

January 20, 2017

Members-

The biggest news to start off this letter is that Acting Plant Manager Jeff Hotchkiss has moved on to a detail in Harrisburg and is being replaced by Ken Hanson. Hopefully, Mr. Hanson will bring a different outlook for our plant; one that focuses more on the workers and letting them happily and peacefully perform their jobs instead of having bosses harass them. I'm sure that changes are afoot, but we shall see if they are for the better or worse.

In highly disappointing and completely aggravating news, Arbitrator Judith Bello once again has ruled against the Mail Handlers of the Lehigh Valley. In this instance, she decided that the 31" snow storm last year did not meet the standards needed to pay administrative leave other than during the time set forth by the district. Ms. Bello's determination came as somewhat of a shock because this was a very strong case with a lot of evidence gathered by the Union, however she decided to put some arguments into her decision that management never even made. Suffice it to say that I'm quite angry with her ruling, as is Mike Mohan who did a great job advocating the case. In the end, though, it comes down to one person's interpretation of the evidence before her, and even some not before her. I did forewarn that this may happen in one of my previous rants prior to the ruling because I know what Arbitrator Bello's track record on Act of God grievances is. Hopefully, next time we get a better ruling from an arbitrator.

Once again, I'd like to mention the importance of this Union office having some sort of contact information for the members, whether it is a phone number or an email address. Over the holidays, the holiday list said that people were forced in. Through negotiations and bargaining, the Union was able to reduce and in some cases eliminate the force. Unfortunately, some people had not provided their contact info and there was no way for those individuals to be told that they were no longer required to work on their holiday and they wound up showing up. If you have not done so already, please update your contact info with me so that this does not happen to you.

The vacation bid forms were mailed out last week, if you have not received them please stop in the office and get yours. If you have any questions please feel free to ask someone from the Union. This year may be the last time that management sends them to your house. The possible plan for next year is to have you pick them up either in the

Union office or the MDO office like is done for holiday sign-ups. We will keep you updated.

By now you all should have received your contract ratification ballots. Don't forget to have these mailed back in by February 10th. All in all I believe it's a good contract with key provisions still included. I wouldn't trust an arbitrator to give us anything better. MHAs should definitely vote yes because this contract is expanding their benefits greatly. There are also benefits for the regulars which have been carried over such as the no layoff clause and the COLAs. The Service tried to get the no layoff protection taken out of the contract but the Union successfully negotiated its retention. Just a reminder of why Union membership is important; because if it weren't for the Union management would make us all casuals at any chance they had.

Ballots for Local elections will be mailed next week. You will be asked to vote for PA State Rep and Vice President. Please be sure to fill out and mail your ballots for the election.

Stay United, Stay Strong

Sean