



American Postal Workers Union • Northwest Arkansas Area Local

August 2022

From the President

What Day Does My Holiday Fall On?

by Ike Mills

We just celebrated the new Holiday that was signed into law last year and negotiated into our CBA this year. I would like to thank and congratulate our negotiating team for being the first union in the Postal Service to negotiate the Juneteenth Holiday into our CBA. That brings me to the point of my article for this newsletter.

It surprises me how much confusion there was over this holiday — Craft and Management alike. So, I will try and alleviate the confusion on this issue.

It seems that part of the problem was the fact that the notice had been published that the Postal Service was observing the holiday on Monday, June 20, 2022. All that means is that the Post Offices will not open and there will be no Express Mail. It does nothing to an employee's actual or designated holiday. If the actual holiday falls on an employee's regularly scheduled day, that day is their holiday; it doesn't change cause the Post Office is observing it on another day.

Another issue was "What day does the Post Office observe the holiday? If the holiday falls on Saturday, they observe it on Friday. If it falls on Sunday, they observe it on Monday. If it falls on any other day, that is the day it is observed.

Depending on your NS days, that will determine what day is your holiday or your designated holiday. For example, using the Juneteenth holiday *, if your NS days were Saturday / Sunday, Monday becomes your "designated" holiday. If your NS days were Sunday / Monday, then Saturday would be your holiday. If your NS days were Monday / Tuesday, then Sunday would be your holiday; and if your NS days were Tuesday / Wednesday, then Sunday would be your holiday. The rest of the week would have Sunday as the holiday and their regular NS days as usual.

Hopefully, this helps clear up the issues.

There is one other issue I need to bring up, and that is the **Postal Pulse Survey**. Remember, the Union recommends that we do not participate in any Postal Service surveys, because they have used the data that they compile in these surveys against the APWU and its members during contract negotiations that have negatively impacted our bargaining unit in the past. Please just say "NO" to the Postal Pulse.

***Sunday, June 19th, as the example**

Congratulations to Dakota Kholos and Kharma Beck on being awarded the
Virginia Hickman Scholarship for 2022!

The **RAZORBACK SCHEME** is the official voice of the Northwest Arkansas Area Local of the APWU – AFL-CIO. However, opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writers and not necessarily those of the APWU, Local, officials or Editor. Articles, artwork, cartoons and/or other material are solicited from member readers who wish to share their views. Although freedom of the press is recognized, contributors are exhorted not to submit derogatory material about any fellow union member or to submit any false or unsubstantiated allegation concerning management or any other individual inside or outside this organization. All letters must be signed (if hard-copied) or emailed via an identifiable, recognized screen name and are requested to have been received by the Editor ten (2) days prior to the announced publication date. Names will be withheld upon request. Send submissions to **RAZORBACK SCHEME**, P.O. Box 654, Fayetteville AR 72702; or email to Editor's screen name listed below or on website. Submissions may be returned upon request.

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NEXT UNION MEETING:

Sunday, September 18, 2022 – 1:00 pm
 Foghorn’s, 1100 48th Place, Springdale AR
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Remembering Gini Hickman

It doesn't seem like it's been 9 years since we lost Gini. She was the life of the Local. When someone was down, she was there. Birthdays, anniversaries, and other special days were remembered by Gini. In fact, she created notebooks to keep track. She asked me to create a Birthday Book for the Local just so she wouldn't miss one.

She kept us together. Always with a smile or laugh, she made our days go better.

One year she came back from vacation where she'd been with her sister touring Death Valley (of all places, but during cold season). Since Gini looked like Paula Dean, many in the public misidentified her. At Death Valley, she and her sister played along with it – pretending to be Paula. The tourists fell for it! We laughed all over the Plant over that one.

Since Gini had been an officer (Financial Secretary) for almost 20 years and since she was considered the “life of the party”, we named the Local's Scholarship after her. But even after all these years, we miss her greatly. She wanted everyone to enjoy life, wanted us all to get along, and to be in solidarity with the Union like nowhere else on Earth.

So, we honor Virginia Hickman as long as this Union exists.... Hopefully forever. — *Loren Adams*





UNION MEETING!

Sun., Sept. 18th, 1 p.m.

Foghorn's Restaurant
1100 48th Place, Springdale

(Take Exit 72 off I-49, turn east 1 block to 48th St signal light, turn L to Foghorn's.)

You could win \$50 door prize!

“Welcome to the Maintenance Craft!”

by Barney Barnes, Siloam Springs

I just read the March-April 2022 issue of the *AMERICAN POSTAL WORKER* and found out that an issue has bugged me for 20 years has finally been resolved. In our favor!

When I got into Maintenance in 1997, the Maintenance Open Season for testing for eligibility for another Maintenance position was restricted to **“positions available in your facility”**.

Luckily, I was at a P&DC where I could test for many positions. So, when the position I wanted came open at a smaller Post Office close to home, I qualified and got the position.

That’s when I realized the **“positions available in your facility”** catch was lacking people in offices with no Maintenance positions (or only janitor positions) — out of the chance to even test for Maintenance positions at all. It took some time to open Management’s eyes to all the unused talent. But now, with our new APWU Collective Bargaining Agreement, the door is open, folks. It doesn’t matter if you are already in Maintenance or not. “Management is now required to open in-service testing every year during the month of March for career employees and permit testing for ALL occupational groups (except ET-11).

Also, “It is the applicant’s option which individual occupational groups to test for, or to test for all of them.”

In short, if you are in an office with only carriers and window clerks, you can still submit a written request every year from March 1 to March 31 and test for any or even ALL Maintenance positions; and when you pass, you can put in for Maintenance at other offices. Your eligibility rating becomes part of your “e-OPF” (electronic Official Personnel File).

There are still 3 types of registers: (PER) Promotion Eligibility Register for existing Maintenance employees; In-service Registers for existing career postal employees (clerks, mailhandlers, carriers, etc.), and “Entrance Registers” to hire applicants from the street.

The only catch that I see is that every year you will need to submit a written request to stay on the Service Registers or your will be purged from the list. So, like the title says: “Welcome to the Maintenance Craft!”



**Local members
in attendance at
the 102nd
Anniversary of
the Local Union.
It was chartered
May 1, 1920.**

How Big Is Your Footprint?

by Kaylynn Mills, Tour 2 Steward • P&DC

So, for those of us that have been here more than five years or longer, we can vouch for the changes to the mail volume. For example, flats dropping drastically due to people utilizing emails, apps, and online programs. It has cut down that flat volume. Or how letter mail has slowly begun dwindling down. Most people have begun to pay bills in-person, over the phone, and auto-draft. They get statements and receipts texted or emailed, and they are not very often mailed by companies, because they are heavily pushing to save the environment! “Go e-statements!” Is their motto.

There are upsides to some of these for each of us personally. Yet, for our workload, it is taking away over livelihood slowly. With the prices of gas, food, and cost-of-living keep continuing to rise, it makes one wonder how long until we are replaceable. The answer is unfortunate, but we are easily replaced when you break it down for most of our jobs would be filled before our obituary even made it to the newspaper. The one constant that I take solace in is the APWU. For, they are fighting for us to be less replaceable. From how they negotiate COLA increases; to ensuring that we have ample leave; and a contract that just keeps improving to ensure that things like bid displacement or guaranteed hours stay in full effect; to providing us with stability; seeing that the conversion rate is becoming a smoother and faster transition than in the past.

And the APWU sees that medical, dental and vision insurance stays affordable and available to all. The only way to be absolute that this stays constant for years to come is to start getting involved.

The National, State, and Local officers in charge will not be around forever. So, to be sure that all these current benefits and future benefits continue to come our way, we must keep lighting the path for OUR UNION to stay STRONG! We need more people to find their voices and become involved. Who knows? Maybe one day your child will keep up the tradition and work in a USPS facility? Wouldn't it be wonderful if you knew you had part in keeping all that we have fought so hard for is still possible for them too.

If you haven't already done so, find a Union rep and ask, “What can I do to help?” If you haven't filled out the 1187 from to become a dues-paying member, by all means, come on in; we can help. This is so much more than you and me! As brothers and sisters, we have an obligation to put the work in so that we don't let all the hard work from those before us crumble. We also have a duty to the future to ensure that we keep it going for those who will come long after we have gone. So, how big of a footprint do you plan on leaving? As for me, my goal is to leave as big of a footprint as I can before my time is up here.

Forever in Solidarity, *Kaylynn Mills*



Sharon Wilson awarded on her retirement and farewell. Sharon was an officer of the Local for several years. She has now moved to Texas.

L to R: Pam Beck, Sharon Wilson, her granddaughter, and Ike Mills