



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

POST OFFICE BOX 39 ◊ SLOVAN ◊ PENNSYLVANIA ◊ 15078

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THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS...

Seniors, including you and me, as Retiree Chapter members, are living under a Sword of Damocles! That hyperbole is not overstating the condition in which we find ourselves. What condition, one may ask? Here are the facts: FACT - The world is under a pandemic caused by the corona virus. FACT - There is no known effective treatment for the disease, except for treating infected persons symptomatically. In too many cases the result is death. FACT - There is no vaccine to inoculate to prevent contracting the disease or mitigating it in any way. FACT - Seniors are at greater risk than the general population contracting the disease, and in most cases, it is fatal. FACT - For seniors with underlying medical issues, which most have, the dangers are even greater. FACT - Nursing/rehab facilities have a very high incident of infections, in many cases the highest. Many seniors wind up in those facilities. Many there who get infected die.

Medical authorities have developed these methods to protect ourselves: First and foremost, we are instructed to remain in our homes, and follow the guidelines of frequent hand washing and avoidance of others who may show symptoms of the disease. If we do find it necessary to leave the home, we are urged to wear a facial covering of the mouth and nose, and stay at least six feet apart from others. Forays away from the home should be avoided if at all possible.

CHAPTER ACTIVITY IS IMPACTED

Union activity, including Retiree Chapter activity, by its very nature, requires mass member gatherings. The recent Staples boycott that we engineered, saw the involvement of hundreds if not thousands of Union and retiree activists throughout Western Pennsylvania over the nearly three year period. Moreover, our Chapter has a solid core that joined other Unions in various demonstrations for their causes over the years. Our parties were another example of mass gatherings that had @ 150 members and guests seated around dining tables. We have already had to cancel the Mid Summer Blast in July. The United Labor Day Parades had our members first on the scene, with a pick-up vehicle to pick up marchers who tire before the end of the parade. State and regional APWU Union groups cannot meet this year, and the APWU Convention scheduled for August has been cancelled. Following the virus guidelines, all of these activities and more will not take place this year. For those that do, like the Labor Day Parade, if it goes, our participation is a non-starter because of age and infirmities.

Until the virus issue is resolved, the Chapter will have a much different operation. Since we don't have access to members through bulletin boards like we did when active in the Local, this method of communication will be the norm. Fortunately, all of our editing and printing gear is located in our bedroom, (with wife Charlotte's forbearance), there is no need to leave the home for newsletter preparation. We address envelopes using a data base and a single pass through method, and also are able to print newsletters in-house with a dedicated copier.

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CHAPTER ACTIVITY CONTINUED...

With the ability to do the newsletter prep work in-house, all that is left to complete the job is folding, stuffing envelopes, sealing, sorting, and mailing. For the stuffing, the Chapter was breaking in assistance until the protocol of protection became so limited that introducing others into the process seemed to present unneeded infection dangers, so that assistance was temporarily terminated. Along with wife Charlotte, we complete folding, stuffing, sealing, and sorting for our 550+ members. Charlotte completes the job by transporting the finished product to the Canonsburg Post Office for entry into the mail stream.

Life, however serious, is not without serendipity! When the Chapter was in early formation, we asked the Local to let us use a vacant office on the first floor of Local headquarters as a Chapter office. They refused the request. Fast forward to the present, if we had established operations there we would have been shut down by the requirement to remain in the home. Que Sera, Sera!

Our Chapter probably publishes newsletters more frequently than any other Chapter. Dating back to our service with the Local, it has always been our belief that sending information into member's homes was and is a very effective method of communication. Sharing that information with other entities in the APWU Postal Press Association is a policy of the Association.

You as a member of the Chapter may notice an increase in our publication, so as to keep you as fully informed as possible. The pressure by many to treat the economy as if the virus almost doesn't exist will have serious consequences on senior groups, including our Chapter. The ultimate effect on us is obviously unknown at this time, but you can be assured that it will not be good. We have national political leadership, read the Trump administration, that suggests drinking Lysol, or shoving a lamp into our bodies, or taking medications that produce harmful side effects, to combat the virus. As this is written 100,000+ Americans have already been killed in the country by exposure to the virus. And more are sadly coming.

WHAT NEXT?

Within a matter of minutes watching news channels, predictions of progress in vaccine production and inoculation ranged from a few months to over three years. Which ever prediction is more accurate, seniors are in for a long haul. At our ages it is likely that many of us will die from other issues before the virus gets us, if we adhere to the protocols. Nevertheless, some of us will pass as a result of the virus no matter how careful we are. In any event we are faced with months if not years of forced home domicile, if we are able to adhere to the restrictions.

In the meantime, the virus will continue to take it's toll.

In the 1300's in Europe during the bubonic plague, the situation got so bad that people died in the streets. Others scouted the cities for the bodies, gathered the bodies into carts, then took the bodies to mass graves, without identifying who they were. One can only hope and pray that it won't get that bad here, but there are no guarantees. Follow the rules! Be safe.

SHUT-IN LIST ~ Robert Gesk, Norbert Conway, Jeanne McCarthy, 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