

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

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"Comes with the Job"
I asked member X at the 10-18-09 membership meeting why she was passing out un-signed slander against me and she said "you ran for the job, and they write lies about President Obama, it comes with the job"

On 9-2-09 management at Palatine informed the union of their intent to abolish 33 clerks bids on tour 2 including 12 AFSM bids. After the meeting I went to the second floor to inform the employees and on 9-3-09 I put out a floor letter stating these tour 2 bids would be abolished. I bid for a bulk mail job on 9-2-09 after being officially told my tour 2 AFSM bid was being abolished. I have refrained from bidding for years because I had a bid. The bulk mail job I bid on was posted until at least 9-4-09 so any abolished clerk senior to me had time to bid on it. 600 CCD Czerwinski has a bid but even NBA John Clark bid for a higher-level job for his last high-three years.

Information is Shared
Back on 6-6-09 the Local Line reported that Carol Stream management had decided to run one AFSM crew on tour 2 and jobs would be abolished. The Local Line stated "this was due to shrinking mail volume and in anticipation of FSS bids to be posted three months ahead of FSS arrival at Carol Stream in January 2010." Around this time management at both plants also began placing tour 2 AFSM crews on stand-by due to low mail volume. These facts were known to everyone as information is constantly being shared so that employees can make informed decisions. We asked Palatine Management to hold off on the tour 2 abolishments at least until they had residual vacancies to fill and Greg Johnson said they would "look at that." Then on 10-2-09 Ralph Ramion informed the unions and employees that he was going ahead with the abolishments effective 10-24-09 stating "we have to do something."

Union Membership

I agree with the floor letter put out by Carol Stream Mail Handler Branch President Agenes Means, in which she talks about the bad times we are facing and how its time for all employees to be supporting the union. She says "The excuse "I can't afford it" doesn't fly because you can't afford not to belong. The excuse "I don't get in trouble" does not wash because these are troubling times." I have written similar things in the past but most non-members won't join and continue to take the benefits without paying for them. All unions with the exception of the Rural Carriers have seen a decline in membership over the last few years. Not that long ago we were 3000 members, but now after the 160 or so members retire with the Incentive we will be down to 1750. Non-members hurt the union and the shrinking pool of dues-paying members who keep the union afloat. We face the worst contract negotiations in our lifetime and should be 100% organized.

Jackie Engelhart
President
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News Director

Special points of interest:

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Constitution Changes Needed to Balance NWIAL Budget

A few weeks ago the budget committee met to prepare the 2010 budget knowing we were losing members but found we have reached a tipping point due to the large number leaving under the \$15,000 Retirement Incentive. The committee made cuts where we could but those cuts were not enough to balance the budget based on the projected 1750 members for 2010. The budget committee realized the changes we need to make would require some changes to the Local Constitution. I asked the Constitution Committee to meet and they went through the constitution to see what changes could be made to save money and balance the budget. The Budget Committee identified three options for reducing spending and these were discussed by the Constitution Committee and read at the 10-18-09 meeting.

1. Roll back the one-level upgrade in 2008 for all officers and stewards, saving \$12,000 per year. **Passed**
2. Change the full-time Vice President to part-time with the next election, saving \$50,000 per year. **Failed**
3. Change the pay for Stewards from the current 8 hours at level 7 step 0 to a flat rate of 150 per month and change the Chief Steward pay from 10.5 hours at level 7step 0 to a flat rate of 225 per month, saving \$35,000 per year. **Failed**

Change #1 passed but #2 and #3 did not, meaning if #1 passes the second reading we save \$12,000, which is not enough. This is being shared with those who were not among the 50 members present at the meeting on 10-18-09.

Other Constitution Changes Read at 10-18-09 Meeting

1. To not pay a steward who is unable to perform their duties for 60 days and vacate the position if unable to perform duties for six months. **Passed**
2. To vacate a steward position if we have to reduce the number of stewards per Article 17.2 of the National Agreement. **Tabled**
3. Eliminate the Organizing Director as the Post Office is not hiring and the position has not been active, saving 4 hours per month. **Passed**
4. Eliminate the Assistant Clerk Craft Directors (2) saving 8 hours per month as the position is not needed **Passed**
5. Eliminate the Associate Office Director saving 22 hours per month. President and VP have historically processed a large part of the AO grievances. **Failed** Members said let AO Director do the AO job.
6. Reduce the hours for the Webmaster from 8 to 4.5 hours per month. **Failed.** The Webmaster is working more than 8 hours per month for the Local. Constitution Chairperson Doreene Motley did an excellent job of reading the changes and allowing discussion of the changes per Robert's Rules of Orders. The membership agreed to suspend the regular order of business to read the changes and said we should wait until next month to read the budget as the Treasurer was excused for his New Year holiday. The second reading of the changes passed will be read at the November meeting as will the budget for 2010. The changes will be posted on union boards 15 days prior to the November meeting.

Employee Assistance Program

Alice Crawford has been the EAP consultant for the Northern II District for many years where she has been domiciled at Carol Stream. She called to let me know that she is now at Palatine P&DC for Palatine employee on Mondays from 7am to 12 noon and on Thursdays from 10 am to 6 pm. She can be reached at Palatine at **847-590-6581** and at Carol Stream at **630-260-5478**. This is a stressful time for many postal employees and EAP so call her if you need help.

Daily Herald Article on AMP
The Daily Herald article on the Palatine AMP appeared in the Local Focus section of the paper on Friday, 10-16-09. Reporter Kim Pohl called to ask us questions and the article presents the concerns of postal employees and customers. The NWIAL purchased a second ad that appeared in the Sunday paper on 10-18-09 against the AMP of mail out of Palatine. With the article and the two ads we expect to generate more public input and opposition to the AMP. Vice President Baskin has been taking most of the calls and writing letters to public officials. The public is very much against this AMP with not one call in favor of it.

Correction on Dates for IPWU Human Relations Seminar

In the last floor letter I listed the dates for the IPWU Human Relations Seminar as 10-5 thru 10-7 when the dates should have been 11-5 thru 11-7-09. The cost for one day is \$15 and for the three days and dinner on Thursday night its only \$25. I am told that National Clerk Director McCarthy will be at the dinner, and he will be running for President next year when President Burrus retires.