

ABA News Digest

Vol. 39, No. 2

Postal Workers Serving Postal Workers Since 1891

Fall, 2024

National Director

Wayne Maurer

A Special Thank You To Our Membership



Good day everyone and welcome to the newest issue of the APWABA News Digest. As another year winds down, I turn my attention to the American Postal Workers Accident Benefit Association membership and how grateful I am that this association has passed the test of time. The association has been around longer than I have, or any of us for that matter. While we remain the only non-profit association dedicated to offering benefits to APWU members and their families, it is only due to each of our 60,000 members. Through the good times and the bad times, we have been here to provide benefits to the members for accidents causing injuries whether sustained on the clock, off the clock, on postal premises, at home or away from home, 24/7/365. Whether you are a member by yourself, active or retired, or a member because your

local or state organization had decided at one time or another to enroll their entire membership as a thank you to you, the member, each of you are deeply appreciated. Locals and states who enroll their entire membership not only have an extra organizing tool to attract the non-member to join but they also save their membership money as we continue to provide a 37% discount on our most popular plan, the Value Plan, to locals and states when they enroll their entire membership. Simply put, an individual still only pays \$1.37

per pay period to enroll whereas a local only pays \$0.87 per member, per pay period, when they enroll as a group. Less than a bottle of water out of the swing room vending machine once every two weeks provides you with our accident benefit coverage around the clock. Many of our organizations have been with us for over thirty-five years and I'm pleased to announce that we just had the Trenton Metro Area Local from New Jersey join our family this past summer. I hope that everyone has an amazing holiday season and

that you enjoy the upcoming holiday season with healthy and happy times. Please exercise safe practices whether you are driving at work or at home, and remember, we are here just in case you sustain an injury caused by an accident. It is what we are here for, and our only mission is to provide relief to you, our membership, during a time of need. Thank you again for all your support.

In Unionism,
Wayne Maurer,
National Director

2024 APW-ABA Scholarship Recipients

Honoring Thomas Hartos, Michael Tosches & Eugene Johnson



James Meade

Hi, my name is James and I am extremely honored to be the recipient of one of the APW-ABA's Memorial Scholarships. I have recently graduated from Antigo High School in Antigo WI. Since a young age I have enjoyed being outdoors, playing sports, and enjoying entertainment of all kinds. I love reading, and I would infatuate myself with encyclopedias and novels of all kinds. It didn't take me very long into life to decide what I wanted to pursue after high school, as I've always loved paleontology. I plan on attending Montana State University this fall to pursue a degree in Earth Sciences with a focus in paleontology. In high school I was the Vice President of the National Honors Society and competed in my high schools cross country, men's swim, and track and field teams. I made it to state-level competition in cross country and track. One of my biggest inspirations and influences in my life is my mom, who has been with the APW-ABA union for roughly 8 years now. I have an immense amount of respect for unions and my mother's specifically. As a future worker I know I will be looking for a job with unions available to me, to help protect my freedoms as a worker. I hope to use this scholarship to help pay for my tuition in school. I cannot wait to begin the next phase in my life!



Gianna Sinibaldi

Dear APW-ABA.

My name is Gianna Sinibaldi. I would like to thank the APW-ABA for the Michael Tosches/Tom Hartos/Eugene Johnson Scholarship award to help me in the next step of my education.

I am a resident of Peabody, Ma., and a 2024 graduate of Peabody Veterans Memorial School. My interests in high school were soccer and track and field which I competed in for 4 years. Academically I graduated top 10 percent in my class, and I am interested in accounting, finance and business, which I will continue to pursue in college. I will be attending Merrimack College in North Andover, Ma. in the fall to continue my educational journey.

Once again, thank you for this scholarship award.



NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PRESORT INC

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

Central Region Director A

Keith M. Richardson

Prevent Accidents This Winter



Greetings from the Central Region. I'd like to share some helpful tips on how you could possibly prevent yourself from having an accident in the upcoming winter months. Here are some ways to prepare for

- winter and prevent accidents:
- **Dress for the weather**
Wear multiple layers of loose-fitting clothing, including a hat that covers your ears, insulated gloves, and water-proof boots with good treads. You can also carry extra socks, a jacket, and a thermos of hot liquid.
 - **Drive safely**
Slow down, increase your following distance, and avoid sudden movements. Use your headlights to increase visibility.
 - **Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning**
Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows. Don't heat your home with a gas stovetop or oven.
 - **Protect your workplace**
Discuss expectations with your

maintenance staff or snow removal vendor. Make sure snow and ice are removed quickly, and that icy spots are treated with salt or other surface treatments.

- **Prevent slips and falls**
Keep ice melt or sand on hand for

when things get slippery around your house. Take short steps and walk at a slower pace.

- **Check for vehicle recalls**
You can use the NHTSA's Recalls Look-up Tool to see if your vehicle has a critical safety issue that needs to be repaired.

Remember, the ABA is here for you in critical times of need if you have been impacted by having an accident. File a claim, and if filed properly, be prepared to be paid accordingly.

It pays to belong to the APW-ABA. Lastly, I want to congratulate newly elected Central Region Director Keith Combs. Welcome to the ABA Board of Directors.

Happy Holidays! I'm hoping you and yours have a prosperous New Year!

AMERICAN
POSTAL
WORKERS

APW

ABA

Postal Workers Serving Postal Workers Since 1891

ACCIDENT
BENEFIT
ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors

Wayne Maurer	National Director/Editor	nationaldirector@apw-aba.org (603) 330-0282
Richard Phillips	President	tal259pr@yahoo.com (813) 438-9567
Scott Hoffman	Northeast Region Director A	shapwu@gmail.com (617) 894-6472
Dana Coletti	Northeast Region Director B	dcoletti230@gmail.com (603) 235-9317
David Dunkle	Eastern Region Director A	kyowva45@comcast.net (304) 633-7221
Sherry C. McKnight	Eastern Region Director B	smcknight@bfsfall181.com mcknight_sherry@yahoo.com (443) 810-6341
Kenyon Beasley	Southern Region Director A	kenyonbeasley@yahoo.com (770) 905-7889
Larry Sorrells	Southern Region Director B	avlapwu@charter.net (828) 301-5921
Keith Richardson	Central Region Director A	keithrichardsonapwu@gmail.com (312) 344-0039
Keith Combs	Central Region Director B	combskeith24@gmail.com (313) 330-7030
Marty Schneider	Western Region Director A	schneidsothersis@yahoo.com (480) 202-6278
Scott Parkin	Western Region Director B	apwulocal703@yahoo.com (208) 251-3038

Visit us on the internet
24/7/365 at
www.apw-aba.org

or call us
Toll Free
at
(800) 526-2890

The ABA News Digest is
the official publication of the
**American Postal Workers
Accident Benefit Association**
P.O. Box 120
Rochester, NH 03866-0120
and is published irregularly.
(603) 330-0282
www.apw-aba.org

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

PROUD MEMBER

STACY PUBLISHING INC.

Home Office Staff *

Executive Assistant/Business Coordinator	Melissa Potter
Accounts Receivable/Customer Service Coordinator (Associate Editor, ABA News Digest)	Lisa Bado
Accounting Technician	Kelly O'Neil
Claims Administrator/System Development Coordinator	Jennifer Coelho

*Proud members of OPEIU Local 6

Honorariums

Hank Greenberg
National Director
Emeritus (2004)

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

David E. Daniel
National Director
Emeritus (2016)

President

Richard Phillips

Congratulations, ABA Delegates, For Another Productive Convention



Before I go any further, I would like to extend my personal thanks to those delegates who attended our convention following a busy day at the APWU National Convention. As such, the attendance by almost 100 delegates allowed us to achieve a quorum, which in turn made it possible for us to call the convention to order and address the important business at hand.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF MEMBERS

As reported during the convention, when I mentioned our “well-managed operation”, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the office staff who work at our headquarters office in Rochester, New Hampshire. As I reported at the convention, it is important to note that over the past two years, during the continuing negative impacts across the country caused by COVID19, the staff stepped up and continued to provide timely and professional services to our members.

These staff members are:
Melissa “Missy” Potter, Executive Assistant
Kelly O’Neil, Accounting Tech
Lisa Bado, Accounts Receivable
Jennifer Coelho, Claims Administrator
... and they deserve our thanks and recognition for all they do.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Prior to the convention I had appointed the following staff and members to organize the convention, which included but was not limited to announcing the Convention Call to all of our members, notifying members of the requirements to be a delegate, soliciting and registering delegate credentials, ensuring that the election of the vacant position of Director, Central Region, was conducted smoothly, as well as certifying and reporting that a quorum had been met before the convention was called to order:

Wayne Maurer
Marty Schneider
Melissa Potter
Jennifer Coelho
Lisa Bado
Kelly O’Neil
In addition, Reggie Maddox, a delegate from the Tampa Area Local,

volunteered to serve as Sergeant at Arms, as he had in the past.

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Constitution Committee was comprised of the following:
Dana Coletti, Chairman, (Director, NE Region)
Larry Sorrells, (Director, Southern Region)
Scott Parkin, (Director, Western Region)

Timothy Cliche, Rank & File Member (New Hampshire APWU)

As previously reported, changes to our Constitution & Bylaws at previous conventions have helped us address the decrease in numbers of ABA members, which had resulted from the general decrease in the numbers of APWU members hired over the past decade. Also, at the convention it was reported that all expenses incurred and paid were accurately accounted for.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

At the outset of the convention the delegates unanimously approved a motion to dedicate the 2024 APW-ABA Convention to the memory of longtime Central Region Director, Ed Brennan. Ed had served the union movement for more than fifty years and had been a member of the ABA Board of Directors since 2002. In this regard Ed demonstrated continual and exceptional support of the ABA until his passing this past February at the age of 87.

ELECTION OF ABA NATIONAL OFFICERS FOR THE 2024-2026 TERM OF OFFICE

All current offices and officers were uncontested, except for the vacant Director, Central Region position left by brother Brennan. The Election Committee conducted the election for the two Directors position for the Central Region. Those candidates were: Keith Richardson (incumbent, Chicago Area Local), Keith Combs (Detroit Area Local), and Michael Gillespie (Des Moines Area Local). The candidates elected were Keith Richardson and Keith Combs. We would like to thank each of the candidates for their interest to represent the membership and further promote the ABA in the future.

As such, the following members will comprise the Board of Directors for the 2024-2026 term:

- National Director, Wayne Maurer
- President, Richard Phillips
- Director, NE Region, Scott Hoffman
- Director, NE Region, Dana Coletti
- Director, Eastern Region, David Dunkle
- Director, Eastern Region, Sherry McKnight

- Director, Southern Region, Larry Sorrells
- Director, Southern Region, Kenyon Beasley
- Director, Central Region, Keith Richardson
- Director, Central Region, Keith Combs
- Director, Western Region, Marty Schneider
- Director, Western Region, Scott Parkin

SOME POST-CONVENTION HOUSEKEEPING

1. **Selection of a Vice President** - In accordance with Article 5, Section 1, the members 10 regional Directors communicated with each other following the ABA Convention and voted that Keith Richardson (Director, Central Region) would continue to serve as the Vice President for the 2024-2026 term. Congratulations to Keith on his selection, and I look forward to continuing working with him as we progress over the course of the next two years.

2. **Fall Audit Committee** - In accordance with Article 20, Section 3, I appointed Dana Coletti (Director, NE Region) and Larry Sorrells (Director, Southern Region) to perform the 2024 Fall Audit. Update: Due to devastations from hurricane Helene, throughout Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and North Carolina, where brother Sorrells lives, we lost communication with him for several days. Thankfully, Larry reports that he and his family are safe. While awaiting word from Larry, Southern Region Director Kenyon Beasley moved into the Alternate position and the required audit was conducted telephonically on October 10th. As in the past, their report and recommendations have been forwarded to the National Director and the other Board members.

3. **A Final Thought** – The devastation caused by hurricanes Helene and Milton, brings the importance of the Accident Benefit Association into focus. We are hopeful that all our members and their families are safe, but in the event an accidental injury occurred to any of our members, we are here for you. If you or any other members need assistance filing a claim with the ABA, you can download Claim Forms by going on-line at www.apw-aba.org. You can also receive information regarding coverage by calling 603-330-0282.

With best wishes to all during the upcoming holidays, and for a safe, healthy, and prosperous New Year, I remain, In solidarity.



Dan Greagor, Jacksonville BMC President and Tiffany Thompkins, Jacksonville BMC Health Plan Director, stop by our table at the APWU Health Plan Open Season Seminar to meet with Melissa Potter, Executive Assistant and Wayne Maurer, National Director APWABA.

Northeast Region Director A

Scott Hoffman

Winter Is Coming, Stay Safe

Hello, APWU family. Winter is coming. Make decisions based on your abilities, your assessments of the conditions, the assessments of public safety officials, and your knowledge of the routes of travel. Do not for a second think the Postal Service gives any real consideration for your safety. You see how cavalier they are with everyday safety concerns, or a pop-up serious issue on the workroom floor. Those concerns are ignored as if they don't exist. The Postal Service is not your friend or protector. Keep yourself safe, your union keeps you safe.

As you know, the contract expiration date has come and gone. The terms of the contract have been extended in toto while the parties continue negotiations. While it is usually favorable to reach agreement, that is not always possible. Especially dealing with an entity as duplicitous, onerous, and callous as the Postal Service. While agreement is generally preferred, the National must put forth and have recognized by the Service that we are willing and able to fight, and in this scenario, the fight would be arbitration. We can't blink and show that we have any fear of this process. If we do, we are destined to be in the position of weakness. Arbitration can be risky but can also be rewarding. In our history, we can point to regressive arbitration decisions, but as exemplified by two contracts ago, much was gained by forcing arbitration. The Rank and File Committee is critical in this process. This committee is assembled from local officials whose job it is to look at any agreed upon contract from the view of the workroom floor. This committee has the final say as to whether the contract negotiated by the National officers and the Postal Service is worthy enough, sound enough, protective enough, from the perspective of the membership. It is imperative that the Rank and File act as independent assessors. If everyone sticks to the intent of the organizations' constitution, a contract worthy of consideration by the membership in the form of a ratification vote will occur. The autonomy between the Rank and File committee and the National negotiators must be maintained.

As usual, economics are the stumbling blocks to national agreements. It is hoped that the extra time agreed to for continued negotiations will bear fruit. I do think the impending elections for the White House and other congressional races will ultimately play a hand in this. If the party of DeJoy's selections to Postmaster prevails, expect further deterioration of the Postal Service, further strides to privatization, and certainly a more regressive economic package offered at negotiations. The other party is not so hellbent on Postal Service degradation and privatization and is clearly a more labor oriented body. So, think carefully. Too often people focus on fringe issues that do not actually affect their daily lives.

I go with what puts food on my family's table in the form of job security, protections in the workplace and functioning government services designed to serve and to protect working class families. To not do so is acting against self-interest.

In closing, stay safe this season, but if you do have an accident, we are here. We are coming off a successful ABA convention and the organization's board is in place to make sure the ABA stays true to its mission and acts responsibly in any fiduciary capacities. Hopefully, we will celebrate a good contract soon. In the meantime, keep grinding and fighting.

In Union unity.

Northeast Region Director B

Dana Coletti

Preparing For Natural Disasters

As the world ages and becomes ever more populated, one of the biggest concerns we have is the effects of weather on us and the concern for natural disasters. Natural disasters are hard to predict and are uncontrollable. As responsible adults, there are always things we can do to ready ourselves and be prepared for what the world may throw at us. But first, what is a natural disaster? A natural disaster is a large-scale event or occurrence that occurs in nature that typically causes significant damage to life, property, and the environment.

While this is quite a general and expansive statement, some types of natural disasters include, but are not limited to, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, heat waves, floods, monsoons, ice storms, blizzards and many more. While geography does dictate the types of natural disasters that may affect us, they can all leave devastating paths of destruction in their wake. In 2023, natural disasters caused over 92 billion dollars in damages in the United States alone. The costliest was the Southern/Midwest drought that cost over 14 billion dollars in damage.

So, what do we do to protect ourselves from these devastating events? Emergency preparedness is key to this. It is important to make a familial plan for all potential emergencies. This includes, meeting places, emergency contact information, and how to care for family pets during this time. Organizing muster/meeting places in case out of necessity. Most importantly, plan to evacuate the surrounding area if it is deemed necessary. If it is determined to be safe to hunker down, together to keep it from becoming an airborne projectile. Parking cars in garages, if possible, to keep them out of extreme weather conditions. Also, be sure to have a full tank of gas, jumper cables, bottled water, and a spare first aid kit stocked in the car as well. Filling bathtubs with water in case of extended power outages is an essential part of preparing your home for severe weather. The ability to use the toilet if the powers out is an effective means of hygiene and sanitation. Finally, knowing how to shut off the utilities in the house is very important as well.

An emergency kit is an essential part of disaster preparation. It should include the following items:

- Potable Water and non-perishable food items. This includes food items that are ready to eat and do not need to be cooked
- Flashlights and other battery powered light sources
- Portable emergency radio
- Extra batteries for flashlights and radios
- Sanitation and hygiene supplies
- Blankets and sleeping bags

- Warm clothing if it is winter
- Important Medical and Financial documents stored in a waterproof bag
- Communication devices other than cell phones like short wave radios or walkie talkies
- First Aid Kit and Hand Sanitizer
- A Whistle and Signal Mirror

Part of your "kit" is also knowing CPR and basic first aid. During natural disasters and other severe weather emergencies, emergency services can be strained and less effective. Knowing basic lifesaving skills can often do just that.

We can't forget about our four legged, furry and other friends as well. Preparing to care for your pets during these emergencies is an essential part of preparedness. As many pets eat dry food and there are many varieties, it is easy to keep a few weeks extra on hand for them. Water for pets is also crucial to keeping them healthy during times of crisis.

All these things come together to be a master plan of preparedness. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of care in times like these and readiness is key to survival.



Western Region Director A

Marty Schneider

Safety Is No Accident

Sisters and Brothers.

This will be the last edition of our 2024 American Postal Workers - Accident Benefit Association News Digest. We are happy to award 2 scholarships to two very deserving High School Seniors and wish them the best as they embark on their higher education.

One of the slogans the APW-ABA has used in the past is "Safety is no accident." To expand on that slogan briefly, we remind you to keep a close eye on what you are doing. Pay attention to your surroundings. Watch where you are walking. Be mindful of items in the area that could be potential hazards. Essentially, slow down and take all your work into consideration before you charge into it. The time you take to survey the situation could be the difference between a smooth day or a difficult and painful one.

To switch gears, I would like to remind our readers of the signs of a Stroke. First, a person's face might seem droopy, this would indicate the muscles in the face are not holding things up. Second, arms stretched out might not be equally strong, perhaps even one or the other feels numb or weak. Third, the person's speech is affected, words may be slurred or jumbled in a sentence, or a particular word can't come out at all. And Last, if an individual shows these signs GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY! The window of opportunity to save a person's life or prevent severe damage from a stroke is very short. Acting FAST is critical.

Best Holiday Wishes to you all,
Sincerely,
Marty Schneider

Eastern Region Director A

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 continue to look forward to representing you as APW-ABA Eastern Region Director.



I love the ABA because it has helped so many across our great land since 1891. Personally, I'd rather get my accident benefit coverage from an organization run by retired and current APWU postal workers who I know understand my needs. 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).

One of the great benefits for 100%

local members is the local pays premiums for all members, including those that are in a no-pay status. On average this is only about 3% of your total membership, but this is insignificant when you consider what a great incentive tool this is to attract new members. More recently, it was proposed that we raise our benefits with only a small premium increase. At the 2022 APW-ABA Convention, that proposal passed, and the daily disability benefits were increased by \$4.00 per calendar day, with only a .12 cent per pay period increase in premiums. Just another great benefit of belonging to the APW-ABA.

It's easy to become a 100% ABA Local and get discounts on our plans. Simply make a motion at your local union membership meeting, vote, and pass the motion, and once it passes by majority or two-thirds vote, you will then only need to send a copy of the minutes of the meeting where the motion passed, to both the APWU National Secretary-Treasurers office and to the APW-ABA Home office.

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING!

Articles written by me are based on experience and particular fact circumstances 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.

FILE OSHA TIMELY AND POSSIBLY AVOID INJURY AND EXCESSING FROM YOUR JOB

We all should know, the USPS cannot just close a post office without jumping through several costly and timely Legal requirements, unless they can avoid the red tape by letting the building deteriorate to a point it is declared unsafe.

The USPS had done this in Ore-

gon and other places that I became aware of before they tried it in Ashland KY when they tried to move about 150 employees to Huntington WV without going through the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 requirements. It started simply with a couple of leaks in the roof. We thought they would be fixed. But soon there were more than 15 leaks and 3 were right over million dollar machines. This is about the time I became aware of this same thing happening in Oregon. I didn't want this to happen to the employees in Ashland KY so, I started reading the OSHA law. What I found was, if you file an OSHA complaint before the building can be condemned you can force the USPS to fix the problem. My efforts in Ashland resulted in OSHA forcing the USPS to put an entirely new roof on the Ashland Plant at a cost of 1.4 million dollars. So, the moral of the story is, file OSHA before a building or work area can be condemned and you may at least delay excessing for 10 years as we did in Ashland Ky. If you see this happening tell a Union representative and make them aware of the above.

ACT OF GOD SITUATIONS

All USPS Career employees that include, Fulltime, Part-time and Part-time Flexible employees have a right to Administrative Leave due to an "ACT OF GOD" situation. **Acts of God involve community disasters such as fire, flood, or storms. The disaster situation must be general rather than personal in scope and impact. It must prevent groups of employees from working or reporting to work.**

An employee has a right to administrative leave if they or their steward can prove the above underlined element.

Groups can be defined as: At least 2 employees in 2 post offices in a district area or at least 2 employees in 2 different sections, categories or crafts in one office.

Further, the snow or flooding or fire, etc. must be a community disaster. The disaster must be general rather than personal in scope and impact.

Meaning, if you call into work

and claim you couldn't get there because of county, state, or interstate roads closed and there are groups of employees off work you will have a good claim for admin leave, but if you say you couldn't get there because your driveway is too steep to drive on due to snow, this is a personal problem created when you decided to buy property on a hill.

Admin Leave provisions are found in chapter 380 of the F-22 or F-21 USPS handbooks or chapter 519 of the ELM.

Further, this section in the F-21 or F-22 tells us that if the employee requests on a PS form 3971 another form of leave prior to administrative leave, that employee loses their right to admin leave. So, make sure you don't let your supervisor talk you into filling out a 3971 for annual or sick or LWOP prior to your request for admin on a PS form 3971 that USPS signs for received in the far-right box toward the bottom of the PS form 3971.

It is also very important for all employees claiming admin leave to try to get confirmation that the roads were closed in your area. You can usually get proof of road closings at your local courthouse or 911 Office. Your steward will need this information to make a successful case for you. Normally, after admin leave is denied, an employee can only use annual leave for the Act of God absence to get paid, until they win a grievance filed for Admin Leave, except in a scenario described below where I used sick leave while waiting on a settlement or decision on an Act of God grievance.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT How to get sick leave while waiting on an Act of God grievance decision.

A few years ago, I called into work during a huge snowstorm. I told my supervisor I was calling in on administrative leave due to the storm. I also told my supervisor I would make every effort to get to work.

Thereafter, I picked up a shovel and began cleaning my driveway trying to get to the USPS that I loved so well. I got so exhausted shoveling snow I later had to call in sick. When I got to work a few days later after roads

continued on page 6

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

Request for or Notification of Absence

Employee's Name (Print last, first, MI)
Joe Blow

Employee ID
000000000000

Date Submitted (MM/DD/YYYY)
JANUARY 4, 2018

No. of Hours Requested
72

Installation (For postmaster's leave, show city, state, and ZIP Code)
N/A

NYS Day
N/A

Play Loc. No.
N/A

DIA Code
N/A

From: Date
1-4-18

Hour
N/A

Thru: Date
1-6-18

Hour
N/A

Time of Call or Request
N/A

Scheduled Reporting Time
N/A

If Needed, Employee Can Be Reached At:
☐ Do not call

Type of Absence
☒ Annual
☐ Holiday/AL Lv Exch
☐ Center 701 Route
☐ LWOP (See reverse)
☐ Sick (See reverse)
☐ Late
☐ COP (See reverse)
☐ Other Administrative Leave

Documentation (For official use only)
☐ FMLA Requested (Certification review - HR502)
☐ For COP Leave (CAI on file)
☐ For Advanced Sick Leave (PS 1221 on file)
☐ For Military Leave (Orders reviewed)
☐ For Court Leave (Summons reviewed)
☐ For Higher Level (PS 1723 on file)
☐ Scheme Training Testing Qualifying (Memo on file)

Revised Schedule for (date)
N/A

Approved in Advance
☐ Yes ☐ No

Begin Work
Mon 01
Sun 02
Mon 03
Tue 04
Wed 05
Thur 06
Fri 07
Sat 08
Sun 09
Mon 10
Tue 11
Wed 12
Thur 13
Fri 14

Day
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thur
Fri
Sat
Sun
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thur
Fri
Sat
Sun

Init.
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A

Hours
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A

Remarks (Do not enter medical information. See Privacy Act Statement on reverse of this form.)
Using Annual leave in lieu of Administrative leave denied.

I understand that the annual leave authorized in excess of the amount available to me during the leave year will be charged to LWOP.
Employee's Signature and Date
1-7-18

Signature of Person Recording Absence and Date
1-7-18

Signature of Supervisor and Date Notified
1-7-18

Official Action on Application (Return copy of signed request to employee.)
☐ Approved
☐ Disapproved (Give reason below)

Do not check an FMLA box until you verify the FMLA designation.
☐ FMLA Designation is PENDING
☐ FMLA Protected
☐ Not FMLA Protected

Signature of Supervisor and Date
N/A

☐ Continued on reverse

PS Form 3971, December 2011 (Page 1 of 2) PSN 7530-02-000-9136

Warning: The furnishing of false information on this form may result in a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment of not more than 5 years, or both (18 U.S.C. 1001).

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

Request for or Notification of Absence

Employee's Name (Print last, first, MI)
Bogi Crabwell

Employee ID
000000000011

Date Submitted (MM/DD/YYYY)
1-5-18

No. of Hours Requested
16

Installation (For postmaster's leave, show city, state, and ZIP Code)
N/A

NYS Day
N/A

Play Loc. No.
N/A

DIA Code
N/A

From: Date
1-5-18

Hour
N/A

Thru: Date
1-6-17

Hour
N/A

Time of Call or Request
N/A

Scheduled Reporting Time
N/A

If Needed, Employee Can Be Reached At:
☐ Do not call

Type of Absence
☒ Annual
☐ Holiday/AL Lv Exch
☐ Center 701 Route
☐ LWOP (See reverse)
☐ Sick (See reverse)
☐ Late
☐ COP (See reverse)
☒ Other Administrative Leave

Documentation (For official use only)
☐ FMLA Requested (Certification review - HR502)
☐ For COP Leave (CAI on file)
☐ For Advanced Sick Leave (PS 1221 on file)
☐ For Military Leave (Orders reviewed)
☐ For Court Leave (Summons reviewed)
☐ For Higher Level (PS 1723 on file)
☐ Scheme Training Testing Qualifying (Memo on file)

Revised Schedule for (date)
N/A

Approved in Advance
☐ Yes ☐ No

Begin Work
Mon 01
Sun 02
Mon 03
Tue 04
Wed 05
Thur 06
Fri 07
Sat 08
Sun 09
Mon 10
Tue 11
Wed 12
Thur 13
Fri 14

Day
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thur
Fri
Sat
Sun
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thur
Fri
Sat
Sun

Init.
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A

Hours
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A

Remarks (Do not enter medical information. See Privacy Act Statement on reverse of this form.)
Roads to works closed due to storm.

I understand that the annual leave authorized in excess of the amount available to me during the leave year will be charged to LWOP.
Employee's Signature and Date
1-7-18

Signature of Person Recording Absence and Date
1-7-18

Signature of Supervisor and Date Notified
1-7-18

Official Action on Application (Return copy of signed request to employee.)
☐ Approved
☐ Disapproved (Give reason below)

Do not check an FMLA box until you verify the FMLA designation.
☐ FMLA Designation is PENDING
☐ FMLA Protected
☐ Not FMLA Protected

Signature of Supervisor and Date
N/A

☐ Continued on reverse

PS Form 3971, December 2011 (Page 1 of 2) PSN 7530-02-000-9136

Warning: The furnishing of false information on this form may result in a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment of not more than 5 years, or both (18 U.S.C. 1001).

Eastern Region Director B

Sherry C. McKnight

How To Stop Fake Callers



Greeting Brothers and Sisters,

Hope this article finds you all in good health. Let's embrace autumn as the seasons change and welcome winter. As the holidays approach us, there will be overwhelming scam calls daily. Stop, think, and don't pick up the phone if the number isn't familiar. Please, let's protect our loved ones from scammers, be on the lookout!

HOW TO SPOT FAKE CALLERS

Stay ahead of the crooks. This season, we're looking at scam calls. Phone scammers use a technology

called spoofing, which makes calls appear to come from real companies, your area code, and even specific people you know. Their goal is to get you to share personal data, login information, or to pay them money.

The Golden Rule of spam calls: Learn to not answer your phone!

Even if your caller ID reads a legitimate company name, think twice. Scammers have successfully compromised caller ID — that means unknown numbers, local numbers, and recognizable large companies or organizations.

- Register with the Do Not Call Registry

You can add your phone number to the National Do Not Call Registry ([donotcall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov)) to prevent unwanted calls.

- Use call blocking services

Your phone company or mobile device manufacturer may offer call blocking services. You can also download apps to block or label potential spam calls.

- Avoid giving out personal information

Don't give out personal information over the phone, even if the caller claims to be from a government entity.

REPORT SUSPECTED SCAMS

If you receive a robocall, you can:

- Hang up immediately
- Report it to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at ReportFraud.ftc.gov

Tips for dealing with spam calls:

- Don't use a search engine to look up contact information for the supposed caller. Scammers can create fake pages that can look legit, which can even show up in the top search results.

- Call the number on the back of your credit card or use the mobile app to talk to someone.
- Share this knowledge with friends and family.

HOW TO STOP UNWANTED CALLS

The best defense against unwanted calls is call blocking. Which type of call-blocking or call-labeling technology you use will depend on the phone — whether it's a mobile, traditional landline, or a home phone that makes calls over the internet.

Source: *PENFED Credit Union & FTC*

Eastern Region Director A

David Dunkle

continued from page 5

were cleared, I made sure I completed a PS Form 3971 showing the time and date I first called in on admin leave. After this was immediately disapproved, I filled out another 3971 for sick leave indicating a later time and date since the sick leave occurred after the admin leave was requested.

My Admin Leave as stated previously was denied along with others at the Post Office, but my sick leave was approved. I filed a grievance within 14 days of the incident and had all the necessary proof mentioned above and/or in the F-21 handbook to prove my absence was due to an Act of God situation. At the arbitration Dunkle won as usual and got his sick leave reimbursed and was paid admin leave for the Act of God absence at issue.

THE TRICK TO COMPLETING PS FORM 3971 FOR ADMIN LEAVE (ACT OF GOD) PURPOSES

USPS almost always denies Admin Leave for Acts of God. This means you must prove your case which will probably end up in arbitration. The less paperwork in arbitration the better, so the number 1 scenario is better than number 2 below if you can accomplish it.

Scenario 1: Ask your supervisor if he will approve your Admin Leave. If supervisor says no, then fill out your PS Form 3971 first going to the Remarks section and write, for example, **“Requesting Annual**

Leave due to Administrative Leave previously denied.” This puts all info on one page for arbitration and it shows you requested Admin Leave

prior to other form of leave.

Scenario 2: You attempt scenario one above and your supervisor refuses to sign it. Then complete one PS form

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



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) \$16 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) \$28 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:

<p><u>100% Local Member Rates</u> (Local provides ABA benefit to member)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Value Plan</td> <td>\$0.87 (per pay period)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advantage Plan</td> <td>\$3.12 (per pay period)</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>100% Full-Dues Cash Pay Rates</u> (Retired member still paying Full Dues)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Value Plan</td> <td>\$22.62 (annually)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advantage Plan</td> <td>\$81.12 (annually)</td> </tr> </table>	Value Plan	\$0.87 (per pay period)	Advantage Plan	\$3.12 (per pay period)	Value Plan	\$22.62 (annually)	Advantage Plan	\$81.12 (annually)	<p><u>NON-100% Local Member Rates</u> (Member pays for ABA on their own)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Value Plan</td> <td>\$1.37 (per pay period)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advantage Plan</td> <td>\$3.62 (per pay period)</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Standard Member Cash Pay Rates</u> (Retired member paying for ABA on their own)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Value Plan</td> <td>\$35.64 (annually)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advantage Plan</td> <td>\$94.20 (annually)</td> </tr> </table>	Value Plan	\$1.37 (per pay period)	Advantage Plan	\$3.62 (per pay period)	Value Plan	\$35.64 (annually)	Advantage Plan	\$94.20 (annually)
Value Plan	\$0.87 (per pay period)																
Advantage Plan	\$3.12 (per pay period)																
Value Plan	\$22.62 (annually)																
Advantage Plan	\$81.12 (annually)																
Value Plan	\$1.37 (per pay period)																
Advantage Plan	\$3.62 (per pay period)																
Value Plan	\$35.64 (annually)																
Advantage Plan	\$94.20 (annually)																

ABA PLUS RATES:

\$20,000 - \$0.35 (per pay period) (\$9.10 annually)	\$75,000 - \$1.13 (per pay period) (\$29.38 annually)
\$30,000 - \$0.45 (per pay period) (\$11.70 annually)	\$100,000 - \$1.50 (per pay period) (\$39.00 annually)
\$40,000 - \$0.60 (per pay period) (\$15.60 annually)	\$125,000 - \$1.90 (per pay period) (\$49.40 annually)
\$50,000 - \$0.75 (per pay period) (\$19.50 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.apwu-aba.org



Southern Region Director A

Kenyon Beasley

Winter Weather Preparation

Greetings Sisters and Brothers. I hope this article finds you in good health and spirits. In the past few weeks, the southern part of the country has experienced some extreme weather patterns and many of our members have had to endure some of the fallout associated with those extreme weather patterns. Winter brings beauty and joy with snowy landscapes and holiday festivities, but it also poses various safety challenges. From freezing temperatures to snowstorms and icy roads, winter weather can disrupt daily life and even be life-threatening. Ensuring safety during winter requires adequate preparation, awareness of potential hazards, and taking proactive measures to protect oneself and loved ones. Winter safety preparedness is not just about avoiding inconvenience; it is essential for preserving health and well-being. Here's a comprehensive look at the importance of winter safety preparedness, including key strategies for staying safe.

Winter weather can bring severe conditions such as heavy snow, ice, freezing rain, and bitter cold temperatures. These elements pose significant risks including:

- Hypothermia and Frostbite:** Exposure to cold temperatures can quickly lead to hypothermia and frostbite. Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce, leading to a dangerously low body temperature. Frostbite, on the other hand, is the freezing of skin and underlying tissues, typically affecting extremities like fingers, toes, ears, and the nose.
- Slip and Fall Accidents:** Snow and ice accumulation creates slippery surfaces, increasing the risk of slips and falls. These accidents can result in injuries ranging from bruises and sprains to broken bones and head injuries.
- Car Accidents:** Icy roads and reduced visibility during snowstorms can make driving treacherous. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, nearly 24% of weather-related vehicle crashes occur on snowy, slushy, or icy roads. These conditions can cause loss of control, reduced braking ability, and collisions.
- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:** Winter often leads to increased indoor heating, which can bring the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. The danger arises when fuel-burning appliances like heaters, generators, and fireplaces are not properly ventilated, allowing the toxic gas to accumulate inside.
- Power Outages:** Winter storms can bring down power lines, leaving communities without electricity. Extended power outages can lead to significant discomfort and dangers, especially if heating systems fail, pipes freeze, or food spoils due to lack of refrigeration.
- Stranded Vehicles:** Extreme weather can cause vehicles to get stuck in the snow or leave drivers stranded on the road. Without adequate preparation, individuals may

face life-threatening situations due to prolonged exposure to cold.

THE NECESSITY OF BEING PROACTIVE

Winter safety preparedness is essential to mitigate these risks and ensure safety. Preparing for winter involves taking steps to protect oneself, family, and property against adverse weather conditions. Being proactive can make a significant difference when emergencies occur, providing peace of mind and reducing the likelihood of harm.

1. Emergency Kits: Essential Supplies

Having an emergency kit ready at home and in the car is one of the most critical components of winter preparedness. A well-stocked emergency kit should include:

- Warm clothing and blankets: To prevent hypothermia in case of power outages or vehicle breakdowns.
- Non-perishable food and water: In case one is stranded for an extended period, or during power outages.
- Flashlights and extra batteries: For visibility during power failures.
- First aid supplies: To treat minor injuries.
- Portable chargers and backup power sources: For electronic devices.
- Shovel, ice scraper, and sand or kitty litter: For vehicle emergencies, particularly if stuck in snow.
- Carbon monoxide detector: To detect dangerous levels of carbon monoxide indoors.

Regularly updating emergency kits is important to ensure items are not expired or unusable.

2. Proper Vehicle Preparation

Preparing a vehicle for winter is crucial to reduce risks when driving in snowy or icy conditions. Winterizing a car includes:

- Checking the tires: Ensuring they have adequate tread and are suitable for winter driving.
- Winter tires provide better traction in snow and ice compared to all-season tires.
- Maintaining the battery: Cold weather can drain car batteries, so ensuring it is fully charged and functioning is essential.
- Using winter windshield wiper fluid: This type of fluid is formulated to resist freezing and is more effective at clearing snow and ice from windshields.
- Keeping the gas tank full: To prevent fuel lines from freezing and to provide heat if stranded.
- Emergency car kit: Adding extra blankets, snacks, a flashlight, and a first aid kit to the vehicle can be life-saving in case of getting stuck in a snowstorm.

3. Home Preparedness

Protecting the home against winter weather involves measures to keep it warm, safe, and functional despite severe conditions. Here are some essential steps:

- Insulate pipes: To prevent them from freezing and bursting, pipe insulation or heating tape can be used.

It is also advisable to let faucets drip slightly to prevent freezing.

- Seal windows and doors: Proper sealing can prevent drafts and help maintain indoor temperatures.
- Maintain heating systems: Regularly servicing heating equipment ensures they are working efficiently. It is also important to check the chimney for blockages if using a fireplace.
- Stocking up on firewood: If using a wood-burning stove or fireplace, keep a sufficient amount of dry wood available.
- Backup heating sources: In case of power failure, it is important to have alternative heat sources like portable heaters or wood stoves, but they must be used safely to avoid fire hazards.

4. Dressing Appropriately

Dressing in layers is one of the most effective ways to stay warm during winter. The body loses heat through exposed skin, so wearing appropriate clothing helps prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Essential winter clothing includes:

- Base layers: Made from moisture-wicking materials to keep sweat away from the skin.
- Insulating layers: Fleece or wool garments that trap body heat.
- Outer layers: Waterproof and windproof jackets and pants to protect against snow and wind.
- Warm accessories: Hats, scarves, gloves, and thermal socks are vital for protecting extremities from the cold.

5. Staying Informed and Alert

Winter weather can change rapidly, making it essential to stay informed about conditions. Monitoring local weather reports, signing up for alerts, and having access to weather apps can help individuals anticipate and prepare for severe weather. Alerts from the National Weather Service (NWS) provide warnings about blizzards, winter storms, and other hazardous conditions. Knowing when to stay off the roads or avoid outdoor activities can reduce the risk of accidents and injuries.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

Certain populations, such as children, the elderly, and people with pre-existing health conditions, are more vulnerable to winter hazards and require extra precautions.

- Elderly individuals are more susceptible to hypothermia and falls, so ensuring they have sufficient heating and a safe environment is crucial.
- Children may not always recognize the signs of cold-related illnesses, so caregivers should dress them appropriately and limit their time outdoors during extreme cold.
- People with chronic illnesses such as heart or respiratory conditions should avoid strenuous activities like shoveling snow, as it can strain the body.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES IN WINTER PREPAREDNESS

Community efforts play a vital role in ensuring public safety during the winter. Public agencies can:

- Provide information and resources for winter safety, including distributing emergency preparedness materials.
- Organize warming centers for those in need, particularly during extreme cold or power outages.
- Maintain roads and sidewalks by salting or plowing to reduce the risk of accidents.
- Coordinate with utilities to restore power promptly during outages.

Additionally, neighbors can look out for each other by checking in on elderly or vulnerable residents and sharing resources when necessary. Winter safety preparedness is not a luxury but a necessity that protects lives and minimizes risks during the cold season. Proper planning and proactive measures can help individuals avoid potentially dangerous situations and cope with the challenges of winter weather. From assembling emergency kits and winterizing vehicles to preparing homes and dressing warmly, every step taken toward winter safety contributes to overall well-being. Being informed, staying prepared, and having a plan in place ensures that when winter weather strikes, one is ready to face it safely.

Winter can be unpredictable and harsh, but with the right preparations, it is possible to enjoy the season's beauty while staying safe and secure. Whether for yourself, your family, or your community, taking winter safety seriously is an investment in health, comfort, and peace of mind. "If you stay ready, you ain't got to get ready." Stay ready Sisters and Brothers.

Find out all we have to offer



APW ABA

Contact us today!

Call 1-800-526-2890 or visit our website apw-aba.org

Southern Region Director B

Larry Sorrells

Some Things To Think About

OUR DEMOCRACY

When the Constitution of the USA was written, its content was novel and new democracies, such as ours, had been tried but never accomplished. The monarchs had also squashed these efforts. Many people nowadays spout rhetoric about, “the founding fathers intended this” or “they never intended this.” How could anyone today know what was intended or not? I think the writers of this document had good intentions and that they did a great job. As with anything new, it had to be worked on, amended, and perfected. This has happened over the years with amendments and laws. One must remember that these men (women had little or no input) were slave holders, and probably wealthy. While it was accepted at the time, there is no way slavery was right. It was all about free labor and complete control over the

slaves. Having said this, I fully believe in our democracy and always want it to be ours. No one back in the late 1700’s could ever believe how things are today. Trains, motorized ships and boats, airplanes, cars, electricity and all the tools and machinery we have now, were non-existent. Labor was mostly manual or animal driven. Guns could only fire at most one round per minute. No asphalt or cement pavement. There were very few merchants or places to buy food. Food was grown by you, gathered or hunted. There was no refrigeration. Food was smoked, dried, salted, etc. to preserve it. There were very few doctors and dentists around. The population was miniscule compared to today. We need to keep and protect our democracy.

HISTORY OF VOTING
1788 – Only white males owning

property could vote. This changed sometime after 1800.
1870 – Black men were granted voting rights
1920 – Women were granted voting rights
1924 – Native Americans were granted voting rights
Surprised? Be vigilant. There are people today who are trying to make it harder to vote.

INFO ON HURRICANE HELENE
I live in western NC. This area was hit very, very hard by Helene. Thanks to all who have asked and prayed for me and my family. We are ok, but have no water, power, internet, or cable. Many are not as fortunate. Complete communities were washed away, loved ones lost, properties lost, etc. People are cut off in many areas due to roads and bridges

being destroyed. In some areas there is a stench of human bodies present. The good news is that government at all levels, churches, charities and volunteers, have responded. Unions have stepped up with volunteers, supplies, water, food and donations. The APWU is one of those. Postal workers, police, firefighters, military, EMS, hospitals, businesses and many others are heroes!! Conspiracy theorists are out there condemning FEMA. Don’t listen to this. FEMA is doing a stellar job. I have seen them counseling, advising, and consoling the poor souls that need it. Shame on the people spreading this BS! We are all in this together. Love your neighbor as you would love yourself. We are our brother’s keeper. Think of the least of those among us. God bless America and may he bless and protect you and your families.

Western Region Director B

Scott Parkin

Investigating The History Of The ABA

I have always had a curious personality and often find myself inquiring into the history of things. I have begun exploring a rabbit hole of postal history that started with the ABA. As I started researching into the history of the ABA and from the information that I have been able to gather so far, I have found that the ABA was organized by Railway Post Office (RPO) Clerks in 1891 and officially was organized in the State of New Hampshire on December 12th, 1898, as the National Association of Railway Postal Clerks. These RPO Clerks were amazing people that faced an incredible amount of danger sorting the mail on railcars running from town to town. From 1864 to 1977, these RPO Clerks traveled America’s

rail system aboard rickety train cars facing unpredictable weather conditions, wrecks, fires, and robberies while touting their motto “the mail must go through”. The number of injuries and casualties of RPO Clerks between 1890 and 1905 was astounding. One hundred and forty-three RPO Clerks lost their lives in that 15-year span. These wooden postal rail cars had no cooling whatsoever and were supposed to be heated with steam pipes, which rarely worked according to RPO testimonies, exposing the clerks to extreme cold and hot temperatures. Some RPO clerks recounted fingers and toes being lost to frostbite. Train wrecks were also a common place event. Between 1890 and 1905 there were 7,492 accidents

involving trains with postal cars, over one accident a day on average. Since these cars were directly behind the locomotive, they often suffered the brunt of the impact. These postal rail cars were often constructed cheaply and made of wood as well as being lit by oil lamps and heated by wood burning stoves. During an accident or sudden stop, these lamps and stoves would be tossed around into basically a tinder box of kindling. Even if a spark from the engine flew back toward the mail car it could be enough to ignite the paper dust from the mail or the old, oiled wood of the train car. Mail cars also carried registered mail, and in those days registered mail contained plenty of heavy loads of gold and silver. After the Rio Grande mail robbers were sent before a U.S. Circuit Court in 1892, railway mail robberies became sensationalized. Robberies became so romanticized by some that RPO Clerks had to be armed with .38 caliber handguns. These rail cars often went through cities without stopping, they would roll on through merely slowing the train down. The mail still had to be delivered to that city as well as collected from the city. The RPO Clerks would have the mail destined to the city bagged up to toss from the train, but for them to be able to collect the mail, the bags of mail they were picking up would be hung from a pole and the RPO Clerk would have to reach out of the train to grab the bag off of the hook or use a hooked pole to snatch the bag. This was the cause of the majority of RPO Clerk injuries, resulting in mangled and missing fingers, hands, and arms while sometimes even pulling the Clerk from the train resulting in injuries all over their bodies.

This is why RPO Clerks were so hard to insure. These RPO clerks,

because of the dangerous nature of their jobs, were having difficulty finding any insurance companies willing to insure them, so they did what they needed to and started their own insurance company. That company is still in business and has been known as the American Postal Workers - Accident Benefit Association since September 5, 1972. The APW-ABA has been in business for one hundred and thirty-three years this year, insuring the members against accidental injuries and fatalities. The APW-ABA is overseen by the President and ten regional board members, along with the National Director, all of whom must be APWU members in good standing. The ABA is also supported by an amazing office staff who belong to the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU). I am proud to work alongside these amazing people to ensure that our members are taken care of in the unfortunate event of an accident. The money that is collected from the members is used to directly pay out to the claimants during their time of need. It is money that is not just reserved for medical bills or insurance payments but can be used by the claimant for whatever use they see fit. The cost is low and I’m happy to know that my small contribution goes to help those when they need it.

If you’re interested in the Railway Post Office and the brave souls that worked the mail while riding the rails, you can find out more about them at the National Postal Museum at the Smithsonian. There is an abundance of information that can be found online at the Smithsonian at the following web address: <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/virtual/railway-mail-service.html> including oral histories given by former RPO Clerks.



Mayor Daniella Levine Cava of Dade County, Florida stops by our table at the Florida State APWU Educational Conference in Miami to ask about our affiliation with the APWU.