



Just say no! to the Postal Pulse

Financial Health Warning:
*Management has a history of using
the survey results to justify lower wages
for postal workers.*

**All APWU members are asked to submit
their unopened Postal Pulse Surveys (2)
to enter a drawing for cash prizes.**

Send to:
St. Louis Gateway District Area Local #8
1705 S. Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104

APWU

President's Report

By Becky Livingston

Failure to Maintain a Regular Work Schedule (FTMRWS) Discipline is on the rise!

Over the last few months, we have had employees refuse to sign and accept a piece of discipline for *Failing to Maintain a Regular Work Schedule*. Heated discussions ensued with the end result being management placing the employees in an off-duty status, in other words, told them to get off their clock! In some cases, these incidents initiated more discipline being issued. The union has always asked that you sign and date the discipline and immediately request a steward so a timely grievance can be filed on your behalf. Just because you sign for the discipline does not mean that you agree with it. It just gives the union the exact date the discipline was issued. Once notified (please immediately request a steward and have a grievance filed) it is the union's responsibility to file the grievance and perform a thorough investigation. The union will look at live discipline (management has been citing discipline that should have been expunged from your records) and make sure the discipline that was issued is at the correct step of the discipline procedure. The union will then request all 3971s and call-in logs to make sure dates that were approved in advance or protected by FMLA are not cited. We all know that just because you have a signed and approved 3971 (**Please keep all copies of your 3971s-request for or notification of absence**) it doesn't mean management took the time to process your request correctly. We also know that management continues to explain the FMLA protection for serious health conditions incorrectly. I recently spoke to an employee who had been told because his work hours had fallen below the required 1,250 work hour FMLA rules, he no longer qualified for FMLA protection. **This is not true!** When a qualifying condition causes a series of intermittent absences, the 1,250 work hour eligibility test is applied only once during the 12-month leave year, at the beginning of a series of intermittent absences. The employee remains eligible throughout the leave year for the FMLA qualifying condition, **even if the employee later falls below the 1,250 work hour requirement.** Management automatically tells employees that they are no longer protected

by FMLA when they see work hours fall below 1,250. Falling below 1,250 just means that you would not be able to have another serious health issue protected by FMLA until you bring those work hours back to 1,250. Whether management is using this as a tool to discourage you from using FMLA or they seriously don't understand the FMLA guidelines is a debate for another time. Please verify what management is telling you. The union is a phone call away. Take the time to get the facts before you make any decisions when it comes to protecting your health and your job.

The USPS has now decided that in order to avoid altercations and conflict, they will start notifying everyone of PDIs (pre-disciplinary interviews) and issuing the discipline by mail. This process is now placing the responsibility of making sure you have your current address on file with the Postal Service and that you regularly check your mail. This mail is being sent by express mail, priority mail with delivery confirmation or certified mail. These are among some of the most important pieces of mail you will get from the Postal Service. **Please take time to read the entire piece of mail!** If you are scheduled for a PDI and are unable to attend due to your serious health condition or are otherwise unavailable, please contact your supervisor at the numbers that are provided to reschedule the PDI. Please don't ignore the PDI request. Please make that phone call. If you fail to respond, management is initiating discipline and stating that they attempted to hold the PDI and you failed to report at the scheduled time. Unless there are extreme mitigating circumstances on why you were unable to contact them or report for the scheduled PDI, this will stand. PDIs are considered your day in court. Please make sure you protect your right to be heard.

Management is not being consistent with how they issue discipline. One piece of discipline may be issued at work and the next piece of discipline could be sent by



mail. When an express mail, a priority mail with delivery confirmation or a certified letter is delivered to your address, the post office has done their due diligence. The clock started ticking on your 14 days to file a grievance when the carrier delivered that mail to your "current address." It may not be the correct address, but that is the only address on file with the post office because you failed to update your address. That is your responsibility. **Please carefully read the entire notification.** I am repeating myself, but this is a very important part of the process. You can contact the union steward and notify them that you have received discipline at home and the grievance can be filed for you even if you are still unable to come to work. If you fail to notify the union to file a timely grievance, the discipline will remain in your file for two years. Management is starting to issue discipline after every sixth unscheduled absence. If that happens within a month, then you can expect to be issued discipline. You can move quickly through the steps of discipline and receive a Notice of Removal in a short time frame if management follows the contract correctly. The newly appointed USPS

district manager has made being regular in attendance a priority. **Please make sure you focus on maintaining a regular work schedule.** Reporting to work late is also being cited on discipline. If you have medical reasons on why you are late to work on a consistent basis, please make sure you have the condition protected by FMLA. If you have other serious health issues, please get FMLA protection. As long as you have 1,250 work hours, you are eligible to have each health issue protected. Just make sure that the doctor clearly identifies the frequency and duration correctly for each health issue. EAP is also a very important tool that the union and the USPS negotiated to help you and your family manage life issues. Life can present many challenges. It is our responsibility to accept those challenges and accept help when the going gets tough. Please contact the Union Hall if you have questions or concerns about any of the challenges you are facing. The union is here to protect you and your job! The most important job I have is to help you be successful managing life at the United States Postal Service! We are all in this together!

Please continue to stay union strong all day long!



Final TACS Grievance Payouts Delayed!

By Becky Livingston

The process of finalizing the second TACS distribution was a complicated one. The union had to make sure that all lead-7s and clerks who were detailed to lead-7 positions during the extended absence of the Form 50 lead were accounted for. We had a lot of inquiries as to why employees were not included in the settlement and investigations were done to make sure the distributions were made fairly. Unfortunately, due to human error, there were payouts incorrectly made during the first payout and some lead-7s were left off of the list completely. These errors have been corrected and the adjustments have been made. Management has received the final distribution information and the union is waiting for the final payout spreadsheet as I write this article. You should see this payment soon. While we still have work to do, the offices are showing a significant increase in TACS duties being performed by the lead-7s. Grievances will continue to be filed until we are confident that 100% of the TACS duties have been returned to the clerk craft. Once we are assured that the lead-7s are performing all of the work, there will be no reason to continue filing grievances. If management would start performing TACS duties again, please request a steward and the union will file the appropriate grievances. Thank you for the patience you have all shown through this over 5-year journey. The wait is almost over!

Executive Vice President

By Gene Hollenbeck



We have six more new career employees. That gives us about 26 for this year. We hope to continue pushing for more conversions.

The one to a machine grievances that were stalled are now being resolved at the Step 2 level. You should start to see the payments on your check, if you were required to work by yourself on the DBCS machines.

This is the procedure that management must follow when bringing employees in during the holiday schedule. The holiday schedule is a three day schedule and must be posted per the contract.

Let's talk about holidays and how you are scheduled. The holiday scheduled must be posted on Tuesday of the week preceding the week in which the holiday falls. The holiday schedule consists of three days. So for a Monday holiday the schedule would be Saturday, Sunday and Monday. On Tour 1 this would be Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday night. If your off days are Sunday-Monday, your designated holiday would be Saturday. If your off days are Monday-Tuesday, then your holiday would be Sunday. On tour 1 if your off days are Saturday night (Sunday)-Sunday night (Monday), your designated holiday would be Friday night (Saturday). If your off days are Sunday night (Monday)-Monday night (Tuesday), your holiday would be Saturday night (Sunday). The holiday volunteer list shall be posted soliciting volunteers to work the days of the holiday schedule. This volunteer list will be posted 21 days prior to the Tuesday that the holiday schedule must be posted. The volunteer list will be posted for 14 calendar days.

APWU employees will be scheduled for holiday work in the following order:

1. All full-time and part-time regular (where applicable) employees for whom it is a holiday or their "designated holiday," and who have volunteered to work, by seniority.
2. All full time and part-time regular (where applicable) employees, by seniority, who have volunteered to work their non-scheduled day(s) which is a holiday or "designated holiday" for others even if overtime and/or overtime guarantees are incurred.
3. All postal support employees.
4. All full-time and part-time regular (where applicable) employees for whom it is a scheduled day off, but have not volunteered, even if overtime guarantees are incurred, shall be instructed to report by inverse seniority.

5. All full-time and part-time (where applicable) employees for whom it is the holiday or their designated holiday but have not volunteered shall be instructed to report by inverse seniority.

This is the way management selects who works on the holiday. This is done for all holidays and, yes, the junior employees may be drafted for every holiday.

Don't forget, if you work the holiday, you can decide if you want the pay or if you want to exchange it for annual leave that you can use at a later date. There are several employees who use this option for additional time off at a later date. And remember we now have 11 holidays for FTRS employees.

Union strong all day long.

2020 and 2021 One-to-a-Machine Grievance Payouts Coming to you Soon!

By Becky Livingston

I am hopeful that by the time you read this article, the DBCS automation clerks waiting for grievance settlement payments will have seen one-to-a-machine money on their checks. Due to a breakdown in communication between labor and the former APWU Step 2 designee, some 2020 and 2021 grievance payouts were not properly processed for payment after the grievances were settled. Once the issue was brought to my attention in the fall of 2021 the labor manager and the experienced labor specialists started to abruptly retire or transfer to other districts. This created even more delays. I have been working closely with the newly appointed KS/MO A/labor manager to make sure these payouts are processed and to you as soon as possible. There is still work to be done but we are getting closer every day!



Make Your Vote Count

It's that time again. It's time to vote in the local elections. You, as a member, get to choose who will lead this local for the next three years. This is not a decision to be made lightly. You need to weigh the achievements and qualifications of the candidates before you cast your vote. This is not a popularity contest. Your decision has a definite impact on your future as a postal employee.

Talk is cheap. You can make promises until the cows come home. But can you deliver on those promises? Smear tactics are a sign that the candidate has a weak or nonexistent platform. Tell me what you wish to achieve if I vote for you. Tell me what you have already done for this local. Is the candidate dependable? Can I count on you? When the going gets rough have you demonstrated the ability to stand up under pressure? Don't keep telling us what your predecessor did not do. Tell me what you plan on doing. Are they around when you need them?

Do they come to work?

You may not like a particular candidate. Does that candidate meet the obligations of that office? You might look good, but can you do good? Examine the candidate's record.

Have you had any personal dealings with the candidate? Was the outcome what you expected? Or was it all pie in the sky? Was your problem solved? Did you get the results you were looking for? I'm just saying, before you cast that ballot, think. Is this the best possible person to represent me in a crisis? Or is this someone living in the past, complaining about some perceived slight? We need to keep the "U" in union.

You have a very important decision to make. This is definitely a best qualified position.

Ballots will be mailed on July 15.

Ballots must be returned by noon on August 8.



Associate Office Director's Report

By Melani Brown



Greetings members. It's that time again, I'll start this article by saying thank you for being patient with me as stewards go. I'm not very seasoned, but I am certainly determined. As many of you know, the elections for officers in the union will take place in August of this year. Please when your ballot comes in, open it up, fill it out and send it in. It's your voice and your choice, so let it be heard and remember, if you don't vote, then don't complain when things are not as you think they should be.

Enough about that, I want to talk about failure to maintain a regular work schedule. Please make sure to call in before your begin tour time or else you will be considered AWOL (it only takes one of these to receive discipline). We all know that the post office considers

every day that you call in an incident. If you know you're going to be out for more than one day, then call in for more than one. That way at least management has a chance to cover your shift. The Postal Service is cracking down on attendance., PDIs are resulting in discipline up to and including removal. So come to work and if you can't, make sure you are FMLA protected. If management tells you to bring in documentation, bring it. If you don't bring the documentation in you could be looking at discipline for failure to follow instructions. But that's a whole different article.

I wish everyone a wonderful summer. Stay safe and **please vote!** Ballots need to be returned by August 8.

Your COLA is not a Drink

By Omar Gonzalez, Western Regional Coordinator

Just about everyone is feeling the pain of inflation these days. I am not an economist, but I do know that inflation means your dollars buy less.

You work in an organized (unionized) work place with a contract (CBA) between your employer (USPS) and you (APWU). This CBA provides a negotiated cost of living allowance (COLA) that helps release some of the air of inflation. It was never meant to cancel out or totally deflate inflation.

No Syrup in COLA Formula

There is no sweet liquid that goes into your COLA. It is based on the CPI-W (Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers).

Article 9 in the CBA, sent to each of you, spells out the COLA formula for increasing your salary schedule which will increase by 1 cent per hour for each 0.4 of a point increase in the index above the base index.

There are those who criticize the formula, the agreement on the increases, and for that matter the entire CPI Index. But what's new? Critics abound and always will. COLA augments our salary — it does not prevent the loss of purchasing power of the dollar! There is no sugar coating the formula. It is what it is!

COLA Has a History

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has been around since 1884 and calculating the CPI since 1913. The CPI is an economic indicator of eight major groups that aggregates prices of fixed basket of goods.

But that isn't the history I want to share with you. I want to focus on your COLA's history. For more than 158 years postal workers had no say in

setting their wages and most working conditions. That changed after a strike and the passage of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970. The Post Office Department and seven exclusive unions negotiated their first CBA on July 20, 1971.

In addition to five \$250 wage increases and a \$300 bonus, a cost of living allowance was negotiated with basically the same formula as today's COLA, but capped at \$160 a year. It was the first ever COLA for federal workers.

In 1975 we got rid of the COLA cap only to see a cap demanded by management again in 1978, this time at \$1,518. Inflation was at double digits. That '78 CBA was rejected by the Rank & File Bargaining Committee, the National Convention, and by a referendum vote by the 94,400 members.

The result was an arbitrated CBA with the COLA cap, being removed and a 9.5% wage increase. But in 1981 USPS reneged on an agreement for a \$1,950 pay increase. Eventually the COLA was "rolled in" to base pay but lower wage increases were finally agreed to. In 1987 wages were set at 2% increase the first year, \$250 in the

second year, two \$300 increases in the third year and \$200 and the COLA formula. In 1990 management tried to get rid of COLA with no wage increases. That CBA went to arbitration resulting in a semiannual basis with no cap or floor and roll ins. But salary increases were hurt resulting in small percentages of 1.2 & 1.6%.

Limited space doesn't allow all the history. We've been fortunate to have COLA ever since. Our allowances are better adjusted than our sister unions too!

Pain at the Pump & COLA's Jump

When gas goes up everything else does too, as does our cost of living allowance. It will not make up for the loss of purchasing power, but allows us to stay above water and breathe a bit better.

So many in this country do not get COLAs. We will get retroactive pay increases and COLAs during the life of this contract which 94% of the voting members accepted. So when your COLA arrives, drink up, but just remember the COLA itself is not a drink and certainly won't be used to relieve gases. To get gas relief, we need to eliminate corporate greed! Saluted!



Atkins, Crystal
Barber, Tara
Bell, Shamele
Blissit, Cawana
Booker, Latrese
Burrow, Tranise
Carter, Temika
Dyson, Alvin

Gardner, Elizabeth
Ivory, Imani
McGinnis, Kristen
Merrill, Smither
Miller, Torriante
Myers, Andrew
O'Bannon, Marquita
Okapal, Greg

Quintera, Luis
Rodriquez, Miranda
Rucker, Rishina
Sapp, Kevin
Sturgis, Susan
Vietor, Carmina
Warren, Jarvis

Nominations of Officers of the St. Louis Gateway

President Rebecca Livingston opens the floor for nominations for the St. Louis Gateway District Area Local general officers, directors, and assistant directors for the **2022 nominations**.

General and Administrative Officers

President	<i>Nominated by:</i>
Rebecca “Becky” Livingston (I) (State and National Delegate)	Robin “Robbie” Robertson
William “Bill” Brady (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Executive Vice-President	
Millard E. “Gene” Hollenbeck (I) (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Tyler Hazelip (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Editor in Chief	
Shelia Patton-Harris (I) (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Leamon “Bill” Beene (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Mia D. Smith (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Sergeant-at-arms	
Kedruinna “KK” Johnson-French (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Wendy Smith-Scales (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Direction of Research and Education	
Joe “Dean” Hathaway (I) (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Claudella “Della” Suggs (State and National Delegate)	Self-nominated
Craft Directors	
Clerk Craft Director	
April Johnson (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Darren Pruitt (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Motor Vehicle Craft Director	
Robert “Bobby” Riehl Jr. (I) (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent
Leonard Nunn (State and National Delegate)	Self-nominated

Uncontested Local Officers

General and Administrative Officers

Secretary-Treasurer	<i>Nominated by:</i>
Robin “Robbie” Robertson (State and National Delegate)	Self-nominated
Director of Industrial Relations	
David “Safety Guy” Childers (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent

Craft Directors

Associate Office Craft

Director	
Melani Brown (I) (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent

Clerk Craft

Assistant Director (A)	
Kamisha Grant	Letter of Intent

Assistant Director (B)

Vacant

Maintenance Craft

Director	
Chris Wilkinson (I) (State and National Delegate)	Letter of Intent

Assistant Director (A)

Zachary Peters	Letter of Intent
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Assistant Director (B)

Regina Higgins-Mayfield	Self-nominated
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Motor Vehicle Craft

Assistant Director (A)

Antoin “AJ” Johnson	Self-nominated
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Assistant Director (B)

Vacant

Support Services Director

Director

Janis Dumas (I) (State and National Delegate)	Orlando Anderson
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Assistant Director

Robbin Nichols (I)	Letter of Intent
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St. Louis Gateway APWU
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St. Louis, MO 63104
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Press On

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Shelia Patton-Harris ... Editor
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POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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Vice President..... Gene Hollenbeck
Secretary-Treasurer Robin Robertson
Dir. of Industrial Relations.....Dave Childers
Editor.....Shelia Patton-Harris
Dir. of Research & Education.....Dean Hathaway
Sergeant-at-Arms.....Claudella Suggs

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Clerk Craft.....Bill Brady
Maintenance.....Chris Wilkerson
Vehicle Service.....Bobby Riehl
IT/ASC.....Janis Dumas
Associate Office DirectorMelani Brown

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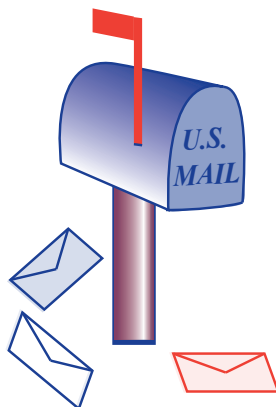
Steward Booths, Downtown
Clerk ... 314-436-5331
Maintenance ... 314-436-4668
MVS ... 314-436-5027

GATEWAY LOCAL CALENDAR

July 4 (Monday)	Independence Day
July 6 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
No July general membership meeting	
July 11 (Monday)	Steward Training (9 a.m. & 6 p.m.)
July 15 (Friday)	Ballots mailed
August 10 (Wednesday)	Executive Board Meeting (2 p.m.)
No August general membership meeting	
August 8 (Monday)	Ballots due back by noon
August 15 (Monday)	Steward Training (9 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.