

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

December Overtime and Holiday Draft...

This year Clerks made more overtime than they have in years because the Christmas hiring was limited and these plants are staffed short-handed year round. Christmas volume seemed heavier this year but it could be that the lack of staffing made it look that way. Postal employees like overtime and they were getting all they wanted at Palatine and Busse, with Clerks working 12 or more hours every day. Carol Stream did not get as much but they were told they could go work at Busse if they were not being maximized to 60 hours per week but few if any went to Busse. Busse gets buried in packages in December, but this year they did not hire enough Christmas help so they called OT. In the past Busse hired hundreds of Christmas Casuals while regulars did not get overtime until the last week before Christmas. Regulars all got tons of OT this year at all three plants. Many Clerks also got drafted for Christmas and New Years because of the lack of Christmas help.

Unhappy Custodians... Palatine is the only plant locally that has changed to the "Team Cleaning" agreed to at the national level in the MS47-TL5 agreement. All facilities will be changed to Team Cleaning but the Palatine Custodians do not like it. Team Cleaning is defined as a methodology for systematically cleaning all facility areas using specialists responsible for specific cleaning tasks. Instead of being assigned to a route with different tasks the "specialist" is assigned to the same task for 7.5 hours. They have specialists who vacuum all day and others who clean restrooms all day. The main complaint we are hearing is the tools. The dumpsters and push brooms Custodians have used for years have been replaced by smaller trash containers and brooms, which are suitable for office cleaning and not for industrial cleaning. The new tools include a vacuum cleaner which the Custodian must wear on their back all day and which is also not suited for industrial cleaning. Management says the standardized tools and procedures have been

MS-47 TL5 Team Clean methodically selected and can be used at any facility regardless of location, size or age. They also say the selection of tools is based on employee safety, environmental impact, cleaning effectiveness and cost. Compared to the supplies the Custodians have used in the past these are like toys and must have been selected based on cost and not on employee safety. Whoever agreed to this should try wearing that vacuum cleaner on their back all day or bending over with the toy broom to sweep up the paper, etc. I have sent a letter to our national Maintenance Craft Director to inform him of these complaints and will be interested in what his response will be. Custodians now perform the same task all day long instead of having a route that included many tasks. The equipment is not suited for industrial cleaning which means Custodians work harder not smarter and the facility looks bad. Most of the plants have not looked clean in a long time but Palatine which looked pretty bad before the change looks worse. These complaints have been sent to the national.

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Special points of interest:

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Holiday Draft
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Contract Update

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Cutting Corners in the AO's

That means having someone other than a Clerk perform Clerk work, usually a supervisor or a Carrier as they don't have enough Clerks and they have to get the mail out. In Glenview this happens daily but the Clerks are providing detailed statements every week to me while the Steward is on leave. In Wheaton it was discovered that management had used Carriers on straight time to perform Custodian work and counted those hours towards the required 90% hours. When we asked for the Workhour Summaries for the LDC 38 hours it showed numerous Carriers and most of these hours were regular work hours and not overtime. Management use cross-craft hours to prove that they performed 90% of the Custodial cleaning hours!!! If we don't ask for documentation they will just give us the LDC 38 hours and who knows who they are clocking onto that operation. Who knows if the Carriers were carrying mail while clocked onto a Custodian operation or if they were actually cleaning but either way there's a violation and the office did not perform the 90%. Today the Wheaton Steward called to say a Custodian was instructed to sort mail but she did not want to cross crafts. Wheaton clocks Carriers on LDC-38 to show they made their required cleaning hours and instructs a Custodian to perform Clerk work. Wheaton is short of Clerks because they have four jobs that need to be filled on e-reassign but it takes forever to get jobs filled. Wheaton, Northbrook, Glenview, and Park Ridge have generated grievances for crossing crafts and supervisors doing Clerk work. Northbrook provided the MS-47 for the main office only and did not include the MS-47 for the downtown station, to make it look like they made the 90%. Tricky.

Protecting Our Work

We need witness statements when other crafts or management performs our work. We need to know the date and time, what they were doing, who was doing it and how long they were doing it. If we get that information we can file the grievance which normally results in payment to the violated ODL. If we ignore it and allow it to continue without filing grievances it will continue and Clerk jobs and Clerk overtime will disappear. Custodians are assigned to stack empty equipment in a lot of the Associate Offices but this is not their work. It is Clerk work in the AO's and grievances should be filed when management assigns Custodians as this is not cleaning, but is a part of mail processing. Not only is it not Custodian work but management is counting the time spent on empty equipment towards their Custodial cleaning hours for the 90% but this is not cleaning and not part of the route. Today a Clerk called me from Wilmette to ask if the Postmaster is supposed to do Bulk Mail? No. This goes on and on in the AO's.

\$56 Million Payment Delayed

The 56 million dollar settlement for PTF Clerks in small offices was to be paid out by Christmas but the payment was delayed due to a computer glitch technicians encountered when they attempted to upload the payments. No new date has been given by the USPS but when a date is given it will be posted on the national APWU site. 56 million is the amount agreed to for grievances filed for management exceeding the 15 hours of clerk work they are allowed to perform weekly in smaller offices. In many cases the postmaster was working more than 15 hours while the PTF Clerk was denied hours. Some postmasters are still doing more hours than they should and it is up to the clerk to let us know.

Plant Staffing

We have contacted the national Clerk Craft officer handling our ADRP grievances filed for Busse and Carol Stream but she is still working on trying to settle these. We asked for a meeting with the Palatine Plant Manager to discuss the shortage of Clerks at Palatine and hope to meet with him soon. When we raise the issue of Clerk understaffing management says the problem is bad attendance. Quite a few Clerks retired at both Palatine and CS in 2015 but the number of PSE Clerks is the same. Both Palatine and CS rely on OT. We have about 8 employees to retreat from the Mailhandler Craft at Palatine and they are needed. Once they are retreated we put an end to this long ordeal and can move forward to convert PSEs when more regulars are needed.

\$2.75 Million Second Payment

Custodians at Busse have asked about the second payment for the \$2.75 million dollar settlement and NBA Zimmerman said we must wait at least six months after the first payment to allow missed employees time to come forward. Sometime in January he should begin the process of calculating the second and final payment and making payments to anyone who was entitled to payment but was not identified on the first payment. This will be a long process as the remaining settlement money must be divided among all eligible employees based on the number of eligible quarters they worked.

Contract Update...

President Mark Dimondstein reports the national union has taken the preliminary steps to proceed to arbitration for a new contract. Each side has provided a list of five arbitrators in the process of agreeing on a three member panel. This should be concluded by early February when the parties will begin scheduling hearing dates.

