



THE SPRINGFIELD RIFLE

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Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow

Diana Kirkland, editor

Greeting Brothers and Sisters. I along with Russ Evans, Hector Torres, Pete Mooradd and Rich Peabody had the honor of attending the 10th Annual New England States Convention of The American Postal Workers Union in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. I always thoroughly enjoy attending these conventions because not only are they extremely informative, they remind me of the sheer magnitude and resources available to us ALL as members of the APWU. As always, upon returning I am fired up and ready to go in the ongoing battle for fair wages, workplace safety, benefits and job security. As we go about in our day to day jobs at the Post Office, these things tend to escape us.

Among the topics discussed was our duty to provide fair representation to you the membership and ways to effectively achieve this. We spoke about the numerous strikes around the country that have taken place recently such as the teacher strikes in several states to the most recent Stop and Shop strikes. Labor movements, activist leaders and the ongoing struggle for decent jobs and benefits. The Trump administration and their attacks on Union time, Steward's time, the Janus Ruling and budgetary cutbacks. Attacks on voting rights, privatization attempts and the proposed ending to collective bargaining-which would result in "collective begging". If the current occupants of The White House get their way, we can be sure to see lower wages, higher prices to the consumer, less expanded services, and less delivery days. Be assured, if they win, we lose. With that said, our current contract negotiations have entered into the 'interest arbitration' phase. Interest Arbitration is discussed in greater detail in an article titled "Interest Arbitration" by Pete Mooradd our Research and Education Director which appears later on in this issue.

All of this brings me to a question I ask myself often, "what can I do about this?", "how can I effect positive change?" The short answer is that I can't. But **WE** can. We have a Union Local for that reason. So that **WE** as a **UNION** make changes. **Local 497** I am asking for you to come together and rally in support of each other. I am asking you to attend the Union Meetings which take place at our office the 3rd Thursday of each month at 1124 Berkshire Ave. If you can't make that meeting because of your work schedule, please get in touch with me, editor497dk@gmail.com. Perhaps we can set aside a different time for a meeting where I can review what took place at the previous meeting. A lot of you have approached me with concerns you have about workplace issues, union representation, and a variety of other issues. I'm asking you to answer the call. **I** can't make this Union work, but together **WE** can accomplish anything. Some of you talk of what the Union was like back in the day, let's make that day today, tomorrow, and every day after that. I am calling upon my fellow Union Members to take a stand and make the change that we have all been looking and hoping for.

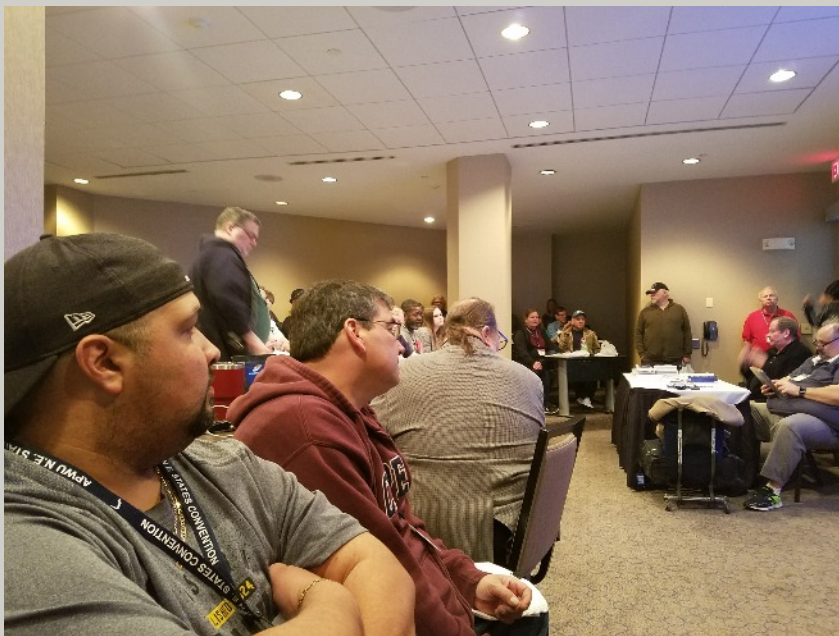
Let's make this happen because we are all **Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow!**



NBA Stephen Lukosus



APWU Secretary Treasurer
Elizabeth Powell



Local 497 VP Hector Torres, President Russ Evans

APWU Local 497 Officers

Russ Evans	President
Hector Torres	Vice President
Stu Kibbe	Recording Secretary
Jean Scalise	Treasurer
Diana Kirkland	Editor
Pete Mooradd	Research and Education
Robert Hyde	Legislative Director
Jim Long	Clerk Craft Director
Richard Peabody	Maintenance Craft Director
Ed Rowell	Motor Vehicle Director
Dave Sims	Safety and Health Representative
Todd Griffen	Web Master
Shaun Heady	Executive Board at Large
Tammy Demars	Trustee
Jessica Del Negro	Trustee
Jennifer Del Negro	Trustee
Jeff Laing	Sergeant at arms
Rory Garrity	Sergeant at arms

Clerk Stewards

Jim Long	T1	Emma Lucas T2
Deb Koscielski	T1	Julie Paige T2
Jermaine Norfleet	T1	Jim Girard T3
Brandon Johnson	T1	
Tara Lanzo	T2	
Russ Evans	T2	
Nancy Kenyon	T3	
Tammy Demars	T3	
Deb Roberts	T3	
Dave Bogacz	T3	
Maya Payne	T3	
Jacki Ciak	T3	
Diana Kirkland	T3	
Evelyn Sydcurka	Chiodopee	
Maria Jiminez	Athol	
Anna Provost	Wilbraham	
Neil Thomas	Pittsfield	

Maintenance Stewards

Enid Rivera	T1
Shaun Heady	T1
Jeff Zawaski	T1-T2
Rich Peabody	T2
David Jones	T2
Jennifer Doyle	T2
Stu Kibbe	T3
Pete Mooradd	T2
Jeff Laing	MSS
Neil Thomas	PITTSFIELD
Andy Mayo	AGAWAM

MVS Stewards

Ed Rowell	T1
Hector Torres	T1
David Sims	T1
Denis Reyes	T1
Tom Brown	T1
George Scott	T2-3
Maureen Hickson	T2
Justin Lincoln	T2
Robert Hyde	T3
Adrian Piris	T2
Dan Rosso	T3



Interest Arbitration

Brothers and Sisters over the past few weeks the question I have been asked the most is where do we stand on our contract otherwise known as The Collective Bargaining Agreement. One of the many items discussed at The New England States Convention was an update on this subject.

The two parties will sit down and try to negotiate the language in the different Articles. Each section of the Articles will be signed off on once the two parties agree if there will be any changes. All agreed language is then either signed off on or initialed by both parties.

The items that can't be agreed to are then sent to mediation. A neutral mediator is brought in to try to get the two sides to agree to compromise. The mediator has no authority to force either party to agree, they are just there to try to find some neutral ground. We are currently finishing with this phase.

The final phase is Interest Arbitration and is entered into if the parties can't agree on the entire contract. This phase involves three 'Arbitrators'. One arbitrator represents The Union, the second is management's, while the third is neutral. This arbitrator will be the one who makes the actual decision on all of the items in the contract that were not previously agreed to. The neutral arbitrator is chosen from a list of candidates. The goal is to find one mutually agreed upon by both sides. If none is agreeable to both sides, a process of elimination ensues. This goes on until there is one left who then becomes the third and neutral arbitrator.

During the arbitration, both sides will bring in expert witnesses to present their side of the argument. While the advocates present their case, the arbitrator is expected to choose one side of the argument or the other. This however, has not always been the case. One arbitrator took the route of taking half of each sides' argument, and that became his final decision. In that contract we ended up receiving two bonuses and two raises. Management wanted to award all bonuses, (like currently proposed) and The Union was for all raises.

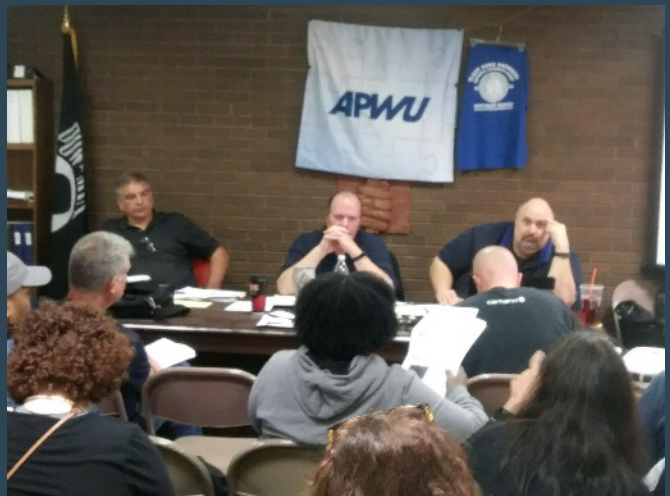
Arbitration is not a continuous process. It takes place only when all parties are available. The more items that are brought forward, the longer the process. Currently we are told it could take a year to get a final ruling, and a completed contract. Hopefully, this will help everyone understand the Interest Arbitration Process.

In Solidarity,

Pete Mooradd
Research and Education Director



Russ Evans, Rich Peabody, Jim Long, Justin Lincoln, Dennis Reyes, Hector Torres, Ed Rowell (kneeling)



Steve Lukosus, Dave Sarnacki, Frank Rigiero
APWU National Business Agents

Stop and Shop

By Jessica Del Negro, Associate Editor

On March 20th 2019 a rally was held at Stop & Shop on Memorial Drive in Chicopee, MA. Local 497 officers were on the scene in support of the UFCW's fight for a fair contract.

Stop & Shop employees were not happy to say the least. Employee contracts expired at the end of February and contract negotiations were ongoing. Many employees opposed the original proposed agreement. Employees were unsatisfied with wages and healthcare benefits among other things. Picketing and striking had the intended effects building tensions between employees and the company. About 31,000 workers in three states represented by 5 Unions were on strike, and APWU Local 497 stood proudly with them. The strike came to an end Easter Sunday when The Union claimed a tremendous victory for the thousands of workers they represented!



Key Facts for Stop & Shop Customers
AHOLD/DELHAIZE SUCCESS
Top operating supermarket in New England
\$8 billion share buybacks since 2010
Over \$2 billion in profit last year
13.4% increase in operating income last quarter
WHAT THE COMPANY IS PROPOSING
Cutting workers take-home pay
Huge reductions in retirement benefits
Drastic cuts to healthcare
Elimination of holidays and personal days
WHAT IT MEANS FOR CUSTOMERS
Increase in poverty in your communities
Longer lines at checkout
Less customer service
Higher employee turnover



What's to Come in Interest Arbitration

By Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman

Our efforts to reach a new contract are now entering the next phases of mediation and [interest](#) arbitration.

In mediation, an impartial mediator engages the Postal Service and the APWU negotiating teams in an attempt to break through any impasses and reach an [agreement](#). If mediation does not lead to a voluntary agreement, we will move to interest arbitration.

Most of you are familiar with grievance arbitration – also called rights arbitration. During rights arbitration, an impartial arbitrator is presented testimony, receives evidence and arguments, and then writes an award. Hearings last a few hours or a few days. The rights arbitrator can't change the contract language, but decides whether someone's rights under the contract have been violated.

In contrast, an interest arbitrator has the power to write contract language – to change rights, determine pay, benefits, and work rules. In doing so, he/she considers the interests of the parties in various proposals.

Working together with the core negotiating team and craft officers, we have been preparing for the possibility of interest arbitration throughout negotiations, including researching, collecting data, and working with professionals. The union must present facts, data, and arguments to convince the arbitrator why he/she ought to favor APWU proposals over USPS proposals.

This arbitration will involve a panel of three (3) arbitrators.

APWU will appoint an advocate arbitrator – someone advocating for the union's views. The Postal Service will also have an advocate arbitrator. The parties will then jointly select a neutral arbitrator who will chair the panel and run the hearings.

Selecting the neutral arbitrator is a complicated process. Given that even a single penny increase in hourly wages would result in a cost of millions of dollars to the USPS and that the union and the [USPS](#) will present a lot of economic data in the arbitration process, the neutral arbitrator must be experienced and able to deal with large numbers.

Each side will provide a list of arbitrators they would like to see as the neutral arbitrator. We will then attempt to mutually [agree](#) on the neutral. If the sides cannot mutually agree to an arbitrator, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) will provide

the parties a list of arbitrators. Then, each side will eliminate an arbitrator until there is only one name remaining. That final name would then be the neutral arbitrator and panel chair.

With the panel set, arbitration can commence. In past interest arbitrations, multiple hearing dates have taken place. When hearings conclude, both parties may submit closing briefs before the panel goes into deliberations and issues an award establishing our new contract.

During the hearings, we will present data and evidence that supports our proposals. We have engaged a team of economists who will detail relevant trends in the economy, comparison of wage levels and trends in comparable jobs. The economists will also present publicly available data that is relevant to postal compensation, work hours, [benefits](#), and scheduling. Panels of employees from every APWU craft and many different jobs will explain what they do and the conditions in which they work. Experts will provide testimony in job analysis and job comparisons. We will also present survey data from many sources. Your craft officers will testify about the work their crafts do and how important it is. Also, other subject matter experts will explain why we need changes to certain work rules. Finally, we will spend a lot of time and effort in the hearings to rebut the testimony and evidence of the Postal Service.

This effort requires a team of national officers, attorneys, staff, dozens of witnesses, and hundreds of exhibits. It will require days of hearings to present our case and days of hearings to rebut the case the Postal Service will present. Together with your core negotiating committee and craft officers, we promise to work hard to get a contract that recognizes your value. Let's work and stand together. Show management our unity and solidarity as we are *Fighting Today for a Better Tomorrow!*



Springfield Cafeteria

Greetings Brothers and Sisters! How many of you are forced to spend ridiculous amounts of money weekly ordering takeout since the cafeteria was closed down at the BMC? I have overheard several conversations about the inconvenience of no longer having a cafeteria on site to grab a fresh hot meal. Even for those that usually bring their own meals, there are situations when time or circumstances make it impossible to prepare something from home. The introduction of food dispensers, while ok for some, simply might not be appealing to others. If you work Tour 1, the chances of restaurants open when it is time for you to have lunch and ready to deliver is laughable at best. If this is something that has had an adverse effect on you, then make your voice heard! We have a new Plant Manager, Ted Goonan and this is an issue we should make known to him. He was not on site when this change was implemented, so he would have no knowledge of the problems we have faced as a result of this change. If this is a cause you would like to take up, then please I urge you to stop by the Union Office and leave me a note explaining your desire for change. You could also send an email to editor497dk@gmail.com. I would welcome the feedback and also the opportunity to address this issue with management.

In Solidarity,
Diana Kirkland



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.



Your Right to Union Representation

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting.

Without union representation, I choose not to answer questions."

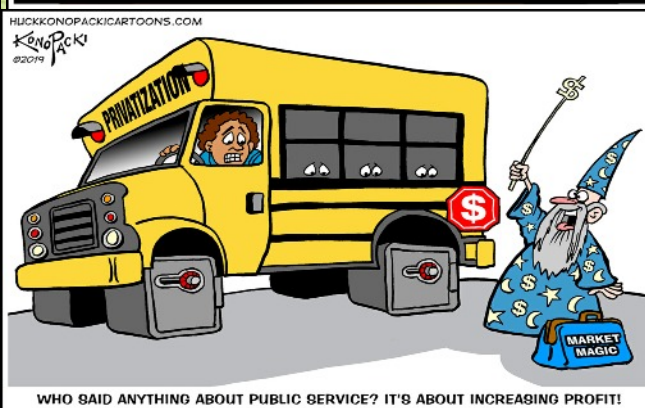
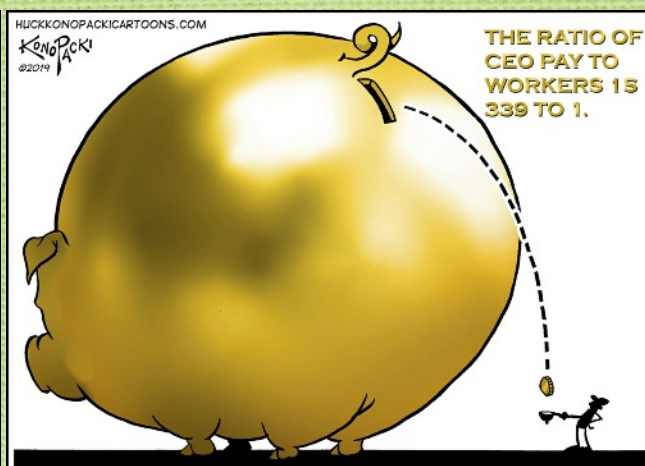
(This is my right under the 1975 U.S. Supreme Court Weingarten decision)



Meanwhile around the plant:



Nobody does it better!



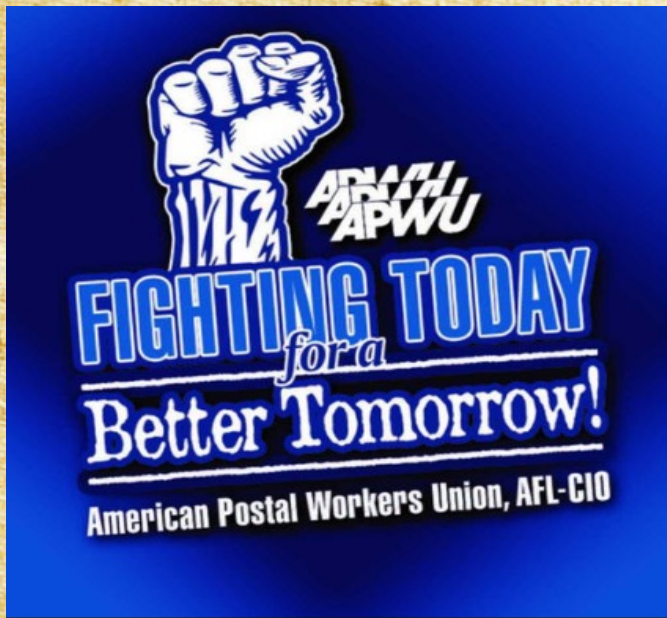


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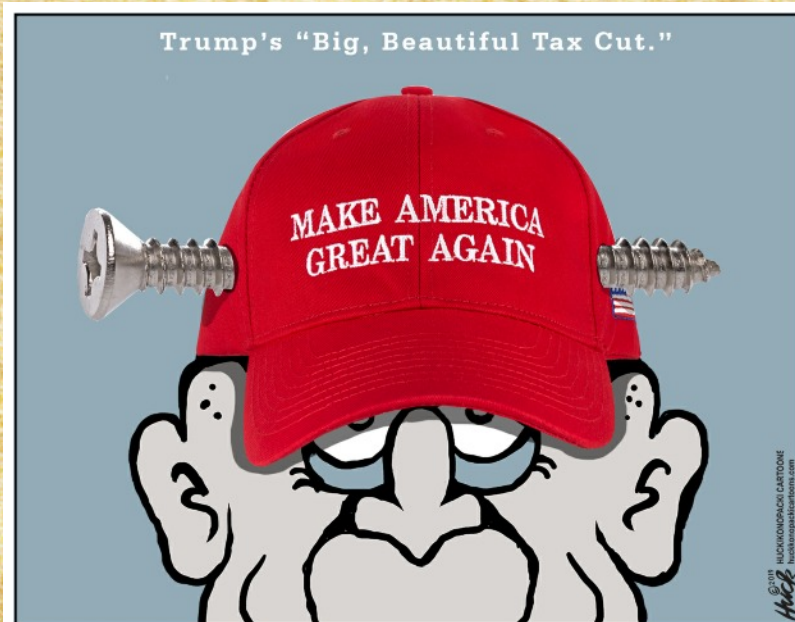
413 543-4851 Fax 413 543-1007



The most important word in
the language of the working
class is
SOLIDARITY

Harry Bridges

APWU LOCAL 497



Our labor unions are not
narrow, self-seeking
groups. They have raised
wages, shortened hours,
and provided
supplemental benefits.
Through collective
bargaining and
grievance procedures,
they have brought
justice and democracy to
the shop floor.

John F. Kennedy

