



MIAMI POSTAL LABOR NEWS

American Postal Workers Union Local 172

2500 N.W. 97 Avenue, Suite 200
Doral, Florida 33172

SERVING: Miami, Miami Beach, Hialeah,
Homestead, & Boca Raton.

REPRESENTING: Clerks,
Maintenance and Motor Vehicle

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By **WANDA HARRIS**

SHINE YOUR LIGHT IN 2022

May this be the day we come together. Mourning we come to mend. Withered we come to weather. Torn we come to tend. Battered we come to better. Tethered by this year of yearning. We are learning that though we weren't ready for this, we have been readied by it. We steadily vowed that no matter how we are weighed down, we must always pave a way forward. This hope is our door, our portal, even if we never get back to normal. Someday we can venture beyond it. To leave the known and take the first steps. So let us not return to what was normal but reach toward what is next.

What was cursed, we will cure. What was plagued, we will prove pure. Where we tend to argue, we will try to agree. Those fortunes we forswore, now the future we foresee. Where we weren't aware, we're now awake. Those moments we missed are now these moments we make. The moments we meet, and our hearts once all together beaten, now all together beat. Come, look up with kindness yet, for even solace can be source from sorrow, not just the sake of yesterday, but to take on tomorrow. We heed this old spirit in a new day's lyric. In our hearts we hear it; for auld lang syne, my dear, for auld lang syne.

Be bold, sang time this year, be bold, sang time. For when you honor yesterday, tomorrow ye will find, know what we've fought need not be forgot nor for none. It defines us, binds us as one. Come over, join this day just begun.

For wherever we come together, we will forever overcome.

—Amanda Gorman

Greetings Sisters and Brothers. We

made it! Happy New Year! To the men and women who fought and died for the freedoms that we may enjoy. Thank you for your service. To each one of you, the Miami Area Local members, thank you for your continued support and always trusting and believing in my leadership. I hope and pray the New Year bring to you and your families, good health, prosperity and lots of love. It has been a three year journey and I thank you for coming along for the ride. **In the history of the Miami Area Local there has not been an administration who faced what we have and Triumph!**

Let's start 2022 off with our **VOICE**. I'm talking about our Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement. Yes sisters and brothers, we got an agreement for our Contract that protects the rights and interests of our members, but we all must do our part. By the time this goes to print you will be receiving a 9x11 envelope from the National APWU to ratify the contract. Sisters and Brothers please hear me. This envelope is very important for you to open and follow instructions. You must use your **VOICE** and cast your **VOTE** to ratify the Contract. It is your future and you have the power to see it through. Let's have a conversation about your future, your Union and your contract. We got a three year agreement, 9/21/2021—9/20/2024. Within those three years we got 6 COLAs, Cost of Living Allowances. PSEs receive the general

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Executive Vice President's Report

By ROBERT MIRANDA

First and foremost, I would like to wish Happy New Year, to all our members. Looking back from the beginning of this term we have never faced more challenging issues putting any plans this administration had to a complete halt. The challenges began with **COVID 19, CORONAVIRUS** which began the unknown illness no real information and quickly spreading to our members. Now it's been over two years and this virus is still around. The APWU National has put out another form of compensation through OWCP. I have had many calls and even though this is on the National web site I believe this is important for me to put in my article.

Not knowing how COVID-19 can affect any one person whether it is a mild illness, a severe case, a case of "long" COVID-19, what the long-term effects might be, or even death, it is vital that those who contract the virus understand that it is their right to apply for worker's compensation benefits to protect themselves and their families.

If you are a postal employee, no matter if you are a career employee or non-career employee, you are entitled to file a claim with the Office of Workers Compensation Programs. One requirement is that you must have worked at the Post Office at some point during the 21-days prior to your COVID-19 diagnosis and are required to complete an approved form of COVID-19 testing to prove you are sick. Employees that have claims approved are entitled to have their medical

costs and lost wages paid. Approved employees are also entitled to request that any annual sick or annual leave used be "bought back" and redeposited to their leave balances.

Section 4016 of the law provides that a federal employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 and carried out duties that required contact with members of the public, or co-workers, or included a risk of exposure to coronavirus during a covered period of exposure prior to the diagnosis, is deemed to have an injury that is proximately caused by employment.

In simple terms, this means that if you are diagnosed with (have a positive test) and you file an OWCP claim, it will be more than likely approved. You are not required to prove you contracted the disease at work. To receive benefits, those diagnosed must submit a claim. Do not expect management to do this for you and do not expect them to inform you that you have the right to file a claim.

When you file a claim for COVID-19 you are entitled to request continuation of pay (COP). This is pay at your regular rate of pay paid to you by the postal service during your COVID-19 illness absence. You are entitled to COP if you file your claim within 30-days of your diagnosis. If you are filing more than 30-days after your diagnosis, you are not entitled to COP. **Please note, that for the first three days, the**

law requires a "waiting period" that you must use sick, annual, or leave without pay (LWOP) before COP kicks in. However, if your absence lasts longer than 14-days, the first three days will be converted to COP. Any non-scheduled days also count towards the three day "waiting" period. COP can be paid for up to 45 calendar days after which any additional missed time will be paid as worker's compensation payments by OWCP.

In order to file a claim, it is recommended that you do so through e-COMP. You must register at

<https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>

Doing so ensures that OWCP receives your claim form, receives the necessary laboratory reports because you upload the documents. They system automatically forwards documents to your supervisors to complete and tracks whether the Postal Service has done their part. Using e-COMP gives you tracking, and you can hold management accountable because you can see what they have and have not done.

The instructions below are not all inclusive and do not guarantee claim approval. To file a claim and to receive COP:'

—Notify your supervisor that you are sick with COVID-19
—Get an approved form of COVID-19 testing to prove you are sick.

• **The best form of testing for proof of illness is a**

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Secretary/Treasurer's Report

By MICHELLE V. CURTIS



***Making money is action.
Keeping money is behavior.
Growing money is knowledge.***

Happy New Year Postal Family! I hope and pray this new year brings happier times than you could ever imagine. Now that's a thought: Dreams bigger than your imagination. Imagine that Family!

Have you ever gotten a charge on your account and wonder, "what the fudge?" Or a company challenging your integrity over Their error. Or a bill about something you had No idea existed. Or even worse, a bill from the IRS. YIKES!

Well, during my term as your Secretary-Treasurer all of the above has occurred at Miami Area Local. And like in my personal life I do sometimes yell out: "What the Fudge" or "Oh no they didn't". And of course as your Secretary-Treasurer, I fight. For every dollar and cent.

One of our banks slapped a \$16 fee on one of our most active accounts. I was like "seriously" and immediately got on the phone and got the charged removed. Or the company we got the Christmas gifts for 2021, I know you liked those lunch bags. The company didn't believe some of the items weren't working properly and challenged me to prove it by photo. I was like: Really? You're kidding right? But they weren't and phrased it in a non-flattering way. Once I demanded the replacements and informed them of Miami Area Local taking their business elsewhere in the future an email of apology and a \$500 check was sent. (Which I

deposited with a quickness)

And then there's the IRS sending us a late penalty bill, yikes. So by nature I'm not a scary person. And thanks to you, for overwhelmingly voting me into office, as your Secretary-Treasurer I operate in a spirit of boldness. But when it comes to the IRS: I'm a chicken, cluck-cluck-cluck. (I asked Siri to spell the sound a chicken makes) Admittedly, we do have Bellows Accounting Firm for our LM Reports and taxes but what they do is dependent on what I do. So back to cluck-cluck-cluck. After I did my usual: What the Fudge, Oh no they didn't, with an added Yikes (it's the IRS after all)! I contacted Bellows. And as with I'm sure all professional accountants who deal with the IRS on a normal basis responded: don't worry about it we'll take care of it. Even after I told them I'm a chicken, cluck-cluck-cluck. So by the time a second notice came, and it did, with an added threat of a lien possibly being placed, in my mind's eye there were feathers on my office floor. Now I'm Super Chicken and not the cool kind with a cape, cluck-cluck-cluck-Double Cluck! Of course I contacted Bellows about it with a reminder of my chicken-ness (not a word). Again, Bellows handled my chicken hearted email and phone call with total professionalism, other than their laughter concerning my chicken-ness (again not a word). Eventually I did receive a letter from the IRS officially plucking my chicken feathers, at least for now, clearing up the entire incident with a sentence of apology. Maybe not a whole sentence, more a few words,

but it worked for me.

Bottom line: As your Secretary-Treasurer I fight for every dollar, and cent. Hopefully in a way that makes you proud or makes you laugh with pride. Either way, I'll take it.

How we handle the unexpected shows who we are, our character. Unexpected things happen in life, it's a part of life. We can prepare for some unexpected bills, hopefully not the IRS, by saving money. But it's also important to prepare mentally, I'm learning that. Sure my mantras of "what the fudge" or "no they didn't" take the edge off but I did spend some mental time, aka stress, on those issues. I Googled, too big a job for Siri, how to destress:

1. Take slow deep breaths (took chicken breaths)
2. Soak in a warm bath (no bathtubs at the office)
3. Listen to soothing music (could put me to sleep at work)
4. Practice mindful meditation (I kept seeing a chicken farm)
5. Write (all I could write is IRSIRSIRS)
6. Use guided imagery (again, chickens)

Maybe these tips will work for you, obviously they didn't work for me.



Clerk Craft Director's Report

By **PAMELA McCORMICK**

Greetings My Brothers and Sisters I wish you all a Happy Prosperous 2022 Year to come. I would like to encourage our members to always work safely ask questions and think positive. To all of our new members first and foremost Congratulation for joining the best Union ever. I would like to offer my advice to start your career off with believing that Knowledge is Power. I say that to say, make sure you educate yourself, and stay involved in your Union. Start with our APWU Zoom meetings. All you need to do is register with our Union secretary prior to the meeting which is every 3rd Tuesday of most months. Secondly find out who your shop steward is and always remember our members are always welcome

Covid 19 is still impacting our lives and we as your Union is here to support you through these troubling times. APWU continue to support our members with needed MOU's

that were extended to benefit our members. Covid 19 known as the Corona Virus has brought so many changes to all of us and yet we continue to press on. It is important to take what is considered the good things from this situation and prosper from it. Corona Virus changes are not only the changes that we have to live with but also deal with. I believe this corona 19 virus is a personal decision that is for you and your family to decide how you will keep yourself safe. I recommend that you PLEASE CONTINUE TO WEAR YOUR MASK.

Management continues to violate our craft by using the carrier craft, mail handler craft and also management doing our clerk work. We need your help with this violation going on. Please say something to your steward or call our office to file a grievance.

Check out our Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement which is a three year contract from September 21, 2021 through September 21, 2024. The American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the U.S. Postal Service have reached a tentative three-year Collective Bargaining (CBA) announced APWU President and Lead Negotiator Mark Diamondstein. APWU is preparing the complete Tentative Agreement sent to members with their ratification ballot. To read a summary of the new 2021-2024 tentative agreement, go to apwu.org/tasummary.

Brothers and Sisters we also will soon began nomination for our local APWU Officers so stay focused and show your support and continue to be involved in your Union.

SHOP STEWARDS Are Needed so call the office if you are interested.



Next Union ZOOM meeting February 15th @ 7pm (Nominations)

UPCOMING MEETINGS: March 22nd (due to election)
April 19th NO MEETING In May

February 14th Happy Valentine's Day

February 21st—Presidents Day

March 13th—Daylight Saving Time (Spring Forward)

March 17th—Happy St. Patrick's Day

February is BLACK HISTORY MONTH March is WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Observances

March 2 — Ash Wednesday

April 3 — Ramadan Begins

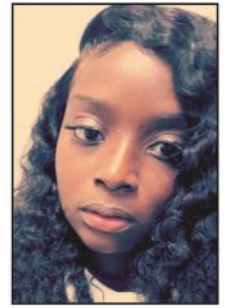
April 10— Palm Sunday

April 15— Good Friday

April 16— Passover April 17—Easter

Maintenance Craft Director's Report

By **ANGELA McDONALD**



Brothers and Sisters,

I hope you all had a safe and healthy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year. I also want to thank you all. No matter your craft, work location, or job title, you each had an impact on millions of Americans' holiday season. Because of your hard work, the holidays were brighter due to the gifts, cards, and letters you made possible to be delivered during the season. I know it is a busy and exhausting season for all of you, but don't forget what the work you did meant to millions of people. I write you with great optimism that 2022 will provide an opportunity for a much better year ahead. I hope you were able to have a few moments to share some holiday time with family and friends. Hopefully your time at work involved standing strong and sticking together with your sisters and brothers of your union. We need to start preparing to rise up with people power. That includes all our members, family, friends, neighbors, community organizations, and our political representatives. We have to rise up to protect our working and living environment, to enforce our Collective Bargaining Agreement and to fight for the support of the Postal Service.

Knowing Your Weingarten Rights

"YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS!" When you are summoned by any person of authority from management or the Postal Inspection Service, always be sure to enact your Weingarten Rights. These are your rights and are there for your benefit of protection. Do not assume anything! Do not assume you are just being questioned and that everything is going to work out in your favor. Do not assume the questions are for your benefit. Do not assume the questions have a corrective rather than punitive intent behind them. You

need to remember that as soon as management asks you a question about your job in any manner during a one on one meeting it has now become an investigative interview and you should exercise **"YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS!"**

IF YOU ARE BEING ASKED QUESTIONS WHICH COULD RESULT IN DISCIPLINE, BE SURE TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Request the right to have your union representative with you before answering any questions, and do not volunteer information before speaking with your union representative.
2. Make sure you are ordered to answer the questions.
3. Keep your answers to the point and accurate. Be completely truthful in your answers. Do not speculate.
4. Do not volunteer to take a polygraph examination or drug test.
5. If you are told you are facing criminal investigation, refuse to answer any questions until you have spoken with an attorney.

Finally, there are always issues which occur on a daily basis like overtime or the occasional other issues such as holiday scheduling. Please see your tour Union Steward to address these issues as they are your best immediate resource for handling many of your day to day issues. If there are unresolved or reoccurring issues then you should immediately contact your steward. If we can work using a team approach during the grievances process, we will reach the desired remedy. We are only as strong as we are united and the more united the stronger we are! Feel free to stop me with questions and if I do not have the answers, I will do my best to find them and get back to you as soon as possible. I will keep you informed with any new information concerning the Maintenance Craft.





MVS/VMF Craft Director's Report

By **CARLISTER GORDON**

Brothers and Sisters as we enter 2022, I want to thank you all for your hard work and dedication to the Motor Vehicle Craft in Miami. To say it has been challenging is putting mildly. However, there is a lot to be thankful for.

2021, saw APWU National reach a contract agreement with Postal management. Our current contract runs for 3 years with a 3.9% contract increase, which will be in 3 stages at 1.3% of each stage. There are also 6 COLA increases during this contract. This contract runs from September 21, 2021, through September 20, 2024.

Level 8 will get an additional step and top out at level P; all double letter levels will be illuminated. PTF pay has increased as of January 1, 2022, and FTR alike will now receive 11 paid holidays including Juneteenth.

Motor Vehicle Craft Needs Stewards

The Motor Vehicle Craft is badly in need of stewards to represent its members both in PVS and the VMF, currently there are only one stewards in each section with myself. If you are interested in becoming a steward, please contact the Union Hall or your MVS Craft Director. Instead of complaining that your Union isn't doing anything for you, joint use in the fight for better working conditions and holding management to the contract and our Local Memorandum of Understanding. Training is provided.

What the Tentative Contract means for us.

Part-Time Flexible (PTF) Work Rules

- Schedule guarantee of 24-hour per pay period, increased from 2 hours a pay period
- Guaranteed at least four hours of work or pay when scheduled
- Forty (40) hours of annual leave will be advanced at the start of each leave year for immediate use
- Guaranteed a minimum of one (1) non-scheduled day each service week except during the peak season exception period with notice Wednesday the week prior
- Bottom Steps FF-AA eliminated with Step A becoming the first Step
- New top Step P added

Enhanced Level 8

- Bottom Steps FF-AA will be eliminated with Step A becoming the first Step
- New top Step P added for Level 8
- Employees currently in Grade/Level 8 will move into new steps while retaining all credit toward

next step: - a few drivers have asked for clarification on this section.

—Steps FF-BB moved to Step A

—Step AA moved to Step B

—Steps A-O moved up one Step

- Any PTF identified for conversion to FTR will be converted within 28-days.
- APWU will have opportunity to submit recommendations on new vehicles prior to specifications being sent to contractors and before manufacturing and completion of new vehicles. I hope Miami Area Local will be included in this process.
- National committee established to address training initiative and opportunities – it is my hope that this will include adapting the Smith System or something similar to it for our drivers which can reduce our accident rate.
- HCR limitation on Subcontracting MOU remains in full force and effect.
- District Safety Committees made permanent.

Uniform/Work Clothes Program Allowances

- 2.5% increase to the uniform/work clothes allowances in 2022, 2023, and 2024.
- New "Rollover" program where unused funds.

Job Security

- Protection from layoff for career employees with six years of service remains in effect
- Any current career employee on the rolls as of September 20, 2021, with less than six years of service will be included in the no layoff protections for the life of the National Agreement, providing an additional 72,000 career employees protection from layoffs.
- 50-mile limit on excessing of employees
- The current moratorium on subcontracting of Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) work will continue in its present form during life of the Agreement.

Source: APWU.com

Point of information

In my last article I made mention that the VMF needed Automotive Mechanics/ Technicians, I am happy to report that since then they have filled that vacancy with three Automotive mechanics and one garageman.

Please keep eye out for the Tentative Contract and Ratification documents coming in the mail soon. We need your full support to ratify this contract.

Wishing everyone all the best for 2022 and continue to stay union strong.

President's Message (Continued from Page 1)

wage increase each year in lieu of COLA. We got three annual raises with one being retroactive. We got Job Security, protection from layoffs. Holiday pay. Juneteenth added with our holidays, instead of 10 we get paid for 11, Retroactive pay, Health Insurance, Staffing, Uniform Allowances, Work Rule Improvements, Additional Maintenance Provisions, Motor Vehicle/VMF Provisions, Harassment provisions and so much more. With all that said regarding our agreement it is up to us to make it happen, so let's do it together. Please Miami Area Local members pay close attention to your mail at home, at Mom's and Grandma house and open the envelope, read what's inside, say yes, mail back and let's ratify our contract! **SHINE YOUR LIGHT.**



COVID 19 DELTA OMICRON IS REAL!

Taking Safety seriously is everyone's obligation. The Union is certified by law to enforce the contract in regards to working conditions, hours and wages. Under Article 14 of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) the Union cooperates with and assists management to live up to their responsibility to provide safe working conditions. The pandemic is still amongst us and we must continue to be a "health hero". Please do not get too comfortable and lower your guards. You must wear your mask, social distance, wash and sanitize. We here in Florida are still rampant with the spread of the OMICRON cases (40,000) because it's more contagious than the Delta and not as deadly. We encourage you to get vaccinated to protect yourself, your families, co-workers and love ones. If anyone is having difficulties with supplies to remain safe while at work, file the 1767, make a copy before you submit it. If not responded to during your tour of duty contact your stewards and/or

call the Union office so we can make sure Management is held account-able. The COVID Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will expire February 11th 2022 but there may be an extension due to the OMICRON spread. America won't seem normal unless it's a lot less sick. Stay in tuned with your Union for further details.

COVID-19 TEST KITS

The APWU supports the public health initiative of free COVID test kits sent to everyone who requests them. This project aligns with the postal mission to bring a trusted, vital and universal service to the people of this country. It underscores the invaluable role of a public Postal Service that reaches every household, no matter who we are or where we live. No private company has the network, infrastructure and capability to accomplish the task of mailing test kits to 161 million homes. Only the public Postal Service and postal workers can do that. Private companies will only deliver where profit can be made.

The APWU has agreed on terms with the USPS to put additional staff to implement this vital program. Postal workers have been on the front lines of this pandemic, financial transactions, medicine, election ballots, ecommerce packages, social security checks and other vital mail to the people of the country. Now we are proud to step up to the task in mailing COVID-19 test kits to those who need them. The kits will be sent through first class mail. Free shipping and one per residential address. Order yours today at usps.com/testkits.

WHAT TO DO WITH RETIREMENT

Will you be ready? Are you healthy? Here are a few very important gems to keep with you for retiring. 1. Update your beneficiary forms every five (5) years. 2. Years of service consist of months and years, not days so use all days left because you will not get credit for them. 3. FERS employees, always retire at

the end of the month. CSRS employees, make your date the first three days of the month. 4. MRA-5% penalty under the age of 62. 5. FERS employees comes with a three part retirement. Basic + Social Security + TSP, maximum of 41 years and 11 months. 6. TSP - long term retirement savings, funds to transfer to an IRA. 7. Social Security benefits - 10 years/40 credits, fully funded until 2034. If you are preparing your retirement exit and/or have your date, please make sure you get all the bang for your buck. **YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF!** You can always call your Union office for any assistance and guidance for this milestone of achievement. All the Best to You.

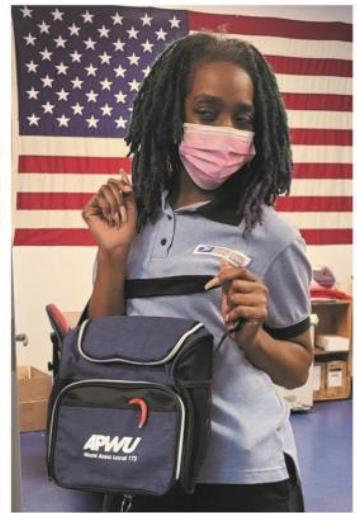
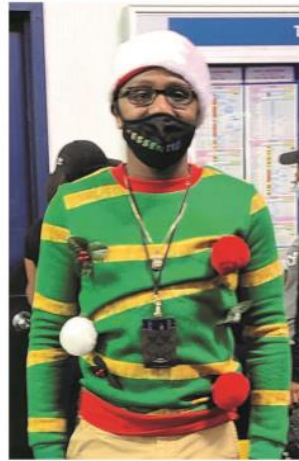
In closing, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., fought for economic justice, racial equality and labor rights for workers nationwide. Yet the voting rights issue is fundamental to all these other democratic rights and is thus a critical fight for our time. In the 2020 election postal workers proudly carried out our civic responsibility to the people of this country by timely and securely moving millions of ballots.

Our APWU family is made up of 200,000 members with varied political views and affiliations. It is one of our strengths. Whatever our diverse opinions, we should remain vigilant and united in re-committing ourselves to the struggle to advance democracy and win social and economic justice for all postal workers and working people. Current voting rights legislation, including the For the People Act, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act, that would ensure early voting, access to mail ballots and easier voting registration. Let's stand together, **Shine your light with your Voting right.**

Until we speak again, don't tell anyone what you're doing until it is done. Outside energy can throw off your goals. Keep shining and let no one dim your brightness. I love each and every one of you and there is absolutely nothing you can do about it.



APWU spreading Holiday Cheer





from Homestead to Boca Raton



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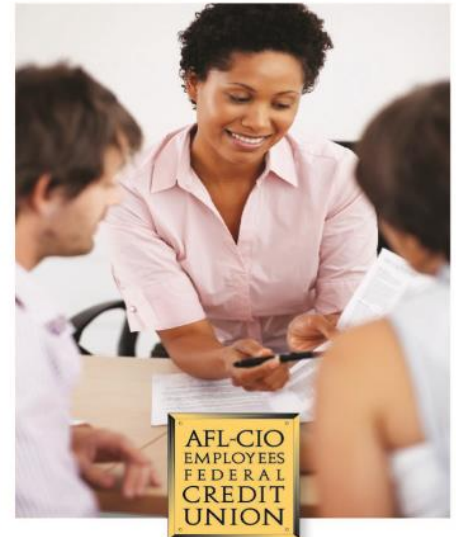
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As members of AFL-CIO Employees Federal Credit Union, you are eligible for a wide range of services:

ATMS—Access savings, checking, or line of credit accounts 24 hours a day from thousands of automated teller machines worldwide! In addition to our own ATMs, you can use your card wherever you see the Co-Op and Allpoint signs.

MOBICENT INTERNET BANKING—From your computer, and the internet, you have access to a secure 24-hour virtual branch. You can perform many of your most needed transactions, including paying bills – right at your fingertips. Free Electronic Bill Pay also available.

24-HOUR TELEPHONE BANKING—Using a phone you can make account transactions from work, on the road, or from the comfort of your own home using any touch-tone phone and calling 202-637-8855.

DIRECT DEPOSIT—Recurring paychecks, Social Security, and pension checks can be safely and securely deposited directly into a designated account each pay period or monthly.

VISA® CHECK / DEBIT CARD—Use it as an ATM card, or use it to make purchases directly from your checking account wherever you see the VISA® logo.

WIRE TRANSFERS—Make money transfers from your credit union account to any banking facility in the world.

PAYROLL DEDUCTION—The systematic way to have funds deducted and deposited automatically to any share (savings or checking) or loan account.

SAVINGS & CHECKING ACCOUNTS

(SHARE ACCOUNTS)—Regular share savings, IRAs, certificates of deposit, money market, holiday clubs, **no service charge checking.**



LOANS

AUTO LOANS—We offer up to 100% financing, including taxes, tags, and title, on any new or used car, van, or light truck depending on the year of vehicle.

AUTO REFINANCE NEW OR USED—If your Auto Loan is with another financial institution we can offer you the opportunity to refinance and save some money.

RV/MOTORCYCLE—Our loans offer competitive rates, flexible payment options, and financing for up to 100% of the purchase price.

LINE OF CREDIT—Use your Line of Credit (LOC) to fund expenses or protect against checking overdrafts. It's cash when you need it, but there are no payments until you activate your Line of Credit.

SHARE SECURED LOAN—Get a low interest loan by securing your loan with your credit union savings account or certificate.

PERSONAL SIGNATURE LOAN—Borrow as little as \$500, up to \$35,000 at a low fixed rate to consolidate your bills, pay taxes, or cover an unexpected expense. Not all borrowers will qualify for the maximum amount.

MEMBER ADVANTAGE—\$1,000, fixed rate and a repayment term of up to 12 months!

MEMBER ADVANTAGE PLUS—\$1,500, fixed rate and a repayment term of up to 18 months!

MORTGAGE LOANS—First-time buyers or refinancing for a lower rate? We offer a full line of options, including fixed and adjustable rates, balloon loans, and pre-approved loans.

HOME EQUITY LINE OF CREDIT (HELOC)—A variable-rate line of credit you can draw on for up to 10 years, and use for any purpose. Interest you pay may be tax deductible. Consult a tax advisor regarding the deductibility of interest.

SECOND MORTGAGE LOANS—Use the equity in your home to borrow at a fixed rate. Interest you pay may be tax deductible. Consult a tax advisor regarding the deductibility of interest.

FRESH START LOAN—Up to \$3,000 for 36 months to assist credit challenged members to pay off past due credit and re-establish their credit rating. Not all borrowers will qualify for the maximum amount.

LOAN LOYALTY PROGRAM—Members who have two or more loans and have borrowed from us since 2005 are eligible to receive a loan rate reduction on select loan products.





Miami Beach Business Agent's Report

By **WANDA HARRIS**

Greetings Miami Beach Sisters and Brothers. I hope all is well and safe with you and your family. We are still having attendance issues on the Beach but I must say you guys have improved and I am so proud of you. I have also taken care of all the clerks who were not paid their holiday pay, in particular at Carl Fisher station. If anyone have not receive their adjustment, contact me immediately. Let's talk about our Union, our Contract, our Future. With your ballot in the mail, it is now time to vote on the national Tentative Agreement for our new Union contract. The decision on ratification is yours, the members. I spoke to you about this so please use your VOICE. Every VOTE counts! VOTE yes for, strong pay increases, including three annual wage increases and six COLAs for career employees. Enhanced pay scales, Job security with no layoff protections for career employees with six years of service and any current career employees on the rolls as of September 20,

2021 with less than six years. Automatic PSE conversions in Level 20 offices and above after 24 months of relative standing. Staffing work rules and Workplace environment improvements and so much more. Please pay attention to your mail and look for a white flat envelope (9x11), open it and cast your VOTE (yes), mail it back to the National to ratify the contract. Come with me and let's get our money, simply because we deserve it. **LET YOUR VOTE BE YOUR VOICE!** One last goodie for each one of you. **We are having our Nominations meeting on February 15th and Miami Beach have a vacant position for the Business Agent and I need one of you to fill the position so you can take care of your fellowman and be a part of one of the best Unions in the nation. Again, it's your UNION, your CONTRACT, your FUTURE. Solidarity forever,**



Boca Raton Business Agent's Report

By **ROBERT MIRANDA**

I would like to thank all members in Boca for your support and I wish you a prosperous 2022. We posted at all the Boca stations the February meeting notice and the nominations for all positions. I will be looking for a member to step up and run for the Boca Raton Business Agent this next term. We also need shop stewards for the whole city. Please consider this opportunity for future leaders.

This year has opened with several Crossing Crafts violations. I am receiving several statements from

members. Please remember in your statements the last name of the violators and how long each one was working. We need more Statements from our members remember this will protect your jobs.



I would just like to speak about Zero Tolerance Policy. We are working under stressful times and very long hours. This might create short tempers and bad decisions that we must avoid. Please remember stop before you put your self out of a job.

As always you can call me at the Union Hall 305-591-0134 or my cell 786-239-8983 if you need further assistance.

Please remember to watch your attendance and come to work.



Hialeah Business Agent's Report

By **CLIFF RITCH, JR.**

WHAT'S NEW!

Greetings to all, first let me take this time to wish you all a Happy New Year and I hope that everyone had a nice holiday season.

Well as you all have probably already heard there was a Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement reached. Below are some of the highlights of the New tentative agreement. The complete tentative agreement is being prepared by the APWU National and will be sent out for ratification by the membership. It looks pretty good. It's a 3 year contract. From September 21, 2021 through September 20, 2024.

As far as Wage Increases

1.3% November 20, 2021 (Will be Retroactive)

1.3% November 19, 2022

1.3% November 18, 2023

Six (6) Cost of Living Allowances (COLA) for career employees (March and September of each year) with no change to the current formula based on the July 2021 CPI-W. (After the fourth month of the six-month measuring period, the COLA increase is at \$0.39 per hour and will be based on the January 2022 CPI-W Index)

PSEs receive the general wage increases and an additional 1% increase each year in lieu of COLA (i.e. 2.3% each November)

\$0.50/hour additional increase for PSE's effective the first pay period of the second full month after the Agreement is ratified

In regards to job security, the protection from layoff for career employees with six years of service will remain in effect.

Any current career employee on the rolls as of September 20, 2021, with less than six years of service will be included in the no layoff protections for the life of the National Agreement, providing an additional 72,000 career employees protection from layoffs.

PSEs will be converted to career status upon reaching 24-months of relative standing

Conversions will still occur prior to the 24-months

Forty (40) hours of advanced annual leave upon completion of an initial 360-day PSE appointment in Level 20 offices and above

PSEs will be offered one (1) non-scheduled day each service week except during peak season with notice the Wednesday the week prior

There was one new holiday added "Juneteenth" was added to the holidays for career employees for a total of 11 paid holidays per year

These are just some of highlights that I thought might interest you. There is a more detailed explanation regarding the tentative agreement online at this link: <https://apwu.org/tasummary>

Now the newest covid-19 threat as of late December is the new variant referred to as omicron. There is a surge of cases of this new strain in

most states and it is spreading like wild fire. Which brings me to a new development we received regarding covid leave. As you probably already know you must now use your own leave for covid related absences. However the latest development is that you may now apply for owcp when you have been diagnosed with covid 19. Best of all it doesn't matter if you are a career employee or non-career employee, you are entitled to file a claim with the Office of Workers Compensation Programs.

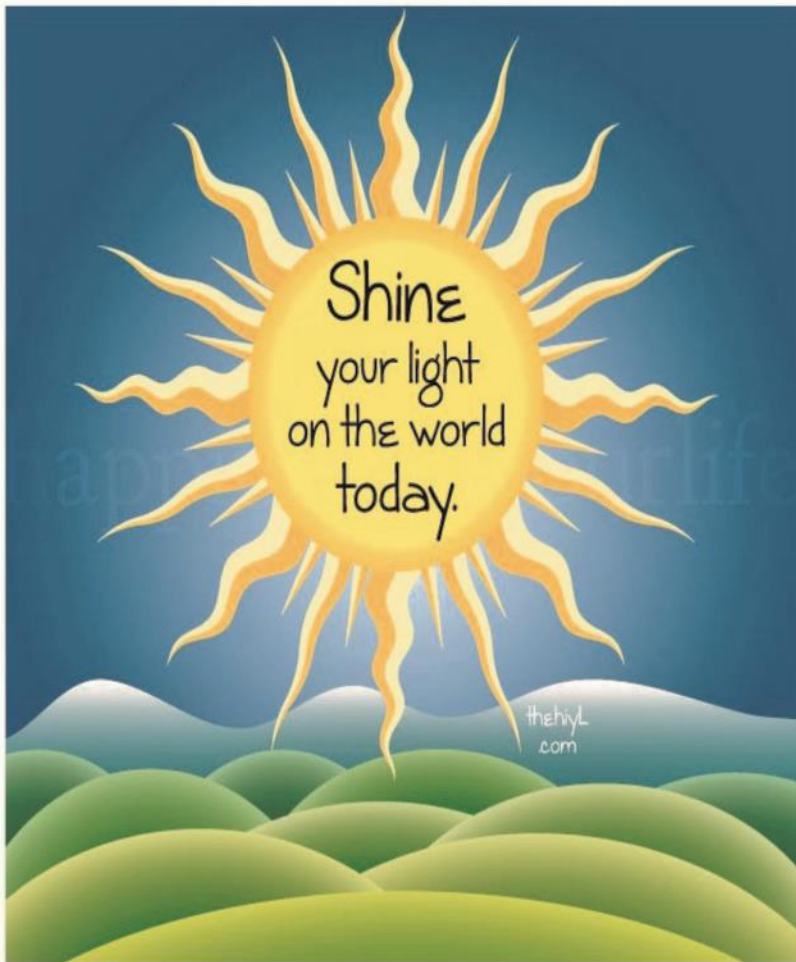
One drawback is that you have to have worked at the Post Office at some point during the 21- days prior to your COVID-19 diagnosis.

At home and rapid tests by themselves are not enough to prove that you were sick with COVID. You are required to provide an approved COVID-19 test to prove that you were sick. When you do so and your claim is approved you will be entitled to request that any sick or annual leave used be "bought back" and redeposited to your leave balances.

You must file your claim within 30-days of being diagnosed with COVID-19 to be entitled to COP. If you file more than 30-days after your diagnosis, you are not entitled to COP.

Also, the law requires a 3 day "waiting period" that you must use sick, annual, or leave without pay (LWOP) before COP kicks in. But, if your absence lasts for more than

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



**MARY
VICKERS
JOHNSON**

Mary Vickers Johnson, a dedicated loyal member and postal worker for 39 years. She retired as a Sales Service Associate T-7 at the Milam Dairy Branch. Congratulations from your APWU family. We wish you all the best in your next chapter.

Hialeah Business Agent's Report - Continued from Page 12

14-days, the first three days will be converted to COP and any non-scheduled days also count towards the three day "waiting" period. COP can be paid for up to 45 calendar days.

To file a claim, it is recommended that you file online through e-COMP. You must register at <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>

It is a good idea to register now and open an account even if you aren't sick. You can use it if at any time you ever have an at work injury. Also God forbid you do get COVID you will have one thing less to worry about having to do in order to file.

You can find all of this information at the APWU National website here at this link:

<https://apwu.org/news/how-file-owcp-claim-when-diagnosed-covid-19>

Once there you will see detailed instructions on how to file that are much better than what I can provide to you in this short article.

A couple of tips though in regards to registering you will need to know this. You will be confronted with a question regarding Agency Group – Southern Area- they will want to know whether you are Florida 1,2, or 3. If you work in zip code area 330-327, 349 which that is most everyone you are Florida 3.

They will also want to know your grade or level what step you are at and your rate of pay. All of this information can be found in the upper left hand corner of your pay stub under where it reads [RSC/LEV|Rate| the RSC is your step LEV is your Grade.

Okay so, I wish you all luck and I hope and pray that neither you nor your loved ones contract this terrible virus. One important thing to remember is to wear a mask at all times when you leave your home.

Now, for my Hialeah brothers and sisters as always if you have any grievance issues or concerns you need help with call me. Any clerks that might be interested in becoming a shop steward please let me know we could really use the help. Good Luck! And Stay Safe!

Homestead Business Agent's Report

By PAULA ANDINO



Fellow brothers and sisters, it is a pleasure to salute you all. Another year of success and happiness has passed, but for some others also grief and sorrow. With every new year comes greater challenges and obstacles in life. I wish you all the courage, hope and faith to overcome the new year. My article is **just a reminder** to those who are not up to date and informed with the latest news.

Unfortunately our country is still in the midst of this pandemic with a high spike of covid-19 diagnostics, and even though we all might be tired of hearing it and worrying about it, it's not going away anytime soon.

A few of my fellow coworkers have asked me about EFEL LEAVE and as bad as it sounds, it's over! Fortunately we have a new resource for career or non-career employees; you are entitled to file a claim with the Office of Workers Compensation Programs.

The instructions below are not all inclusive and do not guarantee claim approval. To file a claim and to receive COP:

- Notify your supervisor that you are sick with COVID-19
- Get an approved form of COVID-19 testing to prove you are sick.
 - The best form of testing for proof of illness is a laboratory PCR test.
 - A positive Antibody or Antigen COVID-19 test result, together with contemporaneous medical evidence and documentation from a medical professional, may

also be accepted.

—If no positive laboratory test is available, a COVID-19 diagnosis from a physician together with rationalized medical opinion supporting the diagnosis and an explanation as to why a positive test result is not available may also be accepted.

—AT HOME & RAPID TESTS ALONE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO SERVE AS PROOF OF ILLNESS - they require an accompanying statement from a doctor.

- Submit a PS-Form 3971 and check COP as the reason
- Register on e-COMP if you have not done so: <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>

—Once registered on e-COMP, login to your account

—Click on new claim on top right of page

—On next screen, make sure "Federal Employee" is selected

—Make sure to select Postal Service as the agency

—Click "File Claim"

—Click "next"

—Select the COVID-19 Claim and enter information requested in the online form

—Once requested information is entered, upload a copy of the positive laboratory COVID-19 results or other relevant medical documentation

—After uploading, make sure you select "continuation of pay"

—It is recommended you save a copy of your claim or at least write down the ECN number for your claim. **You have the right under the law to file an OWCP claim for COVID-19!** Do not let management discourage you

from filing a claim. Do not let them tell you that you have to prove your sickness was contracted at work as this is not a requirement of the law. It is in your best interest to file for the benefits. You protect yourself and your families by doing so. If you follow the steps and have a laboratory test confirmed case of COVID-19, you will likely be approved. However, the APWU cannot guarantee claim approval for postal workers just like you.

I hope all the information listed above helps fellow peers and those affected by COVID-19 understand what to do when hit with unexpected and unwanted news. Also keep in mind to provide the adequate information to your supervisor to avoid any write ups or disciplinary actions. May you and your families all stay safe and healthy.



Executive Vice President's Report

(Continued from Page 2)

laboratory PCR test.

- A positive Antibody or Antigen COVID-19 test result, together with contemporaneous medical evidence and documentation from a medical professional, may also be accepted.
 - If no positive laboratory test is available, a COVID-19 diagnosis from a physician together with rationalized medical opinion supporting the diagnosis and an explanation as to why a positive test result is not available may also be accepted.
 - AT HOME & RAPID TESTS ALONE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO SERVE AS PROOF OF ILLNESS - they require an accompanying statement from a doctor.
- Submit a PS-Form 3971 and check COP as the reason
- Register on e-COMP if you have not done so: <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>
- Once registered on e-COMP, login to your account
- Click on new claim on top right of page

- On next screen, make sure "Federal Employee" is selected
- Make sure to select Postal Service as the agency
- Click "File Claim"
- Click "next"
- Select the COVID-19 Claim and enter information requested in the online form
- Once requested information is entered, upload a copy of the positive laboratory COVID-19 results or other relevant medical documentation
- After uploading, make sure you select "continuation of pay"
- It is recommended you save a copy of your claim or at least write down the ECN number for your claim

Here are some links to references for OWCP claims due to COVID-19:

[Register for e-COMP](#)
[Video Tutorial on Registering for e-COMP](#)
[Video Tutorial on Filing COVID-19 Claim through e-COMP](#)

Additional Resources:

[Now It Is Easier to File FECA COVID Claims | American Postal Workers Union](#)

[Claims under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act due to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | U.S. Department of Labor](#)

[FECA Bulletins \(2020-2024\) | U.S. Department of Labor](#) (these are the instructions claims examiners must follow)

You have the right under the law to file an OWCP claim for COVID-19!

Do not let management discourage you from filing a claim. Do not let them tell you that you must prove your sickness was contracted at work as this is not a requirement of the law. It is in your best interest to file for the benefits. You protect yourself and your families by doing so. If you follow the steps and have a laboratory test confirmed case of COVID-19, you will likely be approved. However, the APWU cannot guarantee claim approval.

**Check
this out**

***How to File an OWCP Claim
When Diagnosed with COVID-19
American Postal Workers Union***

<https://apwu.org/news/how-file-owcp-claim-when-diagnosed-covid-19>



**American Postal Worker's Union
LOCAL 172**

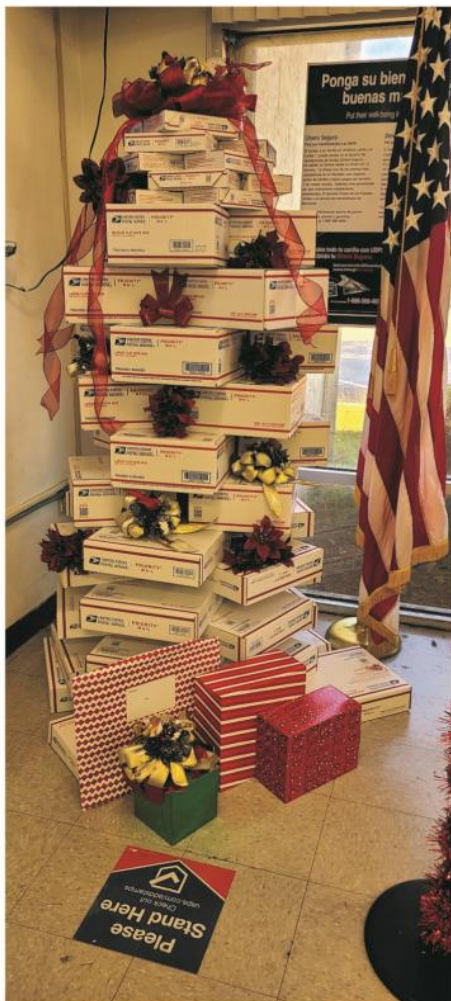
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