

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

This Time It's Percy!
APWU National Business Agent Percy Harrison Jr. used his considerable skills to successfully argue a grievance for a long-suffering grievant. The grievant was issued a Removal, which was reduced by Labor Relations to a paper suspension, entitling the grievant to full back pay. The Union appealed the Suspension to arbitration and won, with full back pay ordered. The grievant submitted the required paper work but instead of paying the back pay, the USPS accused the grievant of falsification, and issued another Removal. The grievant was out of work again, and again the Union filed the proper grievance. Alan Czerwinski successfully presented the Union's case and Arbitrator Simon ruled USPS did not meet their burden of proof. He ordered the grievant returned to work and made whole. Again, management refused to pay, and again the Union filed the appropriate grievance.

Tell the Truth?!
This grievance was argued by NBA Percy Harrison on April 10, 2007. Several USPS Labor Relations Staff were present to assist the management Advocate. Former A/Labor Relations Manager Dan Bessler was management's main witness, as well as the driving force for their refusal to abide by the previous settlements & awards. Management was not prepared to go forward on the merits, but Jackie Majka argued the Union's grievance was untimely. Arbitrator Simon listened to USPS witness Dan Bessler, and APWU witness Alan Czerwinski, and ruled the grievance was timely filed. The management witness advised Al to "tell the truth"! An Arbitrator's Award is supposed to be final and binding on the parties. In this case, management did not agree with the Award, and took matters into their own hands, based on their "opinion". We thanked Percy for doing a great job, and maybe now it's really over.

Dear Mr. Smith
In the March 21st Local Line, I wrote about employees returning from break on time, in an effort to work with management, to end the policy of District Manager Lynn Smith, requiring employees to sign in and out for breaks. Two weeks later, I began leaving messages for Mr. Smith but he has not returned my calls. I wanted to ask him if and when he would end this continuing policy of harassment. Employees are being disciplined for failing or forgetting to sign in and out, and are justifiably upset with the Unions' inability to stop this. You have made your point concerning breaks being 15 minutes, so why not end this? We have filed grievances on the change in the past practice, but we also tried to work with management to communicate directly with the craft. Your point has been made by inflicting something on your craft employees that has been done nowhere else within the USPS (to my knowledge). Give the employees a break, and end the punishment.

Floor Edition

April 16, 2007

Jackie Engelhart
President
Alan J. Czerwinski
News Director

Special points of interest:

This Time It's Percy

Tell the Truth?!

Dear Mr. Smith

**Constitution Changes I
May**

**NWIAL-IPWU Seminar In
May**

**Contract Retro Pay on May
18th**

**Subcontracting Carrier
Work**

Congratulations Retiree's

Constitution Changes in May

I submitted three constitutional changes to the Constitution Committee and they were read, discussed, and approved by the Committee on April 9, 2007. The changes to be read for the first time at the May 6th membership meeting are: 1. *To change the language under News Director in Article 10 Section 10 from "shall be responsible for publishing a quarterly newsletter.. To "shall be responsible for publishing a newsletter up to four (4) times per year."* The reason for the change is that we put out regular floor letters, which can be published quicker and cheaper, and this lessens the need for the mailing. *The change also calls for increasing the News Director's salary from \$50.00 to \$100.00 per month.* The reason for this change is this low salary has never been increased, and the News Director will be taking on additional responsibility, as we will be publishing the mailings in-house to save the considerable sum paid to an outside publisher for the last several years. 2. *The position of Assistant Clerk Craft Director will be deleted effective in May of 2008.* The reason for the change is to save money, as the Chief Stewards will assist. 3. *The third change will be to Article 7 Section 3, Secretary. The change is to add the sentence "The computerized membership list will be maintained in alphabetical order and will be broken down by craft and facility."* The reason for the change is to maintain the mailing list in a form that is election-ready. In recent elections we have seen problems because the membership list was not broken down this way, but this was never the Secretary's job.

NWIAL-IPWU Seminar in May

Human Relations Director Mimi Jackson has been hard at work in preparation for the IPWU Off-Year Conference the Local is hosting in May. The dates are May 17-19 and the place is the Sheraton Hotel in Arlington Heights. Classes will be held with national officers from all crafts on Thursday and Friday. A dinner-dance will be held on Thursday night with a "60's theme". The cost of the classes to members is \$10.00, Conference T-Shirts are \$15.00, and the dinner is \$40.00. Registration for the entire package is \$60.00. This is an opportunity for our members to attend classes with national officers on the new contract, RI-399, Maintenance and MVS Issues, as well as hear our Legislative Director Mike Reid talk about the issues of concern to APWU members. All stewards will be required to attend 8 hours of classes on Thursday and/or Friday, and the Local officers will be in attendance. We will be hosting officers and stewards from all over the state of Illinois, and we hope some of our own members will take advantage of the opportunity to attend a seminar in your own back yard. Assistant Clerk Craft Director Mike Morris (a great speaker) will be discussing the new contract on May 17, APWU Regional Dispute Committee Member Tom Maier will be teaching RI-399 on May 18, and former Retiree's Director John R. Smith will be talking about retirement on May 19. Also teaching will be National Business Agents, including our own John Clark. Register now and make checks payable to Northwest Illinois Area Local. We hope to see you there!

Contract Retro Pay on May 18th

A retroactive payment for the period of Nov. 25, 2006 through Feb. 2, 2007 is expected to be disbursed in paychecks dated May 18, 2007. The first COLA under the 2006-2010 National Agreement was zero due to the failure of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to exceed the index point upon which the previous COLA was based. The second COLA will be based on the July 2007 CPI and would be effective Sept. 1, 2007.

Subcontracting Carrier Work

USPS has begun contracting out some new City Carrier routes to private companies who employ non-union employees. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) was thought to be immune from subcontracting because they represent the "last mile" for a piece of mail and they represent the USPS for most customers. Well they underestimated USPS resolve to replace carrier (read Union) employees with a low-paid, no-benefit workforce. While we are now immediately concerned with the USPS tactic of assigning mail processing & distribution to lower-paid mail handlers, the bigger picture is subcontracting. All crafts will be targeted for replacement by low paid non-Union workers. We now have 20% high-paid non-Union workers, who are the non-member scabs. The USPS is working towards the day when scabs can have what they deserve, a non-Union, low-paid, no-benefit workforce. They won't have to be bothered with us trying to sign them up, because they won't have a Union.

Congratulations Retiree's

Palatine Clerks Janice West and Ed James will be retiring soon, and we wish them the best. Tickets for Janice's June 24th Party at the Fountain Bleu in Des Plaines are on sale now for \$40.00.

JL