

# Press On

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

Volume 92 Issue 2



March/April 2014



*By Frederick Wolfmeyer, President*

**G**reetings sisters and brothers. We are finally starting to come out of the doldrums of winter and soon we will be enjoying warm weather, sunshine, and all the other wonderful pleasantries of springtime. I have included an old article on another page in this issue that I wrote in 1997 when I was the MVS craft director. I have included this article for two reasons: 1.) In order to get everyone in the mood for spring and 2.) Because the editor told me that she needed more articles. It is a humorous writing, a parody actually, on the topic of baseball. I hope you find it enjoyable.

The title of this article is, "Get Involved" and I need all of you to do just that. There have been many changes concerning how the Postal Service does business and most are not friendly to us, the bargaining unit. Employees have been excessed, post offices closed or hours reduced, and processing plants closed or consolidated. Supervisors and managers are performing our work on a daily basis and some of you are simply turning your heads because now you do not have to do that work. I have discovered that many of you are skipping lunches and breaks, and/or you are working outside of your normal schedule to "help" management get the mail out.

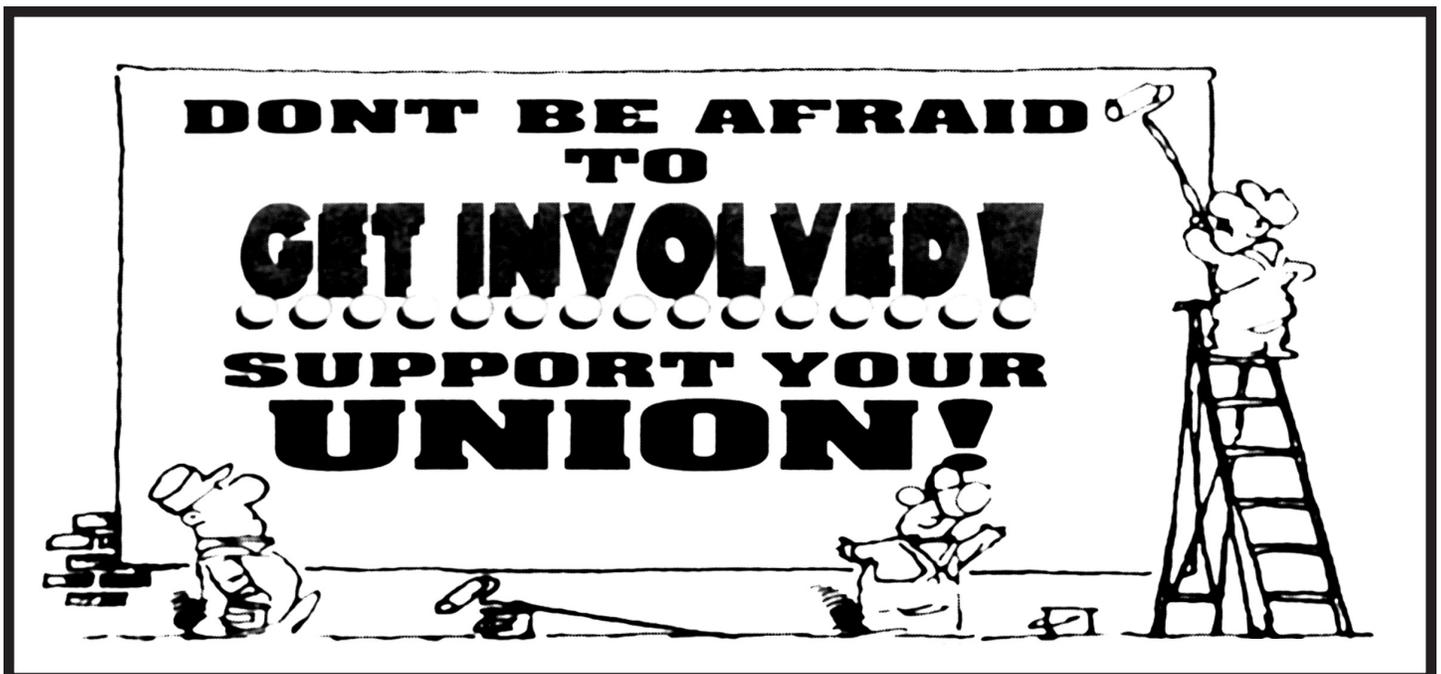
I can understand wanting to help, however, we very seldom get the same consideration from management, if at all. The mail will get out, it always does, and it is not necessary for you to skip your breaks or lunch, nor should you allow the supervisor, manager, or another craft to perform your work. I have mentioned all these concerns in the past, but I continue to get reports of them happening in several locations. You will not help by ignoring the contract as we have seen recently with the excessing in the stations and branches. Those of you who work in these facilities should remember what happened just over one year ago when several clerks had their bids abolished and some were excessed out of their branch. Much of this results from management doing clerk work. Then with fewer people, management does more work showing upper management that the work can be done with fewer employees, (although they deny they are doing any bargaining unit work.). Then when the big wigs run their CSV reports, and they will, they want to tell me they still have too many clerks and need to excess more. Then the supervisors and managers do more clerk work and then another call for excessing, and the downsizing cycle continues.

If you like the scenario I just illustrated, then let management do all the work and everyone can get excessed or worse yet, watch the service contract out our work through privatization. If you want to keep this good job, then “get involved.” People in past labor struggles have faced the same problems and worse. Those people chose to get involved and all sacrificed something, and some sacrificed their lives to win justice and fairness in the workplace. We have not seen this type of struggle firsthand, but instead have worked under the umbrella of workplace rights earned for us through the sacrifice of giving up personal time and time away from family and the sacrifice of life by our predecessors. However, this does not mean it cannot happen to us. We must be vigilant and protect our work against all who would take it away. If you look at some of the cases currently pending before the Supreme Court challenging the Section 7 rights of the National Labor Relations Act, you can see that only one adverse decision by this court could change the landscape to a very unfriendly one for labor.

In my article in the last issue of the Press On, I promised you that I would do more to further our cause and help save the Postal Service and postal jobs. As an example of my efforts to honor that promise, we at the local have gotten 24 clerks retreated this last week and now will grieve for PSEs to be made career. I have also taken our legislative issues to other labor unions at the St. Louis Labor Council and have spoken with

these labor members about them and will be speaking to other labor-friendly groups in the near future. But my efforts alone will not be enough. Remember, in my last article, I also asked for your help and now is the time to get involved. When management does your work, report it. You can speak with your steward or call me personally, my numbers are printed in the Press On. Instead of skipping lunch or breaks, remember who won those rights for you and take your lunch. The mail will still be there when you return. Instead of trying to work outside of your schedule, work your bid and assigned hours. Those bids and the rights that accompany them were achieved through difficult negotiations. Don’t go home early on your overtime day or holiday, because there are negotiated guarantees in place to pay you for eight hours not two or four.

In summary, I know it is cliché to state that there is a ‘U’ in union, and that ‘U’ is you. But it expresses an idea or belief in an easy way. Sure the officers, stewards and, yes, the president are important to the local, but not as important as you, the members. You are the union. You can do this. You can honor our contract just as we insist that management does. You can police our contract and LMOU, and take management to task when they violate the agreement. You can appreciate your bid and workplace rights and even better your working conditions. You can do all of this, if you just “get involved.”





## Vice President's Article

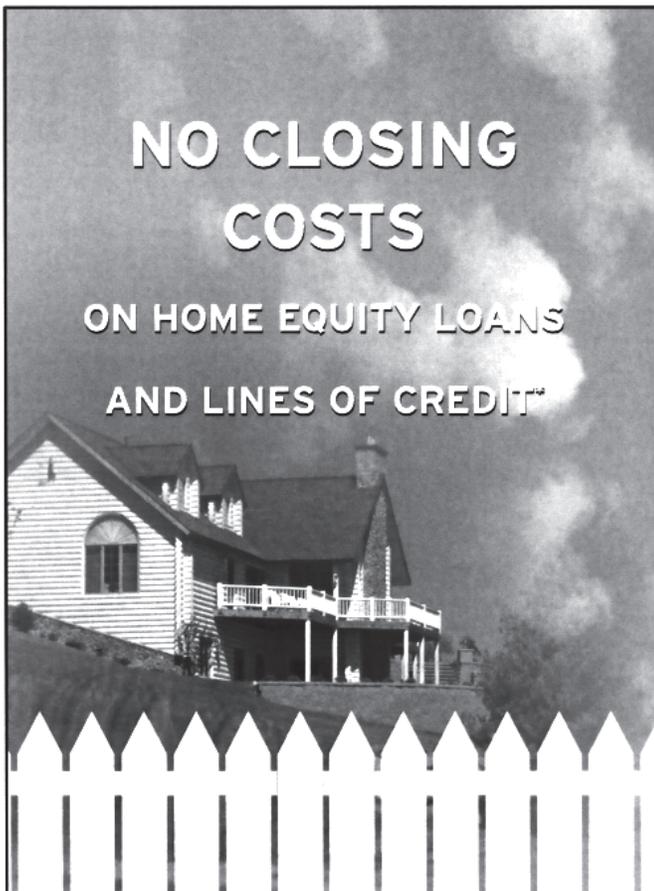
By Gene Hollenbeck

### Excessed employees returned to the clerk craft

The last of our excessed employees have been returned to the clerk craft effective February 22, 2014. The local has been pursuing this since they were excessed. This will not only benefit those that were excessed, but also the rest of the craft. As we know, all of the offices and the plant and annex are short-handed. There are still positions that

need to be filled and we are now looking into the possibility of getting some of our PSEs converted to full time. This will be another battle with management. This is not something that management will just say, "Oh, okay. Let's get that done right away." This will be an uphill battle that we will do our best to win. We will keep you updated on this issue.

Happy St. Patrick's Day



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## We Want to be “Parcel” Perfect”

By Melvin Sanders

Director of Industrial Relations

**A**lmost 30 years ago the APWU created a TV ad titled “We want to be letter perfect.” The ad contained a great song with the same title that was played at the National Convention and used at every APWU rally and parade. In my opinion it was a great success.

Day after day after day  
 We send millions of messages on their way  
 And in all that we do  
 There’s a message for you  
 We want to be letter perfect.

A few months ago we received word that the Postal Service had entered into an agreement with Amazon. Amazon sells just about everything you can think of and mails parcels around the country (if not the world). This would be a great time for our national officers in Washington D.C. to revise the old campaign and dedicate it to parcel delivery. The U.S. Postal Service has the best network to reach every citizen in the United States

The APWU clerk craft and motor vehicle craft can play a major role in making sure the Amazon project is successful. Amazon’s reputation is built on getting

their packages to their customers on time. The current plan even calls for Sunday delivery.

I can remember working on the ground floor where there was a giant city block long parcel sorting machine called “The Battleship.” The entire floor was covered with parcels stacked on nutting trucks and sacks full of parcels were stacked 10 feet high. For some strange reason the Postal Service just allowed UPS to take over the parcel business.

Working together we can get this business back and we can do a better job of sorting and delivering. Why? Because we want to be “Parcel Perfect.”



Our Best  
 Wishes On  
 Passover



# Associate Office Steward

*By Becky Livingston*



So springtime is just around the corner and the weather isn't the only thing that keeps changing. Management at the USPS continually changes positions and sometimes the transition periods aren't easy ones. As we all know, while the Collective Bargaining Agreement remains the same, the interpretation and implementation of the language of this CBA by the postmasters, managers and supervisors can become quite interesting.

One thing remains the same — please follow the last instruction given to you by a supervisor unless you feel that this will put you or your co-workers in danger. Please perform the duties to the best of your ability and if you feel that you have an issue request to see your union steward. Over the last few weeks the union continues to receive calls from management stating that clerks are refusing to follow instructions. I know that the 204-B issue has caused some frustration out in the post offices but we have grievances in the system addressing the improper use of the 204-B. Until this grievance issue is resolved, please remember that the 204-B is in an EAS/supervisory detail and should be treated accordingly to avoid discipline. The good news is that supervisor-EAS vacancies have been posted on e-Reassign and will be filled within the next month. The bad news is that the same 204-B that you are looking at right now may be your immediate supervisor in the very near future. Keep this in mind and let the union take care of any issues that come up.

The post office has finally complied with the Das award concerning

the global settlement by supplying the APWU with thousands and thousands of pages of documentation that was needed to finally be able to start the process of figuring out the monetary awards for each grievance that was filed regarding the violations in the small post offices. Everyone has been very patient, but we still have some work to do. I will be working with the USPS Step 2 designee over the next few months and I am confident that we will be able to come to a settlement that is fair and equitable to all parties. The APWU is still awaiting the decision on the PostPlan arbitration that was heard last year. This will affect a lot of small post offices and we are hoping for a positive outcome on this case. I will keep you posted!

I received a phone call just yesterday asking why UPS had delivered a standard mail package that was mailed at a post office from Utah. Well, the answer isn't what we like to hear, but the post office just recently awarded UPS with the ground transportation of packages from several regions across the country and FedEx was given Priority/Express Mail for these same regions. A grievance has been filed at the national level regarding the contracting out of this work and hopefully we will have a resolve soon.

Like I said, things are certainly changing when it comes to the way things are being handled. While we are struggling with not having enough employees to handle processing mail six days a week and are picketing in the streets to save six-day delivery, we have a new program that will begin March 16, 2014, that will

have the USPS delivering Amazon packages on Sundays.

This is good news for all crafts and we need to do everything we can to make sure this program is successful. The union has been told that the scanning and distribution of these packages to the carriers will be performed by PSEs. On the other hand we hear everyone from supervisors to CCAs will be handling the scanning and getting their packages ready for delivery. Let me make it clear that the APWU wants this Amazon program to succeed more than anyone, but we also want to make sure that clerks perform the bargaining unit work. No exceptions! The Amazon program has been discussed for months and the employees to carry out this plan have just recently been hired or haven't even been hired yet. This may mean that some career clerk employees will be required to work their second non-scheduled day to cover these duties. Then that is what will need to be done. Please do not let the carriers start performing your work. We are still working hard to document the need to convert the PSEs into the residual career positions we have in all of the post offices and we need your help in having management follow the CBA concerning all violations. Please call me if you have any concerns on the process or if you have any other concerns that come up. We all know the union is only as strong as our members make it.

Thanks and I will be seeing you all soon.



## Editor's Corner

By Shelia Patton-Harris



**W**e have been faced with several deaths in our postal family in the last few months. It is important that we take care of ourselves and try to live the best life possible. The average age of postal workers at the main plant is 56 years old. This is the age where a lifetime of neglect and abuse begins to take its toll. Many of us suffer from diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol to name a few.

We don't have to give up because we have been given an unfavorable diagnosis. There are many things that we can do to maximize our health. One of the most important is learning to manage stress. We may find ourselves under constant pressure. Things at home, things at work, problems with our spouses and significant others all contribute to stress. We tend to overeat, under-eat, self-medicate with drugs and alcohol, or any number of other destructive coping mechanisms.

Exercise and meditation can help to alleviate stress. Eating right and getting enough sleep are other key components to achieving optimum health. If you have a chronic health condition, take the prescribed medications as directed. Stop smoking or make your best effort to quit. Smoking contributes to many health problems.

We all need a support network. Be it family or

friends hold the people that you love close. Love is a powerful drug and it can work wonders in your life. Strive to be a more positive person and don't sweat the small stuff. A positive attitude, especially during trying times, can go a long way in helping you to cope with stress. A belief in a higher power can be comforting and help you to deal with issues that are causing you problems. Prayer is a powerful tool in times of stress and turmoil.

Working at the Postal Service can be very stressful, but it can be managed. If you have worked here for any length of time you know how frustrating it can be. You have to try and not let things get to you at work. Don't allow yourself to get angry. The only person that you will be hurting is yourself. If you find yourself losing it, leave the scene if possible, go to the bathroom, and/or ask to see a shop steward. Don't get into an argument with the supervisor. No matter who is right, the supervisor will always win. Being put off the clock will really cause you stress.

I hope everyone who reads this will try some of the suggestions made in this article. I want each and every one of you to have a good quality of life and a long and fruitful life.

**Voting for Delegates  
To the National Convention  
will be on  
March 16, 2014  
At 1705 S. Broadway  
From 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.**



# January and February General Membership Highlights

*By Robin Robertson*

**H**ello my brothers and sisters, pray all is well in everyone's house. Below are the January and February highlights from the general membership meetings for the St. Louis Gateway District Area Local. Remember your presence and voice is needed.

## President Wolfmeyer

Management has sent out letters to the last 38 employees who qualify for retreat rights. They will probably start their new assignments in the clerk craft on or about February 22, 2014. President Wolfmeyer does not think there will be enough employees retreating to fill all the residual bids, so after the retreats, we will be filing a grievance to convert PSEs to career to fill the remaining residuals.

## Vice President's Report

Welcome back, retreated clerks!! Vice President Gene Hollenbeck reported employees they are bringing back to the clerk craft. The retreat rights letter went out to 38 people the labor custodians get to stay over in maintenance. All the letter carriers within the installations have to return. We should have 28-30 people coming back that should be the end of our retreat rights.

## Secretary-Treasurer

The 2014 budget was presented to the members. "The Real Golden Rule" five reasons for writing a check from union funds: 1.) The Law, 2.) The Constitution, 3.) The Vote at a Membership Meeting, 4.) The Vote at an E-Board Meeting, and 5.) Budget. No other reasons are prohibited.

## Research and Education Director's Report:

Rebecca Livingston, Research and Education is excited how successful the new steward training turnout. Becky mentioned how steward training is always the Monday following general membership meeting at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the Union Hall.

## Industrial Relation's Report:

Melvin Sanders mentioned he's still working on the date for the picnic since the National Convention was moved to the month of July. We have to moved our picnic back to August.

## Maintenance Director's Report:

Director Tom Nanna reported. If you are at a station or branch and you are a labor custodian and you are on the overtime desire list and you are not getting the overtime, please let him know so he can file a grievance. Let Director Tom Nanna know if your vacation selection was not completed on time. Director Tom Nanna will file a grievance.

## Support Services Director Report

Support Services Director Orlando Anderson wishes everyone Happy New Year. Director Orlando Anderson welcomed Gale Smith, a new visitor to our craft meeting. Also, acknowledged former Support Services Director Mamie Wells. New support services steward office is up and running. Director Orlando Anderson mentioned the support services contract will be going to arbitration.

## Door Prizes

The \$50 door prize was won by Gale Smith (Support Services) and Cheree Gladey (Maintenance Craft).

There was COPA 50/50 drawing won by Earl Staats (Clerk Craft) and Charles Koperistynski (Maintenance Craft).



## Who Discusses Step One's?

(Parody of "Who's On First")

by Fred Wolfmeyer, MVS Director

Spring is in the air. Flowers are blooming, the trees are budding and the temperatures are on the rise. Once again, the baseball season has rolled around. In recognition of this, I would like to take a humorous look at how grievances are handled by postal management. The grievance procedure is and should be serious business, however, we all need to laugh every now and then.

M = Management

U = Union Representative

Let's Play Ball!

M. We've established a new grievance team to work out and process all grievances quickly and fairly.

U. Are you going to tell us the names of the supervisors on this team?

M. Yes we are.

U. Well, who discusses Step 1s?

M. That's right!

U. Who?

M. Correct

U. Who discusses Step 1s?

M. Absolutely.

U. I don't understand.

M. No, he provides the information you request.

U. Who?

M. No, who discusses Step 1s.

U. Who does?

M. Yes he does.

U. What?

M. What? Oh, she works in Labor Relations.

U. What?

M. Yes, that's correct.

U. I'm confused.

M. She discusses Step 1As.

U. Who does?

M&U. Who discusses Step 1s!

M. That's right!

U. What is the name of the person requesting discipline?

M. No. She works in Labor Relations.

U. Just tell me the name of the person who requests discipline.

M. Not Me.

U. Not me requests discipline?

M. That's right! If you want to know who requested the discipline or where it came from just ask your supervisor and they'll tell you, Not Me.

U. Give us the name of the person that gives the reasons for the discipline.

M. I Don't Know.

U. You don't know?

M. No. I Don't Know!

U. So if I want to know the reasons for discipline, I would see who?

M&U. No, he discusses Step 1s.

U. I'm confused.

M. No, she discusses Step 1As.

U. So just tell me the name of the Step 2 designee!

M. Later.

U. Why not now?

M. No. Not Now is the person you see to ask for steward time. Later does Step 2s!

U) I don't understand!

M &U) He provides requested information. Right!

U. Why can't management just do the right thing and treat employees fairly and abide by the contract?

M. Because.

U. Because?

M. Right! He's our ninth player.

U. Because is?

M. Yes. We use him when we don't know what to do or say. If you ask us a question we can't answer, it will be answered by Because!

So when grievances are discussed with management, it's no wonder that one might hear: I DON'T UNDERSTAND! I'M CONFUSED and I DON'T KNOW WHO issued this, it was NOT ME. You want steward a time? Well NOT NOW. You want to discuss a grievance? See me LATER, BECAUSE I'M TOO BUSY!

U. I'm too busy?

M. Yeah! He's the manager!



## Study Looks at Shift Worker Problems

Employees who usually work evening and night shifts are the most likely to suffer from chronic fatigue and have a higher rate of illness and death, according to a report released by the Conference Board.

The employer group said these shift workers can benefit from 24-hour resource and referral services and employee assistance programs.

The report said night shift workers often feel isolated from staff members

who work during regular business hours and can be deprived of the same professional opportunities available to others.

It said that shift workers are essential to companies that require a 24-hour operation. It said that to have good morale among these employees and effective workers, companies must work harder to improve employer-employee relations by making sure treatment throughout the company is equal and that no employee is overlooked.

# APWU: Excessing, Job Withholding Due to Consolidations on 'Indefinite Hold'

*Reprinted from the APWU website.*

Union members are sure to breathe a sigh of relief following a recent notice from the Postal Service to the APWU.

Excessing related to area mail processing events has been placed on "indefinite hold," according to a Feb. 14 letter from Postal Service to the APWU. As a result, the Postal Service is now releasing "residual vacancies" that were being withheld. Residual vacancies are duty assignments that remain vacant after completion of a bidding cycle. Rather than filling the residual vacancies, the Postal Service has been keeping them open to serve as landing spots for employees impacted by plant consolidations. The Feb. 14 letter follows a Jan. 24 USPS announcement that management is postponing implementation of Phase 2 of its latest mail processing consolidation plan, which was slated to begin on Feb. 1. The USPS

also delayed implementation of changes to service standards that would have slowed mail delivery.

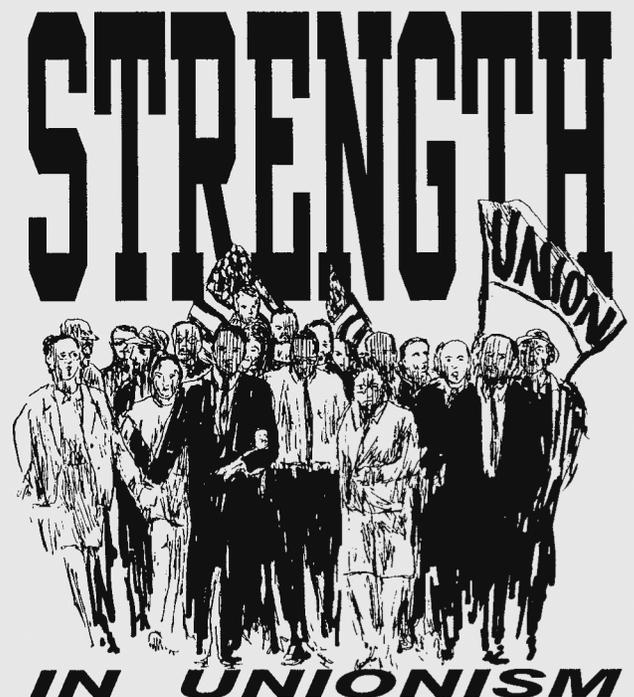
Each area will review the withheld vacancies, the USPS letter notes. If the jobs are operationally justified, "the appropriate contractual process will be used to fill them," it says.

"The end of job withholding is good news," said Director of Industrial Relations Tony D. McKinnon Sr. "We encourage locals to make sure that management reviews all withheld positions and makes a legitimate evaluation of their viability. This process has the potential to create opportunities for the conversion of part-time flexibles to regular and the conversion of postal support employees to career," he said. Local officers who encounter problems should contact their regional coordinator, McKinnon said.

## How to beat your enemies: stand united!

A farmer, who had a quarrelsome family, after trying in vain to reconcile their differences with words, thought he might more readily prevail by an example. So he called his sons and told them to lay a bunch of sticks before him. Then, having tied the sticks into a bundle, he told the lads, one after another, to take it up and break it. They all tried, but tried in vain. Then, untying the bundle, he gave them the sticks to break one by one. This they did with the greatest ease. Then said the farmer, "Thus, my sons, as long as you remain united, you are a match for all your enemies, but differ and separate, and you are undone."

— Aesop





We Wish to  
Extend  
Our Condolences  
to

**Ricky Adams**

*Tour 1 Maintenance*

**Sally Yates**

*Mother of Janice Yates*

*Tour 1*

**Lisa Harvey**

*Daughter of Sue & Kevin Hart*

*Clerk Tour 1*

**Evelyn Smith**

*Sister-in-law of Shirley Orr*

*Tour 1 Clerk*

**Willie Jackson**

*Tour 3 Clerk*

**Jimmy Jarvis**

*Father of Mary Jarvis*

*Support Services*

**Todd Vaughn**

*Father of Angie Vaughn*

*Support Services*

**Gary Macke**

*Retired VMF*

**Wanda Murphy**

*Wife of George Murphy*

*MVS driver*



Patricia M. Bregen

Rosemary Buchholz

Andrew Hentz

Jamessina Johnson

Tammie Morris

Michael Phelan

Tiffany Smith

Flavia Williams

From the Desk of

*Becky Livingston*

Research and Education Director

I would like to thank everyone who attended the new steward training classes. We had members from every craft attend the classes and I felt like a lot of information was covered during the five-week course. There will be another new steward training class held sometime in late fall. I will make sure the times and dates are posted for those interested in learning the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The next steward training will be Monday, March 10, 2014, with classes being held from 9-11 a.m. and 6-8 p.m. Please make sure you bring your training manuals.

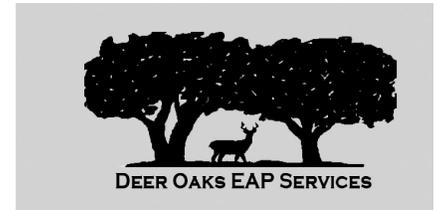


**ATTEND YOUR  
UNION MEETINGS AND  
MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**



# Clinician's Corner..

*Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team*



## Positive Thinking: Changing Your Thought Patterns

Have you ever noticed that you judge, criticize, and expect more of yourself than you do others? Are you your own worst critic? The culprit behind these self-defeating beliefs are our thoughts. Based on our early life experiences and interactions with significant role models, we develop little recordings about the way we think about ourselves, others, and the world in general. Often times, we don't realize that these "recordings" can have a significant impact on goal-setting, expectations in life, relationships with others, and overall happiness.

Try taking a week, a day, even an hour and simply record the types of thoughts that you notice you have. You may be surprised not only by the sheer volume, but by the general tone. Keep track not only of what you say but also: what happened right before each thought? How did you feel, emotionally, after you noticed that thought crossing your mind?

If you're finding that the ways in which you speak to yourself are much more harsh than the way in which you would speak to family, friends, or coworkers, it may be time to slow down, pay more attention to these negative thought patterns, and replace them with realistic thoughts. In other words, if you go too far and you try to think overly positive and cheery thoughts, you may not be setting yourself up for success.

For a thought such as, "This is way too hard. I won't be able to do it." Try, "this may be difficult, but I know that if I practice patience, I do have the ability to succeed." Although it may take time for these new thoughts to feel comfortable (let alone become your new go-to thoughts instead of those older, negative ones) you may be pleasantly surprised to see that your mood and satisfaction with life can be greatly improved all by changing the "recorded messages" you play.

By:

Kira Rogers, Psy.D, SAP, HSP-P  
Regional Clinical Manager  
Deer Oaks EAP Services, LLC



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## Press On

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**Sheila Patton-Harris ... Editor**  
PROUD MEMBER  
POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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**President**.....Fred Wolfmeyer  
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Clerk Craft.....Joe "Earl" Staats  
Maintenance.....Thomas Nanna  
Vehicle Service.....Jeff Cooper  
IT/ASC.....Orlando Anderson  
Associate Office.....Judy Eschmann

### Union Office

**1705 S. Broadway**  
**St. Louis, MO 63104**  
**(314) 231-7665**  
FAX: (314) 231-5709  
Toll Free 1-800-992-2945  
After Hours (314) 330-9641

### Office Hours

Monday-Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Saturday: 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Steward Booths, Downtown  
Clerk ... 314-436-5331  
Maintenance ... 314-436-4668  
MVS ... 314-436-5027

## GATEWAY LOCAL CALENDAR

March 5 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
March 9 (Sunday)	General Membership Meeting (3 p.m.)
March 10 (Monday)	Steward's Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
April 2 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
April 5 (Saturday)	General Membership Meeting (9:30 a.m.)
April 7 (Monday)	Steward's Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
April 30 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
May 4 (Sunday)	General Membership Meeting (3 p.m.)
May 5 (Monday)	Steward's Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
<b>May 26 (Monday)</b>	<b>Memorial Day Holiday</b>

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.