

# ABA NEWS DIGEST

Vol. 33, No. 2

*Postal Workers Serving Postal Workers Since 1891*

November, 2018

**National Director**

**Wayne Maurer**

## Increased Benefits Are On The Way



Welcome everyone to our year end holiday edition of the APW-ABA News Digest. Let me begin by wishing all APWU and APW-ABA members, their spouses and families a safe, healthy and happy holiday season. This year has flown by just as quickly as last year. Where did these two years go? I want to mention two very important matters with you. The first is this year's 2018 APW-ABA Convention in Pittsburgh. The turn out was on the light side due to the increased length of the work day at the APWU Convention since going from a five day convention to a four day convention. Additionally, the National APWU held its "night at the Pirates game" the same evening as our convention. Thank you to all those delegates who turned out to hear how their APW-ABA has been performing. Since be-

coming your National Director in August, 2016 we have decreased spending and cut expenses in dramatic fashion, with no harm to the membership. In the previous two year accounting cycle our expenses were \$3,876,293. During my first term as National Director the expenses for our association dropped to \$2,513,706. Our membership has remained steady (60,000+) and the number of Locals and States (258) who take advantage of enrolling their entire membership in one of our accident benefit plans enjoy a 40% discount on premiums. I am pleased to report that there are no plans whatsoever to ask for a premium increase. The Board of Directors and I have worked very hard to continue to strengthen the association these past two years. Our board lost two valuable members this past August. The Vice President position was merged into one of our Regional Director's positions pursuant to the actions of the delegates at our 2016 Convention. Jenny Gust who has served as our Vice President for many years decided to not seek election to any other positions on the board and has stepped down. Taking her place as Vice President is Keith Richardson who also serves the membership as a Central Region Director. Additionally, the APW-ABA lost National Director Emeritus Dave Daniel who most recently served as a Regional Director. Dave decided not to run for any position on the board and it goes without saying how much Dave contributed to the APW-ABA over the past twelve years, almost six of those years at the home office. I know we are still almost

two years out from our next convention in 2020 but please make plans to attend our convention in Los Angeles. The past three conventions have taken less than two hours to conduct and this is the one opportunity for the ABA delegates from around the country to come together to help form the

uary 1, 2019. Every Local and State in the APWU will receive a mailing highlighting these increased benefits. Anyone already enrolled in either the Value Plan or Advantage Plan need do nothing. The increased benefits will be automatically applied.

In addition to the increased benefits, we have negotiated with our underwriter to allow spouses of APW-ABA active members to obtain the same levels of Accidental Death Benefits (Plus Plan) as our active members. The premiums for spouses will continue to be the same as for the members, but now spouses will be able to purchase up to \$150,000 of coverage. In the past, spouses were limited to \$50,000 of coverage. We have had many



requests to see this Accidental Death Benefit increased for spouses and we are excited to be able to offer this increased level of coverage.

APW-ABA in a positive way moving forward. The second matter is one I'm quite happy to announce. For the first time since 1990 the APW-ABA is INCREASING some of our benefits to the membership with no additional premiums being charged. I have plans for even greater increases in benefits, but it has taken some time to restore the financial health to this association, and we need to be slow but sure in this process. There will be moderate increases to some of the categories of our Value Plan Dismemberment Lump Sum Benefits. There will be across the board dramatic increases to every category of the Advantage Plan Dismemberment Lump Sum Benefits, basically QUADRUPLING the new Value Plan Dismemberment amounts. Additionally, the Advantage Plan Accidental Death Benefit will increase from \$10,000 to \$24,000. These increased benefits will take effect Jan-

I'm also looking at the feasibility of increasing the Accidental Daily Disability benefit structure, but this will be much more costly than the increased benefits I've just announced. I'm hopeful that by the next convention we can have in place these additional benefit increases. As I begin my second term as National Director I promise to take the membership and this association as serious as when I first came to New Hampshire. Through your support at the many local and state events that I've been invited to, and attended, I'm excited to see what the next two years bring for our association. Until next time, thank you again for your participation within the APW-ABA.

In Unionism.

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# Happy Holidays

from the  
**APW-ABA Board Members and Office Staff**

**AMERICAN  
POSTAL  
WORKERS**



**ACCIDENT  
BENEFIT  
ASSOCIATION**

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The editors of the ABA 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.



**PROUD MEMBER**



## Home Office Staff \*

- Executive Assistant/Business Coordinator ..... **Melissa Potter**
- Accounts Receivable/Customer Service Coordinator  
(Associate Editor, ABA News Digest) ..... **Lisa Bado**
- Accounting Technician ..... **Kelly O'Neil**
- Claims Administrator/System Development Coordinator ..... **Jennifer Coelho**

\*Proud members of OPEIU Local 6

## Honorariums

- Hank Greenberg**  
National Director  
Emeritus (2004)
- Michael B. Ganino, Jr.**  
National Director  
Emeritus (2012)
- David E. Daniel**  
National Director  
Emeritus (2016)

President

Richard Phillips

# Congratulations APW-ABA Delegates For Another Productive Convention



(Boston Area Local)

As reported at the convention, changes to our Constitution & By-laws in 2014 and 2016 had helped us address the overall decrease in numbers of ABA members, which was a direct result of decreased numbers of APWU members over the past decade. Also, along with our normal monthly and yearly operating expenses there are federally mandated expenses,

especially regarding the funding of our pension plan, that must be met. Previous changes included:

- the scheduled elimination of the ABA's elected position of Vice President,
- providing the National Director with discretion to fill vacant Board positions,
- providing the National Director discretion to determine which Regional Directors to assign when attending APWU functions.

However, even with these changes in place, and in light of a well-managed operation that has reduced operating expenses over the past two years, we still needed to address additional Constitutional changes to improve our financial security.

- **RESOLUTION to change Article 6, Section 4. Duties of the Board of Directors, (m)**

**Intent:** To reduce the number of times each year the ABA News Digest Publications are required to be published, by eliminating the present language that read "Quarterly".

**Committee Recommendation:** Concurrence

**Resolution PASSED**

- **RESOLUTION to change Article 7, Section 2. Election of Delegates and Officers**

**Intent:** To add clarifying language to Article 7, Section 2 (b) for calculating the number of Delegates a Local or State shall be entitled to at the APW-ABA National Convention, by adding a cutoff date of March 1st of each convention year to be used for calculating the number of Local and/or State Delegates.

**Committee Recommendation:** Concurrence

**Resolution PASSED**

- **RESOLUTION to change Article 12, Section 2-A. 1**

**Intent:** To Add Clarifying Language to Article 12, Section 2-A. 1 to provide notice of available additional coverage for members, to Read:

An employed member: is designated as a full-dues paying member of the American Postal Workers Union, on the active employee rolls in the United States Postal Service and

1. Upon enrollment, may select either the Value Plan, or the Advantage Plan, **Plus Plan, Value Plan with ad-**

**ditional Plus Plan coverage, or the Advantage Plan with additional Plus Plan coverage.**

**Committee Recommendation:** Concurrence

**Resolution PASSED**

- **RESOLUTION to change Article 12, Section 2-A. 2**

**Intent:** To Add Clarifying Language to Article 12, Section 2-A. 2 to provide notice of available additional coverage for members, to Read:

An employed member: is designated as a full-dues paying member of the American Postal Workers Union, on the active employee rolls in the United States Postal Service and

2. May enroll his/her spouse in the ABA at either the Value Plan, or the Advantage Plan, **Plus Plan,**

term:

- National Director Wayne Maurer
- President Richard Phillips
- Director, NE Region Scott Hoffman
- Director, Eastern Region David Dunkle
- Director, Eastern Region Sherry McKnight
- Director, Southern Region Larry Sorrells
- Director, Southern Region Kenyon Beasley
- Director, Central Region Keith Richardson
- Director, Central Region Edward Brennan
- Director, Western Region Marty Schneider

For the third convention in a row the delegates at the APW-ABA Convention passed needed Resolutions that will streamline our organization and update offered benefits and services to our members.

Before I go any further with this report I would like to extend my personal thanks to those delegates who attended our convention following a busy day at the APWU National Convention, and foregoing a *Pirates vs Braves* baseball game that was going on simultaneously with our meeting. Included in this recognition are delegates Diane Slaughter (Chicago Area Local) and Reggie Maddox (Tampa Area Local), who served as Sergeant-at-Arms. As such, the attendance by these delegates allowed us to achieve a quorum, which made it possible for us to address the following important business.

## RECOGNITION OF STAFF MEMBERS

When I mention our "well-managed operation", I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the office staff at our headquarters office in Rochester, New Hampshire. It is important to note that over the past two years the number of staff members at our headquarters office actually decreased, yet they have stepped up and have continued to provide timely and professional services to our members. These staff members are:

Melissa "Missy" Potter, Executive Assistant

Kelly O'Neil, Accounting Tech

Lisa Bado, Accounts Receivable

Jennifer Coelho, Claims Administrator

... and they deserve our thanks and recognition for all they do.

## CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

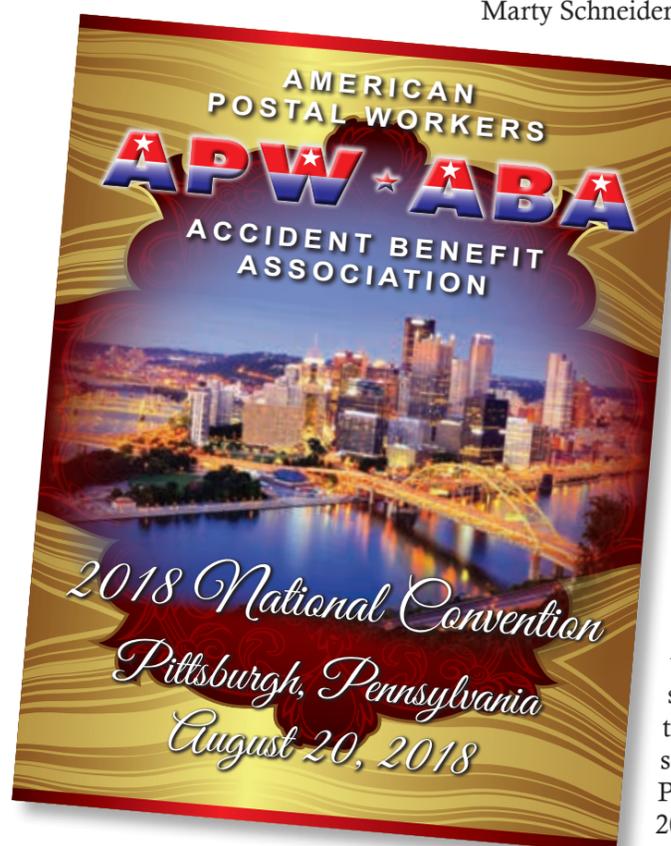
The Constitution Committee was comprised of the following:

Keith Richardson, Chairman, (Director, Central Region)

Larry Sorrells, (Director, Southern Region)

Kenyon Beasley, (Director, Southern Region)

Ned Hogan, Rank & File Member



NOTE: As of this writing the positions of Director, NE Region, and Director, Western Region are vacant.

## SELECTION OF A VICE PRESIDENT

In accordance with Article 5, Section 1, the Directors met during the ABA Convention and decided among themselves that Keith Richardson (Director, Central Region) would serve as the Vice President for the 2018-2020 term.

## SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

• **Fall Audit Committee** - In accordance with Article 20, Section 3, I appointed Marty Schneider (Director, Western Region) and Sherry McKnight (Director, Eastern Region) to perform the 2018 Fall Audit. This audit was conducted at ABA headquarters on October 9th. Their report and recommendations were forwarded to the National Director and the other Board members.

• **Reviews and Reports** - During the next few weeks National Director, Wayne Maurer, and I will be discussing (via phone and emails) needed updates for the *Field Guide for APW-ABA Board Members and Officers* (last updated 12/2016), as well as the *Policies for Full-Time ABA Officers* (last updated January 4, 2008). As usual, the drafts of these updated policies will be sent to each Board member for their review, along with a ballot for their vote to accept any changes.

With best wishes to all during the upcoming holidays, and for a safe and prosperous New Year, I remain, In solidarity.

**Value Plan with additional Plus Plan coverage, or the Advantage Plan with additional Plus Plan coverage.**

**Committee Recommendation:** Concurrence

**Resolution PASSED**

## HONORARY MEMBERSHIPS AWARDED

Pursuant to Article 14, the delegates PASSED 2 Resolutions to bestow Honorary ABA Membership to the following ABA members:

• **Vance Zimmerman**, who served as Director, Central Region, before his election as the APWU's Director of Industrial Relations

• **Jenny Gust**, who served as the ABA's Vice President for several years

## ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS FOR THE 2018-2020 TERM OF OFFICE

There was no need for an election to be conducted at the 2018 ABA National Convention as all positions were uncontested. As such, the following members will comprise the Board of Directors for the 2018-2020

Northeastern Region Director

Scott Hoffman

# The Postal Service Has Been Privatizing For Decades

Dear Sisters and Brothers.

Since this is an A.B.A. article, it should contain an element of safety; so here it is. Don't slip on the ice, and don't hurt your back shoveling too much, or lifting your new snow blower out of the box.

Now that that's done, I'd like to interject a dose of reality. The threat of privatization has never been higher. Now I know we have all heard this be-

assistance of our elected officials; Congressional Acts like the PAEA (Post Office Accountability & Enhancement Act) of 2006. This is the beauty that mandated the Postal Service to have to pay into a discretionary fund to amass 75 years worth of future employee health and retirement benefits. Yes, we are funding health and retirement benefits for people not born yet, and guess what! No other business, whether it be

and crisis to sell of/property and equipment, degrade service and, worse, lie to the public. The biggest lie of all is that the Postal Service uses the public's tax money. We don't. Not a penny. But this pesky fact does not stop those wanting to privatize from spreading the lies. Why would someone lie? Because there are billions to be made. Someone doesn't need to be a political, financial or economical

there is no excuse. You have to get involved. You have to vote your job. You have to protect your job. This is actually one of those rare instances where serving your own family's interest is also for the greater good.

God help the public if their Postal Service goes private! Prices through the roof; service in the toilet, and jobs no better than Walmart employees and paper routes. Get involved, and



fore, and we have dismissed it as folly. It can't happen to us. We are too big; too important. We provide a trusted service. The public actually likes us. We are even mentioned in the U. S. Constitution.

This is the uttering of folks who just don't get it. Fact is the Postal Service has been privatizing for decades. They have outsourced (a fancy term for hiring outside corporate interests to do our work) a tremendous percentage of clerical sortation work. They utilize Highway Contract Routes and vehicle maintenance, instead of using our drivers and mechanics.

They subcontract maintenance work out at every opportunity. They have directly and negatively impacted our work in all our crafts for decades. Yet, we refuse to see. They have employed the "death by a thousand cuts" strategy; each cut seemingly small and not lethal. But the sum of those cuts will be.

All of this has been accomplished with not only the blessing of our federally elected officials, but the hands-on

private or public, American or foreign, has to do this!

This 75 year tax, so to speak, had to be done in ten years. That's like saying you have a thirty year mortgage, but it has to be paid in three. Nobody but those salivating to get their corporate hands on our business could afford that, yet it exists.

This now is the crisis the right wing distorts as the "failing business, money losing, not sustainable enterprise, tax burden" propaganda tool to misinform the public. None of the above is true.

When you look at the actual operating expenses (and yes, factoring in the declines in certain types of mail), the Service itself made billions. That includes the output of all salaries, benefits, equipment, maintenance, supplies, and ass cushions for management. Everything. But when you now require the agency to pay this tax under this legislation, it looks like a loss. So this manufactured payment creates a manufactured crisis.

They use this manufactured debt

genius to figure this out. If the Postal Service was a money loser, then why would the greediest, self-serving leeches on this planet (corporate America) want to get their hands on us so bad?

Now, you don't have to believe me on this; just read the government released reports by this current administration. Reports researched and presented by right wing think tanks (which are funded by corporations) which call for the Postal Service to be discontinued, sold to the highest bidder, and have the services be performed by private enterprise, like it is in some other countries. That is a summary of the reports and findings, but I need to cut to the chase. They are coming for us hard and fast.

They are using our elected officials as their primary weapon. The misinformation fed and disseminated by the media is also an integral part of their arsenal. Those of us that don't know this already, have chosen to remain ignorant. If you haven't seen it, it's because you are too afraid to open your eyes. It's now being flaunted, so

educated. Merely paying union dues and hoping someone else gets it done won't work. Let your families, friends and neighbors know what's happening. Contact your Federal politicians and let them know what's happening. Don't assume anything. Let them know where you and your associates stand. Even our political friends need to be reminded.

Vote your job: Without a job with decent wages and benefits, it really doesn't matter if a wall gets built, who marries who, what bathroom some people use, or anything else. Without a job with decent wages and benefits, you and your loved ones will be working two jobs, never home, and won't have time to champion any causes, including raising your own family.

Get in the game, get involved, or your way of life will change, and not for the good. Oh yeah, unplug the toaster before fishing out your toast with the fork.

Be safe. Enjoy the holidays with your family, but get involved.

In Union Unity.

Eastern Region Director

David Dunkle

# I Love The APW-ABA



APW-ABA which has paid out millions in claims and remains solvent today.

My local is a 100% ABA local with the Advantage Plan and I'm so proud to announce that with the new changes to be implemented by our Board of Directors effective on or about January 1, 2019, the Advantage plan gives you a better bang for your buck and there was no increase in premiums. For Example, the previous 10,000 accidental death benefit has been changed to 24,000 and in every category of dismemberment the pay out at least doubled. The Advantage Plan pays out \$24.00 per day when an employee gets injured accidentally which helps us sign up new members with greater frequency when they find this out. If you have ABA coverage and your local does not, you can simply go to your local APWU meeting and make a motion for your local to join the ABA Advantage or Value Plan. If it passes, your President will only need to call our great staff at the APW-ABA headquarters in New Hampshire and soon you and all your local brothers and sisters will enjoy not only the reduced rates, but the good feeling you'll get knowing that your motion caused others to be covered like yourself.

Brothers and Sisters, if you're tired of your local spending money on parties or other things that some, but not all can enjoy then you should consider what I believe is a wiser use of your funds that helps all local members rather than some. If you put your thinking cap on, you can probably figure out where money can be diverted from one local activity to pay for APW-ABA benefits.

PLEASE JOIN THE ABA !

## 2.7 MILLION DOLLAR MAN AND OSHA

In an article a few months back I spoke of how I had won about 1.3 million dollars for postal workers lo-

cally over my approximate 30 years as a steward and local officer the KYO-WVA Area Local and Ashland ky. Area Local, but I totally forgot about the approximate 1.4 million I cost the USPS on a new roof at a postal facility they were purposefully making unsafe to close a facility and avoid procedures required by the Postal Reorganization Act ( PRA ) when closing post offices, that requires public meetings and months of red tape.

I think it is important I tell you this, because it may be happening at a post office near you. Prior to the year 2000 the USPS tried to close a mail processing plant and move mail to another city in another state, but they failed due to public meetings and marches in the streets. So, Some time later in about 2000, the USPS started to allow the roof on their mail processing plant to deteriorate to the point there were over 15 holes in the roof with rain and water trickling in around million dollar machines. Lucky for me and other in our local we had a friend and former union officer – steward named Ron Satterfield who did a lot of reading. He told me he had read an article that occurred in another state where the USPS had let a facility get so unsafe with a bad roof it was declared unsafe and they were allowed to move the mail to another plant avoiding the public meetings and other Red Tape required by the PRA. I immediately started studying the situation and found that if you file an OSHA Complaint before a building can be declared unsafe then OSHA law requires the employer to repair it. With this info, I filed an OSHA complaint and the USPS was forced to put an entire new roof on the mail processing plant which cost around 1.4 million dollars. So, you can see, I don't like to brag, but sometimes I just simply must. I hoping to go over the 3 million mark shortly.

## ACT OF GOD SITUATIONS

All USPS Career employees that include, Fulltime, Part-time and Part-

time Flexible employees have a right to Administrative Leave due to an "ACT OF GOD" situation. **Acts of God involve community disasters such as fire, flood, or storms. The disaster situation must be general rather than personal in scope and impact. It must prevent groups of employees from working or reporting to work.**

An employee has a right to administrative leave if they or their steward can prove the above underlined element.

Groups can be defined as: At least 2 employees in 2 post offices in an district area or at least 2 employees in 2 different sections, categories or crafts in one office.

Further, the snow or flooding or fire, etc. must be a community disaster. The disaster must be general rather than personal in scope and impact.

Meaning, if you call into work and claim you couldn't get there because of county, state, or interstate roads closed and there are groups of employees off work you will have a good claim for admin leave, but if you say you couldn't get there because your driveway is too steep to drive on due to snow, this is a personal problem created when you decided to buy property on a hill.

Admin Leave provisions are found in chapter 380 of the F-22 or F-21 USPS handbooks or chapter 519 of the ELM.

**Further, this section in the F-21 or F-22 tells us, that if, the employee requests on a PS form 3971 another form of leave prior to administrative leave, that employee loses their right to admin leave. So, make sure you don't let your supervisor talk you into filling out a 3971 for annual or sick or LWOP prior to your request for admin on a PS form 3971 that USPS signs for received in the far right box toward the bottom of the PS form 3971.**

It is also very important for all employees claiming admin leave to try to get confirmation that the roads were closed in your area. You can usually get proof of road closings at your local courthouse or 911 Office. Your steward will need this information to make a successful case for you. Normally, after admin leave is denied an employee can only use annual leave

*continued on page 8*



# 2018 APW-ABA

## *Mary Emma Duff*

I was born in Gainesville, FL on April 4, 2000. My parent and I have lived in Tampa, FL all my life. I graduated from HB Plant High School and will be attending New College of Florida in Sarasota, FL.

My dad has been a clerk in the Tampa Postal Installation for over 17 years and has been a proud member of the APWU for all those years. My mother is a lawyer who works for a life insurance company. I have a brother (Ph. D candidate at Georgia Tech) a sister (entering 8th grade) and a Labradoodle (Teddy).

I have been a ballet student for 12 years and have attained a Level 8 certification in the Cecchetti Method. I have traveled to Italy, France and Great Britain and I hope to do a semester abroad in college. I also enjoy reading, swimming and ice cream.

I hope to study English and Politics in college and then go to Law School – hoping to use my law degree to help underprivileged in this country who are suffering more than ever before.



# Scholarship Recipients

## *Summer McClain*



My name is Summer McClain, I am a 2018 graduate of Sullivan Central High School in Blountville, TN. Over my four years at Central High, I was very involved in many clubs such as Key Club, Beta Club and HOSA. The last 2 years in HOSA I served as president and was very involved by competing at the state level and finding ways to better our club. Sports played a big role in my high school years. Track was high on my list but my passion was for swimming. My senior year I was the captain of the swim team, which gave me a great sense of leadership.

Another passion I had was volunteering at the local hospital which gave me over 100 hours of community service. Since my dream job is to become a nurse I decided to do a clinical internship the last semester of my senior year to have a better understanding of the hospital setting and different jobs that may interest me in the future. I spent 60 hours in the hospital and doctor offices and got to assist the nurses with their daily duties. Time management was the key to staying on track while being involved in so many activities. It wasn't easy to always make the grade but I ended my high school career with a GPA of 3.70 and an ACT score of 25.

My plans for the future consist of continuing my education at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN. I plan to get my Bachelors degree in nursing and go on to being a travel nurse for a few years then make the transition into being a flight nurse. The road ahead will be challenging but I look forward to seeing how far I can go. I would like to thank you for the scholarship that will help make my dreams come true.

# I Love The APW-ABA

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for the Act of God absence to get paid, until they win a grievance filed for Admin Leave, except in a scenario described below where I used **sick leave** while waiting on a settlement or decision on an Act of God grievance.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

#### How to get sick leave while waiting on an Act of God grievance decision.

A few years ago I called into work during a huge snow storm. I told my supervisor I was calling in on Administrative leave due to the storm. I also told my supervisor I would make every effort to get to work.

Thereafter, I picked up a shovel and began cleaning my driveway trying to get to the USPS that I loved so well. I got so exhausted shoveling snow I

later had to call in sick. When I got to work a few days later after roads were cleared I made sure I completed a PS Form 3971 showing the time and date I first called in on admin leave. After this was immediately disapproved I filled out another 3971 for sick leave indicating a later time and date since the sick leave occurred after the Admin leave was requested.

My Admin Leave as stated previously was denied along with others at the Post Office, but my sick leave was approved. I filed a grievance within 14 days of the incident and had all the necessary proof mentioned above and/or in the F-21 handbook to prove my absence was due to an Act of God situation. At the arbitration Dunkle won as usual and got his sick leave reimbursed and was paid admin leave for the Act of God absence at issue.

### THE TRICK TO COMPLETING PS FORM 3971 FOR ADMIN LEAVE (ACT OF GOD) PURPOSES

USPS almost always denies Admin Leave for Acts of God. This means you have to prove your case which will probably end up in arbitration. The less paperwork in arbitration the better, so the number 1 scenario is better than number 2 below if you can accomplish it.

**Scenario 1:** Ask your supervisor if he will approve your Admin Leave. If supervisor says no, then fill out your PS Form 3971 first going to the Remarks section and write, for example, **“Requesting Annual Leave due to Administrative Leave previously denied”**. This puts all info on one page for arbitration and it shows you requested Admin Leave prior to other form of leave.

**Scenario 2:** You attempt scenario one above and your supervisor refuses to sign it. Then complete one PS form 3971 for the Admin Leave indicating it was requested first by dates and time on the form and get your supervisor to sign for it received and the date. Then complete another PS form 3971 for some other form of leave making sure the dates and time are later than the dates and time for the Admin Leave requested.

The 2017 Employee and Labor Relations Manual--issue 41 regarding Administrative Leave for Acts of God states in part:

519.21 Acts of God  
519.211 General

Acts of God involve community disasters such as fire, flood, or storms. The disaster situation must be general rather than personal in scope and impact. It must prevent groups of employees from working or reporting to work.

#### 519.212 Authorizing Administrative Leave for Acts of God

The following provisions concern administrative leave for acts of God:

a. Postmasters and other installation heads have authority to approve administrative leave for up to 1 day.

b. District managers and Postal Career Executive Service (PCES) plant managers may authorize administrative leave beyond 1 day, but not to exceed a total of 3 days, for their installation and those reporting to it.

c. District managers and senior or lead plant managers may approve administrative leave for periods up to and in excess of 3 days for their installation and those reporting to it.

**Request for or Notification of Absence**

Employee's Name (Print last, first, MI): Bogi Crabwell  
 Employee ID: 000000000011  
 Date Submitted (MM/DD/YYYY): 1-5-18  
 No. of Hours Requested: 16

Installation (For postmaster's leave, show city, state, and ZIP Code): N/S Day  
 Pay Loc. No. D/A Code: 1-5-18  
 From: Date Hour: 1-5-18  
 Thru: Date Hour: 1-6-17

Type of Absence:  
 Annual  
 Holiday/AL, Lv Exch  
 Carrier 701 Route  
 LWOP (See reverse)  
 Sick (See reverse)  
 Late  
 COP (See reverse)  
 Other Administrative Leave

Documentation (For official use only):  
 FMLA Requested (Certification review - HRSSC)  
 For COP Leave (CA1 on file)  
 For Advanced Sick Leave (PS 1221 on file)  
 For Military Leave (Orders reviewed)  
 For Court Leave (Summons reviewed)  
 For Higher Level (PS 1723 on file)  
 Scheme Training Testing Qualifying (Memo on file)

Revised Schedule for (Date):  
 Approved in Advance:  Yes  No

Remarks (Do not enter medical information. See Privacy Act Statement on reverse of this form.)  
 Roads to works closed due to storm.

I understand that the annual leave authorized in excess of the amount available to me during the leave year will be charged to LWOP.

Employee's Signature and Date: 1-7-18  
 Signature of Person Recording Absence and Date:  
 Signature of Supervisor and Date Notified:

Official Action on Application (Return copy of signed request to employee.)  
 Approved  
 Disapproved (Give reason below)

PS Form 3971, December 2011 (Page 1 of 2) PSN 7530-02-000-9136

Sample  
PS  
Form  
3971s

**Request for or Notification of Absence**

Employee's Name (Print last, first, MI): Joe Blow  
 Employee ID: 000000000000  
 Date Submitted (MM/DD/YYYY): JANUARY 4, 2018  
 No. of Hours Requested: 72

Installation (For postmaster's leave, show city, state, and ZIP Code): N/S Day  
 Pay Loc. No. D/A Code: 1-4-18  
 From: Date Hour: 1-4-18  
 Thru: Date Hour: 1-6-18

Type of Absence:  
 Annual  
 Holiday/AL, Lv Exch  
 Carrier 701 Route  
 LWOP (See reverse)  
 Sick (See reverse)  
 Late  
 COP (See reverse)  
 Other Administrative Leave

Documentation (For official use only):  
 FMLA Requested (Certification review - HRSSC)  
 For COP Leave (CA1 on file)  
 For Advanced Sick Leave (PS 1221 on file)  
 For Military Leave (Orders reviewed)  
 For Court Leave (Summons reviewed)  
 For Higher Level (PS 1723 on file)  
 Scheme Training Testing Qualifying (Memo on file)

Revised Schedule for (Date):  
 Approved in Advance:  Yes  No

Remarks (Do not enter medical information. See Privacy Act Statement on reverse of this form.)  
 Using Annual leave in lieu of Administrative leave denied.

I understand that the annual leave authorized in excess of the amount available to me during the leave year will be charged to LWOP.

Employee's Signature and Date: 1-7-18  
 Signature of Person Recording Absence and Date:  
 Signature of Supervisor and Date Notified:

Official Action on Application (Return copy of signed request to employee.)  
 Approved  
 Disapproved (Give reason below)

PS Form 3971, December 2011 (Page 1 of 2) PSN 7530-02-000-9136

Eastern Region Director

Sherry C. McKnight

# Safety Risks: Falls

Greetings Brothers and Sisters. Hope this article finds you all in good health. Wishing you an abundantly blessed Holiday Season!

## SAFETY RISK – DON'T FALL FOR SLIPPING AND TRIPPING HAZARDS

Falls always have an element of surprise. The surprise factor is what makes falls a standard comedy routine. But falls aren't at all fun when they are real.

Falls are one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death. And these aren't necessarily falls from heights such as ladder or construction scaffolds. Most are falls from the same level, caused by slipping or tripping.

## 8 WAYS TO PREVENT FALLS

1. Keep obstructions out of the walkways. These items are common causes of tripping accidents.
2. Keep doors and drawers of cabinets and workbench closed.
3. Clean up any spills promptly.
4. Floor covering such as carpets, mats and tiles should be secured to prevent tripping.
5. Make sure your footwear won't trip you up. Keep shoelaces tied.
6. If you are carrying an item, be sure you can see over it or around it. **(This is especially important on stairways)**
7. If you slip or trip even if you are not injured, take a moment to figure out the cause. Correct or report any hazards such as wet floors or obstacles.

8. Don't run in your work area, walk at a level that's appropriate for inside.

## SAFETY RISK – WEATHER ELEMENTS

Falls are hazard at work anytime of the year, but winter weather adds a



greater element of danger. It may not be your job to shovel snow or mop up spills, but it's certainly your responsibility to report hazards so they can be corrected before someone is injured. Report any hazard conditions such as ice on a sidewalk or water in an entry area.

## 7 WAYS TO PREVENT FALLS

1. Outdoor walkways and steps should be kept free of ice, snow, mud and wet leaves.

2. Entrance and interior traffic areas should also be kept free of water and ice. There should be mats at all doorways to remove snow, water and mud from footwear.

3. Extra measures should be taken to ensure safe footing on sloped floor surfaces, such as ramps.

4. When walking on a slippery surface, go slowly and take small steps.

5. Wear shoes or boots with non-slip soles. Special footwear with cleats is available for especially slippery conditions.

6. Watch your footing as you get in or out of vehicles. When climbing in or out of equipment cabs, keep a firm grip on the handholds and watch out for ice on the footholds, and mud or ice on your shoes.

7. Winter weather calls for extra

caution when working at heights. Make sure surface such as ladder rungs and scaffold decks are free of ice and snow.

## REPORTING AN EMPLOYEE INJURY OR ILLNESS – OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (OSHA)

Most businesses are required by law to keep accurate records of all work-related injuries and illnesses. Employers with more than 10 employees that are not in partially exempt industries such as retail, service, finance, insurance or real estate, must record work-related injuries and illnesses using the proper form from the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). Any accident or illness that occurs within the course of employment should also be reported to your workers' compensation insurance carrier or agent.

In addition, OSHA requires that severe injuries – those resulting in inpatient hospitalizations, amputation or loss of an eye – must also be reported within 24 hours. Work-related fatalities must be reported within eight hours.

## IN THE WORDS OF ALAN QUILLEY

"Let's manage safety recognizing how humans are and stop managing safety the way we wish humans were."  
*"I laid me down and slept ; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me."*

— Psalm 3:5

Southern Region Director

Kenyon Beasley

# Holiday Safety Awareness: Suspicious Packages

As we are fast approaching the peak holiday season, we are all well-aware that packages and parcels constitute the majority of U.S. Postal Service mail volume. A series of unfortunate events are currently underway as I draft this article. Members of our society are under siege and are being targeted with homemade mail bombs. These bombs are currently being processed and delivered through the U.S. Mail. As a word of caution, I would like to refresh you on proper protocols and procedures when processing and/or handling packages and parcels. It is very important that you are able to recognize suspicious mail. Listed below are specific characteristics you should be able to immediately identify and take appropriate action with.

- ✓ **SHAPE** - Is it lopsided, uneven, rigid or bulky
- ✓ **LOOK** – Are there any stains, discolorations – any leakage? Any restrictive markings?
- ✓ **SMELL** – Is there an odor or scent of any kind
- ✓ **ADDRESS** – Is there a return address? Is there any misspellings? Is it poorly typed or sloppy handwriting?

Is it addressed to a persons title or an individual name?

- ✓ **PACKAGING** – Is there excessive postage or excessive tape?

There are just a few common sense precautionary measures that should be acknowledged when handling packages – whether at work or at home. Listed below are a few defensive actions should you believe you may have been targeted.

If while processing or transporting mail and you believe that you may have discovered some type of suspicious item – you should:

- ✓ Do Not touch or move the item
- ✓ Do Not continue to process or transport the item
- ✓ **STOP** – Engage Emergency Stop procedures and guidelines
- ✓ Isolate the area around the item
- ✓ Evacuate the immediate area
- ✓ Immediately notify management

If you believe a suspicious item is an immediate danger with the presence of smoke, sound, etc...

- ✓ Move to a safe area
- ✓ Call 911
- ✓ Follow instructions from 911 operators
- ✓ Immediately notify management

✓ Immediately contact Postal Inspectors (1-877-876-2455); when prompted state "emergency".

**Remember STAY SAFE! SAFETY DEPENDS ON YOU, ME AND EVERYONE AROUND US! WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!**

Have a safe, happy and joyful holiday season!

**SUSPICIOUS MAIL OR PACKAGES**  
 Protect yourself, your business, and your mailroom.

If you receive a suspicious letter or package:

- Stop. Don't handle.
- Isolate it immediately.
- Don't open, smell, or taste.
- Activate your emergency plan. Notify a supervisor.

Warning signs include: Restrictive markings, No return address, Misspelled words, Badly typed or written, Possibly mailed from a foreign country, Excessive postage, Sealed with tape, Unknown powder or suspicious substance, Oily stains, discolorations, crystallization on wrapper, Strange odor, Incorrect title or addressed to title only, Rigid or bulky, Lopsided or uneven, Protruding wires, Excessive tape.

If you suspect the mail or package contains a bomb (explosive), or radiological, biological, or chemical threat:

- Isolate area immediately
- Call 911
- Wash your hands with soap and water

Southern Region Director

Larry Sorrells

## Be Careful This Time Of Year

This is the time of year when many of us will be doing outdoor work in the yard and garden. We may be using ladders, power equipment and hand tools to get this work done. Please use extreme care when doing these chores.

As we get older we notice that our balance and reflexes are not what they used to be. There comes a point when we may have to avoid climbing ladders and doing things like getting on top of the house.

If you are still insistent on using a ladder, keep the ladder level and securely positioned on the ground. If one side needs to be chocked up, be very careful that the ladder is stable and will not shift to one side. You should have someone to hold the ladder while you are on it and particular-



ly when you are descending.

Be wary of slick leaves and ice and snow when you are moving about, either walking or driving.

If you are using power equipment,

make sure it is in good shape with all safety protectors in place.

When raking, burning leaves, digging, etc., pace yourself and don't overdo it. Just because the weather is

cooler, do not assume that you automatically have more stamina and energy. Many accidents occur when we are tired and trying to put that extra push onto finishing a job, this is a time when you take chances. When you are tired you are not as alert or agile.

Believe me, I am my own worst enemy on what I have been preaching to you. I am realizing that I simply cannot do what I used to and I am starting to reevaluate what I do and how I do it. These same precautions also apply when doing outdoor activities.

Working outside along with outdoor recreational activities are great stress relievers and some good exercise, so if you participate in these activities, I urge you to continue and go about them in a safe manner.

Happy fall and winter.

Central Region Director

Keith M. Richardson

## Distracted While Walking

### DISTRACTED WHILE WALKING (CELLPHONE USE)

Everyone has seen the commercials and the billboards warning people of the dangers of texting while



driving. What about the dangers of using a cellphone while walking? There are many videos online of individuals who are distracted while walking and end up injured. While

some of these videos can be innocent and funny, the consequences of this unsafe act can be severe.

### DISTRACTED WHILE WALKING INJURIES

Injuries caused by being distracted due to using a cellphone while walking has become so common that the National Safety Council has actually added "distracted walking" as a category in their statistical report *Injury Facts*. This report tracks data around the leading causes of unintentional injuries and deaths.

Other researchers have been looking at the details of these injuries. Some of their findings include:

- 52% of distracted walking incidents involving cell phones happen at home
- 68% of those injured are women
- 54% are people ages 40 or younger

Recent injury statistics that show the total number of injuries due to distract-

ed walking are hard to come by. One study conducted by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission shows that in 2011, a total of 1,152 people of all ages were treated in hospital emergency rooms in the U.S. for injuries sustained while walking and using a cell phone or other electronic device. As you can imagine these numbers are probably higher now due to an increased smartphone use.

### IMPLICATIONS OF DISTRACTED WALKING AT WORK

The list of possible issues distracted walking can create in the workplace is endless. A few basic examples of how using a cellphone while walking at work can lead to injuries include:

- Walking into fixed objects
- Being struck by moving vehicles or equipment
- Walking over an edge or into an open hole

- Tripping over an object
- Walking under a lifted load

### SUMMARY

Be mindful of your cellphone use both on and off the job. While research has shown the majority of injuries occur in the home due to distracted walking, the consequences of doing it at work can be much more severe. Work areas and the tasks occurring in them are constantly changing. The last thing you need to be doing is placing all your focus on the screen of your cellphone.

I'm hoping as this article is being read that everyone is well and in good spirits. Don't forget that the ABA is here for you if and when you're ever afflicted by an accident. For just pennies on a dollar you can rest assure that the ABA is here to serve you.

I want to wish you all Happy Holiday's and an even better New Year!

In Solidarity.

West Region Director

Marty Schneider

## Safety First

As I write this article there is a massive investigation into small parcels in the mail containing pipe bombs. By press time this will be old news but the message is always timely. There is not enough that can be spoken or written about how each of us must assume responsibility for our personal safety and the safety of others both at work and off duty.

We all know the hallmarks of suspicious packages. We all know the protocols that must be taken when suspicious packages are found in the mail stream. Don't ignore these hallmarks and protocols. No amount of time-

saving or need to get something else accomplished is worth your personal safety or more--your life!

It is a miracle that so far none of these small parcels has exploded. As postal workers we usually do not go to work with the notion that we might not come back home after the end of the shift. But distraction, carelessness or inattention CANNOT replace a life. I implore anyone reading this article to discuss with your co-workers how important it is to be alert for suspicious packages. We postal employees really are a first line of defense in this particular kind of situation. We

have to remind one another that Safety should be our number one goal.

In order to achieve that goal we should start at the beginning, which is the collection point. Use a fresh eye. Window clerks, collection box collectors, and letter carriers should be reminded of the first 12 ounces of rates on small parcels. Postage due clerks as well as the previously mentioned employees must be cognizant of configuration, density and noise if any. Employees operating conveyor belts, hamper dumpers, slides and sorting machines, and manual sort employees need to re-think how to look at the or-

dinary, AND, the unusual parcels.

Whether a criminal(s) is brought to justice or not in this case; there could



be a next case. And along the line our safety has been challenged. Safety is everyone's business. Please don't make it last on the list.

Central Region Director

Edward J. Brennan

# A Christmas Present All Your Members Can Appreciate

Once again, we have arrived at the time of year that we have to examine our financial status and prepare for the upcoming year. We need to prepare a budget to govern our spending for the year as compared with our income and other factors. And, of primary importance, what can we afford to do that will benefit ALL of our members and their families.

With all our members in mind we have to consider the best use of their money. With recent changes in the Postal Service and the relationship of these changes to our membership and finances, we have to be very careful to factor in the cost of grievance processing and the day to day events and benefits we give for all of our members. Is a family picnic or a Christmas party really necessary?

Are these expenses really beneficial to all of our members and can all of our members attend these functions? What do we plan for our members that are from Associate Offices that

are some, 75 or 100 miles away? Can they even attend Local or State meetings? What if they never have grievance



ances? What do they actually get for their money?

When you have your Local or State

meetings concerning these items, you might want to consider a Christmas present that fits all of your members'

needs and can be a valuable tool for signing up new members. Perhaps you can sign up for 100% member-

ship in the APWU owned and operated APW Accident Benefit Association. The cost could be a part of the member's dues structure and they would all be covered by the plan 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year if accidentally injured on or off the job. What a wonderful way to show that the Local or State organizations really care about each and every one of their members by providing benefits to all.

We are all Union Brothers and Sisters and care about all of the members of our Union family. To find out about our plans or becoming a 100% Local just call the ABA Home Office at 1-800-526-2890 and one of the young ladies in the office will be glad to explain the best plan for your members along with the costs and benefits. Give your members a benefit that is all member inclusive and can be easily fit into your budget.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and All of your members.

## 2019 APW-ABA Benefits Chart

The American Postal Workers Accident Benefit Association (ABA) is pleased to announce an increase to our Dismemberment Lump Sum Benefits and Accidental Death Benefits which become effective on January 1, 2019. With this enhanced benefits structure there will be NO increase in premiums for either our Value Plan or Advantage Plan members. Additionally, effective January 1, 2019, spouses of active APWU and ABA members may enroll in our Plus Plan (Accidental Death Benefits) for coverage up to \$150,000. Previously, spouses were limited to \$50,000 of coverage in the Plus Plan. Premiums for spouses will be identical to active APWU and ABA members for this additional Plus Plan coverage. Please see the chart below for the categories of benefits being increased. The APW-ABA thanks you for your support and we look forward to increasing additional benefits in the near future.

*Wayne D. Maurer*

Wayne D. Maurer, National Director APW-ABA

VALUE PLAN	Current Benefits	NEW Benefits
Death	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
For loss of one finger	\$350.00	<b>\$500.00</b>
For loss of a thumb	\$500.00	<b>\$750.00</b>
For loss of two or more fingers	\$700.00	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
For loss of one thumb and one or more fingers	\$1,000.00	<b>\$1,500.00</b>
For loss of sight of one eye to	\$1,500.00	<b>\$3,000.00</b>
For loss of sight of both eyes to	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
For loss of one arm	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
For loss of both arms	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
For loss of one leg	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
For loss of both legs	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
For loss of one arm and one leg	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
ADVANTAGE PLAN	Current Benefits	NEW Benefits
Death	\$10,000.00	<b>\$24,000.00</b>
For loss of one finger	\$700.00	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
For loss of a thumb	\$1,000.00	<b>\$3,000.00</b>
For loss of two or more fingers	\$1,400.00	<b>\$4,000.00</b>
For loss of one thumb and one or more fingers	\$2,000.00	<b>\$6,000.00</b>
For loss of sight of one eye to	\$3,000.00	<b>\$12,000.00</b>
For loss of sight of both eyes to	\$10,000.00	<b>\$24,000.00</b>
For loss of one arm	\$3,000.00	<b>\$6,000.00</b>
For loss of both arms	\$10,000.00	<b>\$24,000.00</b>
For loss of one leg	\$4,000.00	<b>\$8,000.00</b>
For loss of both legs	\$10,000.00	<b>\$24,000.00</b>
For loss of one arm and one leg	\$10,000.00	<b>\$24,000.00</b>

**Spouses of active members can now obtain the same coverage amounts in the Plus Plan (Accidental Death Benefits) at the same premium rate. Previous Plus Plan coverage for spouses was limited to \$50k.**

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) \$24,000 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 of Retirees 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)

### 100% Full-Dues Cash Pay Rates

(Retired member still paying Full Dues)

**Value Plan** \$19.50 (annually)

**Advantage Plan** \$78.00 (annually)

### 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)

### 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)