

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

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Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Postal Nurses Vote to Merge with APWU

In an overwhelming vote of 51 to 9, on Aug. 17 the National Postal Professional Nurses voted "YES" in favor of merging with the American Postal Workers Union. Pursuant to the APWU Constitution, the nurses will become a part of the Support Services Division, which will be responsible for contract negotiations, interpretation, and enforcement.

COLA Raise is \$686 Annual Increase.

A Cost-of-Living Adjustment provided for in the National Agreement will give APWU-craft employees an annual raise of \$686, the third largest COLA since 2000. The COLA will be effective Sept. 1, and will be reflected in Sept. 21 paychecks. President Burrus states "the COLA demonstrates the value of the union contract. The COLA also demonstrates the importance of union membership. If all APWU craft employees refused to pay dues, we would have no COLA.

New Custodians Hired at Chicago Metro Hub

After a year of delay, management has begun hiring career custodians to fill the 22 vacancies at CMSH. Over the past year management hired casual custodians and failed to staff adequately. Thus far only 3 clerks have reassigned within the facility, but 15 Mail Handlers have reassigned to the Custodial Maintenance craft. We welcome the new members.

Changing Unions

When reassigning from one craft to another you must fill out an 1187 to become a member of the union that will be representing you. We have lost members due to excessing of Clerks to MH at the plants, but we are gaining members as Mail Handlers become Custodians at CMSH. All four unions have an agreement at the national level to release a member upon reassignment to another craft if they join the new union. New Custodians from the MH craft must fill out an 1187 to become an APWU member

We Did Not Agree...

Recently we are hearing that management is telling APWU employees that the union agreed to something we did not agree to. Management has hired Clerk Casuals at Palatine for tour 3 and tour 1 Automation. (The Clerk Casuals were not separated at Carol Stream when the Clerks were excessed to MH, in violation of Article 12). Management is moving the 1050 Automation bid employees to Lower Automation and assigning Casuals to the non-DPS mail in Upper. Managers are telling the Clerks that the Union agreed to this, and some are referencing Senior MDO Bracket. We did not agree to hiring Casuals while 39 Clerks remain excessed from 2005 and 21 remain excessed from 2007. When I asked Sr. MDO Bracket why they would hire Casuals to staff Automation when they have all these excessed Clerks, his response was "Because we can" and "the contract allows it". The contract says to separate casuals, not to hire.

Jackie Engelhart
President
Alan J. Czerwinski
News Director

Special points of interest:

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New Custodians Hired at Chicago Metro Hub

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We Did not Agree...

Meeting with A/District Manager Robert Hart

"So Did Custer"

Changes in Bid Postings

Reminder on OWCP Changes

Circuit City Boycott Report

First NWIAL (Ray Wience) Scholarship Awarded

Class of 2027 or the Newest APWU Member

Meeting with the A/District Manager Robert Hart

Calvin Taylor, Jack Pyssler, and I met with Robert Hart on Aug. 15 and we talked for about an hour. He told us that he wants the employees "treated like royalty" and he wanted to know how we got along with Ron Woodall. He said we will not always agree with each other but we should keep our word. We liked what the new District Manager had to say, and we hope his word will translate into some positive actions. He stated he would like to attend some Labor-Management meetings at Carol Stream and Palatine. We will be meeting at Carol Stream on Sept 18th, but are still waiting for Palatine to give us a date.

"So Did Custer"

Labor Specialist Mike Fuechtmann will be coming to Palatine for three weeks while Joe and Corky are on leave. Mike tells me he hopes to make some positive changes and get the parties talking to resolve some of our problems so we don't have to file grievances. I told a member of management that Mike thinks he can change things, and his comment was "So did Custer." This reference to the massacre that General George Custer led his cavalry troops into at the battle of the Little Big Horn was meant humorously, but it really reflects the state of relations between APWU and Senior management at Palatine P&DC. Employees want to know why we can't get anything done, and the reason is that Senior management is sending a message at Palatine that your rights are what management tells you. When you are talking to a wall, you have to file grievances.

Changes in Bid Postings

We received a letter dated Aug 9 from Human Resources, informing us that job bidding will be "migrated" to Shared Services effective Sept 1, 2007. The migration will impact the bidding cycles as follows:

- The last posting that will be processed by CMS (Complement Management System) will have an award date of Sept. 1, 2007.
- There can be no open postings in CMS with an award date after Sept. 1, 2007.

Also provided was the new bidding schedule that show no bids will be posted in September, with the next vacancy posting for Clerks and MH at Carol Stream on Oct 2, and at Palatine on Oct 23. We have requested more information, but for now this is all we have.

Reminder on OWCP Changes

On the last day of the 109th Congress the Postal Reform Act was passed. One of the provisions made changes to Continuation of Pay rules for postal employees only. All other federal employees COP rights remain unchanged. The change denies COP for the first three days of temporary disability for a work-related injury. During this three day period, the employee must choose to use annual or sick leave or LWOP. If it turns out that the disability exceeds 14 days or results in permanent disability, you may request to have your leave reinstated and be paid COP for those three days. Employees must be informed by their supervisor of their options at the time of injury. This is one of the reasons APWU opposed this legislation.

National Reassessment Program

We will be putting out a Local Line on this in the near future. We know that USPS has projected to outsource 6100 of the 33,758 limited or light duty employees nationwide.

Circuit City Boycott Report

The APWU supports a boycott of Circuit City based on the company's action of laying off 3400 current workers because they make too much money. The lay off would allow these long-term employees, after a ten week cooling off period, to reapply for the same job and an hour rate of \$7. This is a 50 to 70% pay cut. These employees have no union and no protection. I'm sure they would not mind paying union dues to be protected. I wonder how fast non-members would sign up if the union did not have to represent them.

First NWIAL (Ray Wience) Scholarships Awarded

Chief Trustee Ray Wience proudly presided over the drawing at the August membership meeting for the first two NWIAL Scholarships. Ray is responsible for the creation of this new scholarship program sponsored by the NWIAL grants \$500.00 scholarships each year to two members or children of members attending college. The winners are Jae Kim of Palatine for her son Leo and Lawrence Pedapati of Carol Stream for his daughter Sonia. Alternate selected was Karyn White for her son Tylon. Congratulations to all.

Class of 2027 or the Newest APWU Member ...

Joshua Baskin was born three months early but in good shape on Aug 18th. At 2 pounds 3 ounces he was small but healthy. Congratulations to new parents (Vice President) Dave Baskin and his wife Jenny. Jack P. said the joke at Palatine is that Baby Baskin will be filing a grievance for 3 months of out of schedule.