

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

## Contract Arbitration to Begin on 2-17-16

Hearings for a new contract will begin on 2-17. The case will be heard by a three-member panel that will have one union appointed advocate, one management advocate, and a neutral arbitrator. Stephen Goldberg was chosen as the arbitrator and he will decide what the new contract will be. Goldberg was also the arbitrator for the last APWU contract that was decided in arbitration. Arbitration hearings on the Collective Bargaining Agreement are similar to court cases, with opening and closing statements, witness testimony, cross examination, presentation of supporting documents, and legal briefs. Preparing for contract arbitration costs money for lawyers and expert witnesses to testify on the economic issues being decided. For the non-members who will benefit by the new contract they are once again free-loading off the 88% who do pay. The 12% who do not pay dues have no shame in free-loading off the majority who pay dues to support the union.

## USPS Understaffing

USPS has cut staffing at plants and post offices to the bone. Plant staffing for Mailhandlers and Clerks is based on a USPS program called the Function 1 scheduler. The scheduler determines the authorized complement and is almost always less than the current number of employees. We met with Palatine Plant Manager Mayberry and his staff on 1-28-16 to discuss staffing issues. We were given a printout showing Palatine has 332 Function 1 Clerks. The seniority list shows 360 but the Bulk Mail Clerks and a few others are not considered part of Function 1 staffing. The printout showing 332 Clerks showed 340 as the authorized complement so we said this would allow them to return the eight employees from the MH craft and end the retreat rights at Palatine. They said the 340 number has changed and is now 317 Clerks based on the F1-scheduler, which is based on BPI (productivity). Like most USPS staffing programs BPI goals are not realistic but if the plant does not make BPI they are considered over-

staffed by the higher-ups. Since no plants actually make BPI all plants are overstaffed even though most of them have to call a lot of overtime consistently to get the mail out. Both Palatine and Carol Stream rely on overtime to get the mail out. Palatine current Clerk OT is at 11.55%, and MH OT is at 20.52%. How high does the OT have to go before management hires more career employees? 20%. Palatine management has been saying for years that they have enough employees if they came to work. Palatine and Busse both have managers from outside the facility reviewing the "attendance problem". Palatine has increased the number of PSEs to 74, but they are not replacing the career Clerks who retire. They do not want to hire more careers (read convert PSEs) so they are hiring more PSEs and planning an attendance crackdown. We have grievances filed as that seems to be the only way to get career jobs and /or PSEs converted. The higher-ups will not replace career clerks until they have exhausted all other options, including calling OT, adding PSEs, and looking at attendance.

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### Special points of interest:

Contract Arbitration to Begin on 2-7-16  
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PSE Conversion Grievances  
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Palatine OSHS Complaint  
Fear Not!!!  
From the Workroom Floor

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## Reposting Bids

Effective 1-11-16 management at the Palatine P&DC reposted five IPP/Low Cost Tray Sorter bids that were posted in November. It took management 16 months to post jobs after the facility started to work Priority mail in July 2014. 16 months to post and the Clerks were in the jobs 2.5 months before they were reposted to change the NS days, all changed to Su/Mo. We spoke with the Plant Manager and he said it was "unfortunate" but they need the belt fully staffed from Tuesday through Saturday. We pointed out that management asked us to agree to slash bids with IPP being the principal area of assignment and Low Cost Tray Sorter being the secondary area, and we agreed because we felt that Clerks bidding on these jobs should know where else they'd be working if there was not eight hours of work in IPP. IPP is short for Incoming Parcel Post but the operation works IPP and Priority. The five Clerks who hold these bids will lose them as they must be reposted to change NS days. Some have asked if they will have a closed section and the answer is "no" because the only time you have a closed section is when the section (in this case T3 Manual) is being reduced, but the section is not being reduced, the bids are being reposted so the number of T3 manual bids stays the same. It is unfortunate that management did not know what NS days were needed when they posted these jobs in November, but the contract gives management the right to schedule and staff, not the union. We asked management to reconsider but they said they need to change the NS days to fully staff the belt on Tuesday thru Saturday. We filed a grievance and will have to watch who is working tour 3 IPP /LCTS on Sunday and Monday since these bids were taken.

## PSE Conversion Grievances

Our grievances for Carol Stream and Chicago Metro L&DC are being discussed at the national level and we will share information when they are resolved.

### \$56 Million Settlement is for Small Office PTF Clerks...

Stewards have gotten calls from Clerks asking when they will get their money from the \$56 million. If you were a PTF or NTFT Clerk in a level 15, 16, or 18 office from 5-7-11 to 12-5-14 you are entitled to payment, otherwise you are not. Each week on the rolls during this period is worth \$26.23 for PTF or NTFT Clerks in level 15, 16, and 18 offices as a settlement for all Article 1.6 grievances filed for management exceeding the number of hours of bargaining unit work allowed in smaller offices.

### Busse Labor-Management

We met with Plant Manager Murphy and her staff last week and asked when jobs would be posted for the new Universal LUCAS and they said they are working on this. We asked how Busse did at Xmas and they struggled because the heavy mail volume started in early November instead of December. They were not expecting the mail volume to be so heavy so early.

### Palatine OSHA Complaint

A complaint was filed on blocked fire extinguishers, exit doors, and aisles which resulted in clean-up efforts and a follow up inspection.

### Fear Not!!!

Maintenance Craft Director Joe Golden has been arbitrating cases, many of them in front of a very tough arbitrator, Ann Kenis. When we lose an arbitration case it does not mean we are wrong on the issue, just that the arbitrator did not think we proved our case. The burden of proof in a contract case is on the union. Some in management may think that by losing one or two battles we have lost the war, but that is not true.

## From the Workroom Floor

We have a new senior MDO at Palatine and his name is Bruce. I guess he is here to help Palatine. I got a call over the weekend from a Palatine Clerk who I know well stating there favoritism in the way the Automation unit is run on T2. Some Clerks are allowed to work with their partner and others not. I asked our Steward about this and was told that he felt that was true. The tour 2 Automation MDO had a meeting with the Clerks and told them the numbers were bad and she would have to make changes. I heard that this MDO was spoken to by Bruce, the new senior MDO, regarding Automation numbers. Stuff rolls downhill and onto the Automation Clerks, who already have the hardest job at the plants. Clerks work on the machine all day but they are not machines. There is no required productivity in our contract, only a goal, but Clerks are pushed to get specific numbers in Automation or else. During the MDO's meeting the Steward stated that maybe the numbers were down because they had lost most of their dispatchers and the sweeper has to pull mail. Auto is the largest mail processing operation and management pushes productivity on these machines. The hardest job becomes harder with the constant pressure and intimidation to make the numbers. I'm sure CS Automation Clerks are dealing with some of the same problems but I don't get as much feedback from CS Automation. Clerks should not be harassed and intimidated for thru-put as long as they are giving a fair days work. Most of these managers would not last a day on a DBCS or a DIOSS. Pressure comes from the top but those with the hardest jobs should not be harassed and intimidated. We do not hear these complaints from FSS, AFSM or Manual units.

