

# MAIL HANDLER MESSENGER

May 2010

## MAIL HANDLER NEWS

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*Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and may not reflect the official opinion of Local 297 NPMHU and its officers or representatives. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided by the publication date. Please contact us if you believe an error or an omission has occurred for corrections to be run in future issues. Thank You.*



## President's Report By John Savala, Local President

The first order of Local 297 Tee Shirts was received recently and already they've been spotted on the workroom floor, proudly being worn by Mail Handlers. They look great! Order yours today. Please insure you're using the order form dated 4-10-2010 because prices have been adjusted to cover the cost of sales tax, which was originally overlooked. Order forms can be obtained from union stewards or at our website.

The Postal Service continues introducing ways to reduce costs (mostly labor costs). Products and services such as Automated Postal Centers (APCs), stamps by mail or printed online, and adding more Postal Contract Units are only some methods of cost cutting. All bargaining unit employees—Mail Handlers, Clerks, VMF Drivers, and Carriers—should be concerned about postal work going to private contractors, vending machines or online services.

It is well known the Postal Service wants Congress to eliminate the requirement to deliver mail six days per week. By now you may have received a stand-up talk and laminated card concerning the Postal Service's five-day delivery plan. The Postal Service claims that eliminating one day of mail delivery will help it meet its current budget shortfalls. The NPMHU is opposed to the plan, believing such cuts could add to the pace of mail declines. The APWU has contacted me about the possibility of staging informational pickets and appearing on radio programs to let the public know where we stand on this issue.

Closings and consolidations of postal facilities continue to take place nationwide. Work once performed by Mail Handlers in some stations and branches has been lost to clerks and carriers after technology reduced the amount of our work there. And in some cases the company has simply taken work from us, gave it to other crafts and abolished our jobs, forcing the Union to file grievances. Later in this newsletter you can read the first of two articles we'll publish concerning your seniority when excessing takes place.

Local 297's financial health continues to be good. Staying that way becomes more difficult each year, however. Costs keep rising while revenue fails to keep pace. This year, as in every year for the last several, the number of Associate Members declined. This trend will continue without significant improvements to the Mail Handlers Benefit Plan to make it more competitive. It is good money management and the purchase of our building that allows me to say we remain in good shape financially.

Thanks to all of you who continue supporting the Union through your dues payments and your involvement.



# Around the Local

## MID AMERICA DISTRICT

I'm happy to report Springfield Branch President Chris Bentley's removal action was halted and he is back on the job. I firmly believe Bentley's removal and the long period of time it took to get him back to work were directly related to his many successes as a union representative.

The relationship between the Union and management at the NDC deteriorated to the point that regularly scheduled labor/management meetings ceased, prompting the Union to seek outside help through the Intervention Initiative. The parties met and all the right things were said but it still remains to be seen whether or not positive changes will result.

When KCMO P&DC management decided it would no longer pay mail handlers higher-level pay when operating electrical pallet jacks, the Union grieved the issue and was able to get the problem fixed prior to arbitration. Steward Marie Williams and Arbitration Advocate Van Greathouse did a great job representing our position. Now, just to be spiteful, I've heard some management officials refuse to make this equipment available just so it doesn't have to pay Mail Handlers the higher-level pay. That is a childish response. Let me reiterate what I said in a previous newsletter. 'There is no requirement of management to provide labor saving devices. If it wants to transport mail the way it did 30 years ago, it has that right; but it has to know it's going to take more people in order to do so.' Here's what you need to do. Work safely. Get help if a container or skid is too heavy. Do not let containers fill up to the same level before you pull them if

you're now going to have to move them manually when you previously used PIE, unless you can do so safely. Complete and submit Safety Hazard forms as necessary.

I contacted the Mid America District Office with the suggestion we use Joint Education and Training (JET) funds to provide supervisors and Union representatives education and training opportunities to improve the labor/management climate at the facilities I just wrote about. A committee will be established soon so we can begin the process of requesting JET funds from Postal Headquarters.

## CENTRAL PLAINS DISTRICT

Recently it became known the Central Plains District is getting ready to make changes to mail handler staffing in some facilities in its jurisdiction. Presently there is talk that 7 of the 8 full time regular positions at the Salina Post Office will be abolished and the work given to the clerk craft. I am speculating the Postal Service believes it can do this because of the absence of an Installation Inventory, which is a listing of the work that exists in a facility and which craft performs it. Getting Mail Handlers out of post offices and associate offices and into processing plants is a Postal Headquarters mandate. At the time of this writing, no official notification has been received by the Union but we are trying to get any information we can. The Union will schedule a Labor/Management as soon as possible.

## POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Here's another plug for the NPMHU Political Action Committee which allows us to have a voice in the halls of Congress by providing monetary support for Congresspersons and Senators

that support working class issues, especially issues important to Mail Handlers. The PAC has helped influence legislation assisting the USPS's funding issues as well as the FERS Sick Leave Bill that was recently passed. If every member gave just \$26.00 per year we would have a PAC capable of doing even more for the working class in America. Please consider contributing.

## PAY STUB INFO

Beginning in March, ePayroll became available through LiteBlue to those employees who receive their salaries by direct deposit. It offers more detailed pay and benefit information than the traditional earnings statement. It has, with reduced abbreviations and added information on leave use and balances, become more comprehensible.

## NATIONAL REASSESSMENT PROCESS

Implementation of the National Reassessment Process (NRP) for Limited Duty employees that was reported on in the last newsletter was stalled for several months but is currently being rolled out in KCMO stations and branches, St. Joseph, Shawnee Mission, and the NDC. The current roll-out is aimed at employees who were hurt on the job with an accepted OWCP claim but have not yet been given a modified job offer. Be sure to ask for a steward if you are instructed to attend an NRP meeting.



# Wichita P&DC

**Marssille Ridley, Branch President**

MANAGEMENT has taken the position that the load stations at AI 64 & 65 will not be staffed by the mail handler craft on a consistent basis on tour 3. It has also directed clerks to take flat sorter mail—mail that is normally loaded on the belts at AI 64 & 65—to their prep stations and work it. The Union continues to grieve this issue and request that mailhandlers be paid at the applicable overtime rate.

JURISDICTION grievances concerning clerks palletizing empty equipment and transporting empty equipment to and from automation have been mailed to the Regional Dispute Resolution Committee.

THE rest of this article is

written with the hope that we all fully understand that times are drastically changing and the Postal Service expects more production from less people and that it is time for us to start sticking together, stop playing games and speaking negatively about each other and the Union. We all need to make an honest effort to strengthen our relationships and to understand that we all need to work as a team. It is your Union and you have a right to voice your opinion. But we must remember mutual respect toward each other when talking with a steward or me about a decision that was made that you disagree with. All decisions are made in accordance with the National Agreement, the LMOU, and

other handbooks and manuals.

SAYING thanks when a union representative helps you means a lot. Sometimes we will make a mistake and some of you do not let us forget it. But we move on because we simply cannot dwell on our mistakes but we do learn from them.

MANAGEMENT is very aware of misunderstandings between the Union and craft members. They enjoy this division because it helps to reduce the focus on them. I will end this article with this thought: "We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them."



# Topeka LPC

**Steve Dempewolf, Branch President**

**Greeting from the Topeka Label Printing Center.**

A lot of changes have occurred recently, mainly among management as all have transferred to the Distribution Center. Some permanent replacements have been named but we currently are operating with an acting plant manager. It will be different having new management from top to bottom on board.

A change in label format for the 3849-label format is supposed to be in the planning stage, but no details have been confirmed.

The color-coded tag label is soon to be available nationwide through the e-Busy system. We expect this to increase our workload. Management has gone so far as saying there might be a need to hire more people. Time will tell.

**The branch meeting for the second quarter will be held on May 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM at the Blind Tiger Restaurant located at 417 Southwest 37<sup>th</sup> Street.**

Other than that things remain relatively quiet here, as they usually are.

Steve Dempewolf, BP  
LPC Topeka, Ks.



# KCK NDC

## LaWanda McGhee, Branch President

KCK NDC Mail Handlers have experienced many changes since my last newsletter article. There have been constant schedule changes made to the Tour 3 mid-day shift. Each change is called permanent by management. Management also made changes to Tour 2 by reducing the number of jobs through attrition and reversion. At one point management wanted to make changes one week before the Thanksgiving holiday but the union was able to convince management, at the very least, to wait until after the Thanksgiving holiday. The union originally asked management to wait until after the first of the year to make any changes but management resisted, insisting the changes be made sooner to meet the NDC operational needs.

Changes in the way mail is delivered and processed have resulted in drastic changes to clerk craft employees, forcing some to change facilities or crafts. Mail Handlers at the KCK NDC have been fortunate so far and no one has been excessed to other facilities.

With the many different starting times, management seems unable to get overtime called correctly. It is the Union's position that management cannot make a non-OTDL mail handler stay for overtime until 5:00 a.m. and PTF'S until 7:00 a.m. without first calling before tour overtime for the Overtime Desired Mail Handlers who report to work at 6:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. We have been filing grievances on this issue for years and at some point management has to use the ODL MH's and stop paying the grievances.

The NDC has 94 grievances logged into the system as of March 2010. Many of them are over issues that have already been grieved and/or arbitrated and won by the union. It costs approximately \$5,000.00 to process each grievance from step 1 to arbitration. Talk about wasting

money! The rest of the grievances are for discipline and overtime bypass.

Due to the toxic work environment and lack of treatment with dignity and respect between labor and management, it was necessary to request outside intervention from the parties at the National level. Western Area representatives were dispatched to Kansas City to facilitate a meeting between the parties in an effort to work together to settle disputes. Both sides put their differences on the table and I believe the intervention was very successful and we came to an understanding—the National Agreement “our contract is our bond” settlements and Arbitration Awards must be adhered to. So, to all mail handlers, keep your heads up and continue doing a great job. Change is coming. The dignity and respect levels will change for both sides. If anyone has any problem that I am unaware of, you may call me on Wednesday of any week in the union office. You can always drop a note in my mailbox if you can't make the call.

Another issue discussed at the meeting was sick leave and LWOP and how it affects your coworkers and your retirement. So far this fiscal year sick leave is at 6.1%. When combined with LWOP, the rate of unscheduled absences is 14% to date. During the same period, the overtime percentage is at 12%. Management complains that all these numbers are too high. It is obvious to me that the changes made at this facility simply are not working and I pointed this out to management.

I know we don't live in a perfect world and life happens. I know that lately it has been very difficult to be regular in attendance because of all the changes, difficult working conditions and overtime. Be careful when you are off on sick leave. If you are sick then that is what the leave is for and you earned it. Just remember

when you run out of sick leave and you go into a LWOP status, every 80 hours takes away from your annual leave and eventually affects your years of service, which then affects your retirement.

When you get to the last step in discipline and it goes to arbitration, attendance is the one subject that is often difficult to win by the union. One reason is that discipline is supposed to be corrective and not punitive and second, is that there are many steps that management has to take before you get to that last step where management can terminate an employee. So, unless there are some procedurally defective issues, attendance deficiencies are often very difficult to win by the union. Monitor your leave usage by reviewing your Form 3972 periodically. Do not sign a 3971 if it does not reflect the type of leave you requested and if there are any discrepancies. You can always request these things through your steward if you have a problem getting it through your supervisor.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank ALL my stewards for a job well done. Out of all the grievances logged in this year so far, 80 have been on Tour 3. I have a very faithful team of stewards that fight very hard for every mail handler at the KCK NDC. The results of a grievance may not always turn out the way we would like them but a good fight is always better than no fight. Nobody is an expert on everything. Stewards keep up the good work through these trying times.

Union members don't forget to order your T-Shirts. You can give your orders to any steward. Payment is by check or money order made out to NPMHU Local 297.

**Our annual picnic will be held September 11, 2010 from 11 AM to 8 PM at Pierson Park, Shelter House #2.**



# Springfield P&DC

**Chris Bentley, Branch President**

I'm glad to say I have been back at work since Feb. 6, 2010, after management spent 15 weeks trying to fire me. Their plan didn't work, obviously. If you hear grinding noises coming from management offices, that's the sound of them gnashing their teeth in frustration.

In a way, being fired for the third time in my 11-year Postal career is a tribute to our success in Springfield. Over the 8 years I have been branch president, we have won and distributed over \$1.2 million in grievance settlements and arbitration awards. We have also changed many bad management policies, including getting rid of bump caps, increasing annual leave percentages, and restricting management's ability to move us off bid jobs. We filed and won Labor Charges against management, one of the few places in the country that was able to do so during the Bush presidency when the Labor Department was very anti-Union. We have restored the jobs of fired Mail Handlers and reduced or eliminated discipline for many more. We helped hasten the departure of several bad supervisors and managers, including Phil Renner, Bob Rubino, Robert Monroe, and others.

Those accomplishments are thanks to all of you who stood up for

yourselves, asked to see your steward when something wasn't right, filed grievances or EEO complaints, and wrote statements when the Union asked you to. Our Union is strong because of Mail Handlers who stand up for themselves and one another.

Obviously, there is still a lot that needs to be improved. That's why I'm happy to be back, so I can continue what we've been doing.

I am grateful to steward Rick Western, who worked hard to keep grievances alive and represent everyone possible while I was out of the building, spending a lot of his own time to do so. Thanks Rick!

I'm also grateful to Local 297 President John Savala, who skillfully negotiated my return to work without having to go to arbitration. Thanks John!

And I'm grateful to all the Postal workers in Springfield who supported me, kept me informed, sent cards to me and my family, and even prayed for us. Thanks to all of you, especially the Dillstroms, Bruce Williams, Clara Teague, Judy Lanier, Bev Reed, and everyone else who helped.

While I was out of the building, management failed to pay grievance settlements and arbitration awards, and refused to abide by other agreements. Since I have been back, they have paid

most of what they owe (but still not all), and have begun following many of the agreements (but still not all).

The most positive sign is that in April management paid me to go to Kansas City for a day, so that John Savala and I could negotiate directly with management's head of Labor Relations, Karen E. Jones, over the bad labor-management atmosphere in Springfield. She said the right things, and even apologized for the way Springfield management has behaved towards Mail Handlers. She promised that from now on Mail Handlers will be allowed to see stewards promptly when they ask, that stewards will get sufficient Union time, and that management will make a real effort to stop their most frequent violations of the contract, such as calling overtime wrong, moving Mail Handlers off their duty assignments improperly, and letting truck drivers do Mail Handler work on the docks.

As we all know, though, there are two parts to promises: Making them and keeping them. She made the right promises; now we'll have to make sure Springfield management keeps them.

Thanks again for your support, I appreciate it.

**TOPEKA P & DF**

KAYLYNNE WOODS  
CODY SHANKLAND

**KCMO P & DC**

RONDA RICHARDSON  
DAVID BETZEL

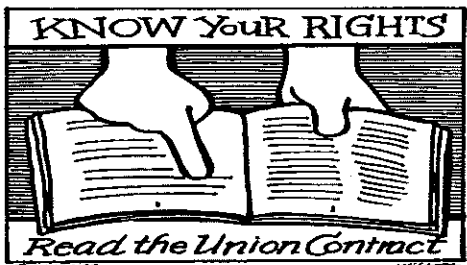
**NEW MEMBERS**

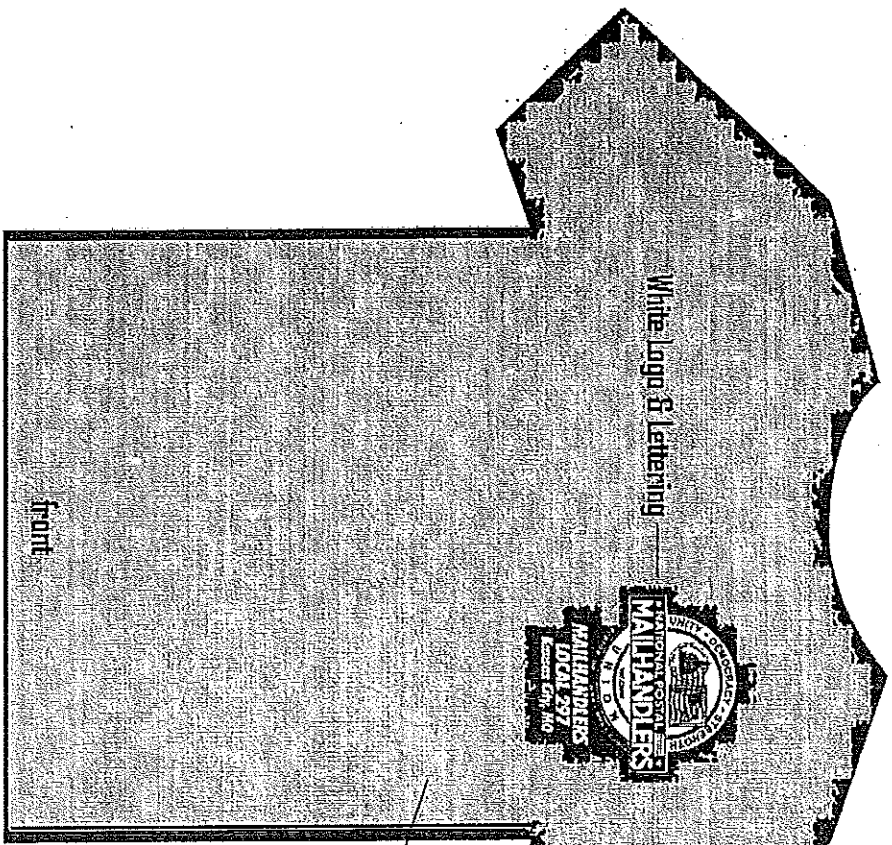
**KCK NDC**

SAMUEL RIOJAS  
MATHEW MALLOT III  
JEANNE FREEMAN

**SPRINGFIELD**

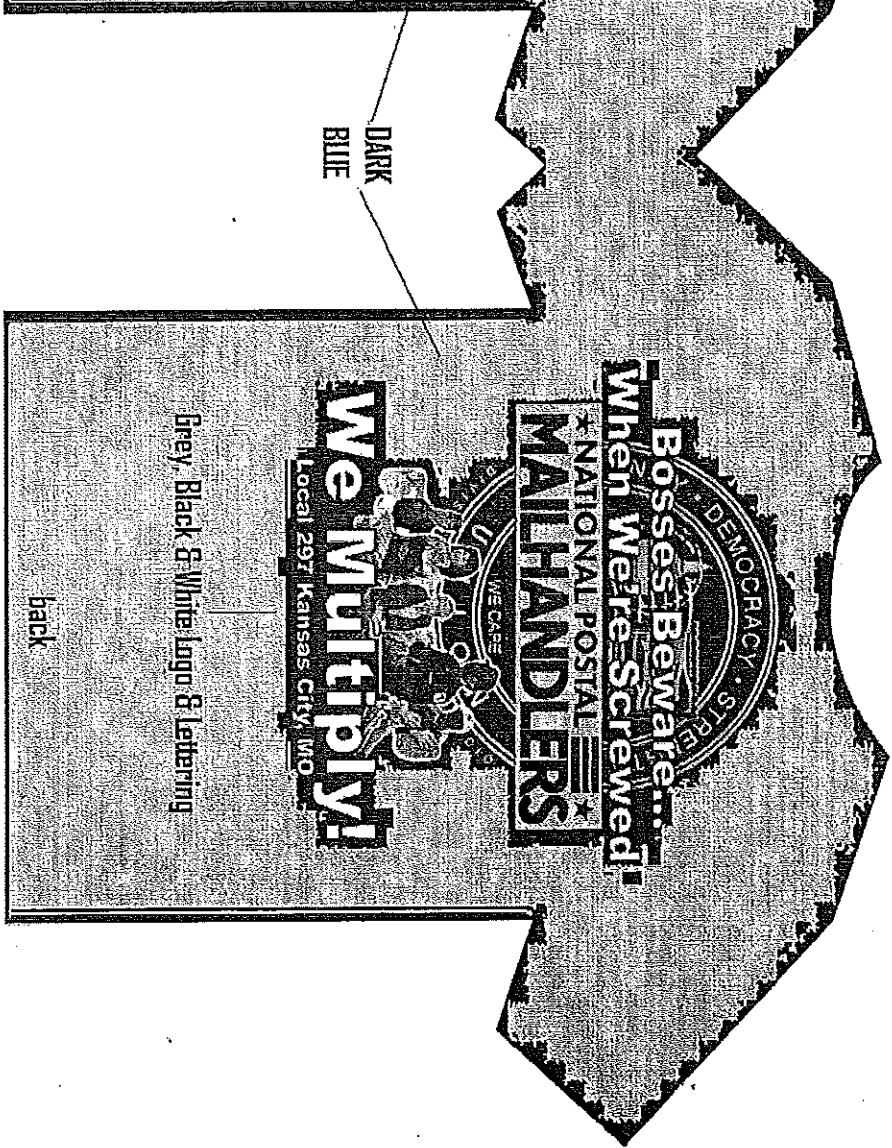
ALAN PAYTON





White Logo & Lettering

front



DARK BLUE

Bosses Beware...  
When We're Screwed!

We Multiply!

Grey, Black & White Logo & Lettering

back

**National Postal Mail Handlers Union-Local 297**

9429 E. 63rd St. 816-753-6030  
 Raytown, Mo. 64133 816-753-8284  
 1297hq@earthlink.net



**T-SHIRT ORDER FORM 04-10-2010**

**ORDERED BY:**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT PHONE NUMBER** \_\_\_\_\_

**FACILITY AND TOUR** \_\_\_\_\_

SIZE	QUANTITY	AMOUNT EACH	SUBTOTAL
S		11.35	
M		11.35	
L		11.35	
XL		11.35	
2XL		12.85	
3XL		14.35	
4XL		15.85	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	

- Orders will be accepted from dues paying members only.
- Checks are to be made payable to NPMHU Local 297 and must accompany an order form. Local 297 DOES NOT make a profit from sales.
- Checks returned due to insufficient funds will result in the member being disallowed from making future purchases.
- A minimum order of 48 shirts is required before it can be submitted to the supplier. Shirts will be shipped to Local Union HQ and then delivered to your facility.
- Shirts are Union Made in America and can be viewed at [npmhulocal297.com](http://npmhulocal297.com).



# KCMO P&DC

*Hugh McCleary, Branch President*

## FROM HUGH MC CLEARY

The overall state of the Mail Handler craft in this installation is very good, however, there are a few situations that continue to cause us great concern. We are working to solve these problems.

Lately I have noticed the attitude and behavior of some managers and supervisors has worsened and workers are being tested at times. For the sake of a civil discourse and the need to maintain your jobs, do not allow them to bait you into committing actions that will give them cause to discipline you. We have been asked to do our best and we have—even under some of the worst working conditions and the lack of proper equipment. There are some managers and supervisors who are not interested in fulfilling their obligations under our National Agreement and when this happened in the past we have filed unfair labor practice charges against them and will continue to do so. We will continue to work with and cooperate with management for the benefit of our workers and the service; however, if we cannot find common ground to solve our problems internally, we will be forced to take these matters to other sources outside of this installation. This will be done in accordance with the rules and laws by which we are governed.

I have listened to your complaints from every section of this plant and representations were made to management and some of these problems have been solved or in the process of been solved. I know of the complaints on the third floor and have conducted

an investigation and found that those employees are working under some of the most oppressive group of managers and supervisors in this installation.

The grievance on the walk-behind power equipment was settled just prior to going to arbitration. The result is that all mail handlers operating any walk-behind power equipment shall be paid level 5. Mail handlers should make certain that they are given higher-level assignments on form 1723, generated and signed by their supervisor. Some supervisors are already indicating that they are not going to pay these level 5 higher payments. If you happen to experience such refusal to pay please notify your stewards immediately and the proper action will be taken.

The union was recently informed of changes that will come our way in the coming months. KCMO management will continue compression activities. It wants to have all DPS mail processed and available for dispatch by 0600. This will require adjustments to mail handler schedules. It also wants to realign the Tour 2 APPS positions to adjust for the maintenance window on Sunday.

As you are all aware, not every mail handler is a member of the union; nevertheless, we are required by law to represent them with the best of our abilities. A few of these non-members, and some members too, are constantly creating divisiveness and discord among our group. These

kinds of attitudes play right into management's hand. Give your union your support. I know some of you are not pleased with the kind of representation you are getting from some representatives and we have been examining each complaint and trying to improve the situation.

Due to attrition, there is a vacancy in St. Joseph and anyone wanting to transfer there should apply through e-reassign. I understand the mail handlers that moved here from St. Joseph last year like it so much better here they turned down the opportunity to return to that facility by declining their retreat rights.

Congratulations to Mail Handler Gary Grant for recently being named the #1 AFCS Operator in the nation. That is a great achievement on his part and I am very proud to be associated with him and the other 010 employees.

Labor/Management meetings are held the last Thursday of each month. Please submit agenda items you may want to have discussed. For these or any other important matters, you can contact me at [hmcclary@kc.rr.com](mailto:hmcclary@kc.rr.com) or call me at 913-526-4438.

The KCMO Branch of local 297 Picnic for 2010 will be held on **SUNDAY JULY 11, 2010 AT THE BANDSTAND, SWOPE PARK starting at 11:00 AM thru 7:00 PM.**

# UNION TIME



THE NEWSLETTER FOR NPMHU OFFICERS & SHOP STEWARDS

## REASSIGNMENT OF MAIL HANDLERS EXCESS TO THE NEEDS OF A SECTION (ARTICLE 12.6C4)

With large declines in mail volume caused by the diversion of mail to electronic communications and the crisis currently facing the American economy, the Postal Service is increasingly trying to reassign and relocate Mail Handlers under the terms of the 2006 National Agreement. This issue of *Union Time*, therefore, begins a multi-part review of the provisions of Article 12 that are most likely to control in these situations.

In this issue, we cover the reassignment of Mail Handlers within their installation when they are determined by postal management to be excess to the needs of a section. In most of these circumstances, the reassignment process is governed by Article 12.6C4 of the National Agreement. We say in most circumstances, because there are exceptions.

The most important exception arises from Article 12.4 of the National Agreement, which authorizes the parties — during local negotiations conducted periodically pursuant to Article 30, Sections 30.2P and 30.2S of the National Agreement — to reach a Local Memorandum of Understanding to define the term "section." As provided in Article 12.4, Definition of a Section, when the Postal Service and the Union adopt a definition of the term "section" for each installation, they must confine themselves to one or more of the following: (A) pay location; (B) by floor; (C) tour; (D) job within an area; (E) type of work; (F) by branches or stations; (G) the entire installation; (H) incoming; and/or (I) outgoing. Moreover, if no sections are established by local negotiations, then Article 12.6C4a makes clear that "the entire installation shall comprise the section." In these circumstances — when the entire installation is defined as the section — then Mail Handlers may be moved by the Postal Service within the installation not by the procedures established by Article 12.6C4,

but by the mechanisms of abolishment and subsequent posting and bidding of assignments under other provisions of Article 12.

Assuming that Article 12.6C4 applies, because a section is defined in the LMOU as something narrower than the entire installation, and because the Postal Service has decided that there are too many full-time employees assigned to that section, the parties have agreed to a particular process for reducing the number of Mail Handlers excess to that section. Under Subsections 12.6C4b and 12.6C4d, the first step is for management to identify both the full-time duty assignments to be abolished and the junior full-time regular Mail Handlers to be reassigned. The employees to be reassigned must be the junior full-time regulars in the section at the salary level of the assignments to be abolished, and may or may not be holding the assignments that actually will be abolished.

Focusing first on the Mail Handlers to be reassigned outside of the section, under Article 12.6C4b, these junior employees will be reassigned outside the section, but within the installation and within the Mail Handler craft. (The National Agreement also refers to "occupational group," but that term has no application under the Mail Handler National Agreement, but rather is a remnant from the years in which Mail Handlers shared a National Agreement with other craft unions.) These junior employees will become unassigned regulars, shall retain their seniority and their salary level, and may bid on any existing vacancies for which they are eligible to bid. As with other unassigned full-time regular employees, these junior employees are entitled to schedules

*(continued on page 2)*

## Reassignment of Mail Handlers

(continued from page 1)

with fixed non-scheduled days off unless or until they successfully bid for another assignment or are properly placed in a vacant duty assignment. If they do not bid, they may be assigned to any vacant duty assignment for which there was no successful bidder in the same craft and installation, as set forth in Article 12.3B11. Their personal preference is to be considered if more than one such assignment is available.

Such reassigned full-time employees retain the right to retreat to the section from which they were withdrawn only upon the occurrence of the first residual vacancy in the salary level after employees remaining in the section have completed bidding. (Such bidding in the section is limited to employees in the same salary level as the vacancy.) Failure by the reassigned full-time employee to accept the first available vacancy will end his/her retreat right. The right to retreat to the section is optional with the employee who has retreat rights with respect to a vacancy in a lower salary level. Failure to exercise the option with regard to a vacancy in a lower salary level does not terminate the employee's retreat rights in the salary level from which the employee was reassigned away from the section. Thus, a Level 5 Mail Handler with retreat rights into the section does not forfeit those retreat rights if s/he fails to exercise such retreat rights with regard to a Level 4 Mail Handler position.

Previous to this writing, as reflected in Version 2 of the Contract Interpretation Manual, the NPMHU and the Postal Service had a dispute at the National level over whether, as long as there are employees who were involuntarily excessed from a section and who still have retreat rights to vacancies in one or more salary levels, all subsequent newly created duty assignments in the same or lower salary level in the section should be posted only to the section or should be posted for bidding on an installation-wide basis. The Postal Service previously maintained that all of these newly created duty assignments must be available to the previously excessed Mail Handlers; the NPMHU previously maintained that any newly created duty assignments must be posted for bid installation-wide, and that only residual vacancies occurring in the section should be offered first to

## Section 12.6C4 of the National Agreement

### Reassignment Within an Installation of Employees Excess to the Needs of a Section

The identification of assignments comprising for this purpose a section shall be determined locally by local negotiations. If no sections are established by local negotiations, the entire installation shall comprise the section.

Full-time employees, excess to the needs of a section, starting with that employee who is junior in the same craft or occupational group and in the same level assigned in that section, shall be reassigned outside the section but within the same craft or occupational group. They shall retain their seniority and may bid on any existing vacancies for which they are eligible to bid.

If they do not bid, they may be assigned any vacant duty assignment for which there was no senior bidder in the same craft and installation. Their preference is to be considered if more than one such assignment is available.

Such reassigned full-time employee retains the right to retreat to the section from which withdrawn only upon the occurrence of the first residual vacancy in the salary level after employees in the section have completed bidding. Such bidding in the section is limited to employees in the same salary level as the vacancy. Failure to bid for the first available vacancy will end such retreat right. The right to retreat to the section is optional with the employee who has retreat rights with respect to a vacancy in a lower salary level. Failure to exercise the option does not terminate the retreat rights in the salary level in which the employee was reassigned away from the section.

When full-time duty assignment(s) in the same craft or occupational group and the same level in the section are to be abolished and the junior employee(s) from the Section are to be reassigned, the following shall apply:

The appropriate duty assignment(s) shall be identified and abolished.

The junior full-time employee(s) excess to the needs of the section shall be identified and reassigned.

The duty assignment(s) encumbered by the employee(s) junior to the senior employee whose duty assignment is abolished will be offered, in seniority order, and in an expedited selection process, to the employee(s) remaining in the section beginning with the senior employee whose duty assignment was abolished. An employee(s) declining to make a selection when canvassed shall be assigned to the duty assignment(s) remaining in the section after the expedited selection process has been completed.

The results of the above-listed actions shall be effective at the beginning of the succeeding pay period.

the junior employees who previously were excessed out of that section. The Postal Service has now agreed with the NPMHU position, and that agreement will be reflected in Version 3 of the CIM, to be distributed shortly.

Finally, it also is worth remembering that Article 17.3C of the National Agreement provides that, while designated as a steward or chief steward (but not an alternate steward), a Mail Handler cannot be involuntarily reassigned to another tour, station, or branch of the installation, if there is a duty assignment in his/her category (full or part-time) for which the steward is qualified.

Turning to the Mail Handlers who remain in the section from which employees will be excessed, the next step to implement Article 12.6C4 is found in Subsection 12.4C4d3, which requires management to implement an "expedited selection process." The senior employee whose duty assignment was abolished now has his/her choice of all duty assignments in the same level that are remaining in the section, starting with the next junior employee to him/her. This process continues, in seniority order, until all of the jobs are filled.

Put another way, and to paraphrase Subsection 12.6C4d3, the Mail Handler duty assignments that remain in the section will be offered, in seniority order, and in an expedited selection process, to the employee(s) remaining in the section beginning with the senior employee whose duty assignment was abolished. An employee declining to make

a selection when canvassed shall be assigned to the duty assignment(s) remaining in the section after the expedited selection process has been completed. The results of this expedited bidding process shall be effective at the beginning of the next pay period.

The provisions of Subsection 12.6C4d concerning the expedited selection process were first added to the National Agreement during 1993 negotiations. Their purpose was to protect the senior employee whose job may be abolished, while also expediting the selection process. If there is a need to abolish a full-time duty assignment in a section which would result in the excessing of the junior employee, there will be expedited bidding by the employees within the section, limited to the senior employee whose assignment was abolished and all employees junior to that employee. Those employees will select from among the duty assignments remaining in the section that are encumbered by employees junior to that senior employee whose duty assignment was abolished. It is important to remember that expedited bidding, pursuant to Article 12.6C4d, can only occur when abolishing and excessing have occurred in the affected section.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the next issue of Union Time, we will discuss Article 12.6C5, which governs Reduction in the Number of Employees in an Installation Other Than by Attrition.

HEY MANNY, WHAT'S ALL THAT RUCKUS IN THE GARAGE?

DAD SAYS DRIVING LESSONS ARE TOO PRICED, SO HE'S GETTING READY TO TEACH ME.

THAT'S BILLY! DAD COULD PAY SOMEONE TO TAKE ON THAT JOB. WITH OUR UNION PLUS AUTO INSURANCE, WE CAN GET UP TO \$250 ON A DRIVER TRAINING GRANT.

THAT'S TOO BAD SON. I WAS REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR LESSON.

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