December 2024

Volume 9 - Special Holiday Edition



Forged Together

USW 2958 Newsletter



SPECIAL HOLIDAY EDITION: HOLIDAY CHEER IS NEAR IN LOCAL 2958 By Zach Keller

As the year draws to a close, we're excited to bring you this special edition of our newsletter. It's been a year of hard work, solidarity, and progress, and now it's time to celebrate not only the holiday season but also the dedication of every member who has helped us along the way. This edition is a blend of celebration, reflection, and looking forward. This issue is packed with fun and meaningful content, from holiday party highlights to our brand-new superlative-style awards, plus much more.

This issue is a little different—we've packed it with both fresh content and some of the most impactful articles from the past year. It's been a busy and productive year for our union, and we want to celebrate our achievements and community spirit as we head into 2025.

As we take time to enjoy the season, we also want to acknowledge the incredible work we've done together throughout the year. Whether you're enjoying the lighthearted fun of the awards, re-reading the most impactful stories of the past year, or getting ready for what's to come, we hope this edition brings a sense of pride and holiday cheer in our community.

R-35 2nd Annual Roll Down Hunger Food Drive

By Andrew Betzner

I would like to take a moment and thank all those who participated in R-35's food drive for Darrough Chapel Early Learning Center (Kokomo Head Start). Because of your generosity, dozens of kids will be going home for the holiday knowing food will be on the table, instead of going hungry. The amount of donations received will provide nutrition support not only for over the break, but with enough remaining to ensure the need is met for the remainder of the school year.

Without you, this would have not been possible.









THE 2958-IES

VOTE IN OUR FUN AWARDS!! This year, we want introduce a new twist to our end-of-year recognition: superlative-style awards! Inspired by those fun yearbook awards we remember from school, these are a light-hearted way to acknowledge the individuality and spirit of our union members. Vote for your favorite coworkers at

https://forgedtogether.link/awardsvote



Please submit a different person for each award you vote for. Let's spread around the fun to many people!



Scan to vote with your mobile device











The "Most Likely to Start a Union Karaoke Night" Award (the person who always has a song in their heart)

The "When Did You Even Sleep?" Award (for the person who seems like they're always doing a double) The "Silent But Productive" Award (for the most quiet, demure, behind-thescenes hard worker)

The "Master of Mischief" Award (for one-liners, jokes, & pranks that lighten the mood)

The "Shop Floor
Storyteller" Award (for
the person with the
best stories or tall
tales)





Adult Christmas Party

The holiday spirit was in full swing at the Adult Christmas Party, where laughter, good food, and festive cheer brought everyone together. It was a perfect evening to relax, connect, drink, dance, and celebrate another year of hard work and happiness. Thanks to the Christmas Party Committee for their hard work in planning and execution as well as David Nieto and his crew for the wonderful food!!



Labor News: Released From Captivity - A Favorable NLRB Decision

By Andrew Betzner

By a 3 to 1 vote, members of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) overturned decades old precedent which allowed employers to hold captive audience meetings. These meetings are typically held by employers when employees try to unionize. The intention is to sow fear and kill organizing efforts. Prior to this ruling, employers were allowed to mandate these types of meetings as long as they remained non-coercive and didn't make any unlawful threats or promises, such as "threatening to close if unionized", or offering increased pay if employees remained non-union.

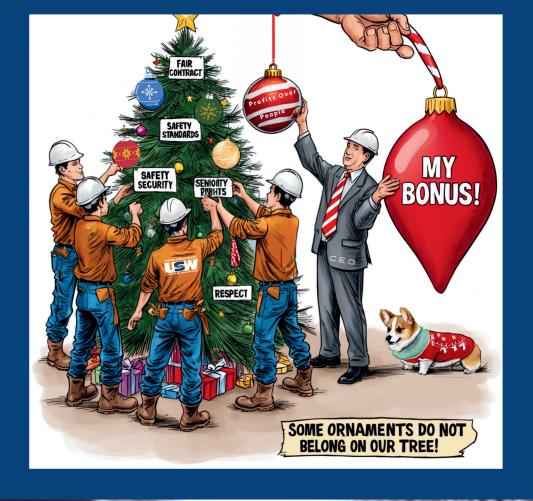
Recent events this summer prove just how effective these meetings are. Workers at both Mercedes in Alabama and Volkswagen in Tennessee had a majority of workers sign authorization cards saying they wanted to be represented by the UAW. Mercedes employees faced a strong anti-union campaign from their employer that included daily captive audience meetings, and ultimately failed to vote in the union. In comparison, Volkswagen did not holdt hese types of meetings, and workers voted in the union with 73% voting "yes."

While historically held for those trying to organize, the 2010 Supreme Court decision on Citizens United has led to captive audience meetings taking on an expanded role. The rights granted by this ruling have empowered employers to hold captive audience meetings not only on matters of unionization, but politics and religion, as well. A 2015 Harvard poll found 1 in 4 employees had been contacted by an employer regarding political matters. With the current state of hyper-partisanship our country faces one can only assume this has escalated since then. While this should be considered a victory, many are questioning how much of an impact this ruling will have.

With the change in Presidential administrations, it is uncertain if newly appointed board members will maintain this position. Although the ruling by the NLRB may not survive, many states have already taken a stand. Through a ballot initiative in this year's election, Alaska will join 10 other states in banning captive audience meetings. With the addition of this perennially red state joining those such as Vermont, and California, it is clear that this issue transcends party lines, and politicians should take notice.

METAL MAYHEM

LOCAL 2958'S EDITORIAL
CARTOON FEATURE





Union History - Our Beginnings

By Zach Keller

With 2025 being our 60th anniversary as a local, we decided to reprint this article from January of 2024.

As we trace the footsteps of the beginning of our local, we discover not only a chronicle of negotiations, agreements, and disagreements but a rich tapestry of resilience, empowerment, and a shared commitment to building a better future for us all. The story of USW Local 2958 is more than a historical account; it is a living legacy, an embodiment of the principles that bind us together in the pursuit of fairness, equality, and the common good.

Many times in Haynes/Cabot/Stellite history, workers had tried organizing into a collective union and had ultimately failed. Organizing drives and votes happened in 1953, 1959, 1961, and 1964, with narrow defeats for organizing falling very short in 1961 & 1964. In March of 1965 though, the campaign won out and elections were held with Tom Peters, a machinist, becoming the first President.

In May, six employees and two International reps began negotiating with company execs just steps from our current union hall at the now-demolished Hotel Frances on our first ever union contract. Months of negotiating followed, and on September 29, 1965 the first agreement was ratified for around 1,700 bargaining unit employees. Among the provisions won were things we still enjoy today, such as grievance procedures, seniority rights, overtime rules, holidays, benefits, and wage increases. The agreement was for two years with a wage reopener clause that could be exercised in August of the following year. That was the beginning of an issue that escalated all the way to the White House.

A tragic explosion killing four people in the newly constructed Reclaim department, and a management change happened in summer of 1966 and offered a backdrop on new negotiations that opened in late summer. The company opened with a wage increase offer of 11 cents an hour; the union asking for a 45 cent increase. With the sides hopelessly far apart and no movement, the union walked out on strike at midnight September 29, 1966.

The picket lines went up and remained for weeks. Violence flared briefly in November as talks broke off, as salaried personnel were prevented from passing into the plant and multiple people were arrested by the Indiana State Police who had been summoned by the company to escort them past the picket lines. Ordered into mediation in December by the Labor and Defense Secretaries, talks resumed but no agreement was within reach. Settlement of the strike occurred only after President Lyndon B. Johnson invoked the Taft-Hartley law, and ordered the employees back to work on December 23, 1966. As of 2023, that law has only been invoked 34 times since its passage in the 1940's. This action was taken because of military needs for "Stellite" products, particularly "Hastelloy" alloy X for jet engine combustion liners and "Haynes Stellite" castings for helicopter engines. Workers returned on orders of the President on Christmas Eve 1966.

The Supreme Court refused to hear an injunction to the strike and finally in February of 1967, an agreement was reached for a 17 cent per hour increase, thus closing a tumultuous and historic first chapter in our labor struggles here at our local level.



Get Your Reps In

By Andrew Betzner

We decided to reprint this article from our first issue so that everyone can be reminded why its important to know your rights!

While you may not have heard of the term "Weingarten Rights," I bet you've heard the phrase, "Get my rep!". Think of them as the Miranda Rights of the labor realm. If disciplinary action is on the table then you have the right to have union representation with you. It's that simple, right? Let's take a deeper dive.

First, let's establish what situations qualify for Weingarten Rights. If your employer is asking questions regarding an investigation that has the potential for discipline or if you have to defend, explain, or admit misconduct then you are entitled to Weingarten Rights. What if your employer claims that they aren't threatening discipline or assigning blame?

If a reasonable employee would believe it could lead to discipline, you have rights. Is management using a confrontational tone? Have you received notices or warnings prior to the meeting? Have other employees been disciplined for similar conduct? Better get your union representative.

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

IF THIS DISCUSSION COULD IN ANY WAY LEAD TO MY BEING DISCIPLINED OR TERMINATED, OR AFFECT MY PERSONAL WORKING CONDITIONS, I REQUEST THAT MY STEWARD OR UNION OFFICER BE PRESENT AT THE MEETING. WITHOUT REPRESENTATION, I CHOOSE NOT TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS.

U-W

Invoking one's Weingarten Rights is simple: All you have to do is state, "I want my rep!". Make it clear, if the conversation could lead to discipline that you choose not to discuss it further until your representation is present. After that, the employer has three options: grant your request and wait until representation is available, deny the request and end the interview, or deny the request and ask if you would like to continue without a rep. Further questioning from management could constitute an unfair labor practice violation.

When your representative arrives management must explain the nature of discussion, and give you both time to conference privately. During questioning your representative should take notes and ask the employer to clarify questions. They can prohibit questions that are intimidating or offensive. Your rep can help you stay on track and not volunteer any unnecessary information. A representative serves not only as an advisor, but as a witness.

When faced with a conversation that could put your job at risk, your union membership ensures you never have to go it alone. Get to know your rights and how to use them. Stop by the union hall on 420 N. Main St. to get a Weingarten Rights card. Do you have more questions on Weingarten Rights or ideas for future labor rights discussions? Reach out to us at USW2958news@gmail.com



LOCAL 2958 CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS



Regular Membership Meetings 7:30am

7:30am 1:00pm 3:30pm



Union Hall Closed for Holidays As union members, it's essential to understand where our money goes and how it benefits us. The USW has a structured and transparent system for dues that directly supports our collective strength and individual well-being.

How Much Are Our Dues?

The USW standard dues structure is set at 1.45% of a member's gross earnings. This means for every \$100.00 earned, \$1.45 goes towards union dues. Importantly, there is a cap: members pay no more than 2.8 times their average hourly earnings monthly. This ensures fairness, particularly for those working extensive overtime. Additionally, we contribute 2 cents per hour to fund organizing campaigns. Our dues system is democratic and transparent. Dues are set by delegates at the union's international convention, and all spending is overseen by members.

For a typical Local 2958 member who has A-Operator pay and works roughly 40 hours/week, the typical amount works out to be \$19.65.

Where Do Our Dues Go?

Understanding the allocation of our dues helps us appreciate the broad spectrum of benefits and services we receive. I broke down how much of your typical \$19.65 goes to each section of operations of the USW:

Dues Breakdown

- Local Union Support (\$8.65): Nearly half of every dues dollar funds our local's priorities, from collective bargaining to member education and conference participation.
- **Political Action (\$0.20):** Supports pro-worker political initiatives for better job security and worker advocacy.
- Organizing (\$0.59): Fuels growth efforts to bring USW benefits to more workers.
- Education & Training (\$0.20): Funds programs covering labor law, health and safety, human rights, and more, empowering members.
- Strike & Defense Fund (\$3.33): Maintains a \$150M fund to support members in strikes and strategic campaigns.
- **General Operations (\$8.65):** Supports core union operations, including Corporate Research, Legal, Safety, and Rapid Response departments.



Customer Praise for Unmatched Excellence & Reliability

Praise from a customer is always a good thing to reread! If you missed it, here's a nice report from a customer.

Rob Knopf, a 35 year veteran hydraulic gate valve engineer at BPMI, commended Haynes and our members for our exceptional products and culture of excellence in a recent letter to Haynes management that was shared with members on the floor. During a visit to our facility, Knopf and his team were impressed by the professionalism, knowledge, and dedication of every employee they met.

Knopf emphasized the importance of Haynes' valve stems, made from HAYNES® 25 alloy (1860), used in hydraulic gate valves across the U.S. Navy's nuclear fleet. "I have never had an issue or problem with one of your stems," Knopf wrote, highlighting their impeccable performance, which is crucial as they must operate flawlessly for the lifespan of the ships they are installed in, because of the impossibility to remove and replace them during the ship's operational period.

Knopf also praised Haynes' STELLITE® 6B alloy (1810) used in the NIMITZ Class nuclear carrier hydraulic gate latch mechanism. These parts ensure the valves stay securely open or shut as needed and have consistently delivered perfect performance.

Throughout his career, Knopf has been BPMI's expert in resolving hydraulic gate valve issues. The reliability of Haynes' products has provided him peace of mind, knowing these critical components have not and will not fail. He concluded by expressing gratitude for meeting those members who forge and process these vital components and his hope to witness the stem forging process in person during a future visit.

He commented that our commitment to excellence and quality in valve stems has made a significant impact on BPMI and US Navy operations, ensuring mission successes worldwide.





When Santa Fought For His Rights

By Paul Reehling

SANTA SOLIDARITY

Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse:

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;



But in Santa's workshop the elves and poor santa were discussing long hours, little pay, and poor working conditions. One fellow stepped forward and declared "We need to fight for our rights". And that night in 1969 several santas and elves started to picket at the store where they were overworked. This group was arrested and charged with obstruction and were later fined before being released.

This was just the start of things for Santa and his helpers, through the early 70s they formed a trade union, The Brotherhood of father Christmas and Santa Claus. They submitted their application to become a union and there was a long process of letters being sent back and forth to iron everything out. Some of the items in the proposal were, no one was allowed to claim to be the sole and genuine Father Christmas, the executive director was to be named "Super Santa", and the treasurer called Sterling Santa.

Unfortunately, they weren't taken very seriously and eventually nothing was heard of again from the Brotherhood. Today you can still see Santa and his helpers overworked and underpaid at least one month out of every year.

2958 ~ ACT NOW FOR SOCIAL SECURITY!!

<u>Urge Your U.S. Senators to Bring the Social Security Fairness Act to a Vote Now!</u>



Retirement is a key priority for every Steelworker, and our union fights tirelessly to protect it. Each year, nearly four million Americans retire, relying on Social Security benefits they've earned. However, many public employees, including thousands of Steelworkers, are denied their fair share.

What's the issue and solution?

Due to bad policy choices made by past elected leaders, many public employees have their Social Security benefit reduced or eliminated.

Our union represents thousands of workers in the public sector, including librarians, crossing guards, public school custodians, emergency medical service (EMS) personal, bus drivers, and so many other folks who serve our communities.

Certain laws, commonly known as the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), hurt public employees in 26 states by making it harder for them to retire.

GPO reduces or eliminates Social Security benefits for public employees who earn a government pension and are also eligible for Social Security benefits from spouses, widows, and widowers.

WEP penalizes workers who have paid into Social Security, but also receive a government pension or disability benefit.

For decades, working class families have fought to end the GPO and WEP by passing H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act.

What is H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act?

The bipartisan <u>Social Security Fairness Act</u> will guarantee that millions of public employees can retire with dignity by repealing the GPO and WEP.

H.R. 82 would restore fairness by ensuring that public employees receive the full Social Security benefits that reflect their contributions. What's the process for passing H.R. 82 into law?

Earlier this year, H.R. 82 passed the House of Representatives with a vote of 327 to 75.

Now, it's the Senate's turn! <u>62 Senators co-sponsored the legislation</u>, which is more than 60 needed to clear. However, the 118th Congress is nearing the end of its term. The Senate needs to schedule a floor vote on H.R. 82 before the end of the 118th Congress

Call the Senate Toll Free: 1-877-607-0785 or Scan the QR Code



Mental Health Matters: Understanding the Reasons Behind Suicide

By Paul Reehling



Our local has been touched by suicide a few times over the last decade, and with the start of winter and the shorter days and colder temps it brings, we wanted to reprint this article from this

A 21-year-old man driving down the street pulled out his pistol and shot himself in the head. He seemed to be a funloving guy. Loved to play basketball, and spend time with family and friends. He had a good job and seemed to be generally happy. Unknown to others at the time, he and his long-term girlfriend had been going through a rough patch and she told him that she did not see them ever getting married.

A 40-year-old successful businessman took his rifle to the woods and took his own life, He left 4 great kids that he dearly loved behind. But he had just learned that his ex-wife was getting remarried. These are just a few instances where someone thought it was better to not be alive. Maybe it was just a brief thought, but they acted on it and friends and family are left asking...why?

Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the USA. In 2021 an average of 23 per 100,000 men committed suicide and close to 6 per 100,000 women. And the numbers get worse when you expand the scope to the world. Over 700,000 people die by suicide every year. To put it into perspective, 1 person every 40 seconds commits suicide. Last year more people committed suicide in the US than at any other time in history and the number continues to rise.

This is an awful trend and brings up the question....WHY??? Why do people commit suicide? What is so bad that you would take your own life? There are lots of reasons, some more prevalent than others. Mental illness is one of the biggest causes. The most common mental illness for this is severe depression. 31% of people with Major depressive disorder have attempted suicide.



Traumatic stress such as childhood sexual abuse, rape, physical abuse, or war trauma all are reasons people think of committing suicide. These situations affect men most of all.

Job loss, Bullying, financial problems, being arrested or imprisoned, academic failure, end of a relationship, loss of acceptance because of your sexual orientation. All these are causes of attempted suicide. Hopelessness, feeling like a burden, and terminal illness are big reasons, especially for the older generations. They don't feel like they contribute anymore and feel like they make things harder on others.

So many reasons and so many deaths. I'm sure most people know someone who has committed suicide and thoughts run through many of our heads in these instances. "What could I have done to stop them? Was there a sign I missed?"

You may not be able to tell everyone that is thinking about suicide but there are some warning signs that you can recognize. If someone is talking about wanting to die, or something that has them feeling guilty or ashamed, or if they say they are a burden to someone else. These are warning signs. It doesn't mean they will attempt suicide necessarily but it is a sign that you may want to talk to them about.

Other signs are change of behavior, extreme mood swings, eating or sleeping a lot more or less, use of drugs or alcohol more often than normal, and extreme rage. These are all things that may help you to see that someone needs help.

But how can you help? Sometimes it just takes someone willing to listen and not just listen but be an active listener. Ask direct questions, listen first but dig into the conversation and maybe they will open up. If you think someone is considering committing suicide encourage them to seek professional help.

Please, take suicide statements seriously. The person talking about it needs help. If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts call or text 988. Someone is standing by to help talk you through this.



Living Beyond Trauma: A Member's Journey with PTSD

By Kurtis Cox

We thought this was an important article that deals with very heavy subject matter and being close to the anniversary of this event that this was important to reprint.

In a violent eruption of a coil caught on the entry turnstile of the A&K, Seth Badger was killed not 100ft from where I was standing. In the 10 seconds that it took to register what had just happened, I went from enjoying a morning chat with a coworker to being in awe at the raw force of an unannealed coil coming loose, to finally horror as I watched a cracked blue ERT hardhat settle in the sudden silence of the aftermath.

This moment reshaped my life.

In the following weeks, I felt as if a spintop was set loose in my head. I became a hazard to my coworkers and family, as my driving became erratic, I would ride close to cars in front of me or overtake a vehicle with a minimal amount of space to pass. My sense of self-control was lost, and stress and anxiety became automated responses. Everything would set me off, and I would lash out in unapologetic anger with a cold, calculated strike of words. I was also unaware at the time of what to call these episodes, but I was experiencing frequent, soul-crushing panic attacks.

Then, it finally broke me one night, as my family and I were setting up the Christmas tree in the month following the incident. I wanted nothing to do with helping them, I was still struggling internally. Perhaps it was because I was thinking of another family that would never experience Christmas the same way. I had become angry at something so simple-helping place the ornaments up for decoration-and excused myself to hide in a dark room. That night, my tipping point, I decided it was time that I seek help, and admit that I could not get through this alone.

I went through all the proper channels, and was linked with a therapist in family counseling (it was not known to my practitioner or myself at the time that I was experiencing symptoms of PTSD). At our first meeting, I had an hour to spill everything I had experienced, everything I was going through, and everything I was hoping to get out of seeking counsel.

Although my therapist was not specialized in PTSD, he carefully took notes on everything I said, quietly shifting his legs to find a comfortable position and occasionally clicking the pen against his teeth while in thought. By the end of the first session, he had recognized symptoms I had been experiencing as part of PTSD:

- panic attacks lack of focus
- intrusive thoughts aggression
- emotional distress irritability
- memory problems sleeplessness
- intense stress self-destructive behavior

I continued seeing him every week for the next 6 months for not only myself, but for my family. With two kids and a wife at home, I could not allow myself to spiral out of control. I took a month off work through FMLA, and started redirecting my life back on track-to where, I didn't know, but I was determined to stray from walking down a destructive path.

In addition to seeking counsel, I started reading and writing again. Not on any specific project, but simply reconnecting with activities I once loved and had since neglected. I also started managing a multiplayer server for a game I play, which we are now up to over 100 players, and managing this server has inspired me into learning how to code. I found peace in these things, and with a community of friends and family to help.

What I do to overcome living in constant stress may seem trivial to some, or foreign even, as in the example of running an online game server, but the point I am trying to make is that living with PTSD is not a death sentence. It can be overcome, and your quality of life can be restored. Find things that you once enjoyed, or new things that you could enjoy. I do not mean to say that you will ever forget, or even get over the experience, but the stress can be managed through seeking the proper help—through counseling, talking with your family, reading self-help books, or even just developing a routine (routines bring comfort through familiarity).

No walks of life are immune to experiencing PTSD, and it does not always come from joining the military and witnessing atrocities of war-it can happen to anyone, at any time. A sudden death in a traumatic event can mark us in ways that we humans have trouble processing, and it is okay to open yourself to being vulnerable and seeking help to understand the process. Recognizing that there is a problem is half the battle, and talking with someone like I did can help, but you have to make the first step.

While I am not fully healed of the incident, it no longer has a chokehold on my life. I have rediscovered the joy in the things I had once loved and found new things to keep moving forward, and it would not have been possible if I had chosen to do it on my own. Please, if you struggle with PTSD, or share some of the symptoms I experienced, do yourself and your family a favor and talk to someone. Seek the help that would best benefit you.

Forged Together, We're Stronger: A Note of Appreciation

It's been just over a year since our first issue of Forged Together, and we want to thank everyone who's flipped through its pages to stay informed. Extra thanks to those who joined in by slapping a "Los Barrios" sticker on their hard hat, designing a t-shirt, or participating in our survey. Your feedback matters—whether it encouraged us to keep going or pointed out areas we could improve.

As we wrap up the year, we extend our thanks to each of you for your support and readership. Every time you read, share feedback, and spark discussions, you strengthen the foundation of this local. This newsletter is here to keep us informed, united, and ready to advocate for our rights, and that's only possible with your engagement.

Your involvement makes a real difference. Whether it's your input on workplace issues, stories from the floor, or simply staying connected with the announcements, you help build a stronger

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union community. Every suggestion, question, and shared experience is a reminder of our collective strength. Thank you for helping make each issue more relevant to the lives we lead on the job and beyond.

We know working here at Haynes has its unique challenges. You're the ones keeping everything moving forward, meeting the demands of production, ensuring quality and safety, and adapting to the constant changes within the company. Through your readership and engagement, you help keep these critical issues front and center. We're here to push for fair practices, safe conditions, and the respect every one of you deserves, and we're grateful to have you standing with us.



Thank You ~ From All of Us & Happy Holidays!!

Dank Wives

International Convention Delegate Information

Nominations for USW Convention Delegates will occur during the monthly membership meeting in February, so begin your preparations to have your support at the meeting. According to the local elections guide, you must be a member in good standing to be nominated and must be present to vote, with few exceptions.

The elected members (2 delegates & local president) will represent Local 2958 in the USW Convention at Caesars Forum Convention Center, Summit Ballroom in Las Vegas, Nevada on April 7-10,



