

Fellow members-

This weekend is Columbus Day weekend and the holiday list has been posted since Saturday. Management called for a meeting on 10/1 to discuss the holiday posting with the Union like they have for every holiday since I've been Branch President. This time, however, this was not a meeting to "discuss" and there was no negotiating. The two management representatives simply stated that they are forcing everybody, every craft, every day, on every shift. Their reasoning and rationale was to blame the call-outs from the last holiday weekend and from last year. They used inflated numbers and inaccurate data to back their conclusions, of course, and threw protocol and the Contract out the window. The Union was fed call-off numbers that included clerks, maintenance personnel, custodians, drivers, supervisors, oh and some Mail Handlers. We were told of delayed mail and unprocessed mail, the overwhelming majority of which was clerk function work which would have no bearing on our craft. The Union was allowed no input and there was no bargaining done. The two EAS employees acting on behalf of the acting plant micromanager simply made their statement and moved on. Another rationale used for the inexplicable overstaffing and intentional, willful negligence of the CBA was that it is heavy fall mailing season and there is an election going on. It has been made abundantly clear over the past two holidays and in multiple dealings that "bargaining in good faith" is just a catchphrase to attach to the bottom of the holiday list to try and cover one's own derriere.

After the holiday meeting debacle, the APWU and NPMHU reps then attended the Election Mail Task Force meeting on 10/6, which is a national initiative. For a management entity that says it is so concerned with the election mail process, you would think that they would at least send a representative to the Election Mail Task Force meeting that was an EAS employee that had the authority to make decisions; everyone is too busy for that though. The meeting was productive as there were a lot of good ideas brought forth by the attendees, but the only problem is that there was nobody there that possessed the authority to make decisions so there were more unanswered questions. Anyone interested in bargaining in good faith would actually attend meetings that bear importance instead of trying to run the work floor like an overpaid SDO. The only message that was relayed from the powers that be was that it's an important time of year and we need to serve the American people and protect their rights. APWU President Andy Kubat and I were asked to help get people to come to work. I'll leave it to your imagination what the reaction was, especially in light of the cooperation and good faith we had experienced over the past week.

Bad communication and poor decisions are nothing new to the USPS and to this building in particular, but it is being compounded now by inept management, a lack of leadership, no "team" commitment, and a complete bad faith effort by some of the players. In addition, the USPS and now this building in particular have also been thrust into the spotlight for not only the election issues but also the delaying of parcel post/priority mail. It is up to the workers, the proud men and women of the craft, to provide the stability and service that we need to dig out from under the avalanche of delayed mail and the influx of political mail. The supervisors and self-titled fixers that mostly stand on the sideline may want the credit and the pay to go with their monikers, but it is you guys and girls who get the mail out. No Mail Handler has ever said that we should send mail to Scranton instead of working it here, and obviously that misguided plan doesn't clear the mail faster, but management has become too reliant on their ability to do so and instead does not staff the areas as they should be. It is always so much easier to blame the work force and the Union as scapegoats for everything than to take the responsibility that comes with your job title.

We just need to keep showing up and doing our jobs and cling to the hope that management eventually figures out how to use its resources and job bids effectively and efficiently. Maybe they will also figure out too that ergonomic rotations are in place for a reason, that you get the same respect that you give, that demeaning employees isn't effective especially if it isn't counterbalanced with praise for those who deserve it, that talking louder at people doesn't make you right, and that the people who actually do the jobs may have better ways to do them than someone from an office up front. The culture hasn't changed in decades though, so why would it now?

I say and type this all of the time and it still will never be enough. Scanning and swiping are the biggest keys to getting and keeping jobs. Always swipe over to the operation numbers of anywhere that you move to work. Scan every parcel and container that you load and unload. These are the most effective ways to show how much work that we do and how much mail that we have. Two jobs are posted this round because we were able to prove that they were needed through the clock rings. Help us protect our work and our jobs!

Please don't forget to vote in the election for Eastern Area Vice-President. Votes must be received by October 27th.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be no fall/winter Branch Meeting this year. Everyone will have equal chances at winning the gift certificates this year.

We are still awaiting word on the Christmas Annex. All that I have been told is that 9 regulars will bid for the positions and it will be in the same building as last year.

Bids close Monday 10/12 at midnight. They will take effect on 10/24.

As Coronavirus cases are on the rise again, remember to take all of the recommended precautions and keep yourself and all of us safe. I would tell you to enjoy your holiday weekend, but you will all be here just like me. Be well and stay safe!

Stay United, Stay Strong-

Sean