

The Local Line

"APPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Assignment of Unencumbered Employees

The 2006-2010 National Agreement changed some of the language pertaining to the assignment of unencumbered Clerks. Article 37.4.C now states "Assignment of unencumbered employees will be made within 21 days of the duty assignment becoming residual ..." and this is new. Article 37 also changed from "Employees not encumbered in bid duty assignments should bid on duty assignments posted for bid." to "Employees not encumbered in bid duty assignments shall bid on duty assignments posted for bid."

Unencumbered Posting at Palatine on June 24th
In-Plant Support Specialist Chachana Elliot states she will be posting all residual Clerk vacancies on June 24th. Unencumbered Clerks who fail to bid on this posting will be placed into residual vacancies that remain from this posting, and they will be placed in seniority order. Residual bids are bids that nobody bid on.

Unencumbered List

We have requested and been promised a current and correct list of unencumbered Clerks at Palatine, but the one we were provided with has many errors. Long-term 204-B Supervisors and Light/Limited Duty Clerks with permanent assignments will not be placed into residual vacancies.

New Language

This new contract language was negotiated at the national level not at the local level.

In the past unencumbered Clerks were allowed to remain in their former bid schedules for extended periods of time and this was preferable to being moved to tour 1. We agreed to extend the 21 days at Palatine to allow unencumbered Clerks more time to secure a bid. This time extension expires in June and for my part I would be agreeable to extending the time limits further but Ms. Elliot states she will be posting on June 24. She continues to work on this as she prepares for her new position in Chicago.

Clerks Forced to Tour 1

Most residual vacancies are on tour 1 with most likely week days off. The result of the new contract language is to force Clerks who have lost bids due to abolishment (AFSM-100, FSM-1000, CFS, etc) to bid on the most undesirable jobs or be placed into them. Most abolished Clerks have been bidding but they have most likely not been bidding on tour 1 Automation with week days off. Some of the unencumbered have bid as former tour 2 FSM Clerks who have bid to tour 3.

A Good Job Once...

When many of us began our postal career in the 70's and 80's we could look forward to working our way off of tour 1 and up to tour 3 and eventually to tour 2. As we built up our seniority we could expect better bids with better days off with the goal for many being a bid on tour 2. We now see the opposite happening as Clerks are being pushed off of tour 2 and tour 3 to tour 1. Their favorite line as they abolish bids is "at least you have a job."

Floor Edition

June 5, 2008
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**Unencumbered List
New Language**

Where are the Bids?

**The Sorry State of
Labor Relations**

Arbitration Advocates

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District Meeting on June 10th

Where Are the Bids?

We got the latest Clerk vacancies from Ms. Elliot on 6-3-08 and most of the bids are for tour 1 Automation. Why? Because she reverted the tour 3 Review Clerk bid vacated by Tony Ferris who retired. (Congratulations Tony!) We don't need a Review Clerk at the Nixie table. We of course expected management to revert this bid because they have reverted every Review Clerk job vacated in the last five years. Nixie is the last unit they have allowed Review Clerks to work, but we can just assign anyone at the table. The Mail Handler union wants to push Clerks off the Nixie table by saying its cancellation so its all good. They also reverted a tour 1 manual letters bid because we don't need bids when we have light duty Clerks in letters. We don't need light duty Clerks in letters either so we send them home even if they have a bid in manual letters. We have no mail so we don't need bids or assignments. Ms. Elliot also reverted a tour 1 Central Dispatch bid because Labor Specialist Joe came up with a clever idea to get rid of more Clerks and gain favor with Senior Plant Manager Ronald Woodall. He changed a 5.5 year interpretation of the Inventory & Memo on the Impact of the Robots on jobs in Multi-Line and Central Dispatch to mean all Clerk jobs will be reverted and reposted as Mail Handler. Before "the lie" the Mail Handler Union at Palatine filed no grievances for 5.5 years as Clerk jobs were reposted in these units because the Inventory says non-robot distribution in these units is Clerk work. Now we see why Clerks are being pushed into tour 1 Automation.

The Sorry State of Labor Relations

I called A/Labor Relations Manager Jeff Moore to complain about Labor not meeting with the union at Step 2 at both Palatine and Carol Stream. We routinely receive Step 2 Denials weeks after a grievance was appealed to Step 3 with no Step 2 meeting. This is not supposed to happen per Article 15 of the CBA but it happens regularly in the Northern IL District. They don't provide information and when we file a grievance for information they don't meet with us or provide the requested information. I don't expect them to meet with me but I'm sure they will send up an untimely denial letter. Management does not care about Labor Relations because they don't care about our grievances. Our respected National Business Agent, John Clark sent us a letter informing us of "*an untimely Step 2 decision and a fabricated Step 3 decision signed by an Area Labor Relations Specialist...submitted in an egregious attempt to buttress the employer's fundamentally flawed disciplinary decision against a hardworking, reliable employee with no history of any prior discipline...*" John goes on to say "*Article 15.4.A of the CBA and basic notion of common decency, require all parties to adhere to good faith principles at every level of the grievance/arbitration procedure. While we may have become somewhat jaded by the misconduct of various local and district management officials, it becomes a major reason for concern when USPS Area Representatives engage in unethical conduct. The submission of manufactured documents is so offensive it requires no additional comment. In any event, we should not allow the deplorable actions of management officials at any level to deter us from adhering to the highest standards of ethical behavior*"

Our Arbitration Advocates

Our NWIAL National Arbitration Advocates are Doreene Motley, Walter Elerby Jr, and Melanie Bellmon. Doreene is the workhorse and averages at least two dates per month. Walter has done a couple and Melanie just presented and won her first case. In their spare time they serve as Steward., Chief Steward and Alternate Chief respectively on tour 3 at Carol Stream. Vice President Baskin has been very busy arbitrating LMOU impasse items and contract grievances. He has also been a great mentor to Doreene, Walter and Melanie. 600 Clerk Craft Director Alan Czerwinski is also an experienced Arbitration Advocate who shares his knowledge and experience. Presenting grievances in arbitration requires nerve, skill, and lots of preparation. Stewards who step up to the level of Arbitration Advocate are performing a great service to the members.

NWIAL Picnic on August 10th
The NWIAL is having a picnic for members and a limited number of guests on August 10, 2008 starting at 10 am at Busse Woods. The Picnic Committee will have information out soon.

Steward Vacancies
We have enough applicants to fill the few Steward vacancies we had following the election, but we still need applicants for vacancies on tour 1 at Palatine.

District Meeting on June 9th
The quarterly Northern IL District Information Meeting serves to inform the unions on the state of the business. We will share this information in the next Local Line floor letter.

Jc