

Press On

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

Volume 94 Issue 12

28

November/December 2016

Merry
Christmas

From Your
Local
Executive
Board



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The Rookies

By Frederick Wolfmeyer, President

Greetings to my union sisters and brothers on this day after the country's general election. I had several options for the title of my article: Big Surprise – Shocker – The Unthinkable. But ultimately I settled on what you see above “The Rookies” because not only is Donald Trump a newby, but so is our governor. Two offices, both at the top, one for our country and the other our state both now occupied by individuals who have no experience in running a government. This can and most probably will play out badly for labor especially in Missouri because with the state legislature being comprised of a Republican majority, and now a Republican governor, our state will become the next right-to-work (RTW) state in the nation. In addition, with Mr. Trump's terrible record on labor and his support and favorable opinion of RTW, labor laws will change in favor of big corporations and against the union workers.

I have heard many pollsters speaking in disbelief at the results of the election because all the polls were shown to be incorrect. The Nate Silver 538 which has been the benchmark of polls for the past several presidential elections was wrong for the first time and for many it is simply difficult to comprehend or digest. These people are asking today how so many experienced pollsters, who have been so correct for so long, could suddenly be wrong, and not only wrong but so decidedly wrong. We may never know the answer. These people make their living on interpreting the data and apparently there is an element that did not reveal itself or that they missed. Now they will have to re-evaluate their election models and perhaps the way they assess their data to see what they missed or where they were wrong in their interpretation of the data.

Now we are saddled with two inexperienced men who must learn on the job. I will congratulate them here and remind them that people are expecting them to be considerate of their constituency. The impact that the governor will have on labor and jobs in our state will be felt for many years. Most RTW states — if not all — have, according to data and published reports, lower wages and less economic growth than non-RTW states. Big corporations were able to finally get RTW in Missouri after spending millions of dollars supporting the candidates who they knew would push this issue and get it passed. As for Mr. Trump, we have the entire world to consider here. The environment, immigration, health care, taxes, and the economy are only a few

of the issues he has to wade through and his decisions can and will influence the American people and other countries for years to come.

While in England recently to visit my daughter and grandson, several people she knows and many of her friends voiced concern over a Trump presidency. They all fear many of his stated policies regarding war and his penchant for just “bombing the hell out of them.” They fear that Europe and England, in particular, would be in the crosshairs of terrorists as a result of his possible hawkish policies. They also cite his intolerance of immigrants and those of the Muslim and other religions. I told her we have no way of knowing what Mr. Trump would do or try to do, but the best defense against this type of rogue or self-serving attitude is our Constitution. Our forefathers crafted this beautiful document to slow down those who would try to ban people of different faiths. To slow down those who would go to war without considering the consequences. To slow down those who acted only because of self-serving agendas. The series of checks and balances include the presidency, the two houses of Congress, and the Supreme Court. This separation of power is there to ensure against those who would seek to push an agenda that would harm anyone who doesn't agree with their views. Our forefathers had particularly good vision and as I heard one newscaster say, and I'll paraphrase here, “... from the second floor of the building where they worked to craft our Constitution, they could look out the window and see 234 years into the future and thus created the Constitution to protect this great country of ours.” As a result, it also protects other countries and those who might want to come to America. In other words, in a way by protecting America and the rights of its citizens, our Constitution has become global and its protection now extends beyond our borders.

After saying all of that, the election is over and the results will not change, so we must work together and respect our new president. We must also work even harder to secure our workers' rights and keep our union and the labor movement strong in spite of all the external forces trying to weaken it. How do we do this? We must fight like never before and do this by becoming involved. There is no better



General Membership Meeting Minutes

September/October

Greetings my brothers and sisters, pray all is well in everyone's household. There are **no** September highlights from the general membership meetings for St. Louis Gateway District Area Local because we did **not** have a **quorum**. **2016** is coming to an **end**, you still have two more meetings to participate.

PRESIDENT WOLFMEYER

The postal pulse survey is back and management decided to make three attempts for employees to complete the survey. USPS is sending the survey to their pay location, home, and offering access to the online survey on liteblue.usps.gov. The local is encouraging members not to fill out the survey but turn it in to the union steward to be entered into a raffle. The union will give out more prizes this go around. We will even give management prizes if they turn in their survey. We need to make sure we tell the members **not** to complete the postal pulse. Management is **not** adhering to the dress code policy. Management is picking and choosing who they want to send home. **"Grievances will be filed!"**

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

Executive vice president passed out vacation bid selections to all the craft directors. Gene presented the 2017 union calendar to verify the dates for eboard, general membership, and steward training for 2017. Gene also would like for everyone to complete an information form so he can have updated numbers on officers and stewards.

SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT

September and October treasurers report presented to the eboard. President Wolfmeyer and Robin Rob-

ertson will be traveling to Houston for the National President Conference. President Wolfmeyer, Becky Livingston, Robin McCurry, and Al Mickey Miller will be traveling to Las Vegas for the APWU Health Plan Seminar.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION REPORT

Dean Hathaway mentioned steward training will be the Monday following general membership meeting at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the Union Hall. New steward training will be Tuesday, October 25, and Thursday, October 27, at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

DIRECTOR REPORT

Industrial Relations Director Paul Reid did not have a report. He wanted to submit an article to the editor. Paul Reid requested the list of stewards in each department. Paul would like to be able to inform a craft employee which steward he/she needs to address if the employee is in a different craft. Paul mentioned, Johns want the guys to complete the survey so they mark equipment is needed. Putting that information on the survey does not help.

CLERK CRAFT DIRECTOR REPORT

Earl Staats reported the craft is still having a dress code policy and 204-B issue. Even though EAS supervisors are fully staffed, they are still pushing up 204-Bs. Also, there are 64 clerk positions labor has not posted for bid. Staats will need to file a failure to comply grievance on those settlements concerning this issue since management failed to comply.

MAINTENANCE CRAFT

DIRECTOR REPORT

Maintenance Craft Director Tom Nanna mentioned that Dave Rubino (maintenance), Courtney Adams (MVS), and Angela Vaughn (support

services) attended the MDA letter carrier's golf tournament. There are lots of problems at the stations and branches pertaining to maintenance issues. Special thanks to Larry Crone (retired steward), Dean Hathaway (research and education dir.), and Charles Koperstyski (steward) for helping to put out the fires. Maintenance is still having the mileage issue. Management does not want to pay mileage greater than 14 days. Management is not telling the employees they are qualified for mileage when they drive their vehicles to the station.

MVS CRAFT DIRECTOR REPORT

Jeff Cooper, MVS director, mentioned management needed to implement a new rebid. There is annual rebidding in place. Management added six new runs and PTFs will be able to select the new runs.

SUPPORT SERVICES

DIRECTOR REPORT

Orlando Anderson mentioned we have a newly created position — national business agent for support services. Judy McCann is a great asset to this organization. Support services fought hard and long for this NBA position. I believe she will do well.

GOOD AND WELFARE

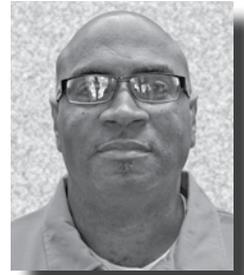
St. Louis Gateway APWU POWER will be participating in the Making Strides Against Cancer on October 22, 2016. Members are more than welcome to join the ladies. If you would like to purchase a pink T-shirt the cost is \$20.

DOOR AND 50/50 COPA PRIZES

The \$50 door prize was won by: Orlando Anderson (support services craft), and Venetta Lambert-Davidson (clerk craft). The COPA 50/50 drawing was won by: Floyd Jennings and Jeff Cooper (both MVS craft).

Director of Industrial Relations

By Paul Reid



Greetings fellow union brothers and sisters. I would like to thank each and every one of you who have taken the time to open and read your union publication, the *Press On*. You have taken the first step in your decision to become an informed member.

In addition to reading this materi-

al, I implore you to read the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Joint Contract Interpretation Manual and the Memorandum of Understanding. You may think that this is a lot of reading, but I assure you that your understanding of the union fight will be greatly enhanced.

I encourage you to attend union

meetings, public demonstrations and other union functions. Your president, vice president, Executive Board members and union stewards cannot do this alone. We are a union, let's do this.

Yours in solidarity.

ATTENTION ALL VETERANS!

Your Union And The Postal Service Need You!

Please call

Greg McNeece (314) 436-4993 or (314) 365-4855
or Gene Hollenbeck (314) 231-7665 or (314) 341-2797

Inform them of your branch of service and length of service.

If you have a photograph of yourself in uniform, please submit that to them.

We are putting together a book on ALL of our veterans to recognize and appreciate you in honor of your service to this great country of ours.

Thank you for your service,

Fred Wolfmeyer/President
American Postal Workers Union





Editor's

By Shelia Patton-Harris




Fashion Police on Patrol

It's a typical evening. You get up and start getting ready for work. You shower; dress and then drive downtown hoping to avoid the hockey traffic. Finally you get on the roof and make it to your assignment. The supervisor gives you a strange look. Fifteen minutes later she tells you she needs to speak with you in the office.

You are thinking; "What is it now?" You come to work on a regular basis. You do your job and as far as you know there have not been any problems. When you walk into the office the supervisor says, "You have to go home and change your pants." You look at the supervisor in disbelief. She then tells you that you are in violation of the dress code policy. She says; "Your leggings are not allowed on the workroom floor." For 28 years you have worn leggings to work. There was never a problem until today. You are instructed that you have two hours to go home and return wearing different pants. As you walk to the elevator, you see several employees wearing the same kind of leggings, but they were not sent home. That's because management has "almond joy" enforcement. Sometimes they will send you home sometimes they won't.

This sounds like the plot of a really bad reality show, but, unfortunately, this is true. Management at the MPO has become the fashion police. They arbitrarily decide what's acceptable dress. Instead of concentrating on properly staffing the machines, management is worried about cleavage. With people already working one to a machine you would think that management would be happy that you showed up. Now, you have to worry if someone in management will think your pants are too tight, your blouse too low cut, your skirt too short or any other fashion problem a supervisor might take exception to. Then off you go home to change.

Management insists that their dress code policy is

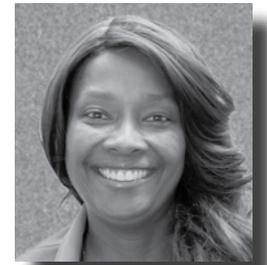
clearly spelled out in the ELM. They even cite the article number. The problem is that they expanded the language in the ELM to suit their needs. They left out wording defining when the provision about jeans, spandex, T-shirts and other articles of clothing should not be worn. That language applies to employees at retail counters. One of their own safety manuals says loose fitting clothing should not be worn on the machines. Now, all of a sudden it's all out warfare on leggings and tight pants. Who decides what is too tight? It wouldn't be so bad if their rule was enforced across the board, but it's not. One employee will get sent home and another clerk wearing the same thing is permitted to work.

With all the challenges USPS is facing, you would think that what you wear to work would not be a high priority. There is no safety issue. The clerks on the workroom floor have no contact with the public, so it can't be an issue of appearance. Most women wear leggings because they are comfortable and easy to work in. Anything that makes the job easier should be encouraged, not banned. Why all the emphasis on employees' clothing?

Another issue is all the discipline that is being issued. Employees are receiving anything from a letter of warning to removal for offenses like insubordination and failure to perform duties. If you have a problem with a supervisor, ask for a steward. Do not try to rationalize, argue or explain your point. If you are asked to come into an office, ask for a steward. Don't think you can reason with the supervisor. Whenever there is a discussion that could possibly lead to discipline, ask for a steward. Don't walk off, don't yell or scream. Do not let management provoke you into saying or doing something that could cost you your job. Keep calm and **ask for a steward.**

**Congratulations to
National Business Agent
Clerk Craft, St. Louis Division
Dennis Taft
on your
Retirement**





By Robin Robertson

On September 19, 2016, Tameka Nunley, Alexandria Goins, and I attended the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists under 40 Committee. “Get Up! Stand Up! The Rebirth of the Black Labor Movement Report” was a forum of young and seasoned labor activists. The break-out sessions included five separate topics:

1. The Black Lives Matter movement within black labor;
2. Youth development in black labor;
3. Building on the legacy of the black labor movement;
4. Accountability in the labor movement; and
5. Revolutionary change in labor politics.

Each break-out was very informational for the black trade labor and the different community issues that black trade labor faced.

The trade labor movement is very important at this time due to the lower attendance in building and

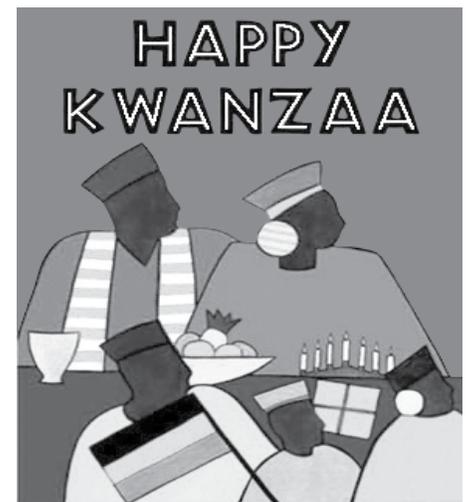
specialty trades within the apprentice programs within the city of St. Louis. As postal employees, how does it affect us? **This will provide the education and awareness for our family members, friends, and associates who are members of the other labor unions and labor affiliates groups.**

After attending the 40 and under forum, I realized that black labor affects the community as a whole and the postal employees are part of that community. Even though I’m well over 40, I would like to assist in getting our young members involved with community issues whether it’s political or social. These different issues affect postal employees’ family and friends, so yes we are looking outside the box.

As labor union leaders we have to educate the members on their voting rights and how it impacts the local laws within each community. We have to understand the ethics and morals of union and labor group affiliates to work together for the betterment of

the community. As labor leaders, we have to lead by example, show self-control, and get the youth involved with all issues.

On October 22, 2016, Maintenance Director Tom Nanna, Assistant Maintenance Craft Directors Dave and Tina Rubino, Rhonda Porter, Christine Smith (sergeant-at-arms) (St. Louis CBTU Chapter), and I (Robbie Robertson) attended the 30th Ernest and DeVerne Calloway Awards presented by St. Louis CBTU. The honorees for the evening were: Jamala Rogers, author and member of the Organization for Black Struggle (OGS); and Nancy Cross, vice president of SEIU. Both women are well-known activists within the community. St. Louis Gateway former President Melvin Sanders received the Ernest and DeVerne Calloway award many moons ago. Our focus to make sure we network with our affiliates groups to recognized union and social solidarity.



Director of Research and Education

By Dean Hathaway

OAD vs Article 16 Discussion vs PDI



What type of discussion is your supervisor giving you today? Ongoing Attendance Discussion, Article 16 Job Discussion, and Pre-Disciplinary Interview, are all terms loosely used by management to describe what type of discussion they choose to have with employees. Most supervisors do not have the slightest idea what the purpose or meaning of these discussions are as they relate to the Collective Bargaining Agreement [CBA]. It is my belief that each and every one of our brothers and sisters within the APWU needs to be aware of their rights and the true purpose of these discussions.

An OAD, or sometimes called an OAR, is an **ongoing attendance discussion** or review. This discussion is supposed to be a *private* discussion that should be held with all employees on a regular or *ongoing* basis. It is not a disciplinary discussion or an investigation and therefore not necessary to have a union steward present. The purpose of this type of discussion is to inform the employee about his or her attendance as related to Postal Service attendance policies. Whether the employee's attendance is good or not so good, all employees are supposed to receive these discussions. It is the supervisor's responsibility to monitor employees and their attendance. It is also the supervisor's responsibility to inform employees what is expected by the definition of "regular attendance." All too many times I have heard supervisors and managers state that the attendance policies are posted and that all employees should be aware

of their responsibility to be regular in attendance. They fail, however, to define "regular in attendance." The policies that I see posted give a vague description with no specifics as to how much of the negotiated sick or annual leave that I am allowed to take before I am in violation of said policy. This is why the OAD is designed to allow the supervisor the opportunity to discuss with each and every employee the Postal Service attendance policies. It is also designed to allow face-to-face discussion **with attendance records in hand** for a visual review of the individual's attendance record. This should be done in private so the employee can speak freely without fear of someone else overhearing the discussion. It should **not** be held on the workroom floor where the employee is working.

An **Article 16 job discussion** is the first step of the discipline procedure in Article 16 of our CBA. These discussions are also held in *private* between the employee and supervisor to discuss minor offenses and to forewarn the employee that failure to correct the problem could lead to future disciplinary action. As clearly stated in the JCIM: "*The purpose of Article 16.2 discussions is to make employees aware of minor offenses and to inform employees of work related expectations/requirements.*" Since these discussions are required to be **in private**, employees are not entitled to union representation during an Article 16.2 discussion. That being said, employees who are **questioned** during the Article 16 discussion and have a **reasonable belief** that the interview will result in discipline, are entitled to request a union

representative be present before answering any questions. The supervisor should identify that it is an official job discussion at the onset of the discussion. Failing to do so, you should ask what type of discussion you are having in private. You are entitled, and strongly encouraged, to take notes during any discussion. If you are called into a private discussion with your supervisor and told it is an official job discussion, please for your sake, request pen and paper or be allowed to get them for the purpose of notes. This lets the supervisor know that you are aware of your rights and your notes will protect you from getting discipline for the same issue. If you correct the items identified in the meeting and get a disciplinary action anyway, the steward in your defense against management can use your notes as valuable evidence. Once management conducts an Article 16 discussion, they are banned from taking further action for the same incidents unless you continue to commit the same type infractions. Article 16 job discussions follow the basic principle that discipline should be corrective in nature, rather than punitive.

A PDI is a **pre-disciplinary interview** that the supervisor has with the employee to determine whether or not to issue discipline. Always invoke your Weingarten Rights — your right to have steward representation — if you believe that management is questioning you and your answers may lead to a disciplinary action. If the supervisor identifies the meeting as a PDI, request a steward immediately. This type of discussion is not private and

management can have another management representative present in the discussion. It is imperative that you request a steward for this discussion/meeting. Most often the case when management conducts a PDI, disciplinary action is anticipated and you should have your representative present to poke holes in their performance of the PDI. If at any time you are called into a meeting with two or more management representatives, you have the right to demand representation before continuing the meeting. Remember, two of them against one of you will leave your credibility at a loss when they both agree as to the content of the meeting. It should be a no-brainer that two of them should mandate two of you present at the meeting. This includes discussions with the Postal Inspection Service or the Office of the Inspector General [OIG] agents. The APWU trains their representatives

in the rules and regulations that will protect you. Don't get railroaded or intimidated into believing that having a steward present somehow damages your honesty or integrity. Invoke your right to have a representative present in the PDI process to protect yourself.

I guarantee that most management officials blindly follow the directives of their superiors without doing the investigation and self-study required to successfully complete the task of initiating the disciplinary action to correct an employee's shortcomings. Most of these supervisors who seem to be eager to issue discipline are the same employees that should have been disciplined when they were craft employees. In my experience as a steward, supervisors who do not have a lot of discipline grievances are supervisors who are leaders and employees work for and respect them. These are supervisors who will

discuss issues with the employees and the employees will listen to their point of view and adjust their actions to keep the heat off their supervisor. Unfortunately, these supervisors are getting few and far between due to our current management personnel.

I recognize all the stewards and thank them for their service to the membership. These are the people you need to go to for answers because they are trained on the contract or know where to go to get the answer. We all need to request stewards for assistance with questions we have about the contract, postal policies, and the grievance process. Do not feel that you are somehow causing a problem when you invoke this right to have representation present. You may be perfectly capable of handling the issue yourself, but it is always a good idea to have a backup. We are on the same side. United we stand, divided we fall.

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!

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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.

Clerk Craft Issues

By Earl Staats, Clerk Craft Director



Hi union brothers and sisters. I hope you all have a happy holiday season. I want to cover a couple of things that may cause confusion for some clerks.

Bids

Bid posting #138426 posted on 11/3/16 closing date 11/13/16

If you look at the top part of the bid below the Job ID# you will see "Bidding" and then newly established below that. When you go to the bottom of the bid you will see vacated by and no name there. This indicates that the bids are new. This is due to a grievance that was settled because management reverted the bids improperly. The sum total of the bids to be posted was 55. Five were posted on the last two postings. The remaining 50 were posted on #138426.

Vacation Selection

You are allotted a total of three weeks of vacation time in your first two choices. If you take three weeks with your first choice, you **do not**

get a second choice. You can take two weeks your first choice and one week with your second choice or one week with your first choice and two with your second choice. **All weeks selected have to be in increments of 40 hours or five days in the same week.** All weeks selected in a choice must be consecutive. Your third choice is to use up the remainder of your entitlement for that year. If you get 120 hours of annual in the new leave year, you can only use 120 hours of scheduled vacation that year, the same goes for 160 hours. If you get 208 hours down at the beginning of the year, you can only select five weeks. Remember leave can only be scheduled in 40 hour increments in the same week or five days in the same week. Once the vacation selections are done, any leave requested in considered **incidental leave**. Incidental leave is granted on a first come first serve basis.

If an employee bids out of the section that doesn't mean the slot becomes open for someone else in the

unit to then request that slot for vacation. There is **no contract language that states the leave will automatically be given to the first person who requests it is the unit.**

When it is your turn to select a vacation and you are not sure what you want, you have 24 hours from the date you were first contacted to make your selection. If you don't pick in the 24 hour period, you will be passed over and they will move on to the next person. They will continue in that fashion until you make your selection. You should make sure that you have a working phone number in the ATAL office and/or the steward's booth so if you are not present due to illness, on leave, or an emergency situation, someone can get a hold of you to select your vacation. If you know you are going to be absent for a period, you can leave your vacation choices with the steward that is doing your vacation.

MVS Town Talk

By Jeff Cooper, MVS Director

Dear brothers and sisters, the MVS craft was tasked to do an early annual 2017 bid and it was completed as requested. I would like to thank the stewards who assisted in making the transition run smoothly. There were six runs added to the 2017 run selection, which allowed eight PTFs to bid. Each steward will handle their tour for the second and third round vacation selection.

The stewards are available to help you with your contractual needs, but as an active member you are encouraged to come to the general membership meeting. Post election there have been some changes. Mr. Floyd Jennings is now the assistant craft director. Mr. Dave Childers is the assistant craft director B. Mr. Paul Reid is the director of industrial relations.

Members should be aware of their Weingarten Rights. If there is a discussion that could any way lead to you being disciplined, you should respectfully request a steward to be present at the meeting. Thanks for your time and I look forward to see you all the next general membership meeting.

Note: Brother Floyd Jennings, assistant craft director, died on November 4, 2016. Condolences to his family and friends.



Associate Office Report

By *Rebecca Livingston*



I hope everyone is ready for the “season.” We all know we are coming into the holiday season, but please remember we are also coming into the FEHB “open” season. Open season starts November 14 and will end on December 12, 2016. This year, more than ever, you will want to look at your health benefits. In 2017 we will see health insurance increases across the board. The new contract gave us a 1 percent increase in our contributions and due to the high rise of health insurance the premiums have also increased. If you have had children reach the age of 26 or have had a life-changing event that would reduce your family to two, please remember to change your status to Self Plus One. Statistics show that a lot of members are still paying for Family when they would qualify for lesser premiums by changing to the Self Plus One. Please take a serious look at the APWU Health Plan. This is your health plan and every year millions of dollars are given to the APWU to help with costs and keep our union dues from increasing.

I have been receiving calls regarding being sent outside your home office to work at other offices. This quite often happens during the holiday season. On May 19, 2015, there was a Memorandum of Understanding between the United States Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union that pertained to the assignment of PTF hub clerks. In the past the Hub Clerk Memo gave no voice to the clerks. In this new agreement the clerks can notify their postmaster in writing their preference not to work in offices in other installations. Over a month ago I sent a copy of this Memorandum of Understanding to all offices, but if you did not receive this, please let me know and

I will send out another one. It is important to understand that there is a pecking order on how clerks are assigned to work in other offices. The pecking order would start with PTFs who have not indicated a preference to only work within their installation, then all available and qualified postal support employees, then finally, PTFs who have preferred not to work in offices in other installations. In other words, you could still be required to work in other installations, but only after all volunteers and PSEs have been utilized. Due to the shortage of PSEs and PTFs in the Area 3 offices please be prepared to be sent to other offices but request a steward and I will make sure the established pecking order has been followed.

Over the last few months I have worked with clerks who are receiving discipline and being placed on deems desirable lists regarding FMLA protected absences. Please request to see your steward if this is happening to you. If you are being given “job discussions” because you have a serious health condition and are utilizing your FMLA correctly, please request a steward. Correctly would be the key word here. All absences outside your approved frequency and duration are subject to discipline. Please keep all of your 3971s and certifications from HRSSC pertaining to your approved FMLA condition in a folder. This documentation will have the frequency and duration that will be covered for your health condition. Please remember that you must call in prior to your starting time when using FMLA. If your FMLA covers that you may be late for a specific number of days in a week you still need to make the call stating that you will be late and that you are using FMLA. FMLA is there for your protection, but now more than ever management is questioning serious health issues and the validity of FMLA. This is

clearly outside their authority and Labor Board charges could come into play. Clearly none of us want to be ill, but the added stress and sometimes harassment is out of line and no one needs that added pressure.

Please remember that the holidays at the post office are stressful enough. Being shorthanded or having a new employee who might not be thoroughly trained can cause tension, but please focus on doing the best job you can. Article 34.A addresses the principle of a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay. When we get caught up in concerns about the work ethic and productivity of our co-workers we can put undo stress on ourselves and those around us. Over the last few weeks I have received several calls from employees who were either in tears or were on the verge of just quitting because of the treatment they are receiving from co-workers. They didn’t even mention management. My take is that the whole situation is being created because management is not doing their job. The United States Postal Service needs to provide a safe and hostile-free work environment for you to come to every day. The zero tolerance policy was established to address these issues, but management has to make sure that the policy is enforced. Please be respectful of your co-workers and help each other. Have the best holiday season possible. Not an easy task when you work for the United States Postal Service. Just being mindful of how we treat each other will make a big difference in how we get through the busiest time of year. I want to wish all of you a very merry Christmas and a very happy New Year and if you need the union, please remember you can reach me anytime at 314-810-4099.

Support Services

By Director Orlando Anderson



Hello sisters and brothers of support services. I trust that everyone will have a great holiday season. A special thank you to all of our veterans. Happy Veterans Day.

I would like to announce that National Support Services Director Steve Brooks has selected Judy McCann as support services national business agent. Congratulations to Judy. I wish her the best and I know she will do us justice in that position.

Contract negotiations are a little different this time around. As long as there has been an IT/AS contract, the negotiation team consisted of the national director, the three presidents from the Eagan, San Mateo, and Wilkes-Barre Centers and the director from the St. Louis Center. Our national president decided to only allow national officers to be present at the negotiating table beginning with this round of negotiations. Therefore, Steve Brooks and Judy McCann will be our primary negotiating team, with assistance from union lawyers and our main APWU contract negotiator. There are currently four weeks slated on the calendar between October 2016 and January 2017 for negotiations to take place. The decision was made that each center president/director will attend one session each. I am scheduled to attend the December 12-16 session to represent St. Louis. However, through teleconferences and emails, everyone has input for the national officers to consider and present or reject proposals submitted by both sides of the table.

The October opening session took place October 17 through October 20, 2016. In attendance were Brooks, McCann and the president

from the Eagan local, Steve Madden. On October 26 there was a teleconference for the rest of us to be updated on the opening round. There isn't much to report at this time. Only proposals of non-economic value were passed across the table. I cannot discuss any proposals entered into negotiations. As information becomes public, I will keep you all posted.

Next, I would like to address the COLA (cost of living allowance) posted on the union boards in IT/AS. COLAs are based primarily on the CPI (Consumer Price Index). As the CPI is announced quarterly, there is a formula that determines if we get a COLA increase. Over the last few quarters, we did not get a COLA. However, due to the September 2016 CPI increase to 700, we are entitled to \$208 for the year. This amount equates to about \$.10 per hour or \$8 per pay period. This is scheduled to begin on our PP24/2016 paycheck on December 2, 2016.

All of us within IT and accounting are used to communicating through our Outlook email systems. Because this is postal equipment, we were forbidden from using postal emails to communicate union information about six to seven years ago. Therefore, we are limited in how we can pass along information to the bargaining unit employees. There is always word-of-mouth, but information can sometimes become distorted using that method. We have a support services Facebook page but everyone is not on Facebook. Finally, located at the glass doors to enter the ASC, and at the bottom of the escalators within the ASC are two official union bulletin boards. I post all relevant information not only for IT/AS but things that

impact all employees. Please make sure that you check these boards at least weekly. There is one other way of obtaining information about our craft, negotiations and other activities. Please join us at the monthly general membership meetings. I encourage everyone to show up to these meetings where valuable information is provided to all crafts.

Accounting management is determined to reduce our staffing. Bargaining unit employees, not EAS are being impacted. In fact, almost every vacant position since October has been reverted. Grievances have been filed but in regard to reversions, this is a lengthy process usually with limited success. However, we are making attempts to recover some of these positions outside of the grievance process. In August, management finally announced to the national and local unions their intention to reduce staffing. Their reasoning, get this, "process enhancements." Whatever that is. We are in a continued fight for our jobs, but remember, this fight is ours and not just the union officials'.

Management is starting to enforce certain ELM language that was previously never enforced. Because the language is there, I must advise everyone to make sure your ducks are in order. For example, employees used to be able to leave a 3971 in the supervisor's inbox or on their desk and there would be no issue. Now they are requiring the 3971 be directly given to the supervisor. If there isn't a supervisor available within your section, please go find another supervisor to give it to. The supervisor should sign and date the

block that says "Signature of Supervisor and date notified." They should make a copy of the 3971 and return it to you. Hold on to it in case we need it later. Please do the right thing with regards to existing rules.

Please, if something does not seem right, notify me or any steward

as soon as possible. We have 14 days to file the grievance. If you are aware of work being taken from the bargaining unit and given to EAS employees, please let us know. Don't be afraid to write a statement. There are far more of you than there are union reps. We can't see or hear everything so we re-

ally depend on your assistance as we continue to fight for our jobs, pay and way of life.

This is why I say, the fight belongs to all of us.

Thank you for allowing me to be your director and thank you for your support.



Maintenance Craft News

By Tom Nanna

Happy holidays to all our members from your maintenance craft director and stewards! We hope that you all have safe and memorable holidays.

Our maintenance union stewards are still very busy with all the remand grievances. There are still almost 300 of the 750 that haven't been remanded back yet. Maintenance craft Step 2 designees have resolved several grievances. It is a slow process with management to get these remanded grievances the proper attention they deserve. We are trying our best to get these grievances adjudicated for our members.

Management should be requesting vacation selections for 2017 starting November 1, 2016. Please make sure you have your choices picked out. After you have been notified it is your turn to pick, you have 24 hours to make your selection. Please keep your signed 3971s in a place you can find them. You may need to produce them at a later date. You may take as much vacation as you get leave advanced to you at the beginning of the new year. Selections for first and second round choices have to be completed by December 31, 2016. All vacation selections have to be completed by January 31, 2017. The leave year for maintenance is for the entire calendar year!

Open season will start November 14, 2016, to December 12, 2016, for your health insurance plans, flexible spending accounts "FSA," dental and vision insurance plans. What health plan do you have? Please consider the APWU Health Plan. It's a great choice. The plan you choose is always up to you. Be informed on the choices that you have. Now would be a good time to review all of your postal benefits and make any changes you need to do. Check your TSP. Are you putting in at least 5 percent to receive the full matching benefit from the Postal Service? When do you plan to retire?

Who do you have for your beneficiaries on your insurance policies and TSP accounts? Do you have an FSA account? It can be used for more than medical bills. You can set up one for parking passes, babysitting fees for your children and elder care for your parents you take care of.

At the time of writing this article, the maintenance craft director has not been notified by management as to what is going to happen to the members who are on the 0200-1050 tour 1.B. The changes in the clerk craft hours greatly affects these members. Rumors are that our maintenance window of work hours will change in

November for tour 1 at least. Other tours might also be included in the changes that might be forthcoming.

Custodians who travel from one office to another are to be paid higher level for travel time and miscellaneous maintenance (simple hand tools, no power driven tools). If you use your own vehicle, you will be paid mileage for the miles you travel. The form to fill out for this is 1164. If you do use your own vehicle to travel from post office to post office, you have to have business insurance to cover your vehicle. Make sure you have it, otherwise if you are involved in an accident, your insurance will not cover your vehicle. Please make sure you keep copies of everything you turn in to your supervisor. If you need to talk to someone in management, always keep a record of who, what, when, where and why. This is very important, especially if you need to file a grievance. This information will become part of your documentation.

May the new year bring good health and happiness to all of our members!

In solidarity, your maintenance craft director and stewards.





Thank you for participating with St. Louis Gateway District Area Local POWER. We had seven walkers and helped raise \$550 for Making Strides of St. Louis! We appreciate the moral and financial support. The local assisted with the T-shirts. **Looking forward to many more walks in 2017! We are striving to support our postal community.**

Thank you, Della Suggs, POWER chairperson

Kym Calmese, Community Event

The ladies of POWER participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk. They raised \$550 for the cause. The Local would like to thank them for their efforts.



Our Condolences to the Friends and Families of:

Richard Palmisano

Father In Law Kelly Palmisano
House Springs Post Office

Elston Brown

The brother of Claudella Suggs
Clerk, P & DC
Tour 1 shop steward

John Taylor

The brother of Glenn Taylor
Support Services

Pearlene Harper

The grandmother of Chonte' Hale
Support Services

Floyd Jennings

MVS Asst. Director

Retirements



Sandra Green (photo above) from the Kirkwood Store retired on October 28, 2016, with 37 years of service.

Sheila Sims from Main Office finance retired on October 3, 2016, with 40 years of service.

Congratulations



Barlow, Jolene
Barry, Brittny
Conrad, Brandon
Delmar, Samuel
Fogal, Judith
Graumert, Kevin
Grommet, Cindy
Howard, Carlton
Kastle, Kristi
Ketchum, Chris
Loyet, Cindy
Merkle, Felicia

Raybon, Linda
Robinson, Brendella
Robinson, Trina
Ryan, Jordan
Simard, Wilfred Jr.
Strothcamp, Jaynee
Taylor, Aundrea
Waller, Blake
Walton, Shelia
Weddington, Teresa
Williams, Breanna

Veterans Day Parade

These are the postal employees who participated in the Veterans Day Parade



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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
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 MVS ... 314-436-5027

GATEWAY LOCAL CALENDAR

November 2	(Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
November 6	(Sunday)	General Membership Meeting (3 p.m.)
November 7	(Monday)	Steward Training (9-11 am or 6-8 p.m.)
November 11	(Friday)	Veterans Day Holiday
November 24	(Thursday)	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
December 7	(Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
December 10	(Saturday)	General Membership Meeting (9:30 a.m.)
December 12	(Monday)	Steward Training (9-11 a.m. or 6-8 p.m.)
December 25	(Sunday)	Christmas Day Holiday
December 26	(Monday)	Christmas Holiday Observed
January 1	(Sunday)	New Year's Day Holiday
January 2	(Monday)	New Year's Day Holiday Observed
January 4	(Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
January 8	(Sunday)	General Membership Meeting (3 p.m.)
January 9	(Monday)	Steward Training (9-11 a.m. or 6-8 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.