



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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A VERY PERSONAL MESSAGE

Our Chapter has been in a sort of free fall since mid January. The reason? This writer has been out of commission since that time because of a household accident. At present we are in a slow recovery mode as we cope to catch up with the backlog. It is slower going than anticipated, but progress is seen every day.

When I explained what had happened to a member via telephone, he suggested that I set forth the narrative responsible for the current state of affairs to inform our members what may be responsible for any delays in responding to your inquiries. That is what follows:

On January 15, while descending a flight of stairs at my home, I tripped, falling about 8 or 9 steps, winding up in a heap on the landing at the bottom of the stairs. My wife Charlotte heard the commotion and rushed to my assistance. I was dazed and bloodied, obviously in pretty bad shape. A call to 911 brought the paramedics who thought that the injuries were a just a few cuts and bruises, who suggested that we transport ourselves to the nearest hospital, the Weirton WV Medical Center.

The Medical Center did a detailed thorough exam, finding that the injuries were much more severe than a few cuts and bruises. The assessment was my neck was broken, several ribs were damaged, and a kidney was lacerated. They placed me in a stiff plastic collar. That resulted in the life flight helicopter to the trauma center at the UPMC Presbyterian Hospital in Pittsburgh. There the neck was evaluated and the other injuries were attended to. Several days in the Trauma ICU followed.

Jumping ahead, I was subsequently later transferred to a nursing/rehab facility. After a few days there, my breathing became a serious problem. That resulted in another call to 911 and transfer to the Canonsburg PA Hospital. After stabilizing the breathing, Canonsburg transferred me back to the Presbyterian Hospital. After nearly two weeks there I was transferred to a different rehab facility. After a couple weeks of rehab I was finally released to come home, where physical therapy, occupational therapy and other treatments will continue.

All in all my condition seems to be improving. All the professionals that have consulted along the way have cautioned that full recovery will take some time, and a lot of rehab effort. We are in it for the long haul until recovery back as close to our condition before the accident as possible.

We are keeping our eye on the calendar, cognizant that we are getting into the area when plans must be made for the Mid Summer Blast Luncheon. If recovery progress permits, we will do all we can to insure that the event will be held in one form or another. If it must be cancelled, we will inform via this newsletter.

(over)

MEDICARE, A LIFE SAVER

As the EOB'S (Explanation Of Benefits) are coming in the mail from our FEHBA Health Insurance carrier, which also have a Medicare component, the enormous cost of all these services cannot be borne here, and also could not be borne by others who also need extensive medical care. As of the date this is written, we have received a stack of EOB's measuring @ five inches, and more come every day. We expect the EOB's will continue through the year before the final tally can be calculated. Most of our members qualify and have chosen Medicare A and B when reaching age 65. As referred to above, supplemental Health Insurance is available through the FEHBA. In my opinion and experience, these are the most valuable benefits that we enjoy in our retirement.

BEWARE, THERE ARE FORCES AT WORK.....

It is no secret that the Trump administration and the Republican Congress have benefits like Medicare and Social Security in the crosshairs. As time moves along we can, or should, expect attacks to weaken them, and in the case of Medicare, cost shift to annuitants, meaning us! Moreover, there are rumbles within the Union about pending legislation and a proffer from the Postal Service to the Unions to shift worker health benefits for those under 65 to Medicare and make other adjustments.

Whether from without or within, any tampering with Medicare must include total protection for current users, including the FEHBA component. We cannot over emphasize the value of these life savers.

APWU MEMBERS WAKE UP, THE HANDWRITING IS ON THE WALL!

We salute and respect those that participated in the Staples boycott. You have done a service to the Union, your fellows, and yourself. But the sad facts are a mere handful of APWU members, Locals and States, engaged in the Staples activity. We are aware of some APWU leadership that gave the boycott little more than lip service, believing it was a waste of time. As we consider what is coming down the road, re: Medicare etc., disengagement is not acceptable.

Our experience is rather common for older annuitants. Every **active** member that reads this will need extensive medical attention and care, whether caused by accident or disease. The struggle to maintain these benefits untouched will need much greater activity from the rank and file than the Staples boycott. It is their responsibility to learn and understand what is contemplated, and be available to support or oppose the proposals if and when called on.

Our experience of 60 years of Postal Union activity has taught several important lessons. First and foremost is the membership must be involved and engaged to present a solid phalanx when called upon. We are not convinced that is the case in too many areas. Staples proved that. On the other hand, the rank and file must be nourished and made to feel that they are the most important entity in the Union, but enlightened leadership is the key to creating that kind of rank and file. We have all heard the old saw, use it or lose it! This is the time to prepare the rank and file for the struggles that surely lie ahead. Let's get it on!

SHUT-IN LIST ~ Norbert Conway, Jeanne McCarthy, Laverne Heil, George Skrbins, and Veronica Bujdos, 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