

Press On

St. Louis Gateway District Area Local
American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO

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28

November/December 2017

Merry
Christmas

From Your
Local
Executive
Board



President's Article *By Frederick Wolfmeyer*

Reversions and Excessing

Happy Veterans Day to all our veterans, thank you for your service. Happy holidays to all my union sisters and brothers. Is it really that time of year already? Yes, Thanksgiving is only days away and Christmas and New Years are not far behind. I hope you and your families have a safe and joyous holiday period and that you are blessed with love and happiness during this wonderful time of year.

Now I must turn to the business at hand which is much less appealing than the season of good cheer and kindness to our fellow men and women. During the last few weeks management has again sent letters proposing the reversion of positions in the plant and stations and branches that have gone vacant. As I have written before, any time a duty assignment goes vacant, management has been instructed to revert that assignment. It doesn't matter that the person who vacated it was working 80 hours a pay period for three years in that assignment, it is no longer needed because the hours are not earned. However, as I write below, the PSEs are working as many hours as a full-time clerk, but the hours are over what the plant has earned, therefore - revert! I get calls on a weekly basis from clerks asking when the service is going to start posting bids at the stations and branches. Folks, it will be a long time. Once we win our grievances over this nonsense, then we will once again see bids posted. Until then, watch those managers and supervisors who are doing your work. Don't let them use carriers to do your work either. This is the time you must get on them and hold them to the contract.



New Job Alignment Update

There has been much talk about another bid or alignment of jobs to match the service's model. Some clerks had their starting time changed recently by less than one hour, however, after speaking with the senior plant manager, if an alignment takes place, it will not be until after the first of the year. What makes no sense at all is that management would be thinking of doing another alignment at all. However, at the All Craft Conference in October, it was mentioned that the service may actually do a realignment every quarter. This would be ridiculous and cause disruption to all those who would be impacted. I was told that the team that is working on this new efficiency model that the service is implementing attended MIT, and are some sort of brain trusts. If this is so, then they should have gotten their realignment right the first time and not have to do it again. Remember, the arrival and departure times for the mail have not changed so why the change in start times and N/S days?

Excess Update

The local union also received an updated impact statement from the area office which shows that 56 FTR clerks are to be excessed. This is scheduled to happen in February or March of 2018 and really makes no sense because the same statement shows that out of 129 PSEs, the service intends on keeping 122. Contractually, that just cannot happen. In fact, those 129 PSEs are working nearly 18,000 hours per month and if you extend that over 12 months, that is 216,000 hours or the equivalent of 104 FTR duty assignments. I would argue that if you want to eliminate 56 clerks it cannot be the full-time career clerks, but the PSEs instead. We attended an impact meeting with management on November 6, 2016, and all union representatives present, Sharyn Stone, Regional Coordinator; Dan Skemp, Clerk NBA; and I were all in agreement that before management could excess those 56 FTR clerks, at least 56 PSEs had to be let go. This is not a rap on our PSE sisters and brothers, but contractually, non-career PSEs must be eliminated before any excess of FTR clerks. The service keeps citing earned hours, but the contract states that:

"Every effort will be made to create desirable duty assignments from all available work hours for career employees to bid."
There is no mention of 'earned hours' but "all available work hours."

Vacation Selection

We have been requesting a vacation meeting with management since mid-October and have finally received a date for a meeting this week. Seems management is absolutely on fire to get your postal pulse survey and issue discipline to all of you, but apparently they are not in much of a hurry to get it in gear to have a timely vacation selection. As it is, the union does the selection process for management, so why not get it done in a timely manner.

APWU Health Plan

Sisters and brothers, once again the APWU health plans are a terrific value. The premiums increased by no more than \$5 and the Consumer Driven Option is extremely affordable at only \$12 per pay period for a Self Only policy. Please take a look at the plans and you will see that they are very good, and they can save you a lot of money. I have had the APWU High Option for several years now and in 2015 I had major surgery and paid very little out of pocket for my medical bills. In addition, the APWU puts money back in the national union's general fund. The more members we have sign up for the plan, the more money goes into our (your) general fund. Last year the APWU paid \$12 million into the general fund.

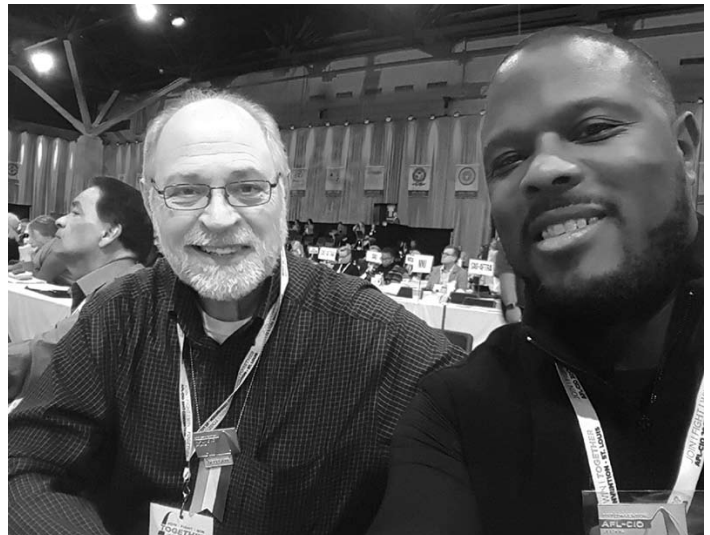
AFL-CIO National Convention

I also attended the National AFL-CIO Convention at the invitation of APWU President Mark Dimondstein. I was an alternate delegate, but was able to be seated at the APWU table with several of our national officers. The convention was informative and I discovered that the AFL-CIO has several new programs to help fight against the ever-present threat to labor. Also the national has over 200 construction projects active in the St. Louis area building housing and using union labor.

Right to work was another important topic of discussion and Missouri AFL-CIO President Mike Louis, and St. Louis Labor Council President Pat White spoke on that issue. Remember, we have won the battle **only**, and not the war. Right to work will be on the ballot this coming November because of many hardworking unionists like you from all across our state, so we must get out and vote against it. We must also encourage, no, more than encourage, we **must** get our friends and families out to vote against this devastating legislation. If you have to drive them to the polls, do so. Speak to your church members, your co-workers, your neighbors, and get them to the polls. Our economic future and workplace rights depend on these votes.



National President Mark Dimondstein addresses the delegates at the National AFL-CIO Convention in St. Louis.



St. Louis APWU President Fred Wolfmeyer with Chicago APWU President Keith Robinson at the Convention.



National Clerk Craft Director Clint Burluson addresses the Convention delegates .

APWU Health Plan: Better Coverage, Lower Cost, Benefits the APWU

By Grace Mason and Fred Wolfmeyer

On October 16-19 the 32nd Annual Open Season APWU Health Plan Seminar was held in the Holiday Inn's Downtown Convention Center. St. Louis Gateway District Area Local APWU President Fred Wolfmeyer warmly welcomed our sisters and brothers from across the country to St. Louis and encouraged them to learn more about the APWU's comprehensive and affordable healthcare plan.

2017 Open Season runs from November 13 through December 11 and it's time for **you** to consider joining the APWU Health Plan. As an APWU Health Plan member, you can rely on comprehensive coverage, a nationwide network of more than 1 million providers with no need for referrals, two solid plans to choose between, affordable premiums, and a personal touch from people who care.

Simply put, the APWU Health Plan gives you better coverage, for a lower cost, and it benefits your local union.

The coverage you will get with

the APWU Health Plan is equal, if not better, than Blue Cross Blue Shield and GEHA, and it costs less.

- The APWU Health Plan gives money back to the National Union General Fund – last year we got \$12 million back to the APWU General Fund.
- The cost of premiums is less than any of the other federal employee health programs.
- If more members joined the plan, our union would get more money, and the premiums could go down, with the same great level of coverage.
- The Consumer-Drive Option is cheap – APWU members can get a self-only plan with great coverage and a broad network for two payments of \$12.79 a month.
- If an employee is retired and on Medicare, the High Option plan coordinates extremely well when Medicare is the primary.
- The APWU is the only union that has the USPS pay 95 percent of the premiums.
- The APWU Health Plan is avail-

able to all federal employees.

National APWU leadership also extensively praised the updated Health Plan. National Director of the Motor Vehicle Services Craft Mike Foster stated that, "I believe in the APWU and what they represent, so why wouldn't the healthcare plan be the same?" APWU's Support Services Director Steven Brooks stated that, "We should be very grateful for our health plan," partially because the APWU Health Plan handles medical needs quickly and efficiently. APWU National Retirees Director Nancy Olumekor said that, "A large number of APWU members in the Health Plan are retirees ... and we truly do appreciate that the rates are lower this year than they were last year and that the APWU Plan works with Medicare." There are hundreds of reasons why the APWU's Health Plan is one of the best in the federal government — and ask your fellow employees who are on the plan to tell you more about it! Questions? Go online at www.apwuhp.com or contact Fred Wolfmeyer at 314-231-7665 at your local Union Hall to learn more!



Executive Vice President

By Gene Hollenbeck



First, I would like to thank all those who have served and those family members who are serving now. Our veterans and those who are serving now make this country great.

We are now in the holiday season. Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and then Christmas and the New Year. I hope that everyone has a wonderful holiday season.

Vacation selections should have began by the time the *Press On* reaches your doorstep. We have asked for a vacation meeting to set the ground rules for vacation selections. As of now we have not received a response to our request.

Discipline is running rampant in the Main Office. Supervisors are put-

ting employees off the clock as if there were no tomorrow. Try to get upper management to correct the problem and you can never seem to find them. But, they want the employees to be engaged. Maybe if the employees were treated like they were a vital part of the operations rather than just a tool to use and throw away, they would be more engaged. Maybe if there were two employees to a machine as required, they would be more engaged.

I will say one thing: If a supervisor gives you an instruction, follow it and then file your grievance. Article 3 of the CBA gives management the right to manage. It also gives them the right to mismanage. Even if you feel the instruction is ridiculous, you still have

to follow that instruction unless it will cause harm to you or others.

Once again management is changing hours for the clerk craft. This is due to the Dashboard scheduler. This will probably happen once a quarter or until they get it right. Whichever comes first.

The penalty overtime exclusion period this year is December 2 to December 29.

Once again, thank you to all of our veterans and to your family members who are serving now.

Happy Thanksgiving, merry Christmas and a very happy New Year.

COME TO OUR SIDE OF THE FENCE

We started in 1928 as the credit union for postal workers. Today, we've opened our doors to everyone in our surrounding communities, but our roots remain. We can save you money on:

- Checking accounts with online banking, mobile banking, mobile deposit and more¹
- Auto loans with low rates and no payments for 90 days² (even on refinances!)
- Home equity loans with low rates and no closing costs³
- Mortgage loans with competitive rates
- Savings, CDs, money markets and IRAs
- Club accounts for youth, teens and seniors
- And more!

Start saving money and open your accounts and loans online today!

314-892-5400 **NeighborsCU.org**

Downtown • Fenton • Florissant • Hazelwood
Jennings • South County • St. Peters

¹Message and data rates may apply from your wireless carrier. ²Interest will continue to accrue during deferral period. ³If loan is paid off and closed within 24 months from opening of loan, member must reimburse the credit union for fees paid.

Membership eligibility required on all offers. Restrictions apply on all offers. See Neighbors Credit Union for complete details on all offers.

Understanding the Accountability of Union Funds for St. Louis Gateway District Area Local

By Robin Robertson



Happy holidays my brothers and sisters! In 2017, St. Louis Gateway District Area Local president formed a trustee committee of four craft employees (one from each craft), which included: Dave Childers (MVS-VMF), Janis Dumas (support services), Charles Koperstyski (maintenance), and a clerk craft committee member. Each craft employee will be responsible for making sure the secretary-treasurer (Robbie Robertson) and president (Frederick Wolfmeyer) comply with the fiduciary responsibilities of the St. Louis Gateway District Area Local finances. Executive Vice-President Gene Hollenbeck is the overseer of the trustee's committee meeting, per our constitution and by-laws.

Former President/Executive Assistant to Secretary-Treasurer Roosevelt Steward taught a webinar called "Trustee Auditing." All trustees, secretary-treasurer, and executive vice president were in attendance to learn the objectives and importance of conducting a frequent audit. According to the Constitution & By-laws, the president of the local is required to select a committee and the committee would select a chairperson. Trustees are required to conduct a quarterly audit on all expenses (receipts and disbursements), in addition to the bank statements and credit card statements the local currently reviews quarterly. Trustees are responsible to make sure the union officers (secretary-treasurer and president) provide all documentation requested for the audit in a reasonable amount of time.

According to our training, the primary contact will be the secretary-treasurer when conducting the audits. The secretary-treasurer will provide all documents requested by the Trustee Committee. The report findings will be provided to the general membership at our meetings. Trustee audit reports will be presented to the membership quarterly.

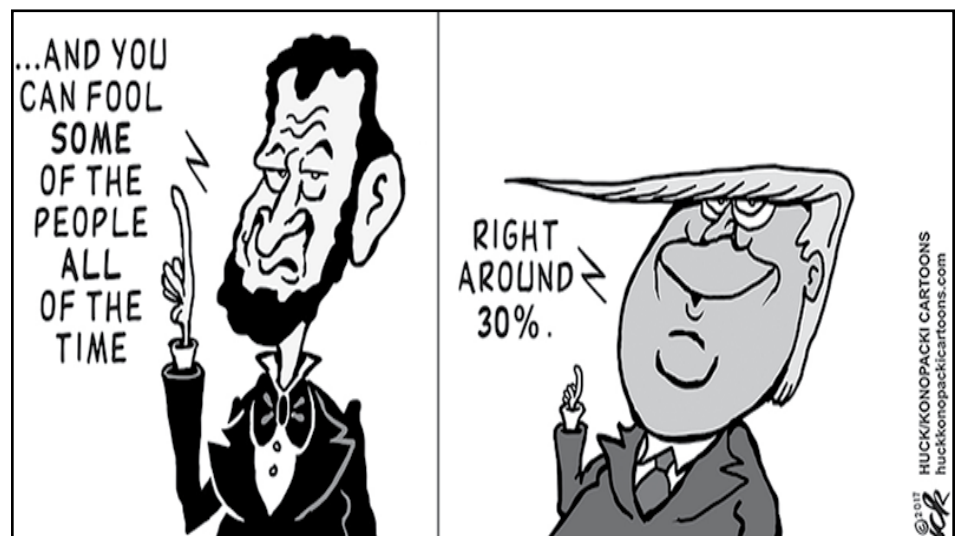
The weekend of September 29, the secretary-treasurer, executive vice president and trustees attended the Secretary-Treasurer Training Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. The training was informative and focused around "The 5 Golden Rules for Spending Union Funds" which includes:

1. The law;
2. The local constitution and by-laws;
3. Motions adopted by the membership (which is the highest ranking body in a union);
4. The Executive Board as permitted in the constitution or by the

membership (meaning **no** quorum, the Executive Board has the highest authority);

5. The budget, as adopted by the membership (yearly at December or January meeting)

According to Section 501, (a) of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, as amended (LMRDA): "The officers, agents, shop stewards, and other representative of a labor organization occupy positions of trust in relation to such organization and its members as a group." Meaning it's **your** responsibility to know what's going on with union funds. Secretary-treasurer reports are given out monthly at the general membership meetings and the secretary-treasurer and president are present to answer any questions pertaining to the report. Our duties as leaders are to provide accurate accountability on how union funds are being spent according to "The 5 Golden Rules." **Enjoy your holidays! Be safe and be blessed!**





Right to Work?

Most people hear ‘right to work’ and think that this must be a good thing. Everyone should have the right to work. Right? Upon further investigation it becomes apparent that this is not the case. The genesis for these right to work laws may be surprising. Right-to-work laws originated as a way to maintain Jim Crow labor relations and anti-Semitism. Spearheading the push for right to work was a Texan named Vance Muse. He headed a conservative organization known as the Christian American Association.

The idea for right to work laws did not originate with Muse. It came from Dallas Morning News editorial writer William Ruggles, who called for the passage of a United States Constitution amendment prohibiting the closed or union shop. Muse contacted Ruggles and asked the writer for his blessings for the Christian American Association’s campaign to outlaw contracts that require employees to belong to unions. Ruggles even suggested the name for such legislation - right to work.

The Christian Americans insisted that right-to-work was essential in maintaining the color line in labor relations. One piece of their literature warned that if the amendment failed “white women and white men will be forced into organizations with black African apes ... whom they will have to call ‘brother’ or lose their jobs.”

In 1944, Arkansas and Florida became the first states to enact right-to-work laws. In both states, few blacks could cast free ballots, election fraud was rampant, and political power belonged to the elite. Right-to-work laws sought to keep it that way, to deprive the least powerful of a voice,

and to make sure that workers remained divided along racial lines.

Muse is quoted as saying; “They call me anti-Jew and anti-nigger. Listen, we like the nigger — in his place Our right-to-work amendment helps the nigger; it does not discriminate against him. Good niggers, not those Communist niggers. Jews? Why some of my best friends are Jews. Good Jews.”

Muse had made a lucrative living as a lobbyist. According to one of his critics he made his fortune by “playing rich industrialist as suckers.” Over the course of his career he fought against women’s suffrage, worked to defeat the constitutional amendment prohibiting child labor, and sought to repeal the eight-hour day law for railroaders.

He was also an anti-Semite. He was active in the Committee for the Americanization of the Supreme Court, which targeted Justice Felix Frankfurter, a Vienna-born Jewish man, for his votes in labor cases.

By the early 1940s, Muse and Christian Americans focused on the labor movement, especially the unions associated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Muse claimed that Marxist Jews were pulling the national government’s strings and the CIO — which became shorthand for Jewish Marxist unions — was sending organizers to the rural south to inflame the contented but gullible black population as a first step in a plot to Sovietize the nation.

As you can see, right-to-work was not designed with the loftiest of goals in mind. It was based on racism and prejudice. It is an attempt to destroy unions and pit black against white. We must defeat right-to-work in Missouri.

**RIGHT TO WORK FOR LESS
WRONG FOR MISSOURI!**

Accountability and Responsibility

By Fred Wolfmeyer

My second article this issue is about the responsibility stewards and officers have to their members and the organization, and how members should hold their representatives accountable. One of my biggest complaints regarding my fellow union workers is the blatant disregard many of these officers or stewards have toward their union responsibilities when they go to conferences, seminars, or conventions, particularly those that are out of town. The sessions and/or classes are short and are conducted to educate these officers and stewards so that they can do a better job of representing you, the members. However, these same officers and stewards must think they know all there is to know about the material being taught because they skip classes or sessions and go out to take in the local attractions. I believe that this is wrong because even though elected to attend these functions, the local union pays for air fare, registration, and hotel expenses, with your dues money. Therefore by skipping sessions of classes and shirking their responsibility, they are cheating you, the members.

An example of this would be the national convention which was held in Orlando, Fla. in August 2016. What is in Orlando? Disney World, Downtown Disney, Disney Boardwalk, and Universal Studios Theme Park. Now I cannot say which attraction these officers and stewards went to, but on many days the St. Louis delegate table was practically empty and later when I saw some of these same people, everyone seemed to be carrying a bag from Disney or Universal Studios. So upon return home, I confronted these peo-

ple and wrote an article about their behavior, but for the most part, it fell on deaf ears.

Just recently, the APWU All Craft Conference was held in Las Vegas and you can only imagine how many officers decided to try their luck at the casinos, but not in the classroom. Later — October 17 - 19, 2017 — the APWU Health Plan Seminar was held in St. Louis. Most all members of the local executive board attended and your union dollars paid them. However, once again, certain individuals skipped many classes and cheated you. They were networking or had business to attend to, but when it is local, the president and vice president take care of the business of the local and both of us were in our classes — every class. So, for some of these officers and stewards, this is beginning to become all too common and I want to let you know that I will hold all of them accountable in the future. If I have to deny pay or ask them to reimburse the local union for certain expenses, I will do it.

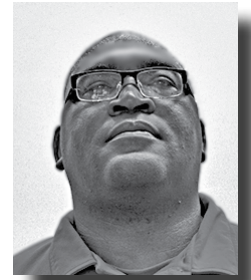
In summary, if you see your craft director or steward, ask them if they skipped classes at the 2016 National Convention or the 2017 APWU Health Plan Seminar. Ask them what was so important outside the classroom that they just had to skip class and cheat you out of your dues money. And also ask them if they paid attention in class or if they were occupied with one or two cell phones and/or a tablet. That still amazes me, as to how a person can be socializing (not working) on a mobile device and think they are attending a class.

And now that I have called out certain individuals, I must compliment Dave Childers, Charlie Koperstyinski, Janis Dumas, Gene Hollenbeck, Becky Livingston, Earl Staats, and Jeff Cooper for attending all their classes in Vegas. Cudos to Gene Hollenbeck, Becky Livingston, Tom Nanna, Earl Staats, Dean Hathaway, Jeff Cooper, and Robin McCurry for their good attendance and attention at the Health Plan Seminar.

**Nominations
for
Delegates to the
National Convention
will be at the
February 3, 2018
General Membership Meeting
Elections will be March 18, 2018
from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
at the Union Hall**

MVS Town Talk

By Jeff Cooper, MVS Director



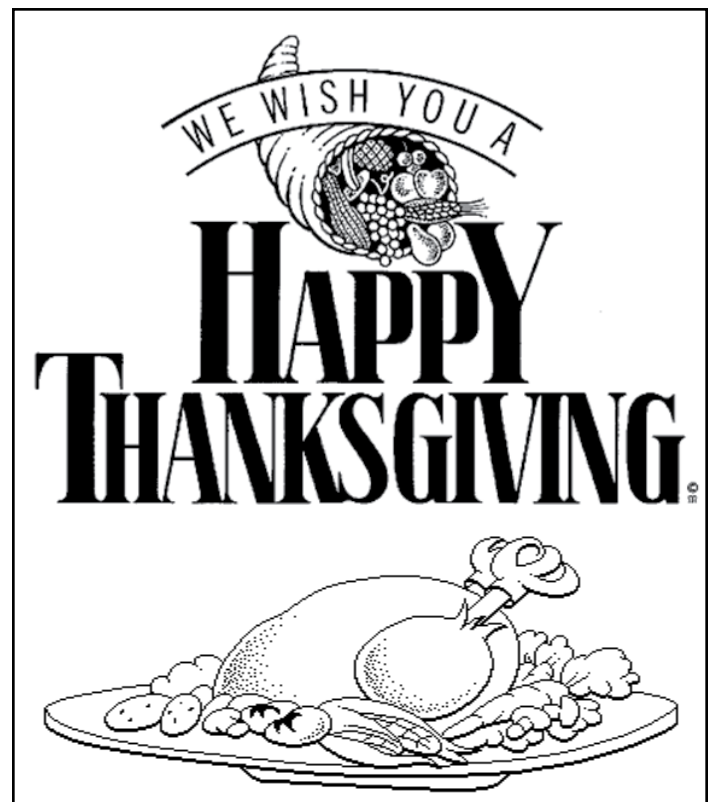
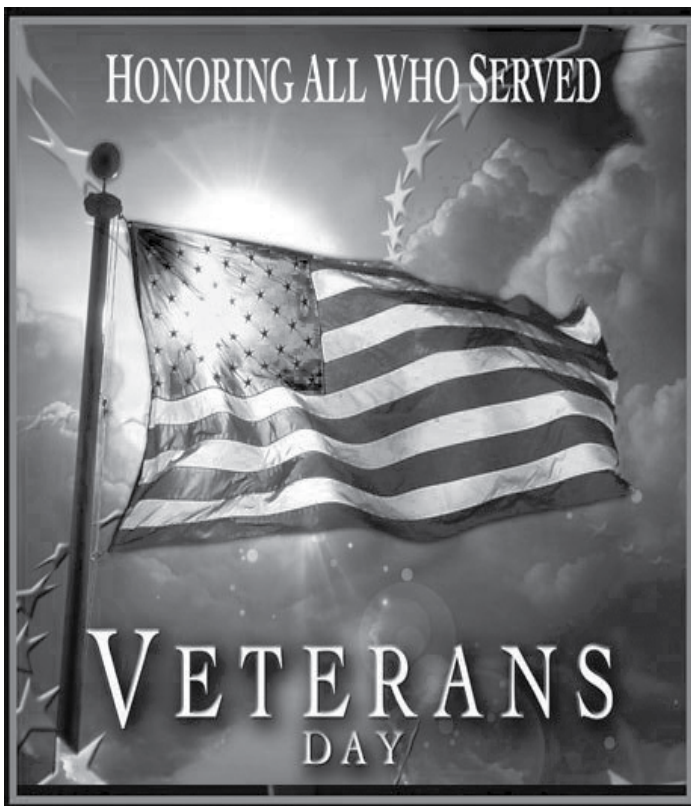
Greetings union brothers and sisters and another year is coming to a close. We are gearing up for the 2018 annual bid and vacation selection. I have asked management to put the run books out by November 13, 2017. If that goes well, the craft should start the 2018 selection by November 27, 2017.

I have represented the MVS craft in two seminars this year. One was the all craft. The national motor vehicle director was present, Mr. Michael Foster. At majority of his conferences he will remind the craft that the struggle is real and we are in a fight for our lives. In 2011 the post office tried to contract out the entire state of California. If it had not been for the stewards filing the initial grievance, the national business agents providing their insight, to the national motor vehicle director and their legal team; there would have been a catastrophic turnout for the motor vehicle craft nationwide. It is vital to attend these seminars, so that union officials can be aware of the tactics management can use that can be damaging to the craft. On a lighter note the craft has returned to all career workforce. Employees can apply for insurance, start the retirement program, within the first year of employment.

The second seminar I attended was the health fair. There were numerous changes to the plan. The APWU Health Plan works hard to stay competitive and provide good service to the members. The co-pay for High Option went up \$5 but the premium decreased. The APWU Health Plan is available for union members. Visit the website to see the benefits, if you still have further questions you can contact me and I will try to answer.

Article 16.2 Discussion

For minor offenses by an employee, management has a responsibility to discuss such matters with the employee. Discussions of this type shall be held in private between the employees and the supervisor. Such discussions are not considered discipline and are not grievable. If any time the dynamics of the meeting change where you think you are going to be disciplined, you should apply your Weingarten Rights (union representation during interrogations). That's all for now. Stay safe, professional and courteous.



Support Services

By Director Orlando Anderson

Holiday Greetings

Hello sisters and brothers, I trust everyone had a good summer and enjoyed our local APWU picnic, if you attended. It was a good time to relax and enjoy each other's company.

I'm pleased to announce that on August 30, 2017, our National President Mark Dimondstein and the Postal Service's vice president of labor relations signed off on support services IT/accounting service newest collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

This contract became effective on September 2, 2017. The members ratified the tentative agreement earlier in August with 429 voting yea and 129 voting no. The majority of the no votes came from our IT center in Pennsylvania. The CBA covers the period from September 2, 2017, through January 20, 2019. The agreement includes a 1.3 percent raise for each year of the contract with back pay for the 2017 year retroactive to January 21, 2017. It also includes a \$333 back pay for COLA not received during the April Consumer Price Index (CPI) and all future COLA awards through the end of this agreement. However, it is not expected to receive the back pay until roughly the end of this year or possibly the beginning of next year. The reason for this delay is due to the processing of the National Letter Carriers CBA that was ratified a few weeks before IT/AS's. The programmers in payroll have to process their form 50s and pay scale adjustments before they can commit to support services. Overall, the contract is a good one. Although we would have liked to have seen more in terms of position upgrades and agreed upon

memorandums, we are pleased we did not lose anything that has been fought for over the years. I would like to thank the local presidents from the other three centers, as well as President Fred Wolfmeyer for input and assistance. I would also like to thank national office's Steve Brooks, national craft director and lead negotiator, National Business Agent Judy McCann and President Mark Dimonstein.

I had an opportunity to attend the national level OWCP (Office of Workman Compensation Program) training seminar during the week of August 6 through August 10, 2017 in New Jersey. The seminar is put on every three years by the APWU human relations director, Sue Carney. I attended the 2014 seminar and found it extremely enlightening. Even though this was a refresher for me, due to changes in the laws and rules, there were things that were new and valuable to me.

Here are some things that all employees should know in the unfortunate event they are ever injured on the job. Notify your supervisor that an injury has occurred. You should then seek immediate medical treatment. There is no mandatory requirement that you go to a Postal Service doctor. The service could later on require a second opinion from one of their doctors, but not at the time of injury. It's your choice! Within our local, there are trained and certified personnel who can assist an employee with an "on the job injury." Contact the Union Hall and ask the president to assign someone to assist you in the case.

There are two types of injuries recognized by the Department of Labor (DOL), Division of OWCP, trau-

matic injury and occupational injury. A

traumatic injury is one that happens on a specific day, at a specific time, in a specific location resulting in an immediate injury. An occupational injury is one that occurs over a period of time. For example, you work on a machine and due to the repetitive nature of your job you develop carpal tunnel syndrome. This type of injury develops over time and is not a one time, one location injury. This is important for employees to know because the type of injury determines what type of form to submit your workman comp claim.

The forms used initially to report and file a claim are forms CA1 and CA2. The best way to remember which form is needed is the number 1 in CA1. It means a one time, one day, and one location. Therefore, if you suffer a traumatic injury, you would request a CA1. If you suffer from an occupational injury, multiple days or over time, you would request from the supervisor a CA2.

You must get a copy of the form, filled out by the supervisor with the date and time it was recorded and turned in. Your copy must be kept in your possession for future reference if needed. Management has been known to recommend denial to the Department of Labor because they will claim it is untimely. Without your copy, it is hard to prove otherwise, so make sure the date and time of injury is correct on the form and that the date and time it was submitted to management is correct. Management has also been known to change the dates on the form after



they give the employee a copy. Management has five days from receipt to submit to OWCP. The employee will **not** send a CA1 or CA2 to OWCP. It will cause a denial if you do so.

The other form that is commonly used for OWCP claims is the CA16. The CA16 is a form management provides to the employee that covers the cost of any medical attention received due to the on the job injury. This form can pay the provider for not only medical bills, but other things like prescriptions and some travel cost. Request one from the supervisor at the same time you notify them of the injury. Keep personal notes of the injury, dates and times of all actions done by you, and if possible, get statements from witnesses of the injury.

There are other forms that could be required, but those forms should be discussed with your representative as relevant situations come about.


Finally, with regards to workman's comp claims, I would like to briefly clarify what most employees refer to as "**my 45 days.**" Officially it is called continuation of pay or COP. Here is how that works. On the first day of your traumatic injury, if you leave work to go to a medical facility, the remainder of your tour is paid by the Postal Service as administrative leave. Days two and three, if you cannot return to work, you would be required to use your own sick or annual leave. (The Postal Service has an independent agreement that requires a three-day waiting period after the date of injury, unlike other federal agencies.) After that, provided you have medical documentation to remain off work for a period of time up to day 48, the Postal Service is required to pay continuation of pay. In the event your claim is not approved, the Postal Service will send you a let-

ter of demand to collect back the continuation of pay amount or charge it to your own annual or sick leave. So be careful and make sure that you have all the necessary documentation to support your request for continuation of pay. Beyond the 45 days of COP, provided your OWCP claim has been approved, your pay is sent to you from the Department of Labor (DOL), OWCP. With an approved claim, the DOL will also pay your health benefits. Most importantly, remember to stay in contact with the assigned union representative provided to you by the president on updated information received from the


Postal Service or the DOL. Everything has a time limit for submission or other actions to be taken. Make your union representative aware of any action as soon as possible. The sooner the better.

Workman's compensation claims are not grievable because the DOL does not acknowledge agency CBAs. However some aspects of the process can be grieved if it's an action taken or lack of an action by the Postal Service. Example, failure to pay COP is a grievable issue.

As we approach the holiday season, I wish everyone a safe and harmonious fall and winter season.



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO



Congress is at it Again—
Taking from Working People
to Give to the Wealthy

"Working families should not be used
as piggy banks to enrich big business,
big banks and billionaires."
— President Mark Dimondstein

CALL 844-813-4060

AND TELL YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS
TO **VOTE NO** ON THE TAX BILL.

The House Republicans' *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* is misnamed. The foundation of this legislation "is not designed to create jobs with a living wage and good benefits, but to enrich the corporate elite and the billionaire class," said Political & Legislative Director Judy Beard. Wall Street and big business will be gifted with a tax rate reduction from 35% to 20%, paid for by trillions in budget cuts to programs for working people, including Medicare and Medicaid.

The *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* will further punish working families by:

- ◆ Capping the State and Local Property Tax deduction, and eliminating the State and Local Income Tax deduction;
- ◆ Repealing the medical expense deduction, including nursing home care;
- ◆ Repealing taxes on companies that ship jobs overseas;
- ◆ Making it harder to claim the child tax credit;
- ◆ Cutting the mortgage rate deduction in half;
- ◆ Repealing the student loan interest deduction.

Maintenance Craft News

By Tom Nanna

Happy holidays to all our members from your maintenance craft directors and stewards! We hope that you all have safe and memorable holidays. **Don't forget**, this is the time of year to be planning ahead for 2018.

Management should be requesting vacation selections for 2018 starting November 1, 2017. Please make sure you have your choices picked out. After you have been notified it is your turn to pick your vacations, you have 24 hours to make your selection. Please make sure you keep your 3971s in a place where you can quickly find them. You may be required to produce them at a later date. Your vacation choices can be as many weeks as you are given at the beginning of the leave year which starts January 6, 2018. Your new leave balance should be credited by the first or second pay period of January 2018. Selections for first and second round choices have to be completed by December 31, 2017. The rest of the vacation choices have to be completed by January 31, 2018. The leave year for maintenance is for the entire calendar year.

Open season starts November 13, 2017, through December 11, 2017, to sign up for health insurance, dental and vision insurance plans. What health plan do you have? Please consider our APWU Health Plan. It's a great choice because of the many benefits you receive. The plan you choose is always your choice. Be informed of all the plans that are out there. Now would also be a good time to review all of your postal benefits

and make any new changes to your benefit package.

Have you checked on your TSP lately to see how it is performing? Are you putting in at least 5 percent to receive the full matching benefit from the Postal Service? When do you plan on retiring? Who are your beneficiaries on your TSP and life insurance policies from the Postal Service?

Do you have an FSA account? It is tax free. It can be set up for more than just paying medical bills. You can set it up to pay babysitting fees for your children and elder care for parents. It can also be set up for transportation and parking expenses.

Congratulations to Cindy Grommet for completing steward training for maintenance. We look forward to working with Cindy on grievances. She will be an asset to our members. Steward training will be starting soon. Please come join Dean as he prepares to educate new stewards or make our members better informed about their rights and our CBA. Call the Union Hall at 314-231-7665 to sign up for the training class.

If you go to a station or branch that is very dirty and not being cleaned, please fill out a 1767 which is a safety and health violation form.

Give the form to your supervisor and have them sign it and return your blue copy to you to keep. Management should return a copy of the form to you with a remedy filled out that day or within 24 hours if it's toward the end of the day when you turn it in .

Your union officers and stewards are not the union. The union is all the members. In the near future there will be several stewards retiring. We need our members to step up and become better educated and become stewards, especially for the stations and branches. Please attend your monthly union meetings. If you are having problems, please come to the meetings. Have a voice in your union. The maintenance stewards are not full time and there isn't someone in the booth 24/7.

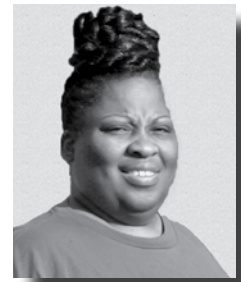
The union's Step 2 designees have completed the last group of remand grievances that were sent back a couple of years ago. Congratulations to everyone who received settlements.

May the new year bring good health and happiness to all of our members! In union solidarity.



Open Season

By Robin McCurry, Station and Branch Steward



Here we are again; it's that time of the year for our APWU Health Plan open season. We have been in business since 1960. It's a great plan. Well, actually we have two plans. The **High Option** covered under Cigna with \$25 co-pays for office visits, specialist and virtual visits. Blood work performed at LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics is \$0 in network. Then we have the **Consumer Driven** option which is administered by United Healthcare. This option is designed for people that pretty much go to the doctor for preventive care, which is free. The plan as a personal care account (PCA) that puts \$1,200 for self and \$2,400 for self plus one on your insurance card to use toward other health issues that may arise. What you don't use rolls over into the following year plus whatever you had from previous years. This is an excellent plan for both young and older employees with little to no health issues. Our PSEs with one year of employment with the Postal Service can apply for this plan.

If you are a new PSE within your first 60 days, the Postal Service offers you a plan which they pay 75 percent and you are responsible for 25 percent. You must act on it before 60 days or you will have to apply for Obama Care or etc., until one year to apply for the APWU plan.

The two plans are open to our regular employees. These are not only good plans, they are also very inexpensive plans. The website is *apwuhp.com*. If you need assistance making a decision concerning the plans, call 1-800-22-2798. You must be a member of the APWU to be eligible for the health plan if you are a craft employee.

All Postal Service employees in non-APWU bargaining units will automatically become associate members of the APWU upon enrollment. You will be billed associate membership dues of \$35 per year.

The plans are a must see. You can download and read the plans for yourself or you can contact me to send you information about the plan. Remember, open season opened on November 13, 2017, and closes on December 11, 2017, at 11:59 p.m. Please do not wait until the last minute to apply or to have me send you out material. Everyone have a very nice and safe holidays. I may be reached at (314) 231-7665, office; (314) 225-1335, cell.



Honor Guard for Health Fair Seminar

Rashunda Taylor, President Fred Wolfmeyer and Maribel Moran. These women are part of Support Service. Congratulations on your achievements and thank you for your service.



Tiffany Sullivan was promoted from E5 to E6 in the Naval Reserves.

Associate Office Director

By *Rebecca Livingston*



I would like to start off by congratulating Patrick Byrne and Linda Curtis on their recent retirements. These Maryland Heights Post Office clerks each had over 40 years of service and were the only scheme trained mail-processing clerks at that office. Every day they made sure that the operation ran smoothly and efficiently. Some would even say that their bid assignments were vital to the daily operation. Oh, but not the Postal Service. One bid was officially vacated on September 1, 2017, and the second bid was officially vacated on October 1, 2017, and as of today the bids have not been posted.

This is happening everywhere, folks! The union has filed grievances to have these bids posted, but in the meantime the Maryland Heights Post Office, just one of many offices, is operating severely shorthanded. With the holiday season fast approaching, the stress levels are high. This leads to the next serious issue. Not only are bids not being filled, supervisors are beginning to perform more bargaining unit work than ever. Supervisors are citing emergency situations as the reason they are doing your work. I'm sorry but management created emergencies — which is exactly what not filling bids and properly staffing offices creates — is not covered under Article 3.F of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The article states that management is to take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out its mission in emergency situations, i.e., an unforeseen circumstance or a combination of circumstances, which calls for immediate action in a situation **which is not expected to be of a**

recurring nature. I'm sorry but abolishing and reverting positions and stating that offices are over compliment as the reasons for these actions then turning around and claiming an emergency situation as the reason supervisors are performing bargaining unit work is wrong. Please do not let management perform your work and fail to report it. Please request a steward when you observe them doing the work. This will sometimes stop them, but in most cases they will continue because the office is in a state of emergency. No they are not! They are in a state of chaos due to understaffing! Please hold them accountable.

The Postal Service is now utilizing a system called the Dashboard Compliment. This system is using "earned" work hours and not "available" work hours as stated in Article 37.3.A.1; Every effort will be made to create desirable duty assignments from all available **work hours** for career employees to bid. This leads into my asking all clerks to start making sure that you are clocking onto the right operations when you perform specific tasks. If you are in the P.O. Box section please make sure you are on the right operation. Postmasters and managers are still manipulating the rings at the end of the week to make the operations fit the work hours they are expected to have used, not what really was used. They make the argument that the clerks don't clock over like they are supposed to, so they adjust as they need to. This is just one of the ways that we are losing hours. If you are not meeting up-times on your P.O. Box but are either being instructed to scan as completed or the supervisor is scanning as completed yet you are hours away from that hap-

pening, please call me. There have been several complaints coming in regarding this serious issue and the issues have been resolved. Another serious issue is not scanning every book or roll of stamps and completing multiple sales with one transaction. We need to make sure that every sale and every transaction, from retrieving vacation holds to picking up certified letters is accounted for. This is not the job of the supervisor. Lobby sweeps are a thing of the past. We do not get credit for the work they are performing. Every time they are in the lobby helping with the APC or helping a customer get their mail, they are performing our work. I know for a fact the supervisor is not filling out a 1260 every time they do this work to help you and the customer out. They turn around and state they are concerned with customer service and are doing what needs to be done. No one would argue with that. What the union is trying to say is fill the jobs and staff the offices so the clerks can give the customers the service they deserve. Once again, please hold the supervisors accountable.

Another big issue is injured carriers being placed in the clerk craft to perform bargaining unit work. This is totally unacceptable, folks! When was the last time that a clerk was seen performing carrier duties? My answer would be never! While the clerk is sent home because there is no work available, management goes to great lengths to make sure an injured carrier works an eight-hour day. Please give the union a call so we can make sure this issue is taken care of. As al-

ways, please make sure that you give the union a call if the carriers also want to help you perform bargaining unit work so they can make sure they leave the office in time. I would imagine you are doing everything you can to make that happen and you didn't volunteer to perform the work of two people because management has decided to revert duty assignments. Please remember to work safely and stay on your duty assignment when not on lunches and breaks. But at the same time, please make sure you are taking your breaks and your sched-

uled lunches (before six hours) on a daily basis. I am receiving calls that clerks are not being given breaks but at the end of the day management is stating they are not denying breaks. I have found out that clerks are feeling as though they aren't given the choice because of the workload and because the office is so short-staffed they are working straight through lunches and breaks. This is unacceptable. The union can pull clock rings for the lunch violations, but the breaks are harder to prove. Also remember that if you work a nine-hour day, you are

due a third break. Taking mindful rest breaks throughout the day will become very important as we go into the holiday season.

The holiday Associate Office meeting will be in December. The information on the place, date and time will be sent out in the next few weeks. I know this is a very busy time for everyone, but please try to attend. We have a good time and APWU officers are in attendance to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Have a wonderful holiday season and I hope to see you all soon.



POWER: The APWU Women' Committee St. Louis Gateway District Area Local



What is POWER?

APWU POWER (Post Office Women for Equal Rights), the women's committee within the APWU, was founded in St. Louis, Missouri on April 28, 1979, and incorporated into APWU's National Constitution in Detroit, Michigan in August 1980. St. Louis Gateway District Area Local POWER Committee consists of: chairperson, co-chair, secretary/treasurer, and community event planner.

What is NECESSARY for St. Louis Gateway?

POWER provides St. Louis Gateway women knowledge and skills needed to level the playing field for legislative and community outreach. St. Louis Gateway POWER women will be responsible for becoming more active within the community, outreach, and COPA (the union's political action fund).

Community Involvement includes:

- "Adopting" postal union families left homeless due to natural disasters.
- Making yearly monetary contributions to domestic violence agencies.
- Donating books, clothing, toiletries, etc. to schools, homeless shelters, and senior citizens' homes.
- Donate to "Sisters Helping Sisters Fund" which was established in 2005 Hurricane Katrina to help women and children who were left homeless due to disaster.
- Making bi-yearly monetary contributions to UNCF (United Negro College Fund).

Are you ready to be a leader within POWER?

Special elections will take place on Saturday, December 9, 2017, directly after general membership meeting. Positions available for election: chairperson and community event planner. **Every female full dues paying member within St. Louis Gateway qualifies to run these two vacancies.**

Please contact Robin "Robbie" Robertson (former chairperson, POWER) at 314-306-5709. Serious inquiries only!

All of Us or None of Us: Join, Fight, Win.

That was the theme of the preconference that gave union brothers and sisters the opportunity to discuss leadership, racism, and exclusion. Reality, some executive boards do **not** look like their communities. I am truly grateful that APWU National Executive Board broke barriers dealing with discrimination and exclusion at the national, state, and local levels. I went to the conference as a volunteer for the Coalition Labor Union Women (CLUW) and Coalition Black Trade Union (CBTU) both affiliates of the diversity constituency groups of the AFL-CIO. I am a proud member and attendee for the St. Louis Gateway District Area Local (STGDAL APWU 8). The AFL-CIO provided several workshops for union and non-union members. Each workshop was geared around diversity. Diversity has been a hot topic at the AFL-CIO national level since the Michael Brown incident. The AFL-CIO took the time to incorporate a Labor Commission on Racial and Economic Justice and how it affects the labor community across the United States.

The following workshops were provided:

1. Amplifying our voices: Digital strategies to grow our movement
2. Common Sense Economics — Moving working people to vote their economic interests
3. Criminal Justice Reform as a Labor Issue; Fighting Together for Immigrant Worker Rights
4. Join, Fight, Win — Vote: Building an Inclusive Pro-Voter Democracy
5. Laying the Foundation to Foster Organizing Growth
6. Race for the Future Labor
7. Stronger Together: Building a more powerful labor movement through inclusivity
8. Then and Now: The Racial Motives Behind “Right to Work” and its Effects on All Working People
9. Throwing Your Hat in the Ring: How and Why Workers Should Run for Public Office.”

I attended workshop #4 “Join, Fight, Win-Vote: Building an Inclusive Pro-Voter Democracy.” We have to understand the different issues on the Voter ID law, and how it affects our working people and senior citizens. Our very own Denise Lieberman, senior attorney and co-program director Power and Democracy was one of the speakers on the panel. This workshop was geared around how to prepare and preserve the right to vote. The workshop focused on how voting rights are being attacked at every level (local, state, and federal), and the importance of educating everyone on our voting rights and how it affects working people.



CBTU Banquet



*Beverly & Fred
Wolfmeyer*



Tom & Rebecca Nanna



Dean Hathaway and son Donny



Retired Clerk Christine Smith with Rhonda Porter



FEFA

Retirement Counselors for APWU Local 8

When: Wednesday - Friday

Time: 10 am – 4:30 pm

Where: APWU Hall
1705 S. Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104

One on One Sessions to Help Understand:

Retirement Eligibility and Dates

- When you are eligible to retire
- Strategically the best time/date to retire
- Sick and Annual leave strategy

Retirement Income

- How to calculate your pension income
- How to maximize pension income
- Survivor benefit
- Social security strategy
- Social security supplement
- Survivor benefit

Changes Coming Within FEGLI

- Changes to expect with cost and coverage

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

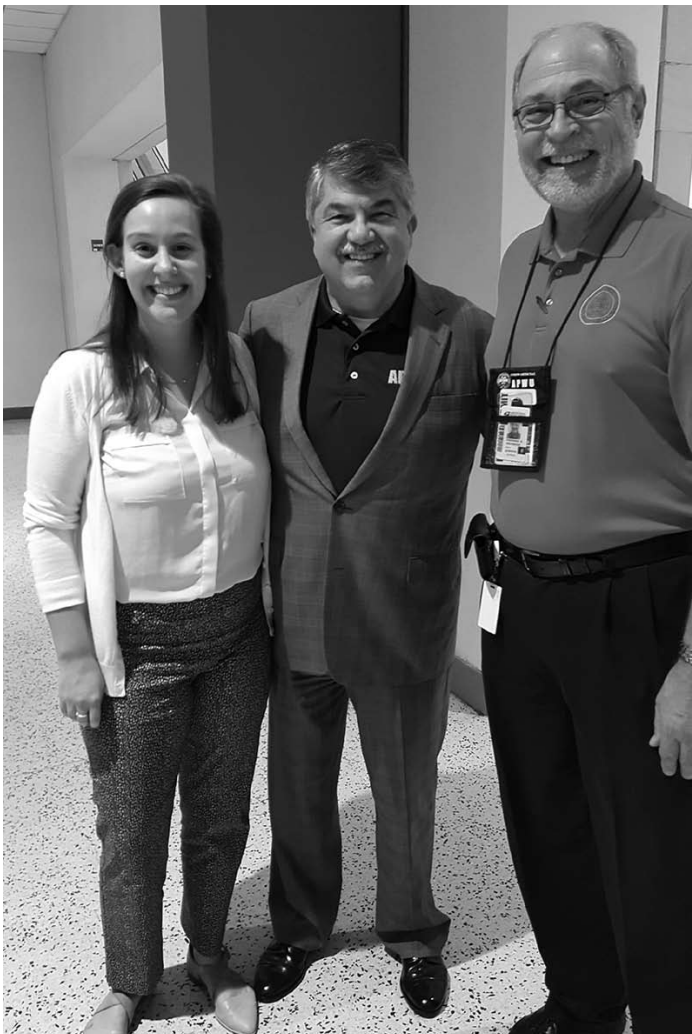
- Growth
- Preservation
- Distribution

Walk-in sessions welcome for all postal craft union members but appointments will receive priority... schedule an appointment by calling 702-445-9851!

Coro Fellow Grace Mason



Grace at the St. Louis P&DC with Annette Davis



Grace with National AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and St. Louis APWU President Fred Wolfmeyer at the National AFL-CIO Convention



MVS Steward John Fritz, Grace, General Clerk Sue Marsters, MVS Steward Dave Childers and General Clerk Virginia Robinson



Grace learning about processing the mail in St. Louis



Grace with Labor Custodian Jackie Harris and National President Mark Dimondstein

Goodbye Tension Hello Pension

LaSandra Terrell retired on September 29 from Wheeler Station with 37 years of service.

Dorothy Curry retired from Main Office Finance on October 31, 2017, with 33 years of service.

Linda Curtis retired from Maryland Heights.

Maurice Cissel retired from Wentzville.



Steward Robin McCurry with retiree Dorothy "Dot" Curry.

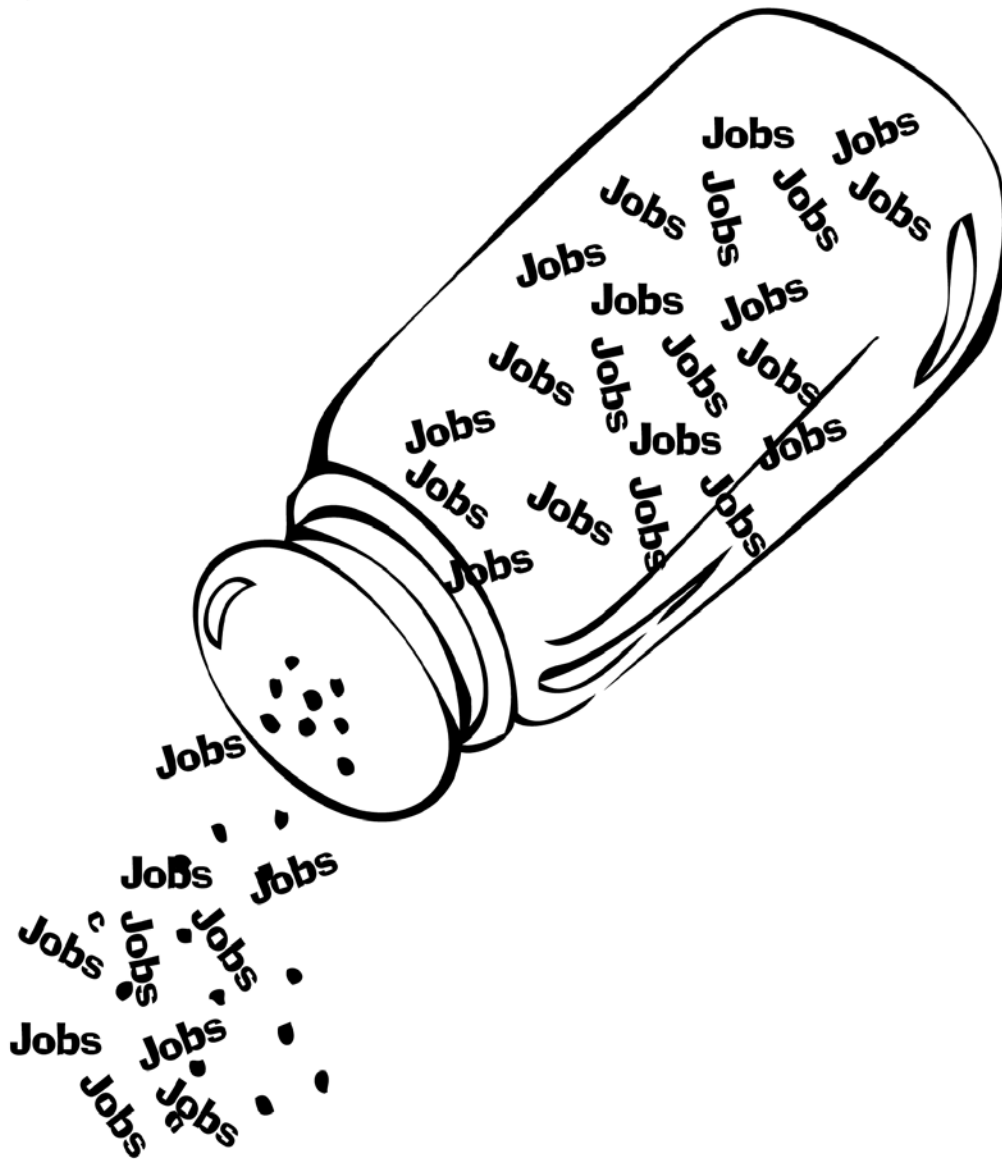


Retiree Linda Curtis with Associate Office Director Becky Livingston.



Retiree Maurice Cissel with Associate Office Director Becky Livingston.

Don't let the Postal Service Shake out your jobs!



Say no to the P O and save your job!!!

**Turn in your incomplete shaker survey to the union
and be entered into the shaker drawing!!**

President Mark Dimondstein Visits St. Louis



APWU National President Mark Dimondstein with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Members at the St. Louis Priority Annex.



President Mark Dimondstein visits members at the St. Louis Processing and Distribution Center.



Storekeeper Ron Wrinkle, Fred Wolfmeyer, National President Mark Dimondstein and MVS Steward Bob Cook

November 28, 2017

Santa Clause
North Pole
Way Up North

Dear Santa,

I am a member of the American Postal Workers Union/St. Louis Gateway District Area Local Number 8. My union leaders try very hard to represent the union members in St. Louis and what I like most is the visits from our president, Fred Wolfmeyer. The stewards, however, are another issue all together. Most of the stewards stay in the booth and we do not see them on the workroom floor. If we go and talk to them, they seem as if we are bothering them and they have no time for our concerns. They like to tell us that the supervisors can do the things we complain about and won't even challenge the supervisors when we inform them of violations.

What we see with these stewards are people who need to be replaced. They have become too comfortable with being in the booth full time. Some are also more concerned with their own upward mobility, whether it be into management or a higher position in the union. This is unsettling because we believe that they should be concerned with the membership and the local union. These same stewards who want to move up in the union seem to have little knowledge of the contract and when talking about management love to say, "They can do that." Santa, do you know how disheartening that is? They can do that, baloney.

So, we have a request for Christmas, Santa. Please meet with President Fred Wolfmeyer and tell him that the stewards, with a few exceptions, are not doing their job. We need new blood and we need it now. We need stewards who will fight for us and stand up for us, the members, like he does. We would also like to see more of him. He comes here and we really like it, but we want more because the stewards just don't come to see us. Can you also find more good stewards for us - stewards who care and who have a spine? We want stewards who will fight for us and not just roll over. We have been nice and not naughty so this should be a simple request. Make this Christmas one to remember and send us stewards who are motivated and not lazy or selfish.

I will be watching and so will many other members. Merry Christmas, Santa!

A Concerned Member

St. Louis Gateway APWU
1705 S. Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104
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St. Louis, MO
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Press On

Official publication of the St. Louis Gateway District Area Local of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO published bimonthly. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor of the local. All articles submitted for publication are subject to editing.

Shelia Patton-Harris ... Editor
PROUD MEMBER
POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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IT/ASC.....Orlando Anderson
Associate Office DirectorBecky Livingston

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(314) 231-7665

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After Hours (314) 330-9641

Office Hours

Monday-Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: 8 a.m. - noon

Steward Booths, Downtown

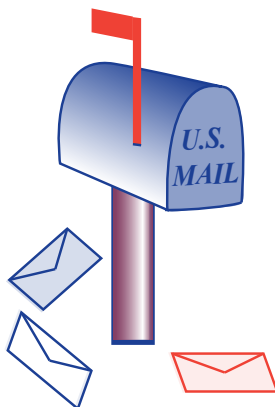
Clerk ... 314-436-5331
Maintenance ... 314-436-4668
MVS ... 314-436-5027

GATEWAY LOCAL CALENDAR

November 1 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
November 5 (Sunday)	General Membership Meeting (3 p.m.)
November 6 (Monday)	Stewards' Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
November 11 (Saturday)	Veterans Day
November 23 (Thursday)	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
December 6 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
December 9 (Saturday)	General Membership Meeting (9:30 a.m.)
December 11 (Monday)	Stewards' Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
December 25 (Monday)	Christmas Day
January 1 (Monday)	New Year's Day
January 3 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
January 7 (Sunday)	General Membership Meeting (3 p.m.)
January 8 (Monday)	Stewards' Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
January 15 (Monday)	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

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.