

## SAFETY FIRST?

*By Frederick Wolfmeyer, President*

Hello to my union sisters and brothers. We are nearly to summer and it is always good to remind everyone to put safety first in all that we do during the summer months. Many of us will be going on vacations with our families and perhaps the family vehicle needs to be gone over by a mechanic to ensure that it is in good condition. Nothing is worse than to go on vacation and have a tire go flat or even blow out while driving on the interstate. Campers and boaters should make sure that all electrical and gas line connections are in good condition so that no one gets an electric shock or there is a fire or something worse. Keep an eye on the kids when swimming in a pool but especially on a beach or in a lake. If you are in a boat, make sure that it is in good condition, that you have your anchor, a spare prop, fire extinguisher, and that everyone in the boat is wearing an approved life jacket. These are common sense safety checks that we all observe and use to provide a safe and secure environment for our families so that we are all safe and return from our vacations or our weekend trips in the same or better shape as when we left home.

Our work environment should be no different. Our employer, the U.S. Postal Service should provide a safe and secure work environment in which we can safely perform our duties. If there are unsafe conditions that exist at our workplace, we need to bring those to management's attention so that they can be addressed and corrected. If management chooses to ignore our concerns, then a PS Form 1767 must be completed and submitted to management. Management must return the 'blue' copy to the employee who submits the form with the action taken indicated written in the space provided on the form. This is not a situation where management gets a free pass when they receive

the form. They are obligated to give you an answer and indicate what action they have taken or will take to correct the unsafe condition.

Several unsafe conditions have been reported in the past several months by the APWU safety representative and have either been corrected, been appealed by the service or the service has paid a fine to OSHA. In any event, it is the responsibility of the service to make sure your work environment is safe. This includes all facets of your job and would include working by yourself on a DBCS, DIOSS and/or CIOSS machine. Many of you have told me when I walk through the plant that you are working alone on a particular machine. I have witnessed this firsthand and have seen you working a large district such as Mackenzie Pointe, Ballwin, Clayton, Chesterfield, Belleville, Sappington, South County etc., by yourself. This is unsafe and unhealthy. The plant manager wants me to believe that when you work alone, you are only performing an initial pass and are not sweeping the machine. **Wrong!** That is not what I have witnessed and it is certainly not what you have told me. Yes, I mention the plant manager because I brought this to his attention at several labor/management meetings and most recently during a one-on-one meeting with him on April 14, 2016. After that meeting I went to the workroom floor and observed at least 10 machines staffed by only one person and did so again the next day and saw the same thing. I emailed the plant manager and as of today, over two weeks later, I am still awaiting a reply. Does he care about those who are working by themselves? Well, I do not believe so because if he did, I think I might have gotten a reply. Therefore, the safety and health of his em-



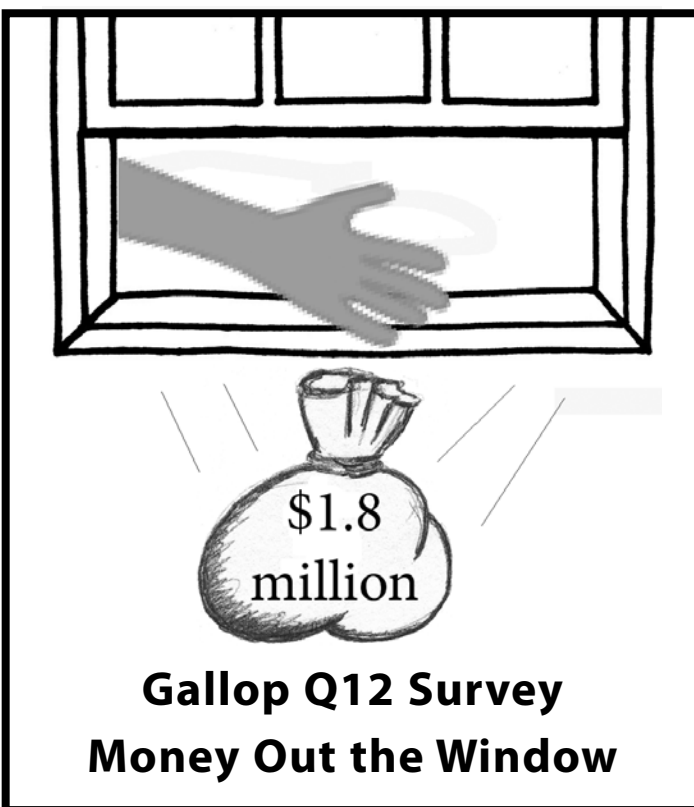
ployees are taking a back seat to throughput. Yes, you all know that word. Your supervisors jump on you all the time, talking throughput instead of the word **partner**. The contract does not mention performance quotas, run numbers or throughput. It states in Article 34 that the principle of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay is recognized by all parties to the agreement. So, when you are working alone, do not be fooled by supervisors who tell you that your numbers are not good enough. Perhaps if you had a partner like you are supposed to have, the numbers would be better and you might not be so tired, or at risk of injury because you are trying to do the work of two clerks. A safe and secure workplace is the responsibility of the Postal Service and in order to provide this safe workplace, the supervisors and managers must care about those workers under their supervision. Supervisors must become engaged in their jobs.

Engage, that is an interesting word and one that has been used a lot lately by the plant manager and the postal service. Remember my article in the last *Press On* when I wrote about the Postal Pulse survey? I mentioned that the service now has an Engagement Department that wants to hear from you on the survey. Well the results from that survey are in and just last week the results of the Gallop Organization's survey were obtained through the Freedom of Information Act by InsideSources and released much to the chagrin of the service because it concluded that the Postal Service is a "terrible place to work." What makes

these results so meaningful is that the Gallop Organization compared the USPS data to those of other client organizations. In fact the number of other client organizations is over 400 and, I am quoting here, "Even for those of us who have heard horror stories from hundreds of postal employees, the USPS's numbers were stunningly awful." The article from InsideSources, states that the survey says, "**No recognition for good work; Supervisors don't care for workers as people; Don't feel job is important; They lack opportunities to learn and grow...**" The USPS paid \$1.8 million to Gallop for this survey and it only states what we have known for a long time. In addition, these quotes go directly to the question I asked only a few paragraphs above in regards to the plant manager; "Does he care about those (employees) who are working by themselves?" I said I didn't believe so, but the Postal Pulse says emphatically, **no**. My answer was free of charge, but the survey's answer cost \$1.8 million.

Let's be realistic here, if the USPS is going to change its culture like it claims, then it must, at a minimum, care for its employees as people. Locally it must recognize that one person to a machine is not safe and is unhealthy and should try to ensure that each machine has two people working on it. However, changing the culture here in St. Louis, or across the nation for that matter, will not be easy or quick. I think that most of the postal supervisors have been trained in the old authoritarian method of supervision and it will not change any time soon because the 204-Bs they have trained and who will follow them as supervisors and managers are carbon copies of themselves.

What can we do? I ask the question this way because I honestly do not see the service doing anything to staff the machines with two people unless we get involved. I do not see the attitudes of supervisors or managers here changing to where they care about us as people or where they tell us we are doing a good job. It's all about numbers, and throughput. Therefore, the officers of the union will plan a strategy to help our members have a safe and healthy work environment. We will plan something different that, hopefully, can have an immediate impact so the workroom floor can become a safe and healthy place to work sooner rather than later. We care about our members as people and we believe that they are the best postal workers in the world, so our plan will bring that out in the open for all to see. Watch for our plan of action. It will be coming soon and when it does, I will need your help. Together we will start the change in the culture of the St. Louis P & DC and make your workplace safe and secure. What the USPS doesn't want to do the union will do. Be safe in all you do and I will see you soon on the workroom floor.



# Notice of Nominations

**N**ominations of candidates for officers of the St. Louis Gateway District Area Local of the American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO will be held at the Lift for Life School, 1717 South Broadway, St. Louis Missouri 63104, on June 11, 2016, at 9:30 a.m. in accordance with the Local Constitution and By Laws as amended June 2014, and the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, as amended.

Nominations will be accepted orally from the floor and by letter of intent. Letters of intent must be in the possession of the secretary treasurer prior to the opening of nominations.

To qualify as candidate, members must meet the local constitution requirements. The term of office will be three years. He/she must be a member in good standing. A member will not be considered in good standing if the member is delinquent in dues payments. In an election year, members who are not subject to payroll deduction shall pay their annual local dues in full by January 31 to be eligible to run for office and/or vote in the election. The national office will send members separate bills for national dues.

## Offices to be Opened for Nomination and Filled by Election

### GENERAL OFFICES

- President and delegate to the national and state convention
- Executive vice president and delegate to the national and state convention
- Secretary treasurer and delegate to the national and state convention
- Director of industrial relations and delegate to the national and state convention
- Editor in chief and delegate to the national and state convention
- Director of research and education and delegate to the national and state convention
- Sergeant at arms and delegate to the national and state convention

### CRAFT OFFICES

#### Clerk Craft

- Director and delegate to the national and state convention
- Assistant director A
- Assistant director B

#### Associate Office

- Director and delegate to national and state convention

#### Maintenance Craft

- Director and delegate to the national and state convention
- Assistant director A
- Assistant director B

#### Motor Vehicle Craft

- Director and delegate to the national and state convention
- Assistant director A
- Assistant director B

#### Support Services

- Director and delegate to the national and state convention
- Assistant Director

## Eligibility for Office (Article 6, Section 2)

A candidate shall be a member in good standing. He/she shall have been a member for at least 12 months immediately prior to the general membership meeting (June 11, 2016) at which nominated. No member shall be a candidate for more than one elective position of the local. Upon nomination, each candidate must certify that they are not in violation of the prohibitions set forth in Article 8 Section 4. The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 prohibit individuals from holding office if they are in violation of Section 504 of the LMRDA/Prohibitions Against Certain Persons Holding Office.

## Article 8 Section 4

Any postal employee eligible to be a member of the American Postal Workers Union who voluntarily holds a managerial, supervisory or EAS position with responsibility for issuing or recommending discipline, or applying or interpreting the National Agreement for the equivalent of one pay period in a year shall be ineligible to hold office at any level of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) or to be a delegate to any convention held by the APWU or any subordinate body of the APWU, so long as the employee continues to serve in such position and for a period of one year from the time the employee vacates such position.

## Ballots

Ballots will be mailed out on or before July 14, 2016, and will be counted on August 8, 2016.

## From the Desk of the Exec. Vice Pres.

By Gene Hollenbeck



The results from the Postal Pulse are in. Management doesn't care for workers as people. There is no recognition for the good work our members do. Management paid Gallup \$1.8 million to find out that the bargaining unit employees do not feel that supervisors treat them fairly. Big surprise! They could have just asked us and saved that money.

The question that got the best response was: I know what is expected of me at work. The survey showed that 52 percent of employees stated that they know what is expected of them. Not so much, for everything else. Management has now created a new team for employee engagement. However, if they can't correct the attitude of the current supervisors/managers I don't see things getting any better.

The APWU was the only postal union to discourage the members from completing the survey. For those members who brought your survey to the Union Hall for the drawing, we say thank you. We had a drawing and gave away some great prizes. We will have another drawing in August, when the next *Postal Pulse* comes out.

# Attention!

Automation clerks, if management forces you to work one to a machine, ask for a shop steward and fill out the form that they will provide you. We need this documentation. Thank you for your cooperation.

... Earl Staats, Clerk Craft Director

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## The Slope Just Keeps Getting Slipperier

The powers that be hope you will not pay attention to the small stuff that is eroding our freedoms and our future. An incident that happened on Election Day should have had people up in arms, but it didn't. Due to a mistake, hundreds of people were turned away from polling places because there weren't enough ballots. So, they did not get to participate in the election. They were not offered an alternative, they just didn't get a chance to vote. Disfranchising a group of people is not supposed to happen in the United States, but it did. We should have been hopping mad, but we weren't. The board of elections suspended a couple of people and the folks who didn't get a chance to vote were told they could go to Jefferson City to testify about not being allowed to vote. It did not change the fact that a basic right was taken away without much fuss or ado. Women, blacks, and other minorities fought long and hard for the right to vote and because of a snafu with the Board of Elections that right was taken away at this particular election. If they can excuse away your voting rights this time, what is to prevent it from happening at the presidential election?

Daily, your right to a decent job at the Postal Service is being diminished and again we do nothing about it. Every day, supervisors and managers perform your work and we just look at them and in some cases appreciate their help. They're helping alright, helping you out of a job. If we continue to allow them to do your job, why do they need clerks? The contract spells out the prohibition on managers and supervisors performing your work. There is a good reason this prohibition is in the contract. If they "help" you they can justify having one clerk to a machine. They can justify not posting bids because we are getting the work out with the clerks we have. What if the supervisor makes a mistake while working on your machine? Do you think that the supervisor will take the blame? Think again.

It can be very easy to lose basic rights and very difficult to get them back. The mail handlers don't get V-time because they lost it in a contract negotiation. They will never get it back. They have lost the rights to work certain ma-

chines. The work was turned over to the clerk craft. They lost those jobs and will probably never get them back.

Things may be okay for you right now. You may even like the assignment you have right now. There is no guarantee things will remain the same. One way to protect your job is to file a grievance whenever the supervisor or manager performs your work. Ask for a steward and document the amount of time the manager or supervisor worked your machine. If you are forced to work one to a machine, ask for a steward and file a grievance. There should be two clerks on a machine in most cases. Ask for a steward so that the situation can be investigated. Don't let the supervisor try and talk you out of filing a grievance. They will tell you it won't do any good and that they are only trying to get the mail out. If it won't make a difference why are they trying to stop you? It is your right to talk to a steward and if warranted to file a grievance. Don't let them try to take away your contractual rights.

Remember the slippery slope. Once you start down that path, it becomes more and more difficult to go back to the way things were. Put the brakes on now.

*The VMF had two recent retirements: Lou Shackelford and Lisa Scaiefe. Good luck and enjoy your retirement.*





## Greetings to all Associate Office Members!

*By Becky Livingston, Associate Office Steward*

### HAPPY SPRING!

There are so many things I want to cover in this article, yet I feel like over the years I keep saying the same things over and over. I guess that is because the same violations keep happening over and over. **Attendance is out of control, folks!** Since the beginning of time the union has told you that attendance-related discipline is the hardest thing to defend. These issues are the reason FMLA was put into place. FMLA is to be used to protect your job. You are the only one who can apply for FMLA and follow through with your doctor to make sure they have properly filled out the documentation and **preferably the doctor has faxed it directly to FMLA (1-651-456-6055)**. A few days later, follow up with a phone call to FMLA to confirm that the paperwork has been received. Please never hand your FMLA paperwork to a supervisor or a steward to FAX for you. First off, your serious health issues are no one's business but your own. The responsibility of filing your paperwork timely is yours alone.

There have been many cases where if the employee would have taken the time to have their serious health issues certified under FMLA there would have been no discipline issued. Unfortunately folks do not take the time or get frustrated and don't complete the process. If FMLA sends the original documentation back with further questions for your doctor, please take the time to follow through. FMLA documentation is available at APWU.Org or you can call the Union Hall and we will make sure we get the correct forms to you. Please do not wait for the USPS to send you the documentation. You only have 15 days from the first day you call in and cite that you are requesting FMLA coverage. There are exceptions and extensions can be requested by calling **HRSSC at 1-877-477-3273 OPTION 5** but please do not rely on receiving an extension. Please make sure to call me if you have any questions regarding this very important issue.

The USPS is really taking a close look at attendance right now. I know I have talked to everyone

about making sure you are on time, but now more than ever is the time to start getting to work on time. Remember the days when if you were 10 minutes late you could just work ten minutes longer to complete your 8-hour day? Well, those days are over! AWOL is being given for any time you are late. That means that you don't get paid for those 10 minutes and now they are also using that 10 minutes against you for attendance related discipline. A double whammy! The steps of progressive discipline can be gone through quickly when it comes to attendance related issues. These are some tips you can use to protect yourself:

- Process paperwork for your FMLA coverage;
- Make sure you stay within your approved frequency and duration and;
- Please start getting to work on time.

Please remember, the union is here if you need us, for any reason. Members only can call me anytime, day or night, at (314) 810-4099.



# Proposed Constitutional Changes

## Change #1

*Submitted by Fred Wolfmeyer*

### Article 14 section 1A

*In the first sentence change the current language that says:*

The Local shall pay the following fringe benefit, retirement, life insurance, APWU health insurance and disability insurance for officers who work full-time for the Union

*New language will read:*

**The Local shall pay the Postal Service share of the following fringe benefits, USPS retirement, life insurance, health insurance and disability insurance. If the officer has APWU health insurance it will be paid in full.**

*Reason for change:*

The current language was written to benefit employees under the CSRS. Then over 80 percent of the membership was under CSRS. Now over 80 percent of the membership is under FERS.

Also, this is the standard language used in other APWU locals.

## Change #2

*Submitted by Robbie Robertson/Melvin Sanders*

Directors Salary

Art 7

H. Craft Directors

*Delete last sentence...*

*Insert* "The monthly salaries for Craft Directors shall be as follows:

Clerk Craft	\$150.00
Maint. Craft	\$100.00
MVS Craft	\$100.00
Support Ser.	\$100.00

*Insert new section*

I. Associate Office Director

The Associate Office Director shall be elected by all dues paying members in the associate offices the local represents. It shall be the responsibility of the Associate Office Director to handle all problems and grievances of the associate offices with the assistance of the Craft Directors (if necessary). Any Associate Office stewards shall work under his/her direction. He/she shall be a member of the Associate Office Negotiating Team. He/she shall receive a salary of \$200.00 per month.

*Reason for Proposed Change:*

This is not a raise. This will put the salaries back to what they were in 1992. In 1992 the salaries were deleted to make the Secretary/Treasurer a full-time position. In 2013 the Secretary/Treasurer returned to a part-time position. This change will return the Directors to the 1992 salary.

## Change #3

*Submitted by Melvin Sanders*

### Article 5 Section 4B

*In the first sentence change current language:*

"... meeting in the year preceding the election."

*New language will read:*

"...meetings in the calendar year preceding the delegate election year."

*Reason for change*

The delegate election is in March. Some say the current language should count meetings from March to March. This is difficult because the nominations are in February. The original intent was to use the calendar year. The new language makes the intent clear and a list of all members from each craft who meet the meeting requirements can be available at the nominating meeting.





# CENTRAL REGION APWU P.O.W.E.R EDUCATION CONFERENCE

April 8-10, 2015

Cleveland, Ohio



By Robin Robertson

Hello my brothers and sisters! We had an awesome networking experience with other APWU POWER sisters from different locals within the Central Region. The Central Region covers Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Over 50 women attended the conference in Cleveland, Ohio. Six of the 13 states were in attendance.

APWU Research and Education Director Joyce Robinson opened the general session. Sis. Charlotte Hiatt introduced Marcy Sanford (chairwomen POWER) Cleveland Area Local to conduct the invocation. We proceeded with the Pledge of Allegiance by Sergeant Tracey Kinton, United States Air Force.

We were given a nice warm welcome from the Cleveland Area Local President Daleo Freeman, Charlotte Hiatt (Central Region POWER coordinator), Starr Hudge (co-chairwoman POWER) Cleveland Area Local, Sharyn Stone (APWU Central Region coordinator), and remarks by National APWU Research and Education Director Joyce Robinson.

The educational conference included "Budgeting Your Money" presented by Violetta Ward-Diamond, assistant to national executive vice president and local member of the Cleveland Area Local. She explained the importance of understanding how to save and budget money.

Sis. Sheila Sullivan, counselor Antioch AGAPE Program presented

"HIV/AIDS Prevention" basically "KNOW YOUR STATUS!" Sis. Sheila went into a grown folk's session explaining, "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN ... do the key test. Hold the keys to your car in one hand and if you are NOT willing to give your man/woman the keys then DON'T give him/her the keys to your heart and/or your body. Love yourself first! Replaceable versus valuable!" Educate and love yourself.

Congratulations to our new legislative director in the interim Sis. Judy Beard. She presented "Getting out the Vote" and explained the importance of knowing your legislative people at the local, state, and national level. Make sure you're reaching out to family, friends, and coworkers to share the important issues currently on the table. Sis. Beard listed several issues we need to address at the national level.

Sis. Linda Turney, Chicago national business agent presented "Union Music." So the sisters were able to learn union songs and dance a little bit.

Last but not least, National APWU Research and Education Director Joyce Robinson presented "You are out of Order." Sis. Robinson conducted an overview of "parliamentary procedure." Every leader should have a copy of "Roberts Rules of Order," the bible for parliamentary procedure. Sis. Robinson explained how to make motions and how to win them.

The beautiful thing about the APWU Central Region is that we have some heavy women hitters at the national level. They include: APWU Central Region Coordinator Sharyn

Stone, National Assistant Director Clerk Division Lynn Pallas-Barber, National Legislative Director Judy Beard, National Business Agent Linda Turney, National Business Agent Christine Pruitt, Accounting (per capita) Department (DC) Andrea Chapman, and Assistant to National Executive Vice President Violetta Ward-Diamond.

As we learn and apply the tools and resources on giving back to other woman and the community, we too will climb to higher heights. Special thanks to all the members within Cleveland Area Local and knowledge is **POWER!** Giving back is the **KEY!**

**St. Louis Gateway APWU POWER will conduct a community event or fundraiser once a quarter. Please network!!**

**"A woman's place is in her union."**



POWER conference: Sis Charlotte Hiatt, central region coordinator; Sharyn Stone, national central region coordinator; Robin Robertson, St. Louis Gateway District Area Local POWER co-chair.



# You Can Make a Difference

By Shelia Patton-Harris

In a memo dated March 26, 2012, the United States Postal Service stated its intent to replace many associate offices with full service post offices inside retail stores if they could find other chains to implement deals similar to the one they had with Staples. These would be staffed with non-postal employees.

The APWU actively fought the deal with Staples through boycotts and picketing. Our efforts may have made other retail chains rethink this plan, saving the jobs of many postal employees.

Another consequence of our activism may have helped block the merger of Staples and Office Depot. After the APWU testified before the Federal Trade Commission, the FTC voted to challenge the proposed merger.

Staples stock prices took a huge tumble. They dropped more than 40 percent. Staples recently announced the closing of 50 more stores.

This is a good example of how you can make a difference. Union members all over the country took part in picketing and boycotting of Staples stores. These actions did not go unnoticed.



# Survey Finds Turmoil in Postal Workforce

**S**urvey says: No recognition for good work; supervisors don't care for workers as people; don't feel job is important; fellow employees not committed to doing quality work.

A survey of postal employees conducted last year for the United States Postal Service paints a dire picture of the state of the organization's workforce.

Gallup, which was paid \$1.8 million by the USPS to conduct the survey, presents a comparison to the results of similar surveys of millions of workers at hundreds of other companies in recent years. Across a range of questions addressing satisfaction in the workplace, the USPS scored in the 1<sup>st</sup> percentile, the very bottom, of the survey results.

Postal workers reported strong job dissatisfaction, and in comparison to other organizations surveyed by Gallup, USPS employees say they rarely receive recognition for good work; their supervisors don't care for them as people; they don't feel their job is important; they lack opportunities to learn and grow, and their fellow employees are not committed to doing quality work.

A spokesman for USPS says the organization was disappointed with the results. "Clearly, there is much room for improvement."

Gallup received responses from 270,000 postal employees nationwide. This was a response rate of only 47 percent, compared to Gallup's 50<sup>th</sup> percentile response rate for other companies of 89 percent. The American Postal Workers Union discouraged its members from taking the survey because it believes the results could be used in contract negotiations.

USPS paid almost \$2 million to find out something we all know. Employees are dissatisfied with their interactions with management. There is no need for an expensive survey to find that out. There will be another survey in August. Once again APWU will hold a raffle for those employees who bring their surveys to the Union Hall. The surveys will be put in a drum and drawn for prizes.

## St. Louis Gateway District Area Local Winners of the Postal Pulse Survey Raffle

- |                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. 32" Samsung TV              | Scott Keck           |
| 2. 32" Samsung TV              | Gregory Morice       |
| 3. 32" Samsung TV              | Patrease Frazier     |
| 4. Kindle Fire                 | Kimberly Hughes      |
| 5. Kindle Fire                 | Dave Kindle (VMF)    |
| 6. Kindle Fire                 | Paul Reid (MVS)      |
| 7. Kindle Fire                 | Robbin Nichols       |
| 8. Holiday Inn One Night Stay  | Dana Ingram (VMF)    |
| 9. Holiday Inn Hotel + Dinner  | Wendy Scales         |
| 10. Holiday Inn Hotel + Dinner | Charlie Koperstynski |
| 11. Bottle of Wine             | Jennie Dunn          |
| 12. Bottle of Wine             | Denise Carnell       |
| 13. Bottle of Wine             | Brent Clardy         |
| 14. Bottle of Wine             | Janet Carrillo       |
| 15. Bottle of Wine             | Kimberly Goodwin     |
| 16. Bottle of Wine             | Marlon Cooper        |
| 17. Bottle of Wine             | Tim Hanna            |
| 18. Bottle of Wine             | Tara Johnson         |
| 19. Bottle of Wine             | Renea Gilliam        |
| 20. Bottle of Wine             | Harriet Mosley       |
| 21. Bottle of Wine             | Ukema Williams       |

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR WINNERS AND THANK YOU FOR SENDING THE PULSE TO THE UNION RAFFLE! LET'S DO IT AGAIN IN AUGUST!**



*Patrease Frazier (Clerk)*



*Dave Kindle (VMF)*

*Kimberly Hughes*



*Tara Johnson*

*Harriet Mosley*



# Union Negotiates New Health Benefit for PSEs

Postal support employees (PSEs) will soon be able to sign up for health insurance during their first year of employment, President Mark Dimondstein has announced. Currently PSEs can enroll only after they complete their first 360-day appointment.

Beginning with a Special Enrollment Period from May 16, 2016, to June 30, 2016, PSEs will be eligible to join the USPS Health Benefits Plan. Coverage will be effective on July 9, 2016.

The Postal Service will contribute

at least \$125 per pay period toward the cost of the insurance.

“This benefit is a step forward, especially for those who need self-only coverage,” Dimondstein said. “This stop-gap measure will improve conditions for PSEs who need insurance for their first year.”

“This benefit applies to all PSEs, regardless of the number of hours they work,” Dimondstein pointed out. This is significant because the Affordable Care Act requires employers to cover only those workers who work a minimum of 30 hours per week.

After the first 360-day appointment, PSEs can switch to the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan, where the Postal Service pays 75 percent of total premium costs for self-only, self-plus-one and self-and-family coverage.

To find out more, visit <https://liteblue.usps.gov/benefits> or call 1-877-477-3273 and select option 1; TTY 866-260-7507. To enroll by mail complete the PostalEASE worksheet available on LiteBlue and mail it to: HRSSC Compensation/Benefits, PO Box 970400, Greensboro, NC 27497-0400

## Nutri-Guru to the rescue!

If it were only as simple as the old adage, “An apple a day...” but deciding whether your apple should be natural, organic, farm to table, gluten or GMO free has made picking it a much more complex feat. When it comes to nutrition; sorting through countless options, fad diets, and an endless array of confusing information, can make you wonder, just what “...keeps the doctor away”?

Fortunately, seeking the help of a certified dietician can provide a trusted resource to help navigate pitfalls in a colossal food industry. Not only can they assist in making informed food choices; but in some instances their expertise can help identify specific food allergies and provide preventative guidance for clients who could otherwise develop serious illnesses like diabetes or heart disease. Studies show that ongoing support from a dietitian does in fact assist in weight loss, maintenance, dietary intervention, and overall better health.

Enroll in the APWU Health Plan's Weight Management Program (at no extra cost) and your visits with an in-network registered dietician/nutritionist are free.



To enroll visit <https://www.apwuhp.com/our-plans/high-option/health-management-programs/weight/>

www.apwuhp.com  
(800) 222-2798

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# Health News

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Get comprehensive health benefits at an affordable price.



## U.S. Suicide Rate Up 24 Percent Since 1999: CDC Rates climbed the most among middle-aged men and girls aged 10 to 14.

By Steven Reinberg, HealthDay Reporter

FRIDAY, April 22, 2016 (HealthDay News) — Suicide rates in the United States rose 24 percent between 1999 and 2014, with young girls and middle-aged men accounting for the largest increases, federal health officials reported Friday.

By 2014, the total suicide rate reached 13 per 100,000 people, said researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. The greatest annual increases occurred after 2006, the agency said.

"This increase is puzzling and troubling," said Deborah Stone, a CDC behavioral scientist who was not involved with the study. "Despite increased suicide prevention efforts, rates are rising."

While no single cause is apparent, Stone said the Great Recession and rising rates of mental health problems, drug abuse and gun availability may account for some of the climb.

The economic downturn that began in 2008 is "probably just one factor," Stone said.

According to the report:

Suicide rates climbed by 1 percent a year from 1999 through 2006, and by 2 percent annually since then.

Men aged 45 to 64 saw a 43 percent increase in suicide rates over 15 years.

Girls aged 10 to 14 years accounted for 150 suicides in 2014, which represented an increase of 200 percent during the study period.

Three times as many men took their lives in 2014 as women (just under 21 per 100,000 versus nearly 6 per 100,000, respectively).

Overall, suicide rates remained highest among men 75 and older.

For men, guns were used in most suicide deaths (about 55 percent in 2014),

while poisoning — including overdoses — was used most often by women (34 percent in 2014).

Suicide by suffocation — including hanging — increased among both sexes, accounting for about one in four suicides in 2014.

Although suicides have increased among whites, suicides among American Indians have risen even more, said lead author Sally Curtin, a statistician from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). And notably, suicide rates for black males dropped 8 percent over the 15-year period, she said.

One expert believes more accurate reporting accounts for some of the uptick that the researchers captured.

"Because more attention has been paid to suicide over the last 10 years, the stigma associated with reporting suicide has decreased, so we are getting a much more accurate count," said Dr. Morton Silverman. He is a senior advisor to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center of the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Stone, however, believes the increases are real. "Suicides are actually under-reported," she said. "There is no research that the reporting has changed."

The study findings are consistent with what has been seen over the last decade, said Daniel Reidenberg, managing director of the National Council for Suicide Prevention.

"One thing that the findings don't tell us is how many lives we are saving from suicide every day or every year through suicide prevention efforts," Reidenberg said.

Also, the findings do not address the effect that suicide has on loved ones, he added.

This matters, Reidenberg said, because research has shown that those who lose a

loved one to suicide experience more mental and physical health problems, and an increased risk of suicide themselves.

Stone called suicide an important public health problem that demands attention. "It takes a community-wide effort to prevent suicides, so we can't expect one thing is going to solve everything," she said.

However, awareness of the likelihood of suicide is one major step, experts suggest.

According to the American Association of Suicidology, warning signs of an impending suicide include thinking or talking about killing oneself; increased abuse of alcohol or drugs; a sense of purposelessness or hopelessness; or withdrawal from friends, family or other social contacts.

Additional red flags are uncontrolled anger, recklessness or significant mood changes.

The new report is published in the April issue of the CDC's NCHS Data Brief.

More information

For more about suicide, visit the **U.S. National Institute of Mental Health**.

SOURCES: Sally Curtin, M.A., statistician, National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Daniel Reidenberg, Psy.D., managing director, National Council for Suicide Prevention, Bloomington, Minn; Deborah Stone, Sc.D., behavioral scientist, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Morton M. Silverman, M.D., senior advisor, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; April 22, 2016, U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, NCHS Data Brief, "Increase in Suicide in the United States, 1999-2014"

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# ANNUAL PICNIC

## American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO

### St. Louis Gateway District Area Local

RAIN, SHINE OR HEAT!  
OUTDOOR PARK AND AIR CONDITIONED BUILDING

### MEMBERS AND THEIR GUESTS

SUNDAY, JULY 17, 2016  
From 1 p.m. until 5 p.m.

*Where:*

Aerospace District Lodge 837 IAM/AW Machinists Hall and Park  
212 Utz Lane Hazelwood, MO 63042

SPECIAL GUESTS INVITED  
NATIONAL UNION OFFICERS

**FREE – REFRESHMENTS – FREE**  
BEER, SODA, BAR-B-QUE  
HOT DOGS, HAMBURGERS, CHICKEN  
CORN, BAKED BEANS

**Fred Wolfmeyer**  
*President*

**Robin Robertson**  
*Chairwoman*



## APWU ANNUAL PICNIC

Come one, come all! The APWU Annual Picnic will be July 17, 2016, at the Machinists and Aerospace Workers Hall at 212 Utz Lane in Hazelwood. **Please RSVP by June 25, 2016.** Enjoy a day of food and fun with your co-workers, family and friends. There will be games for the kids, face painting and a clown.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tour \_\_\_\_\_

Number of guests \_\_\_\_\_

**There is a limit of six (6) guests per member.**

Cut out and return to: Robin Robertson, 1705 S. Broadway, St. Louis, MO 63104





We Wish to Extend  
Our Condolences to  
the Friends and  
Families of:

Eva Mae Eichelberger  
Grandmother of Pamela Russell  
(Support Services)

Alonzo Smith Jr.  
Father in law of Bretina Harris  
(Support Services)

Ray A. Kritis  
Father of Raymond C. Kritis  
(Support Services)



Happy 4th of July



**ATTENTION**

President Fred Wolfmeyer and VP Gene Hollenbeck announce the conversion of five more MVS PSEs to career. That makes 10 since December.

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The top 1 percent in income among American men live 15 years longer than the poorest 1 percent; for women, the gap is 10 years.



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## Press On

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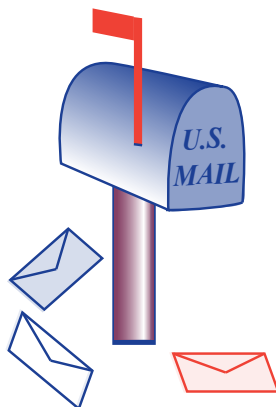
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## GATEWAY LOCAL CALENDAR

May 11 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
May 15 (Sunday)	General Membership Meeting (3 p.m.)
May 16 (Monday)	Stewards' Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
<b>May 30 (Monday)</b>	<b>Memorial Day Holiday</b>
June 8 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
June 11 (Saturday)	General Membership Meeting (9:30 a.m.)
June 13 (Monday)	Stewards' Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
<b>July 4 (Monday)</b>	<b>Independence Day Holiday</b>
July 6 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
July 11 (Monday)	Stewards' Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
July 17 (Sunday)	APWU Annual Family Day Picnic (1-5 p.m.)

There will be no General Membership Meetings  
in the months of July and August.

The Union Hall will be closed on holidays.



**Moving?**  
*Send us your new address  
so we can stay in touch.*

Help Nancy, our office secretary, by sending us your address changes. Your union spends many work hours and pays significant postage fees to obtain your correct address. We cannot get your union paper to you on time without your correct address. Thank you.