

APWU

St. Paul, MN Area
Local APWU AFL-CIO

POSTMARK

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River Falls
Somerset
Star Prairie
Willson

Former St. Paul Area Local President Willie Mellen, who was elected to National Clerk Craft Business Agent in 2001 announces his retirement effective March 4, 2022.

Willie started as a Steward in the St. Paul Area Local in 1987 and served two different times as a Local President and in the middle of these terms also served as the MN State President before stepping into the National Business Agent ranks. Willie has served the members with passion and in his role as a Business Agent has impacted many Postal Workers along the way.

Willie's strengths were on full display as a Union Educator and Arbitration Advocate. The education classes Willie taught were always filled with information and provided clear direction on how to develop contractual violations. As an Arbitration Advocate, Willie was always prepared and this usually meant the Union's position was upheld. His strength in arbitration also allowed him to negotiate settlements effectively as once a case was scheduled management would usually pick up the phone and want to negotiate a settlement.

I want to personally thank Willie for all his years of service on behalf of the St. Paul Area Local Membership for his years of service and the impact he has had on all our lives. I wish him a long and healthy retirement.

The USPS has started processing the US Governments Free Covid-19 test kit program at the Parcel Sorting Annex in St. Paul.

The Annex is part of the NDC and not directly a facility

the St. Paul Area Local represents. However, there is some involvement and workers from the St. Paul Area Local who are being utilized. There are 7 BMEU clerks who have volunteered to be inventory control personnel, they are being asked to keep track of the COVID-19 kits as they arrive at the facility until they leave the facility. The hours of operation are 7 am – 7 pm, 7 days a week. Also, Management at this point is using up to 10 PSE employees from the St. Paul Installation who will be moved temporarily to the Annex to help process and fill the public's request for these kits.

We have had several meetings at the beginning of this process as it gets up and is running. At the writing of this article, it has been up and running for a week they are presently operating at about 40 percent. Management has indicated they may be seeking more PSE's from the St. Paul Installation.

The National APWU has sent out ballots for you to vote on the Tentative Agreement which was reached on December 9th, 2021. At the Executive Board Meeting in January the Executive Board unanimously voted to endorse this Tentative Agreement. We encourage all the members to return the ballots the must be returned no later than February 23, 2022.

Todd Elkerton, President



Requesting Scheduled Leave

Back in October 2020 all employees should have had a stand-up talk regarding the updating of the Enterprise Leave Request Application (eLRA). The eLRA allows employees to request unscheduled leave for unscheduled absences due to illness/injury, personal emergency, community disaster, or Wounded Warrior through the Postal Service LiteBlue website. You will need your Employee Identification Number (EIN) and USPS password to access LiteBlue to request leave.

The update to the eLRA Application allows employees to request scheduled leave as well unscheduled leave. This is merely another method of requesting leave, but does not prohibit an employee from manually completing and submitting a PS Form 3971, Request for or Notification of Absence, if preferred.

Once the request for leave has been submitted, the employee's supervisor will receive an email notification advising of the leave request. The supervisor will review the leave request and deter-

mine whether the requested absence is scheduled or unscheduled in accordance with the provisions outlined in Section 511.4 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM). The supervisor is also responsible for approving or disapproving the leave request in accordance with ELM Section 511.21(c).

It has come to the Union's attention that some EAS personnel are telling employees that they cannot use the eLRA to request scheduled leave. If this is the case, request a steward.

Matthew Garcia, MCT

T-2 Maintenance Steward

Motor Vehicle Service

So I changed my tour for a couple days to see how things were being handled when drivers returned from stations and needed to get unloaded.

It seems that I started quite a crapstorm because certain people in another craft had to actually perform their duties and their coworkers just did it without saying anything.

I also found out that the other craft files grievances when the drivers offload scan claiming it's their job and according to what's called an RI-399 it's their job only. Here's something I'd like to point out.

The RI-399 is a job inventory listing between 2 crafts, the Mail Handlers and Clerks. The RI-399 does not pertain to the Motor Vehicle Services craft at all...and it's clearly written in one of our Contract books called the JCIM. I was told something along the lines that MVS is a separate entity and that were looked at like we're contractors. If we're a separate entity then why do we wear postal uniforms, drive postal vehicles, work in the same building, and get paychecks

from the same place they do?

We are to ASSIST in the loading and unloading of our trailers. (Assist means that someone is there to help) So that means after we scan (until we're told different) we bring our rolling equipment to the dock plate and position the equipment for the mail handler to grab. Pallets are left in the trailer for the mail handlers to grab with the power lifts...remember...just like stations, we are not allowed on the workroom floor.

If we stand together and don't deviate from this, sooner or later it will work...I am counting on you to keep this up.

The ANNEX.....another monster in itself. Given to the NDC, which has NO transportation except Jockeys and relied heavily upon St. Paul MVS drivers to move their mail... can you say "Great Planning".

I am trying to work it out to where we will have runs added into our schedules, but until then please do the runs as frustrating as it might be.

I'm working thru the list of grievances that have held our bidding process up and slowly but steadily I am getting them handled and we will bid. I will post updates in the bulletin board to keep you well informed.

I guess we are getting 2 electric jockey trucks in the near future and I'm excited to see how they'll work as our current jockey trucks are in my opinion "Junk"...constantly throwing codes and driving the mechanics at the VMF bonkers with having to deal with them on a daily basis.

Still dealing with the same grievances on a daily basis so not much to write about on that part so until next time...

Fighting For You

Fighting For Us

Fighting To Win...

In Solidarity,

Adam Godes

Covid

The spike in Covid positive cases within the St Paul instillation has made it clear, Covid is still here and effecting every day Postal life. As such we have been receiving many inquiries on filing for worker's compensation benefits from members who have tested Covid positive. Although we have posted bulletins and discussed in previous POSTMARKS, I think it is important to do so again.

If you are a postal employee, career employee or non-career employee, you are entitled to file a claim with the Office of Workers Compensation Programs. The one requirement is that you must have worked at the Post Office at some point during the 21-days prior to your COVID-19 diagnosis. Employees that have claims approved are entitled to have their medical costs and lost wages paid.

Approved Claimants are also entitled to request that any annual sick or annual leave used be "bought back" and redeposited to their leave balances. In order to receive benefits, those diagnosed must submit a claim. Do **not** expect management to do this for you and do **not** expect them to inform you that you have the right to file a claim.

When you file a claim for COVID-19 you are entitled to request continuation of pay (COP). This is pay at your regular rate of pay paid to you by the postal service during your COVID-19 illness absence. You are entitled to COP **if you file your claim within 30-days of your diagnosis.**

If you are filing more than 30-days after

your diagnosis, you are not entitled to COP but can submit a CA-7 and CA-7a to the Federal OWCP office for partial payment of lost wages.

Please note, that for the first three days, the law requires a "waiting period" that you must use sick, annual, or leave without pay (LWOP) before COP kicks in. However, if your absence lasts longer than 14-days, the first three days will be converted to COP. Any non-scheduled days also count towards the three day "waiting" period. COP can be paid for up to 45 calendar days after which any additional missed time will be paid as worker's compensation payments by OWCP.

In order to file a claim, we strongly recommend that you do so online through e-COMP.

You must register at <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>. Doing this ensures that OWCP receives your claim form, receives the necessary test results because you upload the documents. Using e-COMP removes management errors from the initial claims processing which is all to common. The instructions below are a general guide as what to expect when initiating a claim:

To file a claim and to receive COP:

- Notify your supervisor that you are sick with COVID-19
- Submit a PS-Form 3971 and check COP as the reason
- Register on e-COMP if you have not

done so: <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>

- Once registered on e-COMP, login to your account click on new claim on top right of page
- On next screen, make sure "Federal Employee" is selected
- Make sure to select Postal Service as the agency, then Click "File Claim"
- Click "next", Select the COVID-19 Claim and enter information requested in the online form
- Once requested information is entered, upload a copy of the positive laboratory COVID-19 results or other relevant medical documentation
- After uploading, make sure you select "continuation of pay"

It is recommended you save a copy of your claim or at least write down the ECN number for your claim. Take the time and protect yourself and your family, file a claim if you have tested positive for Covid 19! Any further questions contact the stewards office.
(Credit: US DOL and APWU.org)

Solidarity,
Dave Cook

Recent Grievance Settlements

The Union settled grievances for a total of \$ \$67,403 in January.

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.

Happy New Year

2021 is now over and the new year has started. Although 2021 wasn't as bad as 2020 in general, the surge of the omicron variant made it a close second. In my opinion it seemed like more employees got COVID19 in the last two months than the ten months previous. If you were one of the unfortunate employees that got COVID after the EFEL has expired, there are ways to get compensated if you had a positive test. This has been discussed in previous articles, flash bulletins and Dave Cooks article in this Postmark, if you have questions contact the Union.

Our National Business Agent Willie Mellen has made the decision to retire this spring. Todd is considering putting his name in the hat as one of the candidates for that position. If that happens and he is selected there will be some movement in the Union office. Although we don't know how it will all turn out in the end we do know we will be down one more person in the Union office. If this continues, where our more experience stewards move on by retiring or seeking higher offices and new stewards don't step up to replace them, the membership will suffer.

When I started as a Union steward back in 2000, almost every steward or officer that taught me has either retired or moved on. It takes years, if not decades to learn what I and the other officers have, to get us to where we are now. Stewards have to step up now so they have years or decades to be trained with us experienced stewards. To be honest I think there is only one experienced steward left that will still be here for more than 10+ years at this point.

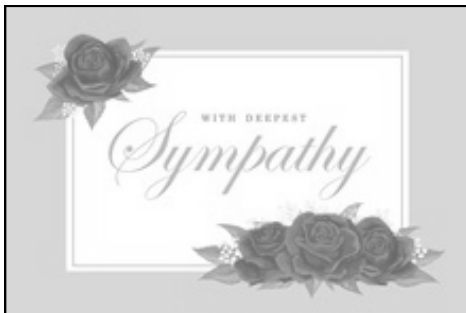
To move on to a different topic, here at the plant several clerk employees have been getting grievance settlements and others in the same units didn't get them and are asking why. I do

try and get out there and talk to as many people as I can but there are only so many hours in a day so I thought I would try and clarify here to answer some of the questions. The grievances I filed were in reference to improper use of 204bs. Management can use a 204b in a vacancy or absence if done properly. Unfortunately, they did not do it properly and last year I filed over 70 grievances on that issue.

The argument is if they need help they should be creating more lead clerk jobs. If they have a Mail Handler supervising clerks there has to be a vacancy or it's an automatic violation. When filing a grievance not only do you have to prove there was a violation of the contract you also have to show who was harmed. If they need more lead clerks they should have had them work more hours (if they were OTDL employees) and if they needed more than that, they should have people come in on full tour overtime. Of course, if someone comes in on overtime they would have to be on the overtime desired list. Which brings me to the remedy, the grievances I filed, the remedy first goes to the lead clerks. Then to the overtime desired list (OTDL) employees that were on the OTDL at the time of the violation, in the section where the 204b worked. I then had to verify the lead clerks and OTDL employees were actually working at the time of the violation.

I will finish with this, soon after you receive this Postmark you should be receiving your choice vacation slip (...will commence no later than March 1st). If you are going to fill it out you have until March 21, 2022 to give it back to your supervisor. They should be returned to you no later than March 31st.

Jason Stevens
Industrial Relations Director



The Local has learned of the death of the following members:

Our deepest sympathies to their family and friends.

Robert Brown

Patricia Ladd

Donald Miller

Maintenance

I want to thank Matt Garcia and John Turnberg for the hard work they are doing to represent the Maintenance Craft. Without these two volunteering to be Union stewards to fight for you, we would not be able to hold Management accountable.

I am looking for Maintenance Craft APWU members on tour 1 and tour 3 to step up and volunteer to be Union stewards to help us keep Management accountable. Currently we have had a couple employees step up but unfortunately they are on tour 2, and we are at our limit of Union stewards on tour 2. If you see either Matt or John make sure to thank them for their hard work and dedication.

One of the major issues we are currently holding Management accountable for is their complete disregard for Seniority in the Maintenance Craft. Specifically, regarding the Laborer Custodial Occupational Group Tour 2 employees, where the supervisors have taken a stubborn stance that they can reassign Laborer Custodian employees as they see fit, and in most if not all cases this goes against the Ask-by-Seniority / Force-by-Juniority requirements placed on them in the National Agreement, specifically Article 38.3. Supervisors and in some cases, Managers are outright refusing to comply with grievance settlements agreed to by the parties, because Management is not held accountable when they refuse to comply.

As I write this Article we are preparing to meet with Management with approximately 80-100 grievances regarding Ask-by-Seniority / Force-by-Juniority and Principle Assignment Area /

Preferred Duty Assignment day-to-day failure to comply issues. Where Management refuses to apply these basic contractual requirements when covering vacancies and Absences at the Stations and Branches. Management MUST apply the Ask-by-Seniority / Force-by-Juniority method for filling Call-ins, vacancies, absences, etc., every day.

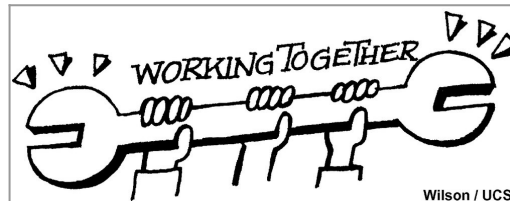
The ask-by-seniority /force-by-juniority is not only for the Laborer Custodians, it is for all Craft employees. If you believe that you were bypassed or violated regarding your seniority for any of the many scenarios that Seniority should be applied, request to see a Union Steward, to help you if there is a need.

Management has stated that they are committed to meeting with the Union on a regular basis, to address the magnitude of issues, here in the Maintenance Department, but so far, the meetings have been sparse to non-existent. I will try to change this by setting up meetings with the new Manager of Maintenance. We will see if he agrees to meet regularly.

If you have any contractual concerns or you believe that your contractual rights were violated, do not hesitate to request to see a Union steward to help resolve any issues.

If you are on tour 1 or tour 3 both here at the Saint Paul P&DC or the Twin Cities L&DC and you are interested in becoming a Union steward, please contact me.

Jim Pierce
Maintenance Craft Director



Hello Brothers and Sisters

Hello Brothers and Sisters

St. Paul Area Local has been having Monthly Joint Labor/Management Safety & Health Committee meetings for the last 25 years along with Quarterly Safety Audits. Now there is a bump in the road. The St. Paul P&DC Safety and Health Inspection for Quarter 2 2022 was scheduled to start on Wednesday January 26, 2022. APWU (American Postal Workers Union) and NPMHU (National Postal

Mailhandlers Union) were in attendance, but Management was not. Acting Senior Plant Manager Dornbusch had decided that he is pulling most management to go to the Minneapolis Annex to package Covid kits. The monthly Joint Labor Safety & Health Meetings will also not be taking place until further notice as Management is too busy working outside of the St. Paul P&DC. There are many things to be fixed continually. It has been proven through every meeting and inspection. We will

continue to fight for the safety of the members and push for these meetings and inspections to continue.

In solidarity,

Shelley R. Fleming

Steward/Trustee Chair/Safety Representative

Welcome New Members

Dawita Abera
Ossama Ahmed
Wondiwoson Ansha
Harriet Asamdah
Rahel Asana
Xleber Berhe
Ethan Cassatt
Abinet Digafle
Dhekkama Dukale
Birhane Embaye
Dana Fitzpatrick
Rachel Gandara
Irene Ghatt
Danielle Griffin
Steve Griffen

Kiflu Hailu
Eileen Hickman
Alexander Holycross
Natalie Jensen
Bryce Johnson
Natalia Johnson
Binyam Kebede
Sosesna Legesse
Elias Maru
Nicholas McDonough
Armani Montgomery
Maria Oropeza
Reginald Page
Laura Riesselman
Jazsmyn Sieverson

Taylor Thomas
Teresa Villarreal
Mesin Wakshum
Jefferson Walker
Ifrah Warsame
Jamila Warsame
Christina Wills
Melaney Williams
Arknita Williams
Connie Williams
Mekeds Wolde
Yohannes Worku
Temessen Zeleke

January GMM Drawings

\$50 Door Prize

Jim Pierce

\$300 Drawing

Ross Padi (not present)

You must be present to win.

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ST. PAUL AREA LOCAL APWU RETIREES CHAPTER

The Retirees met in January 2022 in hopes of electing all new officers in accordance with a November 2021 motion. The St. Paul Area Local sent a letter out to all our retiree members informing them of the purpose of the meeting. Due to weather and a spike in COVID-19 concerns they were unable to reach a quorum. The retirees in attendance asked for the election to be put off until the next scheduled meeting which is March and assurances were made there would be people who will step up to fill

the positions. So, I hope to see you all in March where we can elect new leadership and see the retiree chapter continue.

Todd Elkerton

President

Proposed Constitution Change

As there was no quorum in January, the following change will need to be acted upon at the March meeting:

Constitutional Change

In accordance with Article 15, Section 2, the St. Paul, MN Executive Board submits the following amendment to the Constitution:

"Strike \$12.00 and replace with \$14.00 in Article 3, Section 4.1"

This changes the amount a member of the Local who retires will be required to pay to maintain non-voting honorary membership.

Dues Increase!

Starting January 1, 2022

Retiree dues will increase to \$20 per year. (\$14 for dues, \$6 for death benefit!)

**ST. PAUL, MN AREA LOCAL
APWU AFL-CIO
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2261 Waters Dr
Mendota Heights, MN 55120**

Phone 651-778-1637

OFFICERS

Todd ElkertonPresident
Dave CookVice President
Jason StevensIRD
Camille TuckerSecretary
Tim Strong..... Treasurer
Bruce Gutzke.....Clerk Craft Director
Jim Pierce.....MNT Director
Adam Godes MVS Director
Shelley Fleming.....Trustee Chair
Sue RodriguezTrustee Clerk
Matt GarciaTrustee MNT
Ray KoserMVS Trustee

We're on the Web!
stpaulapwu.org



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Twin Cities, Minnesota
Permit, No. 65

Return Service Requested

Retiree Dues for 2022 are due!

With death benefit— \$20.00

Just membership - \$14.00

Send to:

PO Box 21128

St. Paul, MN 55121

General Membership Meeting
Schedule

November 23rd 6:15 p.m.

No meeting in December

2022

January 25	11:00 A.M.
February 22	6:15 p.m.
March 22	6:15 p.m.
April 26	6:15 p.m.
May 24	11:00 a.m.
June 28	6:15 p.m.
No meetings in July or August	
Sept 27	6:15 p.m.
October 25	11:00 a.m.
November 22	6:15 p.m.

General Membership Meeting

February 22, 2022

6:15 p.m.

Attend in person, or via Zoom!

Call the union office and give us your email address to receive a zoom link.

Or attend in person at 2261 Waters Drive

Refreshments served

Retiree Meeting

March 16, 2022

At the Union Office 2261 Waters Dr

Attend in person or via Zoom!

Officers to be elected!!!