

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

Floor Edition

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3 Million for Palatine Line H Grievances

On 5-2-2022 the parties at Step 3 agreed to a 3 million dollar settlement of grievances filed for Palatine custodians by Maintenance Craft Director Joe Golden for the years 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. This settlement would not have been possible without the hard work put in by MCD Golden. Line H grievances for the plants are not settled easily because of the amount of money involved but when you are as knowledgeable as Joe the grievances do eventually get settled. While Joe is doing all this work employees are asking him when they will get paid for these Line H grievances but he has no control over that because they are not usually settled at the local level. Once the grievances are settled there is more work in determining who (ODL) gets paid and how much, and this time-consuming work is also done by Joe. If you were a Palatine ODL custodian during those years you will be part of this settlement but give Joe time to work on it.

Ricky Hilliard's Going Away Present to USPS

Ricky Hilliard retired a couple of months ago after serving as the Palatine Maintenance Manager for many years. He is the Palatine manager responsible for this 3 million dollar payout because he failed and or refused to call overtime to ensure the required Line H cleaning hours were performed at Palatine PDC. He thought he could do this year after year by denying the grievances and letting them go up. He didn't care as the money would not be coming out of his pocket. There is no accountability in postal management. He saved money by not calling overtime and or filling custodian jobs, but in the end he caused the USPS/Palatine P&DC to pay 3 million dollars to custodians for workhours they did not perform. Since Line H began in 2013 conditions at the plants in regards to cleaning have steadily declined to the point the buildings are nasty dirty. It is not the fault of the custodians working in a broken system called Team Cleaning not suited for industrial cleaning.

Lack of Accountability

How many plant managers have we had at Palatine since 2013 and how many of them took an interest in the Line H hours each of these years? They relied on Maintenance management under Mr. Hilliard and this is what they got. They violate the contract and Joe is relentless in filing grievances to enforce the contract for his Craft. Over the years management has tried to stop him by refusing to give him and other Maintenance Stewards union time, which continues today. Tour 3 MMO Edgar Young refuses to allow tour 3 Steward Troy Saldana union time based on his heavy workload. They have plenty of violations on tour 3 thanks to Edgar Young but he tells his supervisors (some former union stewards) to deny and or severely limit his union time. Palatine Maintenance management has it in for the Union and this has not changed with the departure of Hilliard. The Maintenance Craft is lucky to have a fighter like Joe who is training the next generation of Steward at the same time filing grievances on every violation he becomes aware of.

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Special points of interest:

3 Million for Palatine
Line H Grievances
Ricky Hilliard's Going
Away Present to USPS
Lack of Accountability
It Depends on Who's Sitting
In the Chair
From Busse Clerk Steward
Inspectors/Postal Police Search
Bags at Palatine
Filing a Claim for COVID-19
Welcome New Stewards!

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It Depends on Who's Sitting in the Chair...

Last Local Line I wrote about the Carol Stream Plant Manager refusing to buy new chairs for manual letters, and then bringing in ancient leaners from Rockford. She pointed out that employees should not be sitting (after all these years using chairs she brings in leaner/stools to make a point. What is the point? I don't know. I was told at Step 2 that she said the cheapest chair they can find would be \$500.00. I don't know how each USPS installation does their budget but I'm sure it wasn't cheap to re-pave that huge parking lot, but it needed to be done. Why is it a problem to buy new chairs for employees when the chairs are old and falling apart? Clerks are afraid to write statements but we have one statement saying Pam was on the floor asking questions about the chairs and the next thing you know the Clerk's chair was replaced with a three legged mechanics stool. The Palatine plant manager said he would buy new chairs for Manual Letters and we will follow up. I never did get an answer as to why the Nixie Review Clerk is being required to sit at an old wooden work bench instead of the regular tables historically used for Nixie at both plants. I requested information on this, asking why the change was made and received a hand-written response which looked like Pam's hand-writing. It said "*Smoother tour to tour transition - efficiency of the service. Article 3 of N/A.*" I don't see how bringing in an old workbench for the Nixie Clerk makes a smoother tour to tour transition ??? One affected Review Clerk states "*The table is too tall, some days I have a hard time finding a chair. I go home every night with my feet twice the size because they're so high off the ground.*" **Not efficient or safe!**

From Busse Steward Clerk

If you work at Busse, I am certain you have experienced or been a witness to Trina Sims and Janice Brown's bad attitudes and unprofessional behavior. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to hear complaints about their behavior from employees; the constant yelling at employees on the workroom floor, disrespectful remarks, tampering with employee's time, openly discussing employee's personal business, and intimidating employees. They do it all! Instead of preventing or mediating issues amongst employees, they stand by or gossip about it with other employees. This is a workplace, not a high school cafeteria. **This behavior is unethical, unacceptable and unprofessional, and does not have to be tolerated.** I know that some employees, especially the new employees may not want to write statements in fear of retaliation by these supervisors, but it is absolutely necessary. The Union needs statements if employees want the bullying and harassment to be addressed. There should be consequences for their actions. Employees should not have to endure harassment from management especially when they should be setting the example for the employees, that is what REAL leadership does. ZERO TOLERANCE applies to all USPS employees, including management. How can they EQUITABLY enforce a rule they do not abide by themselves? This issue has been brought to upper management's attention but they, too, seem to be intimidated or uninterested in addressing this issue. Management is creating, and seemingly, supports a hostile work environment. WE are urging you, if you are experiencing this behavior from Trina, Janice or any other supervisor, please write a statement and give it to one of your union stewards.

Do not be intimidated; you do not have to work in a hostile work environment. **You Have Rights!** **Junior PSEs Separated at Plants** PSEs are being separated at Busse, Palatine and Carol Stream "for lack of work" because they are over the authorized cap and any extensions given for being over the allowed cap have ended. Any PSE separated for lack of work has to be called back by their facility before that facility hires off the street. Carol Stream provided copies of 10 letters but we have nothing from Palatine. We were told that five Palatine PSEs were being sent to Busse Annex, while Busse PSEs have been separated. Makes no sense! **Inspectors /Postal Police Search Bags at Palatine**

I contacted the A/Plant Manager who said "*The search was conducted to ensure safety - presently there are not known threat or actions at Palatine.* So they are just doing this randomly, but only at Palatine. There must be some reason for these folks to search bags as employees enter the facility.

Filing a Claim for COVID-19

The American Rescue Plan Act makes it much easier to federal workers diagnosed with COVID to file an OWCP claim. To establish a COVID-19 claim you simply need to establish that you were a "covered employee" meaning:

1. You were diagnosed with COVID while employed in the Federal service and any time during the period of 1-27-2020 to 1-27-2023; and
2. Within 21 days of your diagnosis of COVID-19 you carried out duties that a. required contact with members of the public or coworkers; or b. included a risk of exposure.

Welcome New Stewards!

Welcome to Otto Pfeuffer for Maintenance and Oscar Molina for MVS, on tour 2 at Palatine.

