



# 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 XIV

JUNE 16, 2019

No. 5

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## APWU ELECTION OF OFFICERS 2019 REPORT

*(The APWU Election Of Officers is underway. While there are numerous resident and field officers to be elected, this report will concentrate on only those running for President, since that is the most important office, and as this is written and published before candidates are officially announced, it is widely suspected that the office is being pursued by four disparate candidates.)*

### WHO ARE THE PROBABLE CANDIDATES?

**Mark Dimondstein** ~ Mark is the incumbent, running for re-election to his third term. For many years he was the president of the Greater Greensboro Area Local in North Carolina and was a field organizer for "outside" trucking.

**John Marcotte** ~ John was active in Michigan before election as Legislative/Political Director six years ago. More recently he was appointed as Health Plan Director by President Dimondstein when the former director retired.

**Tony McKinnon** ~ Tony served as Director Of Industrial Relations six years ago. He left national office after serving one term. After three years of inactivity he has emerged as a candidate for this election.

**Greg Bell** ~ Greg was president of the Philadelphia Local for many years. His most recent service was as Director Of Industrial Relations in both the Burrus and Guffey administrations. He left that office six years ago as a result of the election at that time.

### WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?

All of the above were impacted by events six years ago related to the "Guffey" contract. When that contract was negotiated, the Union was in an uproar over unprecedented regressive give-back provisions. As a result, for the election that followed enactment of that contract, it resulted in a massive turn over of the officer corps. Dimondstein, Marcotte, and McKinnon were elected in. Bell was elected out.

A critical backdrop of this election is the unresolved current contract that is in process of the Mediation/Arbitration procedure. Nothing could be more serious than going through the election with an unresolved contract as a critical factor for the Union. One school of thought is one should not "change horses in the middle of the stream". That is a persuasive argument. Whether or not that argument will prevail remains to be seen. I, for one, would have serious reservations if a new leadership is handed the arbitration in the middle of the process. That is "the elephant" in the room.

There is just too much in stake for the rank and file to gamble with untested leadership.

## A ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY, AND THEY BLEW IT! NOW THE CHICKENS HAVE COME HOME TO ROOST!

It is undisputed that the Great Post Office Strike in 1970 was the most significant event in Post Office history. For those of us that were leaders and participants in that strike it was an unprecedented event of our lifetime. Those were indeed heady days. After President Nixon capitulated and the Postal Reorganization Act was passed the focus then moved to the employee groups for their action.

The National Postal Union, one of the key players in the strike, was an industrial union that represented all Post Office Workers under the auspices of President Kennedy's Executive Order 10988. All the other groups were Associations that represented a single craft. As discussions between the groups commenced, those of us that believed in a single industrial union of all Post Office workers urged all the groups to embrace that concept. A persuasive argument was that if the groups remained separate, eventually the postal bosses would play one against the others in separate contract negotiations. This resulted in formation of the APWU, comprised of the National Postal Union, clerks, maintenance, motor vehicle services, and special delivery Associations, and while the other groups: letter carriers, rural letter carriers, and mail handlers, continued as separate entities.

### WHAT WAS THE STUMBLING BLOCK THAT CAUSED A FULL MERGER TO FAIL?

In my opinion, there were two factors that ended hopes for a full merger of all the employee groups ~ **GREED AND EGO!** Greed, because all the merging groups demanded that all officers in the former groups must also have offices in the new Union. That is how the APWU was formed. None of the groups were willing to more sensibly create a structure without a bloated elected officer corps, streamlined to better serve the members. One only has to look at the result in the APWU, as it was originally structured, to see the fault lines. Considering that the letter carriers also had a huge officer structure, there was no way they could have joined the merger, **unless**, some of the bloat was willing to create a structure that would have required large numbers of incumbents to leave national office, **even if that meant returning to the work floor.** {One example of the result of 'taking care' of the officers, was creation of a new office titled **Administrator of Finance and Records, without any real duties, to 'take care' of an incumbent.**} **Thankfully that office was eliminated when the incumbent left.** Later on the APWU held a special Constitutional Convention in Kansas City, where all the areas and crafts now in the Union vied for more pork in their areas. That Convention failed due to the ridiculous result that ultimately was voted down.

Egos were a major factor in determining who would be the top officers in the new Union. Bear in mind initially this was decided by deal making. Since then the rank and file choose officers through referendum elections.

The history of bargaining separately has borne out the predictable conclusion that the Postal bosses have played the Unions against each other. Look what has transpired since the Guffey contract adopted part time workers, lower wages for them, and limited fringes. After getting those concessions from the APWU, the bosses applied them to the other groups that bargained later. The beat continues with the current APWU contract at impasse and arbitration.

There was a real opportunity in 1970 to create a monolith with unprecedented strength and impact. Alas, that time has passed so the competition between the groups continues. Greed and egos sealed the deal. Ironically, it is the rank and file that will bear the brunt. So sad!