

ABA News Digest

National Director

Wayne Maurer

We Have Come To A New Beginning



Greetings Sisters and Brothers and welcome to our spring issue of the *News Digest*.

There are many reasons to be optimistic and I am curious as to what lies ahead for us as postal workers and as citizens of these United States. This time a year ago we were dealing with the onset of the Covid-19 virus. Now we have three vaccines available which appear to provide a much-needed defense against this deadly virus. This time a year ago we were going through a forgettable time as the former president of our country did everything in his power to divide the citizens of this nation. On top of that he chose our current Postmaster General of the United States Postal Service to replace Megan Brennan as she opted to retire. Neither the former president nor our current PMG are friends of organized labor. And if that was not enough,

the former president spewed so much misinformation and hatred that now we have family members who do not speak to one another, neighbors who have taken to fighting and destroying decades long friendships and lastly an intentional attempt to ruin our democracy and everything this country stands for by sitting back and watching as rioters descended upon our Capitol, armed and dangerous, to wreak havoc. Lawmakers, police and rioters' lives were at stake and even though several people were killed, yes killed, things could have been much worse. Hopefully, time will bring calm to the vast majority who bought into his style of promoting his own brand at the expense of the seeing our moral fiber, democracy and world standing decay to levels never before seen. The sad truth is for some, the damage has been done and getting back to uniting our nation is no longer an option. Stating during his campaign that he wanted to unite our nation he did everything he could to alienate us from our allies around the world and divide

our citizens here at home to the point where intimidation and violence was okay to get everyone in line with his program. So, as my article title states, we have come to a new beginning. The vaccines will definitely help with this pandemic and we have a president now who cares about our country and our Postal Service. I have been asked what actually separates us from the many for profit companies who sell accidental dismemberment and death benefits. The difference besides the APW-ABA being a union run non-profit organization is that we also include an accidental daily disability benefit along with the accidental dismemberment and death benefits. This might not sound like much but believe me, it is. There are several reasons why. First, the numbers show that for every dismemberment and or death claim received, we receive approximately 100 claims for daily disability benefits. This alone proves that simply offering a dismemberment and death benefit means a member or their beneficiary will rarely benefit from buying

this type of benefit package. Here at the APW-ABA we process hundreds of approved claims year in and year out solely for daily disability benefits. The other, and equally important reason is our plans that cover all three categories, dismemberment, death, and daily disability start at only \$1.25 per pay period. If an APWU local or state organization enrolls their membership, the cost drops to just 75 cents per pay period for our most popular Value Plan and \$3.00 for our upscale Advantage Plan. Nobody offers this much coverage for so little in premiums. Therefore over 58,000 APWU members, spouses and retirees are enrolled in one of our plans. I hope everyone reads this issue as it contains not only our convention call but it includes the guidelines and application for our yearly scholarship contest. Enjoy this issue of the news digest and as always, thank you for your support. In closing I ask everyone to take the time to take precautions against this deadly virus and be safe. Until next time Sisters and Brothers.

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American Postal Workers
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P.O. Box 120
Rochester, NH 03866-0120



Announcing the

2021 ABA CONVENTION

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS
APW ABA
ACCIDENT BENEFIT ASSOCIATION

**The ABA National Convention
will convene on**

**Monday, October 4, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.
at Ballys – Las Vegas, NV**

See pages 2-3 for details

THE 2021 ABA NATIONAL CONVENTION

2021 ABA CONVENTION

The ABA National Convention will convene on Monday,
October 4, 2021 at 6:00P.M. at
Ballys – Las Vegas, NV

(APW-ABA Convention Room numbers will be advertised
once provided by the National)

Registration will begin on Friday October 1, 2021 at the ABA Registration Booth, where credentials must be presented no later than two hours prior to the start of the APW-ABA National Convention.

ARTICLE 7 ELECTION OF DELEGATES AND OFFICERS

Section 1.

(a) The members of the respective Locals or State ABA organizations shall use procedure that is consistent with ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER to elect delegates to the ABA Convention. The names of delegates should be received by the home office in New Hampshire prior to June 1st of the Convention year.

(b) Delegate's credentials must be presented at the ABA Registration Booth no later than two (2) hours prior to the scheduled start of the ABA National Convention.

Section 2.

(a) The membership of the National Convention shall be composed of the Board of Directors and registered delegates. An eligible MAL may petition their state organization to gain delegate status to the National ABA Convention.

(b) Each Local or State shall be entitled to representation at the National Convention on the following basis:

3 to	75 members	1 delegate
76 to	150 members	2 delegates
151 to	300 members	3 delegates
301 to	500 members	4 delegates
501 to	750 members	5 delegates
751 to	1000 members	6 delegates

and for each additional 250 members or major fraction thereof in any Local or State, one additional delegate is authorized, with a maximum of twenty delegates for any single Local or State.

Section 3. The President, National Director, and Regional Directors shall be elected for a term consistent with the schedule of the American Postal Workers Union National Convention. All nominations for office by members must be in writing and sent via US Postal Service mail to the National Director's office at: APW-ABA, PO Box 120, Rochester, NH 03866 and must be received after

AMERICAN
POSTAL
WORKERS

APW

ABA

Postal Workers Serving Postal Workers Since 1891

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ASSOCIATION

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article considered to be destructive to its goals
of unity and union spirit.

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AL CONVENTION CALL

March 1st , but no later than close of business on April 15th of the election year. All nomination letters of intent must be signed and state the office the member wishes to be a candidate for. There will be no nominations excepted after 4:00pm EST April 15th and he/she must be a member in good standing on the date the letter of intent is received by the APW-ABA Home Office. Any candidate who wishes to withdraw from consideration for office must follow the same procedures used for nominations and said withdraw must be received by May 15th of the election year. As the first order of business, the National Director will read all the names and offices of the candidates seeking elective office. The election of officers shall be the last order of business of the Convention prior to the Installation of Officers.

(a) A candidate for the office of President or National Director, must be a member in good standing in the Association and shall be elected by delegates present and voting.

(b) A candidate for the office of Regional Director shall be a member in good standing in the Association within the Area he or she seeks to represent and shall be elected by the delegates representing that Area.

Section 4: Regional Directors: Two (2) Regional Directors shall be elected from each of the five ABA Regions:

- 1. Northeast Region:**
Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York.
- 2. Eastern Region:**
Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland
- 3. Southern Region:**
North Carolina, South Carolina Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands.
- 4. Central Region:**
Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska
- 5. Western Region:**
Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands

Section 5. Any candidate for National Office who receives a majority of votes cast at the Convention for said office shall be declared elected. No write in votes will be valid.

Section 6. When there are two or more candidates for National Office and the two candidates receiving a majority of the votes cast for such offices result in a tie on the first ballot another election shall be held immediately. These two candidates engaged in a tie shall be voted upon as candidates for such office in the second election, and the candidate with the majority of the votes shall be declared elected.

Section 7. All National ABA officers will be installed following the completion of the election by the President of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, or his/her designee.

Section 8. The members, officers, representatives or delegates of this Association will not be permitted to vote by proxy.

Section 9. Each delegate and each member of the Board of Directors shall receive one vote. Members of the Board shall be allowed to vote for the Director of their respective Region.

Section 10. The President of the Accident Benefit Association shall establish an election committee, no member of which shall be a candidate for election while serving on such committee. The election committee shall be responsible for conducting the election. Prior to the acceptance of the election committee report any candidate who feels aggrieved in connection with the election shall file an appeal with the election committee at the ABA Convention. Where the Committee finds merit in an appeal, it shall report its findings to the President who will report to the delegates. The delegates shall act on the findings of the Committee.

(For the purpose of this Article the term “election” shall include nominating procedures.)

ARTICLE 8 NATIONAL AND LOCAL MEETINGS

Section 1. The National Convention shall convene in the same month and years as the American Postal Workers Union Convention, at a time and place to be named by the Board of Directors, provided a National Convention is held at least once every four (4) years. Special sessions of the ABA National Convention may be convened upon call of the President, subject to the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the Board of Directors.

(a) At least one hundred twenty (120) days prior to the biennial session of the National ABA Convention this association shall publish in the Official Publication of the ABA, a notice stating the time and place of the National Convention. This information shall be sent to every ABA Local and State Association, not later than April 10th of the Convention year.

(b) At least sixty (60) days prior to any special session of a National ABA Convention, the National Director will notify all ABA affiliated locals and State Organizations of the time, place, and purpose of the special session.

(c) It shall be the duty of the Local or State President or Secretary to furnish a certified list showing the names of the delegates and alternates. These certified credentials shall be furnished to the ABA Home Office no later than June 1 of the Convention year and it is to be used to entitle them to be seated as a delegate at the National ABA Convention.

(d) Resolutions must be submitted for the ABA Convention prior to June 1 of the convention year. The author of the resolution is required to send these resolutions to the office of the National Director in duplicate. This shall not prevent the submission of resolutions by delegates at convention as long as a copy is available for each delegate in attendance. Resolutions submitted after the report of the Constitution Committee will not be considered nor acted upon.

Section 2. The President shall meet between each non-convention year at the home office of the Organization, with the National Director. In addition, the Constitution Committee shall review the Constitution and make recommendations to the next convention to conform with such state and federal regulations as required by law.

President

Richard Phillips

Predicting The Unpredictable



In any organization, whether the enormous size of the U.S. Postal Service or the relatively smaller APW-ABA, financial forecasting plays an important role. Accurate forecasting of future revenue and expenses is essential to planning budgets,

understanding future cashflows, identifying potential risk areas, and deciding where to invest time, manpower and resources. Unfortunately, significant unexpected events can have a negative impact on even the best forecasts.

As we are all aware, the quick and foreseen rise of the COVID-19 global pandemic last spring impacted businesses of every size, and continues today. With this in mind, the APW-ABA has developed a new method of how we conduct business in order to reduce expenses, but all while continuing to provide our excellent services to our members. In this regard, National Director, Wayne

Maurer, continues to generate monthly updates to all of the Regional Directors so everyone is aware of where we stand as an organization regarding membership numbers (which unfortunately are declining, based primarily on the reduction of new hires by the USPS), finances (including monthly bills, as well as governmental obligations), budget, and the limited number of APWU events that our Directors have been able to attend.

We have continued to function within the duties outlined in the ABA Constitution & Bylaws, including conducting the 2020 Spring and Fall Audits telephonically. At this writing we are planning to conduct the Spring 2021 audit telephonically in April. We are also planning on conducting the ABA National Convention in October, to coincide with the APWU National Convention. Much of this,

of course, depends on the future endeavors of the USPS at large, as well as the APWU.

As of this writing, a recent OIG Report has disclosed that while the Postal Service experienced yet another dramatic loss in letter and flat volume and revenue, it also experienced a huge increase in packages. These changes made its previous forecasts unusable. In response to a congressional request, the Postal Service created a new series of revenue and volume forecasts. In this report, the OIG found that, in its efforts to produce forecasts quickly, USPS management didn't always document processes or save supporting materials used for assumptions, inputs, and calculations. For example, management was unable to provide a documented methodology for how it determined post-pandemic volume

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Vice President & Central Region Director

Keith M. Richardson

Welcome To 2021

Greetings sisters and brothers.

Welcome to 2021. With 2020 being behind us and having to endure the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by either being exposed to or contracting the virus, or those who were affected by having to miss work to care for a child, spouse or dependent, it was certainly tough.

I want to commend you all for being



the brave Frontline Essential Worker that you are. No matter what craft you belong to you all rose to the occasion to deliver America's mail.

I hope everyone is taking advantage of their opportunity to receive a COVID-19 vaccination shot. As a frontline essential worker, we all belong to group 1b in regards to distribution of vaccine dosages. I for one would rather

be safe than sorry. I want our society to go back to normal in how we interact with each other. To those who feel isolated, miss traveling, or not being able to visit a loved one, won't you consider taking the vaccination.

I've personally weighed the pros and cons and decided it was in my best interest to get vaccinated. I look forward to in-person meetings again. I want to be able to eat out at my favorite sit-down restaurant or plan my next family cookout.

I know you will make the best decision in regards to your own person-

al health and wellbeing.

Let's talk safety. Have you had a reason to seek out a PS FORM 1767? You wondering what a PS FORM 1767 is? A 1767 is used to report hazards, unsafe conditions, work practice and hostile work environments.

The Postal Service is **OBLIGATED** to provide a safe working environment for all of its employees.

There should never be an instance where you feel unsafe or are working in a hostile work environment. The forms should be readily available in the facility where you work.

Once management is notified of an unsafe condition or hostile work environment the immediate supervisor must promptly reply within the tour of duty. Per the ELM "It is the supervisor's responsibility to monitor the status of the report at all times until the hazard is abated. If the hazard remains unabated longer than 7 calendar days, the supervisor must verbally inform the employee as to abatement status at the end of each 7-day interval."

What does this have to do with the ABA? If you're working in a safe facility it should minimize your chances of being involved in an accident. As valuable as the ABA benefit is to have, I would hope that no one would have to file a claim due to an occurrence that could have been prevented if the USPS would honor their commitment to provide all employees with a safe working environment.

If you see something say something. It doesn't cost a thing to report a hazard. Better to be safe than sorry.

In Solidarity.

UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE®

Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice

SAFETY
DEPENDS
ME

Hazard Control Number
(Assigned by Safety Office)

I. EMPLOYEE'S ACTION

Area (Specify Work Location)

Describe hazard, unsafe condition or practice. Recommended corrective action.

Employee

Signature

Date and Tour

II. SUPERVISOR'S ACTION

Recommend or describe action taken to eliminate the hazard, unsafe condition or practice. (If corrective action has been taken, indicate the date of abatement.)

Supervisor

Signature

Date

III. APPROVING OFFICIAL'S ACTION (Check One and Complete)

The following corrective action was taken to eliminate the hazard, unsafe condition or practice (Indicate date of abatement):

A work order has been submitted to the manager, plant maintenance to effect the following change:

There are no reasonable grounds to determine such a hazard exists. This decision is based upon:

Approving Official

Signature

Date

Date Employee Notified

IV. MAINTENANCE ACTION (Complete if Necessary)

Maintenance Supervisor

Signature

Date

Date Hazard Abated

PS Form 1767, February 2014 PSN 7830-01-000-9422

WHITE - Local Safety Office (After Abatement)

PINK - Local Safety Office (Initial Notice)

YELLOW - Approving Official

BLUE - Employee

SAFETY
DEPENDS
ME

INSTRUCTIONS

I. EMPLOYEE

a. Complete section I. and file it with your immediate supervisor.

b. If you desire anonymity, complete section I. (including your name) and file the report with the safety Office. Safety personnel will immediately return the form to your supervisor for necessary action, and will delete your name from the form to ensure your anonymity.

II. SUPERVISOR

a. Investigate the alleged hazard during the same tour of duty in which the report was received.

b. Abate the hazard if it is within the scope of your authority to do so.

c. Record the action taken to eliminate the hazard or record recommendation for corrective action in section II. and sign your name.

d. Forward the original and yellow copy to your immediate supervisor (approving official); send the pink copy to the Safety Office; and give the employee the remaining blue copy as a receipt. It is your responsibility to monitor the status of the report, at all times, until the hazard is abated.

III. APPROVING OFFICIAL

a. Initiate action to eliminate or minimize the hazard. If this results in the submission of a work order, attach the original of this form, and forward through channels, to the manager, Plant Maintenance.

b. If you determine that there are no reasonable grounds to believe a hazard exists, notify the employee in writing within 15 calendar days. Safety personnel will assist you in this determination when requested.

c. If the hazard was abated by the first line supervisor or when it has been abated through your actions, notify the employee in writing, and send the original of this form to the Safety Office.

IV. MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

When the work order has been completed, sign, date, and return the original of this form to the approving official who will then forward it to the Safety Office.

PS Form 1767, February 2014 (Reverse)

Northeastern Region Director

Dana Coletti

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Brothers and Sisters.

I hope this Article finds you all healthy and well. It has been a long 2020 so let's dive right into 2021. With all the Covid-19 hysteria going on, it is important to remember there are other things that can affect you and your family's well-being. Seasonal Affective Disorder, or the winter blues, is an illness that affects many during this time of year. While most of us yearn for fun times with the family in warmer weather and would wish away this winter weather, it can have a more considerable impact on us. The changing of the seasons can actually cause depression in many of us. This depression is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). This disorder can worsen with less exposure to daylight.

The symptoms of SAD vary between people but there are 10 common symptoms that would suggest a person needs to seek some sort of assistance. The symptoms are as follows:

Disabling Fatigue - Many people feel a sudden and unexplainable loss of energy. This loss of energy may be either mental, physical or both. Typically, people describe it as being exhausted.

Self-Alienation - People affected by SAD will stop interacting with friends and family and also stop doing regular social activities like going to the gym or out to eat with friends. Daily activities are no longer performed and often times personal hygiene is ignored as well.

Lack of the Ability to Focus - Difficulty concentrating and issues with memory may also indicate SAD. This could range from simple tasks and appointments as well as routine decisions like meal planning and clothing decisions.

Sleep Issues - Drastic and sudden changes in sleep, such as insomnia (the inability to sleep) and hypersomnia (constantly sleeping) may indicate a SAD issue. Often, even after sleeping for the night people wake up feeling exhausted and fatigued.

Self-Loathing - a typically happy and jovial person may experience SAD. Often having feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness and a poor outlook on life.

Joint and Muscle Pain - Muscles,

joints, and organs are sore or upset for no apparent reason. There can be a dull ache throughout the body.

Irritability - Often, people with SAD feel an overwhelming range of emotions from sadness to anger. These emotions are uncontrollable, and it is difficult to find relief.

Fluctuations in Weight and Appetite - Another big indicator that someone may be suffering from SAD is weight and appetite fluctuations. Weight loss and a disinterest in foods typically found comforting can be a sign.

Anxiety - The anxiety can manifest itself as a slightly stressed feeling to the inability to cope with even the most mundane tasks.

Recklessness - While SAD may be disabling for some, it can cause risky and reckless behavior in others. It is often used as a sign of escape from SAD and may include, gambling, thrill seeking or substance abuse.

There are ways to combat SAD and many of them are linked with exercise and outdoor activities. Exercise has multiple benefits as not only does it improve your physical health, it also will greatly improve your mood and mental health as well. Endorphins which are released into your body during exercise increase energy. That coupled with overall increased health will combat the affects of SAD. Another way to combat SAD is ensuring that you maintain social activities with others. Personal interactions can stave off the symptoms of SAD. Outdoor activities or just getting yourself out in the sun, even in cold weather, have proven effective against SAD.

Another method of thwarting the effects of SAD is with light. Opening the curtains and letting sunlight into your home can be helpful. Light Box therapy is also another way to manage the symptoms of SAD. Usage may vary from person to person, but the method may be helpful to many. There are so many methods to alleviate the symptoms of SAD. Each having varying success with different people. The important thing to remember is if you are suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), there are means and treatments to get assistance. Take care brothers and sisters, be safe and be well.

In Unity.

Northeastern Region Director

Scott Hoffman

Do Not Let Up!

Dear Sisters and Brothers.

Do not let up! Do not let the Postal Service's apparent dismissal of Covid affect your mind set. Keep the pressure on to make sure they follow the proper protocols, perform proper contact tracing, and don't intimidate sick people into coming to work who don't feel good.

The Service, whose attitude has been relatively cavalier throughout, and generally played "catch us if you can" in regards to employee safety; is now in full denial. It is up to us to

keep it in the forefront. It is not over until it's over, and we can't let them fumble on the goal line.

We also cannot let up in the self destruction by management of the Postal Service itself. While there was great fan fare, both in and out of the Postal Service itself, in regards to the health of the Service during election and holiday times, that spotlight has been diminished. We have to keep the issue in the forefront by exposing management policies, actions and decisions that degrade the Service itself.

We need to not only convince those same politicians who needed us for re-election and the protection of democracy in the form of "Vote by Mail", but we need them vigilant still, as well as others, as the destruction that was halted due to the election, seems to be back on track.

The Union, in its representative roll, can expose the destruction. To get help, you need proof. We get the proof through information requests and grievances. So by doing our regular work of contract enforcement

and grievance processing, we kill two birds with one stone. We can arm our allies with the information and facts needed to prove the internal destruction, and get it stopped. We did it for the elections; we can do it again.

But, to do nothing will be fatal. Keep fighting, sisters and brothers. If you like it, need it, want it, deserve it, you better fight for it. Or it's gone. Let's not be commiserating. Let's be congratulating. Stay safe!

In Union Unity.

Predicting The Unpredictable

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projections. Further, management relied on "professional judgment" to develop these projections due to a lack of historical data to reflect the impact of such a pandemic.

Well, that's quite a mouthful from the OIG. But using these types of kneejerk reactions by the USPS as examples of what not to do, we at the ABA have been maintaining a steady course toward our continued future. And, to this degree, we offer our continued support of the work of the APWU.

At this writing APWU President Dimondstein has provided testimony in front of the Oversight and Reform Committee in Washington D.C. on measures to support the financially struggling U.S. Postal Service. His testimony included the statement: "The USPS is a national treasure. The

the USPS. Here's an example, which is based on general information from various web sites as well as a detailed article and reprinted with permission of *The American Legion Magazine*, © February, 2021. www.legion.org.

"NO MAIL, LOW MORALE"

The above motto of "No Mail, Low Morale" was the rallying cry of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion. Known as "The Six Triple Eight", they were the first and only all African-American Women's Army Corps (WAC) battalion deployed overseas during World War II. Of the nearly 6,500 African-American women who served on active duty during World War II, some 855 – 31 officers and 824 enlisted – formed the Six Triple Eight. Members of the Six Triple Eight trained at Fort Oglethorpe, GA, jumping trenches in gas masks,

arrived in Birmingham, they sorted mail in cold, dim warehouses where rats nibbled packages of spoiled food.

families of the fallen. After clearing the logjam in Birmingham, England the unit was reassigned to Rouen, France, where they again got the mail moving in half the time given.

An Honor Recognized – Some seventy-five years after the end of World War II the Six Triple Eight is receiving new attention and accolades in recent years, including the award of the Army's Meritorious Unit Commendation in 2019, and legislation that would award the battalion the Congressional Gold Medal,



To stay warm, they wore long johns and extra layers of clothes under their coats. However, overcoming these hardships they developed cards to track individual servicemembers, using serial numbers to distinguish those with the same name (including some 7,500 Robert Smiths, according to records). Soon they were processing over 65,000 pieces of mail per shift, all by hand without the aid of modern sorting machines or computers. In addition, they redirected those items marked "undeliverable", identifying the correct recipients of incorrectly addressed mail, and even returning letters and packages to

al, as well as the subject of an award-winning documentary. Jim Theres, writer, director and executive producer of "The Six Triple Eight", which traces the battalion's roots has stated, "They took their job very seriously, and they were fantastic at it, ultimately delivering 17 million pieces of mail in about eight months." Moreover, retired Army Col. Edna Cummings, who is one of the few living members of the battalion, is quoted as saying, "They were trailblazers ... They put patriotism above everything else and saw military service as an opportunity to contribute to the war effort."



severe delays affecting the country's critical postal services are unacceptable. This must be fixed and we have a rare window of opportunity now to make the necessary changes. ..." President Dimondstein's statement preceded that of PMG and CEO DeJoy along with a few other witnesses. Of note, one of the recurring themes discussed during the Oversight and Reform Committee was the replacement of DeJoy, who has been frequently identified as the main cause of intentional mail slowdowns – primarily by his order for the nation-wide removal of mail processing machines - both prior to the November national elections as well as during the holiday mailing season that followed.

And, mail slowdowns have been shown to have dramatic effects on the public's general view and support of

every day. With a shortage of qualified postal officers, and the challenge of delivering mail to 7 million American servicemembers in the European theatre who were constantly on the move, the result was a colossal logjam of mail.

On February 3, 1945, the first contingent of The Six Triple Eight sailed across the Atlantic, with a second group following nearly two months later. Upon arriving in Birmingham, England, the Six Triple Eight battalion was expected to clear the mail backlog in what one general estimated would take six months. Aware of the power of letters to lift the spirits of homesick GIs they did so in three months by working around the clock, basically in three eight-hour shifts, adopting "No Mail, Low Morale" as their motto.

It is reported that when the women



Pictured above, members of the "Six Triple Eight" battalion are joined by French civilian postal employees in November 1945 to sort mail, two months after the war ended. — Picture credited to the U.S. Army Women's Museum

2021 APW-ABA Scholarship Program

Honoring Thomas Hartos, Michael Tosches & Eugene Johnson

APW-ABA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

honoring

THOMAS HARTOS, MICHAEL TOSCHES & EUGENE JOHNSON

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MAY 15, 2021

APPLICATIONS MUST BE FILLED OUT IN THEIR ENTIRETY

NAME: ADDRESS:

CITY: STATE: ZIP: PHONE#:()

I will graduate from High School, which is located in , in .
(City – State) (Month – Year)

I will be enrolled for the term of at .
(Year) (School)

in . My father, mother or legal guardian is a member
(City – State)

in good standing in the ABA and the Local APWU.
(Local name)

ABA Member's EID#:

ABA Member's email address: @

Student: (printed name & signature)

Parent/Guardian: (printed name & signature)

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SENT TO:

ABA Scholarship Program • PO Box 120, Rochester, NH 03866-0120

(This section to be completed by ABA National Director)

This application has been reviewed and certifies that the above member is a member in good standing of the Accident Benefit Association.

Local Name: Local #: Date Recv'd:

ABA Nat'l Director: Date:

2021 APW-ABA SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES

- 1). The scholarship announcement, application and guidelines will be mailed each year to all Local and State Presidents and ABA Board of Directors, no later than March of each year. The announcement and application will also be printed in the ABA News Digest as well as posted on the official ABA website. The deadline for returning the scholarship application will be set forth by the ABA.
- 2). All entrants must submit a completed application which will be verified by their local or state president or by the ABA home office. Properly completed applications will be entered into a drawing for a one thousand dollar (\$1,000) scholarship. Entrants must be a graduating high school senior who is the son, daughter or legal ward of a member of the ABA.
- 3). The scholarship award is limited to a one time amount of one thousand dollars, (\$1,000). Two scholarships will be awarded per calendar year.
- 4). The scholarship drawings will be held at the ABA home office no later than June of each year. These drawings will be strict “luck of the draw”, meaning the entrants pulled are the winners. No preferential treatment will be given to any entrant. All applicants will be assigned a random number for drawing. The winners will be drawn from amongst all applicants and notified by certified mail.
- 5). Scholarships will be paid directly to the school that has been designated on each winners application. Each winner will also be required to submit an acceptance letter and photograph accompanied by a biography which will appear in an issue of the ABA News Digest.
- 6). The National Director will coordinate the scholarship program with the authority to settle any or all eligibility requirements or disputes that may arise.

Central Region Director

Edward J. Brennan

You Are Not Forgotten

The Corona Virus has caused massive problems for the United States. Over half a million of its citizenship have died from the virus and millions more have filled hospitals beyond capacity. Throughout the center of the country the virus has caused the APWU to cancel Conventions and handle them by mail, telephone or virtually through computers. The attendance at Local meetings is prohibitive. But we have not forgotten you.

Your Accident Benefit Association Representatives think about how the virus has caused a major crisis for them by making it almost impossible for them to tell APWU members about their right to have the benefits of ABA membership. Meetings are cancelled or attendance is cut way back, speeches about the ABA and its benefits are never given and handout materials never seen, but not all is lost.

If you have questions about the ABA or need material for yourself or your members, you can call me at (636)947-6106 and I will do my best to help you out, or you can call the APW-ABA Home Office at (603)330-0282 and one of the lovely young ladies will help you out. They can put together some ABA Information and mail it out to you and can also answer any questions you may have, like how to become a 100% local. This is a great organizing tool for your local and your members can get the many benefits that are provided exclusively to APWU members.

Many of our representatives would be happier if they were speaking at a meeting or had a table at a meeting. But unfortunately, the virus has hit the states and locals throughout the Midwest very hard and the end of the virus tunnel is nowhere in sight. Many of our midwestern states have had to cancel meetings and conventions. Many have officers with the virus along with delegates who could not attend the events. But do not feel forgotten. Even though we cannot get together at large meetings, we are still available for our members. We are just a phone call away. Your ABA Rep is ALWAYS AVAILABLE. You are not forgotten.

Eastern Region Director

David Dunkle

I Love The APW-ABA

Brothers and Sisters, I truly love the APW-ABA and you the member, and have enjoyed representing members in New Jersey, Washington D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Delaware and I look forward to representing you in my next term as APW-ABA Eastern Region Director.



I love the ABA because it has helped so many across our great land since 1891. I'd rather buy coverage from an organization run by retired and current APWU postal workers who I know understand my needs better than some other companies. I also believe in helping my own before helping others

The American Postal Workers-Accident Benefit Association comes from very humble beginnings in 1891. It was incorporated on December 12th 1898 and originally named the "National Association of Railway Postal Clerks."

It was started by several Railway Mail Clerks who had very dangerous jobs hanging out of trains attaching mail sacks to hooks as the train rolled along. As a result of the immense danger, no company wanted to insure them, so they started the "National Association of Railway Postal Clerks."

On September 5th, 1972 the organization's name was changed to the American Postal Workers Accident Benefit Association (APW-ABA) which has paid out millions in claims and remains solvent today even after the Great Depression and more recent Recession.

Brothers and Sisters, if you're tired of your local spending money on parties or other things that some, but not all can enjoy or benefit from, then you should consider what I believe is a wiser use of your Local's funds that helps all local members rather than just some. If you put your thinking cap on, you can probably figure out where money can be diverted from one local activity to pay for an APW-ABA benefit plan(s).

It is simple to become a 100% APW-ABA Local. Simply make a motion at a meeting to become a 100% APW-ABA Local. Once it passes by majority or two-thirds if it is being put into your constitution, you will only need to decide which plan(s) your local wants to buy into for your members.

One great plus for 100% local members is the local pays the premiums for any member(s) they have that is in a low pay or no pay situation during a calendar quarter. On average this is only about 3% of your total membership every quarter which is insignificant when you consider what a great incentive tool this is to attract new members.

PLEASE JOIN THE ABA!

Articles written by me are based on experience and particular fact cir-

cumstances in individual case(s) and should not be relied upon as advice for all situations because each case can have different mitigating circumstances. In short, you should never solely rely on info in my article(s) before taking an action. You should always confer

with your Union steward or attorney about all the facts in your case and let them decide the best course of action for you to take related to any issue.

ABA AND OWCP CLAIMS

In the past 2 years I have helped many members with ABA and OWCP questions because sometimes the 2 become intertwined when an employee is injured on the job due to an accident related to external causes. I thought now would be a good time to go over some things we sometimes forget or maybe don't know.

- You are not required to claim your ABA claim payments as income on your OWCP form.

- Normally, the first 3 days of Continuation of Pay (COP) or Compensation must be charged to annual, sick or LWOP, unless your doctor on the original report or possibly later report explains your permanent or partial disability is going to be in duration of longer than 14 days. Section 8117(b) of the FECA law states:

A Postal Service employee is not entitled to compensation or continuation of pay for the first 3 days of temporary disability, except as provided under paragraph (3) of subsection (a). A Postal Service employee may use annual leave, sick leave, or leave without pay during that 3-day period, except that if the disability exceeds 14 days or is followed by permanent disability, the employee may have their sick leave or annual leave reinstated or receive pay for the time spent on leave without pay under this section.

- If an employee gets injured at work due to external force during a period of 24 hours or less an OWCP claim should be filed on form CA-1 and qualifies as a COP situation and the employee should get up to 45 calendar days of normally straight time pay, less the 3 days mentioned above, unless your doctor has said your disability will exceed 14 days.

- If an employee has a medical problem that occurs over a period in excess of 24 hours related to or aggravated by their employment a claim should be filed on form CA-2. No COP is authorized in these situations and the employee must follow up with form CA-7 to start compensation. During the interim period while waiting on Compensation to start the employee can use annual, sick or LWOP and if they use annual or sick leave they can buy it back using the CA-7 or other related forms.

- Compensation is paid at a rate of 66 and 2/3% which equates to 66.666667 of an employee's regular average pay if they're single, or 75%

if married. An employee can also receive a lump sum scheduled award payment in addition to other compensation or COP after the doctor declares they have done all they can do medically and the employee has lost all or part of mobility in part of their body or they have lost a body part related to or aggravated by their employment.

Normally Compensation is paid based on an employee's average salary over the past 12 months, but like COP there are different calculations for unusual situations. COP is based on what an employee's average or fixed salary was in the past 12 months prior to injury date, but because there are situations outside the 12 month period, for example; the employee is a PTF or PSE or the employee has not worked 12 months yet, there are several different ways to calculate an employee's pay. Section 8114(d) of the FECA law breaks these different ways of calculating how COP will be paid and it states:

(d) Average annual earnings are determined as follows:

(1) If the employee worked in the employment in which he was employed at the time of his injury during substantially the whole year immediately preceding the injury and the employment was in a position for which an annual rate of pay--

(A) was fixed, the average annual earnings are the annual rate of pay; or

(B) was not fixed, the average annual earnings are the product obtained by multiplying his daily wage for the particular employment, or the average thereof if the daily wage has fluctuated, by 300 if he was employed on the basis of a 6-day workweek, 280 if employed on the basis of a 5 1/2-day week, and 260 if employed on the basis of a 5-day week.

(2) If the employee did not work in employment in which he was employed at the time of his injury during substantially the whole year immediately preceding the injury, but the position was one which would have afforded employment for substantially a whole year, the average annual earnings are a sum equal to the average annual earnings of an employee of the same class working substantially the whole immediately preceding year in the same or similar employment by the United States in the same or neighboring place, as determined under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(3) If either of the foregoing methods of determining the average annual earnings cannot be applied reasonably and fairly, the average annual earnings are a sum that reasonably represents the annual earning capacity of the injured employee in the employment in which he was work-

ing at the time of the injury having regard to the previous earnings of the employee in Federal employment, and of other employees of the United States in the same or most similar class working in the same or most similar employment in the same or neighboring location, other previous employment of the employee, or other relevant factors. However, the average annual earnings may not be less than 150 times the average daily wage the employee earned in the employment during the days employed within 1 year immediately preceding his injury.

(4) If the employee served without pay or at nominal pay, paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this subsection apply as far as practicable, but the average annual earnings of the employee may not exceed the minimum rate of basic pay for GS-15. If the average annual earnings cannot be determined reasonably and fairly in the manner otherwise provided by this section, the average annual earnings shall be determined at the reasonable value of the service performed but not in excess of \$3,600 a year.

(e) The value of subsistence and quarters, and of any other form of remuneration in kind for services if its value can be estimated in money, and premium pay under section 5545(c)(1) of this title are included as part of the pay, but account is not taken of--

(1) overtime pay;

(2) additional pay or allowance authorized outside the United States because of differential in cost of living or other special circumstances; or

(3) bonus or premium pay for extraordinary service including bonus or pay for particularly hazardous service in time of war.

- Many employees believe they do not have an OWCP claim if a pre existing medical problem flares up while working or it is related to working for their employer, but these thoughts are misguided. The FECA plainly states that if your medical problem is related to or aggravated by your employment and you prove it through your doctor's comments on OWCP forms, that you will qualify for Compensation.

- Workers Comp will only pay your medical bills related to a work related injury if your claim is approved and the doctor is recognized as your attending physician. This is usually the first doctor that initiates your CA-20 form. Workers comp will also pay for visits to other doctor's, but only if your attending physician refers you to another doctor. If you do not get a referral from your recognized OWCP attending Physician, OWCP will not pay that doctor's bill and you will be responsible for payment.

Find out all we have to offer . . .

APW-ABA

Contact us today!

Call 1-800-526-2890

or visit our website apw-aba.org



Eastern Region Director

Sherry C. McKnight

Health Concerns During The Pandemic

Greeting Brothers and Sisters.

Hope this article finds you all in good health. Spring brings new growth, weed out the bud and make room for something beautiful. Let us welcome beautiful Spring! There has been significant increase of health issues in the United States during the pandemic. If you are struggling to cope, there are many ways to get help. Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row. If you or someone you know are experiencing similar or like issues that is life threatening please contact 911 immediately.

The COVID-19 pandemic represents one of the most severe public health challenges our world has faced in recent history. At the same time, lockdowns and social-distancing measures intended to prevent the spread of the virus are posing unintended consequences for other public health issues

5 PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES FLARING UP AMID THE PANDEMIC

There are five public health issues worsening amid the pandemic:

1. **Mental health.** As of early May, about one-third of Americans showed signs of clinical anxiety or depression, according to a U.S. Census Bureau survey of more than 42,000



U.S. households cited by *The Washington Post*. Twenty-four percent of Americans showed clinically significant symptoms of major depressive disorder, and 30 percent had symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder. These figures demonstrate a large jump from depression and anxiety rates seen before the pandemic.

Overall, 40 percent of U.S. adults are experiencing adverse mental health conditions, a June 13 CDC report found. The data suggests the pandemic is weighing heaviest on young adults' mental health. About 25 percent of respondents ages 18 to 24 said they had seriously considered suicide in the last month. Overall, 75 percent of respondents in this age group reported at least one mental or behavioral health symptom.

The findings come after many mental health professionals expressed concerns about how social distancing and isolation would affect Americans' mental health this spring.

2. **Drug overdoses.** Fatal drug overdoses hit a record high last year after decreasing for the first time in three decades in 2018, according to the CDC. Early data suggests this trend is continuing in 2020, likely due to Americans' prolonged isolation, economic hardships and changes

to the U.S. drug trade, reports *The Washington Post*.

Suspected overdoses were up 18 percent in March, 29 percent in April and 42 percent in May compared to the same period in 2019, according to federal data obtained by the *Post* on drug-related emergency calls from ambulance teams, hospitals and police.

Definitive data on overdoses trends may not be available for five to six months due to the slow nature of federal reporting processes. However, the current figures suggest that overdoses are not only increasing, but accelerating as the pandemic progresses, the *Post* reported.

3. **Preventable infectious diseases.** COVID-19-related lockdowns and travel restrictions have forced many countries to pause immunization programs, resulting in a spike of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles and diphtheria.

The pandemic also is complicating global efforts to diagnose and treat such infectious diseases as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV, which could undermine years of progress, health experts told *The New York Times*.

In mid-July, the World Health Organization warned that the consequences of declining childhood immunization rates linked to COVID-19 disruptions could be more severe than the pandemic. Preliminary data from January through April also shows a «substantial drop» in the number of children receiving three doses of the vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and per-

tussis, the WHO said. This could be the first time the world sees a drop in immunization coverage for these diseases in 28 years.

4. **Food insecurity.** An additional 17 million Americans may experience food insecurity in 2020, according to a projection from the hunger relief organization Feeding America.

A recent Brookings Institution analysis found that U.S. children are facing an unprecedented level of food insecurity for modern times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of late April, 17.4 percent of children were not eating enough because their families couldn't afford to buy food, according to a survey cited in the analysis. During the 2008 recession, just 5.7 percent of families reported the same, according to *The New York Times*.

5. **Legionnaires' disease.** Stagnant water systems in commercial buildings temporarily closed during the pandemic may pose a risk of waterborne-infections such as Legionnaires' disease, researchers and public health experts warned in May.

Since many buildings have been closed since mid-March, there is a chance bacteria has built up in some buildings' plumbing systems. The CDC shared guidelines to help prevent bacteria's spread in water systems as buildings reopen.

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: ASC Communications 2021

Southern Region Director

Larry Sorrells

Let's Get Back To Civility, Thoughtfulness For Others

This past year has been a tough one in many ways. The current pandemic and the horrible discourse of American politics have caused much depression, fear, and trepidation. To top it all, 2021 started out with the January 6th "storming of the Capitol" and was followed up by forces trying to overturn the 2020 vote and ignore the will of the people. While I do not challenge the right to anyone's opinion and follow legal avenues available to them, the two aforementioned actions were an attack on the democracy of this Nation. Numerous lawsuits were filed and ran their course and were denied by the courts including the Supreme Court. These lawsuits were deemed without

merit due to no evidence of fraud or other illegal actions. Even after all this, threats were made against those officials and their family members from both parties who chose to honor their oath to uphold our Constitution and the Constitutions of the respective states. To those who assisted, participated, and instigated in these treasonable and seditious actions, you should be prosecuted and held accountable by the legal system of the Country that you attacked. If you are an elected official who was involved you should be prosecuted and if found guilty, at a minimum, be branded as a person destitute of honor. We have always prided our self as a country who respected

non-violent transition of government and working together after an election. THIS TIME IT DID NOT HAPPEN! I hope we have learned from this and while allowing legal differences of opinion, we come together and work together. I long for the day when this again becomes a return to norm in this country. I think some of the blame for this is due to the pandemic in that people have not been able to meet, sit down, discuss issues, and just be civil with each other. In other words, to just be friends. Another blame is on certain politicians who demand loyalty, spew hateful rhetoric, and condemn those who are different because of ideology, race, religion etc. Our diversity has

been our strength and is now been used to pull us apart. Again, we need to get rid of this and get back to civility and thought for others. To those who stood up and defended our Constitution, you deserve much praise and should be awarded medals. This includes politicians, law enforcement and military personnel, and average everyday citizens. THANK YOU!

We will get through this pandemic and our other problems as these too will come to pass. However, it will take some work by all of us. So let's get to work and let's do it. We all need to think about our words and actions. It is our country, and we can fix it. God Bless Us All and our Country.

West Region Director

Marty Schneider

Check Out Our Upcoming Events

Brothers and Sisters, the APW-ABA has two events approaching that I feel compelled to remind you about. The first is our annual scholarship program which honors three preceding members - Michael A. Tosches, Thomas Hartos and Eugene Johnson. Two high school graduating seniors will

be awarded \$1,000.00 each. An application form is available on our APW-ABA.org website and elsewhere in this issue of the *News Digest*. Scholarship guidelines are also on the website and in print in this issue. This is an easy "luck of the draw" entry which will benefit two young people greatly in ad-

vancing their education. The deadline for application is May 15, 2021. Please investigate and take advantage. You will thank us later for the reminder.

The second event is the most important, (in my opinion.) Our National Convention is expected to be held Monday evening October 4, 2021 in

Las Vegas, Nevada. I invite you to attend. We have much business to handle, as well as old friendships to rekindle. The APW-ABA is before all a fraternal organization, looking after the welfare of the whole. Please make plans to join us.

Yours in Union Solidarity.