

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

## COVID Cases Increase at Postal Facilities...

The latest numbers from management for the postal facilities we represent is as follows:  
**Palatine P&DC - 67**  
**Carol Stream PDC -57**  
**Chicago Metro L&DC (Busse) - 16**  
The Lakeland District sends out an email every week with updated case numbers for all offices in the Lakeland District. I get no such email updates from the Central and Chicago Districts. Carol Stream Plant Manager Pam Bronson sends an email update to myself and Mailhandler Branch President Sheila Spaulding when a new case is verified at CS. We get no updated information from Busse Plant Manager Halfman unless we ask him for it. OSHA conducted an investigation for a complaint filed at Palatine stating "The employer is not following CDC guidelines in regards to the use of facemasks or face coverings after employees have tested positive for Covid-19." The same complaint was filed at Carol Stream and Busse, and could be filed at other facilities.

Early on we complained that the mask policy was not being enforced and that managers were some of the worst offenders. Since supervisors were not wearing masks they did not seem to care if the employees wore masks. After a few Carol Stream managers tested positive they started to take mask wearing more seriously, but I am hearing some managers still don't think its their job to tell employees to wear a mask. A Safety grievance was filed at Carol Stream because some employees say they were not contacted (contact tracing) after someone they were in close contact with tested positive for COVID.

## COVID Cleaning

Anyone who works at the Post Office knows the buildings are not clean. Go into a bathroom in any store and bathrooms are much cleaner than any you will see at the Post Office. The stalls and floors in post offices look like they have not been cleaned in a long time and they haven't. Custodians are given time to clean toilets and sinks and replace paper products and hand soap.

The deterioration of the cleaning at postal facilities mirrors the deterioration of the USPS itself and can be traced back to the TL-5 Agreement signed at the National Level in 2014. The man who signed off this agreement was the Maintenance Craft Director Steve Raymer and we cannot ask him why he signed it because he has since passed away. The TL-5 Agreement achieved two things, it reduced the cleaning hours everywhere and it forced management to perform the (reduced) required cleaning hours or pay the ODL Custodians. ODL Custodians at some facilities have received large checks as a result of the TL-5 for the required number of cleaning hours not being performed in each of the fiscal years since the TL-5 was signed. This has led to a management mentality of making sure they have the hours logged but not being very concerned about the actual cleaning of the facilities. As long as they have the hours the don't seem to care if cleaning gets done. Many Custodians work hard because of their work ethic but some do not as they see that management does not care if they work.

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## Special points of interest:

COVID Cases Increase at  
Postal Facilities  
COVID Cleaning  
COVID Cleaning (continued)  
No Steward on T2 at Busse  
Crossing Crafts...  
New Appointments  
Retirements Continue in 2020  
The Passing of Dave Retel  
Christmas Gift Cards

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### **COVID Cleaning (continued)**

Since the decline in cleaning at postal facilities due to the TL-5, it is doubtful that much additional COVID cleaning is getting done. Maintenance Management Order MMO 031-20 Influenza and Coronavirus Cleaning Contingency says *"ensure all custodians are properly wiping down all fomites according to MS-47 guidelines."* \*A fomite is an inanimate object that can transmit an infectious agent from person to person, hard surfaces, handrails, door handles. Your eyes do not lie, the facilities are not being cleaned as management is more concerned about cleaning hours than cleaning. Most Custodians work hard but are working in a broken system. It is hard to believe that extra COVID cleaning is being done. The story is the same in the post offices where every time a full-time custodian retires they replace the job with a part-time custodian. This is based on reduced cleaning. This is what management asked for and the Union for whatever reason agreed to in 2014, and now post offices/facilities are filthy. Compare postal facilities with any other public building, its amazing! **No Steward on T2 at Busse** We have not had a regular Steward on tour 2 at Busse for years, since John Johnson stepped down. We have hired, paid, and trained Stewards but they did not do the job and they all resigned or left. We asked Plant Manager Halfman to allow us to detail our tour 3 Chief Steward Yolanda Safsaf to tour 2 for coverage and he agreed. This went on for over a year with details being approved until this November when he disapproved the detail in retaliation for her filing grievances on crossing crafts. If he would stop assigning Clerk work to Mailhandlers there would be more Clerk bids on tour 2 and we would not have this problem!

### **Crossing Crafts...**

In the Associate Offices it is a daily occurrence that Carriers and managers scan and sort parcels. When we see it we file a grievance for the Clerks to be paid at the overtime rate and management's excuse is "we have to get the mail out" but the fact is they intentionally understaff Clerks so they have just enough to cover the window and sort some of the mail. The back-up plan for intentional understaffing is to cross-crafts. At Wheaton, Park Ridge and Northbrook last year they had Custodians sorting parcels, because again they do not care about cleaning. Some Clerks will tell us but many ignore these violations because they do not want to be retaliated against for speaking up. They do not understand that clerk jobs will continue to disappear if management can get away with a skeleton crew of Clerks while Carriers and supervisors sort mail. I am told Lake Forest Postmaster Dalynn Craft regularly sorts mail. Tell us what you know and we will file a grievance with or without using your name, as we know Clerks are afraid of management retaliation at the post offices.

### **At the Plants...**

The Busse Inventory states that distribution and containerization of NMOs is assigned to Clerks but that is being ignored. LCUS 1 and LCUS 2 are part of NMO according to management and have been staffed that way since 2014. In spite of the Inventory, Plant Manager Halfman assigns this work to MHs and takes Rack mail from the Clerks, hence Yolanda's grievances and booted off tour 2. At Palatine when the APPS goes down or cannot handle the mail management sets up additional manual distribution units for IPP and Priority and staffs with MHs. This is Clerk work per the Inventory and grievances will be filed.

### **New Appointments**

Retiree member/retired Carol Stream Maintenance employee Janet Street is our new Legislative Director and promises to keep the members updated legislatively. She reports the main issue currently is the run-off election in Georgia for two Senate seats that will determine control of the Senate. We have appointed three new Stewards recently and they are Maisha Clark tour 1 Palatine, Walter Mitchell Jr. MVS Busse, and Luis Perez, tour 3 MVS CS.

### **Retirements Continue in 2020**

This year we have given out 23 men's and 31 women's retirement watches to our retiring members. 54 members have retired in 2020. I have put in my retirement papers and withdrawn, and put them in again for 1-1-2021. I started in 1976 and have 44 years service so it may be time to get my watch. I will continue to serve my term, with the Local saving money by not having to pay my benefits. Where else can you work for the same employer for 44 years and say you really liked your job... Tour 3 Chief Steward Ramone DePeralta is also retiring and we thank him for all he has done for the members at Carol Stream. There is no one like Ramone!

### **The Passing of Dave Retel**

Dave Retel passed on 11-30-2020. He was a Steward at old North Suburban and at Palatine. Dave also served as Maintenance Craft Director for three years. He retired a few years ago and was part of the Local's Retiree Chapter. Dave was a proud Veteran and Maintenance Craft employee. Condolences to his wife, Secretary Linda Retel and family.

### **Christmas Gift Cards**

We are giving \$20 Jewel Cards to NWIAL members for Christmas. Merry Christmas to all members. We all wish everyone a safe and Happy New Year 2021!

