reason to believe the employee will return to duty. Sick leave may be advanced whether or not employees have annual leave to their credit.”

For example, let’s say you have no sick leave left and you are scheduled to have surgery on your back next month. Your doctor says you will need to be off work for 3 weeks and you can return to work after the 3 weeks. Since many of us would be in

a certain degree of financial hardship without any money coming in for 3 weeks, the Advance Sick Leave would certainly come in handy. When you return to work, the sick leave that was advanced to you would have to be paid back.

This is accomplished by the USPS deducting your sick leave as you accrue it until the sick leave is paid back. Also, you do not have to exhaust all of your annual leave before requesting Advance Sick Leave.

When applying for Advance Sick Leave, you must submit medical documentation supporting your request. For example, your physician can state that “due to surgery, the employee will need to be off work during whatever time frame and will return to duty after this time.”

The request should be submitted well enough in advance so as to have the sick leave forwarded to you by the time you are off work. This will ensure you don’t go without pay. The request can be submitted to your supervisor who should then forward it to the proper management authority for approval.

In lieu of giving the request to your supervisor, members can go to their steward who can ensure the request is capable supervisors, unfortunately, many have a tendency to forget about issues like this which will leave you scrambling at the last minute. Thus, see your steward if possible.

You are allowed up to 30 days (240 hours) of Advance Sick Leave per request. As previously stated, you must be returning to work after your absence if you want the request for Advance Sick Leave approved. This is because the USPS wants to ensure you will be able to pay it back.

The main advantage of Advance Sick Leave is that it allows someone to continue receiving a paycheck during an absence that would normally have been without pay due to lack of sick leave.

Advance Sick Leave is a seldom used benefit that is sometimes misunderstood by both craft employees and management. Therefore, it is important that you ask your union steward for information on this so as to properly determine if Advance Sick Leave will be authorized.