



# The RETIREE RECORD

A NEWS BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS  
AFFILIATED WITH APWU POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION  
PITTSBURGH AREA RETIREE CHAPTER  
OF THE AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO

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VOLUME X

MARCH 26, 2015

No. 3

## CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDERWAY

### THE DIE IS CAST

Negotiations for a new labor contract between the APWU and the Postal Service got underway on February 19 in Washington DC. Whereas the opening day has traditionally been a mere ceremonial picture taking activity, this was not to be the case for this round of bargaining. Flanked by actor/activist Danny Glover and AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka, as soon as the ceremonial aspect was completed, marked by the Postal Service refusing to have their pictures taken, APWU President Mark Dimondstein moved right into placing the union's concept of the negotiations and the union's intent to include service issues and expansion of services into the bargaining. It was obviously a ploy that the Postal Service and the new Postmaster General were unprepared for.

It was reported a few days ago in a training conference in Jacksonville FL that several bargaining sessions had occurred since that time at the 'main' table as well as the craft tables. It is clear that the union is working toward a negotiated agreement, but nevertheless is also preparing for the event that if the talks fail, and the issue is moved to the resolution procedure, including if it goes that far, ultimately to the final step of interest arbitration.

Having made that observation and analysis, this writer is convinced that President Dimondstein will do his level best to try to unravel the abuses in the current contract while seeking job and service protection and expansion of services into the financial area.

### RALLYING THE TROOPS

While action continues at the bargaining table, other activities are underway throughout the union in support of the bargaining team. Tailgate parties and other group actions have been and are occurring throughout the union. (So far there is no indication that similar activities are in the works for the Pittsburgh Metro Area Local.) A national sticker day for active members has been designated for March 26, where stickers supplied by national should be distributed and worn on the work floor on that date.

Since retirees do not have access to the work floor, we have enclosed a sticker with this newsletter (for members only, not included with the courtesy copies). We urge our members to wear these stickers throughout the bargaining period. We have several extras that are available by merely calling the chapter at 724 947 9374 if it is lost or wears out!

Retirees have a lot at stake in these negotiations and parallel congressional activity that bears on issues critical to us. Issues ranging from our health benefits under the current health insurance laws and the Postal Service attempt to carve postal workers out of it, Medicare which is the life saver for untold numbers of retirees, attacks on Social Security, tampering with retirement deductions that would result in lower take home pay for active workers, reduced annuity for retirees by reduction in COLA calculations, etc. With more to come!

## BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Retirees and active members are between a rock - the give back current collective bargaining agreement - and a hard place - a Republican dominated Congress that seeks to turn the clock back to the 'good old days' before collective bargaining. These are **not** theoretical over-the-horizon perils, they are real and coming at us with alarming speed. In a matter of merely weeks the contract negotiations will conclude. The conclusion will be either a successor agreement, which is the preferred conclusion, or a shift toward arbitration. In either event, the process will be concluded in a few months.

The Congress is moving toward progress and action on the budget, with both houses having already sent forth their wish lists in separate resolutions. That process, including negotiations with the Obama administration, should conclude sometime this year after the Summer. As was stated above, there is much harm and little positive progress for retirees and workers in the proposals. A lot of work will need to be done to emerge from these perils in the best positive posture.

Retirees and active members are being challenged as never before to engage in the process. The jury is still out on whether or not they - we - can rise to the occasion. Our chapter is committed to support these initiatives to the best of our ability and within our physical limitations. Merely wearing the enclosed sticker is one example of personal involvement, and it is a painless example. We will be called upon for more as the process unfolds. Be ready and willing to do what must be done to protect and improve our interests.

## THE STAPLES CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

Demonstrations at Staple's stores is ongoing. As this is written we will be at the store in Butler, followed later after Easter at the store in Robinson Township. The Western PA Postal Workers Solidarity Committee, that includes Locals for the four Unions that represent Postal workers in Western Pennsylvania, has been sponsoring these demonstrations since 2013. Thus far actions have been held at most of the Staple's in this area on a rotating basis. We have been at most stores multiple times since the campaign began.

We demonstrate on Sundays, since most workers are off on that day. April presents a scheduling issue, with Palm Sunday and Easter infringing on our schedule. Nevertheless, we are working around those dates, with the Robinson Township store scheduled for April 12.

It is not an understatement to note that our chapter retirees are front and foremost in these efforts. Members are a vital component of the Solidarity Committee, fully involved in the planning and execution of the various demonstrations and other activities. Retirees have distributed thousands of leaflets to motorists and potential Staple's customers. Our members have withstood the worst weather seen here for years to stand tall unflinching to the elements as we have advanced the Union's program. We salute these members and express the pride we have in standing with them throughout the miserable conditions this past Winter. While Spring is here, the Butler event has what is hopefully the last blast of cold weather forecast for that demonstration. More pleasant weather is hopefully on the horizon. It will be welcome and long overdue!

**SHUT-IN LIST** ~ Norbert Conway, Jeanne McCarthy, Laverne Heil, Veronica Bujdos, James Fodi, and Ruth Marlett are on the shut-in list. Please keep a good thought for our shut-ins. There but for the grace of God..... (To be included on the shut-in list, call the Chapter at 724 947 9374.)

**MAY BE PASSED AROUND/DUPLICATED**