

## Are We Done Yet?

*By Frederick Wolfmeyer, President*

**H**ello my union sisters and brothers. The title to my article is grammatically incorrect, but I purposely wrote it as such to get to my overall message. It actually goes to a story from the year 2007 when I was in Rome. I had gone to Italy for the wedding of my niece in order to walk her down the aisle because her father had died a few years earlier. She asked me if I would “give her away” and I agreed and then robbed my savings to make the trip.

We stayed in a small 12<sup>th</sup> century town about 50 miles north of Rome and like all tourists, we decided to visit Rome and of course Vatican City. After a short train ride and a long time walking with my niece and my sister through one shop after another looking for last minute items, we finally made it to the Vatican. We waited in line for an hour and when we finally made it inside of St. Peter’s Basilica, we needed to find the restrooms. As luck would have it, the ladies room was right around the corner, but the men’s room was up two flights of stairs and involved several turns and then another two flights of stairs. Of course I wandered about for a while and eventually found a door with a sign over it marked in Italian which I was sure said “men’s room.” I went in and found out that my Italian was terrible because there before me were about twenty nuns, all in habits, working very diligently around a table. I was approached by a sister who appeared to be in charge and I immediately started speaking in English trying to talk my way out of trouble. Fortunately she understood me and responded in perfect English but with a heavy Italian accent.

I told her I was lost and read the sign over the door thinking it said men’s room and entered. She explained that the sign had an arrow on it that was broken off a few weeks earlier and that it had pointed further down the hall. I thanked her and then asked what she and the others were doing. She told me that she and the other nuns were restoring a tapestry that was over 800 years old. The work was meticulous and very time consuming. They had to be extremely careful and methodical in their efforts or the tapestry could inadvertently be damaged. The nuns had been working on this project for three years and had much more work to do before completion. So as a true American, I asked how much the project was going to cost, and got a look that meant, “Are you really serious?” So, I then asked her when they expected to be done with the tapestry. She looked at me and said, “We will be done when we are finished.”

I tell this story because the statement from the nun comes to mind each time I am asked questions about grievances or PSE conversions. Is this issue done? Or the one I have heard most recently, “Is the post office done converting PSEs?” As your officers and stewards, we look at all issues as ongoing. Management may view each issue or grievance as being ‘done’ because they reached some type of settlement or converted a few PSEs. However, the union is always looking at the issue to see if there are any other ele-



ments that could possibly lead to new or additional grievances. In regards to PSE conversions, we are always looking to see if there remains any residual vacancies, and if so, we go after additional PSE conversions filing more grievances if management is not in agreement with the additional conversions. Many issues are ongoing because the post office violates the contract even after settlements are reached.

So when it comes to questions from our members, whether career or PSE, concerning grievance issues or conversion issues, and they want to know if they are done, I always think of the little nun in the Vatican and her words come to mind, "It will be done when it is finished." Unfortunately, when dealing with postal management, things are never done, so we will never be finished.

Recently there has been more movement on the conversion of PSEs with 14 conversions effective on

April 18, 2014. However, it isn't done because we are not finished. The union and management still disagree with the total number of residual vacancies. The union shows more residuals than management, and management will not accept our totals as correct. Accordingly, the union will be filing more grievances to have more PSEs converted to career and placed into the existing residual vacancies.

There is no update on the contract negotiations. The service and the union are far apart with the USPS wanting to eliminate our COLA and the 'no layoff' clause and other benefits we have achieved through past negotiations. The resolution to these negotiations will lie in the hands of an arbitrator. To read more on the contract talks visit the APWU national website at [apwu.org](http://apwu.org). And if anyone asks when the contract talks will be done, remember to tell them that they will be done when they are finished.



## From the Desk of the Executive Vice President

*By Gene Hollenbeck*



First, I would like to congratulate the 14 newly-converted, career employees. For the rest of the PSEs, we will continue to work to get you converted. We have a number of residual vacancies and continue to push management to convert employees. The problem right now is that we have unassigned FTRs that need to be assigned to positions. They have to be put into these residual positions before we can get any more PSEs converted. We are working with management to get this process completed as soon as possible.

What is a residual bid? Residual bids are those bids that have been posted for general bid by all career, clerk-craft employees within the installation. Once management posts the bids and there are no bidders, the positions become residual bids. They are bids that no FTR employee wants. After the bid cycle, management must then place any unassigned FTRs. After that has been accomplished, the union pushes for management to convert the PSEs.

We need you, the membership, to get involved with your union. Come to one or both of the next union meetings on May 17, 2015, at 3 p.m. and/or June 20, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

# Communication/Listen/Participation

By Secretary Treasurer Robin Robertson



The *www.thefreedictionary.com* defines **communication** "the act of communication; transmission with the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, signals, and writing." Communication sometimes can be misinterpreted when the other person is **not** listening. Listening skills are imperative when it comes to discussing a Step 1, Step 2, and/or Step 3 with your representative. Sometimes poor communication can occur, but if you are uncertain, take the time out to ask the representative to explain any uncertainties.

The *www.merriam-webster.com* defines **listen** "to hear something with thoughtful attention; give consideration or to be alert to catch an expected sound." Sometimes we tend **not** to listen and only **comprehend** what we **want to hear**.

The *www.merriam-webster.com* defines **participation** "the act of participating; the state of being related to a larger whole." Active communication and listening requires participation. People are so quick to say, "I'm getting out of the union," when something doesn't go their way. Employees complain consistently about management tactics, but **no one** wants to **stand up** and represent the **minority**.

Yes, my brothers and sisters we are the **minority** (regardless of the race or nationality).

## COMMUNICATION:

- How does management communicate with you?
- How did management deal with the bidding process?
- How effective is your mail processing due to the closing and consolidations?
- How is Post Plan realigning working out?

## LISTEN:

- Does management listens to union officials about the bidding process?
- Do you take time to listen to your representative?
- Do you take time to listen to postal or union issues that surround the organization?

## PARTICIPATION:

- When was the last time you attended a union meeting?
- Have you ever attended a union meeting?
- Have you ever attended a union rally? (Day of Action) (Labor Day Parade)
- Have you ever reported a violation?



## ATTENTION All APWU Members

### "Commissioned Notary"



Secretary-Treasurer Robin "Robbie" Robertson is a commissioned notary for the State of Missouri. If you need documents notarized, please provide proper identification. Dues-paying members only.

If you have any questions please give me or Fred a call.

In solidarity,  
 APWU Secretary Treasurer Robin R. Robertson, BS, MBA  
 Office: 314-231-7665  
 Cell: 314-306-5709  
 email: rrobertson@stlouisapwu.org

*"Difficulties mastered are opportunities won."*

# Do Postal Employees Really Have The Right To Remain Silent ?

By Melvin Sanders, Director of Industrial Relations



Anyone who has watched any of the many law enforcement or cop shows on TV has heard a police officer after placing someone under arrest read the suspect his/her Miranda Rights. The officer will say something like....." you have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you can't afford an attorney one will be appointed to you."

This is just the tip of the iceberg. If you are called into the Postal Inspectors or the OIG-office of the inspector general ( yeh.. what's the dif ? ) office please remember this.

In order to conduct investigations that do not violate Garrity and Kalkines warnings the inspectors should provide information to those employees they plan to interview.

A Garrity Warning typically contains the following (sample) information :

You have the right to remain silent if your answers may tend to incriminate you. Anything you say or do may be used as evidence in both an administrative proceeding and any future criminal proceedings involving you . If you refuse to answer the questions posed to you on the grounds that the answers may incriminate you , you cannot be discharged solely for remaining silent. However, your silence can be considered in an administrative proceeding for its evidentiary value that is warranted by the facts surrounding your case. This interview is strictly voluntary and you may leave at any time.

A Kalkines Warning Typically contains the following (sample ) information :

You are going to be asked a number of specific questions concerning the performance of your official duties as an employee of the United States Postal Service. You have a duty to reply to these questions ,and agency disciplinary proceedings resulting in your discharge,

may be initiated as a result of your answers. However, neither your answers nor any information or evidence which is gained by reason of such statements can be used against you in criminal proceedings. You are subject to disciplinary actions up to and including your dismissal if you refuse to answer or fail to respond truthfully and fully to any questions.

It is always best to exercise your Weingarten Rights and ask for a union representative to advise you of your options. Please remember that APWU officers and stewards are not attorneys and they should not attempt to act as such. They are taught about these different rights so they can advise in your time of need.

If a member is is directed to participate in an OIG-Inspector interview and there is reason to believe that the member may be subject to criminal prosecution, the union should advise the individual to consult an attorney as soon as possible.



## Associate Office Report

*By Becky Livingston*



**H**ello, everyone! So where do I begin. Every week I write down ideas for articles as they come up and, honestly, for this Press On article I am having a hard time coming up with what to ramble on about, because sometimes that is exactly what I am doing. I don't mean to harp on the same issues over and over but that is what ends up happening. Why? Because I get calls from clerks letting me know what is going on in their offices, but they don't want me to address the issues directly. They want me to make sure they remain anonymous. That works out sometimes, but when it comes to supervisors and carriers performing bargaining unit work, I have to have statements and breakdowns of exactly what they were doing, the date and how long they did the work. Trust me I know there are repercussions and retaliation. It is always a concern, but if you want to save your job, you will have to help me keep the carriers in their craft and the supervisors away from our work!

Carriers do not get to help themselves to DPS. Carriers do not get to have as many pull downs as they want because the clerks don't do it fast enough for them. Carriers have always wanted what they want, when they want it, and they have a "me" first attitude. I have had discussions with carrier stewards, sometimes good and sometimes not. Don't get me wrong. We have had carrier stewards provide statements that they were instructed to

perform bargaining unit work and those statements have been very helpful in settling grievances and I am very appreciative. But more often than not when we ask carriers to get involved they demand time off of their routes on the clock to give me a statement or just a hard time. If a carrier is not willing to do the right thing and put pen to paper and give us a statement, we are not begging for anything. The carriers wouldn't think of letting us cross crafts and help them out, well we don't want the help either. Please don't work alongside supervisors and carriers without reporting it to a steward. We have Motor Vehicle deliver mail and give us statements that the supervisors are working dispatch and preparing registered mail every night. Please let me or any steward know and provide statements, this is important to all of us.

Another problem we have is the improper scheduling of overtime. Overtime rules are pretty straightforward. If your name is on the overtime desired list, then by seniority, availability and qualifications you are scheduled. Not if you are friends with the supervisor or if you ask nicely. The rules are the rules. Stewards pull clock rings every day for overtime violations and we have been successful in having clerks compensated because they were denied overtime. There are three separations on the overtime-desired list, 10-hour, 12-hour and Non-Scheduled Day. You can be on one list or all three lists and during the course of a quarter you can request to be taken off of one or all of the lists. Please remember

you can only sign the overtime desired list during the two weeks prior to the start of each calendar quarter and once you take your name off of the list(s) you can not go back on until the next quarter. We have one contract, one correct way to handle this, but you would be surprised how many offices do it incorrectly. The only thing we can do is correct the process and move on. Our seniority is what determines a lot in our career at the post office. It determines what hours we work, our days off, our vacations and more importantly our paychecks. If you feel you are being denied overtime opportunities, please let me look into it for you. The process does take time, but once the grievance is filed it is processed as an ongoing violation, so if there is a problem we can address it and all missed overtime is included in that grievance. Management does not appreciate us asking the questions, but this is your job, your paycheck and your right to make sure everything is being done properly. Sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't. Please let me ask the questions so you know for sure.

There will be an Associate Office meeting in May; the date has not yet been determined. I will be sending out flyers as soon as the information is available. Please plan to attend and catch up with friends and let us know how everything is going. Have a great spring and I look forward to seeing you all soon.


**Editor's**
*By Shelia Patton-Harris*
*Corner*


## What's Going On?

*"Mother, mother, mother, there's too many of you crying.*

*"Brother, brother, brother, there's far too many of you dying.*

*"You know we've got to find a way*

*"To bring some loving here today.*

*"Picket lines and picket signs*

*"Don't punish me with brutality*

*"Talk to me, so we can see*

*"Oh, what's going on?"*

*"What's going on?"*

These are the lyrics to an old Marvin Gaye song. Even though the song is from the 70s, it rings true today. Every time you turn on the news, there is another shooting, another killing, another person losing their life to senseless violence. Police brutality is at an all-time high. Communities are exploding in re-

action to the deaths of black men at the hands of the police. Pedestrians are being run down in the streets and left for dead by drivers who just don't care. Many people today have no respect for human life. They take a "so what" attitude to everything. We have got to find a way to end this horrendous situation.

Please be safe in your comings and goings. Pay attention to your surroundings at all times. Be alert when you enter and exit your vehicle. Make sure no one is lurking around your residence when you leave for work or come home. Be aware, so you won't end up on the morning news.

Talk to your family about being aware of the dangers that are out in the street. Emphasize the need for personal responsibility. Let them know that there are consequences for their actions. Remind them that all lives matter.

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## APWU MVS Town Talk

By MVS Director Jeff Cooper

**G**reetings brothers and sisters of the Motor Vehicle Service craft. A new year is upon us with old and new issues of our craft that we will address with management. In addition to what the craft director and the stewards will be doing, I am asking each and every one to read the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement and 2012 Joint Contract Interpretation Manual pertaining to Article 1 Union Recognition and Article 3 Management Rights. I understand that the local management here has an open-door policy to discuss individual concerns. This opportunity should not be used as a soapbox to discuss current union grievances. The union is the exclusive bar-

gaining unit agent to discuss and resolve union grievances. In the grievance procedure a person writes a statement stating that he or she has been improperly skipped on the OTDL or improperly paid. The steward presents this grievance to management and 90% of the time, depending on the circumstances, it is denied.

I also want to repeat your Weingarten Rights. When you are talking to management; if the discussion could in any way lead to you being disciplined or terminated, or affect your personal working conditions, respectfully request that a union representative, officer, or steward be present at the meeting. Until the represen-

tative arrives, choose not to participate in this discussion. This is to include any discussion with management outside of an Article 16 Job Discussion which are not considered discipline and are not grievable. If management denies the request for union representation and continues to ask questions, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has a right to refuse to answer. If you become a victim of this unfair labor practice contact me, a steward, or a union officer immediately, so this violation can be addressed. In closing be safe, be courteous, get involved and participate.



### *Not Made in the USA*

Are you driving an American-made vehicle?

Are you buying American-made clothing and accessories?

Are you willing to help fellow brothers and sisters in the manufacturing and communication industry keep their jobs?

The middle-class union workers are being affected. The industry has affected the mailing stream, manufacturing industry, and communication industry.

Many jobs are going overseas. I think the time is now to help our brothers and sisters in affiliate unions with solidarity from the St. Louis Gateway District Area Local (APWU).

Several rallies will be coming up throughout the summer, please look on the [www.stlouisapwu.org](http://www.stlouisapwu.org) website to get the info.



## Update on Contract Negotiations

**B**eginning May 15, meetings will be held every day, around-the-clock, if necessary. We are focusing on the most important issues.

In addition to our economic proposals, which cover wages and benefits, these include:

- Retain the 50-mile limit on excessing.
- Eliminate non-tradition full-time (NTFT) assignments in most offices.
- Work toward an all-career workforce.
- Restore the service standards that were in place in July 2012.
- Expand services.
- End subcontracting.
- Improve safety and health.
- Stop mid-contract work-rule changes (Article 19).

- Make the grievance-arbitration and discipline procedures more responsive.

We expect management to hit hard when the USPS submits its economic proposals. The Postal Service's proposals so far include:

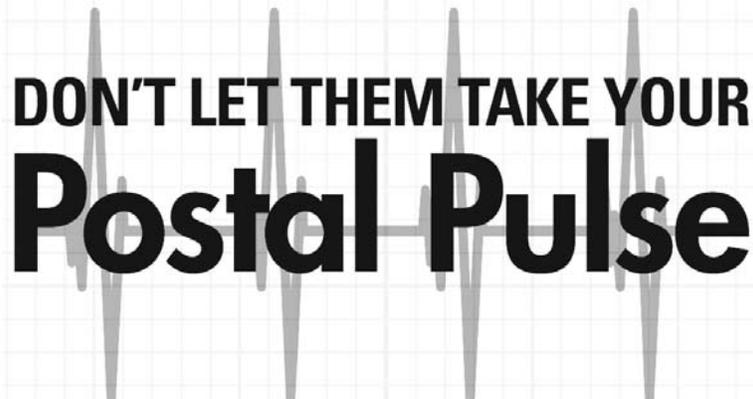
- Allow the memo that limits excessing to 50 miles to expire.
- Permit cross-craft assignments, regardless of level or occupation.
- Make it easier for management to subcontract.
- Restrict holiday pay to employees who are in a pay status before and after the holiday.
- Eliminate the policy that permits grievances to be filed "on the clock."
- Allow quick implementation of time-measurement and work standards.

- Allow PSEs to work in every functional area.
- Establish a time period in retail operations when management may exceed the maximum number of PSEs otherwise permitted.

The crafts are meeting with management separately to discuss items of special interest to them.

The Clerk, Maintenance, and Motor Vehicle Divisions have submitted 10 proposals each, and the Support Services Divisions has submitted five. Management has submitted three proposals for the clerk craft, nine for the maintenance craft, five for the motor vehicle craft and one for support services.

*Reprinted from APWU website*



## DON'T LET THEM TAKE YOUR Postal Pulse

Sisters and brothers thank you for returning your postal pulse to the St. Louis Gateway District Area Local (APWU)!

We are looking forward to the next quarter!

Always remember, we all are **winners!**

1st place winner: Don Persons (MVS) \$300

2nd place winner: Randall Wilkison (Maintenance) \$200

3rd place winner: Vail Pickens (MVS) \$100

# Prostate Cancer Risk and Prevention

Prostate cancer seems to be an unavoidable consideration since all men are at risk for developing the disease. Research indicates that one in every six men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime, but only one in 36 of these diagnoses will be fatal. Studies have also revealed that 80 percent of men show prostate cancer cells by the time they reach age 80. Other factors, such as age, race, and family history also contribute to the risk. Since there are often no early prostate cancer symptoms, understanding these risks and having a preventive plan, including routine prostate cancer screening, is the best way to beat the odds.

## Risk

Besides being a man there are other risk factors to consider:

**Age** is one of the greatest risk factors. Risk increase significantly after the age of 50 for white men and 40 for black men. However, most cases are diagnosed in men age 65 and older.

**Race also plays a factor in raising your risk for prostate cancer.** Research shows that prostate cancer occurs about 60% more often in African-American men than in white American men, and when it is diagnosed; the cancer is more likely to be advanced. It is important for prostate cancer testing to begin at age 40 for African-American men.

**Diets with a large consumption of high dietary fat** prove to be a contributing factor for prostate cancer. The disease is more common in men who consume significant quantities of fatty meats, dairy products and high-fat foods. Risk can quadruple in obese men and increase as their weight goes up.

**Family history** also puts you at risk; if you've had an immediate family member (father or brother) who has had the disease then your risk more than doubles. According to the American Cancer Society having a brother with prostate cancer appears to increase your risk more than having a father who has had the disease. These risks are even higher when there's multiple family members affected. In these cases screening should begin at age 40.

## Diagnosis and Symptoms

Once you are aware of your risk be sure to see your doctor for routine screening. Many men avoid screening to their detriment and the cancer is diagnosed when it is in an advanced stage. It is best to catch and treat prostate cancer early. The prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test is used to diagnose prostate cancer. PSA levels in blood are higher if there is prostate cancer, making it a valuable tool in early diagnosis.

Benefits bulletin: PSA is covered at 100% (in-network), one annually for men age 40 and older

There are often no early prostate cancer symptoms, but some men experience the following:

- Frequent urination
- Trouble starting or stopping urination
- Weak or interrupted urinary stream
- Painful or burning sensation during urination or ejaculation
- Blood in urine or semen

Discuss these symptoms with your doctor.

## Prevention

Now that you are aware of the risk, also know that prostate cancer is not preventable but you can take action to lower your risk.

You can't change your age or your race but you can eat more low-fat, high-fiber foods and foods with omega-3 fatty acids, such as:

- Tofu and soy beans.
- Tomatoes and foods that contain tomato sauce.
- Vegetables including broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage.
- Fish, like salmon, albacore tuna, and sardines.
- Walnuts and flaxseed, and their oils.

Exercise and staying healthy through physical activity can also help reduce the risk of prostate cancer.

## Treatment

Your doctor may recommend a single therapy, or some combination of radiation, surgery, hormone therapy, and rarely chemotherapy. The choice varies and depends on a number of individual factors. Prostate cancer that hasn't spread usually can be cured with surgery or radiation. Prostate cancer is generally not fatal in many men so understanding the risk, staying healthy, identifying symptoms and getting the proper screening is essential.

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St. Louis Gateway District Area Local**

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*President*

**Robin Robertson**  
*Chair Person*



**APWU ANNUAL PICNIC**

Come one, come all! The APWU Annual Picnic will be August 30, 2015, at the Machinists and Aerospace Workers Hall at 212 Utz Lane in Hazelwood. **Please RSVP by August 4, 2015.** Enjoy a day of food and fun with your co-workers and friends. There will be games for the kids, face painting and a clown.

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

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

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

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



## NLRB Slams Postal Service For Failure To Bargain Over Employee Data Breach

In a first-of-its-kind complaint, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has cited the Postal Service for failing to bargain with the APWU over last year's massive data security breach. The incident, which was revealed to the union and employees in mid-November, compromised the personal information of hundreds of thousands of current and former postal employees.

As a result of the cyber intrusion, employees' Social Security numbers, addresses, dates of birth, and injury claim information were accessed from postal data systems over a period of months. In response, the Postal Service decided unilaterally to offer employees just one year of free credit reporting.

Upon learning of the breach from then-Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe, APWU President Mark Dimondstein demanded that the Postal Service bargain with the union over the issue. The

APWU also sought information from the Postal Service about the extent of the breach; what they knew; when they knew it; and what they did or failed to do to protect employee information.

The APWU filed the NLRB charge just days after learning of the cyber intrusion, after the Postal Service refused to bargain over management's response to the breach and failed to respond to the union's request for information. At the time, Dimondstein said, "We are outraged that this happened. We do not know at this point whether management did everything in their power to protect our privacy, but they bear the ultimate responsibility."

The complaint by Region 5 of the NLRB cites the Postal Service for ignoring its legal obligations to bargain with the union.

"By issuing this complaint, the NLRB is recognizing employee rights in the information age," Dimondstein said.

In a move typically reserved for the most intractable employers, the NLRB is seeking special remedies for the Postal Service's unlawful acts.

"In view of the extensive history of repeated unfair-labor-practice violations found by the board and courts," the complaint says, the NLRB is seeking an order "to comprehensively address the Postal Service's violations of the law."

The special remedies include a video featuring a top postal manager reading an NLRB-drafted notice to employees and an NLRB-imposed bargaining schedule, with regular progress reports and pay for union negotiators.

The Postal Service has until mid-April to answer the complaint. The trial before an NLRB administrative law judge is expected to take place in May in Washington, D.C.

*Web New Article#:078-2015  
04/08/2015*



## New Jennings Mayor Has An APWU Connection

The newly-elected mayor of Jennings, Yolonda Fountain-Henderson, is the daughter of APWU member Patricia Fountain. President Fred Wolfmeyer attended the swearing in ceremony of the new mayor. Her mother, Patricia Fountain; her daughter, Whitley; and her brother Marcus were also present; along with Lou Alboussie, assistant to the St. Louis County executive. Congratulations to Yolonda and her mother, Patricia.



*Yolonda Fountain-Henderson, daughter of APWU member Pat Fountain, being sworn in as mayor of Jennings.*



*(L-R) President Fred Wolfmeyer; Yolonda Fountain-Henderson, Mayor of Jennings; her mother and our member, Pat Fountain; and the mayor's brother Marcus.*



*Mayor Yolonda Fountain-Henderson with Lou Alboussie, advisor to St. Louis County executive and former staffer of Rep. William Lacy Clay.*

# CONGRESSIONAL ADDRESSES MISSOURI AND ILLINOIS

## MISSOURI



**WILLIAM "LACY" CLAY (D)**  
1st District  
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202-225-2406



**ANN WAGNER (R)**  
2nd District  
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**BLAINE LUETKEMEYER (R)**  
3rd District  
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Washington, D.C. 20515  
202-225-2956



**JASON SMITH (R)**  
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2230 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
202-225-4404

## ILLINOIS



**MIKE BOST (R)**  
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202-225-5661



**JOHN SHIMKUS (R)**  
15th District  
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Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-5271

## U.S. SENATE

### MISSOURI



**CLAIRE McCASKILL (D)**  
506 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
202-224-6154



**ROY BLUNT (R)**  
260 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
202-224-5721

### ILLINOIS



**RICHARD DURBIN (D)**  
711 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington D.C. 20510  
202-224-2152



**MARK KIRK (R)**  
524 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
202-224-2854

Postal workers need to be prepared to contact their respective congressman at any time. Above is a list of our area representatives and senators with their addresses and phone numbers. Keep this information handy when you are called upon to act.

# The Wit to Quit

If you are among the estimated 42% of adult smokers nationwide there's a chance you've thought about or have actually tried to quit. You may be surprised to learn you're not alone. It is reported that 68.8% of adult smokers in the United States admit they want to completely quit smoking. As the evidence mounts on the hazards of smoking, more and more smokers become determined to kick the habit. Here's where the challenge lies. Nicotine dependency is not only one of the leading addictions in the United States but research suggests that nicotine may be as addictive as alcohol, cocaine, or even heroin. While nicotine related illnesses account for more than 480,000 deaths every year; making a decision to stop smoking can significantly reduce your risk for disease and early death. Having a plan and understanding the available resources and treatment will be the key to success in cessation.

Nicotine, the addictive substance in tobacco contains a mix of dangerous, cancer causing chemicals. Tobacco smoke has been linked not only to lung cancer but also to breathing problems, heart attacks, stroke and a number of other serious health problems. Even being a bystander puts you in harm's way. Secondhand smoke can cause asthma and breathing problems for those exposed.



Smokers face a number of challenges and often begin smoking again after the initial attempt to quit. For some, the hurdles of withdrawal symptoms, stress, and weight gain can easily lead to relapse. Nicotine withdrawal symptoms can be overwhelming and may include:

- Feeling irritable, angry, or anxious
- Feeling withdrawn and unable to focus
- Craving tobacco
- Feeling unusually hungry and over eating to compensate for the drug

If your initial attempts fail, don't give up entirely. It's best to stick to your plan and know the overall benefits far outweigh the difficulty required to quit.

The benefits of not smoking include:

- Decreased risk for lung and other types of cancer
- Decreased risk for heart disease and stroke
- Decreased respiratory symptoms: coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath
- Reduced risk of developing lung diseases like COPD
- Reduced risk for infertility and low birth weight pregnancy

Giving up cigarettes is difficult but not impossible and requires a well-planned strategy. There are a number of proven treatments and effective resources to assist in becoming tobacco free. Once you're ready to quit, support groups, nicotine replacement therapy, and other medications should be part of your plan.

When enrolled in the APWU Health Plan's Tobacco Cessation Program the following FDA approved drugs and nicotine replacement products (NRT) are covered at 100% in-network:

- Prescription or over-the-counter nicotine patches, gum
- Prescription inhalers, nasal sprays: Nicotrol
- Prescription non-nicotine medications: Zyban and Chantix

Nicotine replacement therapies provide the drug in ways that are far healthier and safer than smoking. Non-nicotine medications like Chantix and Zyban work by blocking nicotine receptors in the brain and lessen nicotine cravings. A combination of these medications along with behavioral therapies, individual or group counseling are more effective than choosing just one alone. Research suggests that when combined they can double and sometimes even triple the chances of success.



APWU Health Plan members are encouraged to enroll in the following Tobacco Cessation Program where treatment is covered at 100% (in-network):

- Telephonic counseling sessions
- Group therapy sessions
- Educational sessions with a physician

Talk to your physician to structure a plan that's right for you.



(800) 222-2798  
www.apwuhp.com

**APWU**  
HEALTH PLAN  
Together. Better Health.®



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

**George Hudson**

Father of Leslie McRath

Registry clerk

**Verline Calmese**

Mother of Kymberlie Calmese

Tour 1 Shop Steward

**Howard Dunkin**

Father of Wendy Dunkin

Clerk at Festus P.O.

**Louise Wilson**

Mother-in-law of Cordell Doss

Shop steward at Priority Annex

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**Larry Davis Retires after 39 Years**

Clerk Larry Davis retired from the Mackenzie Pointe Post Office after 39 years of service. He is pictured with shop steward Robin McCurry during his retirement ceremony. Congratulations!

St. Louis Gateway APWU  
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## Press On

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**Shelia Patton-Harris ... Editor**  
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## GATEWAY LOCAL CALENDAR

May 10 (Sunday)	Mother's Day
May 13 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2:00 p.m.)
May 17 (Sunday)	General Membership Meeting (3:00 p.m.)
May 18 (Monday)	Stewards' Training (9:00 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
May 25 (Monday)	Memorial Day Holiday
June 17 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2:00 p.m.)
June 20 (Saturday)	General Membership Meeting (9:30 a.m.)
June 22 (Monday)	Stewards' Training (9:00 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
July 4 (Saturday)	Independence Day Holiday
July 8 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2:00 p.m.)
July 13 (Monday)	Steward's Training (9:00 a.m. & 6 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.