



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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WHERE WERE YOU 50 YEARS AGO IN MARCH?

To my dying day I will never forget where I was. I was the Business Agent for the National Postal Union Local in Western Pennsylvania, or NPU. (Many that read this may have no idea what that Union was. We were a national Union that represented all crafts under the auspices of President John Kennedy's Executive Order 10988. While smaller than the craft associations, which were limited to represent only members of those crafts, we were aggressive hell raisers who believed in industrial unionism that welcomed all workers into a single Union regardless of craft. Our struggles with those associations were monumental, earning respect from most on the scene at that time. The NPU also had locals in key cities like New York City, Detroit, Cleveland, Los Angeles, as well as Pittsburgh, and other areas in larger cities. In Pittsburgh the NPU Local was led by President Oscar Leckman. Long time activist Joe Anthony also was a key player for the Local. We were the leadership nucleus for the Local when word came down that the New York City NPU Local and the New York City NALC Letter Carriers went on strike.)

Without reservation or hesitation we immediately mobilized our Local and set up picket lines at employee entrances at the General Post Office located at Grant Street and 7th Avenue. We also knew that the Federal Courts would be after us with Orders to end the strike, so we developed strategy where they wouldn't be able to find the leadership and serve us with Court Orders. When the craft association members reported to work, most respected the picket line and refused to cross. Many on duty at the time we struck left the building to honor the picket line. **IT WAS THE LARGEST WILDCAT STRIKE IN US HISTORY!**

It is fair to state that it was the NALC and the NPU that initiated the strike in New York. As the strike spread throughout the country it was joined by some craft Locals. It was the shutting down of the transportation hubs throughout the country that paralyzed the entire system. Many workers did not strike, but due to strikers shutting down the large hubs, had no work so reported to swing rooms where they sat for their tours. (It is amazing that in the 50 years since the strike how many claimed they were active participants in it.)

These were heady and dangerous times since the right to strike was the same as it is now: prohibited by law. I had just purchased a home and had a daughter in diapers. Our futures were at stake since if things went wrong we could wind up with long prison sentences, the destruction of our Local stripped from all its resources, and who knows what else?

Yet the strike and President Nixon's capitulation resulting in formation of the APWU made an indelible impression on me, an impression that remains to this day. It is hard to contemplate that 50 years has gone by since some of these memories are as fresh as the actual events as they transpired. For those of us that "walked the line" we have established a legacy that will be hard to equal. Current APWU rank and file who are too young to have been a part of this must never forget what brought us to where you are today.

(over)

IT IS TIME TO GET SERIOUS!

The antics of the Trump administration and the US Senate concerning critical retiree issues have raised enough red flags to have our attention riveted on the upcoming election. One needs only to look at the administration's budget proposals to realize that President Trump and his lock step Republican Senate that approves anything and everything coming from his administration to understand the peril retirees and seniors find ourselves in.

First and foremost of concern is the Trump proposal to slash \$billions from Medicare. As we age retirees and seniors will require medical attention, some very comprehensive, at an enormous cost. Without a strong funded Medicare in many cases those medical expenses would result in poverty or death. Those are the stark facts. It is unconscionable that this administration and his lap dog Republican Senators are proposing these massive cuts when increasing funding and benefit enhancement is what is required. It is essential that a Democrat majority must be maintained in the House Of Representatives as a barrier to these proposals, while attention is focused on turning the Senate in to a Democrat veto proof majority.

The administration also has their sights on slashing Social Security. Many Post Office retirees who retired under Civil Service have a Social Security component, and FERS retirees lean more heavily on Social Security. It is bad enough that our Social Security annuities are burdened by the Pension Offset provisions that "rob" annuitants from benefits earned in addition to and part of our Civil Service or FERS annuity. The administration obviously has no qualms in seeking to go after Social Security as well as Medicare. It is a heartless agenda aimed at us seeking to balance the budget and/or reduce the deficit on our backs.

SENIORS MUST BE AWARE OF AND OPPOSE THOSE INITIATIVES!

Seniors and retirees vote. That is a fact. While we can be counted on to continue that tradition, we must redouble our efforts in the 2020 election. We must maintain if not improve the Democrat majority in the House Of Representatives and wrest control from the lap dog Republican Trump Senate sycophants who support his anti senior agenda.

We will be called on as never before to support candidates that favor improving senior issues. Likewise, we will be called upon as never before to support a Democrat candidate for President. As that race is currently developing as this is written, there will a candidate who supports senior concerns for Medicare and Social Security. It will take nothing less than a major victory and complete turn around to reset the course that has been attacked by the current administration. We must insure that the hemorrhaging must stop and be reversed.

Not to be lost in our attention to the top of the ticket, we also have serious elections to the Congress as well in our area. Already there is unprecedented outside Republican support, including huge financial support, for Rep. Conor Lamb's opponent. The APWU and our Retiree Chapter has supported Lamb since he entered the political scene. Members in the 17th District are urged to get behind Lamb and support his reelection in any and all ways.

The ball is in our court. If we drop it in November we will suffer the consequences.

SHUT-IN LIST ~ Norbert Conway, Jeanne McCarthy, Laverne Heil, 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