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Vol. 46, No. 2

April, 2019

*President's Report*

**Working To Make Retirement A Reality**



by Joe Cuccinotto, President  
 jc@phoenixapwu.org

Thank you for the confidence and continued support as your Local President for a second term 2019-2022. Congratulations to Phoenix Metro Area Local's Executive Board who were either elected or white balloted: Executive Vice-President Joseph Zamenick Jr., Secretary-Treasurer Sarah Rodriguez, Director of Industrial Relations Rick Bloomquist (White Ballot), Rep-at-Large Monica Chavez, MVS Craft Director Collin Bews (White Ballot), Maintenance Craft Director James Agnew and Clerk Craft Director Johnny Abril. Thank you to Manny Chagolla (MNT Craft) and Terrie Davis (Rep-at-Large) for their time on the Executive Board. I would also like to wish a Happy Retirement to our Local Business Agent Gary Hufstetler. Gary had previously retired from the USPS during his term as Local Business Agent and is now officially retired as he has completed his term and has retired from the APWU. Thank you for all the years of Union Activism and friendship, you will be missed.

Local Business Agent had been responsible for representing the Associate Offices. In order to maintain fiscal responsibility, PMAL Members voted to change the Local Constitution and eliminate a full-time position effective this term. In order to continue to provide the necessary representation to our A.O. Members, the Executive Vice-

President and Secretary Treasurer have taken on added responsibilities by splitting the East Side and West Side A.O.'s. We are always looking for additional Stewards to better assist with Representation. If you are interested or know of one of your co-workers who would make a good Steward please contact: The Union Hall 602-437-8173.

**FEFA Retirement Strategy Workshop, You Must Sign Up In Advance:**

Retirement is a major life decision that we all are working to make a reality. It is never too early to realize the benefits that APWU has negotiated for its Members. It's never too early to learn about how much your sick leave is worth when you retire. Are you better off using the sick leave or banking the sick leave before you retire? How much annual leave can one carry over into retirement? It's never too early to learn about maximizing your Thrift Savings Plan Benefits. Visit [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) for everything related to your TSP. Several changes are coming to your TSP options in the fall of 2019. Learn what the Special Supplement for FERS

employees is, how many years and at what age are you eligible to get this Supplement? CSRS employees are also welcomed to attend. PMAL 0093 is inviting all Members to attend one of four Retirement Workshops that will be held at the Union Hall on Sunday July 28th 10:00am-12:00pm and 4:00pm-6:00pm. Tuesday July 30th 10:00am-12:00pm and 6:30-8:30pm. These workshops are free to all of our Members. Why pay \$150 to have someone assist you with filling out The Blue Book retirement paperwork when your Union provides the service at no cost to our Members. Again, it is necessary to sign up in advance. Detailed information is available at [www.phoenixapwu.org](http://www.phoenixapwu.org)

**Postal Support Employees:**

Sarah Rodriguez and I welcomed 13 PSE's into PMAL 0093 during March and April Career Conversion One Class. PMAL 0093 had 7 Conversions in Phoenix, 2 in Mesa, 2 in Scottsdale and 2 in Chandler. Chandler PSE's had been working four years prior to this Career Conversion. PSE's just don't get converted because USPS wants you to better your life and make you career. These

conversions are the result of the Union creating bid jobs, fighting bid job reversions, creating an MOU at National Level to make these career conversions a reality. Union Yes!

**APWU News Bulletin USPS And APWU Exchange Final Economic Proposals:**

USPS and APWU exchanged final economic proposals as both parties continue to prepare for Interest Arbitration. APWU's proposals include: Annual pay raises, PSE pay increases, COLA increases twice a year, adding more steps to the lower career pay scale, reduction of non-career workforce while increasing career workforce, PSE conversions after a set amount of time, increased employer contributions to FEHB premiums. USPS wants a freeze in pay, lump sum payments in lieu of contractual increases as well as COLA's which in effect would freeze your high three for retirement purposes, cut pay and benefits for all employees, cut pay rates of converted PSE's, change no lay-off clause for career employees from 6 years to 15 years, no lay-off clause eliminated for all future workers, de-

*continued on page 2*

**2019-2022 New Officers Being Sworn In**



APACHE JUNCTION \* CHANDLER \* GILBERT \* GLENDALE \* MESA \* PEORIA \* PHOENIX  
 SCOTTSDALE \* SUN CITY/SURPRISE \* TEMPE \* WICKENBURG \* AVONDALE/GOODYEAR \* QUEEN CREEK

# HEATWAVE

HEATWAVE is the official publication of:  
 American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO  
 Phoenix Metro Area Local  
 3741 E. Atlanta Ave.  
 Phoenix, Arizona 85040  
 (602) 437-8173

and is published up to 12 times per year.  
 Web Site: [www.phoenixapwu.org](http://www.phoenixapwu.org)

## PHOENIX METRO AREA LOCAL APWU OFFICERS

Joe Cuccinotto ..... General President  
[jc@phoenixapwu.org](mailto:jc@phoenixapwu.org)

Joseph Zamenick ..... Exec. Vice President  
[jz@phoenixapwu.org](mailto:jz@phoenixapwu.org)

Sarah Rodriguez ..... Secretary-Treasurer  
[sr@phoenixapwu.org](mailto:sr@phoenixapwu.org)

Rick Bloomquist ..... Director of Industrial Relations  
[rick.bloomquist.apwu@gmail.com](mailto:rick.bloomquist.apwu@gmail.com)

Monica Chavez ..... Rep-at-Large  
[monicachavez.apwu@gmail.com](mailto:monicachavez.apwu@gmail.com)

## CRAFT DIRECTORS

Johnny Abril ..... Clerk  
[johnnyabril@yahoo.com](mailto:johnnyabril@yahoo.com)

James Agnew ..... Maintenance  
[James\\_E\\_Agnew@yahoo.com](mailto:James_E_Agnew@yahoo.com)

Collin Bews ..... Motor Vehicle Service  
[cb@phoenixapwu.org](mailto:cb@phoenixapwu.org)

## STEWARDS COUNCIL

Davyd Collie ..... Chairperson

Marc Pacheco ..... Chairperson

## APPOINTEES

Vacant ..... Retirees Director

Roy Braunstein ..... Legislative Director  
[Marilynroyb@aol.com](mailto:Marilynroyb@aol.com)

Terrie M. Davis ..... Human Relations Director  
[hrdirector@phoenixapwu.org](mailto:hrdirector@phoenixapwu.org)

Gabrielle LaDue ..... Health Plan Director  
[gladue.apwuphx@gmail.com](mailto:gladue.apwuphx@gmail.com)

Greta Garrett ..... Communications & Media

Terry Mattioli ..... Sergeant-at-Arms

Freeman Stuart ..... Sergeant-at-Arms

VACANT ..... Heatwave Intern

This publication is for the express purpose of educating and informing members of Phoenix Metro Local APWU.

Any member in good standing is permitted to submit articles for publication. Articles are included on a space available basis. Submissions must include your name, signature and address or pay location for verification.

The Local reserves the right to edit all submissions. Material containing slander or libel will not be accepted. Copyrighted material must be accompanied by permission to reprint by the publisher.

The deadline for all articles is the 15th of the month.

Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of Phoenix Metro Area Local, its officers or the editor. All articles should be submitted to:

[heatwave@phoenixapwu.org](mailto:heatwave@phoenixapwu.org) or  
 HEATWAVE

3741 E. Atlanta Ave.  
 Phoenix, AZ 85040



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## Vice President's Report

# Thank You Gary



by Joseph Zamenick, Vice President  
[jz@phoenixapwu.org](mailto:jz@phoenixapwu.org)

I would like to dedicate this article to my good friend and brother Gary Hufstetler.

was going to achieve completing his work for the day when every call was treated as the only thing that mattered? For this, the stewards and membership say thank you Gary.

Gary always has a keen sense for when things are bothering you or causing you to question your abilities and would readily provide mentoring and encouragement to get you through the tough times. He had a knack for knowing when to stroll into your office, with either a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or a pudding cup in hand, and cause a conversation which led to my feeling better, feeling encouraged about what was ahead. He would then leave the office, spoon and pudding cup in hand, and continue to work into the night

that I couldn't do this job without you?" Ironically, now we will have to find a way to do our jobs without him. No great team loses its most valuable player without taking a serious hit. It will be our job to minimize the hit we'll take and learn to operate with less staff, and in Gary's honor we will succeed.

Gary, I look up to you like an older brother. The good kind of older brother, not the kind that tries steal all of your stuff and ruin your life. I wish you great health and happiness during all of your well deserved retirement years. I will miss your presence in the office and your camaraderie in this fight. You truly are like a brother to me, and for that I say... Thank you Gary!!!

*"No great team loses its most valuable player without taking a serious hit. It will be our job to minimize the hit we'll take and learn to operate with less staff, and in Gary's honor we will succeed."*

During the past three years I've had the pleasure and the privilege to work with one of the most steadfast and ardent unionist I've ever met and I suspect that measure will never be exceeded. I could not have hoped for a better partner and teacher to work with during my first term as Vice President. The amount of work piled on his desk was never of any matter when it came to maintaining an open door for discussion or an open mind for debate. And debate we did.

The debates began long before this, now complete, 3 year term. They may have even gone back 10 years. While he was the Chief Steward on Tour 3 at the GMF and I, the Chief Steward on Tour 3 at the WV, we regularly found time to connect, ask questions, and debate contract language and/or Local policies. These conversations led to many positive grievance settlements, policing strategies, as well as ideas for the foundational sculpting of the future of this Local. It was these conversations and debates which led me to a better understanding of many contract issues and for that I say, thank you Gary.

Gary, to this day, has always been immediately available for all of our stewards and members. It did not matter when or why someone called. Gary always allotted each person's questions or concerns with thoughtfulness and ample time. His attention to detail when addressing the concerns of our stewards and our members was always something to behold. I often wondered how he

on his own priorities. He was almost always the last to lock up and leave work for home. For this we say thank you Gary.

Often, as we walked to our cars to head home, Gary would often shout out to me, "Hey JZ, have I told you

Please, as always, remember to stand persistently and professionally in the face of Supervisors, Managers or Postmasters who feel the need to dismiss your negotiated benefits. Feel free to contact me with questions or concerns at [jz@phoenixapwu.org](mailto:jz@phoenixapwu.org)

## Working To Make Retirement A Reality

*continued from page 1*

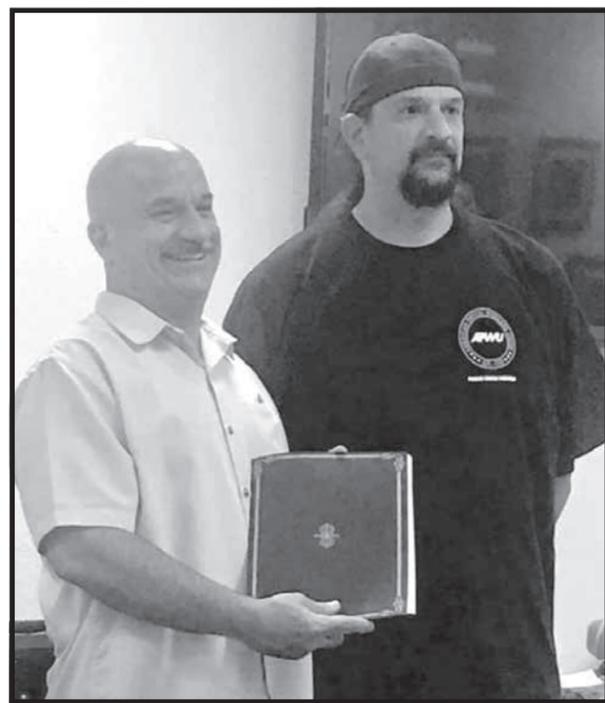
creases in career workforce, increase PSE to 25% in the Clerk Craft, increase PSE's in MVS Craft and reintroduce PSE's in the Maintenance Craft. Per

APWU President Mark Dimondstein, "There are clearly two sides in this fight and the battle lines have been drawn in our efforts to obtain a contract that honors and respects postal workers." To better follow the Contract Negotiation visit: [apwu.org](http://apwu.org)

National Elections are quickly approaching as petitions are due June 15th. Once it has been determined as to who is running for which positions, PMAL 0093 Executive Board will do our due diligence and make endorsements for who we think would better represent the needs of Phoenix Metro for the

next three years.

Follow our Phoenix Metro facebook page and our Local website [phoenixapwu.org](http://phoenixapwu.org) for Election Information.



PMAL President Joe Cuccinotto on his Postal retirement! Certificate presented by Executive Vice President Joe Zamenick

## Local Business Agent Update

# What A Journey



by Gary Hufstetler,  
Local Business Agent  
gh@phoenixapwu.org

This article will be my last one as an Officer of the Phoenix Metro Area Local because I will be retiring at the end of my term on April 16, 2019. My career as a Union official has been quite a journey and I wanted to express some of my feelings about that part of my life. First off, I want to thank all of you for your support and assistance over these many years. Serving the members of this great Union has been one of the highest honors of my life and I will be forever grateful that you granted me that opportunity.

My journey actually began in Utah and after spending too many cold winters there, I was able to come to Phoenix for the last half of my career; and that was the best career decision that I ever made. It took some doing but eventually, I was able to convince the Local leaders that I really wanted to serve as a representative and they then welcomed me with open arms. This first part of my journey took place at the Rio Salado facility, or as we called it, "Club Rio", and it was there that I was introduced to Joe Cuccinotto and JoAnn Gerhart. Joe went on to become the President of our Local and JoAnn went on to become a National Business Agent for the Clerk Craft. I learned so much from each of these gifted Union leaders, and I want them to know how much I appreciate everything they did for me. It has been a great privilege to know them and to serve under their leadership. Also during this time period, I met Renee Breeden who was the Local President at the time. Over the years, Renee was very instrumental in guiding and mentoring me as a Steward. I want her to know how grateful I am and how much I respect her commitment to the Union cause. While at Rio, I also came to know Sarah Rodriguez who later became the Secretary-Treasurer of the Local. I was her Steward when she was first hired, and several years later she and

I were partners on a DBCS machine. Today she and I work together at the Union Hall and I still refer to her as, "Partner". I am grateful for the relationship we have and I also want to thank her for all the help and support over the years.

As Union members we refer to each other as "Sisters" and "Brothers". We do this in recognition that we are united by a common purpose and a commitment to take care of one another much like a family does. On my Union journey, I was very fortunate to be able to serve with great Stewards who epitomize that commitment to our common purpose and I want to mention a few of them by name. At Rio, I was lucky to be able to work with two extremely talented Stewards, LaMont Green and Michelle Pitre and over the years, we became very close. I will always be grateful to them for their friendship and support, and I will always consider them family. On Tour 3 at the Phoenix GMF, I had the great good fortune to be part of an amazing group of Stewards whose teamwork

redefined for me what it was to be a Union Steward. In particular I want to especially thank Monica Chavez and Davyd Collie for sharing their talents, their insights, and their passion for our common mission. They both have the unique ability to educate and motivate those around them in ways which make them better. Being a part of that team made me better at what I do, and the experiences we shared bonded us together forever. I love them both and they will always be family to me.

For the last three years, I was honored to serve as the Local Business Agent with responsibilities for the Associate Offices. This was the most difficult Union position that I have ever held and it challenged my abilities on several levels. During that time, there is one person in particular who deserves special recognition and thanks for the help and assistance that he gave to me. That person is Executive Vice-President Joseph Zamenick and I want him to know how truly grateful I am for all his support and assistance. For me, he was a true partner and without him, I

would have struggled in this position. From our first day in office through my last, Joe reinvented how we conduct business in the A.O.'s and taught me new and better ways of doing things. On a day to day basis, Joe was always willing to help when needed, and I relied on his talent, intelligence, and wisdom more times than I can count. I will miss working with him and he will always be a "Brother" to me.

I also want to give special thanks to every one of the Stewards in Phoenix and the Associate Offices that I have been privileged to work with over the years. I have great respect for all your hard work and your ongoing commitment to our common cause. Your support meant the world to me and I hope that I served you in ways that made you proud. My journey as a Union representative has now come to an end and I can truly say that it has been one hell of a ride. The American Postal Workers Union will always occupy a special place in my heart and it was truly an honor to serve.

## Mail Processing Clerks At The GMF

Over the past couple of months, the number of clerks being improperly or under staffed on the DBCS, has been growing. We have on average, 20 people for Tours 1 and 3, working alone. Did you know you can and SHOULD be filing grievances for these infractions? We have many people who think they are not allowed to. Many people who think they can be disciplined for filing a grievance. Both of these things are false. If you have had more than 90 days employment, you are eligible to file for improper staffing. Currently, we are asking for an escalated remedy of a full 100% of your pay. If you are working alone on a DBCS, you need to ask your supervisor for a steward on the following day. Or on your next work day. It takes just a few minutes to file a grievance. The reason for filing a grievance not only makes the employee whole, but it also shows that we do not have enough staffing for the operation. It also shows the need for PSE conversions. Employees on the OTDL have been working 6 and 7 days a week, and 60 hours. They are mandating NON OTDL nearly every single day. That alone would show we don't have the correct amount of employees needed. Obviously, management is not seeing it that way. So we are taking a different course of action. Don't be afraid to file a grievance. That is one of the

things your stewards are here for. File, file, file! Even if you are not sure if you

have a grievance. Talk to your steward and find out!



Marc Pacheco and Davyd Collie will serve as Co-Chairperson for the Stewards Council. Each one brings years of union experience to the training table.

### Clerk Craft Report

# Thank You!!!



by Johnny Abril,  
Clerk Craft Director  
johnnyabril@yahoo.com

From the bottom of my heart, I want thank all of our members who supported me in my successful re-election for Clerk Craft Director for our Phoenix Metro Area Local. I

campaigned hard and fair throughout the election process. It was definitely a tough election. It requires a great amount of fortitude to run for an office and I respect all the candidates who did.

During my visits to our facilities, I spoke with members that I had not seen for a bit and I also met new members. It was heartwarming to reminisce and discuss old issues with old friends and of course discuss new issues with new friends. Most importantly I received input from our membership on how to improve our Union moving forward.

I would like to thank Terrie Davis and Manny Chagolla for all of their hard work the past three years and look forward to working with incoming officers Monica Chavez and James Agnew in our next term of office.

#### GMF – Re-post And Start time Changes

In early March, President Cuccinotto and I attended staffing meetings at the plant that will primarily affect Tour 1 and Tour 3 automation crews. Management had staffing changes that included the reposting of bid jobs and changing of start times and also temporary assignments (out of schedule pay). The employees had many questions on these changes and we tried to address them as best we could. I would like to clarify that we do not get these changes in advance and we definitely do not condone the upheaval of our membership. We are there to make sure the process is correctly done and also to field questions.

#### Step 3 Settlements

We continue to receive very favor-

able Step 3 Settlements which have included monetary compensation and most importantly bid jobs wins. As some of you know management has paid out a whopping amount of compensation. I feel the bid job reversion Step 3 Settlements are even more substantial. The reversion cases provide the catalyst for PSE conversions and also provide compensation to the eventual successful bidders – in the form of out of schedule pay.

Our local has a relentless steward force that continues to file grievances that eventually lead to these Step 3 decisions. I would like to personally thank our Stewards Force for a job well done!

You can contact me at the Union Hall (602-437-8173) by cell phone (602-359-4179) or email johnnyabril@yahoo.com .

Yours in Union solidarity.

### Maintenance Craft Report

# The Fight Continues



by James Agnew, ET West Valley & Maintenance Craft Director  
James E Agnew@yahoo.com

Hello brothers and sisters. My name is James Agnew and I have the distinction of being your newly elected Maintenance Craft Director. Thank you to all whom voted, especially those who voted for me.

I'd like to start this open letter by thanking Manny Chagolla and all of his stewards who have done a great job over the previous 3 years. I look forward to working closely with all stewards who have stayed on or recently joined the team to work together to enact positive changes.

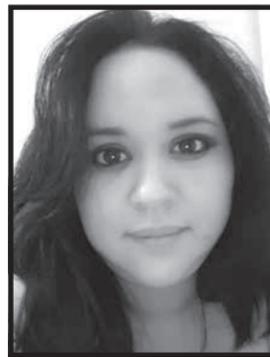
The continuing fight to achieve

and maintain a fair and safe working environment is dependant on the skill and dedication provided by invaluable stewards. If anyone else is interested in becoming a steward please get into contact with either myself or any officers or current stewards. We especially need

help at the GMF where there is only one maintenance person as a steward. Representation is important!

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me via email: James\_E\_Agnew@yahoo.com or call/text me at (253) 861-1816. Yours in solidarity.

## Thank You For Protecting Our Rights



by Monica Chavez, Tour 3 Chief Steward Phoenix P&DC Representative At Large  
monicachavez.apwu@gmail.com

I am truly grateful to everyone that supported and encouraged me through our local election. I am very excited to take this next step and be your Representative at Large. I would like to acknowledge and thank every candidate that made the decision to run for office. Thank you for your service to our Local and our members. Thank you for protecting our rights and for wanting to do more. I hope every election turns out more Members wishing to serve Our Local and more Members wanting to participate in voting. If you have any concerns that you would like me to address, please contact me.

# It's Official I'm Retired

Patty Adams - West Valley 3/1/2019 - 3yrs

Linda Iman - GMF 3/29/2019 - 21yrs

Union Steward Charlotte Hannah - SO Mountain Station 3/31/2019 - 32yrs

Holly Kennard - Mesa Dobson station 2/28/2019 - 15yrs

Wayne Rowe - West Valley 2/28/2019 - 33yrs

Jesse Ward - GMF 1/2019 - 30yrs

Maria Abril - CFS 8/2018 - 38yrs

## Together We Are The Union And That Includes YOU!



# Presidential Day Of Mourning

In the USPS ELM, when a sitting or former President of the United States dies, we are granted a Day of Mourning. With the passing of former President George H.W. Bush, most clerks of stations, carriers, and MVS drivers, were granted their leave on the National Day of Mourning, which was held on December 5th, 2018.

**519.4 National Day of Observance**  
**519.41 General**

In the event that the postmaster general or designee determines that the Postal Service will participate in a national day of observance (for example, National Day of Mourning) subsequent to the declaration of a national day of observance by Executive Order of the President of the United States,



administrative leave is granted to employees.

If you are one of the many employees who have yet to take their Day of Mourning, please be advised of your time limit to do so. Since the fiscal year is later than the 6 month period, you have until

September 2019 to use your day. Please be advised, when the fiscal year comes and goes and you have yet to use your day, you lose it. Please don't wait to put in your leave for your day.

**519.43 Leave Taken at a Future Date**

Administrative leave to be taken at a future date: 1. Must be granted and used within 6 months of the national day of observance or by the end of the fiscal year, whichever is later.

It works just like an Annual Day. So when filling out your 3971, you must turn it in no less than 7 days prior to the day you want to take. If you are unsure if you are eligible to receive the Day of Mourning, please speak with your Union Steward.

## Industrial Relations Report

# — Local Elections —



by Rick Bloomquist,  
Director of Industrial Relations

Local elections have been completed and I will be your Director of Industrial Relations, again, for the next 3 years. I will do my best to continue, and improve upon, the education of our current and future Stewards. Thank you to my wife and the West Valley Stewards Force, whom I work with on a daily basis, for their constant support and invaluable input. I would like to say thank you to our outgoing officers Terrie Davis and Manny Chagolla, for all the hard work. Congratulations to Joe Cuccinotto, Joe Zamenick, Johnny Abril and Collin Bews on being re-elected and congratulations to our new incoming officers, Monica Chavez and James Agnew.

**Director of Industrial Relations News:** On a personal note, I would like to extend a heartfelt show of appreciation to Phoenix Metro Area Local's last, and best, Business Agent, Gary Hufstetler. Gary retired from the Postal Service a few years back and is now officially retiring from Phoenix Metro. Thank you for your years of service to the APWU and specifically, for the knowledge, the incite and the mentoring you have provided to

so many of us. You will be missed. I hope you have a long, happy and healthy retirement.

We've just had 7 members complete this quarter's New Steward's Training. I'd like to welcome them aboard and extend a huge "Thank You" to them all for stepping up and joining the fight.

The next New Steward's Training is scheduled for Wednesday, July

24th and Thursday, July 25th. If you wish to become a Steward contact your Chief Steward, the Union Hall (602-437-8173) or myself ([rick.bloomquist.apwu@gmail.com](mailto:rick.bloomquist.apwu@gmail.com)), and the appropriate Union official will reach out to you. Once approved to attend, I will email those eligible to attend with all the pertinent details approximately one month in advance of the class.

Additionally, all Stewards who attended the last New Steward's Training Class are eligible to attend the Steward's 2.0 Follow Up Training Class, held three months after completing the New Steward's Training Class. The next Steward's 2.0 Follow-Up Training Class is scheduled for Friday, July 26th. I will email all those who are eligible to attend *continued on page 6*

# APWU Auxiliary



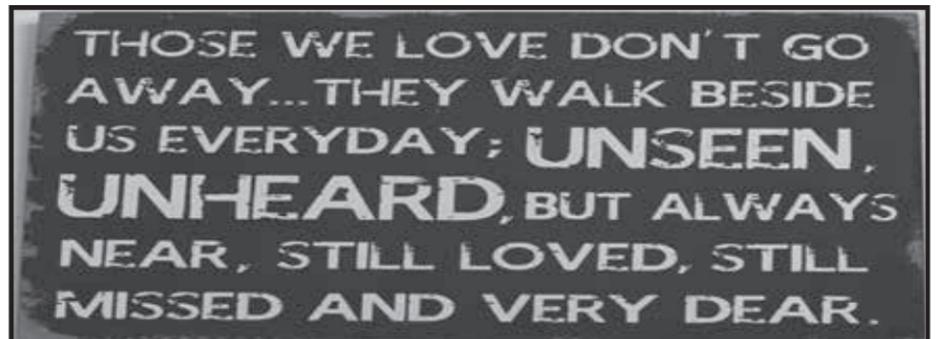
by Terrie M. Davis,  
Chief Steward/Rio Salado T2

The APWU Auxiliary is asking for our help. Several times during the year, the auxiliary takes on a Human Relations Project. The current project that they are participating in is helping the Fisher House. The Fisher House is a organization that assists military families (like how the Ronald McDonald House helps families of sick children) when a loved one needs ongoing medical attention. The Fisher House allows the family stays at the facility to be close to the family member. The APWU Auxiliary is requesting donations for the new

facility in New Mexico that has been in the making for the past 10 years. It has finally opened its doors to a new 16 bedroom facility to house military families going through a crisis. The auxiliary is requesting that when we go on our next trip(s) that we donate the shampoo, conditioner and lotions etc. that is left available at the hotels. The facility is also in need of hygiene items, clothing, shoes, toothpaste etc and gift cards to various grocery

stores (Costco, Sams club) these are just examples so they can buy in bulk. If you purchase Suave products, Suave will donate \$1.00 to the Fisher House for each item purchased. The donated items will be collected at the Denver Regional Conference in Casper Wyoming on June 20-23.

For additional information you can go to [apwuauxiliary.org](http://apwuauxiliary.org) or contact me at [hrdirector@phoenixapwu.org](mailto:hrdirector@phoenixapwu.org)



Mike (West Valley) and Sheryl Janousek (GMF)  
lost their Dad (Father-in-law)

Tractor Trailer Operator from the GMF Lancelot Williams  
passed on 3/29/2019

Christine (Chris) Trevino from the Rio Salado station lost her brother

# Hatch Act

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Their basic authorities come from four federal statutes: the Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

The Hatch Act is a federal law passed in 1939. It prohibits federal employees, including postal workers, from engaging in political activity while on duty or in a federal room or building. For purposes of the Hatch Act, political activity is defined as activity directed at the success or failure of a political party, partisan political group, or candidate for partisan office. This prohibition is broad and encompasses more than displays or communications, including in-person and via email or social media that expressly advocate for or against President Trump's reelection. For example, while on duty or in the workplace, employees may not: wear, display, or distribute items with the slogan "Make America Great Again" or any other materials from President Trump's 2016 or 2020 campaigns; use hashtags such as #MAGA or #ResistTrump in social media posts or other forums; or display non-official pictures of President Trump.

Some of the things you MAY NOT do are:

- May Not engage in political activity;
- May Not wear or display partisan political buttons, t-shirts, signs, or other items;
- May Not make political contributions to a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group;
- May Not post a comment to a blog or social media site that advocates for or against a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.

Some of the things you MAY do are:

- May be a candidate in a nonpartisan election;
- May register and vote as they choose;
- May assist in voter registration drives;
- May contribute money to political campaigns, political parties, or partisan political groups.

Any employee who violates the Hatch Act is subject to a range of disciplinary actions, including removal from federal service, reduction in grade, debarment from federal service for a period not to exceed 5 years, suspension, letter of reprimand, or a civil penalty not to exceed \$1000.

In October of 2016, there were 2



postal employees both from the office in Ashtabula, Ohio, who were suspended for violating the Hatch Act. The first employee violated the Hatch Act's prohibition against engaging in political activity while on duty and in the federal workplace when he brought campaign signs promoting a presidential candidate into the post office. He had obtained them from his union to distribute to other union members, but was advised not to distribute the signs at work. Nonetheless, he announced during a morning staff meeting that the union had endorsed the candi-

date, and he had signs in his workspace for anyone who was interested. In a settlement agreement, he agreed to serve a 30-day suspension for his violation. The next morning, post office employees received a briefing on the Hatch Act. The second employee, who supported a different presidential candidate, then filmed himself inside of his postal vehicle and posted the video to Facebook. In it, he identified himself as a postal employee, criticized the presidential candidate whom the union had endorsed, and praised the candidate he supported. He

concluded by stating, "I don't care about this Hatch law. If I lose my job, so be it. But I want my country back." OSC also discovered that the second employee had posted several other messages that either supported or opposed a presidential candidate while he was on duty or in his postal vehicle. The settlement agreement provides that he will serve a 60-day suspension for his knowing and willful Hatch Act violations.

It would be best to leave ALL of your political gear at home and not wear it inside the workplace. Not only would it be a violation of the Hatch Act to promote your political candidate who is or will be running for a partisan office, it would also prevent creating a hostile work environment. Not everyone has the same views as you on political candidates. If you have any questions on the Hatch Act, please contact your Union Steward or visit [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov).

<sup>1</sup>39 U.S. Code § 410

<sup>2</sup>For further guidance, please see OSC's Latest Guidance Regarding Pictures of President Obama in the Federal Workplace Now That He Is Officially a Candidate for Reelection

## Local Elections

*continued from page 5*

proximately one month in advance.

**Phoenix Metro Steward's Team Building Seminar:** Phoenix Metro has scheduled a Steward's Team Building Seminar for Wednesday, May 15th. We will initially be volunteering our services at St. Mary's Food Bank, then following up at the Union Hall for training and finishing up with the May General Meeting. Emails have been sent to all Phoenix Metro Area Local Stewards. I hope to see you all their!

**Local Dispute Resolution Committee:** The parties continue to meet on a monthly basis in accordance with the most recent National RI-399 MOU. The parties have signed new inventories for the GMF, Rio Salado and the West Valley. Despite the inventories being agreed upon and signed, the Mail Handlers have their own interpretation of the meanings of the signed language. Phoenix Metro is working diligently with the Mail Handlers and Management to clarify any interpretational issues. Rest assured, Phoenix Metro has no intentions of "giving up" any work that is currently being done by the Clerk Craft.

I've been told by our Regional

Dispute Resolution Committee Representative that the case regarding the dispute for jurisdiction on the USS machine at the West Valley is being readied for arbitration. I believe we have made some compelling argument that the jurisdiction should have been given to the Clerk Craft. Time will tell.

**News from the West Valley:** Despite this being one of the lower mail volume times of the year, the West Valley is still working an excessive amount of overtime. Thankfully, we have only had a couple of instances where non-OTDL mandates have taken place. Thus, those who want the overtime are getting it, and those who do not aren't.

West Valley management has been directed to take the F-1 scheduler for a spin again. You may remember what an overwhelming success (sarcasm intended) the F-1 scheduler was the last time it was implemented. There were abolishments, reversions, out-of-schedule pay, hours changed, days off changed, etc. Despite the amount of overtime currently being worked, and the amount of PSE work hours currently being used, area level Postal management is saying the West Valley, once again, is overstaffed. Management's bright

idea of "Earned" work hours versus the actual work hours we use to move the mail. The Union was successful the last time in getting jobs reposted and hours/SDO's redone, but there was a lot of turmoil until that was accomplished. We can only hope management does a better job this time around. I'm not holding my breath.

**Our Goal:** The goal of our Union is not simply to file grievances. Our goal, as I see it, is to enforce the provisions of the contract by filing grievances when management violates our contract, in an effort to educate them, so they do not violate our contract in the future. This may seem like a pipe dream to some. This may seem like a futile endeavor to many. I still hold out hope, that by educating our Stewards Force and our members, in an attempt for them to educate management, we may one day have a workroom floor with minimal, if any, violations.

"United we stand, divided we fall."

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**RETIREMENT STRATEGY WORKSHOP**

**WELCOME ALL POSTAL CRAFT UNION MEMBERS**

**SUN, JULY 28TH**

**10:00AM - 12:00PM**  
**4:00PM - 6:00PM**

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**3741 E ATLANTA AVE**  
**PHOENIX, AZ 85040**

**TUES, JULY 30TH**

**10:00AM - 12:00PM**  
**6:30PM - 8:30PM**

**PHOENIX METRO AREA LOCAL**  
**3741 E ATLANTA AVE**  
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*Legislatively Speaking*

# Postal Employees And Retirees See Threats To Pay And Benefits In White House Budget



by Roy Braunstein,  
Legislative Director,  
via APWU Web News

The White House released its plans for the fiscal year 2020 budget this month. It once again attacks workers, calling for deep cuts in salaries, retirement and health benefits. It also echoes parts of the Postal Task Force December, 2018 report that calls for the elimination of union negotiated collective bargaining rights over pay,

creating a postal employee pay system similar to what is seen in the federal workforce.

Further mirroring the Postal Task Force report, the budget calls for the privatization of the Postal Service in part, including outsourcing processing and sortation to private companies, and providing access to mailboxes to third parties.

“The cuts in the current White House budget clearly come at the expense of postal employees, retirees, and the American people,” President Mark Dimondstein said. “Similar attacks on postal workers and universal postal service were also seen in the June, 2018 report from the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in which the White House proposes to sell the Postal Service to the highest corporate bidder.”

“APWU members must remain vigilant, organized and unified in defense of the public Postal Service and the

rights of postal workers,” President Dimondstein continued.

In addition, the budget also attacks our wages and benefits through:

- High Three to a High Five

The White House budget recommends basing retirement annuities on the average highest five years of salary instead of the current high three, resulting in a decreased annuity payment.

- Changes to COLA's for FERS and CSRS Retirees

Postal retirees under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) would see a total elimination of cost of living adjustment (COLAs) under the budget plan, and those in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) would see a 0.5 percent reduction of COLAs.

- Elimination of FERS Annuity Supplement

Current FERS retirees who left service before Social Security eligibility qualify for an annuity supplement. This would be eliminated for new retirees.

- Increases to postal employee contributions to FERS

FERS enrollees will see an increase of their contributions by one percent over six years. By doing so, employee and employer contributions will be equally divided.

- Changes to the G Fund

The Thrift Savings Plan's (TSP) G Fund interest rate would be modified under the Trump Administration's endorsed budget. Proposed changes would lower the rate to under one percent. This would only possibly save the fed-

eral government \$16.5 billion over 10 years, and make the G Fund virtually worthless for those TSP participants.

- Changes to Retirement Services and Healthcare Administration

The management and administration of both retirement services and healthcare will move from the duties of the Office of Personnel Management to the General Services Administration.

For this budget plan to come to fruition, it would have to be approved by the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. The Senate Budget Committee released its budget plan for fiscal year 2020 on March 22. In it, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee is requested to develop \$15 billion in savings. This would most like come in the form of reduction to employee health care benefits.

The House Budget Committee has yet to release its fiscal year 2020 plan. Votes on past plans to cut pay and benefits did not pass in either the House or Senate.

It is important to be aware of these threats and to raise your objections to your lawmakers.

“APWU will continue to meet with elected officials, on both sides of the aisle, reminding them of the value of the work of postal and federal workers to this nation,” said Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard. “Retirees should live with respect, receiving COLAs and annuities that should be increased, not cut. Federal budgets should lift workers and communities up, not tear them down.”

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