

Associate Offices

Minnesota:

Afton
Bayport
Bethel
Braham
Cambridge
Cannon Falls
Castle Rock
Cedar
Chisago City
Circle Pines
Cottage Grove
Dalbo
Dennison
Farmington
Forest Lake
Grandy
Grasston
Hampton
Hastings
Hugo
Isanti
Lakeville
Lindstrom
Marine on St.
Croix
Mora
Nerstrand
Newport
North Branch
Northfield
Owatonna
Pine City
Randolph
Red Wing
Rosemount
Rush City
St. Paul Park
Scandia
South St. Paul
Stacy
Stillwater
Vermillion
Welch
Willernie
Wyoming

Wisconsin:

Amery
Beldenville
Clayton
Clear Lake
Deer Park
Ellsworth
Glenwood City
Hager City
Hudson
New Richmond
River Falls
Somerset
Star Prairie
Willson

Shout out to the St. Paul, MN APWU Stewards

At the end of March, I will host the Stewards for the Annual Steward Appreciation Dinner at Mancini's Restaurant. This has been done now for more than 30 years to recognize the hard work the Stewards do in representing you the members of the St. Paul Area Local. It is always a humbling privilege to host this event on behalf of the members.

Union Stewards are the front line of our representation duties as a Union. We ask a great deal from our Stewards to solve our problems at work, some small, some big. Stewards are asked to treat all requests with respect. These requests are as varied as there are members, and some outside of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. They are asked to work diligently to find solutions to the issues and communicate what they found out.

The first thing a Steward is required to do is listen and then determine if the issue is a Contractual issue. If the issue is Contractual, they are required to interpret and enforce the Contract. In violations of the Contract a Steward is required to initiate a grievance at Step 1 within 14 days of the violation occurring or when one first was aware of the violation. These time lines are very important and when they are not met management has its most valuable argument not to settle the grievance. So, we depend on our members to contact a Steward through their supervisor and notify the Steward as soon as possible of

the problem to allow them to do a thorough investigation.

In order to prevail in a grievance, it is the evidence collected through investigations which is always the most important part of establishing a violation of the Contract. This evidence is gathered through witness statements, interviews with supervisors and others who were involved. Evidence also comes from USPS documents such as TAC's reports, eMars Reports, OT tracking sheets, PS Form 3971's, and many other documents the USPS keeps as records. Getting an early start to do the through investigation needed is the best thing you can do to help the Steward get a positive outcome for your violation. How you feel or your opinion really doesn't matter in contractual violations, it always depends on the evidence to show the violation.

In the course of representing members, Stewards are given very personal information about people's lives. They are asked to keep this information private and not share it with co-workers and management. The privacy they are asked to keep is important to develop trust with the individuals they are representing. Occasionally but rarely, I find Stewards who have not kept this privacy and they are held accountable for breaking this trust. It is one of the most serious things I have to deal with.

Stewards are asked to solve problems which benefit everyone. If a solution only benefits one individual at the expense of others it is usually rejected as a way to solve the issue. Stew-



ards are not asked to defend someone by saying someone else's behavior is worse in discipline. They are asked to determine if just cause exists on a case by case basis and defend you using the facts gathered as evidence in your particular case.

I believe good stewards are committed to working with you to find solutions which benefit you and everyone in your work area. We are blessed with a committed few Stewards who try to reach these expectations every time you ask for them.

We are always looking for new Stewards, if you think you can help others find solutions to workplace issue, please contact the Union Office and our Vice President will contact you to set up a two hour training to explain the position further to you.

Please take the time to thank your Steward today for the work they are doing on your behalf, it always good to hear a thank you.

Does Management really care about work place safety?

For any of you who have worked for the Postal Service for any length of time, I am sure you have heard numerous stand-up talks on how important work place safety is. I am sure you have seen safety posters in your facilities and even safety slogans for specific units or facilities. The Postal Service is clearly good at talking the talk, but when it comes down to it do they really take safety seriously?

On Thursday February 20, 2020 the Union became aware of a potential asbestos issue at the Como Retail office. Do you think management brought this concern forward to the APWU? No, it was one of our members who contacted us with the concern. The APWU immediately took action and contacted St Paul management and OSHA. The claim was confirmed and by February 21, 2020 we had a copy of official asbestos testing report for the Como Retail office. Of the twenty (20) samples taken at the office, the only material asbestos was detected in was the black mastic and filler material associated with 12-inch gray floor tile in the South/East Entry area. Now the fact that there is asbestos in a Postal facility is no shock to us. Numerous facilities in the St Paul area have been tested and have

asbestos containing materials in them and are safe environments for our employees to work in. The issue arises when these materials are not maintained properly and breakdown, releasing the asbestos fibers.

The concern with the positive test results was the tile and mastic was broken up in the south/east entry and had been since 2017. This means postal employees had potentially been subjected to cancer causing materials for over 2 years! Upon further investigation, the APWU found out employees had been reporting the hazard on PS Form 1767 since 2017 with concerns that there may be asbestos in the material. However the Postal Service kept reassuring the employees that there was no asbestos in the facility and instructed the employees to continue dry sweeping and vacuuming of the infected area! Furthermore, the Postal Service (local management) had known of this positive asbestos test result since January 2, 2020 and had not taken a single action to abate the hazard!

Thru the pressure of the employees, the

APWU and OSHA the hazard at the Como Retail office was removed and abated by trained contractors on February 22, 2020. Although this was a step in the right direction, it is clear the Postal Service needs to prove to their employees that their safety and health is actually a priority of the USPS. Practice what they preach! The APWU will continue to push management to learn from their errors and hopefully implement procedures to ensure a situation like this does not occur again.

The APWU urges our members to remain vigilant and continue to advocate for safe work environments. If a safety issue arises fill out a PS Form 1767 (safety hazard report) immediately and turn it in to a supervisor. If you do not get a satisfactory response or the safety concern is not abated ask for a steward so we can get involved and advocate on your behalf.

Solidarity,

Dave Cook, V/President



Associate Office Cleaning PI's/OIG and Choice Vacation

I am hearing that at the offices at the Small AO's that the supervisor or Postmasters are having you clean at the same time you are scheduled at the window. This is a violation. If you are scheduled to work the window and the back from 8-12:00, then you should be doing the cleaning from 7:30 -8:00 or 12:00 -12:30 and make a move to a Maintenance Operation. If this is happening at your office ask for a steward.

PTF or PSE at the AO offices, if your Postmaster or supervisor gets mail from another office, they are taking work away from you. Ask for a steward so a grievance can be filed.

If you receive a Letter of Warning or any discipline ask for a steward. We only have 14 days to file a grievance on your behalf, otherwise it stays on your record for 2 years. Often the supervisor does the discipline wrong and it gets thrown out, so don't let management get away with that.

If you see an employee working by themselves, please ask for a steward.

If the PI's or the OIG wants to see you in the office, ask for a steward and don't talk or say anything to them until your steward is present.

If any supervisor or postmaster tells you it is your job to get yourself a steward, this is also a violation.

Remember: choice vacation period for St Paul is March 1- March 21.

If you do not get a service talk regarding the Coronavirus let the union know.

Bruce Gutzke
Clerk Craft Director

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ST. PAUL AREA LOCAL APWU

RETIREES CHAPTER

The next meeting of the St. Paul Area Local Retirees Chapter will be held on March 18, 2020 at 11 AM at the St. Paul, MN Area Local's office, 2261 Waters Dr., Mendota Heights, MN 55120.

The \$50.00 drawing at the January meeting was won by Steve Johnson. The drawing is held at each meeting. You must be present to win.

Thanks to Local President, Todd Elkerton for chairing the November and January meeting in my absence. We can always count on President Elkerton to keep us informed regarding how our APWU national officers are fighting to protect our retirement as well as the welfare of current employees.

Our good friend, local member and longtime advocate for the well being

of postal workers, Larry Gervais, passed away on February 14, 2020. To say that he will be missed is the understatement of the century. His influence is seen in every Article of the Contract, especially big issues like jurisdictional disputes and leave issues. He was one of the most effective negotiators and arbitration advocates in the APWU. Many of us owe the skills we have in union issues to Larry. We send our prayers to his family; for their loss is far greater than ours.

To repeat my plea in every article; PLEASE call your congressional representatives! Ask your family members and friends to call also. The Capitol switchboard number is **202-224-3121**. Let them know how you feel about preservation of the Postal Service, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and protections for our veterans. Hold them responsible for their decisions

As always, you may contact me via my Email address **lreed6112@aol.com**. You can also call the union office at **651-778-1637** or visit the Local's website at **stpaulapwu.org**. The union office will give out my home phone number if you need it. I welcome your contacts.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting. We'll do a little business and finish off with food. It really is fun to catch up on what our retiree friends are doing

Lola Reed Langford,
Chapter President



Call your representative and tell them to support the Postal Service! It's quick and easy!

Capitol switchboard

202-224-3121

Retiree Dues for 2020 are due!

With death benefit— \$18.00

Just membership - \$12.00

Send to:

PO Box 21128

St. Paul, MN 55121

*Check, out the new website **stpaulapwu.org** for the meeting schedule!*

Lawrence “Larry” Gervais, Former National Business Agent [Clerk Craft], Bloomington, MN passed away Friday, February 14, 2020.

Larry Gervais My Friend: My Brother

By Lola Reed Langford

On February 14, 2020, A legend in the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) joined his beloved wife in their next world. He leaves behind two children, known to me as Doug and Rene’, and their families, as well as other family members. As my own sorrow fills my heart, I know it is nothing compared to theirs. It doesn’t seem enough to send thoughts and prayers, but in the end that is all we can send. My thoughts and prayers are sent your way, as well as those of the members of the St. Paul Area Local, APWU, The St. Paul Area Retiree’s Chapter and many friends throughout the APWU.

When Larry came into the Postal Service as a sub-clerk (currently known as part-time flexible clerk), he quickly joined the National Postal Union (NPU). His organizational skills and his ability to speak up and resolve problems was quickly recognized and he was appointed to be a “sub-rep”. The union and the Postal Service didn’t have the bargaining rights currently enjoyed by employees; we had what we called “collective begging”. Bargaining for wages, working conditions, hours of work, progressive discipline and defense of wrongful disciplinary actions was non-existent.

The infamous strike in 1970 established those things. Here in St. Paul, Larry was the force behind the strike. He was our “strike captain”. We walked out after our PM shifts and picketed in front of the main post office until Larry assigned us to stations before time for the letter carriers to report to work. He was the one who checked to see that the stations were covered. Without him the St. Paul strike probably would have not been successful.

After the strike. The unions gained the right to real collective bargaining and subsequently several unions merged. Thus, the NPU became the APWU. Larry was involved in making those things happen. After things settled down a

bit, Larry was appointed to the position of National Business Agent which he held for thirty or so years. During that time, he represented the Minneapolis Region (Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota) at arbitration hearings, during national and local negotiations, taught us how to investigate and process grievances aimed at protecting us and our rights, encouraged us to speak up when something was wrong, taught us how to approach our congressional leaders when action was needed on that level, and taught us that we deserved good and safe working conditions.

Comments I have received show the regard in which Larry is and always will be held e.g. “We’ve lost the best and the brightest”; He left his mark on bettering the working conditions for postal workers”. “He always tried to find common ground between the parties in order to resolve problems”. “His memory and almost total recall of past arbitration awards and positions taken in past negotiations was phenomenal”. “His ability to see all sides of a problem and quickly analyze ways to approach it helped solve many seemingly unsolvable problems”. “All postal employees owe him a debt of gratitude.”

I came into the Postal Service in 1967. I met Larry in 1968. He is the one who helped me see the value of collective bargaining (unions). He is the one who helped me see that collective bargaining would fail if employees like me didn’t step up and speak up. Over the years I found his advice and friendship to be unfailing. Many times, he pushed me into things I didn’t want to do or thought I couldn’t do. He had more faith in me than I had in myself. We were friends for so long that I came to see him as my brother. As I go through the rest of my life, I will carry lessons learned from Larry close to me. So long my friend. I’ll see you later.



May I offer my profound condolences to the Gervais family on the loss of their loved one and my friend, Larry.

Early in my career as a National Business Agent with the American Postal Workers Union I had the opportunity to work extensively with Larry. I can't tell you how impressed I have always been with Larry's ability to assemble facts, documents and evidence and his capability to immediately recall the necessary information when required.

He was my role model and my mentor as I believe he was the finest representative the APWU has ever produced. My fondest memory of Larry was working with him over a two-year period on the most significant case the APWU had to take on, which involves the subcontracting of 18,000 jobs to remote locations (to Remote Encoding Center) as the employer was using the latest technology to exploit essentially poor neighborhoods throughout the country, where they could employ people at starvation wages instead of keeping the work inhouse as good paying APWU union jobs.

Larry was the case manager who assembled thousands of documents as evidence and helped guide us to the most significant victory in APWU history in which a National Level Arbitrator returned all those jobs to postal workers. I've never been so impressed by a person's memory and wherewith-

al then or now 30 years later at the end of my career with the APWU.

Our lead attorney on the case (Anton Hajjar) said, "this is a \$4 Billion case, if this was the private sector a whole firm of attorneys would be working on the case". We only had 1 attorney and 3 National Business Agents, 2 of us were just newly elected, but we had Larry to lead us. He was simply amazing to watch put together arguments for every variable we faced in this overwhelmingly challenging case.

I credit Larry with making me the representative I became after being exposed to his incredible talent. We used to tease him calling him an "APWU Semi-Deity" for his seemingly divine abilities.

Goodbye my friend, may Larry Gervais rest in peace.

Fondly, Fraternally and Sincerely, Mike Gallagher



MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES

It's been awhile since I've written an article, and for that I do apologize. I've been trying to teach management this craft won't take crap, they still don't get it, even if it fell in their lap. I tell them if you do it this way, we won't grieve, like usual they fail, will they ever listen and start to believe.

One Manager in particular likes to argue and yell, he says "I don't interpret it that way", and "There's no way in hell". When will he learn, can he hear that ringing, it's the victory bell...

Ok, enough rhyming: Here's what's up

First, Thank you for sending me to the recent 4 state caucus. I learned quite a bit, how to write resolutions and then vote on them. I authored 2 resolutions and they will be considered at the Station Convention. If passed at the State Convention, they will be considered at the National Convention.

#1) Change PTF conversion time to 14 days and reflecting the correct conversion date.

#2) Change Management's length of time to post bids from 28 days to 14 days.

Fingers crossed they make it to the contract.

We are close to settling the Christmas Annex work grievance and hopefully by the time you read this it will have been settled in our favor.

We are once again grieving 2 more PTF conversion dates and I foresee 2-4 more grievances of the same nature having to be filed.

I'm fighting a suspension for a union brother and I feel confident we will be victorious as Management's case has multiple fatal flaws.

Another MVS Steward is going to be filing on improper scheduling/out of schedule premium for Management continuing to do

what they want, when they want. (SMGDH)

Lastly,

We settled a grievance for 204b doing bargaining unit work. It went to step 3 where it was settled and got language saying "204B/Dispatcher" will no longer be used AND then remanded back to step 2 for payment. This leaves the door open for a on-going and continuous grievance but also an ongoing and continuous VICTORY.

Very important issue

When you go for your D.O.T Exam...**DON'T SIGN ANYTHING RELEASING YOUR INFO.** There was a national settlement in which we do not sign anything releasing info to the Postal Service, all they need to know is **qualify** or **fail to qualify**....

Fighting For You, Fighting For Us, Fighting to Win

In Solidarity,

Adam Godes

St. Paul APWU MVS Craft Director



Winners from the February GMM

You must be present to Win!

\$300

Monica Rocha

(not present, you must be present to win)

\$50

Shelley Fleming

50/50

Al Weisse

Recent Grievance

Settlements

The Union settled grievances for a total \$47,157.

The Union is working hard for you, both in the grievance procedure and in the fight to Save America's Postal Service. We need you to step up to the plate! If you know a non-member, please ask them to consider joining, we all need to pull together to protect the Postal Service. The Local is approximately 90% organized.

Maintenance

A grievance was filed in January 2019 for each of the 26 Stations and Branches, regarding the issue that the Function 3B Staffing Packages, that were not reflecting Saturday cleaning and policing routes, as well as multiple tours, at the appropriate Station or Branch. The result of these grievances that were resolved at the end of December 2019 which rescinded the staffing packages of all 26 Stations and Branches. If Management determines that they are going to create new staffing packages they will have to add Saturday Cleaning/policing routes as well as add where applicable multiple tours. Management will have to staff the Stations and Branches accordingly. All FY 2019 Function 3B staffing Packages were rescinded meaning they no longer exist. Management is required to utilize the previous year's Function 3B staffing Packages. This is only for Laborer Custodial employees at the Stations and Branches.

Maintenance Craft Seniority is golden and it is what Article 38 Maintenance craft is based on. We have filed grievances against Management's mis-handling of intent of Article 38 regarding day-to-day seniority and how they improperly assign Laborer Custodial employees to cover Stations and Branches. The following language is what was agreed to at step 2:

“Management will comply with Article 38 Section 3, Management will ask by seniority and force by juniority when it is necessary for filling vacant unassigned

Maintenance duties, and other purposes including but not limited to operating powered industrial equipment, going to Stations and branches for daily custodial coverage”.

If you are directed to go to a Station or Branch to perform custodial duties and you are senior to other custodial employees and you do not want to go, you should request to see a Union steward. Management must comply with the above agreed to settlement language. That being stated, you have to do what your supervisor tells you to do, (unless you feel the directive is an unsafe directive) and file a grievance afterward.

Another issue that has been brought up a lot lately, can Management direct an employee to start at a Station or Branch that is not their normal duty position? Yes, on your overtime day, Management can direct you to report to another bid location such as, but not limited to, another Station or Branch, without having to pay you mileage or higher level pay. If you are working your normal work days and Management directs you to go to another duty Station or Branch to perform custodial duties, you should start your tour, at your regular duty station. Management is then, upon request, required to provide a Postal vehicle and pay you higher level pay for the required travel time.

POStPlan Step 4 Settlement

There is an exception, to the Privately Owned Vehicle MOU rule, for

Management providing postal vehicles are for those Maintenance Craft employees directly working in POStPlan offices. This is not applicable to those Maintenance Custodians working in identified POStPlan offices. If you are a Laborer Custodial employee working in an identified POStPlan office you will be asked if you are willing to drive your own personal vehicle to the RMPO's to and from, the APO, on a daily basis. If you tell Management that you are willing to drive your own personal vehicle you will retain the hours of the combined APO and RMPO's which in some cases should result in more hours for the part time regular (PTR) employees, as well as, possible hiring of more employees for the larger APO facilities. If you are one of these affected Custodial employees, I implore you to call the Union office to talk with a Maintenance steward for clarification information before you give Management any answers to any questions regarding POStPlan issues. You will be asked very important questions regarding day-to-day operations regarding the recent POStPlan Step 4 settlement that can have great ramifications to your job. So I stress to you that you should call and discuss any concerns prior to answering Management's questions regarding anything about POStPlan.

Please contact me, if you are on Tour 1 and Tour 3, and you are interested in becoming a Union Steward.

Jim Pierce
Maintenance Craft Director



NEW MEMBERS

Bridgett R. Susalla
Maintenance

Megan Anne Carey-Nelson
PSE Clerk

ST. PAUL, MN AREA LOCAL
APWU AFL-CIO
PO Box 21128
St. Paul, MN 55121
2261 Waters Dr
Mendota Heights, MN 55120

Phone 651-778-1637

We're on the Web!
stpaulapwu.org



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Twin Cities, Minnesota
Permit, No. 65

Return Service Requested

OFFICERS

- Todd ElkertonPresident
- Dave CookVice President
- Jason StevensIRD
- Shelley FlemingSecretary
- Tim Strong..... Treasurer
- Bruce Gutzke.....Clerk Craft Director
- Jim Pierce.....MNT Director
- Adam Godes MVS Director
- Kim Richardson.....Trustee Chair
- Terri GrinerTrustee Clerk
- Matt GarciaTrustee MNT
- Gary Walsh.....Trustee MVS

The new website is up and running!
Check it out !
Stpaulapwu.org

General Membership Meeting Schedule

January 28 - DAY MEETING 11:00 a.m.
February 25 - 6:15 p.m.
March 24 - 6:15 p.m.
April 28 - 6:15 p.m.
May 26 - 11:00 a.m. DAY MEETING
June 23 - 6:15 p.m.
No Meetings in July or August
September 22 - 6:15 p.m.
October 27 - 11:00 a.m. DAY MEETING
November 24 - 6:15 p.m.
No meeting in December

Free Pizza and Prizes!!!

Retiree Meeting!

Congrats to Steve Johnson who won \$50 at the January Retiree Meeting. You must be present to win!

We meet every other month, on the third Wednesday of the month, with a get together luncheon on the off months, all are welcome!

Retiree Meeting
March 18th
2261 Waters Dr

If attending the Union meeting and you need an ASL interpreter please notify the Union the Tuesday before the meeting.
651-778-1637