



Buckle Up!



There can be no doubt that 2016 will bring its full share of challenges to the National Postal Mail Handlers Union on all levels. Our National office has been hard at work for months now as they prepare to negotiate for a fair and decent successor agreement. Those negotiations begin in February with our current contract set to expire May 21, 2016. Make no mistake about it Brothers and Sisters there is much at stake, as Postal Headquarter will once again attempt to convince an arbitrator that we are overpaid and they are broke. The efforts of our National Office, as you know, are not conducted in a vacuum, as our Sister Union, the APWU, prepares to make their arguments in interest arbitration. As was the case with their negotiated agreement during the last round of bargaining, what they end up with will, for good or ill, have an effect on our negotiations. Improvements to the terms of our contract will not come easy but you should know, as I do, that our negotiating team is second to none and I am confident that if it can be done it will be done.

While we prepare to negotiate over wages, benefits, and working conditions, the very right to negotiate with the Postal Service for future contracts may itself be in jeopardy

in 2016. Unless you have been completely disconnected from the world over the last several months you know that we are heading into a Presidential election year and many seats in both the House and Senate are also up for grabs. The political free-for-all that will be the election cycle of 2016 may have major and long-lasting effects on Mail Handlers and all Postal Unions for that matter. As we have discussed at many of your branch meetings over the last couple of months a recent proposal by Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) would eliminate labor organizations within the IRS and with them the right to bargain collectively. The threat to our right to bargain is very real and each and every one of us should feel compelled to engage in the legislative process. If you are not registered to vote, get registered, voting to protect your interests is the very least you can do. Know more about the legislation that can impact your life and the lives of your loved ones directly and visit npmhu.org and link to the [Legislative & Political page](#).

In Solidarity,
John Gibson

The Local Front

The influence of National negotiations as well as the impact of national elections cannot be overstated, however the coming year will present us with plenty of hard work within Local 308. Of course there are ongoing battles with management that remain unresolved and there are plenty of new skirmishes on the horizon.

The issue of reverted career duty assignments within the South Jersey and Philadelphia Districts which directly impede the conversion of our Mail Handler Assistants continues to be challenged by your Union as Brothers Bahrle and Rembelinsky prosecute grievances within their branches to restore career duty assignments and convert MHAs.

Union actions within the South Jersey P&DC also continue as we argue for remedy for mail handlers on Tours 1 and 3 whose schedules were changed as a result of the wrongfully created relief mail handler positions. The propriety of the Tour 3 case was recently argued before an arbitrator and we currently await the decision. Provided the arbitrator finds the case arbitrable another hearing on the merits will be scheduled. Brother Campellone also continues the Union's efforts to accelerate conversion of our MHAs to career Mail Handlers. We also continue to look for opportunities to grow the Mail Handler complements in many of the associate offices throughout the South Jersey District.

The recent announcement to slash staffing within our Norristown Tri-County facility (Formerly Southeastern) is being challenged on two fronts. First the reduction of the mail handler complement by 9 is more than ill-advised. The actions proposed by management are based on another flawed Function 4 study that suggests theoretical staffing rather than actual. We will obviously challenge the study

under the provisions of Article 12. Secondly, outstanding jurisdictional issues remain as local management thinks it ok to assign members of the APWU to mail handler work. As you read this the Union is processing four separate disputes to have that work properly assigned to the mail handler craft.

In Central PA, 2016 will bring us the scheduled consolidation of mail processing operations from Scranton into Lehigh Valley sometime after April. Unfortunately this will impact our Brothers and Sisters in Scranton as complement will go from 44 career mail handlers and 3 mail handler assistants to 17 career mail handlers. The impact to those mail handlers and their families is obviously no small matter as we continue to push for a reduction in impact. The struggle continues to return mail handlers to our Williamsport and Reading plants and those impacted should know that we have not quit the fight. Along with active grievances awaiting arbitration, the Union continues to discuss with District management the possibility of returning mail handlers to perform the mail handler work that exists in those facilities. Lancaster will see staffing grow as the Small Parcel Processing System (SPSS) is introduced in January. Of course our National Office continues to fight for all of the jobs on the SPSS and we look forward to our day in court.

There are many, many issues facing Mail Handlers on a daily basis and 2016 will not afford any respite from the battle to defend and enhance our rights in the workplace. I have no doubt that collectively we can meet and overcome the challenges before us.

-John Gibson-

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
FROM
LOCAL 308

*NPMHU, Local 308
President's Report
Nov-Dec 2015*