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THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA AREA LOCAL AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

## SWFAL-APWU Retains Attorney



Sam Wood  
President  
SWFAL APWU

On August 9, 2000, the Southwest Florida Area Local - APWU (SWFAL-APWU) filed a grievance for management at the Fort Myers Processing and Distribution Center assigning Mail Handlers to prep flats mail which was always performed by Clerk Craft Employees.

After an agreement by the parties (APWU, NPMHU, and USPS), the

case was sent to Arbitration. After waiting thirteen (13) years, the case was arbitrated and the SWFAL-APWU prevailed as Arbitrator Edward E. Hales sustained the APWU's grievance on the issue on August 15, 2013.

The SWFAL-APWU filed a non-compliance grievance within two weeks after Arbitrator Hales sustained the grievance to ensure that the grievance was timely.

On August 28, 2013 I sent a letter to acting Ft. Myers P&DC Plant Manager Randy Stines (while also cc'ing upper management) requesting a meeting to discuss the implementation of Arbitrator Hales award. I received no official response from anyone.

On December 17, 2013, I sent another letter to Suncoast District Manager Nancy Rettinhouse, once again requesting a meeting to discuss the implementation of the award. This time, Nancy responded that the issues of back pay and the return of the work was "currently under review by Labor Relations at Headquarters" (Washington D.C.). She concluded her letter by stating:

"As we currently have the above issues under review, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on your concerns at this time. I assure you, however, that we will keep you informed of any future decisions we make regarding Arbitrator Hales' award."

I, along with the SWFAL-APWU Executive Board decided that we had no choice but to seek legal counsel regarding this arbitration award.

As most of you are aware, when I took over as President in 2001, we went to Federal Court on another grievance (15 Minute Break Case), where the arbitrator awarded a monetary remedy. We lost that case due to the lawsuit not being filed within six (6) months.

Well, after waiting patiently for management to meet and implement the current RI-399 award, we will not make that same mistake again.

On January 12, 2014, the membership at the meeting unanimously approved the hiring of the Law Firm of Mase, Lara & Eversole out of Miami, Florida. The Law Firm is very capable of handling cases such as ours and will be fighting to return the work in question to the Clerk Craft and collect the monetary relief granted by Arbitrator Hales to all of the appropriate employees.

We hope that everyone understands that the SWFAL-APWU has ensured that we have methodically followed all of the proper steps to ensure that we have been both timely and have kept the memberships' best interest in mind in the course of action that we have taken.

It is important to understand that without taking action for our members, we may never receive fully what we are entitled to.

We also have to keep in mind that the jobs we would get back will be beneficial to our Current Career APWU Employees as well as our Postal Support Employees' future employment by creating more career jobs in the Clerk Craft that should have never left the APWU Bargaining Unit in the first place.

Timing is very important here and I believe in this case we have acted as quickly as possible. We have looked at every option available to us and we believe this is the best direction for us to go.

This has been a very difficult process for me personally as Local President. I would much rather have been able to sit down, along

**See: SWFAL-APWU Retains Attorney**

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## Secretary-Treasurer's Report Felicia Gluhareff



### SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

**Felicia Gluhareff**

**January 12, 2014**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Time 9:50 a.m. There were 11 members in attendance.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Eileen DiMase.

**ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS:**

Felicia Gluhareff performed the roll call of officers. Present were Sam Wood, Dan Gray, Felicia Gluhareff, Mickey Szymonik and Kathy Moyer. Mickey Szymonik made a motion to excuse Paul McAvoy who is on annual leave. Motion passed.

**THE MEMBERSHIP  
AGREED TO CHANGE  
THE ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

Attorney Richard Lara from the firm Mase, Lara & Eversole out of Miami came to talk to us about our RI-399 award. The local has filed a noncompliance grievance but the USPS still refuses to comply with the original arbitration award. Mr. Lara spoke about how he and his law firm feel they can help us get those jobs back and our due compensation. Lawyer fees will cap at 33 and a third percent of the amount recovered and only be collected if the law firm is successful. Dan Gray made a motion to retain Mase Lara Eversole as our attorney to represent us in our RI-399 enforcement. Grace Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**MAP:**

Barbara Carr told a joke in honor of Charles Glennon.

**NEW MEMBERS:**

None

**EXECUTIVE BOARD  
MINUTES:**

Discussed lawsuit to enforce RI-399 arbitration award. Attorney from law firm scheduled to address executive board and members at GMM. An attorney was selected by experience concerning labor

law and arbitrations.

Management is not complying with return to work of back pay remedy. The local will not let management continue to drag their feet on compliance. Attorneys will be working on a contingency basis. Pros and cons of hiring an attorney vs enforcement of the arbitration award through the grievance procedure was discussed.

Discussed PSEs in the maintenance and the clerk craft. Lehigh PSE arbitration was discussed. Jim Demaro advocated and Sam Wood testified. Discussed PSE percentages and conversion rules. The percentages will be monitored by National and the NBAs.

**SECRETARY-TREASURER  
REPORT:**

Mickey Szymonik made a motion to accept minutes as reported in last month's Eagle's Eye. The motion passed. We opened a new business checking account with the Tampa Postal Federal Credit Union and we will slowly be phasing out and eventually closing our Wells Fargo business checking account.

**REPORT/ SELECTION  
OF COMMITTEES:**

None

**REPORT OF CONVENTION  
COMMITTEES:**

None

**REPORT OF TRUSTEES:**

None

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Letter from National addressing opening of postal counters in Staples stores. These counters will not be manned by USPS employees. National encouraging pickets and letter writing campaign.

Thank You note from our office secretary, Karen D'Angelo, to the members for her Christmas gift card.

Sam Wood sent letter to district managers asking them to abide by the RI-399 arbitration award.

**UPDATE OF GRIEVANCES:**

None

**OLD  
BUSINESS:**  
None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

"Holiday" PSEs and a few more were released from duty. We discussed delayed mail at stations and dishonest reporting by management on this delayed mail. Falsifying mail counts can lead to removal. Do not dishonestly scan mail. You must follow a manager's direct order unless it is unsafe or illegal. If you are given a direct order to dishonestly scan mail do as directed then ask for a steward. While this may not be a contractual issue it can be addressed through the postal inspectors. Lack of PSE conversions was discussed.

**LABOR/ MANAGEMENT:**

Karen Walker will be the new acting plant manager.

**GOOD AND WELFARE:**

The winner of the COPA 50/50 drawing was Sam Wood who won \$23.50. He donated his winnings back to COPA. The total netted was \$47.00. The name drawn for the member's incentive award was Joyce Kelly. She would have won \$50.00 had she been present at the general membership meeting. The pot will be \$60.00 at the next meeting.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS  
AND DELEGATES:**

None

**LEFTOVERS:**

Sam Wood extended the speed of our wireless internet connection at the plant and decreased our bill by \$30.00 per month.

**ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS:**

Felicia Gluhareff performed the roll call of officers. The results were recorded.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Robert Nowall moved to have the next meeting February 9th, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. at the union hall. The motion passed.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Robert Nowall moved to adjourn at 11:15 a.m. The motion passed.

# Attendance Discipline Being Improperly Issued By Management

Attendance discipline seems to be once again on the upswing. With the increasing volume of mail and decreasing number of employees, management is trying to make employees come to work even when they are sick.



**Daniel M. Gray**  
Vice President  
SWFAL APWU

If your condition will qualify you for FMLA protection please see your doctor and have them fill out the proper FMLA forms and submit the forms to the FMLA coordinators office for approval.

If you need any information or assistance with getting the correct forms or questions concerning FMLA please ask to see your steward. Remember you must have been employed for a year with the USPS and maintained 1250 work hours during that preceding year to qualify for FMLA.

The work hours are actually work hours, when you take annual, sick or LWOP these hours do not count towards the 1250 required hours.

A simple rule to remember is "feet on the floor" or all your physical worked hours which include overtime hours. You receive up to 480 hours/12 weeks of protection for your FMLA condition under the Family Medical Leave Act.

Management cannot (well they are not supposed to) discipline you for any FMLA protected absences. I mentioned not supposed to since we have had employees improperly disciplined with management citing FMLA protected absences.

If you are disciplined for what is determined a FMLA protected absence, please file charges with the Department of Labor, Wage and Hour in Miami, Florida. You can access the information on the Department of Labor website regarding how to file charges.

Once again, please check the accuracy of your PS Form 3971s, Request for or Notification of Absence. We are still seeing the PS Form 3971s turning up during investigative interviews for attendance with employees claiming this is not what was requested or that they had requested FMLA.

By signing the PS form 3971 you are stating you agree with what is on them. If you see errors on the PS form 3971 ask your supervisor to correct the error. If your supervisor refuses politely refuse to sign the PS form 3971 and ask to see a union steward to file a grievance to

have the PS form 3971 corrected.

Management seems to be inputting into ERMS employees for "deems desirable" for absences of three days or less for no legitimate reason.

It appears that their excuses are employees have used excessive sick leave, established a pattern (when no real pattern exists) or around a holiday (when the employee usually does not) which is simply not valid reasons to force an employee to get medical documentation.

Management is deeming employees calling in for certified FMLA conditions also, even when the employee has not exceeded the frequency and duration allowed by their doctor.

Management does not practice "restricted sick leave" locally, so they must then abide by the ELM 513.361 for absences of three days or less; "medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work or need to care for a family member is only required when an employee is on restricted sick leave (see ELM 513.39) or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service."

Instead management is utilizing ERMS's "deems desirable" function as a blanket call in list which is prohibited.

ERMS allows a supervisor or manager to simply check a box and then enter a beginning and end date which will then continue to automatically advise an employee of the requirement to produce documentation for each absence during the flagged time period.

Remember a supervisor's determination that medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacitation is desirable for the protection of the interest of the Postal Service must be made on a case by case basis, and may not be arbitrary, capricious or unreasonable.

Now if an employee had requested annual leave on a specific date and was denied, but then called in sick, yes management would legitimately have a reason to request documentation from the employee.

If you are "deems desirable" when you call in sick for an absence of three days or less please ask to see your steward so we can determine if you were properly deemed or not. Remember, unfortunately, you must follow instructions first, and grieve later.

Employees are receiving inves-

tigative interviews followed by discipline when asked for documentation and they fail to do so. If you are instructed to return with medical documentation and you believe you have been incorrectly required to do so the Union will need the following for your grievance: Time spent retrieving documentation, mileage to and from doctor's office and your home, and any out of pocket expenses (receipts) you incurred because of your visit.

Now remember, for absences in excess of three days ELM.513.362 states:

"For absences in excess of 3 days, employee are required to submit medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work or of need to care for a family member and, if requested, substantiation of the family relationship". Also ELM 513.365 Failure to Furnish Required Documentation states "If acceptable substantiation of incapacitation is not furnished, the absence may be charged to annual leave, LWOP, or AWOL".

The SWFAL is proceeding with filing a lawsuit against the Postal Service to enforce our recently won Arbitration Award on the flats prep, which awarded back both work and a monetary settlement to the clerk craft dating back to 2000. Management is ignoring the Arbitrator's decision and is forcing our local to file suit.

Management had 90 days to vacate the Arbitrator's Award in Federal Court, but failed to do so. The Union has filed non-compliance grievances and the lawsuit is our next step forward for enforcing the Award.

Remember, this is typical of the USPS management in thumbing their nose at an Arbitrator's or Judge's decision.

You just have to look to the recently won MSPB (Merit System Protection Board) case of one of our own, Sgt. Maj. Richard Erickson a decorated long-time Special Forces member and long-time SWFAL member.

Rich was fired from the USPS while working at the Fort Myers P&DC in 2000 by management for simply serving his country. Management, in violation of the law, claimed Rich took too much Military leave and fired him.

The MSPB has once again ordered the USPS to reinstate Rich, who proved he was wrongly fired from his job because of military leave. The MSPB ordered the

USPS to pay him what could add up to millions in back pay, benefits and legal fees.

Rich has won in federal court before, as recently as 2012, in which the USPS simply appealed and failed to reinstate him, even though ordered to do so.

Now according to the most recent ruling which the MSPB described as its "final decision," the USPS has 20 days to reinstate (from December 30, 2013) Rich and in 60 days to provide back pay since 2000, plus interest and benefits.

The USPS must also report back to the MSPB and describe how it has carried out the actions, the ruling said. Congrats to Rich - this is a well deserved victory and 13 plus years in the making. Hopefully this is finally done.

People ask how and why does the USPS get away with this kind of crap? It is because no one in management is held accountable for their actions.

Most businesses would not tolerate managers and supervisors committing these blatant violations. Just because the USPS management agrees to do something or is told to do something, doesn't mean they will.

One needs to look no further than Sgt. Maj. Erickson's case, our recent Arbitration Award or the National Agreement that management violates on a daily basis.

Remember if you have any questions or concerns ask to see your steward.



# Working For The Tin Man

In *The Wizard of Oz* movie, the Tin Man had no heart. At the Fort Myers P&DC we work for for many Tin Men.



**Paul McAvoy**  
Clerk Craft Director  
SWFAL APWU

Management does not know the meaning of compassion or care about the lives of their employees.

First case in point is the PSE's. We had a stellar group of PSE's who management used and abused all through Christmas time to get the mail out.

They worked in automation, manual letters, flats and priority. We made it through Christmas relatively unscathed. It was rare that mail was delayed or didn't get out timely. The PSEs were a major part in this accomplishment.

The Acting Plant Manager herself in a service talk thanked all the employees for the great job we did during Christmas. How did they thank the PSE's?

First they told them that many of them would be kept on after Christmas and the Plant was approved for 27 PSEs.

What came next is where manage-

ment showed its true colors. They changed their collective minds at the last minute and only kept 15 PSE's in total. That leaves a total of 12 PSEs who will be without jobs.

Manasota currently has over 100 PSEs. What the \_\_\_\_? This whole episode has the nasty stench of a Plant Manager who obviously has no heart.

Some of the harder working PSEs at the Fort Myers P&DC have either resigned or quit because of the treatment they have received. Management might not appreciate the work of these young men and women but I have nothing but good things to say about the class of new employees that have been hired. Now if we could only keep them for more than a cup of coffee.

Another heartless act by management is deeming clerks who have FMLA for absences of three days or less if they are requesting paid leave. This is a violation of FMLA law.

On top of that management is disciplining employees for failure to follow instruction if they do not bring in documentation.

In one instance, a clerk was out sick and requested FMLA sick leave. She had to go to a doctor to get FMLA paper work filled out and approved. As is customary with

FMLA coordinators her first request was denied.

She asked for an extension and ultimately received an Approved FMLA form. Three days after she gets her FMLA what does management do? Give her a suspension letter for attendance and a letter of warning for failure to follow.

We proved at step one that the absences cited were FMLA covered and the suspension letter was rightfully expunged. However, management denied the grievance for failure to follow saying she did not bring in documentation right away.

This once again shows the lack of compassion and ignorance of management.

When requesting FMLA you have 15 days to get approval from FMLA coordinator. You may ask for an extension if needed to either get an appointment or to correct something that may have been omitted. The grievant in this case did all that and did in fact get documentation as required by the CBA.

On Tour 3 an employee was brought in for an Investigative Interview for having 3 absences. This employee had a serious surgery and was out for an extended period of time.

In that time he had used up his 12 weeks of FMLA for the year. Did management care that this added pressure of discipline could make the grievant's condition worsen? Not in the least. This employee reached the magic number of three absences and as a result the hammer must fall.

Each discipline according to the contract should be on a case by case basis. Management was fully aware of why this employee was out and proceeded to start the discipline process anyway.

The Tin Men don't care about you, your health or anything to do with your personal life. In order to do that they would have to have a heart. You are nothing more than an extension of the mail. A way and means to get the job done and nothing more.

In December Management issued 7 disciplines that I filed. I am sure there were more for other tours and crafts filed by other stewards. Just another way for the Tin Man to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

In another note: Acting Plant Manager Denise Cameron has finished her detail and moved on. Karen Walker has been named acting Plant Manager. Kirk Charles has been appointed the Tour1 MDO position.

## Did You Know?

**Your SWFAL APWU  
Local 1279  
has its own website!**

**swfloridaapwu.org**

**Visit our website to find out about  
News, Information and Events.**

## SWFAL-APWU Retains Attorney

*Continued from Page 1*

with Vice President Dan Gray and Clerk Craft Director Paul McAvoy, with Postal Management and resolve this issue quickly for our membership. However, after pursuing every option to do just that, I felt that the only way to quickly resolve this matter was to seek legal council as per our membership vote last year.

I spoke to numerous law firms in both Tampa and Miami who have tried Federal Court Cases, and I believe that the Law Firm of Mase, Lara & Eversole are the best fit (experience, confidence level, energy, reputation, etc.) for what we need as legal counsel.

I would like to thank the SWFAL-

APWU Executive Board for their due diligence in selecting and approving the hiring of our legal representatives. I would also like to thank the membership of the SWFAL-APWU for voting unanimously to hire the Law Firm selected by our local.

I assure you that we will continue to keep everyone updated on the process of our Federal Lawsuit filed against the United States Postal Service and will hope for a speedy resolution in this matter.

As you will read below, justice is not always automatic, but with perseverance, the reward can be just as sweet and worth the wait.

**FORT MYERS P&DC SOLDIER  
WINS JOB BACK AND  
\$2 MILLION IN BACK PAY**

Congratulations to fellow co-worker, Purple Heart recipient and

Special Forces Veteran, Sergeant Major Richard Erickson, on his thirteen year battle for justice. Management at the Fort Myers Processing & Distribution Center wrongfully terminated Richard back in 2000 for excessive military time for service to our Country.

In my first year as President of the SWFAL-APWU in 2001, I spoke to management about retuning Mr. Erickson to duty after he had returned from overseas and found out that the USPS terminated him. Management refused to reinstate him and the struggle began.

The United States Postal Service has been ordered to return Richard to work by January 20, 2014 (This article was written prior to January 20) and is to be awarded \$2 million in back pay and benefits.

As of January 2014, Richard was

still serving with the Army's Special Operations Command in Fort Bragg (North Carolina).

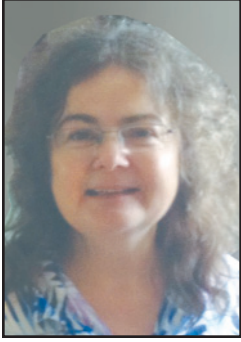
This is not the first time Richard has won this case. After winning this case with both the Merit System Protection Board as well as Federal Court, the USPS appealed each win by Erickson. Finally, it looks as though the battle has been won and Richard will be awarded everything he is entitled to.

On the wall in the SWFAL-APWU Union office hangs an American Flag that Brother Erickson sent to our Union that was flown in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. Erickson dedicated this flag to our membership.

Once again, Congratulations Brother Erickson on your much anticipated victory.

# Union Matters

While I'm still getting used to using the 2014 date stamp, the New Year is already bringing changes to the Fort Myers P&DC.



**Mickey Szymonik**  
Maintenance Craft  
Director  
SWFAL APWU

Acting Plant  
Manager  
Denise

Cameron returned to Fort Worth and her HR position in early January. I would like to wish Denise good luck as she returns to Fort Worth.

Some big changes for the Maintenance Department were also announced early in the new year. Tour 2 Maintenance Supervisor Dave King was promoted to the newly re-established Maintenance Engineering Specialist position.

This was the position Jim Keller and Steve Krankoski held before it was abolished prior to the EAS Reduction in Force (RIF) - during which time, it was reinitiated.

Other maintenance supervisors

applied for the promotion, but apparently Dave was deemed to be the applicant most suited to sitting in front of a computer screen rather than interacting with maintenance employees on a day to day basis. Makes sense to me.

Also in January, MMOS Denise Chase was awarded a National runner-up award for her excellent work in our P&DC's recycling program. Denise submitted her own application for consideration which, I can only imagine must have been titled "Garbage in, Garbage out". Congratulations to our custodians, the unsung heroes in our recycling effort.

The biggest news in January, perhaps involving the most ramifications to maintenance employees also concerns the custodians. A January 9th email from District Finance Manager Bob King informed all the stations and branches under the jurisdiction of the P&DC (Cape Central, Cape South, North, Downtown, Tice, Page Field, Six Mile Cypress and Mid Cape - for now), that all custodial hours would be transferred to each individual facility.

What that means is that "The

responsibility for the work assignments, scheduling, vacation planning, overtime, grievances, supply purchase, etc., will be the responsibility of the stations to which they are assigned. The plant will only be responsible for bidding in the same way as the clerks are administered now."

I received some news, which at the time of this writing, couldn't quite wrap my head around what this ultimately might mean to our maintenance craft workers. I immediately emailed our Maintenance Business Agents, Terry Martinez and John Gearhart for their input on this new directive.

A few of my initial thoughts are:

This action could affect Maintenance Operations Support staffing (my job), but that was already slashed a year ago so it's kind of a moot point.

Basically, some of the station and branch workload will be reassigned to the station personnel. Just so you know, in some sort of postal logic, the P&DC did not receive credit for the custodial hours and expenses accrued by supporting these facilities.

For the custodians at the stations and branches, this might be a good thing. For perhaps the first time since Supervisor Ed Morgan retired, they would have someone taking responsibility for them - for better or worse.

That hasn't been the case with the current crop of "out of sight, out of mind" supervisors who only seem to interact with the facility custodians when they needed to rack up some discipline points on their 991s.

Really, I don't know what to make of this latest directive from District. I'd feel more positive about this change if I knew that craft workers would be assigned the duties that my co-workers and I have performed for years. I'm well aware though that the USPS is not in the habit of enacting changes that will benefit the craft workforce.

I hope to get some input from the affected custodians as these changes are implemented. Please feel free to email me at [maintdirswfal@apwu.org](mailto:maintdirswfal@apwu.org). Better yet, show up at our next general membership meeting!

Solidarity, Prosperity, Peace



## Rights Of Deaf And Hard Of Hearing Employees

Does the Postal Service have to provide an interpreter for a hard of hearing employee filing an OWCP claim if the employee requests one?



Grace Baer  
T2 & T3 Steward  
Ft. Myers P&DC  
SWFAL APWU

This inquiry was recently posed to the tour 3 stewards at the plant by a hearing impaired member. The answer is an unequivocal yes; the Postal Service has a duty to provide a qualified interpreter.

Use of an interpreter is considered a reasonable accommodation under section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This law gives specific rights to federal employees with a disability including deaf and hard of hearing employees.

Under the law, federal employers are required to provide effective communication with deaf and hard

of hearing employees for meetings and special occasions, training, job evaluations, workplace communications, discipline, job benefits and programs.

Additionally, deaf and hard of hearing employees should have equal access to general information, telephone services, emergency procedures, safety and health programs, and all services and amenities available to other employees.

Discriminatory practices utilized by the Postal Service have recently resulted in a \$4.5 million settlement for deaf and hard of hearing employees. Foremost among the allegations of the lawsuit is the denial of communication accommodations, including interpreters for critical workplace meetings and events.

Deaf and hard of hearing members have the right to file discrimination complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Additional remedies or assistance may be available through the grievance procedure.

## The Great Postal Giveaway Don't Fall For It

I continue to read about the Staples pilot program and am amazed.

In case you are unaware, The USPS has initiated a pilot program with the Staples business supplies chain in which Staples would provide postal services in their stores.

The USPS claims this will increase revenue and expand postal services for customers.

However, haven't we been told by the same USPS for the last several years that it needs to eliminate Saturday delivery to cut costs. And haven't we been told by the same USPS that it needs to close post offices and consolidate processing plants to cut costs?

Apparently the USPS wants to expand, only if it can do so in the private sector. Make no mistake about it, this is just another attempt to further privatize the postal service and bust the union.

Why should anyone care?

1. The security of the mail needs to be a top priority. Unfortunately, unless there is a major breach in that security, it rarely gets any

mention. However, does anyone believe the security of the mail will be a top priority of non-postal employees?

How will these non-postal employees be supervised? How will compliance to mail standards be measured? How will security of the mail be maintained? I have heard nothing regarding answers to these questions. That ought to immediately set red flags waving - if you care about the security of the mail.

2. Our customers have come to rely on the service provided by the USPS. Part of that service is the relative low cost of that mail service, and part of that service is the universal nature of the USPS itself. Rich or poor, urban or rural, the USPS provides service to all at a reasonable cost.

Customers might be led to believe that privatization will lead to lower costs, but that is not likely. If you don't believe that, check out the pricing scale of our competition.

It is always an argument of proponents of privatization that costs will be lower. Usually what happens is after the switch to privatiza-

tion occurs, costs go up and / or service goes down. By the time customers realize they have been had, it is too late to change things back.

3. The USPS provides a livable wage to its many career employees, as well as, serves as a major employer for our veterans. In a time when everyone is talking about an employment problem in the United States, why would anyone be interested in eliminating good paying, postal jobs, or any jobs for that matter?

4. The crisis mentality that seems to permeate all thinking regarding the future of the USPS is a manufactured crisis. If it were not for the prefunding requirement, the USPS would have made a substantial profit last year.

However, we too often hear people speaking as if the USPS is in dire straits financially, and something needs to be done, anything, to stave off the crisis. And so, we get talk about elimination of Saturday delivery, closing processing plants and rural post offices.

5. The Postal Service is established by the United States

Congress at the direction of our United States Constitution (Article 1, Section 8). We have operated under that interpretation for well over 200 years, so, no matter how much someone wants to dismantle the Post Office, it really is going against legal precedent to do so.

Our USPS management at the top has shown it is ready to give away postal services and postal jobs, rather than committing to improving the services and jobs already under its jurisdiction.

If expanding services at a private retailer is such a good idea, then why is the USPS so determined to do the opposite with its own business resources and employees?

Our National APWU is aware of this great giveaway and is determined to save the USPS for today, and future generations. As a postal worker, and postal customer, I hope they, and we, are successful.

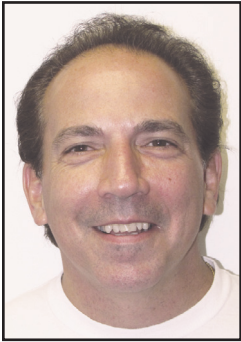
Kathy Moyer, Editor



# A Fresh Start

Hello everyone!

I hope you all have had a great time over the holidays and had the opportunity to enjoy your friends and loved ones. The holidays are a very special time, one that hopefully brought us much joy and laughter and is a fitting way to end a very busy year.



Danny Carinci  
T2 & T3 Steward  
Ft. Myers P&DC  
SWFAL APWU

“So”, now we begin moving past the holidays and through the new year. And it is now our opportunity to seize this moment, to start the year on a positive note, and keep it going throughout the year.

I feel our local is only as strong as our members and what better way to help our local start the year, and keep the year, on a solid foundation than to look to ourselves with a “Fresh Start” in mind.

If you need some suggestions, here are just a few ideas that I

hope inspires you to take time and reflect on making the entire new year one that is both exciting and prosperous.

Choose to be a Leader. Rather than remain in the background, it is time to step-up. Go beyond your discomfort zone and be a leader for a change.

Volunteer Your Time. A meaningful way to spend time is to do so in the company of those who need some kindness and care.

Make a commitment to fitness. Don't just make a resolution and join a fitness center you won't see after February.

Join a class at your fitness club, an exercise group or a team sport. Or, if you can afford it, hire a trainer. These things will not only make your workouts more productive and fun but will also give you the advantage of having others hold you accountable to your workout commitment.

Practice Forgiveness. Give this year a loving start by forgiving those with whom you have borne a grudge.

Keep an eye on the important things. Don't forget to stop and smell the proverbial roses. If you've been neglecting your health, your family or friends, make a point to address those concerns in the this year and you'll be more likely to be successful in your work life as well.

Break out of your rut. Be honest: is it time to take on something new? If you've been doing the "same old" for years, now may be the perfect time to plan for a change.

Practice the “One-A-Day” Principle. You can't make everybody happy all the time but you can do something extraordinary for someone each day. Find a customer, colleague, relative or a friend each day and do something remarkable.

Have gratitude. In many areas of our lives, we may often be surprised by how we already have what we need if we just choose to look at things differently.

Take a life inventory. How are your relationships with friends and family? How often do you laugh? Are you doing the things you love the

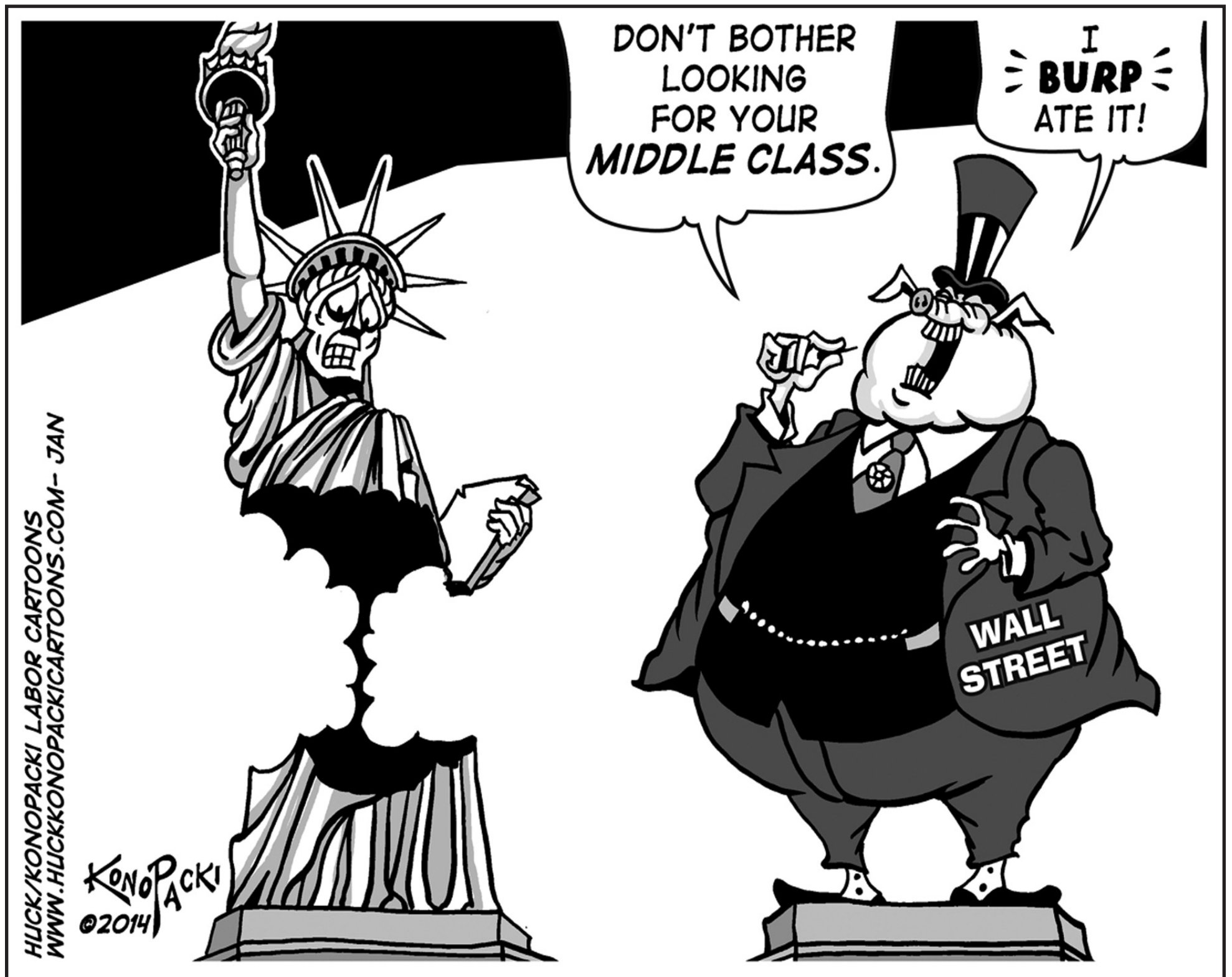
most? Be sure to reflect on all the amazing aspects of your life.

Eliminate Wasteful Activities. The primary complaints from people about why they fail to accomplish their goals is that they do not have enough time. These thoughts are sometimes coming from the people that hit the snooze button 9 times before getting out of bed, watch hours of TV a night, and spend every 20 minutes checking their e-mail and Facebook status update.

Take stock and charge forward. Ask yourself: What battles did I fight and not win last year? Are any of those battles worth continuing? Why didn't I win them last year? What can I do to win them this year? How can I make those things I liked most about last year happen more frequently?

2014 promises to be an exciting year with many new issues for us to face. But I am confident “We will be ready!” So, get your act together, think of ways to make our local even stronger and I will be seeing you at the next meeting.

Together in Solidarity



## Your Elected Officials

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Our members live in several different districts. For your representative's information, go to [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org). Enter your zip code and the web site does the rest. You can e-mail most of your representatives at once with a click of your mouse at this web site. Their voting records are also available here. Check it out! Let them know how you feel, it's your DUTY!

## THE EAGLE'S EYE EDITORIAL POLICY

The Eagle's Eye is the official publication of the Southwest Florida Area Local, APWU, AFL-CIO. The editor has the right to determine whether the material submitted shall be printed, and has the right to edit as needed. It is the policy of this newsletter to disallow any attacks on individuals. Opinions expressed are those of the writers, and not necessarily those of the Executive Board. The deadline for submission of all articles is the day of the monthly membership meeting. You must be an APWU member to submit an article. Name may be withheld upon request. All articles may be reprinted with proper credit given. Captions/cartoons may only be reprinted upon written permission of the editor.

## Southwest Florida Area Local Membership News

We wish to extend our welcome to all new employees coming on board at the United States Postal Service by inviting you to our next SWFAL APWU meeting on February 9, 2014, at the Union Hall located at 11000 Metro Parkway, Unit 8, in Fort Myers.

Meetings are held once a month on Sunday at 9:30am. Be united, protect your job and discover the many benefits of becoming a member of the SWFAL APWU.

Join us at our next local meeting - united we can make a positive difference in our workplaces. We look forward to seeing you there!

For those of you that have recently retired who wish to continue receiving *The Eagle's Eye* newspaper, please email the Editor at [Edswfal@aol.com](mailto:Edswfal@aol.com) or call Karen at our SWFAL APWU office at 239-275-1007.

We want to encourage our mem-



bers to email information to the editor regarding marriages, graduations, special events or achievements of our employees, or their families, at [Edswfal@aol.com](mailto:Edswfal@aol.com). We will be pleased to include as many member announcements as possible.

## Doc Hunt

Americans dedicate hours of research when shopping for cars; homes and other house hold items, but don't really know where to begin when selecting a health care professional. Choosing a family doctor can be a daunting task especially if you don't know exactly what to look for. By first assessing your family's needs and then doing some research you can select the right doctor and build a lasting relationship. Choosing the right doctor means having an expert on your side when dealing with your family during healthy and sick times; so here are a few questions to ask when gathering information to make your choice.

1. Know the Network. APWU Health Plan offers comprehensive network options. While, you are always free to seek the services of any provider, worldwide. Selecting an in-network provider would offer you the least out-of-pocket costs. All in-network providers are investigated to ensure that they are properly board certified and in good standing with the state licensing agencies. To view our provider directory, go to [apwuhp.com](http://apwuhp.com) and click on Provider Directory.
2. Does this doctor come recommended? Reach out to family, friends and other health professionals for a referral to someone they know, have been treated by and trust. Ask detailed questions about why they endorse the doctor.
3. Is the doctor's hospital plan-affiliated? Check to ensure the hospital has no restrictions in selecting your preferred doctor. Again, in-network facilities will offer you the least out-of-pocket costs. To view our provider directory, go to [apwuhp.com](http://apwuhp.com) and click on Provider Directory.
4. Can you easily get an appointment? Check with the office administrator to make sure there will be availability if an immediate appointment is required. You don't want to wait weeks to see your doctor when needed.

Here are some additional questions to ask yourself before you make a decision:

- What is the doctor's personal style? What are you more comfortable with?
- Is the office easy to get to and what is the hospital affiliation?
- Are you comfortable in the office environment and is the staff polite, competent and willing to assist?
- How are the doctor's records maintained?
- Does the doctor schedule time to return calls or can you communicate through email?

The answers to these questions will determine if the doctor you select is a good match for you. They can also determine the quality of care you receive based on your standard and level of care needed. It is important to gather information from a variety of sources to make an educated decision.



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