



The Badger Bulletin

The American Postal Workers Union of Wisconsin

Volume 46 No. 1

PPA Award Winner

Jan/Feb/Mar, 2013

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT . . . BY STEVE LORD

2013 The Year Of Postal Reform

Hi Everyone. I hope your holidays went well and that you have a happy and healthy 2013. Unfortunately this could be 2011 or 2012 nothing seems to have changed for us. We are still dangling over our own fiscal cliff. Congress doesn't see any urgency in our financial problems that they have created for us. We still are mandated to prefund retiree health care costs far into the future. We still are unable to raise our rates sufficiently to cover our costs.

There is a little less doom and gloom however than in the past couple of years. Democrats still control the Whitehouse. We survived the election cycle that sees more way Democrat Senators up for reelection than Republicans and kept a majority there. This means that we should have several layers of protection from the extremists' attempts to sink the USPS. Underline, boldface and italicize the word should. Nothing is for certain. Deals and compromises are made in Congress all the time.

We must remain diligent and keep getting our point of view across to our local Congress person and our Senators. When you get cards in the mail to sign and send to your representative please send them in. There is a reason the National APWU spends the dollars to send

them out to you. We need to keep letting our representative know where we stand. We need to pay visits to them when they are back in their districts.

The "fiscal cliff" vote at the end of the year showed that the resolve of right wing conservatives can be broken. The 2012 elections showed the extreme right which way the political wind was blowing and it was not at their backs. As a window clerk I can pretty much get the feel for the will of my customers. They do not want to see the USPS go down. We must find ways to keep these people informed and on our side. Our priority more than ever must be legislative.

In March I will be going to Washington DC for the NPC Legislative Conference. After the conference I will be visiting Representatives offices to get our view point across to them. I will be specifically concentrating on the office of our new Senator Tammy Baldwin. If you want to go there is still time to sign up. If you come we will visit the office of your representatives. It is hard for us to visit an office of your representative if there is no one from that district with us. The first thing we are asked is who is there from the district of the representative we are visiting.

2013 must be a year of increased political

action on the part of local officers and members. Many of your members probably don't know that at the beginning session of a new Congress everything starts over. A bill that passed the Senate but not the House of Representatives must be reintroduced in the Senate and be voted on all over again. It will have a new number and might not even resemble the same bill passed in the previous session. That is why we must be more diligent and more dedicated and make sure postal reform we can live with is passed in 2013.

Expect calls from me or Legislative Director

Jeff Worden. At your local meetings discuss with your members what you can do locally to get your opinions heard by your legislative representative. Make a plan and carry it out. If we don't do anything locally everything that is done by the national and at the state level will be less effective. Congressional representatives pay attention to the opinions of their constituents more than from a lobbyist in Washington. You are the voters who elect them. Let's make 2013 the year that the USPS is pulled back from the brink of financial disaster and our jobs are made more secure.

Tentative 2013 Agenda

Not much if anything is set in stone as far as training and events for 2013. Here are some tentative dates.

March 1-5 Legislative NPC in Washington DC

March 16-17 APWU of Wisconsin Training Seminar in Wausau

August 25-26 John Akey Seminar in Madison

By the time you read this there will be more info on the Wausau seminar and the Akey Seminar. Sorry about the delay but sometimes it's unavoidable.

Congratulations to all of you retiring at the end of January. See you all soon.

Retirement Announcement



There is a good number of APWU members taking advantage of the "Early Out" incentive program offered by the Postal Service this month (January). Among those making the decision to enter life after the Postal Service are Rick and Paula Gallo.

Most of you know Rick as an APWU of Wisconsin State Officer. He served a total of 14 years as President, Secretary-Treasurer or Director of Education and Organization of our State.

In his "Home Town" of Kenosha, he was elected to the position of Local APWU President in 1975 and filled that position until 1991 when he decided to take a break. About a year later though he was appointed to the Local position of Secretary to fill the remainder of the position that had been vacated.

In 1993, Rick ran for President again and filled that Office until the next Election

which coming up next month. He will have spent a total of 37 years during that time period as the President of the Kenosha Local. Quite an accomplishment.

His wife Paula filled the position of Lo-

cal Treasurer for a period of 28 years. She was also active in the State APWU as Secretary-Treasurer and Editor for a total of six years.

Congratulations and Thank You to the

both of you for your sincere dedication to your Union. Although you will be missed, it is time for you to relax and have some fun.

Best wishes to all the retirees.

Do You Have Too Much To Do?

by David Yao

It's a common story in Customer Service these days — not enough clerks to get the work done. Almost every unit has seen jobs reverted by management. The staffing model that was adopted recently (SST) is miserly with work hours.

Clerks are being told to do more jobs every day. This can be stressful, as many of us are conscientiously striving to get everything done, and done correctly. Suddenly it seems like you are being asked to do the impossible. It's a mental strain, but you have to have a plan for coping with the situation.

1. It's not your fault. First of all, it's not your fault that the unit is understaffed. It is management's decision, and they are not scheduling to allow for sick calls — their attitude is that the unit has to deal with it if they are shorthanded.

Realize that this has become almost stand-

ard in the workplace. Corporations cut staff and force the remaining workers to do extra jobs, a strategy that may reduce quality and that increases job stress. But it also increases profits. Government agencies have laid off employees due to budget cuts, caused partly by the recession and partly by tax breaks for the wealthy. (There also is a conscious effort to starve government of revenue by the anti-tax, anti-government forces.)

Not to say that this is right or that you should be expected to do a superhuman amount of work in a short time. Our contract recognizes the principle of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Remember to work at a safe speed. Do not put your body at risk by rushing through your assigned tasks (which also increases the chances of making mistakes).

2. Ask for Help. Asking for help will not solve understaffing but it can relieve your

stress. We are used to getting a lot done but when you are asked to do more, and then asked to do even more?

The key is communication. If you think you will need help, tell your supervisor — even if you do not expect to get help. You have then handed responsibility over to the supervisor; it is their problem, not yours.

You can also let your supervisor know you won't have the time to do all the work, and give them choices. Which do you want me to do? Or do you want me to stay overtime to get this done?

3. Talk to Your Coworkers. Communication is important for everyone to get the job done, prioritize schedules, or know why someone is leaving the work behind. It also helps if the clerks can discuss the work situation and work out a common solution to address the problems.

— Source: Greater Seattle APWU News

THE UNION NEWSPAPER IS THE MOST VISIBLE SIGN OF LIFE IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT



APWU OF WISCONSIN GENERAL OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

STEVE LORD
PO Box 2371
Oshkosh, WI 54903
Home: 920/426-5285
Cell 920/279-6308
lordsa@charter.net

SECRETARY/TREASURER

STEVE KENDALL
N85 W15650 Ridge Rd. #207
Menominee Falls, WI 53051
Cell 414-322-4860
kendallapwumke@hotmail.com

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

JEFF WORDEN
4984 S. 24th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53221
Phone: 414/270-2019
jjworden@sbcglobal.net

**DIRECTOR HUMAN RELATIONS,
ORGANIZATION & EDUCATION**

LUCY HAUSER
W7205 Newland Rd
Black Creek, WI 54106
Home: 920/525-3695
Cell: 920/841-2909
LuHaus9@aol.com

EDITOR

JOHN E. DURBEN
PO Box 47
Cecil WI 54111-0047
Cell: 920-639-8906
Home: 715/745-2248
chilihead@frontiernet.net

Regional Representative 540, 547, 548

KATHY BUSH
PO Box 61
Spooner, WI 54801
Kathymarie1414@yahoo.com
715-296-4112

Regional Representative 535-539, 546

ERIC M FARMER
PO Box 8808
Madison, WI 53708-8808
ericmfarmer@gmail.com
Cell: 608-630-3795

Regional Representative 544, 545

RENEE HEANEY
PO Box 1
Wausau, WI 54402
Err_nay@yahoo.com
Cell: 715-370-1738

Regional Representative 541-543, 549

STEVEN C PARADISE
PO Box 10324
Green Bay, WI 54307-0324
Steve2dice@usa.net
Cell: 920-737-2410

APWU OF WISCONSIN AUXILIARY

PRESIDENT

DEBRA KOSZAREK
5321 S. LaSalle Dr.
New Berlin, WI 53151

VICE PRESIDENT

BARBARA MACIEJEWSKI
2145 s 89th St.
West Allis, WI 53227
414-550-2169
angelmajek2@hotmail.com

SECRETARY

JACQUELINE CHILDS
3818 Clover Ln
Madison, WI 53714
608-222-0772
jchilds@uwcaatholic.org

TREASURER

PATRICIA PASELL
1367 Pinnacle Cir
Sun Prairie, WI 53590
hskylvr@charter.net

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

ARLENE BEISBIER
916 Chestnut
West Bend, WI 53095
262-338-8663
arlenebeisbier@yahoo.com

APWU of Wisconsin website:
<http://www.apwuwi.com/>

The APWU of Wisconsin publishes this newsletter as a means of communicating with our members. The union encourages letters to the editor; letters must be signed but name will be withheld upon request. All opinions expressed are those of the writer, and not necessarily those of the state organization or its officers.

The *Badger Bulletin* is a proud member of the APWU Postal Press Association. The *Badger Bulletin* is printed five (5) times per year. Articles not credited are those of the editor.

LEGISLATIVELY SPEAKING . . . BY JEFF WORDEN, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

What To Expect In 2013

The 113th Congress will meet in January 2013 and there will be over 60 new members.

There were plenty of items left on the table when the old (112th) Congress left! One of the biggest and most decisive issues will be the 75-billion dollar pre-funding of postal retirees health benefits. The legislation that was introduced in 2012 will most likely . . . have to be re-introduced again!

Of course the right-wingers will try to introduce legislation that will reduce or destroy postal workers wages and benefits. Some of the right-wing agenda items include keeping the 75-billion dollar pre-funding of retiree health benefits, destroying and/or eliminating the No-Layoff protection, going to a "High 5" years for retirement instead of the current "High 3", slashing services, and closing post offices.

This is why we need to write/e-mail our elected representatives whenever possible. In early December the APWU national union sent out pre-addressed envelopes with a pre-scripted letter to all APWU members (including retirees) to be sent to our elected

representatives. All the members had to do was print their name and address and then place a stamp on the envelopes and mail. It was just that easy! We need to get ALL our members to do this in order to secure our future!!!

The recent elections ended up with Democrats getting 53 seats and the Republicans 45 seats. The two independent Senators are EXPECTED to caucus with the Democrats.

Congress is the place we definitely have to work on for the next elections.

Since the Congressional elections are every (2) two years, we need to elect more Democrats to Congress in 2014.

As you know, (with all of the right-wing tea bagger nut jobs) the road for labor will be tough, but with a labor friendly President it should be much easier to maneuver.

In closing, I want to say Thank You and Good Luck to all those union Brothers and Sisters who have retired or are retiring at the end of January 2013. You made it! **You are now going to enjoy the fruits of your labor.**

It's because of DUES PAYING MEMBERS like you (as well as past members and current members) that WE ALL HAVE a strong union and the ability to retire with a good pension and benefits!

What I'm really getting at here is we all have a secure future BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T A FREELOADING NON-MEMBER.

Because you were an APWU member prior to retirement you are eligible to be an APWU retiree member and an active VOICE in any/all legislation that affects postal workers.

You are always welcome to help/work at the different APWU functions, attend the monthly retiree meeting, march in the Labor Day parade, write articles for your local APWU newspaper. The list is pretty much . . . endless!

To become an APWU Retiree contact your local union officers and/or stewards. You can also call the APWU National Union at (202) 842-4200.

The Struggle Continues.

BY LUCY HAUSER, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RELATIONS, ORGANIZATION & EDUCATION

Beneficiary Forms

During the Christmas holidays my son's in-laws lost their home in a fire. Thankfully nobody was injured, but they lost almost everything, including all their Christmas gifts. Had the fire occurred during the nighttime hours they may not have been so lucky. Still, they are devastated. Their homeowner's insurance company treated them very well, but they are still trying to complete an inventory of their losses. How many of us would be able to list all the items in the house, including the attic and basement and assign a value to each item? They also lost their computer, which had a wealth of information on it. Several years ago I started a booklet of *"Things that My Family Needs to Know if I Die"*, but it's sitting on my hutch in the dining room. I included contact names and numbers for car insurance, life insurance, homeowners insurance, doctor, dentist, investment counselor, safe combination, employer contacts, location of important legal documents, etc. All that information would be lost if my house burned down. I have decided that the booklet should be placed in our fireproof safe and that a copy should be given to one of my children for safe-keeping. I am also going to take photos of each of the rooms in my house and put them in the fireproof safe. A photo may jog a person's memory when trying to recall items during an inventory. While going through the booklet I realized that I cannot verify that my OPF is up-to-date or that all my beneficiary forms are complete. Here is some information regarding beneficiary forms.

All employees should have 4 different beneficiary forms on file. If you don't know whether or not you have completed all the proper forms go to liteblue.usps.gov and click on eOPF. You will be able to view and print anything that is currently in your file.

The first form is Unpaid Compensation

of Deceased Civilian Employee (SF-1152). This form is necessary if you die while still employed. You must designate who should receive your last paycheck, which will include all work hours and payment for the balance of earned annual leave. After completion this form should be mailed to Shared Services, where it will be filed in your official OPF. They will also certify the form and mail a copy back to you for your records.

The second form (SF-2823) is for the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance program (FEGLI) for the current value of your life insurance selection. This form must also be mailed to Shared Services. They will certify the form and mail a copy back to you.

The third form, TSP-3, is for Thrift Savings. This form is for payment of your TSP account balance as of the date of your death. You can access the Thrift Savings website at www.tsp.gov to print a copy of the form. This form must be mailed to the Thrift Savings Plan at the address printed on the form.

The fourth form depends on which retirement

system you are in. If you are in CSRS you must complete an SF-2808 and mail it to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at the address shown on the form. They will certify the form, put one copy in your OPF and mail a copy back to you. If you are in FERS you must complete an SF-3102 and mail it to Shared Services. They will certify the form and mail a copy back to you.

All forms other than the TSP-3 can be obtained by accessing liteblue.usps.gov and clicking My HR at the top of the page. Go to Browse by Subject and click on Benefits. On the left side of the page where it says "I want to . . ." click on Access Beneficiary Forms. For those of you who do not have computer access, request the forms from your supervisor or contact your local Union official.

Here is the address for Shared Services:

HRSSC
Benefits/Compensation
PO Box 970400
Greensboro NC 27497-0400

— THE LIGHTER SIDE —

~ Newlyweds ~

Jimmy and Kathy are newlyweds in the honeymoon suite on their wedding night, and Kathy's in the bathroom. As Jimmy's getting undressed he says to himself, "How am I going to tell her? How am I going to tell my new wife that I have the world's smelliest feet?" Then he throws his socks under the bed. Kathy walks out of the bathroom, and, too chicken to face her, Jimmy runs past her and he goes into the bathroom. Kathy sits on the edge of the bed and says to herself. How am I going to tell him? How am I going to tell my new husband that I have the world's worst breath? I've got to tell him." Just then Jimmy walks out of the bathroom. Kathy runs up to him, gives him a huge wet kiss, pulls back and says, "Honey, I've got to tell you something." Jimmy says, "Yeah, I know. You just ate my socks."



ATTENTION: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:**Win Cash Prizes Up To \$500**

For essays of about 750 words on the topic:

"Unions have been important to my family and my community because..."

The Wisconsin Labor History Society announces its High School Essay Contest for the 2012-2013 School Year. Wisconsin high school students (grades 9-12) are eligible to participate.

Great cash prizes, awarded in April 2013, include:

\$500 First Place \$300 Second Place \$200 Third Place
\$100 Honorable Mention (Up to 5 awarded)

RULES: Essays should be approximately 750 words in length. They will be judged on understanding, evidence of original research, writing style and significance. Essays must be typed, double-spaced, on white paper. Two copies must be submitted (One may be a photocopy.) Please be sure to provide the following information on the cover sheet: Your name, address, home telephone number, your grade in school, name and address of your school, and, if you were encouraged or assisted by a teacher, the teacher's name. (Also, list your family's union membership, if applicable.) If you have any ques-

tions, contact: Harvey J. Kaye (920-465-2355 or kayeh@uwgb.edu).

Send completed essays to: Prof. Harvey J. Kaye, Center for History and Social Change, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay WI 54311 Submissions must be postmarked Feb. 15, 2013 or before.

ATTENTION:

• **Students:** Ask your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or other relatives, friends and neighbors what labor union membership has meant to them, or what struggles they may have faced in their jobs. Then write what you have learned.

• **Teachers:** The WLHS welcomes all submissions, and encourages you to announce this essay contest to your students and to encourage and assist them with editorial and research advice.

• **Union Members:** Urge your high-school age children, grandchildren, nephews or nieces to participate. Talk with them about your involvement in unions and the workplace.



Urge their teachers and schools to participate in the contest.

Wisconsin Labor History Society (Affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society)

6333 W. Blue Mound Rd., Milwaukee WI 53213 (414-771-0700 x20) <http://wisconsinlaborhistory.org>

Want To Cut The Deficit? Start By Closing The 'Mitt Romney Loophole'

While congressional Republicans are heavily focused on cutting Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare benefits and other harmful budget cuts that threaten the 98%, a better approach is to eliminate loopholes that allow the wealthiest 2% of Americans and Wall Street to pay much less than their fair share of taxes. Focusing on loopholes keeps money in the hands of working families, which helps the economy grow without increasing hardship and economic insecurity for working people.

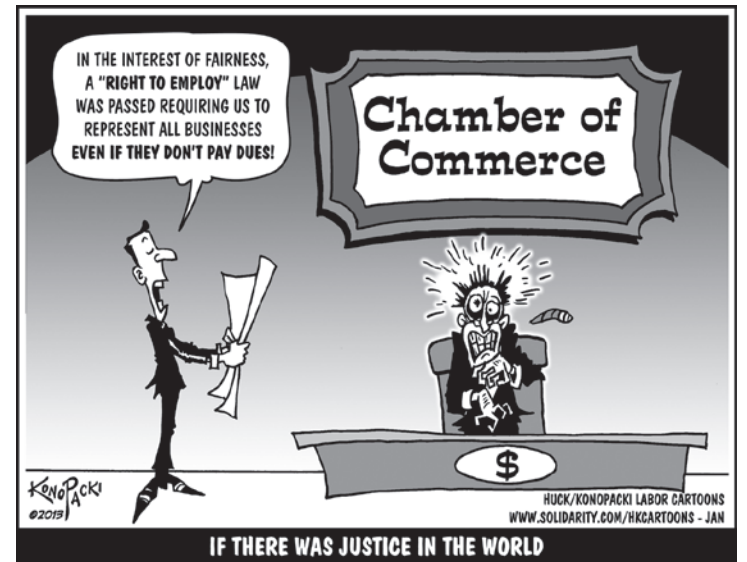
Many current loopholes just aren't fair. Take, for example, what Think Progress calls the "**Mitt Romney Loophole.**" People like Mitt Romney who manage investment funds get paid in two ways. Part of their income is a management fee that is taxed as ordinary income, currently at a top rate of 39.6%. But fund managers also get a cut of the profits of the investments, which is taxed as a capital gain, with a top tax rate of only 20%. The typical investment manager takes a management fee of 2% and gets a

20% cut of the profits, meaning they avoid paying the normal tax rate on the vast majority of their income, something working families are not able to do. As Think Progress explains:

"This loophole is one of the main reasons that Mitt Romney paid a tax rate of just 13.9 percent on income of more than \$20 MILLION. Meanwhile, millions of middle-class workers pay a much higher rate on their much, much lower salaries."

Closing this loophole would not only make our tax code fairer and more progressive, it would help raise revenue to protect vital programs and leave room in the budget for investments to grow the middle class. Closing just this one loophole that often benefits the ultra-wealthy would raise \$21 billion over 10 years."

— Source: AFL-CIO NOW

**~ Why Picket Lines Matter ~**

I spent so much time on picket lines as a kid that when I thought my dad's rules were too strict, I would run to build a sign on a stick and try to talk the neighbor kids into marching around the house with me.

I learned early on the power of a picket to protest unfair treatment.

That right is more important today than ever. As our economy has shifted toward a more contingent workforce, **companies are increasingly hiring workers as part-time or temporary, or labeling them as independent contractors.** This leaves workers more vulnerable to abuse while also shielding companies from accountability. When

warehouse workers unpacking Walmart goods in a Walmart-owned warehouse were cheated out of their wages, the retail giant responded that those workers were hired through a temporary agency and are **not the company's responsibility.**

These kinds of working conditions make it all the more important that workers be able to share their stories with the public. Consumers have the right to know about the kinds of labor practices they are supporting when they shop at a particular store. In this economy, where workers have **so little bargaining power**, the ability to picket an employer to expose unfair conditions is more important than ever.

That's what makes the recent California Supreme Court decision in **Ralphs Grocery Co. v. UFCW Local 8** so important. The court **upheld two provisions of California law** that protect the right of workers to picket. The Moscone Act protects peaceful picketing and communicating

about the facts of a labor dispute on "any public street or any place where any person or persons may lawfully be." Labor Code Section 1138.1 restricts injunctive relief to stop picketing unless a company can show substantial and irreparable injury, the commission of unlawful acts and several other factors. Ralphs sought to invalidate those **state statutes**, which would have silenced California workers from such peaceful protest.

In upholding California law, the court maintained a critical protection for working people. What is at stake here is far more than where in a shopping center picketers are allowed to stand. The picket line was — and still is — an essential tool in building the American middle class. **Workers standing together**, making their case in the court of public opinion, helped bring about the eight-hour day, the weekend, prevailing wage, anti-discrimination laws and so many other protections. It also helped working

people win wages and benefits that allowed them to buy homes, send their children to college and give back to their community through taxes, service and time.

In essence, the picket sign has enabled generations of working people to achieve the American Dream. Given the economy we face today, it's time for the next generation to start making signs and marching to demand those same opportunities.

"Why Picket Lines Matter," by Caitlin Vega, originally appeared on the California Labor Federation's blog **Labor's Edge.** — Source: AFL-CIO NOW

"Every man's work, whether it be literature or music or pictures or architecture or anything else, is always a portrait of himself."

— Samuel Butler (1835-1902)
British writer.

Safety And Health Article 14

by Michael O'Hearn

The first sentence of Article 14 states, "It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installation and to develop a safe working force." If management does not live up to this responsibility, it is up to us to see that they do. How do we do this? In Section 2 of Article 14, it says "If an employee believes he/she is being required to work under unsafe conditions, such employees may: (a) notify such employee's supervisor who will immediately investigate the condition and take corrective action if necessary." Therefore, the first step is to notify the supervisor.

The form PS 1767 "Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition, or Practice" can be used to report the situation to management or you can simply verbally notify the supervisor. If your supervisor is unreceptive to such information, I would recommend the PS 1767. If the employee believes that another avenue should be taken, Section 2 goes on to state that the employee may "(b) notify such employee's steward, if available, who may discuss the alleged unsafe condition with such employee's supervisor." These provisions are designed to resolve unsafe conditions as quickly as possible. Obviously, we want to fix the unsafe condition to prevent anyone from being injured.

However, sometimes management may resist such overtures. Section 2 goes on to state that the employee or union may "(c)

file a grievance at Step 2 of the grievance procedure within fourteen (14) days of notifying such employee's supervisor if no corrective action is taken during the employee's tour, and/or (d) make a written report to the Union representative from the Local Safety and Health Committee who may discuss the report with such employee's supervisor."

That in a nutshell is the actions to be taken at the beginning of any safety dispute. It is important to note that any safety grievance is to start at Step 2 rather than Step 1 of the grievance procedure. The reason is plain. If the supervisor did not take appropriate action after being notified, what is the sense in going to him/her with a Step 1 grievance? Again, we are trying to remedy the unsafe condition as soon as possible to avoid anyone from becoming a victim of the unsafe condition. Going to the supervisor, going to the steward, going to the Local Safety and Health Committee, and going directly to Step 2 are all intended to get a quick fix of the problem. If none of this works, the grievance is appealed directly to arbitration. The Union may move this type of grievance to the head of the arbitration docket. Again, time is of the essence in such matters. We don't want anyone to be hurt while we are going through a bureaucratic shuffle.

The steward in such a grievance should include any PS 1767's filed on such a con-

dition, any report from the supervisor, and any report from the Safety and Health Committee. Always check Article 14 of the contract and the JCIM Article 14 to assist you in developing your grievance. In the JCIM you will find information on such topics as Safety Glasses, Gloves, and Radio Head-

sets. The proper rules and regulations should also be cited in the grievance. To assist the steward in this regard, the APWU has developed a Safety and Health Resource Kit. You can find it on the national website, www.apwu.org. The kit is in the Industrial Relations Department. When you get on the Industrial Relations page, you will see on the left hand side a Safety and Health topic to click on.

Then, on the left side of the Safety and Health page, there is a Safety and Health Resource Kit topic to click on. The exact address for the Safety and Health Resource Kit is: www.apwu.org/dept/indrel/sh/shirk/index.htm.

Once you get to this page, you will see on the left side a list of some 43 topics that

you can click on to get information about handbooks and manuals related to your topic of interest. Just a few of the topics are Accidents-Injuries, Equipment, Lighting, Temperature, and Workplace Violence. As an example, when you click on Equipment, you will find a link to the ASM Chapter 5 "Facilities and Equipment" and PO502 "Container Methods" manual. This kit will be a great help in researching your particular problem.

Also, on the Safety and Health page you will find other helpful information on the left side of the page like Stand-Up Talks, Bio-Detection Systems, Threat Advisory Codes, External Links, and S & H News Archive. If you still need help you can click on the subject About Safety & Health on the left side of the Safety and Health page. Here you will find the names, phone numbers, and email addresses of the APWU Regional Safety and Health Representatives. You can contact them for assistance. There is nothing more important than protecting your safety and health at your work site.

— Source: *THE ILLINOIS POSTAL WORKER*

 Safety matters

RETIREMENT TIDBITS

Flexible Spending After Retirement

Q. What becomes of an active FSA option once an employee retires? Does the amount collected prior to retirement apply towards medical expenses or is the bi-weekly option continued to be collected from retirement annuity?

A. Your deduction for FSA stops once you retire from service. Any expenses incurred prior to the date of retirement will be paid, even if your expenses are more than the deductions that were paid up until the date of retirement. If you were paid for expenses that were more than the amount of deductions paid from your paycheck, you would have to claim that money on the following year's taxes in some manner. You would need to contact your tax man regarding this money. Here are a couple of questions that come from the OPM website regarding summary of FSA benefits. The web address for the summary of benefits is pretty informative.

Q. If I separate or retire from service, can I receive the remaining balance in my HCFSA or LEX HCFSA?

A. No. You can only be reimbursed for the expenses incurred prior to the date of separation/retirement even if you have accelerated your allotments. You are not eligible for reimbursement even if there is still money in your HCFSA or LEX HCFSA to pay these expenses.

Q. Can annuitants participate in this program?

A. No. By law, annuitants (other than re-employed annuitants whose employment status is full-time) cannot participate in FSAs. FSAs are a way of setting aside pre-tax salary for payment of eligible expenses. Annuitants receive annuities, which are not salary. Re-employed annuitants must be eligible for active FEHB coverage.

Reference: <https://www.fsafeds.com/http://www.opm.gov/insure/>

— Source: *Newscaster (PPA)*

The Next Badger Bulletin Due Date is Friday, March 29, 2013.

NOTE: The APWU National Postal Press Association has teamed up with the APWU of Wisconsin to present the 2013 John Akey Seminar at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, WI.

NATIONAL PPA CONFERENCE:

August 22 – August 24, 2013

JOHN AKEY SEMINAR:

August 25 – August 26, 2013

More information to follow.



John E. Durben, Editor
THE BADGER BULLETIN
PO Box 47
Cecil, WI 54111-0047

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED