

# QUARTERLY NEWS DIGEST

Vol. 32, No. 2

*Postal Workers Serving Postal Workers Since 1891*

July-September, 2017

National Director

Wayne Maurer

## We Are All About Family



Welcome to the latest APW-ABA *Quarterly News Digest*. I hope this edition finds all of you well and I thank you in advance for taking the time to look over our publication. This spring has been an extremely busy season with all the state conventions and educational conferences taking place. It is a pleasure to see familiar friends within the APWU as well as making new friends along the way. My article for this issue is brief but I hope you will find it useful. I want to discuss exactly what the APW-ABA is, and how we differ from the “others” you see at various APWU functions. I don’t use the word “others” with any disrespect whatsoever, however I sometimes hear that there is some confusion about what various companies provide to the APWU membership.

The first thing that sets us apart

from other companies is that we are the ONLY APWU member owned and operated association that provides benefits to APWU members. Along with myself, every board member and regional representative of the APW-ABA, is either an active postal employee AND APWU member or retired postal employee AND APWU member. No other company that provides benefits to postal employees can make that claim. Second, the current 63,000 members of the APW-ABA own and have a stake in the operation of the association. The APW-ABA Constitution mandates a national convention to coincide with the APWU National convention every two years and our delegates are made up of the membership of the APW-ABA. No other company can make that claim either. The entire makeup of how our association is operated is through the deliberations and decisions of the delegates at our national convention and then those decisions are carried out between conventions by our board of directors and myself, all APWU members. This is the major and all important difference between us and everyone else out there.

The revenue generated by the APW-ABA goes into conducting the operation of the APW-ABA along with our OPEIU staff on a day-to-day basis, promoting and advertising the benefit plans we offer to the membership and most importantly, paying claims to our members when they are disabled, dismembered or die due to an accident of external force. We have no stockholders to answer to, there is no sales commission to be made and every APW-ABA board members’ salary is noted in our Constitution. Whether the APW-ABA has 20,000

members or 120,000 members, our salaries are the same. Being a non-profit association has both its pros and cons. The other companies out there are “for profit” companies that do quite well for themselves. Yet, they have no genuine ties to the APWU. All this should be under-

you that our board members, our staff and I continually work at controlling costs to the association wherever possible. When I sent out my first *Quarterly News Digest* last fall, I reduced the amount of copies going to each local and asked if anyone wanted extra copies, to please advise me of



stood next time a company is offering a free raffle or gift card just for giving them your name, phone number and e mail address. The APW-ABA never “cold calls” a member in any form of communication. That isn’t the way business should be conducted. The next time a member gets a knock at the door or a phone call at whatever hour, it will not be from us, unless the member has requested us to reach out to them regarding a specific matter they wish to discuss.

I have only been your National Director for ten months but I can assure

such. Taking my survey a bit further, we are conducting a contest. I’m asking that you take a moment and respond back to me on whether you feel our *Quarterly News Digest* is useful or not. Please respond “yes” or “no” to [nationaldirector@apw-aba.org](mailto:nationaldirector@apw-aba.org). From the responses received we will be drawing two names at random and they will each receive a \$100 Visa gift card. The deadline for responses is August 31, 2017. Thank you all for your support of the APW-ABA and please have a safe and very happy summer.

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Vice President

Jenny Gust

# One Thing You Can Forget

The summer months are upon us and sometimes it seems like life speeds up during this time. We try so hard to cram and pack everything in while the weather is good and the sun is shining. Now you have to remember that I live in Ohio, so summer is very much looked forward to here. I realize that in other parts of the country you have severe heat along with that beautiful sunshine that you might not appreciate quite as much! But right about now the living is good here!

While you are keeping busy with yard work make sure to take care so you don't get injured or hurt yourself. Mowing the lawn, weeding the flower or vegetable beds, pulling the hose close to where you need it, cleaning out the garage or shed. Accidents can happen so don't forget to be careful.



More things to not forget? Heading to the beach, take sunscreen! Going to a cookout, take potato salad, coleslaw or baked beans! Heading to

a wedding, take a card with cash and your best wishes for the new couple. Going to the zoo, take your camera. Taking off on vacation or going to an amusement park, take an extra pair of comfortable shoes. Yes, there are lots of things you need to not forget!

One thing you can forget is your APW Accident Benefit Coverage! Or at least forget it until you need it. While we hope you won't need it, we got you covered 24/7 - 365 days a year. If you have an accident we are here to take care of you. Filing a claim is quick and easy and you are welcome to call the office for help. 1-800-526-2890 or check us out on the web, [www.apw-aba.org](http://www.apw-aba.org).

I wish you all a beautiful, sunny & delightful summer! Take care.

**AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS**



**ACCIDENT BENEFIT ASSOCIATION**

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The editors of the APW-ABA *Quarterly News Digest* reserve the exclusive right to edit, amend or delete any article considered to be destructive to its goals of unity and union spirit.



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# APW-ABA History: Railway Mail Clerks Led The Way



branch of the post office.

This exhibit was interesting as it not only shows a typical railway workroom floor, it also allows visitors to try their hand at sorting sample mail into designated holdouts marked on letter cases. I had to chuckle as I overheard other visitors say "This doesn't make sense; the holdouts aren't in any order". Yep, just like I recall the first time I sat

in transport, but sorting mail was only half the job. Imagine spending your working hours speeding through the countryside inside a boxcar-like mail car; sorting mail, and trying to read the addresses while being jostled from side to side with the motion of

each gave \$5 (which in the late 1800's was a considerable amount of money) and set up their own corporation. The National Association of Railway Postal Clerks was incorporated under the laws and statutes of New Hampshire on December 12, 1898 and for-

In our crazy, fast paced world where tweets and emails serve as official notices and set policies, it's good that there are still museums that house our collective history. During a recent trip to Washington D.C., I was able to visit the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum, which is located in the basement of the old Post Office building across the street from Union Station. And, yes, like most postal employees, once I clock out from work I usually don't want to talk "post office". But this place is different.

True to its name, the Postal Museum houses small and large collections that contain anywhere from postal stamps and buttons to various postal vehicles, including a stagecoach, motorized postal vehicles, and Air Mail planes that were built for and operated by the old Post Office Department. Of particular interest as an officer of the ABA, the museum also houses a rebuilt railway post office mail car that depicts the working conditions of Railway Mail Clerks who worked for the Railway Mail Service (RMS)

in front of an Outgoing case when I was first hired; except my experience was in an air conditioned building with sort of adequate lighting, nowhere near the working conditions that RMS clerks faced in a moving rail car as it sped between cities

Information about the RMS clerks from the Smithsonian states that they were first utilized to sort mail between cities by the Post Office as early as 1832, with their heyday being between 1864 until they were phased out in 1977. By the 1890s, mail was being carried by the Railway Mail Service (RMS) through every state in the contiguous United States. And, like the modern day Internet, the RMS, was a communication system that relied on a complex network, with interconnecting routes to transfer content from origin to destination, all through a system of decentralized mail processing

A job as a RMS clerk was reported to be highly sought after and fulfilling, but working on a moving train was sometimes hazardous. RMS mail sacks were opened and sorted while



the train. Then, hearing a series of blasts on the whistle, knowing that you're approaching the depot where the train will slow down and you must reach out of the railway car doorway and hang the sack of mail on a hook. Hopefully you will get it right on the first try and in the process avoid hooking your thumb, finger, arm or your sleeve and get pulled out the door onto the tracks. And, remember that these were years before OWCP and safety committees.

This is what the Railway Mail Clerks faced daily. There were not many insurance companies willing to insure workers with such high accident risk. As such, a group of postal workers decided to get together and

mally opened for business on December 14, 1898, insuring members and potential members for accidents. A final name change to American Postal Workers Accident Benefit Association occurred on September 5, 1972.

It took people looking out for their own to eventually form our organization, the ABA. That initial coverage has been expanded to include injuries caused by accidents that might occur either on or off the job. With this in mind, the ABA of today is not that different from that of when it was formed. And, as whatever ghosts might occupy the railway display at the Smithsonian would say, our hope was and is for safe and healthy working and living conditions.

## 2017 Award Recipients of the APW-ABA Tosches, Hartos, Johnson Memorial Scholarships



Brendan Malone

Dear Mr. Maurer,

I was very excited to receive notification that I have been awarded one of the Michael Tosches/Tom Hartos/Eugene Johnson Memorial Scholarships for 2017. I very much appreciate the generosity of the APW-ABA in offering scholarships to help offset the cost of college.

I am a 2017 graduate of Holliston High School. During my high school career, I was a member of the Holliston Panthers football team that won the Division Super Bowl in 2014 and 2015. I also played Freshman baseball and am a First-Class Boy Scout. I will be attending Wentworth Institute of Technology in the fall and majoring in Construction Management.

With sincere thanks,  
Brendan Malone

The APW-ABA would also like to congratulate our 2nd scholarship winner, John Allen Carpenter, son of ABA member James Carpenter, of the San Angelo, TX Area Local #1868. Best of luck in your future endeavors John.

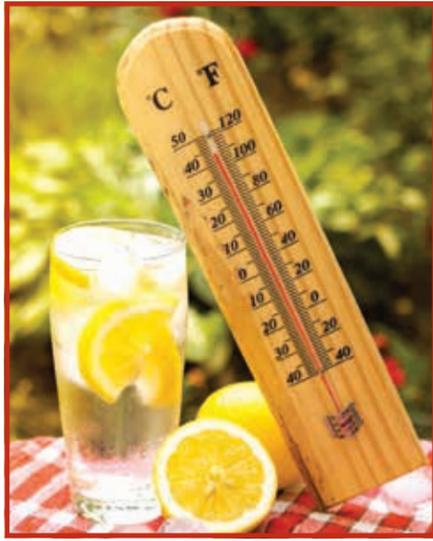
Southern Region Director

Larry Sorrells

# It's Summertime, Be Careful

Hello to my APW-ABA Brothers and Sisters.

Hope you are having a great Spring and Summer. This is a beautiful time of the year to be outside enjoying nature, vacationing, and working in the garden or yard. It is also a time of year when we have to be careful. Accidents are probably more likely to happen this time of year, due to the activities mentioned above. When doing the outside chores, take your time and take breaks to avoid being exhausted. When you are tired, hot, and aggravated with what you are doing, relax. These can be the times when you do not position the ladder correctly or get careless with the lawn mower. Take precaution when using machines that will cut you. Also, stop and take breaks when you are on that long drive and maybe drink something



with some caffeine in it. You need to be alert and wide awake while driving!

Be alert when you are working outside or hiking. Watch for bee's nests in the area. Hornets and wasps normally

build nests above ground in trees and rafters while yellow jackets and some others build underground and enter and exit through a small hole. Also, this is the time of year for snakes to be out. Learn to identify poisonous snakes and know which ones are residents of your area. Many snakes are beneficial and should be left alone. Black snakes and king snakes actually keep poisonous snakes out of the area and under control. Other snakes help keep rodents and insects under control. Ticks can be a serious problem this time of year. If you are bitten by a tick, it needs to be removed. The internet can give you tips on that. You may have to go to the doctor if the tick is inside the ear or imbedded under the skin. If bitten by a tick you should mark the date on the calendar and let family members know. The reason for this is to tell your

doctor if you get fever and flu-type symptoms. Evidently Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever is difficult to detect and victims are often treated for flu, colds, etc. This disease, in addition to Lyme's Disease can be fatal if not treated. Protect your skin from the sun with sun screen, caps, and long sleeves if needed. Keep yourself hydrated with water and other liquids, heat stroke is a killer. Learn to identify plants that are poison to the touch and avoid them. Be extra careful when boating or wading. You can drown or get bitten by something bad if those animals are present in the area. Be careful when using the grill or building campfires. These precautions are not to scare you, but to make your summer or your trip enjoyable and not a disaster. Take care, Lord knows we do not need to lose any family, friends, or Union members.

Northeastern Region Director

Scott Hoffman

# Once Again, A Call To Arms

Dear Sisters, Brothers, Stewards.

This article is a "Call to Arms". The Service has announced intentions to cut 3500 jobs in the Northeast Area in the Clerk craft. They will accomplish this by indiscriminately reverting any vacated or residual positions. These will be bids opened up by the bidding process, retirements, deaths, resignations and removals. The purpose is clear; reduce the conversions of PSEs to career, make life difficult to induce voluntary retirements, and simply reduce their manpower costs and numbers.

How can they possibly maintain customer service by doing so, you ask! Answer is – they can't! Truth is – THEY DON'T CARE! The branch of postal management that is responsible for staffing and labor costs is ruling the roost. The mandate from postal headquarters is to CUT. They have empowered this branch of management to do so. They set up monetary incentives for this branch. Local management, and I mean from the District Manager to the supervisor in your location, have no real say in it. They are on this ride, as well. They have no power.

Some local management will try to convince you they have some sway. They don't. They may try to convince you to "be a good team player", or "if we work harder for now, it will go better for us in the future". IT WON'T. You are being lied to, to make life easier for them. It is time to realize what team you are really playing for. It is clearly the job of the workers to save the Service from itself. Just like we had to with Staples, which was the biggest threat ever to the health and longevity of the Postal Service. Management as a whole was for it; we were not. We saved the Service from itself, for not only our continued employment, but also for the public who we were designed to serve. We are a public ser-

vice, not a corporate, private, money maker.

It is not time to panic, it is time to wake up. APWU has the antidote to this venomous course of action. Just like a real antidote, it takes time. The body will suffer for a bit, it will be sick, but it will be restored. We have the tools to re-establish the lost jobs; we have the winning formulas. We need the members and stewards to hand us the ingredients to make the antidote. We need you to grieve, report and, most of all, follow the rules and regulations. Usually you only hear of a rule or regulation when the boss is sprouting one he claims you broke. Management is very selective of the rules they seem to know, or want to enforce only the ones convenient – at that very moment, or one that falls on your shoulders.

However, the fact is that most rules and regulations are management's responsibility. They are in place to protect all parties involved – us, them, and especially, the public, by ensuring service and standards are upheld. Amnesia runs rampant in management for those rules. Look at your registry case security, accountable items; management's responsibility to ensure employees are on correct operation numbers to properly account for all aspects of necessary work performed. They will encourage scan falsification on all-up times, boxlines, arrival and attempted scans, because they will not have the manpower to do it on time, properly and by the rules. This is where we step in. GRIEVE. REPORT. This shows something is wrong, it needs to be fixed. Local management can't fix it; Regional and National management

don't want it fixed. This is their plan. We have to prove it needs to be fixed and force it down their throats.

Volumes of grievances, documenting problems, falsification, not following established rules, regulations and protocol is part of the antidote. You will be directly affected by these cuts. You will now start to notice annual leave denials because you lost a body where you work. You will be harassed for sick leave use, regardless of your history, because



now they can't afford you to be sick. They will try to force you to do the work of two, or three! If you do, you are not only a sucker, but a traitor. This is equal to ignoring early stage cancer, not addressing the problems to try to cure it, but allowing it to fester unchecked, rotting away the core. They will try to farm away our work to other crafts, or have the supervisor steal segments of our work. DO NOT LET IT HAPPEN. GRIEVE IT! Give statements. Part of their plan is to count on our apathy, lack of fortitude, or "go along to get along" mentality. Those are fatal attributes.

They will manipulate overtime rules. Even though the workload everywhere is the same, or maybe growing due to package and parcel work, they will expect somehow that the work will

be done without penalty pay, or expansion of NTFT hours, or PSE hours, at the expense of the overtime desired list, or job creation. These are not only winning issues that put money in our pockets, but are also indicators of problems. GRIEVE IT. Be aware that attendance problems will be handled more aggressively and harshly. Upper management will not allow local management to have a heart. It is a win-win scenario in their eyes. They can shed what they feel is a problem child, and then also kill the job that was vacated by the removal.

I cannot begin to enumerate all of the ancillary problems and violations that will occur due to short-staffing, but they will be clear to all of us. They will affect all of us. The fight belongs to all of us. Part of my job as Local President is to report back what I see from my scouting missions. This is what I see, what I know. I would not be doing my job if all my reports were rosy and all good news.

In good times merely paying dues is good enough. In tough times it means all hands on deck. It is time for full involvement. Full involvement means engaging in the grievance procedure, attending rallies called by the union, participating in the political process, and maybe even stepping up for a stewardship. There is no magical benevolent force that will just appear and make it right. The force necessary is our membership united and involved. Our senior and retired brothers and sisters have gone through times like these before. They fought, and survived. It is also our job to leave behind a Postal Service and functioning union for the future. God forbid we be known as the ones that rolled over, snuck out the back door, and left nothing behind.

Give the APWU your involvement and we will give you victory!

In Unity.

## Northeastern Region Director

David E. Daniel

# Safety Is About You And Your Family's Wellbeing

The Postal Service has historically given the idea of safety a bad name. Lip service "safety talks" and Committees have proven to be a ruse to document criteria for disciplinary action if an employee ultimately had a "related" accident. Supervisors issued canned policies like, "all accidents are preventable". Then they cut hours and workers to the point that the stress, rush, customer pressure and innate desire of workers to do a decent job makes working safely impossible.

Well, I am here to tell you that all accidents are not preventable. You can't control what the "other guy" does and you can't overcome the fact that we are all fallible human beings. Accidents DO and WILL occur. It

is, however, a smart thing to try and avoid accidents and learn from the unfortunate experiences of others to

prevent you and your family having to deal with tragedy, injury, loss of income and quality of life. So be aware

that safety is not about statistics and awards, its about protecting yourself and your family's wellbeing.

The Accident Benefit Association, APWU Health Plan and other benefits under the APWU umbrella, are in place to help care for you in the event the unfortunate should happen.

The ABA costs just 5 cents a day for 100% local members and about 9 cents per day for individual members. It is a benefit that you can't afford NOT to have. Locals can provide 100% ABA coverage to their members just by passing a motion at a local meeting. Not only is joining the ABA a great recruiting tool, it's also easy, inexpensive and will serve every member all the time.

In Union Spirit.



## Eastern Region Director

David Dunkle

# Increase Membership And Save Money On ABA Dues By Becoming A 100% APW-ABA National, Local Or State Organization

Dear Brothers and Sisters.

In addition to being your APW-ABA Eastern Region Director and serving ABA members in New Jersey, Washington D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Delaware, I am also the President of the KYOWVA Area Local which serves APWU members living in Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia.

While the Value Plan coverage is the ABA's cheapest accidental injury plan, my 30 plus years' experience as a Union Officer has taught me that more members sign up in the APWU when they find out our local is a 100% ABA local with Advantage Plan coverage. This Plan gives us a reduced rate on premiums and costs only \$3.00 per member, per pay period. The **Advantage Plan** pays \$24 dollars a day for disability due to an accident and also provides dismemberment benefits and a \$10,000 accidental death benefit. The Value Plan pays \$12 dollars a day and includes a \$6,000 accidental death benefit.

To become a 100% ABA Local, a motion at your local meeting must be made and passed to elect either the Value Plan or Advantage Plan coverage. Once that is done, give the ABA Home Office a call at 1-800-526-2890 and they will guide you the rest of the way.

The best thing about being a 100% APW-ABA local is using it as a tool to sign up new members. Here are some of the selling points:

1. The coverage begins when the first premium payment is made.
2. PSEs who have no right to GOVERNMENT health care coverage until one year after their hiring get ABA coverage as soon as they sign with a 100% APW-ABA union and first premium payment is made.
3. The very best news for any PSEs

or PTFs who are not guaranteed but 2 hours a pay period, is their 100% APW-ABA local will pay their bi-weekly premiums if such employee is in a non-pay status or do not make enough money a pay period to cover such premiums. Of course, any 100% local can advise the ABA national office they will no longer pay for their members in non-pay status, but my local never has because we usually only have 2 to 3 non-pay members a pay period and the ability to sign up new members outweighs the minor cost to the local.

### HOW TO OUTWIT YOUR EMPLOYER IF THEY FORCE YOU TO SIGN A MEDICAL FORM OR OTHER DOCUMENTS THROUGH THREATS OF DISCIPLINE OR REPRISALS

Usually, if someone pressures you to sign something the end result will be a detrimental effect on you. So never get in a hurry and be more intelligent than your employer. It's easy and here are the steps to follow and things to remember.

Most people trying to pressure you for your signature will do anything to get your signature including giving you a copy of what your being forced to sign, prior to you signing, if you tell them you will sign the paper if they give you a copy of what you're going to sign.

Below are steps to follow if pressured for your signature:

**Step 1:** When pressured to sign something ask for your steward. If you do not get a steward and employer continues pressuring you for signature and you feel if you don't sign document that discipline or other reprisals are imminent and to avoid such reprisals go to step 2.

**Step 2:** Tell your employer you

will sign it, but you first need a copy of what you are about to sign. This should be accomplished so you'll have

The employer will have no legal recourse against you because you have signed the document as ordered, but



a copy to give your steward once the situation ends. The employer in most cases will get you a copy quickly because they are so eager to attain your signature. Then go to step 3.

**Step 3:** After you receive the copy, stick it in your pocket or somewhere on your body which will cause them to be subject to a felony, if they try to take it from you.

**Step 4:** Then take their form and very clearly write the words "SIGNED UNDER DURESS" which renders the document worthless in arbitration or litigation proceedings. Then under or close to these words sign your signature anyway you like. You have a right under U.S. Constitution ( Freedom of Expression ) to sign your signature anyway you see fit and this protects you again should questions/threats be raised by employer regarding your signature being different from ones they are familiar with.

rendered it invalid by signing it under duress. In most situations the employer may not realize what you just accomplished or possibly may not look at your signature until later in their office. As soon as this incident is over and you are in a safe place pull the copy out and write the words signed under duress and your signature as closely as you can to how your signed the document the employer took and contact your steward and provide the steward with a copy of the document and wait for further instructions or comments from your steward.

### POSTAL EMPLOYEES WHO CAN PROVE NOTIFICATION OF THEIR DISABILITY TO USPS AS DEFINED IN REHABILITATION ACT CANNOT BE LEGALLY FORCED INTO ANOTHER CRAFT WITHIN THE USPS

There is a little known fact out there

*continued on page 6*

Central Region Director

Edward J. Brennan

# Retired Or Soon To Be? Read This

Recently I was the speaker at an annual retiree luncheon in St. Louis and was amazed by the interesting stories told and the questions asked by some of the attendees after my speech. It was my first experience in my 50 plus years as a Union officer that I had people line up to speak to me or have their picture taken with me. It was truly a lifetime experience, but most of all, it brought to my attention the interest of retirees in the Accident Benefit Association.

One retiree commented that he was a guest from a 100% ABA local and when he retired he lost his ABA coverage because no one told him he could take it with him. I gave him and many other's applications to fill out and also gave out the number

to the ABA Home Office. Another person asked how they could benefit from the ABA coverage since they are retired and would not lose time from work. It was like someone shut off the ABA information valve upon their retirement. I was totally surprised by the lack of knowledge these retirees had about the ABA.

Returning home I immediately called the ABA office and suggested that someone prepare an informational piece explaining exactly how a retiree could join or rejoin the ABA. This item has been well taken care of and is available to present and future retirees. If you are about to retire and have questions about how to retain your ABA coverage, please call the home office at 1-800-526-2890 and one of the ladies in

the office will be glad to help you.

Remember, accidents can still happen, even after retirement. So

pick up your phone and call the ABA today. Your family will thank you tomorrow.



# Increase Membership And Save Money On ABA Dues . . .

*continued from page 5*

which can put a wrench in a USPS article 12 excessing action if there is a junior employee at your facility or APO with a qualifying disability as defined in the Rehabilitation Act and the Union or Employee can prove the Employer has been notified of said qualifying disability prior to or during the excessing process at a facility. The federal provision I speak up in certain cases restricts the USPS from putting an employee with a qualifying disability in another craft. If this occurs and the disabled employee is junior to others slated to be excessed than the

other senior employees should not be excessed until the disabled employee is placed in their same respective craft in another section or office as applicable.

This provision has also been used successfully in forcing the USPS to give an employee disability retirement in cases where the USPS was trying to force the disabled employee into another craft.

The provision I speak of is U.S. Code › Title 5 › Part III › Subpart G › Chapter 83 › Subchapter III › § 8337 which states in part the following:

(a)An employee who completes 5

years of civilian service and has become disabled shall be retired on the employee's own application or on application by the employee's agency. Any employee shall be considered to be disabled only if the employee is found by the Office of Personnel Management to be unable, because of disease or injury, to render useful and efficient service in the employee's position and is not qualified for reassignment, under procedures prescribed by the Office, to a vacant position which is in the agency at the same grade or level and in which the employee would be able to render useful and efficient service. **For the purpose of the preceding sentence, an employee of the United States Postal Service shall be considered not qualified for a reassignment described in that sentence if the reassignment is to a position in a different craft or is inconsistent with the terms of a collective bargaining agreement covering the employee.**

The M-16 Medical Evaluation form ( items 3 and 12 ) which I developed in the late 1900s has been used many times successfully to determine if an employee has a disability as defined in the Rehabilitation Act. Call or text me at 304 633-7221, supply me with your email and I can bleep it to you.

### HOW THE M-5 FORM CAN ASSIST A LIGHT DUTY EMPLOYEE JUMP THROUGH THE HURDLES CREATED IN THE 1987 LIGHT DUTY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

On September 1, 1987 the APWU and USPS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding related to Light Duty Employees. While the settlement made great strides in the Light Duty world it also created hurdle(s) that the USPS use to this day when they want to prevent a light duty employee from bidding and attaining a bid job. One of those hurdles was the fact the employee was required to provide proof from a doctor

they would be able to fully assume the bid position within 6 months before or during the bid cycle, if the USPS requested the employee to provide it. This put the ball in the USPS's court because it allowed them to let their fair haired creatures bid while asking the employee who they disliked to jump the medical evaluation hurdle at the time of bid realizing in most cases the employee would not be able to get the appropriate medical paperwork to jump the hurdle during short bid cycles of 10 to 15 days at many locals.

To my knowledge the Union never developed a form with instructions so employees could preempt such skullduggery played by managers. I developed a form long ago that has been used successfully to get employees on light duty into the job of their dreams. I now supply the form to you in this article. The form has a place to send it in certified mail to USPS or have your supervisor sign your copy. To make it easy on your doctor when completing the form for a particular job you must remember the doctor does not know the USPS job titles or their job description which you can find and supply to the doctor so the Doctor can have a better understanding of the job and complete the form hopefully to the employee's satisfaction. The Job Title and Job Description and Job Qualifications can be found on the USPS BQ-net at: [http://eseries.apwu.org/bqnet/bq\\_alpha.cfm](http://eseries.apwu.org/bqnet/bq_alpha.cfm) to assist you in the completion of the form.

*Note: Articles written by me are based on my opinion, experience and particular fact circumstances in individual case(s) and should not be relied upon as advice for all situations because each case can have different mitigating circumstances. In short, you should never solely rely on info in my article(s) before taking an action. You should always confer with your Union steward or attorney about all the facts in your case and let them decide the best course of action for you to take related to any issue.*

**INFORMATION REGARDING WHETHER A LIMITED / LIGHT DUTY EMPLOYEE CAN FULLY ASSUME THE CORE DUTIES OF A U.S.P.S. BID POSITION**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Certified #: \_\_\_\_\_

TO: Installation Head / Designee  
United States Postal Service

Subject: Patient, \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir / Madam;

I recently examined the above named patient and the patient informed me he/she will or has bid on a position within the U.S. Postal Service. The Title of this U.S. Postal Service position is:

---

**Position title from USPS handbook EL-201 or supplement thereof**

The patient has explained the principal assignment area and the full duties of the assignment .

Based on the information I have, it is my decision that the above named patient can fully assume the duties of the above cited bid position as listed below.

With reasonable accommodations

Without reasonable accommodations

Print Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Physician's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Form created by Dave Dunkle APWU

**Instructions:** Go to the United States Postal Service BQ-net on the Web which has all the proper names for USPS jobs with a job description the doctor can read to determine if the employee can do the job within 6 months with or without light duty limitations. Go to: [http://eseries.apwu.org/bqnet/bq\\_alpha.cfm](http://eseries.apwu.org/bqnet/bq_alpha.cfm)

**FORM M-5**

TO BE COMPLETED BY USPS SUPERVISOR RECEIVING THIS DOCUMENT AND RETURNED TO SAID PATIENT / EMPLOYEE ON THIS FORM

\_\_\_\_\_  
USPS SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
RECEIVED DATE & TIME

Central Region Director

Keith M. Richardson

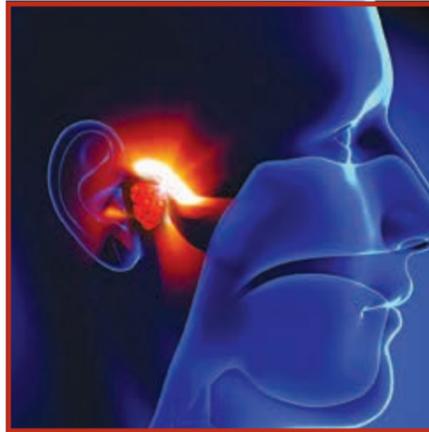
# Practice Workplace Hearing Safety

Greetings Sisters and Brothers.

Hearing loss is one of the most common disabilities in the United States because there are no warning signs, which means practicing workplace hearing safety can help to prevent these problems. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 30 million workers experience hazardous noise while on the job. Recent innovations reduce or eliminate workplace-induced hearing loss. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 44 percent of carpenters and 48 percent of plumber's experience workplace-induced hearing loss. Hearing impairment costs the government billions of dollars on social security disability and Workers' Compensation settlements.

## WORKPLACE HEARING SAFETY TIPS

- Take control of your hearing



in the workplace by practicing workplace hearing safety and monitoring your exposure to hazardous noises.

- Use protective earwear whenever you are working in loud environments, such as on the factory line or in production environments.

- Decrease the length and exposure of the noise you do experience, because hearing loss is irreversible by regeneration or medical procedure.

- Utilize and wear hearing conservation devices, such as earplugs and earmuffs. Ensure that the device has an airtight seal, which ensures that the loud sounds will not penetrate your eardrums.

- Use noise-cancelling headphones if you are recording live music. The ear protection devices should be used at work, as well as when you are home performing routine tasks, such as mowing the lawn or using

chainsaws to trim foliage.

- Extremely hazardous noises experienced up close, such as a firecracker, can damage your hearing permanently on the spot.

In closing, I'd like to announce to you all that this past May I was elected to serve as the President of the Chicago Area Local 0001. I am honored and humbled that the sisters and brothers of Chicago saw fit to elect me to lead them in these most trying times. Also, it's with great sadness that I announce the untimely passing of my mother Betty J. Richardson who died the day after I was sworn in as president. I'm glad that my mom lived long enough to see me accomplish a dream of mine.

In Solidarity.

West Region Director

Marty Schneider

# Summer Rules For Safety



Summertime sure is lovely! The beautiful outdoors beckons. Whether it's a favorite swing, a backyard bar-

beque or even a home improvement project, summer is the time to do it! And remembering safety before the

ride or cookout or project is imperative.

Check all the hinges and ropes or chains on a swing before using it for the season. Repair or replace worn items as well. Barbeques should be inspected for rust. And if it's a gas grill, make sure the propane tank and line are in ship shape.

Now home improvement is a little out of my league; but brothers, cousins and good friends are usually willing to lend a hand with the age old temptation of food! (What better reason to crank up the grill?!)

I was watching a friend as he replaced some baseboards recently. One of the things he pointed out when using the table saw is NEVER push the wood through the saw with your fingers. Use a board for that specific

purpose. And if you are using a battery operated saw, make certain it's fully charged when you begin the task. Another safety reminder is to use eye protection when sawing, drilling, hammering etc. Flying debris travels unbelievably fast!

Always keep water away from electricity; like extension cords. And be most careful when using power tools and ladders! One's imagination could go really wild at that combination!

Last on the safety check list is the summer icon: the driving vacation. Prepping the vehicle for a long drive goes without saying. Fluids at peak levels; tires with correct air capacity and tread that's not below par; wiper blades fully operational - all are a must before a road trip.

Safety First! Be well – stay well.

West Region Director

Jim Alexander

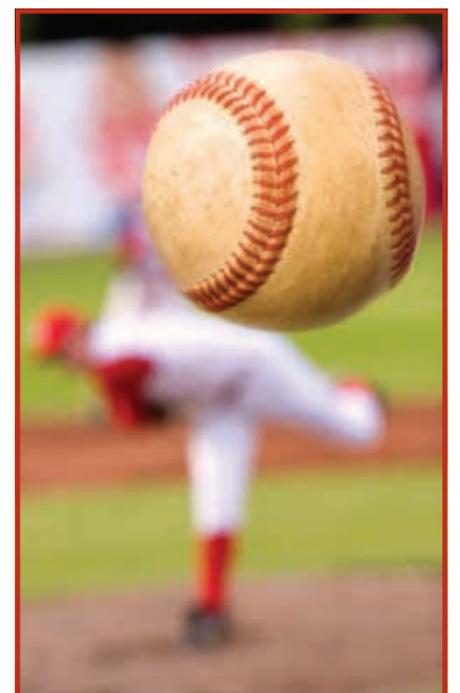
# Keeping Your Eye On The Ball

Like most kids growing up, I dabbled in sports of all kinds. Baseball, football, basketball – they all were enjoyable experiences. Indeed, later in life when I picked up the low-impact game of golf, the one common denominator throughout my exposure to sports was the lesson to “keep your eye on the ball.” It didn't matter that I wasn't gifted with pro-caliber talent at any given sport, in order to get the most out of my ability, keeping my eye on the ball was necessary. There is no doubt that we live in perilous times – more so than I can remember at any time in my life. Given the current political and social climate, the dangerous world we exist in affects everyone. It matters not whether one is a Republican, Democrat, Independent, whatever; the ideas proposed by political leaders seek to

change much that we take for granted and certainly are not good for us and those in our lives that we hold dearly. Our jobs, kids, sick and elderly family members are all vulnerable to attack. “Keeping your eye on the ball” is one of the more salient sports metaphors that can be used during these critical times. Whether one voted for or supports our current President and other political leaders generally, the fact remains that the ideas being floated by them are not in your best interests. Unless you're knocking down a million bucks a year or more, none of the legislative “fixes” by the President and Congress are in your best interest. We all must keep our eye on the ball as we trudge through these times. Being aware and knowledgeable of what is happening around us is the first step in

effectively coping and surviving the onslaught of draconian ideas being proposed by the rich and powerful that are currently running our great country. Health care, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, pensions and a plethora of other government programs meant to protect the most vulnerable in our society are under attack. We don't have to take it lying down though. If we care, we must fight. When we fight, we must know what we are fighting for. When we know what we are fighting for, we must know how to fight. Once we know how to fight, we must align ourselves with others who share our interests. It really doesn't matter the issue we focus on – when we keep our eye on the ball and engage in this great democracy, we will prevail.

Onward!



A M E R I C A N P O S T A L W O R K E R S

**APWU** ★ **ABA**

A C C I D E N T B E N E F I T A S S O C I A T I O N

### APWU MEMBER OWNED AND OPERATED BENEFITS AT A GLANCE

The Accident Benefit Association is easy and affordable to join. All members in good standing with the APWU and employed by the U.S. Postal Service, including associate members, are eligible to participate in the Plan. **AND**, you may also retain your ABA coverage upon retirement.

The following (3) ABA Plans are available to active and retired members and their spouses and can be obtained as a stand-alone benefit or you may combine the ABA PLUS Plan with either the Value Plan or the Advantage Plan.

★ **Value Plan** – (1) \$12 per calendar day for an injury resulting from an accident that totally disables the member and requires assistance in performing normal daily life functions. (2) Lump Sum Dismemberment benefits resulting from a covered accident. (3) \$6,000 accidental death benefit for the member. (4) A \$2,000 accidental death benefit for the non-member spouse of a member. (5) A \$2,000 accidental death benefit for the members’ unmarried dependent children up to and including the age of (26).

★ **Advantage Plan** – (1) \$24 per calendar day for an injury resulting from an accident that totally disables the member and requires assistance in performing normal daily life functions. (2) Lump Sum Dismemberment benefits resulting from a covered accident. (3) \$10,000 accidental death benefit for the member. (4) A \$2,000 accidental death benefit for the non-member spouse of a member. (5) A \$2,000 accidental death benefit for the members’ unmarried dependent children up to and including the age of (26).

★ **PLUS Plan** – Enhanced accidental death benefits in incremental amounts from \$20,000 to \$150,000 which may be obtained as a stand-alone benefit or combined with the Value Plan or the Advantage Plan. If the PLUS Plan is chosen with either the Value Plan or the Advantage Plan, the higher amount PLUS benefit replaces the accidental death benefit amount of the Value Plan or Advantage Plan. **(Retirees and Spouses are limited to a maximum of \$50,000 of PLUS Plan coverage)**

As you can see, we offer great benefits at the lowest prices:

**100% Local Member Rates**

(Local provides ABA benefit to member)  
**Value Plan** \$0.75 (per pay period)  
**Advantage Plan** \$3.00 (per pay period)

**NON-100% Local Member Rates**

(Member pays for ABA on their own)  
**Value Plan** \$1.25 (per pay period)  
**Advantage Plan** \$3.50 (per pay period)

**100% Full-Dues Cash Pay Rates**

(Retired member still paying Full Dues)  
**Value Plan** \$19.50 (annually)  
**Advantage Plan** \$78.00 (annually)

**Standard Member Cash Pay Rates**

(Retired member paying for ABA on their own)  
**Value Plan** \$2.75 (monthly) / \$33.00 (annually)  
**Advantage Plan** \$7.75 (monthly) / \$93.00 (annually)

**ABA PLUS RATES:**

\$20,000 - \$0.35 (per pay period) (\$9.10 annually)  
\$30,000 - \$0.45 (per pay period) (\$11.70 annually)  
\$40,000 - \$0.60 (per pay period) (\$15.60 annually)  
\$50,000 - \$0.75 (per pay period) (\$19.50 annually)

\$75,000 - \$1.13 (per pay period) (\$29.38 annually)  
\$100,000 - \$1.50 (per pay period) (\$39.00 annually)  
\$125,000 - \$1.90 (per pay period) (\$49.40 annually)  
\$150,000 - \$2.25 (per pay period) (\$58.50 annually)

For more information on how to join, or to request an Application for ABA Membership, please call the ABA Home Office at 1-800-526-2890 or 1-603-330-0282. You may also visit our website at [www.apw-aba.org](http://www.apw-aba.org)

**Contact us today!**