



by
Michael
Mize

PRESIDENT

We Have Lost Another Great Union Leader From Michigan

Our Brother Leo Persails passed in April.

Myself like many others today, never worked with Leo at the Post Office or in the Union when Leo was still working. For me most of my knowledge of Leo came from all the people that mentored

me speaking of Leo. Then I moved up to become the Flint President and had a couple conversations with Leo. Later I followed in his footsteps and was fortunate enough to be elected the MPWU President. One of the first few people to congratulate me was Leo. I still have the message he left on my phone.

There are many people that have and will speak about Leo, what he

meant to them, etc. Leo struck me right away as a person that only spoke what was necessary. He didn't contact me and try to direct what we were doing, he just gave knowledge of the issues. Leo never told me what to do or how to think. What Leo did was give the information one needed to figure out on their own what they should do or think.

Leo was a fierce advocate for the membership of the APWU. His legacy from all the people he trained that later trained others will live on in the APWU forever. It is sad that our Brother has passed on, but I have to believe he is playing a round of golf on the most beautiful course now. I sit in the Flint Union the Lions Den, named after

continued on page 2

Rest in Peace, My Friend

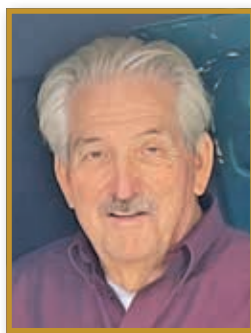
Leo Francis Persails

November 17, 1939 — April 3, 2024

Leo F. Persails, 84, of Gaines, MI, passed away after a long winter's battle with pneumonia on Wednesday, April 3, 2024 in Avon Park, Florida. A Memorial Mass will be celebrated 11:00 AM on Monday, April 22, 2024 at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 9450 Duffield Road, Gaines, MI 48436 with Fr. Carl Simon as celebrant. The family will receive visitors from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Sunday, April 21, 2024 at Sharp Funeral Homes, Miller Road Chapel, 8138 Miller Road, Swartz Creek. A rosary will be prayed on Sunday evening at 7:00 PM. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org.

Son of William F. Persails and Mary L. McCormick, he was born in Flint, MI. He graduated from Beecher High School in 1958. On March 3, 1961, he married

his loving wife of 63 years, Jeannine Kay (Duley). Leo was hired in the post office as a hand sort and letter sorting machine operator in 1962. Soon after, he proudly became a dedicated union member of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU). He was elected President of the Flint local, where the office is currently named "The Lion's Den" in his honor. In 1972, he was elected as the President of the Michigan Postal Workers Union (MPWU) and served as such until 1984, when he was elected as a National Business Agent handling arbitration workloads alongside two other NBAs. In 1995, Leo served as the Central Regional Coordinator for the APWU while also



serving on the National Executive Board. He handled thousands of arbitration cases to support his union brother and sisters through 2002 when he retired after a close election for APWU National President. Leo knew the importance of solidarity, not only at work, but first and foremost at home,

where he was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. After retirement, he and his wife Jeannine enjoyed many years as snowbirds in Avon Park, Florida, playing golf, and spending time with friends and family. Leo enjoyed playing guitar, singing country music songs, and cruising with the top down, always with his wife by his side.

Leo is survived by his wife, Jeannine;

four children, Leo (Kelly Hartwick), Wayne (Vicki), Douglas (Teresa), Sheila (Greg) Best; twelve grandchildren, Michael, Dakota, Shelby H., Matthew, Jacob, Trevor, and Shelby J. Persails, Amanda Tiemer, Sarah DeDonna, Maci, Madilyn, and Carli Best; six great-grandchildren; brother-in-law, Jim (Jan) Duley; sister-in-law, Cathy (Tony) Carobine; and many beloved cousins, nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William and Mary; two children — a daughter and a son shortly after childbirth; his brothers, Bill Persails and Norman McCormick, and parents-in-law, Thomas & Jennie Duley; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Tommie and Mary Duley, Ronald and Marian Wilcox.

— Sharpfuneralhomes.com

— The Enemy Within —

by Leo Persails

Turning the Postal Service over to private industry isn't a new idea. It's been supported for years by people outside our ranks. The Republican Party has been in power for 17 of the last 21 years. Former President Reagan formulated a committee specifically designed to investigate and report on the Postal Service. It didn't come as any shock when the

main report of that committee recommended that private industry take over the Postal Service. The fact that the Republican Party is still trying to give the Postal Service to private industry under the present Bush (senior) Administration is also obvious. The changes made in the last year, and projections for the near future, show a trend to change us to a private concept

continued on page 2

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— The Enemy Within —

continued from page 1

that could easily result in a private takeover. There are many old Postal people who will say taking over the USPS isn't possible, simply based on history. It's true that we are unique in that we serve every hamlet and village throughout this great land. It's true that our postage rate is the lowest in the world. It's true our production rate and volume of handling are higher than those of the rest of the world. In fact, we are probably the only major business that other countries can't do cheaper. Other companies, like GM, Ford, or Chrysler may reap great profits by building cars with cheap labor in Korea, Mexico, or other countries, but that can't be duplicated with mail. Those countries, and others like them, can't move their own mail as cheaply as we move ours. Nothing beats a 25 cent stamp when you compare it with the cost of postage around the world. In addition, nothing compares to a 25 cent stamp when you compare it to the cost of anything else. You can't buy anything for 25 cents anymore, and it doesn't matter what you want or where you are. A candy bar from a machine starts at 50 cents and everything goes up from there. A 25 cent stamp will send a message from one side of this country to another and hand deliver it to its destination. It's a plain and simple fact ; You can't beat the value of a 25 cent stamp. We know all of that's true, and most of the public would also, if they took the time to consider it. The fact that it's true won't save us, because the people who want to own the Postal Service

don't care about the service it provides or the money it saves the public. They care about one thing; the profit that can be made if the government turns over the Postal Service. The 25 cent stamp will be gone with the \$3000 and \$4000 car. It will be a thing of the past, like the \$10 phone bill, and the \$100 plane ride. "They have tried to get us before," some say, "and they never have. What makes you think they can do it now?" The answer to that is simple. They no longer are attacking us from the outside. THE ENEMY IS WITHIN. They couldn't destroy the USPS as long as we provided the great service at the rate we do. They realize that in order to destroy the USPS, all they had to do was destroy the service. They had to enter with decision-making people who would destroy the service – people who would structure and mold us into something that duplicated private industry. The reason for that also, was simple. If we resembled private industry, then private industry would be able to take over. If the service were destroyed, the public would obviously

support private industry taking over. To accomplish this, someone had to be put in charge to promote and accomplish their goals. There would have to be members put on the board of governors who supported their goals. That was easy to do, because the governors are appointed and the Republicans were in office for 17 years. They next needed a Postmaster General who would destroy us from within. That too, was easy. The PMG is appointed by the board of governors. It admittedly took them a while, because every PMG they appointed was impressed with the dedication and effort of our tradition. That converted a lot of PMG's to support the USPS and its employees. These PMGs found, as all before them had, that the employees are the service. The great tradition of the USPS had been handed down from employee to employee, and therefore the service and tradition still existed. They learned that, in order to destroy the USPS, it would be necessary to destroy its employees and tradition.

A plan was devised and finally a PMG was appointed to do just that. It's also possible he may have designed the plan himself, but regardless of where it came from, it's in effect. Our survival as the USPS is being put to the test. Employees are being fired at the fasted rate in our history. Excessing and cuts in hours are happening everywhere. Consolidation of MSCs and elimination of jobs, both management and bargaining unit are being ordered, while our work is given away. Job security is a thing of the past for everyone, including management. These people even eat their own. The greatest threat to all this is the employees of small offices throughout this land. Small offices are the backbone of the USPS. Small offices provide service to every American regardless of profit, plain and simple, they keep private industry out. The Postmaster General is ordering attacks on postal employees. He is demanding personnel cuts, both in management and in the bargaining unit. He is purchasing equipment and

continued on page 6

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continued from page 1

Leo, working on the next project and thinking about our loss.

What we must all continue to do is fight the good fight in his honor. I spend my days praying that I even begin to fill the shoes of Leo and others that came before me. Never forget we have what we have and we are where we are as a result of the great people

that came before us. Leo Persails was and is one of those people that forged the APWU and we are forever in his debt.

Many of those that spoke about Leo also spoke about his family. Spoke about the kids being at an event. I think we also must recognize a couple things in this. Leo advocated for the APWU members vigorously. But Leo

did not forget about his family and loved them just as vigorously. We also must recognize the family. The only way one can be like Leo is to have the support for it at home. The entire family gave of themselves and shared Leo with us. We all owe them a debt as well.

God Bless and Rest in Peace Brother! You will be missed!

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The Michigan Postal Workers Union proudly represents the Members at Large within the Great State of Michigan. The following locals have also affiliated with the MPWU for training, education and information sharing between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

Battle Creek	Gaylord
Central MI	Great Lakes Area
Detroit District	Mail Haulers
Farmington	Jackson
Flint	Muskegon
480-481	Southwest MI
486-487	Traverse City
498-499	Western MI

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



by
Eric
Chornoby

How Did I Get Here?

Ordinarily, I write about something happening or something I have experienced for the *Michigan Messenger*. This article is a little different. All I have been able to do these past couple of weeks is reflect on the past. I love my job(s), but at some point, you must explain to your family why you work so much. Sitting down to write for the *Michigan Messenger* was difficult as all I could think of was how I got here.

I was elected the Executive Secretary at the 2024 State of Michigan Convention. The Executive Secretary is one of the top four positions in the State of Michigan and was held by Mike Long. Mike is the man who sits next to President Mize at the State Convention. He was the lifeblood of the State of Michigan.

When we go to the Convention, everything is done for us. At the State Convention, Mike spends 18-hour days typing our resolutions, setting up audio-visual equipment, making copies, advising the chair, etc. If it was done, Mike had his hand in doing it. Walking into this position is daunting.

I have known Mike for a long time. It was not until I sat down to do the job that I realized how time-consuming it was. Mike made the Executive Secretary role his own. If I had to write down what Mike did, I would fill a book and still miss things. I was honored that Mike asked me to step up, but these are huge shoes to fill. When I agreed to run, I had a pit in my stomach, the question of 'why.'

Born for Advocacy

I said I was being reminiscent, right? My dad is Patrick Chornoby, a long-time Detroit District Area Local (D.D.A.L.) officer. I grew up at Union meetings, Union halls, and Conventions. I have the fondest memories volunteering at the D.D.A.L., Setting up Union meetings, P.O.W.E.R. meetings, building the file room, etc. I always considered the Union office my second home. I had the privilege of knowing many current National Officers as a child. To this day, it is the coolest thing in the world.

Life has a funny way of turning out. I had no intention of becoming a Postal Employee. I knew how many long nights and weekends my dad had to put in. Helping people was in his blood, and I did not think I had it in me. So, I originally went to College to teach history. I started boxing, albeit briefly, at the KRONK Boxing Gym in Detroit before it closed.

Except parents always know best, and while working full time at a Union Grocery store, my dad convinced me to apply to the Post Office. P.S.E.'s were brand new, and the Post Office needed people. My interview was at the Bellingham Building. As luck would have it, I

was hired. The Postal Service gave me a list of offices that needed help, and I asked for a moment to take a phone call.

I called my dad. The list I had before me had some Detroit Offices, which I recognized, but it also had Madison Heights. I knew following in one of my dad's offices would create expectations. For me, this would be a job while I finished College. But Madison Heights was one of Roscoe's offices. I remembered Roscoe. I liked Roscoe.

So, I did what any teenager would do: I asked my dad. He said, "Yes, that is Roscoe's office. He is a good President. You should take it." The Post Office did what they always do and lied, so I was sent to Royal Oak Main. I remember former 480-481 Area Local Vice President Gary Thomas asking me to become a Steward while I was a P.S.E., but I said no.

After being converted to regular, I had a brief stint at the Michigan Metroplex. As an unassigned regular, I had to bid on everything and landed a bid at the Customer Care Center. Years passed, and I finally got in trouble. A Steward, who is now my Installation Director, saved my job. That Steward was Tracy Watson. When Tracy asked me to be a Steward this time, I had to say yes. I felt the need to give back.

A Whole lot of Fighting

Although it's been six years, I remember my first on-the-floor 'disagreement' with a Supervisor as an Alternate Steward. The Supervisor, Lauren Steele, wouldn't listen. So, I returned to the office, printed out the Federal Law and Contract, highlighted it, and slapped it on her desk. I told her, 'I think you should read this before I return.' That rush of proving myself right has never left and drives me as a Steward.

I love being a Steward and problem-solving every day. Most issues I deal with are outside the C.B.A., so most of what I do is just 'figure it out' and negotiate. To improve, I took public speaking classes, a negotiation program at the University of Michigan, and earned a Computer Science Degree online.

Being a Steward in the 480-481 Area Local was a blessing. I was lucky to be sent to P.L.U.S.S., the West Virginia Steward School. I was a brand-new steward and had training through the N.B.A. John Jackson Jr, N.B.A. Bob Romanowski, former Assistant M.V.S. Director Ken Prinz and Long Island NY Area Rep Cliff Johnson. At this training, I met stewards with whom I am friends today, including fellow 480-481 steward Eddie Hosendove.

Along the way, I have had some fantastic mentors. My first Installation Director, Richard Dale, my current Installation Director, Tracy Watson, and former 480-481 Vice President Gary Thomas were always there to answer my stupid questions and help me navigate situations. Words can't express my

gratitude to Tracy and Gary to this day.

Fighting the Past

Those who know me personally or work with me in the Union realize I have a chip on my shoulder. Since the day I was hired, and especially since I became a Steward, I did not want to be 'Pat Chornoby's kid.' It was not because I didn't love or appreciate my dad. He left large shoes to fill. I never wanted to be known as a Steward simply because I was a legacy in the A.P.W.U.

I always had to know the most in the room. My free time is spent studying Arbitrations, the C.B.A., the J.C.I.M., etc. Anything to get the edge. I remember asking my dad for old A.P.W.U. training flash drives and issue-specific training books he made for the D.D.A.L. I got so bad that I even had hard copies made of all of Jeff Kehlert's training manuals from 21CPW. To this day, I have a bookshelf of arbitration books in my tiny apartment in Detroit.

Being a Steward is a lot like being a boxer. You will not be the best at everything but must know your weaknesses. The goal is always to keep the fight in your area of expertise. As I matured in the Union, I learned my area of expertise. Hard work and studying. My weakness was always trusting my abilities.

COVID Changed Everything

I lost one of my first mentors, Richard Dale when COVID hit. He was a 'throw every argument at the issue' Steward, whom I essentially emulate today. His loss hit hard, but I was in a new world where knowing the C.B.A. did not matter. We would begin teleworking at the Customer Care Center. People were dying. I got COVID twice. Someone had to be on the ground fighting. That is where I found my groove. I counted laptops on pallets and let 480 – 481 President Roscoe Woods know how many could

work from home. I met with Grievants who ended up giving me COVID. When new legislation became law, I stayed up all night reading it so the next day, I could explain it to the membership before the National A.P.W.U. Gave an opinion. People's lives were on the line, and I stepped up.

COVID changed the game for me. After Richard died, Tracy Watson was appointed installation director of the Michigan Metroplex and Customer Care Center. We had to cover a facility comprising 420 people, except everyone else was remotely working. It started with buying a second phone line and a document signing program. Soon, I had a dedicated server to store documents securely, a second laptop, too many flash drives, and a paid Zoom account.

Members stopped Grieving discipline. I could not see the violations on the floor. Even being in the building as much as possible did not help, as the membership was at home. Days were filled with Investigative Interviews and calling members back with questions not covered in the C.B.A. or telework agreement. I look back with pride as we made it work on day one and never gave up.

Deciding to Do More

Only in the months leading up to the 2022 State of Michigan Convention did I want to 'step up' and do more than being a full-time Steward. I had a few years under my belt as a steward, had been to labor-management meetings, and had given so much during COVID that I realized I could do more. The 480-481 Area Local elected me to be a delegate for the State and National Convention, or so I thought.

It turned out that during COVID, I failed to meet the meeting requirements to be a National Delegate. Former 480-481 Area Local President Roscoe

continued on page 8

What This Union Needs Is More 'Yes' Men And Women

That's right – the kind of people who say YES when they are asked to help their union brothers and sisters. The kind of people who are willing to spend their "precious" spare time to attend union meetings, volunteer for committee work and yes, even run for union office. We are looking for the kind of people who say "yes" when they are asked to serve on the election committee, the social events committee, or be more active in the work YOUR UNION



is doing on behalf of YOU the member. Even a small yes would be appreciated! For more information, attend your union meetings or talk to your union representative .



by
Dustin
Hume

EDITOR

Allow Me To Introduce Myself

Hello Union Family.

Please allow me to introduce myself. I have been a steward here in Lansing for almost seven years now. I am the Human Relations director for Central Michigan Area Local 300 (CMAL) as well as the Installation Director for Lansing P&DC. The first state training I attended was in Frankenmuth in 2017 and I have happily been to a few more since. I have met many members and officers over the years, and I hope to become more acquainted with everyone as time goes on.

I was born in Illinois but moved to Arizona at a young age where I spent most of my youth. I moved back to Illinois in 2008 to attend college. I got my AS in mathematics from Black Hawk College. I followed this up with a BS

in anthropology from Northern Illinois University. After that, I earned a graduate certificate in emergency services. In 2013, I moved to Lansing, Michigan, with my partner so that she could attend graduate school at Michigan State University. We met at Northern Illinois University where she also got her undergraduate degree in anthropology. We married in 2014, she graduated with a PhD in medical anthropology from Michigan State in 2021, and, a few months later, she gave birth to our son Felix in August 2021.

In 2015, I was looking for a job. I never considered working for the Postal Service before, but I decided to apply. I started out as a PSE in the plant here in Lansing. Shortly after that, I was suckered into moving to the customer service side. After 34 months of abuse as a PSE, I finally made regular in 2018. I became an automation clerk with expeditor and registry room

backup on my bid. I enjoyed being off of the window and the set schedule. I liked automation, throwing on the headphones to listen to music or a podcast while loading mail made the time go by quickly. When my partner got pregnant, I knew I needed to move my schedule around. I became a tour 3 manual clerk throwing outgoing big box and still expediting and working the registry cage.

I became friends with many of my coworkers, fellow stewards, and officers over the years. A few of these friends encouraged me to take the maintenance exam and to switch to the other light side. I was weary at first, but decided I had nothing to lose. I took the exam and received a passing score. In May of 2023, as I was driving to the state training in Kalamazoo, I got a call from the maintenance manager offering me a position as an ET. I happily accepted, and over a year later as

of writing this, I am still glad I took the position. I enjoy coming to work every day to fix things. It is a very gratifying job to have.

When I became the Human Relations Director for Central Michigan, I decided to build a website for our local to help disseminate information and to have a resource for members to connect with the local. Shortly after that, I attended my first Postal Press Association (PPA) conference virtually, due to the pandemic, and won an award for our website.

It wasn't my goal nor my intention to become an editor. I just wanted to build a website to help connect with members. I wasn't even aware what the PPAs were at the time. It all just fell into place, and I ended up enjoying what I do. I hope that, as your new editor, I can continue to help connect with members and serve the membership in a way that fosters strength in our Union family. In Solidarity!

AREA 7 DIRECTOR



by
Dana
Mclean

State Convention

On April 16th – 17th, I was lucky enough to attend the State Training and the State Convention April 18th-20th in Traverse City. I always appreciate getting training that is taught by NBA's. It was also nice

handle this job. I want to thank Wendy Kempke for all she did while she was in that position, (I hope I can fill those shoes) and congratulate her on stepping into the Director of Research and Education position. Also congratulations to all the other officers on being elected to their respective positions.

I no longer will be representing area 9. I truly enjoyed representing the members in those offices. It was a great learning experience. Brittany Thompson is the new area 9 director and since she is my niece I will be able to really help her get experienced and familiar with the offices and the issues that we have had and settled. She will be well informed on what issues I've had with each postmaster so she will keep an eye on it.

I'm still going to represent area 7 and now that the weather is better, I will be making state visits. It will be nice to put faces to the clerks I've been helping by the phone. Some of the issues I have been working on are the 4 hour guarantee for PTF's, hours being equitable, PSE's working in offices when PTF's are available, toxic work environments and also scheduled leave issues. Just last week I had a clerk notify me she was working in an office that had a water issue and the office actually had no running water and no working bathroom. It was a pipe issue but wasn't treated as an

emergency and not dealt with immediately. That is totally unacceptable to be expected to work in that environment. When you working conditions are causing a safety issue, please fill out form 1767 and hand it to your supervisor or postmaster. Management must provide a 1767 if you ask. After you turn it in, your immediate supervisor must investigate the situation and initiate immediate corrective action or make appropriate recommendations. They also have to give the reporting employee a signed copy of the 1767. Please also notify me if you turn one in. Hold USPS accountable for unsafe or hazardous working conditions.

One of the issues we have statewide is lack of clerks or lack of clerks that WANT to work. If you do want more hours and are not being afforded the chance to pick up hours by your postmaster, please text me so I can begin a list of clerks willing to travel to cover offices. We have had a few situations where the postmaster of the clerk's home office refuses to let them travel in fear they in turn would be short staffed. Let me know if that is happening in your office. Remember you are on the clock when driving in between offices and you get mileage reimbursement.

When our union officers go into negotiations this summer, a strong union is a great weapon they will have. If you know a non member,

please reach out and ask if they are interested in joining, Its vital for expanding membership and strengthening the collective voice. By members reaching out it helps amplify our message and builds solidarity within the community. It also empowers members to advocate for better working conditions and rights collectively. If you are interested in listening to the information on union progress, check out the new podcast on the APWU website.

I hope everyone has a wonderful summer. Spend time with family and make sure to make time for yourself. Mental care is essential!

In solidarity.



to have a chance to hear President Dimondstein speak. At the state convention we had state officer nominations and elections. I want to thank Darren Joyce for the nomination of Clerk Craft Director and I am humbled that the officers have faith in me to



'Dumpster Fire': Experts Predict Swing State Ballot Chaos Due To DeJoy's USPS Overhaul

Raw Story: A noticeable slowdown in mail delivery by the US Postal Service (USPS) is becoming a significant concern for democracy advocates, as millions of Americans will be voting by mail this year. There's growing worry about whether mail ballots will be counted in time — particularly in swing states like Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

NBC News reported that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy — a GOP donor who has been in his position since a Republican-controlled USPS Board of Governors put him there in 2020 — is being blamed for mail delays due to his 10-year restructuring of the USPS. DeJoy's plan, dubbed "Delivering for America," involves consolidating all mail-sorting operations to 60 regional distribution centers. The plan's rollout began in the fall of 2023, and the on-time delivery rate of two-day, first-class mail has since dropped from 90% to 87.5%.

"It's just a dumpster fire right now," former USPS manager Leo Raymond told NBC. "If you're a business, you're going to be discouraged from using the mail because you want your stuff to actually get there."

In a letter to DeJoy last month, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) led an effort with nearly two dozen Senate Democrats to publicly condemn DeJoy's USPS overhaul and its effect on mail delivery. They warned that under the plan, "outgoing mail processing will move hundreds of miles to a regional facility, outside reasonable commuting distance and, in some cases, to another state entirely."

"Wyoming, Vermont, and New Hampshire are set to lose all outgoing mail processing from within the state," the letter read. "[F]or communities near facilities under review, it is unclear how local first-class mail will meet its two-day standard while traveling hundreds of miles for sorting. This is especially concerning for Americans who need reliable and expedient mail service to conduct business, pay their bills, receive medications, and stay in touch with loved ones."

One of the hardest-hit metropolitan areas by DeJoy's plan is Atlanta, which Leo Raymond described as "a complete house on fire." According to NBC, the rate of on-time delivery of mail went from 60-70% to roughly 20%. And because President Joe Biden won the state by less than 12,000 votes in 2020 largely due to high Democratic turnout in the Atlanta Metro area, it's expected that mail-in ballots could play a crucial role in deciding who wins Georgia's electoral votes this November.

"We're approaching a major November election," Rep. Sylvia Garcia (D-Texas), who represents parts of Houston, said last month. "We need to make sure that we iron out any difficulties, any obstacles, any barriers, any is-

sues now, so that we don't end up in a situation much like we were in with the November ballots."

Louis DeJoy's tenure at the helm of the USPS may not continue for much longer. In March, Biden nominated former US Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh to fill one of the USPS Board of Governors' two vacancies. If



confirmed by the US Senate, Walsh would be the sixth Democrat to sit on the nine-member board. And because DeJoy is accountable to the board rather than the president, the board could theoretically hold a vote to appoint a new postmaster general at any point.

Steve Hutkins, who runs the Save the Post Office website, told NBC that he hopes mail delays "won't be a problem" in November as the USPS has in the past implemented special procedures to speed up mail delivery in previous elections. However, he didn't rule out the possibility of a fiasco in the event of a nail-biter election.

"If the election is really close and a couple of key states have mail ballot issues, it could be a nightmare," he said.

— savethepostoffice.com

39TH ANNUAL OPEN SEASON

APWU HEALTH PLAN

BALTIMORE

MAY 31

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

JUN 24

EARLY REGISTRATION
REGISTRATION FEE: \$75

JUL 15

GENERAL REGISTRATION
REGISTRATION FEE: \$100

SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER!

APWU HEALTH PLAN

WELCOME TO Charm City

Room Rates: \$160.00 per night
(taxes not included)

BALTIMORE

WED 10/16

ARRIVAL DAY

Check-in @ 4PM

THURS 10/17

Registration: 10am-1pm
Opening Session: 1pm-3pm
PSHB Session: 3pm-5pm
Reception: 6:30pm-9:30pm

FRI 10/18

Registration: 7:30am-5pm
Breakfast: 7:30am-9am
PSHB Morning Breakouts: 9am-10am
Morning Classes: 10am-12pm
Lunch: 12pm-2pm
Afternoon Classes: 2pm-4pm
Dinner: 5:30pm-9pm

SAT 10/19

Registration: 7:30am-2pm
Breakfast: 7:30am-9am
Morning Classes: 9am-1pm
Lunch: 1pm-3pm
Closing Session: 3pm-4pm
Dinner: 5pm-9pm

SUN 10/20

Breakfast To Go: 8am-11am
DEPARTURE DAY

HYATT REGENCY

— The Enemy Within —

continued from page 2

machinery at a blinding pace. A recent purchase request for \$800 million worth of bar code readers demonstrates his push for automation. That is three times the number of other letter sorting machines currently operating nationwide. Don't confuse bar code readers with LSMs. Bar code readers don't require operators like LSMs do. Bar code readers can also sort mail so it eliminates carriers sort time as well as clerk sort time. Management – at least at the top – also has programs in the works to supply the necessary knowledge to businesses so they can bar code their own mail. It's like pre-sort mail is now, going directly to the carrier, only this type of pre-sort will increase by the thousands. I know some will say that this is only automation, which has always increased jobs before. You must understand that under this PMG, employment has to be reduced. The plan requires a cut in hours every time equipment is purchased. A dollar-for-dollar savings must be demonstrated to this PMG – or else.

A perfect example of that arose at a recent meeting in the Central Region. We were advised that 280 window clerk hours would be eliminated during the fiscal year. I asked if they were aware that Sears wasn't playing Post Office anymore, and would that cause the number to be reevaluated. I was told by one of their experts on automation that contracting-out had no bearing on the reduction. I asked what did, and was told that the cost of the IRTs caused the reduction. I explained that the IRTs don't replace window clerks. IRTs might assist clerks in providing better service, but they don't replace them. I was then advised that the cost had to be made up, regardless. That type of mentality makes this use of automation different from any before it.

This automation isn't designed or supplied to improve service. It is supplied to ELIMINATE EMPLOYEES. Their plan is obvious if you know their goals. They want to buy machines under the guise of improved production and lower labor costs. But they have to justify the cost, especially for amounts like \$800 million. So, jobs are eliminated. When employees are eliminated, particularly on a large scale, so is service. Management's goal is to eliminate small offices, establish mail factories that can't work, and replace people who provide service with machines that don't. If the USPS emerges as 100 mail factories that can't provide service, private industry can do no worse. It doesn't matter whether it works or not. If it did, they wouldn't change it in the

unsuspecting people are adding fuel without knowing it. They do it either because they are afraid for their jobs, or because they think they will be taken care of if only they shut up. I have news for them, if the service goes, so will their jobs. If the clerk craft and other APWU crafts are eliminated, how many supervisors will it take to supervise machines? If the supervisors are eliminated, how many managers will it take to manage nobody? It doesn't matter about the mail handlers either. If there are no clerk jobs to get, their union will have nothing to do. And if the carriers think they are the only ones left, that is the biggest joke of all. Who will they drink coffee with during EI meetings? And what will be done with the excess carriers when case time is no longer

their goal of destroying employees and the USPS itself. We all have to stand together in this fight, and we have to do it now. The service cuts have to be exposed, and any inside information on that has to reach Congress and the public. The APWU can't fight this battle alone, and we shouldn't. If the tradition of the USPS is going to survive, if our children and others will ever find a career in the USPS, and if someone will remain to support our retirement the battle has to start now, and it needs every one of us. The current leaders in Washington are on a self-destruct path. They are a new breed of management, and they require managers to blindly follow, or else. Nobody is safe under their leadership, and that includes all of us. Because you do a good job or

suck up won't stop them. That's proven in their MSC consolidations. Everyone in the way was hit by that steamroller, and the after-effects are still coming down. Those driving the steamroller may have thought it was fun, but we will see what they

When employees are eliminated, particularly on a large scale, so is service. Management's goal is to eliminate small offices, establish mail factories that can't work, and replace people who provide service with machines that don't.

first place. The enemy is no longer on the outside, the enemy is within. The enemy is destroying the best postal service in the world, intentionally and from the inside. There can be no other reason for asking Sears and others to do our work. We can't control the service others would perform. So obviously we are giving away work without control of service. It's true Sears has nationally withdrawn from this job offer by the USPS, but the PMG will give it to anyone who will take it, and he is still trying. What business gives away its work without control of the service unless it doesn't care about the service? You should also be aware that postal officials are seeking to change next-day delivery requirements, yet another attack on service. The current leaders have turned the Postal Service into a runaway locomotive, and a lot of

required? Do they think cluster boxes and other schemes for mail pick up by the public haven't been considered? If not, they will be when you're the last ones left and the enemy comes for you. THE ENEMY IS WITHIN, and we had all better realize it and prepare to fight. If they destroy the service, private industry will pick up the pieces, and 700,000 of us will be looking for work. The headhunters the PMG is using had better realize that their heads will roll too. The APWU has always led the way in battling these problems, and we obviously will here also. We have no choice. Nobody else is, and our jobs are at stake. We are first on the firing line, and as usual, our crafts will receive the most cuts. Some management jobs are being cut, with more of the same planned for carriers and mail handlers. Top management even plans to pit office against office to keep work. They tell us that low productions and grievances cause problems with the "decision gods." They use fear of excessing, and they pit craft against craft, as well as office against office. The choice is clear: We can either lie down and take what they give us, or stand up and have some chance of stopping them. I say we STAND UP. If the USPS is destroyed, I don't want to be part of helping it happen. Stopping a runaway locomotive won't be easy, but lying down won't even slow it. We need all crafts and managers who really care about our jobs, and the USPS itself, to get involved before it's too late. The enemy is within, and if we are to prevail, everyone has to be involved. The USPS leadership has to be exposed for what they are doing, and for what is happening inside. They can't be helped in reaching

think when they become the targets. This battle can't be won by retirement either. Someone has to pay into that fund to keep payments coming. Everyone is in this battle, and they better get involved. We're not only fighting private hawks and Republican politicians on the outside. The enemy is within, and is destroying the USPS. We all have to get involved, and we have to do it now.

Editor's Note: The preceding article first appeared in the Michigan Postal Workers Union publication in 1989. I recently noticed that it is still be circulated and reprinted in various publications around the nation and felt that it needs to be republished once again in our own Messenger. Joe Foster from the Charlotte Area Local and Editor of the "Perspectives" said this in his reprint of this article: "The first and only time I met the author of the article was at a PPA editor's conference in Milwaukee, WI. This much I know about Leo Persails: He is highly regarded by my PPA counterparts. His views are based on long years of harsh experience, and he has written perhaps the scariest analysis of current postal events that I've seen yet. It has been lightly edited for technical reasons – punctuation, sentence structure, etc. Read it, then pass it along to someone else – like your supervisor, or that non-member at the next case who thinks a few bucks for union dues are too much. The war is on, the stakes are high, and if we are to save the Postal Service as an institution of, by, and for the people, we will have to do it ourselves. Ignore Persails at your own risk. You could end up unemployed."

— reprint Originally published in 1989



**Get Active With
Your Fellow Retirees!**



PRESIDENT, MPWU AL LABRECQUE RETIREE CHAPTER

— Retiree Corner —

by Raymond Novakoski

Let me introduce myself: Raymond Novakoski, the newly elected President of the Michigan Postal Workers Al LaBrecque Retiree Chapter. I am currently the President of the Western Michigan Local Retiree Chapter in Grand Rapids MI. I retired from the Grand Rapids Office in 2012 as a clerk. I had been a steward, President of the local and many other offices during my 38 years.

I was elected at the 2024 MPWU Retiree Convention and I would like

to thank all the delegates for that privilege and for their confidence in me, it was a great honor. I would also like to thank Past President Paul Browning for his dedication and leadership. He has been able to keep the state chapter moving in the right direction and was an excellent spokesperson for the retirees and our issues. Paul ran a great convention this year, as he has in the past, and supported me moving into the President position and I thank him for that. I look forward to working with him, as he was

appointed the Retiree Chapter Advisor. I look forward to working with the newly elected board consisting of Vice President Joanna Atkinson, Treasurer Jane Duggan, Trustee Teresa Williams, Trustee Deb Gorney and Trustee Yvonne Tatum. I would like to congratulate the New Officers and hope we can continue addressing retiree issues and represent the retirees in the state.

As a delegate to the national retiree convention and the national convention I will represent the retiree, along

with the chapters board, and will report in the next issue.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to represent the retirees in the great state of Michigan.

One last item: recently, we lost a great union person, Leo Persails. We would like to express our sincere sympathy to his family. He held many offices locally, at the state level and nationally, and stood up for the membership 110 percent and he will be missed.

Yours in Union Solidarity.

AREA 9 DIRECTOR

Are You Tired Of Headbutting With Management?

by Brittany Thompson

Hello All. I'd like to take a moment to introduce myself, I am Brittany Thompson, a PTF in Hesperia, Michigan. I recently found myself headbutting with management over my own future in the Postal Service and that's when I knew that I wanted to become a Steward. I decided that I wanted to make my own future

decisions, not have someone else do it for me. When management was telling everyone that I would be their next 204b, without asking me or considering my feelings beforehand is when I put my foot down.

I recently got to experience my very first convention in Traverse City, and it was the most amazing experience. Hearing stories, the

things I got to learn, and the people I got to meet. I am so thankful that I was able to learn the things I did and had time to connect with an exceptional group here with the APWU. I would like to send a big thank you to my Local Union, WMAL #281, for sending me to the MPWU convention.

I hope that as I spend more time

going forward, in my new position as the Area 9 Director, while learning from the very best, and the person who had the spot before me, that I can do the best I can for the "little people". I will gladly step into this role knowing I have some big shoes to fill, thank you to everyone and I hope that I can do my new position proud.

Solidarity Is The Antidote To A Toxic Workplace

by Charlie Cash, APWU National Industrial Relations Director

As the "Chief Spokesperson" for the 2024 contract negotiations, I have both a huge and humbling task. The outcome of negotiations, whether through a voluntary agreement or through a contract imposed upon us by an interest arbitration panel, will have a direct effect on 200,000 postal employees covered under the main agreement — and if we count our families, hundreds of thousands more. Rest assured that your APWU negotiators are up for the challenge.

As I have worked on these negotiations and thought about priorities, one thing that comes to mind is, how do we deal with the toxic work environment that postal employees of every craft face each day? I will not attempt to convince you that I know all the answers. I do know this is not a simple subject. Can we file grievances regarding the issue? Yes. But will grievances fix the problem? They might in the short term in a single facility, but many of these grievances go in the queue for arbitration scheduling. In the meantime, the toxic situation still exists. We have negotiated memorandums of understanding (MOUs) for setting up task forces and committees to attempt to address the issue at the national level. Unfortunately, what I have found is that management, at the highest levels, does not want to

address the toxic work environment.

It is my opinion that toxic work environments are a systemic problem within the Postal Service. This has been a problem for decades. The term "Going Postal" is offensive, but was born from Postal Service leadership's acceptance — if not encouragement — of abusive and toxic leadership styles. Grievances alone will not fix the problem or force management to deal with the abusers. The leadership must want to change it. We, as union members, must organize to put pressure on management at all levels to want to change the toxic environment. We can do this by utilizing internal worker action, public campaigns, congressional pressure, and public exposure of the abusers, to not only demand change but to make management want to change.

But what is going to make them want to change? One thing I believe they are starting to see is that people do not want to come to work in these toxic and abusive environments. I believe they know that they need to improve the environment in order to make people want to come to work. Another thing that will help is being united and supporting one another on the workroom floor.

What does this mean? To me it means we cannot say "it's not my problem," nor can we turn a blind eye when our coworkers are being

abused. Everyone has the right to get involved and tell the abusers to stop. Everyone has the right to write a statement about what they saw. I have been told before, "Well, they are a bad worker so that is why management treats them that way. They will never treat me that way." Guess what? More than likely, your day will come when the abuse is aimed at you. Whether it's because you had a health issue or just got slower with age, one thing about the Postal Service is that the abusers are equal opportunity abusers. Wouldn't you

want someone to stand next to you and be your witness when you are abused?

If the Postal Service sees employees united against abuse and toxicity, it might be the catalyst that makes them want to change. Standing together makes our grievances — and other efforts — better, and shows the Postal Service that we are serious. I am not saying this is the only solution — but it is an easy step to take in this battle. I end every article with the word Solidarity! This is one way we can practice it.

Michigan Messenger
Deadline for
Newsletter Submissions
August 1, 2024

How Did I Get Here?

continued from page 3

Woods went to the microphone at the 2022 State Convention and put my name in the race to be a State Delegate to the National Convention. I was as surprised as the body was. Usually, the State does not send people from large locals to be a delegate for the National. This was the first time I heard I would not be a local delegate.

Roscoe asked my dad to go along with him and I to caucus, or plea to other locals to vote to send me. Roscoe wanted me to be a delegate and stacked the deck as much as possible. I don't know the plan, but I was determined to earn this on my own. As my dad and Roscoe largely stood in the back of the room, we went from local to local, pleading my case.

Only when I was in the Western Michigan Area Locals breakout room with Amy Puhalski, I was asked a question I needed to know the answer to. It was like, 'What do you plan on doing for the Union.' The truth came out: I can be a local Clerk Craft Director or a National Business Agent. I love doing Grievances. I was asked about being President and spoke the truth; seeing how much Roscoe and my dad had put into being President, I didn't want the job. But I did want to help the membership, and this was something I was good at.

My name was read first when the results were posted, which means I received the most votes. I was ecstatic. But the humbling moment was when other candidates, officers from different locals, and officers from the State came to talk to me — congratulating me. Telling me how well I spoke. Those I knew were proud of me. Other candidates told me they voted for me. Those I did not realize were impressed with what I said.

I couldn't help but think back to when I was a kid at a State Convention and being a part of a conversation with current Central Regional Coordinator Amy Puhalski, former Western Michigan Area Local President Jennifer Amos, and my dad about the future of the Union. What it would look like. I never expected to be a part of that future one day.

The 2022 National Convention

Attending a National Convention and being a delegate are very different things. As a kid, I remember working for former National A.P.W.U. Secretary-Treasurer Terry Stapleton set up for a Convention and stuffed bags. At the end of the day he told us volunteering to line up, and the National paid us. I was shocked, as my time with the Union has primarily been spent volunteering. It was like Christmas!

Being a delegate was different. Being able to attend sessions early and attending the optional after-hours caucuses like P.O.W.E.R. was exhausting. M.P.W.U. Secretary-Treasurer Darren Joyce gave me advice that I remember today: 'Sit next to Mike (Mize) and learn as much as you can.' That is exactly what I did. I participated on the convention floor but spent as much time learning as possible.

This was when I realized I was on the right path. President Mize was at the front

of the Michigan table, and behind him was current 480 – 481 President Steve Wood. Next to Steve was the current M.P.W.U. Veterans Director and current 480 – 481 Executive Vice President John Diem. Across the table from Steve was then 480 – 481 President Roscoe Woods. I was right next to Mike, as Darren had told me.

Being the know-it-all I am, I was verbal when resolutions were read I disagreed with. More than once, I remember asking Mike, 'That's stupid. It would hurt X, Y, and Z, right?' Several times, I got angry as Roberts Rules were violated, and Mike and Steve would nod in agreement, equally frustrated. In the moment, I did not understand how big of an impact that had on me.

After the Convention, Mike told Steve something to the effect of, 'He thinks like us' with a smile. I thanked Darren for the recommendation to sit next to Mike. It was not until weeks later, back at home, that it sank in what Mike said. He said I understood the C.B.A. and Robert's Rules well enough to draw the same conclusions as experts.

How I Got Here

2023, the inaugural Young Members Conference would be held before the All-Craft Conference. Then 480-481 Area Local President Roscoe Woods offered to send me along with nine other young members from our local. I remember thinking, "Finally, I am getting a shot to step up!"

The Conference was interesting. We had Stewards and non-stewards alike who mostly complained about pay and harassment in the Post Office. I met several young people from across the country with whom I keep in touch with today. At this Conference, I heard of the Leadership Institute, put in an application, and asked then 480-481 President Roscoe Woods to write me a recommendation. I am happy I did.

President Roscoe Woods established the 480-481 Area Local Young Member Committee and I was selected to be a member. The Committee selected me to be their Chairperson. At the 2024 State of Michigan Convention, those young people were at the front of the room, turning in resolutions, speaking on the microphone, and learning the process. I could not be prouder of what we have accomplished.

I learned early this year that I was selected to be an attendee at the inaugural A.P.W.U. Leadership Institute. Ironically, I found out when Stephen DeMatteo and Roscoe called me early on a Friday

morning, telling me I never RSVP'ed. The email went to my spam folder, and the physical mailing never arrived. I love being a Postal Employee sometimes!

Former 480-481 President Roscoe Woods also offered me the opportunity, along with Nick Isby and Shana Hardwick Holmes from 480-481, to assist with Field Organizing. We have had the chance to help organize Amazon and work closely with National Field Organizers Rich Shelley and Lori Cash. This has been one of my most rewarding experiences in the A.P.W.U., helping our fellow working-class brothers, sisters, and comrades create a Union for themselves.

In March 2024, I ran for Editor of the 480-481 Area Local and won. This is an Executive Board position in our local and a humbling experience to be selected by the membership to do the job. Mainly because during COVID, my face-to-face interaction has been way down with the membership. People knew 'Eric' the Steward, not Eric Chornoby running for office. From that moment life has been crazy.

I have contributed to the Michigan Messenger for a few years and our local paper, the Communicator. Both are excellent publications. But putting out a good paper and learning the printing world was another ball game. I had fantastic help from former M.P.W.U. Editor John Greathouse on learning the printing industry and former 480 – 481 Area Local Editor Elaine Dunlap on how to write more concisely. It is something I am clearly still working on.

During this time, I stayed busy. I just 'teched' my second Arbitration for NBA Devendra 'D' Rathore as his Technical Assistant. I also attended the A.P.W.U. Leadership Institute, with two more Michigan natives. Western Michigan Area Local President Michelle Mack and D.D.A.L. President Keith Combs. Michigan was exceptionally well represented, and if I say so myself. Three total weeks, our last being in May.

Along the way, at the Leadership Institute, I could express my frustrations, aspirations, and goals to people walking the same path or recently have walked. I received excellent advice from many at the Institute, but there were too many to acknowledge. Three that stuck with me the most were W.M.A.L. President Michelle Mack, Puerto Rico Area Local President Gabriel Medina, and President of A.P.W.U. Local 390 Ibrahim Pedrinan.

One night at dinner, Michelle asked me if I had spoken to Mike Long. I told her no, but evidently, Mike wanted to talk to me about the State of Michigan. I told

her that I would love to speak with Mike, and shortly after, he messaged me on Facebook.

Here We Are

When Mike Long asked me to run for Executive Secretary, I did not know what to say. I told him I would think about it. I spoke to my partner, Paola Ferreira, who gave me the green light. I ran it by 480-481 President Steve Wood during the Convention, who also gave the green light. Everyone I spoke to told me to take the job if I thought I could do the work.

I did not know. The only two things I was positive of were that I loved working for the membership and Mike Long thought I could do the job. And if Mike figured I could do his job, then I could. These are not just big shoes to fill. This is a child trying to wear Shaq's game-worn sneakers. But I promise to grow into them.

I was born in the A.P.W.U. The A.P.W.U. raised me. The A.P.W.U. is my family. Growing up, I had the honor and privilege of meeting and learning from some of the most incredible advocates ever walking this planet. As an advocate, I have been blessed to meet and work with some of the most amazing people nationwide.

It is surreal to know that people you looked up to, your childhood heroes, now treat you with respect as a peer. The list of names of people I looked up to is long, and I dare not leave anyone out. I have many mentors and fellow advocates I respect and admire. It feels like home to be at M.P.W.U. events.

I am eternally grateful to my mentors Tracy Watson and Gary Thomas, the 480 – 481 Area Local Leadership, such as Roscoe Woods and Steve Wood, for giving me a chance to be a Steward and M.P.W.U. Leadership, such as Mike Long, Mike Mize, and Darren Joyce for guidance and support. I am forever grateful to my father, Patrick Chornoby, for being such an amazing advocate, father and involving me so much from a young age.

To end this long, emotional article, I want to say thank you. Thank you to the best State in the Country for electing me. Thank you to Mike for believing in me. Thank you to the membership for putting your trust in me. I promise to give my all to the M.P.W.U. and spend as many sleepless nights required to do this job well. I may not be perfect, I may not be Mike, but I will do whatever it takes to ensure the M.P.W.U. remains the best State in the A.P.W.U.!

PREVIOUS EDITOR



by
John
Greathouse

Congratulations

Greetings Brothers and Sisters.

I would like to congratulate Dustin Hume, our new editor for the *Michigan Messenger*!

Having known Dustin for several years, I know he will do a great job and continue keeping the MM as one of the

top publications in the country.

I hope each of you will support Dustin in his new position the same way you have supported me over the years. Our number one goal is to keep spreading information to the members.

In Solidarity.