THE SPRINGFIELD RIFLE

SPRINGFIELD, MA | AREA LOCAL 497

FEBRUARY 2021 | Volume 45 | Issue 1

We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action." - "All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence." • "The ultimately measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige and even his life for the welfare of others." "Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity." • "The time is always right to do what is right." • "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." • "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way." • "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." . "People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other." - "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?" • "Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality." "Tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action." • "All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence." . "The ultimately measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of c proversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige and even his life for the welfare of others." . "Nothing in all the world is nce and conscientious stupidity." • "The time is always right to do what is right." • "I have a dream that one day this r of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." . "We must learn to li "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way." . "Our lives begin to end the day to get along because they fear each other, they fear each other because they don't know each of nmunicated with each other." • "Life's most persistent and ctly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what urgent question is, What are you doi you ought to be. This is the interre nted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, ther mplacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action." • "All labor that uplifts hum tely measure of a man is not where he stands in mor nbor will risk his position, his prestige and even h scientious stupidity." • "The time is always righ eed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, t nnot do great things, I can do small things i along because they fear each other; they icated with each other." - "Life's most pe I can never be what I ought to be unti th the fierce urgency of now. In this . This is of life and a time for vigorous and or that uplifts history, there is suc humanity has nere he stands in moments (on, his prestige and lity." • "The time is always even his li right to d nold these truths to be selfevident lo great things, I can do small things ecause they fear each other; h each other." • "Life's most they Martin Luther King, Jr. | Union and Civil Rights Activist



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STEWARD DESIGNATIONS

Designations are subject to change. Information is correct as of 02/28/2021. Contact our business office for further information.

CLERKS | TOUR 1 | SPFLD NDC

Norfleet

CLERKS | TOUR 2 | SPFLD NDC

Russ Evans • Annie Chamberlain • Debbie Jacobs Wheeler • Greg Roy

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Dan Carney • Aurelia Willis • Richard Green • Sasha Gooden Blake • Richard Green

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Nancy Kenyon • Dave Bogacz • Jenny Bogacz • Deb Robert • Enid Rivera T1 • David Jones T1 • Jeff Zawalski T1&2 • Rich Peabody T2 • Pete Mooradd T2 • Jennifer Brouillette T2 • Chuck Ferros T2

MAINTENANCE | AOs

Rich Peabody (All) • Jeff Laing MSS • Justin DesLauriers Pittsfield/N. Adams • Andy Mayo Agawam

 \P ditor's Note: Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual author and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or Union. Article and photograph submissions from all APWU members are welcome and encouraged! The Editor reserves the right to determine if material submitted to this publication shall be printed, and reserves the right to edit as needed for libel, space and clarity. Please send signed submissions to the editor at 497JBD@gmail.com or to our business address at 1124 Berkshire Ave, Springfield, MA 01151.





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

pandemic. We made it through the COVID-19 pandemic. We made it through the election mail. We made it through the busiest Christmas season in our history. It is all because of you and your continued dedication toward the Postal service, and I thank all of you.

The pandemic is not going away anytime soon. I must remind you of the precautions to take at work and while off duty. Wear your masks at all times when out in public. While working in the post office, it is a requirement to wear your mask or a face shield while inside the facility. Wash your hands as recommended by the CDC. Avoid close contact whenever possible. Avoid touching your eyes and try to avoid large gatherings. Be aware of your surroundings and don't let your guard down. Take the extra step to keep yourself and others safe.

When there is a positive test in your facility, the occupational nurse is notified. She then will contact the employee who tests positive and ask them questions to determine if there has been close contact with a fellow employee that necessitates fellow employees to be told to self-quarantine, due to the fact that they were identified as in close contact. If you were identified as being in close contact with an employee that tests positive you are entitled to administrative leave until cleared by the occupational nurse to return to work. A person who tests positive is required to use their own leave. The FMLA coronavirus leave expired December 31st.

The liberal leave policy is still in effect so if you have childcare issues and have to request a change of schedule, annual leave, LWOP, to work around your children's schooling

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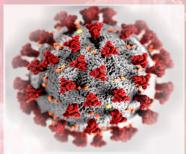


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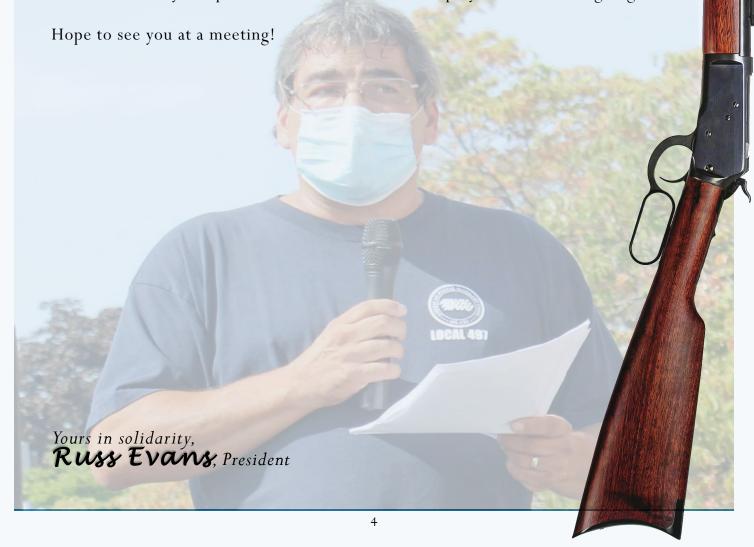


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or childcare issues, you may do so. Management has to give it serious consideration prior to denying your request.

There is some good news on the Homefront. Our national leaders and postal management have signed a major MOU addressing the understaffing at mail processing facilities throughout the country. The terms of the new agreement, over 5500 new career positions will be created. The BMC will be converting 40 PSE's into regular positions. These positions will be filled, no later than March 13, 2021.

One last reminder to all our members. I would like to remind you that our local holds union meetings every third Thursday of the month starting at 6:30pm, at the Berkshire Ave Office at 1124 Berkshire Ave. We also will put up a link on our web site, APWUSAL 497 and on our Facebook page for those of you who would like to join the meeting via Google chat. We post notices for union meetings on the bulletin boards. There are no meetings in July, August, or December. At these meetings, we report on the current issues that are going on in our local. It's a place where you can be heard, and have your questions answered. Please stop by and see what's going on.



Petition Delivered: Postal Workers and Customers Urge President Biden and Congress to Fill Four Vacancies on the USPS Board of Governors

This article originally appeared on the APWU National website (02/24/21).

On February 23, the APWU and allies who support a strong, public Postal Service presented a petition with over 400,000 signatures to the Biden Administration. The petition, reported on in the last issue of The American Postal Worker, called on the new Biden Administration and Senate leaders to "swiftly fill" the four vacant positions on the nine-member, USPS Board of Governors.

"We need a strong board that reflects the will of the people," said President Mark Dimondstein. "We need leaders who will support prompt, reliable and efficient service, and public servants who understand that this is the United States Postal 'Service' and not the United States Postal 'Business."

All of the current board members are Trump appointees; all are men. Most have deep ties to Wall Street and corporate interests, and not one has had direct experience with the USPS prior to joining the board.

"On behalf of our members, I thank the many allied organizations such as Progress America, Take on Wall Street, Alliance for Retired Americans, Daily Kos, People for the American Way, The 98%, and other organizations of A Grand Alliance to Save Our Postal Service that along with us, did a terrific job in collecting these signatures," President Dimondstein said.

In addition to the demand for Governors who will preserve and protect the People's Post Office, the petition also urges President Biden to select candidates who "will support an agenda of expanding the role of the USPS in serving our communities." One example of this is adding new products that can help the public and at the same time generate revenue, such as paycheck cashing, offering wire transfers and other financial services.

"A Board of Governors unafraid of innovation can make these changes happen," Dimondstein said. "Our union is united with the public in rejecting calls for shrinking our way to success by slowing mail, lowering standards of mail delivery, closing post offices and consolidating plants. We've been down that road before. It didn't work."

In sharp contrast to President Trump, who called the USPS 'a joke' and whose administration proposed ending the universal service requirement and selling off the USPS, the Biden administration has expressed a commitment to a public Postal Service. Recently, the administration has called for replacing the aging fleet of postal delivery trucks with electric vehicles, which would save on fuel costs and provide greater capacity to carry packages.

"The USPS is a national treasure. The severe delays affecting the country's critical postal services are unacceptable," President Dimondstein said. "This must be fixed and we have a rare window of opportunity now to make the necessary changes."

COLA Increase Announced

This article originally appeared on the APWU National website (02/12/21) and includes the updated pay scales henceforth.

Agreement, career employees represented by the National Agreement will total \$1,414.00 per year. APWU will receive a 20 cent per hour cost-of-living Postal Support Employees (PSEs) do not receive costadjustment (COLA), effective February 27, 2021.

The increase is the result of a rise in the Consumer increases under the 2018 contract. The next increase is Price Index (CPI-W). It will appear in paychecks dated effective on May 22, 2021 when PSE's will receive March 19, 2021 (Pay Period 06-2021). The value of the another 20-cent raise. COLA for full-time employees in each step and grade

will increase by \$416.00 annually, and the hourly rates for part-time employees will be adjusted accordingly.

The COLAs are in addition to general wage increases. This is the fifth cost-of-living increase under the 2018 In accordance with the 2018-2021 Collective Bargaining contract. The COLAs received so far during the 2018

of-living increases, but have several general wage

WELCOME TO THE CIRCUS Vice President's Report

I don't have to explain why 2020 was a complete nightmare for everyone, but I can explain why the Springfield NDC turned into a complete circus. COVID-19 hit this country in March and the everyday normalities ended for everyone. The US Postal service, being an essential occupation, had a rough road ahead. We had a national election coming up and mail volume was going to go through the roof.

Being that we had a national pandemic, the employee safety should have been the number one priority; as the year went on, we noticed that managements' day to day actions showed *it wasn't*. Every month, we were on the 3rd floor with labor management questioning these actions.

WELCOME TO OUR CIRCUS.

Louis DeJoy was appointed postmaster general in May 2020 by the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service. This was the start of more job loss, as we all know DeJoy was brought in to dismantle our service and cripple the day-to-day operations around here. The *UNION* is needed more than ever right now.

WELCOME TO OUR CIRCUS.

So, foreseeing that mail volume and the election was ahead of us in 6 months, you would think that postal management would have been "very" proactive in preparation for this task. You think they would have worked on getting trailers, equipment, man power, temporary facilities lined up by June 2020 in preparation for the November and December task. Nope, management starts in November.

WELCOME TO OUR CIRCUS.

After all the obstacles Management put in our way, the Circus they created in 2020, the members of this great union found a way to make the USPS successful in November with the election ballots. We appreciate all the hard work and dedication you showed during this period. The Christmas mail volume was at a record high and even though we were set up for failure in every way, we found a way to get as much mail to the customers as we could. Great work APWU members!

It wasn't all bad in 2020.

Thanks to Local 497, with Hector Torres leading the way for the *fight* to get Providence work for Springfield PVS. Countless hours were put into this case by *many*. We are now doing the Providence work and So. Ct is next!

Thanks to local 497, and Clerk Director Jim Long for *fighting* the F1 scheduler violation. Great case and thanks for making management accountable for their failure on this matter.

Thanks to Maintenance director Rich Peabody, and MVS director Justin Lincoln for handling *the circus* this year in this local. We dealt with a lot at first. It was stressful but we faced the challenge head on as team and came out standing. We have to continue being the bear and *fighting* for our rights!

Moving forward in 2021

The local needs help. We have won many battles recently but the War to keep our jobs continues. Our officers are getting tired and we need the support of the membership. Our strength comes from the body; that body is the membership. We will be looking to reignite our members. We need more engagement; we are looking for more people to get involved in *our UNION*. We are looking to increase the attendance at our membership meetings. We need the

younger members to step up and get involved. YOU are the future.

I hope 2021 is a healthy and better year for all the members of APWU! Continue your hard work and as a UNION I'm convinced we will move forward in *protecting* our *Jobs* and *rights*.

In Solidarity,

Ed Rowell, Vice President



MAINTENANCE CRAFT REPORT

As we continue moving forward through this pandemic, the USPS continues to cut and revert maintenance jobs. As of this report, we have not gotten any new staffing from USPS management; I have not received new staffing for MS-1, eWHEP, or a new 4852 for custodians, which the Union should have gotten back in October 2020. I have filed a grievance and work continues on these issues concerning staffing. I assure you, your stewards and Craft Director are working hard on these challenges.

Back in December, I put out a letter in response to Management's "Invite" to help out operations by doing Mail handlers' and clerks' work, as which is crossing crafts. Management did not care that they cut

We, as a union must stand as one and say no and request a steward. We must stand as one and work together, not against each other."

clerk jobs when removing AFSM-100 and trapping FSS-4. This had an impact to maintenance as well, losing ET and MPE jobs. Then maintenance management felt it was ok to have BEM's doing MPE work on APPS, having MPE's doing BEM work, or BEMs doing MOS clerk work such as dispatching and to have ETs work down. Does anyone see a problem with this?

When we as a Union agree to work in in another occupational group, when management is cutting jobs, we are committing job suicide. We, as a union must stand as one and say no and request a steward. We must stand as one and work together, not against each other. Look at it this way; USPS management is the witch

and craft are Hansel and Gretel. Instead of candy, its overtime being used to lure craft to cross into other occupational groups. I am not saying don't work overtime, but rather work in our assigned occupational group or principal assignment. As a union, we must face this together. When we do, we can take our work back.

As for arbitrations concerning the following maintenance grievances, all I can tell you is that we are working on scheduling dates. There was an important change to article 38, and one was for opened season. The new language states,

"Maintenance craft employees who are not on a promotional eligibility register(s), may apply for inclusion on the appropriate promotional eligibility register(s). employees who apply will receive the results of their application(s) no later than sixty (60) days after testing provided the applications have been properly completed by the applicant".

This language eliminates the open season provisions from the old contract.

I would like to finish with a quote from Martin Luther King Jr.

"In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as 'right to work', it provides no 'rights' and no 'work'. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of

collective bargaining we demand this fraud to be stopped."



In unity,

Richard Peabody,

Maintenance Craft Director



LIFE AND LOSS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

The devastation caused by this Pandemic has been felt by all. It feels as though there is no end in sight for the uncertainty. In the midst of all that is happening in the world, we must rely on the support and strength of our brothers and sisters. I, like many of our brothers and sisters, have lived and breathed in this terrible gray area.

As a *single mother*, I have made ever effort to ensure my child, the future of our nation, the best possible education. This requires sacrifice, in order to ensure stability.

As a woman, I fear that I will become obsolete in the workplace due to those motherly obligations. The loss of work, of pay, creates a sense of panic and anxiety. This pandemic has created a vacuum for the all the progress we've made as women.

As a human being, I struggle with the day-to-day stress, and the loss of my mother. The support from my fellow workers gave me strength.

I consider these fellow co-workers my second family. I know I am not alone in that. I know that I and not alone. I have my Brothers and Sisters beside me. I have my Union to fight for my right to be a mother, a woman, and a human being, worthy of respect and value in the workplace. I am confident that with them alongside me, I will not be left behind. Unity prevails, and we stand together. The fight continues!

In Unity,

Jennifer Brouillette, Editor

RETIRED



Larry Bryant | Maintenance 2005 - 2021

MEMBER PORTAL &

Connect to your personal health plan information.

Your member portal — **myapwuhp.com** — features resources to help you stay healthy and tools to help you get the most out of your health plan. Access deductibles, copays, coverage, maximums, and more.

When you register for a free member account, you'll have secure access to your personal health plan information.

All members must re-register for the new member portal, even if you've registered in the past.

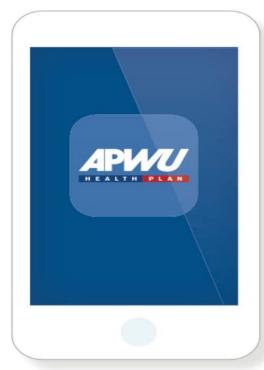
Visit myapwuhp.com to register in just minutes for instant access to your health plan.



MOBILE APPLICATION

Manage your High Option Health Plan with your member portal.

Your member portal automatically transfers medical information from your claims and organizes it in a single, secure location.



As a member, you can log in to **myapwuhp.com** to:

- Check the provider network to find a doctor
- Print a temporary ID card or request a replacement ID card
- View or print claims and authorizations
- · Review your personal health summary
- · See benefit and eligibility information
- · View and download the plan brochure
- Read industry-leading health and wellness information
- Update your email address
- · Update your coordination of benefits

Download the myapwuhp app.

The **myapwuhp** app is another tool that can help you manage your health plan. See your claims, year-to-date information, prescriptions, and more.

You must register for the member portal in order to use the secure app.





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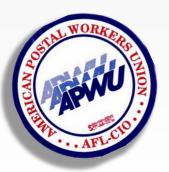


This is a summary of benefits and features offered by the APWU Health Plan. All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the Plan's Brochure (RI 71-004).

The APWU Health Plan's Notice of Privacy Practices describes how medical information about you may be used by the Health Plan, your rights concerning your health information, and how to exercise them and APWU Health Plan's responsibilities in protecting your health information. The Notice is posted on the Health Plan's website. If you need to obtain a copy of the Health Plan's Notice of Privacy Practices, you may either contact the Health Plan via email or through the website at apwuhp.com or by calling 800-222-2798.

APWU, Local 497

1124 Berkshire Ave, Suite 3 Springfield, MA 01151-1316



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we want to hear from you!

We want to hear from you!

Trop the Editor an email at AQTJBD Doymail.

Your chance to be seen & heard!

Membership Meeting Schedule

Union meetings are held the third of every month *except* July, August, and December. Meetings are held at our business office at 1124 Berkshire Ave at 6:30 P.M.

JANUARY 21

FEBRUARY 18

MARCH 18

APRIL 15

MAY 20

JUNE 17

SEPTEMBER 16

OCTOBER 21

NOVEMBER 18

Yes, we do meetings online as well! Please visit our website at: APWUSAL.org (under the 'HOME' tab) for details!