

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

## Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Floor Edition

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Jackie Engelhart  
President  
Alan J. Czerwinski  
News Director

### The Complaint Department is Open...

Recently I spoke with a Palatine steward who told me some members say the (Local) Union is weak because we are losing jobs to the Mail Handlers, & we are not doing anything about it. I asked if they read the floor letters, as we try to keep our members updated on what we are doing locally to protect our work. In the case of AI, the USPS decided at the national level to assign the work to the Mail Handlers. We were instructed to file local disputes at each facility to be held pending the national level dispute, & we have done so. We met with the Local Dispute Resolution Committee at each plant after AI was deployed, & we prepared a detailed position paper concerning the jurisdiction in the AFSM. The Palatine MH Union agreed to hold the dispute pending the national level case, but the Carol Stream MH Union did not. Both the Palatine and CS AI disputes are now held pending the national level dispute.

### Feedback is Welcome

When I get calls from employees or talk to them on the workroom floor, I try to answer their complaints and assist with their problems. I prefer a member complain to me than about me. We know that the work place is getting worse for most of our members as postal management continues to assign our work away, and to get more work out with fewer employees. Our first priority has been to file RI-399 disputes on all work that should properly be assigned the Clerk craft, but we know there are many other issues that need to be addressed. We have many good stewards & officers who are doing their best to work together to fight postal management. Vice President Dave Baskin is preparing cases for arbitration, conducting grievance shake-outs, & filing many grievances for serious discipline for all crafts & offices. One of our most effective weapons is having Dave Baskin working full-time for the Union.

### Always Attack the Union, not Management.

Most members appreciate what we do, & some complain no matter what we do. This is part of the job. You work, do your best & hope most members understand that postal management is the enemy, not the Union. We will continue to see an occasional attack letter from one member until she gets what she wants. The most recent concerns a tour 2 bid that was marked cancelled on the bid board, & then posted as awarded pending qualification, because management failed to cancel it out of the system. Several senior clerks called to complain that they did not bid because the job was marked cancelled. Management created this mess by failing to change the job before it was posted & failing to cancel the job in the system. By their mistakes they deprived senior clerks from bidding on the job. Management's incompetence created a mess & a perfect opportunity for an attack letter against the Union.

Special points of interest:

**The Complain Department is Open...**

**Feedback is Welcome**

**Always Attack the Union, not Management.**

**USPS & Privatization**

**Postmaster Potter on Chicago**

**Area VP Feint on Staffing**

**USPS Awards Contract to Convert Personnel Files to Electronic Folders**

**NWIAL Scholarships**

**AFL-CIO President Forum**

**Picnics & Parties**

**Electronic Voting ?**

## USPS & Privatization

I read an article in the Sunday Sun-Times on Sunday 7-8-07 about the future of the mail system and private contractors. The USPS has made a decision to give all new growth and new deliveries to private contractors. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) has conducted informational pickets to protest the contracting of city letter carrier work, and has failed to reach an agreement on a new contract. Not long ago, NALC was not concerned about subcontracting, as it did not seem to affect the "last mile" of the mail system. This change shows that all craft employee jobs are on the table as far as management is concerned. No craft is safe, Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle, Mail Handler, and Letter Carrier are all high paid labor to the Postal Service. They want to replace us with machines, casuals and private contractors, in order to reduce their labor costs. The president of a major mailer group said "It's conceivable that a postal system in the future could evolve into something which I would call the master contractor, where it maintains its government identity by the government being the master contractor that puts things out competitively for bid." While postal management continues to pit one craft against another, Rural Carrier vs. City Carrier & Clerk vs. Mail Handler, in the end they would like to privatize all our jobs, and get rid of the Unions that infringe on their right to manage. One craft especially hard hit by contracting is MVS, and that is why we are happy to have former Business Agent and MVS Director John Cychosz back as the NWIAL MVS Director.

## Postmaster Potter on Chicago

Postmaster General Jack Potter testified during hearings concerning Chicago's poor mail service. He said a misguided incentive plan led to problems with Chicago's mail delivery, which was ranked worst in the nation. He said the plan awarded bonuses for beating the budget & not for improving service, & that led to layoffs and an inability to maintain service. Potter said the management bonus plan is being reviewed & revised to weigh more heavily to service improvement than beating the budget. Will that catch on?

## Area VP Feindt on Staffing

Great Lakes Area Vice President Jo Ann Feindt wrote about balancing summer work hours to workload in her last article. She said declining volume provides an opportunity to match work hours to workload in our processing plants. She also said summer is an opportunity to match work hours for part-time flexible & casual staffing to the declining work load.

When I read that line I wondered why she thinks casuals are needed at all with a declining workload?

## USPS Awards Contract to Convert Personnel Files to Electronic Folders.

The USPS is implementing a program to convert all paper personnel folders to electronic folders, which will transform the way employee information is stored, retained & retrieved, ultimately enabling postal employees to have a 24-hour access to the content of their personnel folder. The Postal Service awarded a contract to SOURCORP BPS, Inc to convert the files from paper to electronic as part of the Electronic Official Personnel Folder or e OPF.

## NWIAL Scholarships

Two \$500.00 scholarships will be awarded each year to a member, a member's child or stepchild, & you must be a member in good standing for one year. Application for scholarship must be made on an application form in your union office or a 3X5 card with the applicant's name, member's name, address & phone number. Applications must be mailed and received by 8-11-07 & the winners will be selected by random drawing at the 8-12-07 Union meeting. Mail to: NWIAL at PO Box 86200, Carol Stream, IL 60188. Attention: Ray Wienc.

## AFL-CIO President's Forum 8-7

The bus will leave the Elmhurst Union Hall at 4 pm on 8-7-07 to the McCormick Place West for the 6 pm President's Forum. You must be on our list for the bus, a ticket & a shirt. Tickets and T-Shirts for this event will be available from Legislative Director Nancy Horan after 7-31-07.

## Picnics & Parties

For the last few years we have not had a picnic or a Christmas party. Social & Recreation sponsored the annual Great America outing, & we gave \$10 gift certificates to all members for Christmas. I am seeking feedback from our members on their preference for continuing the Gift Certificate, or replacing that with a Christmas party. We are seeking input from the members on your interest in these type of events.

## Electronic Voting for NWIAL?

I have contacted a company called Ballotpoint that eliminates paper balloting and replaces it with electronic voting by telephone & computer. Depending on the information they provide I will be reporting to the membership on benefits of electronic voting and the possibility of changing our local election to electronic balloting.

