

ABA News Digest

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Postal Workers Serving Postal Workers Since 1891

December, 2020

National Director

Wayne Maurer

Meet Your APW-ABA Team



Greetings to the year end issue of the *APW-ABA News Digest*. I hope that everyone has been staying safe and healthy during this pandemic. It sure has been a unique situation that we've all been tossed into. I'm also sure that everyone is aware of the social distancing guidelines including mask wearing, hand washing, etc... so I won't be going there. Instead, I will take this opportunity to introduce you to the wheels on the vehicle that keeps the association functioning day in and day out.

First we have Lisa Bado. Lisa is our Accounts Receivable/Customer Service Coordinator. If you ever call the office, chances are that Lisa will be the person answering the phone. Lisa oversees all of our cash pay members and retirees as far as processing billings and payments received. She also handles all of the beneficiary information for each of our members. She processes all

new member applications. Lisa is our liaison with Stacy Publishing who provides us with many of our forms, envelopes and this News Digest you are reading. Lisa is the Associate Editor of this publication as well. Lisa also performs a monthly inventory of all our benefit information materials and promotional materials. She is responsible for getting our product into the field whether it's for one of our representatives at a conference or to a local or state organization requesting product.

Next is our Accounting Technician, Kelly O'Neil. Kelly oversees all of our financial business. She basically pays the bills, deposits our revenue in the appropriate accounts and works with our financial advisors on maintaining our general and pension funds at the association. She works with our accounting firm on a year-round basis and is responsible for gathering, processing and presenting our financial reports for both our internal semi-annual audits and our yearly outside auditors. Kelly handles all of our transactions and interactions with the IRS and PBGC.

Third is our Claims Administrator and Systems Development Coordinator, Jennifer Coelho. Jennifer is responsible for the incoming claims for benefits, reviewing such claims, approving where appropriate and denying when needed. She is responsible for the communication with the member during the denial/appeal process

and prepares all claims to be paid, once approved. She also works with our underwriter, Sun Life on all death and dismemberment claims as well as our in-house daily disability claims. On the IT side of things, Jennifer

ences such as the National Convention, All Crafts Conference and the Health Plan Open Season Seminar. Melissa co-signs along with myself all checks for member claim benefits, all bills being paid and payroll. Melissa

runs the payroll for the staff members as well as the board members and maintains our attendance and leave hour reporting logs. She also handles the association's health plan, dental plan, life insurance plan and FSA/HRA accounts. Melissa has direct communication with our attorney, actuary and other contract entities and works closely with me on anything out of

the ordinary from normal day to day activities. Melissa maintains our Facebook page and ensures that the office be run in accordance with all association policies.

In an effort to keep this report brief and on point I did not include every little thing each of these staff members do for the membership but please believe me when I say they work hard and take their positions very seriously. All of the staff are members of the OPEIU Local #6 and together they have more than 95 years of service to the APW-ABA and the membership.

Please take a moment to read about our two 2020 Scholarship winners located inside this issue and please have a very safe and happy holiday season coming up. As always, thank you for your support!



Wayne with Kelly, Melissa, Lisa and Jennifer.

worked with our outside computer programmer, Don Drew. Don recently retired and Jennifer has picked up the pieces to ensure our individual pay period records are run accurately and processes our add, drop and transfer rosters with the other staff members as needed. Jennifer is also in charge of our dealings with our phone service provider and all of our hardware and software in the office. Jennifer also maintains our official website and inventory of all association equipment.

Last is our Executive Assistant/Business Coordinator, Melissa Potter. Melissa oversees the association day to day projects and workload in conjunction with the other staff members. Melissa sets up the travel for all board members and is our primary contact with APWU on all national confer-

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Happy Holidays

*From the
Officers and
Staff of the
American
Postal Workers
Accident Benefit
Association*

Vice President & Central Region Director

Keith M. Richardson

We Must Come Together And Send A Message

Greetings.

We are working and living during precarious times. If you have been following the news, the postal service has been all over it. There has been an all-out assault on our livelihoods. The President of the United States la-

beled us as being “A JOKE”. WOW! Our workforce has had to endure working during a pandemic processing and delivering America’s mail, and this is what the President has to say about us? It is absurd.

This November we must come to-

gether and send a message that we are not a joke. We need to send a message that we are here to stay. If you are reading this, I am urging you to exercise your right to VOTE. This is an election of our lifetime. It’s crucial, It’s important, It’s vital!

DON’T SIT THIS ELECTION OUT. THERE’S TOO MUCH AT STAKE.

VOTE AS IF YOUR LIVELIHOOD DEPENDS ON IT, BECAUSE IT DOES!

VOTE!

Scholarship Recipient Thank Yous

Hello! My name is Maja Rytych and I am a recent graduate from Plainfield North High School and an upcoming student at Columbia College Chicago. With the scholarship awarded to me by the American Postal Workers Accident Benefit Association, I will be able to further pursue my passions with a lighter heart. I will be majoring in filmmaking and production this coming fall semester. Thank you for wishing me the greatest success with the help from this scholarship.

Hello, my name is Lauren Hill. I would like you to know that I really appreciate this scholarship award. Thank you so much for selecting me, it is truly an honor. I will be attending Wichita State University in the fall and will be majoring in Physical Therapy. I am excited to see what my future will bring.

Thank you again!

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The editors of the ABA News Digest reserve the exclusive right to edit, amend or delete any article considered to be destructive to its goals of unity and union spirit.

PPA

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*Proud members of OPEIU Local 6

Honorariums

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Emeritus (2004)

Michael B. Ganino, Jr.
National Director
Emeritus (2012)

David E. Daniel
National Director
Emeritus (2016)

President

Richard Phillips

ABA Updates Under COVID-19



Welcome to the end of 2020! Can I have my admission back, please? Needless to say, the timing of this article – late October - is unique, as whatever my thoughts and what I might have written about, especially any political issues regarding the USPS and APWU that will impact the ABA will have changed by the time you read it. And, don't get me started on PMG DeJoy's tactics to remove mail processing machines, meddle with the timely delivery of mail-in ballots, and outright delay mail. So, hold on to your hats, pocket books, and chewing gum ... because this ride may be just beginning.

We're all aware of the impacts that the COVID19 pandemic has had on ourselves, our families, our communities, as well as the organizations we belong to. Many of us, especially those of us in our retiree years, have pretty much been "sheltered in place" for several months, and I can tell you this isn't what the "Golden Years" was supposed to be all about. For most of us, our vacation plans with the family over this past summer were cancelled,

or postponed at the best. Social gatherings with our friends and families have also been put on hold.

We need look only at the postponement and possible rescheduling of APWU State and National conventions and seminars to see the potential impact on the ABA. And sad to say, with the reduction in APWU functions, the ABA has been hampered in our ability to meet face-to-face with local officers and members to thank them for their continued membership, as well as to reinforce the many benefits the ABA offers with new members.

As we've seen in various local APWU tabloids, in many cases APWU locals have had to outright postpone or cancel their monthly union meetings. However, some have progressed toward off-site telephonic or zoom-style meetings. In this regard, the ABA too has used emails and teleconferences to conduct important business by the Board of Directors, as well as the 2020 Spring and Fall audits. The good news is by doing so we have saved thousands of dollars on budgeted items involving travel, etc.

Even though COVID19 is a disease, and not a "accident" covered by the ABA, as we enter what many health care officials are describing as "The Fall Surge" in COVID19 cases world-wide, it is encouraging to see the USPS has continued to issue updated protocols. These updates are available on APWU.org, through the

Industrial Relations Department, and are also being sent to local presidents and NBAs. They cover, among other things, the availability and proper use of masks and gloves, social distancing, hand washing, handling of mail items from the point of acceptance by window clerks, sortation and delivery, and include liberal leave policies if employees are exposed to, quarantined, or receive treatment if they test positive for COVID19. Moreover, these protocols help to

protect employees, and maybe more so, to protect our families from secondhand exposure when we return home after work. In this regard I'm reminded of a song that our local community radio station (WMNF 88.5) plays every Labor Day. It's performed by Sweet Honey in the Rock, and bears listening to on YouTube if you get a chance:
Best wishes for a safe and healthy holiday season.
In solidarity.

More Than A Paycheck

As performed by Sweet Honey in the Rock

We bring more than a paycheck to our loved ones and families
We bring more than a paycheck to our loved ones and families
We bring more than a paycheck to our loved ones and families
I wanted more pay
But what I've got here today
Is more than I than I bargained for
When I walked through that door
I bring home: Asbestosis,
Silicosis,
Brown lung, black lung disease
And radiation that hits the children,
before they've really been conceived
We bring more than a paycheck to our loved ones and families
We bring more than a paycheck to our loved ones and families
We bring more than a paycheck to our loved ones and families
Well now, look out, lend an ear
'Cause it's important that you know
With every job there is a fear
That disease will take its toll
If not disease, then injury
That may befall your lot
And if not injury, then stress Is going to tie you up in knots
We bring more than a paycheck to our loved ones and families

Northeastern Region Director

Dana Coletti

Take Precautions To Stay Healthy

Brothers and Sisters.
Greetings to you and your families. I hope you were able to enjoy some time off during the pandemic with family and friends. Summer has passed us by in what seems like an instant and Fall is in full swing. As Winter fast approaches we are faced with new challenges concerning Covid-19 and it brings with it an assortment of

ailments which we must endure in addition to Covid-19. One such as the Common Cold which symptoms are similar to that of the Covid-19 virus. These symptoms are:
• Fever
• Congestion
• Shortness of Breath
• Chills
• Sore Throat

- Fatigue
- Cough
- Runny Nose
- Muscle or Body Aches

Because of the similarities of these symptoms, all APWU members should be vigilant in taking precautions to stay healthy. Proper precautionary measures and appropriate social distancing is essential during these

times. Washing your hands often and using hand sanitizer are simple means to ensure your safety and health. In addition, wearing masks or other face coverings can help to stem the spread of infection to those around you. Prevention is always the first step in protecting against any infection.
Another step towards protecting you, your family and your coworkers from the virus is testing. Many of the insurance plans available to APWU members offer free Covid-19 testing by mail. These tests can be performed in the comfort of your own home without any outside exposure to others. I have used this benefit multiple times and it offers a great peace of mind to myself and my family.
These are unprecedented times and as such we must take extraordinary measures to protect ourselves. Our careers, our families, and ultimately our lives depend on our diligence and adherence to proper safety protocols. Take heed, take care, and keep you and your families safe. In Unity.



Northeastern Region Director

Scott Hoffman

We Need To Keep Up The Pressure

Dear Brothers and Sisters.

We have just gone through and are still experiencing the craziest and most dangerous times as Postal workers. First, we have to work with the constant threat of this pandemic.

On the first go-round, the advice, procedures and policies of the Service changed on a daily basis. The rules of quarantine seemed to be as whimsical as a coin toss. Sometimes it would be a group, sometimes no one, despite similar circumstances.

For a while, if you couldn't prove you were "making out" with a co-worker, then you didn't rate as having enough contact to be quarantined. Then, in a different Post Office, the whole lot would be quarantined for less. Protective equipment was sparse; however, due to the constant and aggressive approach taken by the Union, PPE was ultimately provided in abundance.

The mask issue is the most contentious. Those that view it as an infringement of their rights can champion their cause outside of work. From my perspective, which is from the overwhelming majority of the medical field and science, is that they should be worn. The quoting of the small 1 or 2% of doctors who state it has no effect, or may even be dangerous, is analogous to me of the 1 or 2% of the the requirement of wearing a mask in work, based on all the medical evidence, and advice of other government agencies, and for the protection of all employees during a pandemic, is an unreasonable condition of employment.

So, in the end, any such argument against would be time consuming, expensive, and with little likelihood of success. I would save the membership's money fighting battles that are winnable.

These are crazy times for our actual employment as well. The Trump Administration put the fox in charge of the henhouse. They placed an anti-union/employee Postmaster General in charge of the largest public sector union employer. The Administration would have been able to erode public confidence in the Service, disenfranchise voters by negatively impacting our ability to potentially handle ballots and directly influence the people's will in the election. But, we did not lie down quietly. We reacted.

I saw no real coordination from above, yet instinctively our members and Locals knew what to do ... blow the lid off! And that we did. But it is not over. The public and political attention, the court rulings, all dealt with the election time frames. We have part two of our war to fight. Fight against the same degradation, smear tactics against our reputation and abilities, all with the end game of privatization at stake.

We are a trillion dollar industry. One that dwarfs both Federal Express and UPS. The money involved is beyond our comprehension. Just think how much money the corporate interests can make when they set the prices, set the standards, and set the non-union wages and benefits at poverty level. We are not only here to protect the Post Office and our own hides, but also a way of life.

This is one "I told you so" I do not want to have to say. We need to keep up the pressure ... on politicians, on management, by way of reporting wrongdoing and falsification, on our friends, neighbors and the public to alert them to the dangers; and even amongst ourselves and the Union so that we don't become complacent and complicit in the demise. Keep making noise!

Oh, now I will make my gratuitous safety pitch for the upcoming holidays and winter. Watch out for wet leaves, bones in your turkeys, and don't lift your snow shovel with your back. But, if you do have an accident, the ABA is here for you.



Eastern Region Director

David Dunkle

How You As A Member Of The APW-ABA Can Save Money On Your Premiums

If you are already a member of the APW-ABA there is a way to have your ABA dues paid by your local. The APW-ABA has a policy that all 100% locals enrolled in the Group Discount Plan pay ABA dues for their local members. Even members in a low pay or no pay status. An example of a low pay or no pay type member would be one off work due to an illness with no sick or annual leave or an employee suspended or terminated without pay awaiting the decision from an arbitrator relative to said discipline.

I'm President of the KYOWVA Area Local. We are a 100% APW-ABA local enrolled in the Advantage Plan. Usually about 3 percent or less of our members quarterly find themselves in a low pay or no pay situation. The APW-ABA sends out a quarterly invoice for those members and the KYOWVA Area Local pays our members premiums until they either leave the USPS rolls or get back on their feet and are able to pay their own premiums. It is a great thing to do for your members and a great incentive tool to sign up new members. By being a 100% APW-ABA Local, our members save \$13.00 per year on their ABA premiums simply because they are a member of our local.

HOW YOU BECOME A 100% APW-ABA MEMBER

Find out who in your local is an APW-ABA member and try to get them to go with you to one of your local union meetings. If you don't know anyone like this, just try and find some interested members. Once you are in "New Business" at your local meeting you can say "I make a motion our local become a 100% APW-ABA Local and we join either the APW-ABA Value Plan which costs \$0.75 per pay period or the Advantage Plan which costs \$3.00 per pay period."

If the motion passes you will only need to decide which ABA plan you want. Your local Executive Board should be helpful making this decision by telling you which one your local can afford. The KYOWVA Area Local has the **Advantage Plan** because you get the best bang for your buck.

It has been a pleasure representing our APW-ABA members for many years and I look forward to meeting with you and/or assisting you, in the future.



Supporting Mental Health During COVID-19

Greeting Brothers and Sisters.

Hope this article finds you all in good health. Let's welcome autumn and embrace winter. The global coronavirus pandemic has impacted not only the physical health of many individuals and their loved ones, but their mental health as well. With the pandemic and related economic downturn, many Americans are experiencing higher than normal levels of stress, anxiety and worries. Whether they are friends or family, there are several ways to support the people you care about.

Stress affects employees and employers at home and in the workplace. USPS Employee Assistance Program is there to help at 1-800-EAP-4YOU (1-800-327-4968) TTY: 1-877-493-7341 www.EAP4YOU.com. Keep in mind resources are available, please take advantage.

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Take care of your mental health

Mental Health is an important part of overall health and wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It may also affect how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices during an emergency.

People with pre-existing mental health conditions or substance use disorders may be particularly vulnerable in an emergency mental health condition (such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia) affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood or behavior in a way that influences their ability to relate to others and function each day. These conditions may be situational (short-term) or long-lasting (chronic). People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. If you think you have new or worse symptoms, call your health-care provider.

How do I know if someone has a mental health problem?

Sometimes it will seem obvious when someone is going through a hard time, but there is no simple way of knowing if they have a mental health problem. Sometimes you don't need to know. It's more important to respond sensitively to someone who seems troubled than to find out whether or not they have a diagnosis.

Although certain symptoms are common with specific mental health problems, no two people behave in exactly the same way when they are unwell. If you know the person well, you may notice changes in their behavior or mood.

Below are some signs of common mental health problems. Our A-Z



of mental health provides information on a range of mental health problems not covered here.

Signs of depression

People who are depressed may:

- have low confidence
- lose interest in activities they normally enjoy

- lose their appetite
 - get tired easily
 - be tearful, nervous, or irritable.
- At worst they may feel suicidal.

Signs of anxiety

People experiencing anxiety may:

- have difficulty concentrating
- be irritable
- try to avoid certain situations
- appear pale and tense
- be easily startled by everyday sounds

Panic attacks

Panic attacks are usually a sign of anxiety. Someone having a panic attack experiences a sudden and intense sensation of fear. They may breathe rapidly, sweat, feel very hot or cold, feel sick or feel faint.

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

- OCD is a common form of anxiety involving distressing repetitive thoughts. Compulsions are the actions which people feel they must repeat to feel less anxious or stop their obsessive thoughts.

Some people who are distressed deliberately harm their bodies, usually secretly, using self-harm as a way of dealing with intense emotional pain. They may cut, burn, scald or scratch themselves, injure themselves, pull their hair or swallow poisonous substances.

Some people experience a severe mental health problem, such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. They may have periods when they experience their own or a different reality. They may hear voices, see things no-one else sees, hold unusual beliefs, feel exceptionally self-important or read particular meanings into everyday events.

HOW CAN I HELP?

There are a number of ways you can help a friend, relative or colleague who has a mental health problem:

Talking about mental health

If you are worried about someone it can be difficult to know what to do. When you are aware there is an issue, it is important not to wait. Waiting and hoping they will come to you for help might lose valuable time in getting them support.

Talking to someone is often the first step to take when you know they are going through a hard time. This way you can find out what is troubling them and what you can do to help.

Eight tips for talking about mental health

1. Set time aside with no distractions

It is important to provide an open and non-judgmental space with no distractions.

2. Let them share as much or as little as they want to

Let them lead the discussion at their own pace. Don't put pressure on them to tell you anything they aren't ready to talk about. Talking can take a lot of trust and courage. You might be the first person they have been able to talk to about this.

3. Don't try to diagnose or second guess their feelings

You probably aren't a medical expert and, while you may be happy to talk and offer support, you aren't a trained counsellor. Try not to make assumptions about what is wrong or

GP with them, or help them talk to a friend or family member. Try not to take control and allow them to make decisions.

8. Know your limits

Ask for help or signpost if the problem is serious. If you believe they are in immediate danger or they have injuries that need medical attention, you need to take action to make sure they are safe.

HOW DO I RESPOND IN A CRISIS?

People with mental health problems sometimes experience a crisis, such as breaking down in tears, having a panic attack, feeling suicidal, or experiencing their own or a different reality.

You may feel a sense of crisis too, but it's important to stay calm yourself.

There are some general strategies



jump in too quickly with your own diagnosis or solutions.

4. Keep questions open ended

Say "Why don't you tell me how you are feeling?" rather than "I can see you are feeling very low". Try to keep your language neutral. Give the person time to answer and try not to grill them with too many questions.

5. Talk about wellbeing

Exercise, having a healthy diet and taking a break can help protect mental health and sustain wellbeing. Talk about ways of de-stressing and ask if they find anything helpful.

6. Listen carefully to what they tell you

Repeat what they have said back to them to ensure you have understood it. You don't have to agree with what they are saying, but by showing you understand how they feel, you are letting them know you respect their feelings.

7. Offer them help in seeking professional support and provide information on ways to do this

You might want to offer to go the

that you can use to help:

- Listen without making judgments and concentrate on their needs in that moment.
- Ask them what would help them.
- Reassure and signpost to practical information or resources.
- Avoid confrontation.
- Ask if there is someone they would like you to contact.
- Encourage them to seek appropriate professional help.
- If they have hurt themselves, make sure they get the first aid they need.

Seeing, hearing or believing things that no-one else does can be the symptom of a mental health problem. It can be frightening and upsetting. Gently remind the person who you are and why you are there. Don't reinforce or dismiss their experiences, but acknowledge how the symptoms are making them feel.

HEALTHY WAYS TO COPE WITH STRESS

Know what to do if you are sick
continued on page 6

Supporting Mental Health During COVID-19

continued from page 5
and are concerned about COVID-19. Contact a health professional before you start any self-treatment for COVID-19.

- **Know where and how to get treatment** and other support services and resources, including counseling or therapy (in person or through telehealth services).
- **Take care of your emotional health.** Taking care of your emotional health will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family.
- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories,** including those on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- **Take care of your body.**
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
 - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Get plenty of sleep.
 - Avoid excessive alcohol and drug use.
- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- **Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations.** While social distancing measures are in place, consider connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

KNOW THE FACTS TO HELP REDUCE STRESS

Knowing the facts about COVID-19 and stopping the spread of rumors can help reduce stress

and stigma. Understanding the risk to yourself and people you care about can help you connect with others and make an outbreak less stressful.

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row. Free and confidential resources can also help you or a loved one connect with a skilled, trained counselor in your area.

Get immediate help in a crisis

- Call 911
- Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 (press 2 for Spanish), or text TalkWithUs for English or Hablanos for Spanish to 66746. Spanish speakers from Puerto Rico can text Hablanos to 1-787-339-2663.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or Lifeline Crisis Chat.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522
- National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4AChild (1-800-422-4453) or text 1-800-422-4453
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or Online Chat
- The Eldercare Locator: 1-800-677-1116 TTY Instructions
- Veteran's Crisis Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Crisis Chat or text: 8388255

FIND A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER OR TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER AND MENTAL HEALTH

- SAMHSA's National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) and TTY 1-800-487-4889

- Treatment Services Locator Website
- Interactive Map of Selected Federally Qualified Health Centers

WHAT IS SUICIDE?

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with the intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions.

Several factors can increase the risk for suicide and protect against it. Suicide is connected to other forms of injury and violence, and causes serious health and economic consequences. For example, suicide risk is higher among people who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence. Protective factors like family and community support, or, “connectedness,” and easy access to health care can decrease the risk for suicidal thoughts and behavior.

Suicide and other forms of violence can be prevented by using a public health approach that addresses risk and protective factors for multiple types of violence.

Suicide

Different life experiences affect a person's risk for suicide. For example, suicide risk is higher among people who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence. Feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety, and other emotional or financial stresses are known to raise the risk for suicide. People may be more likely to experience these feelings during a crisis like a pandemic.

However, there are ways to protect against suicidal thoughts and behaviors. For example, support from family and community, or feeling connected, and having access to in-person or virtual counseling or therapy can help with suicidal thoughts and behavior, particularly during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suicide is a serious public health problem that can have lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and communities. There are many factors that contribute to suicide. The goal of suicide prevention is to reduce factors that increase risk and increase factors that promote resilience.

Ideally, prevention occurs at all levels: individual, relationship, community, and society

Other Resources:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or Lifeline Crisis Chat.
- SAMHSA Suicide Prevention
- Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs
- Five Action Steps for Communicating with Someone Who May Be Suicidal

RECOVERING FROM COVID-19 OR ENDING HOME ISOLATION

It can be stressful to be separated from others if you have or were exposed to COVID-19. Each person ending a period of home isolation may feel differently about it.

Emotional reactions may include:

- Mixed emotions, including relief.
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Stress from the experience of having COVID-19 and monitoring yourself, or being monitored by others.
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have fears of getting the disease from you, even though you are cleared to be around others.
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties while you had COVID-19.
- Worry about getting re-infected or sick again even though you've already had COVID-19.
- Other emotional or mental health changes.

Remember to practice safe and healthy hygiene AT ALL TIMES. Close contact is defined as: being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a pro-longed period of time.

— Source.: Center for Disease Control

Ask for help

It's OK if you're feeling down. Reach out to others.

Set a routine

Make sure to eat good meals, exercise and get plenty of rest.

Learn a new hobby

Do a puzzle. Paint. Bake. Learn a musical instrument. Be brave enough to suck at something new.

COVID Kindness

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Stay connected

Call, text, write or video chat your loved ones.

Limit media intake

Avoid misinformation. Get news from CDC or WHO.

Go easy on yourself

You're not alone. We'll get through this together.

Southern Region Director

Larry Sorrells

Some Good News For A Change

First of all, let me preface my remarks for this article. I am from the Southeast (North Carolina), where it is EXTREMELY hard to organize a Union. The history of this goes back to the 1920's and 1930's when textile workers were struggling to organize. Some were shot in the back in Marion, N.C. and some were labelled Communists and hanged in Gastonia, N.C. Many were thrown in the "slammer" for standing up for their rights and their families. Local police and the National Guard often assisted the Company in crushing these workers. Not surprisingly, you will not find much in the history books about this tragedy.

GOOD NEWS. In September of 2020 registered nurses voted to form a union in my hometown, Asheville, N.C. Over seventy percent of those

voting, voted for the Union. You do not know the joy that I feel over this organizing success. This vote answered my prayers and made my whole summer. This is a unit of 1700 to 1800 persons and they will be represented by the National Nurses United Union AFL-CIO. To you from the Northeast, Midwest, and the West

Coast, this may not seem like much, but this is BIG. This was the biggest hospital organizing success in the South since 1975. No other hospitals, except for the VA, have Union represented nurses in North Carolina. We are hoping we have some momentum and this spreads through our state and region to hospitals and other

industries. Good work by the NNU with the assistance of the local Central Labor Council and the NC AFL-CIO. Mayor Manheimer and several members of City Council and Chairman Newman of the County Commissioners came out in support of the NNU. UNPRECEDENTED. Good news in a difficult year.

On another note, those of you still working, also us retirees, pay careful attention to things happening in the USPS. With a "stroke of the pen" we all could lose a lot. It can't happen right? Don't count on it. These are crazy times. PLEASE VOTE AS IF YOU AND YOUR FAMILY'S FUTURE DEPENDS ON IT, BECAUSE MORE THAN EVER, IT DOES! Consider candidates endorsed by Labor from THE COURTHOUSE TO THE WHITEHOUSE.



West Region Director

Marty Schneider

Taking Care Of Business

Are you still working? Do you have a mortgage and or credit card debt? Have you retired but are still winding down from the fast pace of working life? There is no substitute for good Life Insurance, a current "Will" and a plan for your survivors in the event of your untimely death.

Our union, APWU has a pamphlet entitled "Workers and Retirees Records Organizer Vital Papers." It is most likely available on the APWU website. And it is an invaluable tool.

I raise the issue because a friend of mine (since 1972) recently passed away unexpectedly of natural causes while still employed by the Postal Service and his family is not having an easy time of the aftermath.

We all know we are not going to live forever. The kindest thing we can do for our loved ones is to have our affairs in order. The pamphlet I mentioned is one of the easiest ways to start the process. It is an explicit method to literally write down and enumerate life's important details. There are areas for Bank Checking and Savings Accounts - Credit Union Accounts, Life, Health and Automobile Insurance policies. Another area covers safety deposit boxes. Still another area covers Mortgage and Credit Cards. All of the areas have spaces for Account/Policy numbers, location of the policy/account, beneficiary etc.

Filling out this pamphlet puts all the information about your life in one



place and should be kept in a secure location! The bottom line is that filling out and securing it **AND** letting your personal representative or executor know where it is located is critical.

In these trying times of pandemic you can never be too prepared for the unexpected. And finally, the importance of a current Last Will and Testament cannot be overemphasized.

We all have good intentions but if these final details are not looked after, the burden falls to our survivors. Why needlessly burden these folks financially or timewise when it is at our fingertips? It merely requires rolling up our sleeves and taking care of business.

Yours In Union Solidarity.

COPING CALENDAR: KEEP CALM. STAY WISE. BE KIND

30 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together. Please use & share

1 Make a plan to help you keep calm and stay in contact

2 Enjoy washing your hands. Remember all they do for you!

3 Write down ten things you feel grateful for in life and why

4 Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and boost your immune system

5 Get active. Even if you're stuck indoors, move & stretch

6 Contact a neighbour or friend and offer to help them

7 Share what you are feeling and be willing to ask for help

8 Take five minutes to sit still and breathe. Repeat regularly

9 Call a loved one to catch up and really listen to them

10 Get good sleep. No screens before bed or when waking up

11 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world around you

12 Immerse yourself in a new book, TV show or podcast

13 Respond positively to everyone you interact with

14 Play a game that you enjoyed when you were younger

15 Make some progress on a project that matters to you

16 Rediscover your favourite music that really lifts your spirits

17 Learn something new or do something creative

18 Find a fun way to do an extra 15 minutes of physical activity

19 Do three acts of kindness to help others, however small

20 Make time for self-care. Do something kind for yourself

21 Send a letter or message to someone you can't be with

22 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others

23 Have a tech-free day. Stop scrolling and turn off the news

24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go

25 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths

26 Take a small step towards an important goal

27 Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why

28 Make a plan to meet up with others again later in the year

29 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing

30 Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time

“Everything can be taken from us but one thing: the freedom to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances” ~ Viktor Frankl

A M E R I C A N P O S T A L W O R K E R S

APW

ABA

A C C I D E N T B E N E F I T A S S O C I A T I O N

APWU MEMBER OWNED AND OPERATED

BENEFITS AT A GLANCE

The Accident Benefit Association is easy and affordable to join. All members in good standing with the APWU and employed by the U.S. Postal Service, including associate members, are eligible to participate in the Plan. **AND**, you may also retain your ABA coverage upon retirement.

The following (3) ABA Plans are available to active and retired members and their spouses and can be obtained as a stand-alone benefit or you may combine the ABA PLUS plan with either the Value Plan or the Advantage Plan.

★**Value Plan** – (1) \$12 per calendar day for an injury resulting from an accident that totally disables the member and requires assistance in performing normal daily life functions. (2) Lump Sum Dismemberment benefits resulting from a covered accident. (3) \$6,000 accidental death benefit for the member. (4) A \$2,000 accidental death benefit for the non-member spouse of a member. (5) A \$2,000 accidental death benefit for the members’ unmarried dependent children up to and including the age of (26).

★**Advantage Plan** – (1) \$24 per calendar day for an injury resulting from an accident that totally disables the member and requires assistance in performing normal daily life functions. (2) Lump Sum Dismemberment benefits resulting from a covered accident. (3) \$24,000 accidental death benefit for the member. (4) A \$2,000 accidental death benefit for the non-member spouse of a member. (5) A \$2,000 accidental death benefit for the members’ unmarried dependent children up to and including the age of (26).

★**PLUS Plan** – Enhanced accidental death benefits in incremental amounts from \$20,000 to \$150,000 which may be obtained as a stand-alone benefit or combined with the Value Plan or the Advantage Plan. If the PLUS Plan is chosen with either the Value Plan or the Advantage Plan, the higher amount PLUS benefit replaces the accidental death benefit amount of the Value Plan or Advantage Plan. **(Retirees and Spouses of Retirees are limited to a maximum of \$50,000 of PLUS Plan coverage)**

As you can see, we offer great benefits at the lowest prices:

<u>100% Local Member Rates</u>	<u>NON-100% Local Member Rates</u>
(Local provides ABA benefit to member)	(Member pays for ABA on their own)
Value Plan \$0.75 (per pay period)	Value Plan \$1.25 (per pay period)
Advantage Plan \$3.00 (per pay period)	Advantage Plan \$3.50 (per pay period)

<u>100% Full-Dues Cash Pay Rates</u>	<u>Standard Member Cash Pay Rates</u>
(Retired member still paying Full Dues)	(Retired member paying for ABA on their own)
Value Plan \$19.50 (annually)	Value Plan \$2.75 (monthly) / \$33.00 (annually)
Advantage Plan \$78.00 (annually)	Advantage Plan \$7.75 (monthly) / \$93.00 (annually)

ABA PLUS RATES:
\$20,000 - \$0.35 (per pay period) (\$9.10 annually)
\$30,000 - \$0.45 (per pay period) (\$11.70 annually)
\$40,000 - \$0.60 (per pay period) (\$15.60 annually)
\$50,000 - \$0.75 (per pay period) (\$19.50 annually)
\$75,000 - \$1.13 (per pay period) (\$29.38 annually)
\$100,000 - \$1.50 (per pay period) (\$39.00 annually)
\$125,000 - \$1.90 (per pay period) (\$49.40 annually)
\$150,000 - \$2.25 (per pay period) (\$58.50 annually)

For more information on how to join, or to request an Application for ABA Membership, please call the ABA Home Office at 1-800-526-2890 or 1-603-330-0282. You may also visit our website at www.apw-aba.org