

**IF IT WAS TUESDAY, IT WAS BOOTS DAY**

By Dennis Dillon (Lafayette Board Member)

*(Periodically, the newsletter will profile board members and others who have made special impacts on Lafayette Industries. This story looks at long-time volunteer Boots Berry)*

Below: Boots holding a picture of Julie and herself.



Boots Berry came to Lafayette Industries as a volunteer in 1976. She stayed for 38 years. “Until my legs gave out,” said Boots, 92, as she sat in the living room of her home in Ballwin recently and told the story of her love affair with Lafayette.

It began because of Kenny McLuen, a neighbor with special needs who used to visit the Berry home so much that he became a part of the family.

“Ken was going to turn 21 in August of ’76 and he kept saying, ‘I won’t be able to go to special school any more, but there will be a workshop for me,’” Boots recalled. “He had more faith than I did.”

A workshop did, indeed, open up in 1976 in a small building in Valley Park. Ken McLuen was the first of about a dozen young adults with special needs to be hired at Lafayette. That’s when Boots decided she wanted to volunteer there.

She started on a Tuesday, the same day as Julie Simpson, a young mother from Kirkwood who had recently lost her special needs son. Boots offered emotional support to Julie, and the two women became best friends. They volunteered together at Lafayette for 34 years (Boots stayed for another four years after Julie became too ill to work). “It turned out she was one of the most wonderful, giving, loving persons I’ve ever known,” Boots said.

Tuesday became Boots Day at Lafayette. The workers could always count on her and Julie to be there. They helped supervise the workers, did quality control and gave tours to individuals or groups that wanted to learn what Lafayette Industries was all about. Those tours sometimes led to donations.

It didn’t take long for Boots and Julie to forge a relationship with the workers. [Continued on next page](#)



Rob Libera

CEO & Executive Director  
rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com

**Mission:** The mission of Lafayette Industries is to provide employment opportunities to persons with developmental disabilities and to persons with other disabilities who are 18 years or older.  
**Goals:** ♦ To provide a meaningful and productive work experience to persons who are disabled ♦ To maintain a safe and pleasant work environment ♦ To teach and to train persons with disabilities to acquire better work habits ♦ To enhance self-worth and dignity through employment ♦ To provide high-quality business service through packaging, light assembly and commercial mailings ♦ To operate the center in a professional, fiscally responsible manner ♦ To provide fair wages and good benefits

## **IF IT WAS TUESDAY, IT WAS BOOTS DAY – CONTINUED:**

“When we would walk into the plant, they’d say, ‘Hi, Boots; Hi, Julie,’” said Boots. “Everybody was so happy to see you, it made you glad you came.”

Almost from the start, Boots and Julie gave out birthday cards and Christmas cards to the workers, some of whom were overwhelmed by their kind gesture. “I had one older woman who cried when I gave her a birthday card,” Boots said. “She told me that her mother never sent her a card.”

On payday, the workers proudly showed their checks to Boots and Julie.

“They were so happy,” Boots said. “There was one young man named Tom who had been there a long time, and he just kept heckling me. ‘I want to see your check, Boots. How much money did you make?’”

One young, African-American girl called Boots and Julie her “white mamas.”

“I got more hugs. Gave more hugs,” Boots said. “It wasn’t only (about) helping them with work. It was also listening to them. I heard a lot of different stories. Some of them weren’t very happy stories. They’d even ask me to say a prayer for someone they knew, and I told them I would. Julie did the same.”

When a flood damaged the Lafayette building in Valley Park, Boots pitched in to help with the cleanup — but not before she had to get a tetanus shot. Like other volunteers, she brought home important paperwork and spread it out on her basement floor to dry. Boots recalled that it took six weeks before the workers could return to the building, and even then there still was silt in the lockers.

Boots referred to the Valley Park building as “that little hole in the wall. I think we had one bathroom. We froze in the winter and burned up in the summer.”

Robert Berry, Boots’ husband, also became involved at Lafayette. He would donate his time, often grilling hot dogs for picnics or special lunch days. On Tuesdays, Robert usually wound up cooking dinner for Boots because he knew that day belonged to Lafayette.

“Everyone knew Mom was busy on Tuesday,” said Becky Pierce, Boots’ daughter. “That was sacred. Nobody could ask her to do anything else.”

Boots arrived early on Tuesday and usually stayed until mid-afternoon, leaving shortly before the vans arrived to take the workers home.

“I came home pretty tired some days, but it was worth it,” Boots said. “I think those kids at the workshop helped me learn a little patience. I always needed to learn a little patience.”

Boots, who was born in Kansas City, Missouri, was nicknamed “Boots” before she learned to walk. The name was given to her by her grandmother, who owned a farm in Mountain View, Missouri, and nicknamed her animals, too. “I’ve always wondered if (the nickname) came from the ‘Puss In Boots’ story,” Boots said. “I never asked her.”

Boots was a stay-at-home mom. She and Robert, who passed away in October of 2017, were married 71 years. They raised two children: Becky, a former teacher at Parkway South High School who now teaches preschoolers at St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church in Ballwin, and Robert Jr., a videographer and producer who lives in Olathe, Kansas.

Continued on next page



Above: Boots holding her newest great-granddaughter, Palmer

## IF IT WAS TUESDAY, IT WAS BOOTS DAY – CONTINUED:

In addition to volunteering at Lafayette, Boots loved to read and garden. For 30 years, she belonged to a craft group called “The Angels” (naturally, the husbands were “The Devils”). Only two “Angels” are left.

Boots has four grandchildren (all girls) and four great grandkids (two boys and two girls). She embroidered quilts for each of her great grandkids.

For her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, Boots received a poster-like birthday card signed by all of the Lafayette workers which she proudly displays on a wall near her kitchen. It reminds her of nearly 40 years of precious memories from her time at Lafayette.

“I couldn’t have ever volunteered for something that gave me more happiness,” she said.

Immediate right: Boots holding her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday card from the Lafayette workers



### **Event Calendar**

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>February 2, 2019</b>   | <b>Third Annual Trivia Night – Manchester, Schroeder Park, Room C</b> |
| <b>March 23, 2019</b>     | <b>Mouse Races – Trinity Lutheran Church, Chesterfield</b>            |
| <b>May 11, 2019</b>       | <b>Manchester Craft Beer Festival</b>                                 |
| <b>June 2, 2019</b>       | <b>Family Picnic – McDonnell Park</b>                                 |
| <b>September 12, 2019</b> | <b>Links for Lafayette Golf – Whitmoor Country Club</b>               |

PRIDE DIGNITY SAFETY WORK OPPORTUNITY

LIFE @  
LAFAYETTE  
INDUSTRIES  
NORTH

FAMILIES AND GUARDIANS

Join us for a chili supper as we discuss transportation and Lafayette's current state of affairs. St. Louis ARC will provide a presentation on aging resources and services.

January 13th, 2019  
4621 World Parkway Cir.  
3-5:00pm

RSVP needed by 1/7/2019  
selster@lafayetteindustries.com  
636-227-5666 ext. 1110

PRIDE DIGNITY SAFETY WORK OPPORTUNITY

# Lafayette Industries presents Third Annual Trivia Night February 2, 2019

**Manchester Parks & Rec  
Room C**  
359 Old Meramec Station Road,  
Manchester

*Space is LIMITED to 20 Tables!*



**Doors Open at 6:30pm  
Trivia Begins at 7:00pm**

**Free Beer & Wine!**

**Cash Prizes!**

**New location with smart TV**

**\$20 person**

**\$160/Table of 8**

Register at [lafayetteindustries.com](http://lafayetteindustries.com) click DONATE, enter donation amount and Select TRIVIA or call Alesia Roccia at 636.227.5666, ext. 1118

\_\_\_\_\_ **I have a TEAM \$160**

\_\_\_\_\_ **I want an Individual Ticket \$20**

\_\_\_\_\_ **I want to sponsor a Round \$50**

Individual tickets will be assigned to teams with open space. Round sponsors, please send logo to [aroccia@lafayetteindustries.com](mailto:aroccia@lafayetteindustries.com) for promotional purposes.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Payment enclosed

\_\_\_\_\_ I can donate an auction item. Please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_

*I am unable to attend. Please accept my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support Lafayette Industries*



**LAFAYETTE INDUSTRIES  
PRESENTS**

***9th Annual Mouse Races***

**Saturday, March 23**

**Doors Open 6:30pm**

**First Race 7:00pm**

**Trinity Lutheran Church  
14088 Clayton Road**

***\$25/person ~ \$20/Lafayette employee***

***Sponsor a Mouse for \$25***

***Sponsor a Race for \$100***



***Ticket price includes snacks, soda, beer and wine.  
You may bring your own food. Tables of 8 available.***

***This event sells out quickly!***

***Contact Alesia Roccia  
636.227.5666, ext. 1118  
aroccia@lafayetteindustries.com***

***www.lafayetteindustries.com***

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR JANUARY BIRTHDAY FOLK!!**

**NORTH**

Bertrian	Thomas	7
Emmanuel	Low	4
Jessie	Carpenter	9
Telly	Mays	11
Briana	Beasley	15
Eddie	Brown	18
Duvunier	Gear	19
Dalana	Graves	19
Homer	Wells	20
Tobias	Barnett	24
Sharron	Williams	25
Terry	Stevenson	26
Dawn	Kirkendall	30
Marina	Raskin	30

**WEST**

Allison	Branham	3	David	Reardon	14
Craig	Conrad	4	Robin	Owen	17
Matt	Marien	5	Bob	Thoele	18
Julie	Wefel	5	Patricia	Redd	23
Mary	Klevorn	7	Patti	Hodges	26
Mary	Boyle	9	Brian	Dunn	27
Laura	Meyer	9	Arthur	McCarver	29
Deborah	Walker	9	Hamid	Tariq	29
Stacey	Elster	10	Sam	Biondo	31
Bryon	Minkemann	12	Brendan	Sonnabend	31
Julie	Aufdenspring	14			



Have the best year ever, and good health to all.



**CAUGHT BEING SAFE – NOVEMBER 2018**

**Immediate left:** Scott Risley, Bill Hawn, William Taylor, Stacey Elster, Ian Bagley

**GOOD JOB BEING SAFE!!**

**UNUSUAL HOUSEHOLD TIP**

**Cooking Oil:** We are heading into the “meat” of winter. During the next couple of months we will probably see snow. Some of the snow might even stick to the ground if it ever gets cold and stays cold enough to do so. If it does, then we might have to shovel some of the snow out of the way to be able to get around. The snow might even stick to your snow shovel. How to prevent that from happening? This tip sounds like it belongs in the kitchen, but the Editor has tried it and it works. Take a cooking oil that is a spray-on, and generously treat both sides of the snow shovel to a thorough round of it. The cooking oil should prevent the snow from sticking to the shovel. One year several years back, we had 4” of snow that stuck to the ground. The snow was sticking to everything in sight, my shovel included. It made shoveling really tough. I had heard this tip and happened to have a spray oil in the house. I sprayed the shovel, and it made it really easy to shovel the rest of the snow. If we get any snow this winter, it happens to stick and you happen to have a snow shovel that is less than helpful, try this tip out.

# 2018 WEST ART CONCERT





**2018 WEST ART CONCERT – CONTINUED:**



## 2018 ATTENDANCE AWARDS FOR NORTH

The 2018 Attendance Awards goes to the following North employees for great attendance in 2018:

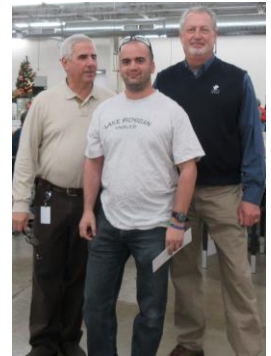
1. Terrance Williams
2. Duvunier Gear
3. Krystle Conroy
4. Samuel Sullivan
5. Tim Hubbard
6. Tamara Little
7. James Bateman
8. Eddie Brown
9. Karl Gill
10. Phillip Johnson
11. Jason Doss
12. Elois Rogers
13. Jerry Ring
14. Veronica Quinn
15. Roxanna Robinson
16. Earl Lester
17. Anthony Williams
18. Alphonso Jackson
19. Kristina Schrader
20. Cynthia Behan
21. Timothy Cagle
22. Torrey Watson
23. Charles Young
24. Stephen Bindbeutel
25. Elizabeth Moore
26. Charles Buchanan
27. Cameron Bransford
28. Telly Mays
29. Eileen Eder
30. Anton Jones



## 2018 ATTENDANCE AWARDS FOR WEST

The 2018 Attendance Awards goes to the following West employees for great attendance in 2018:

- |                    |                     |                    |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Mark Becker     | 2. Scott Schmitz    | 3. Peter Johnston  |
| 4. Margo Bates     | 5. Logan Weber      | 6. Kurt Pfeiffer   |
| 7. Dan Zeller      | 8. Mark Carlson     | 9. Scott Risley    |
| 10. Travis Nichols | 11. DJ Williams     | 12. Sam Williams   |
| 13. Sheri Cooley   | 14. Diane Hoferlin  | 15. Mary Klevorn   |
| 16. Stacie Waller  | 17. Suzie Covington | 18. Craig Marek    |
| 19. Ryan Clemente  | 20. Doug Miller     | 21. Mark Grosch    |
| 22. Beth Goodwin   | 23. Mike Gaglio     | 24. Shelly Schmitt |
| 25. Carmen Dockett | 26. James Nash      | 27. David Vanek    |
| 28. Daniel Scholl  | 29. Tim Sitek       | 30. Tommy Mondello |



# ST. JOHN'S UCC ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

By Kay Martinez (Proud Mother)

Santa, as always, was the most anticipated guest at this annual party. Pastor Debby and her Elves from her church provided the spirit of happiness and fun for all the guests. The afternoon began with a delicious luncheon, then the guests moved on to make a craft to put on their tree. Santa arrived to an excited crowd. The best part now begins - the singing! Everyone got a chance to show off their vocal talents. Santa bids us all goodbye and we end with thoughts from the pastor about the Reason for the Season. The Lafayette employees enjoy this party every year!



## 25 YEARS ON THE JOB

Each Workshop had an employee who had completed 25 years of service to Lafayette Industries. In a time where a lot of workers don't complete even 5 years, it is phenomenal that we keep having a significant amount of individuals who reach this achievement. They not only reach it, but they work beyond it. Congratulations to both of our folks, and we wish them many more years of employment at Lafayette.



**Above:** Gary Killiebrew and his brother celebrate his success.



**Above:** Stacey Elster and Gary Killiebrew celebrate with cake.

**LAFAYETTE NORTH:**

**GARY KILLIEBREW**

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



**Above:** Jim Bianchi, Chuck Udell, and Stacey Elster look as Sherri Cooley looks at the case of her new watch.



**Above:** Jim Bianchi, Sherri Farmer, Dan Libera, Rob Libera and Chuck Udell celebrate with Sherri Cooley

**LAFAYETTE WEST:**

**SHERRI COOLEY**

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

## PUJOLS FAMILY FOUNDATION

By Marilyn Wombacher (Proud Mother)

Joe and I were recently interviewed by the Pujols Family Foundation. The video was shown at their "O Night Divine" gala on December 1<sup>st</sup>. You can see it on Facebook, under the Pujols Family Foundation page. It is titled "One Black Belt At A Time". Since I'm not on Facebook, I'm not exactly sure how it works. The video is about 6 minutes long. They interviewed Joe and me about bullying and having a child with special needs / Down syndrome. Then they show footage from both Tae Kwon Do classes (several Lafayette employees are in the class) showing the kids learning the moves. The instructor, Mr. Trower, talks about how the classes give its participants confidence. I hope everyone gets to view it.

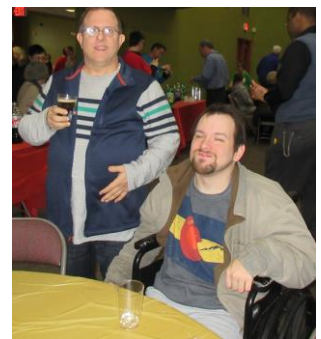
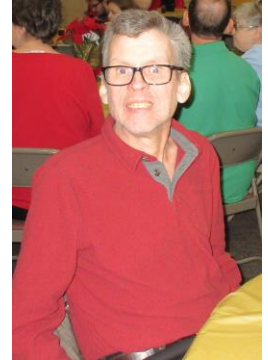
# 2018 NORTH HOLIDAY PARTY



**2018 NORTH HOLIDAY PARTY – CONTINUED:**



2018 WEST HOLIDAY PARTY





**2018 WEST HOLIDAY PARTY – CONTINUED:**



**Editorial Note:** This photo and article are from the December 2018 / January 2019 issue of Catholic St. Louis. The article is in the section of the magazine titled Profile, and it was written as told to Jennifer Brinker and the photo was taken by Lisa Johnston. We didn't see a copyright indicated, so we hope it's all right to share their information about our own Andrew "Andy" Villaire.



## A HAPPY HEART

*How one young man became the inspiration for popular monthly dances for people with disabilities*

Andy Villaire is pretty quiet when you first meet him. But ask him about music, and his face lights up. He'll mention his favorite musicians, including Michael Jackson. "Billie Jean," he grins as he answers a question about his favorite song. He presents a fedora and sequined glove, which he sometimes wears to dances.

Andy, who has Down syndrome was the inspiration for Felice Coures (Italian for happy heart), monthly dances at St. Clare of Assisi Parish in Ellisville for people ages 18 and older with developmental disabilities. Andy's parents, Gerry and Bob, struggled to find social activities for him. They worked with Knights of Columbus to sponsor the dances. Bob Villaire died 2010.

Now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, the dances are hosted by seven Knights' councils and ladies auxiliaries in West County: St. Alban Roe, St. Joseph Manchester, Holy Infant, Christ Prince of Peace, St. Clare, Ascension and Incarnate Word. Gerry Villaire said the cafeteria is at capacity almost every month. The dances generally average about 200 attendees.

Andy and his mom recently spoke about his Catholic faith and favorite activities.

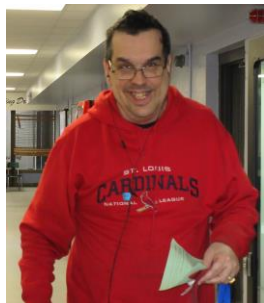
**How are you involved in the Church?** Andy is a Fourth Degree member of the Knights of Columbus Council 7119. His father helped to re-activate the council at the parish many years ago. Andy also is an usher at the 5 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass and is generally perched at a side door and greets friends as they arrive for Mass. He carries a rosary to Mass and places it around his neck during the consecration of the Eucharist. He received first Communion at age 7 with the late Msgr. Elmer Berhmann, who was the longtime director of the archdiocesan Department of Special Education.

**What is your primary work?** Andy works at Lafayette Industries, a packaging facility that employs people with disabilities. He fulfills orders by placing items in boxes. He has many friends at work, some of whom attend Felice Coures dances with him.

**Besides going to dances, what are your favorite hobbies?** Andy joined a group of friends that formed out of a life skills program he attended. The group attends a regular art class and goes to dinner together, and to the movies and bowling. Andy also participates in a bowling league and has a black belt in Taekwondo. He also is a regular at the Pujols Family Foundation annual prom, which is for people with Down syndrome. ●

## ARTISTIC FRIENDS VISIT WEST AGAIN

Every year we get a special visit at West from the Artistic Friends. This is a group who has deep roots with us. They use Lafayette West's facilities every now and again, and in return they make the holidays special for our employees. Earlier in November our folks from West were already asking whether the group would be coming around the holiday break with the cookies and something special for them. Artistic Friends came through towards the end of last week, just before the holiday break. Below are the happy faces of our folks as they receive their cookies and their gift and say thank you to the ladies.



Thank you to our friends from the Artistic Friends Club. You are appreciated!



## TAX PREPARATION SCHEDULING

By Dick Kallemeier

Becky S. and I will begin accepting email requests for 2018 tax preparation appointments on January 21, 2019. This year completing the intake/quality review form is mandatory for us to file a tax return electronically. This document now includes 3 forms giving us permission to use your information for tax purposes, personal background information and permission to share your tax return history with other AARP sites. The Intake form and Tax Preparation Guide are available at the Lafayette West office. Because of the tax intake form change we are increasing the appointment time to an hour and a half. Appointments at the Lafayette West office will begin Monday, February 4 and each Monday thereafter until we have completed all returns. This free service is available to all Lafayette employees and immediate family members. If you do not have access to a computer to make the appointment please call Becky S. at (636) 227-5666, ext. 1100.

Remember to bring all income forms (W2, 1099R, Social Security, SSI Letter, Interest, Dividends, Capital Gains, if expecting a brokerage report recommend your appointment be made for after March 1<sup>st</sup>), adjustments to income (IRA contribution, student loan interest, etc.), Real Estate Tax receipts, rent receipts, proof of medical insurance and premium expenses, and if you itemize (mortgage interest, charity gifts, medical expenses including mileage). Also, needed for each person listed on the tax return is a photo ID, Social Security card, proof of age, direct deposit account numbers and a copy of last year's tax return. Everyone must also have proof of health insurance coverage (form 1095 A, B or C). If you or a family member were a victim of identity theft you may have a new PIN number issued. If the IRS sends a PIN, please bring it with you.

Many Lafayette employees owe no tax but may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit and possibly the Missouri Property Tax Credit (Circuit Breaker). A review of the employee's income, disability status and housing rental expense determines eligibility. Tax returns will be completed on the IRS computer tax preparation system and efiled with the IRS and state of Missouri. Federal income, state income and property tax credit (if applicable) forms are completed as one package.

Becky Stillwell [bstillwell@lafayetteindustries.com](mailto:bstillwell@lafayetteindustries.com) ★ Dick Kallemeier [dickkall@charter.net](mailto:dickkall@charter.net)



## SAFETY TIP FOR JANUARY 2019

By Tom Heitert (Safety Guru)

The weather has turned cold again, and we should expect considerable bad weather. I have been impressed in recent years how well Lafayette has taken care of their lots and walks during periods of ice and snow. We take these things for granted, but who is doing it? Thanks to whomever!

Those of us at home need to take precautions as we clear our walks and driveways. We have all heard the reports of heart attacks and strokes during these times. So a few reminders: 1) Bend those knees for snow removal. 2) A scarf is good to keep the cold air from our lungs. 3) Clear snow in short bursts of effort. 4) Watch closely for the dreaded black ice on parking lots.

Take care of yourselves, my friends. Lafayette needs you.

## SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT

- MORE LATER!



## MY TEXAS VACATION

By Lillian Kwok  
(Proud Lafayette employee)

Arrived Dallas on Friday, December 21<sup>st</sup> in the afternoon. We visited my dad's friends, Jack and Suzy.

Next day, we drove to my brother Andy's house in College Station. It was about a four hour's drive. We spent time bonding with my brother, my niece, Madelyn, and my nephew, Silas. Madelyn and Silas are so cute.

Next day, my other brother's family came in from St. Louis. Andy's house was getting very busy and crowded. We had lots of family fun.

My brother gave us a campus tour of Texas A&M University. It is a really, really big and beautiful university.

We visited Houston, about an hour and a half's drive away. We met up with some relatives there. We had one of the best Vietnamese buffet lunches there.

We also visited the George Bush Memorial Museum. Due to government shutdown, the museum only had the lobby and gift shop open to public.

We continued to do some sightseeing in Austin, Texas, and flew back home on Sunday.

## CHRISTY FRIESEN HAS A NEW BABY GIRL



When West had their Hot Dog Day back in mid-September, we had a bunch of visitors that came to see their friends at Lafayette. One of the visitors was Christy Friesen, and she was obviously pregnant and due within a few months. Lucy Christine Friesen was born at 4:30 a.m. on November 20, 2018. She was 20” long, weighed 5 pounds, 15 ounces. She was born at St. Luke’s Hospital. Congratulations to Matt and Christy, and to her older brother, Eli, as well. Lucy came into the world a little early, but she’s doing fine. We wish them the best, and you are welcome to visit any time at Lafayette!

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

# Have the Best one ever!!

# JANUARY 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Both Workshops closed for New Year's	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 PAY DAY	11	12 K of C West Dance - St. Clare of Assisi School Cafeteria – 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.  Welcome in the New Year
13	14	15	16 Board Meeting – 6:30 p.m.	17	18 K of C North Dance – 6:30-9:00p at Valley Industries	19
20	21 Martin Luther King Day – Both Workshops are OPEN!	22	23	24	25 PAY DAY	26
27	28	29	30	31		