

WMAL VOICE



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WESTERN MICHIGAN AREA LOCAL,
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO



WMAL Voice

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GRAND RAPIDS MAIN OFFICE 776-1489
Fax: 776-1536

P-CAMPUS OFFICE 977-1050
Fax: 977-1020

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT 888-767-6738
retirement line

HR SHARED SERVICES CENTER 877-477-3273
option 5

VETERAN'S CRISIS LINE 800-273-8255

REPRESENTING:

Ada· Allendale· Alto· Baldwin· Belmont· Big Rapids· Bitely· Blanchard· Bradley· Branch· Burnips· Byron Center· Caledonia· Cannonsburg· Cedar Springs· Comstock Park· Coopersville· Coral· Custer· Dorr· Douglas· Fennville· Ferrysburg· Fountain· Free Soil· Gowen· Grand Haven· Grand Rapids· Grandville· Grant· Hamilton· Hesperia· Holland· Hopkins· Howard City· Hudsonville· Jamestown· Jenison· Lamont· Macatawa· Marne· Mecosta· Middleville· Moline· Morley· New Era· Newaygo· Nunica· Paris· Pierson· Pullman· Ravenna· Remus· Rockford· Rodney· Rothbury· Sand Lake· Scottville· Shelby· Shelbyville· Sparta· Spring Lake· Stanwood· Trufant· Walhalla· Wayland· West Olive· Zeeland



Editorial Policy: Submissions are welcome from all APWU members, sent to the address or email listed above. In accordance with the local constitution, 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 space and clarity. The views and opinions expressed within are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the editor, local officers, or the APWU. All material must be signed, though names may be withheld upon request. The WMAL Voice is published bimonthly.

As of March 2005, a policy was instated to publish member condolences, births, marriages, and anniversaries. Please let me know at wmalvoice@gmail.com of anything you would like included. Pictures are welcomed!

My Final Article

By David Janes, Clerk Craft Director B

With the holiday coming to a close at the printing of this article, I would like to take my final article as your craft director to say thank you. For the last 6 years I can assure you that I gave my best to represent the contract that we have, and it's my sincere hope that in some way, I was able to make your life better by my representation. It was a pleasure to get a chance to meet most of you, and I do wish I had a chance to meet all of you. But with as many shifts and offices that this position has, it would have had to been a 24 hour position, and I'm too old for that. I do assure you that all grievances that I have sent up over these years, will maintain my attention until my last day working at the postal service. I believe that they should all be heard by the time I do retire, so I don't believe anything will be unfinished by the time I go. But thank you for the opportunity to do this position for the time I was here.

I personally would like to thank our own union president, Amy, for having the patience for teaching me all that I've learned under her leadership. I think the state having her as the education director will benefit greatly, and I'm hoping that the other locals across the state will become stronger by being motivated from her passion. With someone like her who has spent the large majority of her career in the union office learning and teaching, the knowledge she gained has left this local in a good position to not just roll over every time management wants to violate provisions in the contract. My hope is that the people that learned under her, continue the education of those that replace us so that management here will never underestimate the power of unity when workers unite.

As my final thing to say, please take time to be with your families as much as you can. This job can be a great resource to finance the lifestyle you choose, but without family, there's no one to enjoy it with. As many of you remember, when my father died last year, it took a little of me with him. I took every opportunity to spend vacations with him, and I don't regret any of it. I'm glad I did. It was this union that made it so I

could be paid with annual when I spent some of the best times with him. I still miss him, and my mother who died at the beginning of my career with the postal service. But I will never regret the time that I got with them while they were still here. Now that I have assumed the role of patriarch of my family, I look forward to spending time with my children and grandchildren, without having to debate on a sick call to make sure it happens. It's my sincere hope that I am able to make those lasting memories that will bring a smile to their faces as they remember the time we did that thing. Let's not forget to do that with our loved ones starting next year. Covid stole a lot of time from us on this, and now it's time we get those memories back that Covid owes our families. Please be and stay safe. And, if I don't see you at any other point, may your lives be full of happiness and joy. Thank you again for your trust in me to be your director.

David



2022 Western Michigan Area Local Christmas Party



2022 Western Michigan Area Local Christmas Party



Photo courtesy of Simon Cole via Western Michigan Area Local Facebook page



Wishing You All A Great New Year

By Michael Greene, Editor, wmalvoice@yahoo.com

Greetings and happy holidays to you all. I would like to wish all of you my best and hope that the new year brings you good things. I had intended to go in one direction with

my article, but as life goes, sometimes we need to be flexible and change our approach as needed.

First, I want to say thank you to the members from the executive board who have decided to move on (David Janes and Lisa Borchardt) to the next chapter of their postal careers. From what I've witnessed over the years, it takes a certain breed to be a steward. You have to be committed to the membership. You need to have a thick skin to deal with management that will continually deviate from the terms of the contract we have in place. And you have to be fine with not always receiving your flowers (it's a hip hop type reference) from the people you're helping. We reap the benefits, absolutely. But we don't always say thank you for the train our union stands in front of to protect our jobs, our work and our safety. From me to you both and every other steward in the WMAL - THANK YOU! Your effort and sacrifice don't go unnoticed.

I got a chance to volunteer for the children's Christmas party and stop by the adult one for a bit. It was nice to see a number of faces that I haven't in years, but also those from the other facilities. I'd like to see these same faces at our monthly union meetings going forward. Come in, listen to union business, give a small amount of time to help strengthen the future of our union. Again, the future. Some of you may be close to retirement and others may be fresh faces. I know my experiences with management over the years and what I've seen with other

employees. If you believe that they aren't hoping that our unions will dissolve and disappear one day so they can ravage the core of the postal service to save money (that they'll receive back in the forms of bonuses and such) then you're kidding yourself. Corporate greed is the name of the game going forward. Companies want to slash employees and prevent unions from being formed or being impactful. No union equals no accountability and no rights for employees. Where else can you go, without a bachelor's degree or higher, and earn the type of money we get with the benefits as well? Don't take this for granted. Be involved. Show your support in the meetings, not just the parties. We need participation.

One thing I'm always going to do is be me. Good or bad, up or down. I don't speak or write in the King's English and I'm not really trying to. I am a guy who wants to share his perspective. It won't always be popular, but it really shouldn't be. Honesty shouldn't. A bit ago, I wrote a few articles with suggestions on people starting to work out and emphasize their health a bit more. Let's be honest, the job and the dynamic can be stressful. Especially when we're typically spending at least eight hours a day at work. A few months back, someone sent an unsigned letter which was pretty critical of me and what I was trying to do. Truth be told, I appreciated it. I'm not sure why the person didn't sign their name or provide a return address, but hey. I don't mind criticism. It's a small price to pay to hear the opposite from union members who are hoping to improve their lives because they want to live a better way. We're adults. We can carry ourselves as such. It's all about respect with me. Not everything needs to be divisive or a conflict.

(Cont'd on page 10)

What Does The UNION Do For Me?

by Mark Ferrari, Local Business Agent, Milwaukee, WI Area Local APWU, AFL-CIO

Below are some examples of what APWU represented career (and non-career) employees are guaranteed as compared to what they would reasonably expect to get without the union bargaining for us. See below examples and remember if you ask "what does the UNION do for me?" The answer is very lengthy.

<u>Current Rules for APWU Career Represented Employees</u>		vs.	<u>Without the UNION</u>
<u>Pay:</u>	Competitive or well above similar private sector Jobs.	vs.	Much lower pay.
<u>Pay Raises:</u>	Guaranteed under the UNION contract.	vs.	No guarantees. Keep your fingers Crossed. Kissing butts is no guarantee.
<u>Scheduling for Overtime & Holidays:</u>	Fair rules under the UNION contract. Volunteers take precedence.	vs.	Whoever management wants to work-or not work. Hopefully the boss likes you....
<u>Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA):</u>	Guaranteed under the UNION contract.	vs.	None. The only COLA you get is the kind that you drink.
<u>Time and a half:</u>	Paid for working over 8 hours in a day and/or for working first off day.	vs.	Paid only if working over 40 hours in a week.
<u>Double Time Pay:</u>	Over 10 hours on a regular day and/or working second off day.	vs.	HA! What's that?
<u>Retirement Plan:</u>	Pension and Thrift Savings Plan	vs.	No pension. Maybe a 401k plan if you are lucky.
<u>Bidding/Applying for jobs:</u>	Seniority/Agreed to qualification qualification rules.	vs.	Whomever management wants, keep your fingers crossed. Kissing butt is no guarantee.
<u>Annual Leave:</u>	Generous amount given. Guaranteed amount of employee allowed off per day.	vs.	Much less. Only given if management agrees to let you have off. No guarantees.
<u>Missing work due to sickness:</u>	Up to 104 sick leave hours per year. FMLA per year. FMLA rights are enforced. 80 hours of sick leave dependent care given. Sick leave can be advanced in some situations.	vs.	Very little given. FMLA. rights are often ignored. No advancement of sick leave.
<u>Subcontracting:</u>	Rules that prohibit and limit subcontracting that helps protect postal employee jobs.	vs.	No rules. Could affect postal Jobs. See next item below.
<u>Layoffs:</u>	Not allowed under the UNION negotiated contract.	vs.	You can be laid off. Find a new job if you can. Good luck finding one with the current pay/benefits you get now.
<u>Grievances:</u>	The UNION investigates and files grievances when necessary to correct any problems with your contractual rights.	vs.	No contract to follow. Rules can can change day to day and you have no recourse to be compensated when wronged.
<u>Congress:</u>	UNION lobbies Congress on legislation that is important to postal workers and the USPS.	vs.	Congress will make their decisions decisions solely based on what they receive from groups/competitors who want to harm the USPS.
<u>Postal Support Employees:</u>	Good pay, annual leave, pay increases, health insurance, path to career status, rights to grievance procedure. Right to challenge discipline.	vs.	Much lower pay, no vacation time, no health insurance, no path to career employment. No grievance procedure. Little right to challenge discipline.

And there you have it Brothers and Sisters,.....as predicated by your Union leadership.

Reprinted from The Hi-Lites

Statement by APWU President Mark Dimondstein on USPS Electric Vehicle Fleet

December 20, 2022

On Tuesday December 20, the USPS and the White House announced new plans for a massive transition to electrification of the next generation USPS delivery fleet.

Of the initial purchase of at least 66,000 next generation new vehicles, the USPS has now committed that 75% of them will be electric. In addition, the Postal Service has committed to all "zero emission" fleet purchases by 2026.

"The APWU welcomes this excellent news," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "It is good for the environment, good for future postal revenues, good for postal workers and it is a huge step forward from the original management plans for an only 10% EV fleet. This is progress, for the people, the planet and the Postal Service."

The APWU appreciates the broad coalition of unions, community and environmental groups that pressed hard on this issue over the last two years. Their involvement and public outcry made a big difference in moving the needle and also obtaining helpful Congressional action that provided \$3 billion for the postal fleet conversion to EVs. And postal management listened, adapted and eventually made the right decision.

The APWU continues to stand with the UAW (United Auto Workers) that all of the new vehicles should be union made.

The APWU MVS leadership, along with the entire union, will work to ensure that the mechanics who repair the vehicles are fully and properly trained on the new technology and that repair work remains "in house."

The APWU and our community allies will continue advocating for charging stations at post offices which will be available for public use. There is no better network suited to be the foundation of a nationwide system/grid of EV charging stations than the public Postal Service anchored in every town and community.

Courtesy of APWU.org

UNION-MADE HOLIDAY GIFTS

Games

- Barrel of Monkeys
- Candy Land
- Chutes and Ladders
- Clue
- The Game of Life
- Monopoly
- Pictionary
- Risk
- Scrabble
- Sorry

Beauty Products

- Avon
- Caress skin care
- ChapStick
- Dove
- Old Spice
- Revlon

Candies

- Allan Candy peppermint candy canes
- Jelly Belly
- Laffy Taffy
- Tootsie Roll Pops
- Hershey's chocolates

Sports Products

- Bare wetsuits
- Callaway Golf
- Louisville Slugger
- Standard Golf
- Top-Flite Golf
- Wilson NBA basketballs and NFL footballs

AFL-CIO

AFLCIO.ORG/HOLIDAYGIFTS

VETERAN'S CRISIS LINE

If a veteran or service member you know is showing signs of crisis, such as hopelessness, anxiety, or withdrawal, call on the caring professionals at the VA's Veterans Crisis Line who are ready to listen and provide support.

The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource. Veterans, service members, and their families can access the line anytime.

There are three ways to take advantage of this benefit:

- Call 1-800-273-8255 and choose option one
- Go to VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat
- Text 838255

Each option has free, confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

You can start a conversation today! Visit VeteransCrisisLine.net to download free Veterans Crisis Line materials so you can tell others how to do it, too.

Season's Greetings

The APWU National Executive Board & Officers With you and Your Family Good Health and Happiness this Holiday Season!

(Cont'd from page 6)

With that said, let's start with the workouts.

If you're stuck, there are plenty of plans you can find online. My advice is going to be more about the "how" than the "what". When you train your body, plan for the long haul. If you're in the initial stages, keep your rep range between eight and twelve. You're going to hear people give plenty of reasons why you should do more, etc. There's various perspective and reasons for high vs. low reps. I'm gearing this to those who are trying to start with change. When training, PLEASE stay in the moment. It's easy to gawk at other things or become distracted. Your goal is to change your body. Focus on every rep. All the way up and all the way down. Visualize how you want the muscle to form and the goals you have in place. It will take some time to make the mind-muscle connection, but it will get easier the more committed you are to it. During this time,

lay off cardio altogether and prioritizing the weight training and better eating (I get it - it's a hard adjustment to go cold turkey, but the better you do, the better you will feel). Go with a training split where you are working out no more than four days per week (making sure to fit all the body parts in). **You will get better gains when you give your body a chance to recover from the workouts**

Hopefully this helps. Again, I'm here to motivate and help others find a better path. I only get so much space and I think it's important that you seek out some info on your own as well. We can show each other the direction, but unless we are willing to take the steps necessary on our own, we won't get anywhere in life. Good luck!

Michael

Happy Retirement!!!!

- Al Vilums
- Brian Proctor
- Don Bassett
- Brian Vachon
- Daniel Bessey
- Lois Jorgenson
- Cindy Merlington

Welcome To Our New Members!!

- Gary Richards
- Mai Huynh Yang
- Daniel Johnson
- De'vonce Mack
- Kari Hubka
- Teresa Price
- Marithes Jacobus
- Brenda Brown
- Ryan Broemer
- Ciera Shyton
- Faith Rose
- Kayla Jones
- Kiera Jones
- Mariluz Cintron
- Autumn Martin
- Tai Sharp
- Jaylynn Perez
- Tyler Wierks
- Satwant Kaur
- Zachary Robinson

- Manilyn Vandrie
- Karri Sanders
- Chara Wilkins
- Tiffany Guzek
- Mckenna Dore

condolences TO:



Binh Ly on the passing of her mother.

Cover photo courtesy of Jill Wellington via Pexels.com

Christmas party photos courtesy of Simon Cole via West Michigan Area Local Facebook page.

Change of Address Form
 Return to steward or mail to:
 WMAL Voice, PO Box 2706,
 Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Name: _____

New Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Craft: _____ Pay Location: _____

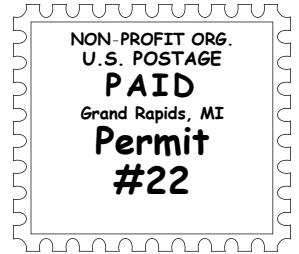
Looking for a location to hold an event? Check out our Union Hall! Great rates for members!

Union Hall Rentals
 2554 Burlingame Ave SW, Wyoming MI
 49509
 616-822-3520 | Capacity 188

	<u>Hall Rental</u>	<u>Security Deposit</u>	<u>Security Agent Fee</u>
Members:	\$250.00	\$200.00	\$0
Non-Profit (meetings only)	\$125.00	\$0	\$0
Public	\$650.00	\$300.00	\$100.00

Western Michigan Area Local
American Postal Workers Union
PO Box 2706
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2706

Address Service Requested



Next Union Meeting:
Sunday, January 8 @ 12 pm

***Looking for answers?
Make sure to check
out:***

January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				