



Postal Chatter

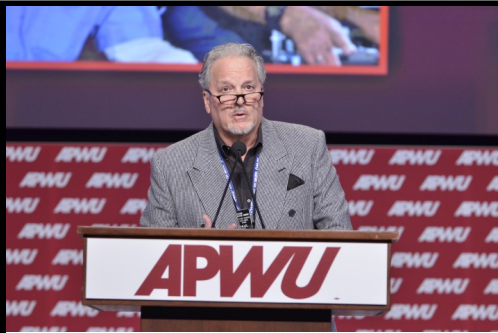
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From the Office of the President March 2021

As of this writing, our Local has seen over 550 positive cases of the COVID-19 pandemic in 67 of our over 100 Associate Offices, Stations, Branches, and Plants. This is not to say that those cases are all from our APWU crafts, but each positive case affects all of us. Of course, most of these employees are back to work by now, but we still must remain vigilant as this pandemic is not over. I have been sending out updates listing the actual numbers of the positive cases in each of our offices affected. As a local we have been hovering between 38-40% of all the positive cases within the Suncoast District, which as you have seen, our local has been the hardest hit in the District. We urge you to continue doing your best in maintaining your social distancing, washing your hands, and wearing your masks, as we want each of us to stay safe! The Safety of our employees will always be our top priority. We have been pressing management to continue to provide the personal protective equipment (PPE), and to continue the proper cleaning. If this is not occurring in your office we need to know, so we can get that rectified immediately! **(I have another article in this edition of the Chatter dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic and updates for newly converted career employees).**

There is a lot going on throughout our local as you would expect, as we represent close to 1500 members in 3 crafts, 3 P&DCs, and over 100 Associate Offices, Stations, and Branches. Our grievance activity is extensive with all types of contractual violations to include, but not limited to, discipline issues such as Notice of Removals, as well as several 7 and 14-Day Suspensions and Letters of Warning, simply to name a few relating to discipline. We are always busy, and we will maintain our mission of protecting everyone under our umbrella of representation. As a Local we are tackling all types of issues in the Clerk, Maintenance, Vehicle Maintenance Facilities (VMF), and Motor Vehicle (MVS) crafts. We are also in the process of training 10 new Stewards, in a social distancing environment, and these additional Stewards/Alternates will be beneficial to all of us.

****On a brief note, by now most of you have been hearing about an 'Early Out'. That 'Early Out' is for non-bargaining unit employees----it is for management. If I hear anything more, or if it is changed to the bargaining-unit, I will let you know ASAP!**

****If you ever feel threatened at the workplace request to file a Threat Assessment (TAT) immediately! The TAT paperwork does not just sit in your installation, that paperwork is supposed to be acted upon locally, and then it is forwarded to the Suncoast District. The Threat Assessment Committee is comprised of: Human Resources Manager (HR) or his/her designee, Labor Relations Manager or his/her designee, Medical Director or Occupational Health Nurse Administrator (OHNA), District Manager or his/her designee, and the Lead Plant Manager or his/her designee.**

Clerk Craft

We are witnessing many contractual violations and/or issues in our Clerk Craft. There are issues such as: Notice of Removals, Proposed Removals, Suspensions, Letter of Demands, members of other crafts performing our work, management performing our Clerk Craft work, rogue MDO's, and supervisors trying to intimidate our employees, as well as a host of other items too many to list here. We will continue to fight these battles and we will not allow management to violate your rights without a fight!

Our focus in the Clerk Craft is to continually stay on the issues and working tirelessly to convert Postal Support Employees (PSEs) to career positions, constantly pushing for conversions of Part-Time Flexible Employees (PTFs) to full-time, preventing management and other crafts from performing your work, fighting discipline, and an array of other concerns. As of March 13, 2021, we have had 375 Postal Support Employees (PSE) and Part-Time Flexibles (PTF) cumulatively, converted to career/full-time over the last 3 years in the Clerk and Motor Vehicle Crafts (the Maintenance Craft does not have PSE's). This year 2021 will be no different, as a path to career is one of the most important milestones in our employee's lives, and we will never give up on that endeavor.

I have brought this next item up in videos, as well as in a couple of my President Reports, and it is dealing with some of our Clerk Craft employees that are assigned to Logistics. These employees are assigned to dock operations and include employees such as Ramp Clerks, and General Expeditors (TMEs). Effective January 16, 2021, the USPS made the decision to move these employees from Mail Processing to Logistics. I placed a couple of questions and answers below that came out on this issue:

- 1) Will this change modify the craft designation of bargaining unit employees assigned to logistics components of dock operations?

No.

- 2) Will this change modify the way overtime is administered within the facility/installation?

No, this change does not modify the way overtime is administered as provided for in Article 8 of the National Agreement.

- 3) Will this change modify the way leave is administered within the facility/installation?

No, this change does not modify the way leave is administered as provided for in Article 10 of the National Agreement.

- 4) Will this change modify the way holiday schedules are administered within the facility / installation?

No, this change does not modify the way holiday schedules are administered as provided for in Article 11 of the National Agreement.

- 5) What is the process for temporarily moving bargaining unit employees from one operation to another on a given service day due to staffing issues? Example: on a given service day, dock operations are overstaffed, and mail processing operations are understaffed, and vice versa.

The process for temporarily moving bargaining unit employees from one operation to another on a given service day due to staffing issues will vary from facility to facility based on how sections are defined in the current applicable LMOU.

Maintenance Craft

In the **Maintenance Craft** we are continuing to stay on top of anything affecting our Staffing within our many Occupational Groups in our Plants. It seems that every time we turn around, we see a reversion of another duty assignment. We are grieving each of these, and we have been for quite some time. Of course, this is going on in most Plants around the country, but locally, we are only concerned with what is going on in our Plants and Associate Offices, and how these types of issues affect the employees that we represent. We are now discovering that management is turning off some routes regularly on the machines in the Orlando P&DC due to low staffing, and those instances are being grieved, and the remedies requested will be to pay the affected employees on the Overtime Desired Lists (ODL). Management should be utilizing the ODL's to complete the routes if they do not have the staff to perform this work during their normal shifts, and Maintenance Craft Director, Ben Love, has already given instructions to the AP-WU representatives as to how to go about this in the grievance procedure. The MMO's for each machine state that the work needs to be completed, and if local management is not adhering to that, then the AP-WU is grieving for the overtime. Make sure you continue to fill out work orders as those will come into play where staffing is concerned as well.

Motor Vehicle (MVS) and Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF)

The **Motor Vehicle Craft** (MVS/PVS) and the **Vehicle Maintenance Facilities** (VMF) have a few issues, and we are challenging quite a bit in these departments. The Article 32 sub-contracting issue is one of the foremost concerns, as we believe that our people can do the work in our VMF's (we have 1 VMF facility domiciled at the Mid Florida Plant and 1 attached to the Orlando P&DC), rather than contracting this work out to other companies. A week ago, I along with Vice-President Bob McSorley, met with the Orlando VMF Manager to discuss the sub-contracting problems. A lot of what the Manager said made sense, but much was not believable to us. Once we went into the garage and spoke to a few employees we saw an entirely different picture. In the MVS craft we are constantly filing grievances on the USPS breaking up specific runs, and we have been quite successful in the grievance/arbitration procedure, yet the Postal Service continues to violate this portion of the contract, so of course we keep filing.

I want to thank each Officer, Steward, and Alternate Steward for their dedicated work for representing the employees under our umbrella of representation. Remember, it is crucial that everyone is a member of the APWU, so please make a point this week to let a non-member know just how much they are needed to help keep our organization strong. This is even more evident as we are going through this COVID-19 pandemic. We have not been laid off and are still working and receiving a paycheck which is another reason to be a part of the APWU. We are facing battles at every corner and need the involvement of everyone. Organizing our workplace is one of the most important goals of the APWU. We are under persistent attacks at every juncture, and we need everyone to assist in the battle for our futures!

In Solidarity,





FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT By Robert 'Bob' McSorley

Greetings, brothers, and sisters of the American Postal Workers Union, Central Florida Area Local #1462. I appreciate your being a union member. Your decision to join the union is a personal choice. The decision to stand shoulder to shoulder with your union brothers and sisters, fighting for better working conditions is commendable. The unselfishness that you demonstrate inspires so many within our organization. You are an employee that desires some control over your career and employment, and an individual that appreciates the value of your efforts, and the quality of your work each day. There is no place I would rather be than with you, in this continued fight for better wages, benefits, and financial security, both now and into the future.

I started my Postal career in March of 1986 in Boston, Massachusetts. I joined the union immediately during my initial orientation. I can still remember how proud I was when I became a member of the American Postal Workers Union, and these feelings have not waived. Being an active member is what I sincerely believe in, and a union advocate is what I was meant to be. I have always wanted to be there to advocate for people that were unable to fight for themselves. I came from a union family, with my Father and older Brother both retiring from the New England telephone company, which at that time was AT&T, Nynex, Bell Atlantic, and Verizon. These are all the name changes of the company during their careers. They had a special bond due to the pledge of solidarity that they both lived. They were proud members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). So, from a young age I can remember my Brother and Father going to marches and union meetings. I remember them going on strike on a couple of occasions, and as I got older, I began to understand why my Father and Brother were standing united. I soon realized that the union was where I was supposed to be.

In the past thirty-five years many events tested the US economy, including a couple of wars, (2) World Trade Center bombings, and now the Covid-19 Pandemic to name a few. I never missed a day of work due to being laid off during these events in US history. Can you remember how unemployment increased during these milestones; I do. I watched as my family and friends were either laid off, or were faced with an uncertain future, and I continued to work. I felt so privileged to go to work every day, and I achieved a sound appreciation for my job, and this feeling was entirely due to the blanket of security that the Union provides.

This security will continue to give us the strength to face many of the unique challenges in 2021. One of the main challenges is totally achievable, and that is the unnecessary and unprofessional and rude treatment of employees by supervisors, which is all too common and must stop! Although there are some good supervisors, there are also some that have no business managing employees. In their defense, they do not receive much training and then they are released onto the workroom floor to affect everyone's life in the various pay locations. The USPS must identify the 10% of managers that cause 90% of the grievance activity in the local. The disrespect that some managers use when he/she speaks to employees is unacceptable. No one would like it if someone talked to you or your family in a disrespectful manner. It is not accepted in private industry, and certainly should not be permitted here in the USPS. We always hear about the Zero Tolerance Policy, but on many if not most occasions, all we hear from management is simply idle talk. Supervisors that have a history of this need to be coached or be placed into jobs removed from managing employees. The USPS simply does not take timely appropriate action against frequent offenders. This inaction can only drive us to assume that it is accepted by the USPS. That is one of the greatest issues that the Postal Service faces. This is an issue that affects all employees and should be acted upon with their Zero Tolerance Policy.

Finally, we see a lot of changes in the Postal Service, and we need your help now more than ever. The Postal Service is up at night trying to figure out ways in which to chisel some rights away from us. Speak with some of your fellow members in your unit and talk about the union and where we would all be without it. Show your union brothers and sisters that we can count on you, and you can count on me!! Together there is **NOTHING** we can not accomplish.

Robert 'Bob' McSorley
Vice-President



DOLLARS and SENSE

By Peter Fournier

First off, I would like to say that I hope everyone is healthy and Covid free. We have seen an overall reduction in positives for our local. Vaccinations are starting to be rolled out for the masses, so keep checking for availability. There are multiple arguments for and against getting vaccinated, so this is a personal choice. Nothing yet specifically available for Postal employees at this time.

From a monetary perspective, the local is in the best shape it has ever been in. We have an excellent group of Officers that are fiscally responsible. Moving forward post Covid, this will allow us more opportunities to train stewards locally, as well as sending stewards to state sponsored events and training.

By the time this gets out to the membership, many of you will have received another stimulus payment. Spend that extra money wisely. Keep in mind that there will eventually be a fallout from all this stimulus money. Whether it is in the form of an added tax at the gas pumps, an increase in sales tax, an internet commerce tax, or an increase in income taxes, there will be a fallout that will result in less money in our pockets. My advice is to reduce your debt to income ratio as much as possible and put yourself in a better financial position to be able to absorb any increased costs in the future. Less debt equals less stress.

Lastly, there has been no information released from OPM for craft employees in the form of a Voluntary Early Retirement (VERA) offer. Although rumors have been swirling on the workroom floor about 5 years added to years of service for craft employees, there is nothing official as of yet. Normally the APWU is very quick to put something on their website when such an announcement is made. So keep checking the APWU website whenever those rumors persist.

In Solidarity,

Peter Fournier

Secretary Treasurer
Central Florida Area Local





Transfers vs. In-Service

By: Ben Love, Maintenance Craft Director

Most people who work in or represent the Maintenance Craft should be familiar with the section of the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) that is titled “ORDER FOR FILLING VACANT MAINTENANCE POSITIONS”. This section gives a detailed explanation concerning the order for filling Maintenance vacancies, until you get to number seven on the list. Unfortunately, step seven is not as clearly written as the rest of the steps. Because of this, there has been a lot of confusion lately over Transfers versus In-Service Register use once steps one through six have been exhausted.

When processing step seven, the first group of employees that should be considered are Maintenance Craft employees requesting a transfer. Within this group, employees who are already qualified would be taken first and then employees being given the opportunity to qualify under the provisions in EL-304, Qualifying for Transfer.

After any Maintenance Craft employees requesting a transfer have been vetted and selected, Management would next go to the In-Service Register to fill any remaining vacancies. When ranking employees on the register, it is important to remember that APWU represented employees are ranked above all employees from other bargaining units. Each Installation should have an In-Service Register per EL-304 and once it is created, no one can be added to the list until it has been exhausted.

If there are still vacancies after utilizing the In-Service Register then Management should move on to step eight, which is going back to the eReassign list for all other employees not currently in the Maintenance Craft. After step eight, the remaining steps are straightforward and easy to understand.

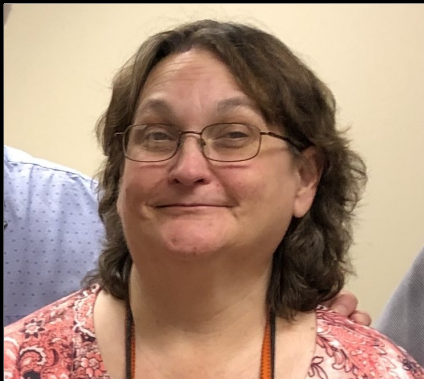
Another part of the bidding process that is commonly confused is step four. When an employee wishes to step down to a lower level, they are required to submit a written request before the closing date of the Notice of Intent. Remember, even though to bid posted may not be the level that you wish to step down to, you should still submit a request because its possible that multiple people will move around during the bidding process, freeing up a bid for you to step down into.

Some members of management have tried interpreting step 4 to mean that they get to decide if they are going to let the employee step down or not. They incorrectly think that the word “consider” gives them this option to allow the downgrade or not. It is the Union’s position that if the employee meets the requirements, meaning they have submitted their written request before the closing of the Notice of Intent and that they are qualified for the lower level position, then management must let them step down. The word consider in the context of this agreement on how to fill Maintenance bids simply means that management will look to that specific group of employees for each step. The same word is used in steps seven, eight, nine, ten, and eleven, yet there is no argument from management that they get to “decide” if they wish to apply those steps.

Hopefully this clears up all of the recent confusion on these subjects. Always remember though, if you have any questions on the bidding process, speak to your local Steward and/or Officer and thank you for being an APWU member!

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ben Love".



Clerk Craft Director's Report

By: Wanda Wroten

It is my hope that you and your families are well and safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the Expeditors at Orlando P&DC and Seminole P&DC, although you are under a different finance number, if you are in the Seminole Bid Cluster then you can bid for all Clerk bids posted in Seminole, and if you are in the Orlando Bid Cluster you are still able to bid on any Clerk jobs in the Orlando Bid Cluster. Refer to President Paul's article as he goes into some detail on this issue.

If you have overtime concerns/questions request to speak with your supervisor and ask him/her to show you the overtime rotation list and ask where they started and ended in the rotation. Local management has the responsibility to handle these types of issues at the lowest step possible so they can avoid unnecessary grievances.

In the Orlando P&DC there is a Class Action grievance on the 204B violations for all the Tours. Tour 2 Steward, Denise Larson-Fischer, has been designated as the Steward of Record for that issue, and has been diligent in the grievance procedure obtaining settlements, and now we are awaiting management to input any pay adjustments.

Tour 3 Steward Kathy Holmes, has been attentive and thorough on the one-person staffing, as well as many discipline issues, and has been able to have most of the discipline expunged. The one-person staffing issues are seeing many employees receiving settlements.

Steward Victor Sanchez has had to handle a lot of discipline cases out in the field and has been able to resolve most if not all of these.

President Joe Paul, Vice-President Bob McSorley, and I trained 4 new Stewards this past week; 1 was for the Orlando P&DC and the 3 others were from the Seminole P&DC. We have 4 more members getting ready for another upcoming class soon, with a third class on the horizon as well. We should have adequate APWU representation on Tour 1 in both Plants soon.

I want to thank all our Union Stewards for their hard work and for what you do to assist our members and non-members alike.

Wanda Wroten



COVID-19 UPDATES and IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR NEWLY CONVERTED FULL-TIME CAREER EMPLOYEES

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCA), which was a Federal Law, expired on December 31, 2020. The position of the USPS is still, “if an employee is identified as a close contact to a positive co-worker, and required to quarantine in accordance with CDC guidelines, they would receive Administrative Leave.” This means that if a co-worker tests positive, and the Occupational Health Nurse (OHNA) contacts the co-worker, and the OHNA instructs them to stay out of work and quarantine, then he/she (close contact co-worker) should be paid Administrative Leave in that instance. Our local’s positive cases are still increasing, but not at the rate they were prior to this past month, as we are finally starting to see some decreases in the numbers of positive cases.

With regards to the COVID-19 vaccines, the USPS employees were deemed as essential workers by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and were in placed into Phase 1.b for vaccinations, yet as of today, many states have not included us thus far. The APWU at the National level is working on trying to see what can be done so that Postal Workers can be included as soon as possible! The H.R. 1319, the ‘American Rescue Plan Act of 2021’ (as of this writing) passed the House of Representatives on February 27, 2021 and has already been sent to the Senate to be deliberated. During this process, the APWU is continuing to combat attempts to undermine the bill and/or eliminate worker protections. As I find out additional details, I will send out updates. Stay Safe!

***Important benefit timeframes to remember as a newly converted CAREER employee.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES’ RETIREMENT SYSTEM (FERS) Career employees are enrolled in FERS. You may be eligible to buy back your military time, which may be beneficial to you in your retirement calculations. Shared Services can provide you detailed information.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES’ HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM (FEHBP) Outside of Open Season, newly eligible employees may enroll within 60 days of becoming eligible for FEHBP. [opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare](https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare)

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (FEGLI) Career postal employees will automatically receive Basic Life Insurance coverage. You must have Basic insurance to elect any additional Optional insurance and must enroll within 60 days of becoming eligible. [opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/life-insurance](https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/life-insurance)

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP) TSP is a retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees. All career employees are permitted to enroll or change their TSP at any time. Once you are converted to career, you are automatically enrolled in the TSP, and 3% of your basic pay is deducted from your paycheck each pay period and deposited in the traditional balance of your TSP account, unless you have made an election to change or stop your contributions. [tsp.gov/index.html](https://www.tsp.gov/index.html)

FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS (FSA) Once converted employees who wish to enroll in this program must do so within 60 days after becoming eligible. There are two types of FSA – Health Care FSA and Dependent Care FSA

In Solidarity,



President
Central Florida Area Local

Postal Chatter

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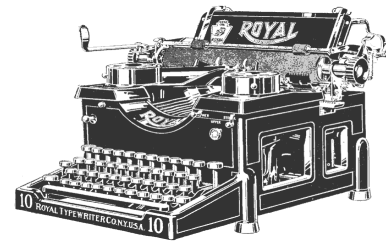
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Message from the Editor...

Any members who would like to contribute articles for possible inclusion in the next issue of the Chatter are encouraged to do so. To submit your article via email please contact the Editor at bloveapwu@gmail.com. If you prefer to submit it in writing you can mail them to the Local Union Office.

All submissions will be reviewed and may be edited before inclusion in the Chatter. Please ensure that you include your full name with your submission so that we can credit the author. Anonymous submissions will not be printed for legal reasons.



Ben Love

Editor
bloveapwu@gmail.com

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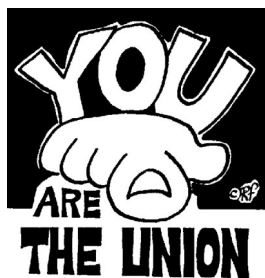
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calendars and attend. It is your Union.

Let your voice be heard!!!