

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

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## What Happened to Seniority and Fairness at Carol Stream?

Thanks to another national agreement there will be more PSE conversions in most plants on July 31, 2021. This should mean that the PSEs to be converted should be preferencing on their assignments, but Carol Stream is refusing to allow preferencing on assignments by seniority as has historically been done in the past. We communicated with Plant Manager Bronson and she said they were to "convert in place" and I asked for something in writing. She provided a copy of the national MOU for the 7-31-2021 conversions which does say "convert in place". I contacted national Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman and he said convert in place means the Clerk remains on the same tour and start time, but agreed that there was no reason to not allow the Clerks to preference on the non-scheduled days, as they did not have regular NS days as PSEs. There is no reason to deny Clerks the right to preference on NS days.

## Grievance Being Filed

After discussion with 601 CCD Calvin Taylor and Chief Stewards Melanie Bellmon and Erica Williams it was agreed that Melanie would file a class action grievance on the failure to honor seniority for the installation. Shame on management for denying these Clerks the right to use their seniority to choose NS days. Employees want to be treated fairly and this is a clear example of them not being treated fairly. These newly converted Clerks have worked six day schedules for the most part since they were hired, and management is assigning them to NS days without regard to seniority. This is wrong. Carol Stream management has time to fix this and to do the right thing. 601 CCD Calvin Taylor has always worked with management on bids and assignment preferencing. **Happy People Move the Mail - Janet Norfleet** Years ago when I first started out at old North Suburban we had a Plant Manager named Janet Norfleet for a short time. Her motto was "Happy people move the mail." Janet Norfleet was right!

## Palatine Plant Manager

The titled plant manager is still Allen Mitchell but they have him on detail, so we are getting used to Ms. Charlesten Anderson as the A/Plant Manager. We don't agree with every thing she does but she is willing to sit down and talk to us when needed. She says she believes in treating employees fairly and expects her managers to do so. We don't know how much longer she will be with us at Palatine but we have developed a relationship where we can talk to her and resolve issues. I have said many times that employees just want to be treated fairly but this is the first time I have heard a plant manager say she believes in being fair. We hope she stays awhile **A/Plant Manager Busse Steve Bacik** is the A/Plant Manager from Milwaukee. On the plus side he met with us for three hours for Labor-Management. On the negative side we asked him to reconsider the separations of some newly converted Clerks who were separated on their 90 day probation for attendance, some for COVID leave, but he relied on his managers and would not bring any of them back.

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### Special points of interest:

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### **EFEL for Childcare...**

We have gotten many calls from employees who have been denied EFEL to help children with schooling when the school is closed and classes are virtual. USPS has taken the position that only tour 2 employees will be approved for EFEL for this reason. Parents who work nights on tour 3 and tour 1 are being denied EFEL to help their children with school. These employees/parents want to know how they are supposed to work their night shift and be up in the morning to help their child as they would have no time for sleep. This is just plain common sense. We asked our national Union who contacted OPM for clarification. They asked "*How Qualifying condition 5 (child care, school closure, etc.) is applied to "off tour" workers. Please clarify whether this circumstance includes an employee who takes leave from his or her night shift in order to align his or her schedule with childcare and school needs during the day when the employee would normally be unavailable. In other words, can a postal employee use EFEL to cover his or her normal night shift hours so they may sleep at night and care for their child during the day?*" On 7-9-2021 APWU Industrial Director Vance Zimmerman stated "*I do not have the responses to these questions. At this time, we are telling you that the answers did not favor the APWU point of view.*" We have received no further information from the national Union on this and school will be opening soon and we don't know how much money is left in the EFEL fund.

### **EFEL Documentation Fraud**

Do not jeopardize your job by using fake or altered documentation to qualify for EFEL. This is considered fraud. A few weeks of paid leave is not worth losing your job over. We have seen it happen.

### **Ask for a Steward!**

I put this in the June 2, 2021 Local Line but it needs to be repeated. When management calls you into a meeting you should ask if the meeting could lead to discipline and if the answer is yes, you need to ask for a Union Steward and wait until you get one before answering any questions. This goes double when speaking with the Postal Inspectors and/or the OIG. Once you request a Steward you do not have to answer questions until you get one, so just wait. Most of the time an employee is called in for a pre-disciplinary interview it is for attendance or failure to maintain a regular schedule. As a postal employee you have a job for life as long as you come to work, do not steal, and do not threaten anyone while at work. Coming to work seems to be the hardest one for some employees. Everyone gets sick, has an emergency once in awhile, or gets to work late for various reasons including traffic and or accidents. Your attendance does not have to be perfect but you need to be regular in attendance. If you have a chronic health condition you may qualify for Family Medical Leave. We have seen many employees lose their jobs for attendance and these cases are hard to win if the employee has bad attendance. The employee is off work and will call us to ask about their case as the grievance procedure is too slow. Don't put yourself in that position. Aside from attendance the other way to jeopardize your job is to threaten someone while at work. If a co-worker or a manager is provoking you, walk away and do not allow them to provoke you into an altercation where they can say you were a threat and violated the USPS Zero Tolerance policy. This policy is used mostly against craft employees and not managers. Report abusive managers to us.

### **Associate Office Cross Crafts**

A never-ending problem in the Associate Offices is management having managers and Carriers performing Clerk work regularly. Management gets away with this if the Clerks do not report it to us. Many Clerks are afraid to write a statement for fear of retaliation. I have grievances currently where Clerks informed me of the violations, Carriers and or Postmaster performing Clerk work, but they want to remain anonymous. In the Lake Forest Post Office the postmaster, Dalynn Craft approached a Clerk and threatened him with being required to work his NS day every week because she suspects he informed me of the violations. This is unprofessional, but this postmaster has no respect for the craft, the union, or the contract. She sounds professional and would never admit otherwise, but her actions say "unprofessional".

### **Thomas Miller to Retire on 8-1**

Tom Miller has served the Local for many years as a Steward, Chief Steward, Secretary, and Vice President. For the last several years he has served as a tour 3 Steward at Palatine and these members were happy to have him. Tom is one of the most knowledgeable union officials we have, and his knowledge, ability and experience will be greatly missed. Tom plans to retire on 8-1-2021 and ride off into the sunset on his motorcycle. We thank Tom for his many years of service to the members of NWIAL and wish him a long and happy retirement.

### **Scholarship Drawing at Union Meeting on August 8, 2021**

Chief Trustee Ray Wience will be prepared for the drawing for the four \$1,000.00 2021 Scholarships. Application forms are available at your union office and must be received by Ray at the Union Hall by 12 pm on Sunday, August 8th. \*Non-members are not eligible.

