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THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA AREA LOCAL AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

## A Review Of Bid Assignments And How The SWFAL APWU Secures Our Work



Sam Wood  
President  
SWFAL APWU

### DESIRABLE DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

Due to management initiating the Operational Window Change (OWC), earlier this year, I have received numerous questions and/or complaints concerning the posting or reposting of duty assignments. Article 37.3.A.1 states that, "Every effort will be made to create desirable duty assignments from all available work hours for career employees to bid."

There are numerous items to look at and questions to ask in order to properly review and contractually enforce that sentence. 1) What are the available hours? 2) Who decides those available hours? 3) Are PSE's working more desirable hours than the career employees? 4) What does the term desirable mean in each individual's situation? 5) Who determines what is and isn't desirable?

Some believe that the Union decides what is or is not desirable. Some believe that the Union has full control on what duty assignments are posted. These assumptions are false. It is management's job to decide what duty assignments are to be posted from all available hours and make an attempt to make those duty assignments desirable. Most of the time, desirable means that these duty assignments would be bid on by someone. However, anyone can challenge via the grievance procedure if they believe that management is not posting the bids (using all available hours) as desirable duty assignments.

What I have found is that with the change in the OWC, not many offices have career employees that want these earlier hours. In those cases, employees working in those offices would have to determine if non career employees were working more desirable hours during other times (Note: they would have to have enough hours worked to justify a bid being posted). In those cases, employees would file a grievance arguing the need to post bids in accordance with Article 37.3.A.1 requesting the undesirable bid to be reposted.

### NON TRADITIONAL FULL TIME DUTY ASSIGNMENTS (NTFT)

In 2011, locals around the country were forced to negotiate Non Traditional Full Time Duty Assignments (NTFT's). The majority of reasons that they were nego-

tiated in Southwest Florida were due to the many conversions of Part Time Flexible's (PTF's) to Full Time status. The main two Installations that had NTFT's were Marco Island and Punta Gorda/Port Charlotte. The Punta Gorda Installation had over 15 PTF's that were converted to Full Time. The Postmaster at the time (Kevin Sullivan) wanted mostly all 30 hour NTFT's with almost half of them being Full Time Flexible jobs (meaning the hours could change each week). I fought to keep all duty assignments at or around 40 hours and only a few were flexible positions. I kept the issue from going to arbitration (where we could have lost many work hours and had many more flexible NTFT positions made for those converted employees). I made the right choice at that time.

Last month (August), we have now virtually eliminated all NTFT Positions in Southwest Florida. Nearly 100% of all duty assignments within our Southwest Florida Area Local have now become Traditional Full Time Duty Assignments. This means that almost all of our Full Time positions have at least two (2) days off during each week. Not all locals can brag about that accomplishment. I am proud to have been able to work with many Postmasters to ensure that almost all of our career positions are Traditional Duty Positions instead of NTFT's.

### POSTAL SUPPORT EMPLOYEES (PSE'S)

Our local has also been successful in converting some Postal Support Employees within the postal installations that we represent. There are some locals who have not had any conversions at all. I am very confident that more conversions will be coming soon. Our local has been negotiating behind the

**See: Bid Assignments**  
*Continued on Page 3*

### IN THIS EDITION OF THE EAGLE'S EYE

A Review Of Bid Assignments And How The SWFAL APWU Secures Our Work...	1
Secretary-Treasurer's Report.....	2
If You Bid It Or You Sign It You Own It.....	3
2016 .....	3
Be Aware Of The Limitations Of Workman's Comp Rules.....	4
Union Matters .....	5
Management Changes .....	5
Issues .....	6
Memo To Congress: Is Anyone Listening?.....	6
You Can't Make This Stuff Up .....	7
SWFAL Membership News.....	8
Understanding Your Postal Benefits.....	8

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**Secretary-Treasurer's Report  
Felicia Gluhareff**



**General Membership Meeting  
Minutes**

**August 16, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

9:00 a.m. There were 18 members in attendance.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Eileen DiMase.

**ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS:**

Felicia Gluhareff performed the roll call of officers. Present were Sam Wood, Dan Gray, Paul McAvoy, Felicia Gluhareff, Mickey Szymonik, Joe Fracek and Kathy Moyer.

**MAP:**

Barbara Carr told a joke in honor of Charles Glennon.

**NEW MEMBERS:**

Welcome Valerie Hoover and Manuel Aviles.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES:**

The refrigerator at the union hall died. We will be checking into getting a new/used one. The back door at the union hall has the aluminum around the frame popping off. We will be contacting the condo association to see if they will fix it or if it is our responsibility. The executive board will be revisiting the steward list. Adjustments will need to be made to the constitution to accommodate some of the adjustments. We are also revisiting the idea of printing the Eagle's Eye every other month instead of every month. John Carioscia Sr. is asking for the endorsement of the SWFAL as he runs for Cape Coral city council. Mr. Carioscia has been a longtime supporter of our local and even attended the rally we had in front of Connie Mack's office several years ago. He currently has the endorsement of the Cape Coral fire department and Police unions. Paul McAvoy made a motion asking for the members of the SWFAL-APWU to endorse John Carioscia Sr. for Cape Coral city council. The motion passed. (While this was brought up at the executive board meeting, the actual motion was made and approved during the general membership meeting) John Carioscia is encouraging voters to submit their mail in votes asap. The RI-399 was discussed. The new national contract was discussed. It is now in mediation and progress is being made.

**SECRETARY/TREASURER'S  
REPORT:**

Paul McAvoy made a motion to accept the minutes as reported in last month's Eagle's Eye. The motion passed. Eileen DiMase

asked about the ownership of our union hall. We currently own the unit at 11000 Metro Parkway, Suite 8, Fort Myers, Fl. 33966. We pay \$500 to our condo association per quarter. There is currently a rumor going around that we own a condo on the beach. (This is a blatant lie. I personally label this a lie instead of misconception since I can confirm that the rumor spreaders have been to our union hall which is in an industrial area a solid 45 minutes from the closest beach.)

**REPORT/SELECTION  
OF COMMITTEES:**

None

**REPORT OF  
CONVENTION COMMITTEES:**

Danny Carinci and Grace Baer reported on the classes they took. They also reported that national was very complimentary of our local and our local's website. Sam Wood and Dan Gray spoke on the Florida President's conference they attended.

**REPORT OF TRUSTEES:**

None

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

One person got out of the union due to going into a management position. APWU-ABA benefits were discussed; there is information on this on our website if you are interested. Your union dues cover the lower tier benefits and an ABA representative will be coming down soon to review other benefits that can be purchased separately. American Life Insurance also offers accidental life insurance to all dues paying members. There was a letter sent to Sam Wood addressing undesirable bids. There are contractual procedures to challenge undesirable bids BUT specific criteria must be met. Please ask your union steward if you have questions regarding this. Also all clerks need to be aware that if you are the high / successful bidder on a bid that you are qualified it, it will be assigned to you. Meaning....you can't change your mind after the bid has been awarded....it's yours until you bid something else. That being said . . . DON'T BID ON A BID YOU ARE QUALIFIED ON AND DON'T WANT. AND . . . IF YOU WANT A BID, BID ON IT. Bids are assigned by the contract. We cannot change the rules after the fact just because you changed your mind. The contract has clear rules that apply to everyone which allows for a level playing field. It has also been brought to our attention that certain clerks are claiming that the union FORCED them to take a bid. This is total and complete nonsense. The union does not poses the authority to FORCE anyone to

bid. If asked we will explain the consequences if you choose not to bid, or if you choose a specific bid. The National contract is available on APWU.org for the convenience of our members.

**UPDATE OF GRIEVANCES:**

Sam Wood, Dan Gray and Paul McAvoy met with labor at the plant concerning the RI-399. Talks are progressing and Sam will update us of any further movement. The 2:00 a.m. bid at Tice will become residual and be posted on e-reassign as per the MOU.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Sandee Beckler asked for clarification regarding pool and relief bids and being short staffed. In the event of delayed mail, it is OIG that would be informed, not the Postal Inspectors. When scanning at the stations, make sure you log out of your scanner if it is not in your possession. Also be aware that if you are falsely scanning mail as delivered when it isn't it may come back to haunt you in the form of discipline. Also be aware that it is the last scan that counts when working mail. Sandee also brought up the importance of properly logging the reason for late scans on the log sheet.

**LABOR/MANAGEMENT  
MEETING:**

Hopefully one coming soon.

**GOOD AND WELFARE:**

The winner of the COPA 50/50 drawing was Eileen DiMase who won \$28. The total netted was \$56. The name drawn for the member's incentive award was Robert Nowall who won \$80. The pot will start over at \$50 at the next general membership meeting.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS  
AND DELEGATES:**

None

**LEFTOVERS:**

None

**ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS  
AND DELEGATES:**

Felicia Gluhareff performed the roll call of officers. The results were recorded.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Robert Nowall moved to have the next meeting on September 20, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. at the union hall. The motion passed.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Robert Nowall moved to adjourn at 10:42 a.m. The motion passed. Aloha from our fictitious beach front union hall!

# If You Bid It Or You Sign It You Own It

There has been a lot of jockeying around with bids since the Operational Window Change went into effect in January.



**Paul McAvoy**  
Clerk Craft Director  
SWFAL APWU

As I have written and told people before - be careful what you bid because there is no guarantee you will like it or that you will be able to bid back to your old job.

If you receive a bid that you are fully qualified in, that is your bid

until you can bid out. We have had clerks at stations and at the Plant receive bids and then not realize what kind of work is entailed on it and not want the bid anymore.

Once again, be careful what you bid because once you are awarded the bid as successful bidder you own it.

When you are out sick and management brings you a 3971 to sign be sure all the info is correct on it because management will use it against you in discipline cases.

I have seen way too many times a situation in which an employee gets an investigative interview for attendance and the information on

the 3971's is not what the clerk really wanted.

In discipline cases the controlling document or the documents of record are the signed 3971s. If you want FMLA and the 3971 says not FMLA on it, you must either cross it out or write FMLA requested on the 3971.

You do not have to use the computer generated 3971 that management generates for you. You can fill out your own with the information you want it to say - not what management wants.

If a 3971 has incorrect info on it you do not have to sign it. Simply refuse to sign. Remember this is

your 3971 not management's. Once you sign it you own it.

As of the writing of this article, management has still not correctly converted the PSE's named in the arbitration award and their pay has been a nightmare since the arbitration decision. Some of them have not been paid. Others have been paid incorrectly and their annual and sick leave is all jacked up.

Once again we are seeing Shared Services at its best. Anywhere else in the business world someone, or a number of someones, would be fired. Is HRSSC ever held accountable for their incompetence and all the mess ups?

## 2016

Over a year away and once again electoral politics rears its ugly head. This time there are 16 Republicans running in the primary. This also includes the current leader in the polls, Mr.



**Scott J. Wiser**  
Tour 1 Maintenance  
Steward  
Fort Myers P&DC  
SWFAL APWU

Donald Trump, whom has already shown that he is unafraid to take on the business as usual establishment conservatives. Indeed, Mr. Trump's take no prisoners approach and his disdain for political correctness has captured the attention of not only Republicans but Democrats and Independents

as well.

On the other side of the aisle we have the presumptive Democratic nominee and establishment liberal, Hillary Clinton. She continues to lead in the polls but her approval ratings continue to slide and her once insurmountable lead has declined significantly and that trend continues. The current Vice President Joe Biden has indicated an interest in running but as of this writing, he has not announced one way or the other. The biggest surprise so far has been the continued success of Senator Bernie Sanders. His populist message is gaining momentum among the middle class and he continues to draw record breaking crowds of anxious people ready to hear a politician who talks about actual issues that affect American

working families.

Trump's as well as Sanders' successes have been described as flukes and neither have any chance at all to win a nomination. So far the polls say otherwise. The momentum is theirs either to continue or to fail. We will see.

It may come down to who spends the most money on their candidacy but with that money comes the obligation to those donors. Those donors are certainly not contributing out of kindness. They are certainly expecting a return on their investment.

Trump has his own money so he is beholden to nobody. Sanders campaign gets its money from thousands of individual donors. Clinton's campaign draws money

from liberal super PACs. The other candidates seek the approval of the Koch Brothers, Sheldon Adelson and Karl Rove and the conservative Super PACs that they represent.

All of this unlimited money is available for political contributions because of two Supreme Court rulings. Citizens' United vs. FEC ruled that corporations have the same freedom of speech rights as individuals. And McCutchen vs. FEC which stated that limitations on campaign contributions violated the freedom of speech provisions of the 1st amendment.

Hopefully the next President of the United States will be elected on merit and not because they received the most money from the fewest donors.

### BID ASSIGNMENTS

*Continued from Page 1*

scenes to make this a reality for other PSE's. I understand that some of you may be disappointed or frustrated with the delay. Please understand that management does not want to convert employees, we have to either convince or force these to occur. I believe that good news will be coming soon, so please hang in there.

Those PSE's who were converted at the Fort Myers P&DC are finding out that even when we win in arbitration, justice does take time. Our local will ensure that all pay, annual and sick leave and back pay issues will be awarded properly.

Dan Gray and Paul McAvoy have worked with me in an attempt to get these issues taken care of as quickly as possible.

### COMPLAINTS

I really do not understand why I get e-mails, calls and text messages from individuals who simply want to complain about what is going on in their office. The reality is, many calls I get only result in the same person contacting me months later still complaining about the very same issue. When I ask them if they filed a grievance, the answer is always, "NO".

Employees believe they will be terminated, harassed, or threatened by management if they file a grievance, yet they live in fear and are being already harassed. There have been ZERO upheld removals in our local on anything other than theft, or employees that never come to work. As I stated in last month's article, if an employee works at their own speed, management has the burden of proof in arbitration. Our local has been extremely successful in arbitra-

tions versus management and we welcome any discipline challenges against them.

If management is harassing or threatening any employee, you have the right to file EEO or NLRB complaints against them.

### FLORIDA STATE SEMINAR AND PRESIDENT'S CONFERENCE

Dan Gray and I attended the Florida President's Conference last month and noticed the same issues that we have locally are the same or worse around the state. It is my belief that we have a very strong local compared to others and what keeps us from being even stronger is our member's inability to file grievances. You would be amazed at what will happen if you simply decide to file grievances when you see violations occur. Our local is only as strong as our members. Are you involved?

Grace Baer and Danny Carinci attended classes at the Florida State Seminar and will have reports on what they learned. I believe that they represented our local at the high level that we are used to seeing from them. Thanks Grace and Danny!

Much of the contractual language for our new contract has been resolved and signed off on. What remains is an agreement on wages and benefits. We are currently in mediation on those issues. If these wages and benefit issues are resolved, there will be a contract to be voted on by the membership. If no agreement is made in mediation, we will be headed for arbitration.

It is my belief that neither party wants to go to arbitration, but to get to an agreement, something has got to give. I just hope that we stay strong and that the USPS gives in. Stay Tuned!

# Be Aware Of The Limitations Of Workman's Comp Rules

Recently a custodian who was injured in a car accident delivering mail to a station was denied by the Department of Labor OWCP for his workmen's compensation claim.



**Daniel M. Gray**  
Vice President  
SWFAL APWU

Now this new denial was to his appeal to his original claim that was filed and denied by Department of Labor OWCP.

The employee was directed to deliver mail by his supervisor and the employee took a USPS vehicle and delivered the mail, but was involved in a car accident in which he was injured. OWCP in their denial state that the custodian was not doing a function of his job and was not at his designated job location and therefore determined that it was not job related per OWCP rules.

Now management did write a letter for the employee stating they directed him to deliver the mail, but this did not change the Department of Labor's OWCP denial.

We still have custodians delivering mail and taking their personal vehicles also. If you do not have business automobile insurance and you are involved in an accident your personal automobile insurance will not cover you.

The following from the JCIM covers the use of privately owned vehicles.

"The parties agree that the following represents the policy of the Postal Service and the APWU concerning the furnishing of privately owned vehicles (POV) by bargaining unit employees, including Postal Support Employees.

- No craft employee represented by the APWU may be coerced into furnishing a vehicle or carrying passengers without the employee's consent. The use of a personal vehicle is the decision of the employee and it is not the intent of the parties to discourage such use of personal vehicles when transportation is needed from one postal facility to another or in the completion of the employee's assignment.

- When an employee begins his/her work day at one postal unit and is provided transportation to another unit to complete his/her tour of

duty, that employee will be provided transportation back to the unit where his/her tour began if transportation is needed. If the employee ends tour at the new location the return trip will not be on the clock but transportation will be provided promptly by management upon request."

The following leave covers leave options that a lot of employees are unaware that they are entitled to under the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**Sick Leave for Dependent Care** allows you the right to use up to eighty hours of sick leave per leave year to give care or otherwise attend to a family member having an illness, injury or other condition which, if an employee had such condition, would justify the use of sick leave by that employee. Family members shall include son or daughter, parent and spouse as defined in ELM Section 515.2. Approval of sick leave for dependent care will be subject to normal procedures for leave approval.

An employee's right to Sick Leave for Dependent Care is separate and different from the right to leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. FMLA is a federal law.

Still, there are certain similarities. For instance, the definitions of son, daughter, spouse and parent used for Sick Leave for Dependent Care are the same as the FMLA definitions. An employee may take time off to care for the same person under both Sick Leave for Dependent Care and FMLA. Sick Leave for Dependent Care allows an employee to use up to eighty hours of sick leave to care for a family member, while FMLA provides protection for the absence if it is due to a FMLA covered condition.

**Bereavement Leave** allows employees a total of up to three workdays of annual leave, sick leave or leave without pay, to make arrangements necessitated by the death of a family member or to attend the funeral of a family member. Authorization of leave beyond three workdays is subject to the conditions and requirements of Article 10 of the National Agreement, Subsection 510 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual and the applicable local memorandum of understanding provisions.

Definition of a Family Member:

A "family member" is defined as a:

(a) Son or daughter-a biological

or adopted child, stepchild, daughter-in-law or son-in-law;

- (b) Spouse;
- (c) Parent; or
- (d) Sibling-brother; sister; brother-in-law; sister-in-law; or
- (e) Grandparent.

For employees opting to use available sick leave, the leave will be charged to sick leave for dependent care, if eligible.

Documentation evidencing the death of the employee's family member is required only when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interest of the Postal Service.

Note: As a point of clarification, the in-laws referenced in this MOU applies to children, including adopted children, stepchildren and spouses thereof, spouse and parents thereof; and brothers and sisters and spouses thereof.

We are now seeing an increase of Investigative Interviews followed by discipline for attendance so once again please check your PS Form 3971s before you sign them.

I am seeing far too many PS Form 3971s where the employee claimed they requested FMLA, but the 3971 states otherwise.

Now when your supervisor returns your PS Form 3971 back to you and you disagree with what information is noted on the slip, ask your supervisor to correct the 3971. If your supervisor refuses, then politely ask to see your Union Steward to grieve and have it corrected. Waiting to the middle of an Investigative Interview is sometimes too late.

If you call in or believe the absence could have been protected under the Family Medical Leave Act inform your supervisor and mark that FMLA was requested in the comments section.

Remember even if you did not request FMLA at the original date of absence, upon your return notify your supervisor if you believe the absence may be covered under FMLA. You cannot be disciplined for an approved FMLA absence. If you have any questions concerning FMLA, please ask to see your Union Steward.

There is a lot of frustration with the grievance process and how long it takes for a grievance to be finalized. It can take years for a resolution to a grievance which you or the local has filed on your behalf. Your stewards and local officers all share your frustration. We are told by our National Officers that we must become more than grievance

machines; yet, that is our only recourse when you complain to a supervisor and manager concerning a violation you get ignored or are told "file your grievance".

Supervisors and managers who violate the contract are not held accountable, but should be. So what motivation is there for them to follow the contract in the first place?

Typically upper management is the one directing the lower level supervisor to violate the contract in the first place. How many times have you heard "I am just doing what I am told to do"? Most of the supervisors get little or no training for their job in the first place much less the contract.

The positive is that at least we have this process. Talk to your friends and family members that work for an employer without a Union to represent them, most would be happy for what we all take for granted.

Just think if we had no Union at the Postal Service. Instead of progressive discipline they would simply fire you. A supervisor or manager that didn't like you would just tell you not to bother coming back to work.

You would be most likely not receiving health benefits, life insurance, sick leave, annual leave, night shift differential, Sunday premium, penalty overtime, decent pay, job security and work hour guarantees to name a few.

These are all benefits the Union has negotiated on your behalf. While the Union is not perfect I am glad it is there for me.

Also as a final note the Union at both the National and Local level are still boycotting the "Postal Pulse" the new replacement for the "VOE". If you turn in your "Postal Pulse Survey" to the Union we will donate \$5.00 to COPA in your name.

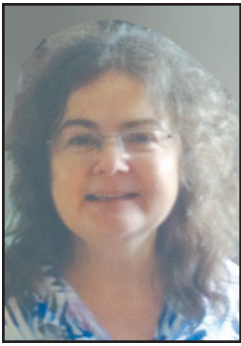
Even if you do not want a donation to COPA in your name please take the survey home and throw it away. The survey is your mail to do with as you wish.

You cannot be forced to complete or return the survey to your supervisor. If your supervisor or manager refuses you the right to take the survey with you, contact your Union Steward or the Union office so the issue can be corrected.

Remember if you have any questions or concerns please ask to see your Union Steward.

# Union Matters

So I get this offer in the mail from Stamps.com\*, "Proud Partner of the United States Postal Service".



**Mickey Szymonik**  
Maintenance Craft Director  
SWFAL APWU

I can print my first nine stamps for free. I can now "avoid the time-consuming trips to the Post Office\*." I can send everything from postcards to packages worldwide right from my home or office! The mailing did not allude to it, but it might even be more secure than Postal Employee Files.

After accepting the 4-week no-risk trial period, I can get my 9 stamps for free. But wait . . . there's more! By signing up today I will be eligible for a \$50 digital USPS scale, and an additional \$40 in postage. I can print postage on labels, envelopes or plain paper, save up to 50% off the Postage Meter costs, and receive discounts I can't get at the Post Office. Wow!

Well, now I'm curious about Stamps.com\*. I check out their website and find out that they are currently hiring at their state-of-the-art facility in El Segundo, California. Some of the reasons talented, smart and fun people

should apply include medical, dental and vision plans. 401K, discounted stock options, pet-care insurance plans, and 100% employer-paid short term and long term disability coverage.

The work environment includes complimentary fresh fruit, snacks and beverages, and a kitchen on every floor. Take advantage of the Company Gym with cardio-equipment, weights, large-screen TV's, and Netflix, Poker and Pandora access.

Stamps.com\* focuses on employee inter-connectedness with summer parties, holiday parties, Halloween parties and other employee engagement events. Engage in the Company Spirit of Volunteering by participating in the monthly in-house sandwich-making for the homeless, and the annual food and toy drives.

By this time I'm thinking I'm working for the wrong stamp peddlers-until I review the "Top 385 Complaints and Reviews Regarding Stamps.com\*", from ConsumerAffairs.com. The following are excerpts of users' reviews:

"After my account went dormant for over a year, Stamps.com merrily continued charging me an atrocious monthly fee of \$15.99 without any notification."

"I got some of the material but

never used the program. When I finally canceled, I had already been charged upwards of \$45.00. I was told the money would be refunded but that never happened.

I never could get a Customer Service rep. on the line and there is no on-line way to leave the program. I finally had to just block future charges on my credit card."

"It was just a big SCAM . . . I called Stamps.com to cancel my account...but not before they took another \$15.99. So, for two 48-cent stamps, I paid \$32.00. This is nothing but theft."

". . . after 500+ complaints to the Better Business Bureau, if you haven't fixed your poor document design, it's because you don't want to be clear. Period! Stay away..."

"It's pretty sad that when you type "mailing labels" into Google, this is one of the first links to come up."

"We were billed for services not provided. Called to cancel and consumer sales rep "James" was extremely aggressive in pushing sales pitch. He was relentless and rude."

"I would rather wait an hour in line at the Post Office than deal with this kind of deceit. How this is even legal is beyond me."

Now bear in mind that this is just a

small sampling of the vitriol consumers posted regarding their dealings with Stamps.com\*. Also bear in mind that the mailing I received from this company was replete with the USPS Eagle logo, and the tag line "Proud Partner of the United States Postal Service." In fact several of the complaints indicated that they believed they were dealing with the U.S. Postal Service. I don't know what this "partnership" entails or how the Service is involved, but this is an egregious smear on our reputation.

When the whole APWU "Stop Staples" campaign started, someone asked me why the Union was not focusing on Stamps.com. Good question. We should be. Believe me, I'm all for "growing our business" using the latest electronic technology, but it should be OUR business, not Stamps.com.

The Union sends our sincere condolences to our Brother Bernardo Santana, his sons, and all of his extended family, on the loss of Bernardo's wife. Donations and prepared meals from his Union brothers and sisters can help alleviate the stress and pain. To send condolences and assistance of any kind, please contact the Union office, at 275-1007 for more information.

Peace, prosperity, solidarity.

## Management Changes

We have had a management change at the Ft. Myers Vehicle Maintenance Facility. I would like to wish our former Manager, Roger "SKIP" Giovansanti, the best of luck in his new job as Manager of Vehicle Operations District 2.



**Joe Fracek**  
Motor Vehicle Craft Director  
Ft. Myers  
Lead Steward  
Page Field  
SWFAL APWU

back to the recent changes.

Also, on another good note, I would like to welcome two new members to the Union: John Shoemaker and Manny Aviles. If you see these new members, please give them a welcome.

It's that time of year again . . . back to school season has already started! This year has really been going by fast. That being said, I'd like to remind everyone, give yourselves some extra time in the morning to get to where you're going. The school busses will be out and kids will be everywhere. Please take a little extra time, drive a bit more careful, and watch out for the children.

Many of bus stops are now very close to the roadside curbs and it's hard to see the children in the early morning hours. I had a very good friend of mine killed at his bus stop by a lady who was not paying attention, and drove onto the sidewalk. He was 15.

I know it's just something we hear every year, to be careful, But it really can save lives. Let's have a safe and happy school year!

I would like to welcome Mary Brown as our new manager. Mary returns to Ft. Myers from managing Sarasota's VMF. I have to say, her presence here at Fort Myers has already been felt in a positive way, as the mood and production have both seemed to improved as well as employee morale.

Hopefully, the growing pains of being under new management will continue to be kept at a minimum. "So far so good", as every employee that I have spoken to at the VMF has only had positive feed-

## Issues . . .

Stewards are designated by section and tour to assist you in the grievance process, answer questions, and address workplace issues. Problems just don't go along with the territory; they are the territory! Here's how the membership can assist the stewards in representing the workforce as a united group.



**Grace Baer**  
T2 & T3 Steward  
Ft. Myers P&DC  
SWFAL APWU

When requesting union representation, a grievant will normally meet with their assigned steward or alternate steward. Please refrain from steward shopping. Cross-tour steward assignments are infeasible considering that grievances must be presented at Step 1 to the aggrieved employee's immediate supervisor. The stewards are here for the entire crew, and any concerns about representation should be discussed directly with them.

Once a statement has been provided to the steward, a grievance will be composed, documented, and presented timely at Step 1. Understand that the grievance process takes time and the steward may not be able to type a grievance and present it at Step 1 on the same day a statement is written. This does not mean that the grievance will not be addressed promptly.

Bargaining unit employees have fourteen days from the date of incidence to file a grievance. Please do not wait until the fourteenth day to request to see a steward and write a statement as this places an undue burden on the union to properly compile the grievance. You are entitled to an immediate release when requesting to see a steward. If management fails to

grant immediate release, be persistent and keep asking (every twenty minutes if necessary) until you and the steward are released.

Attendance terrorism is in full swing again, and the signing of unread 3971's remains a matter of contention. Always review the 3971 before signing it. If FMLA was requested and the FMLA box has not been checked, refuse to sign the form! Once the 3971 has been signed, it becomes a document of record and is no longer disputable.

Confusion also continues over the method of selecting employees to work on a holiday. The intent of Article 11 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement is to protect full-time regular employees from working their holiday whenever possible while permitting those employees who wish to work the opportunity to volunteer.

Management determines the number and categories of employees needed to work the holiday in advance and a schedule is posted by Tuesday of the preceding service week. The Fort Myers Local Memorandum of Understanding establishes the exact "pecking order" as follows:

### ITEM 13 THE METHOD OF SELECTING EMPLOYEES TO WORK ON A HOLIDAY

- A. Ten days prior to the posting of the holiday schedule, Management shall post a list seeking volunteers to work any day of the three-day holiday period. Management shall provide a copy to the local union president.
- B. Employees shall be selected as follows:
  1. All full-time employees by tour who possess the necessary skills and have volunteered to work on the holiday or their

designated holiday.

2. All PSE employees.
3. All full-time volunteer employees by tour who possess the necessary skills and their scheduled non-work day falls on the holiday, even though the payment of overtime is required, by seniority.
4. Full-time employees by tour who possess the necessary skills who have not volunteered to work their holiday, by inverse seniority.
5. Full-time non-volunteer employees by tour who possess the necessary skills and their scheduled non-work day falls on the holiday, even though payment of overtime is required, by inverse seniority.

Management is prohibited from crossing crafts or occupational groups when staffing for a holiday. All employees on a craft seniority roster who are permitted to autograph the holiday volunteer list are subject to holiday scheduling rules; there are no exceptions.

Dissatisfaction with job duties is also causing undue strife on the workroom floor. Article 3 of the CBA grants management certain rights and staffing is one of them. Seniority only comes into play when employees are moved in or out of their principal assignment area (PAA). Clerks can be assigned to any or all of the job duties within their PAA regardless of seniority, but when management moves them out of section it is done by juniority in accordance with the provisions of the Mail Processing Memorandum of Understanding. Conversely, when they are moved back into section, it is done by seniority.

Misunderstanding over relief and pool bids at stations and branches

is also creating perturbation. Relief and pool duty assignments permit management to cover absences of full time regulars holding bids. Once a relief and pool assignment has been properly awarded to a senior qualified clerk, the only way to relinquish the duty assignment is to bid another job posting. The union cannot award a residual vacancy simply because a relief bid does not meet an individual's expectations. The time to withdraw a bid is prior to the close of posting. A bid that remains vacant after the completion of the bidding process is filled in accordance with the negotiated pecking order. Any questions about the bidding process should be directed to a steward.

Clock ring error intimidation has reared its ugly head again. The purpose of the Clock Ring Error Report is to permit management to correct known errors in a timely manner. Do not allow management to harass or otherwise intimidate you and then refuse to correct easily remedied mistakes. If a supervisor incorrectly informs you that your short lunch resulted in unauthorized creep overtime and then refuses to correct the error, ask to see a steward. A short lunch does not constitute unauthorized creep overtime! Evidently, some of our floor supervisors snored their way through TACS training.

I close with a brief reminder about your participation in the grievance process. A well written statement provides all the information essential to investigating and documenting the grievance file. Your statement should be penned by you, not the steward. After a thorough examination of the facts and contentions of the case, your steward will also write a statement for the case file. Thank you for being an active and involved member in our union.

In solidarity, Grace

## Memo To Congress: Is Anyone Listening?

Time continues to pass by and still Congress has not been able to act on restoring mail service standards.



**Kathy Moyer**  
Editor  
The Eagle's Eye  
SWFAL APWU

When I go into post offices across Southwest Florida, I see many people lined up to use postal services - people

of all ages. Yes - a vibrant, efficient working postal service is a necessary function of our society.

How can Congress remain so disinterested in their constituencies? Maybe they are too removed from real life to care anymore?

It shouldn't take months or years for Congress to fix obvious problems. And yet, these new lower service standards have been in effect since January and eight months later all we are hearing from Congress is talk about doing

something. We need more than talk.

The service standard issue is being mishandled just like the prefunding issue is being mishandled.

Prefunding makes no sense from a business standpoint (other businesses are not doing this) and neither does lowering service standards. However, that never stops these failing strategies from being implemented. And once they are implemented, one can see how difficult it can be to get rid of them.

Working men and women are being asked to pay huge sums of money in taxes (check out your pay stub). Meanwhile, our good paying jobs are disappearing, only to be replaced by low wage, part time jobs with little or no benefits (insert the USPS - Staples secret deal here).

The USPS has had numerous obstacles placed in its path and it continues to thrive. Congress can remove these barriers to business. Memo to Congress: Is anyone in Congress listening?

# You Can't Make This Stuff Up!

Last month I started my article. I tried. I found that I was so down on the entire situation that I just could not go on. All I could see was a mess getting messier, with no central purpose, no real goal, long range, or short range (beyond, let's get the mail out by a posted time). I was racked by the question, what is going on?



**Isaac Yost**  
Mail Processing  
Clerk  
Fort Myers P&DC

Is our little corner of paradise, the only section that is as screwed up as a soup sandwich? Is the entire Postal Service management running around willy-nilly, taking what has worked for years and throwing that out, in favor of a line of 'what if's.'

Is this mess from that grand idea of Six Sigma? The Big BRAINS that will lead us from darkness into the true light of knowledge.

As to the big brains who know all the answers, and how they work, I go back to WW I, and Will Rogers; the German U-Boats were driving the Allied Navies crazy trying to find a way to counter them. Will Rogers had an answer, that would cure the problem, forever; boil the oceans! The Navies of the world said, "how could we do that?"

Rogers, as a Big Brain replied, "I give you the idea, you work out the details." Rogers, was not a big brain, but he knew satire. How many Big Brain ideas are out there, with little brains stumbling their way forward, mess, by mess. As to our current mess, who knows what is going on day-to-day?

Have you noticed the number of

question marks so far? That is because all I can say is . . . "What the hell is going on"???

Are we facing a Service wide plan to destroy the Postal Service to make it a private enterprise (where perhaps a certain core group can see themselves in exalted positions, with astronomical salaries)?

There is no imagination, no forward motion (the fall back position is; "We have always done it this way!!!") And as we stumble through our own little stone age, the others who are in the delivery business (remember, we are here to deliver that mail, not just use it for a numbers count to satisfy a desire for numbers) are in an age of drones.

Leave on your N/S days, before you go look around at your area, file the image away. Now when you come back, call up that image . . . now how does it compare to what is before you now?

We have a house that makes Jasper Jones Auto Salvage Yard (read junk yard) in Jefferson County TN, look like a model of order and efficiency. They don't even know the difference between apples and oranges, let alone the way to divide them.

And as to our management, our Plant Manager, just what does she do? The plant, as noted here and often, is a mess; yet nothing is done. Morale is in the dumper. Problems brought to her attention are ignored, or passed on to someone else to ignore them.

And yet the USPS keeps sending her on details, to do what? To dig the postal hole even deeper? If she does nothing here, what is she going to do at a detailed position? And as to what an Acting Plant Manager will do to alleviate our problems, I have very little hope for any change, no good bureaucrat is going to make any changes

that may reflect adversely on his superior bureaucrat.

All that seems to matter in our world is numbers. The numbers stand alone; no idea is given to reality. The AFSM-100 is a machine that when running 'zones' will place flats mail into tubs for a specific carrier. There are a number of problems that would improve overall efficiency in the system, a number of which were in fact shown to, and ignored by our plant manager. But I am just going to point out the number items that come up, and which no effort is made to correct them.

You run nice clean, even mail and you get in the 'green', and the entire world (postal that is) is happy. But, you get bad mail, oversized for the machine, and other mail that needs a little coaxing; hey that is not worth the trouble, and it hurts the numbers, so pull it out.

Now we have a machine with high numbers, and six tubs of pulled mail, and the other machine has lower numbers, but only eight pieces of mail; that's 8. Which machine is the favorite of management? The machine which showed the high green.

Now comes fact; both machines are sending their mail to their carriers; but the pulled mail, well that goes to manual to be worked, by hand, to scheme, then sent to the station to be worked, by hand, and sent to the carrier. Time lost, and as Nortbert used to preach, each time the human hand touches a piece of mail we lose money.

You can point this out to management, but you lose before you begin, the numbers are on paper, and can be proven, and there is no way to add the cost to nice numbers. If ever you bring facts to a bureaucrat, you have lost because of your insolence.

And where in the world do we get our supervisors? And what qualifies them?

We have recently secured a copy of the NEW, IMPROVED, and ENHANCED, Supervisors suitability and adaptability test.

Question only: Which number (not considering GOLF scoring) is BETTER, 1 or 9?

- (a) None of the above.
- (b) 1
- (c) 9
- (d) All of the above.

The correct answer is C. However, those who said B, and pleaded that they did not golf, will be given the opportunity to sign up for a two week course; at full per diem, given at a resort hotel to be named later.

Any questions?

The Milinda Twotrees Award goes to the leadership in our little oasis of happiness who has no idea how to deal with a WET piece of mail. They keep ignoring the laws of physics, and lay wet mail on steel plates. News alert, from the dawn of the IRON AGE, steel is in a constant state of cooling, ipso facto, anything in contact with the steel surface will also be cooled. Warmth and surface exposure to the air are what dries, in our case, paper. We once had a system that worked; an ATMOSPHERIC, SOLAR ASSISTED, a green energy wonder; a clothes line, and two packs of clothes pins. But sadly, the cool kids, those who think they run this campus, thought it would be fun to use them to exhibit foreign express bags in the old priority room.

But, as hope springs eternal, ask me and I'll give you another one.

THAT WORKS.

## FIGHT BACK ON LABOR DAY

**"Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, ...**

**The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."**

**- Frederick Douglass**

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## THE EAGLE'S EYE EDITORIAL POLICY

*The Eagle's Eye* is the official publication of the Southwest Florida Area Local, APWU, AFL-CIO. The editor has the right to determine whether the material submitted shall be printed, and has the right to edit as needed. It is the policy of this newsletter to disallow any attacks on individuals. Opinions expressed are those of the writers, and not necessarily those of the Executive Board. The deadline for submission of all articles is the day of the monthly membership meeting. You must be an APWU member to submit an article. Name may be withheld upon request. All articles may be reprinted with proper credit given. Captions/cartoons may only be reprinted upon written permission of the editor.

## Southwest Florida Area Local Membership News

We wish to extend our welcome to all new employees coming on board at the United States Postal Service by inviting you to our next SWFAL APWU meeting at the Union Hall located at 11000 Metro Parkway, Unit 8, in Fort Myers.

Meetings are held once a month on Sunday at 9:30am. Stand strong and be united, protect your job and discover the many benefits of becoming a member of the SWFAL APWU.

Join us at our next local meeting - united we can make a positive difference in our workplaces. We look forward to seeing you there!

For those of you that have recently retired who wish to continue receiving *The Eagle's Eye* newspaper, please email the Editor at [Edswfal@aol.com](mailto:Edswfal@aol.com) or call Karen at our SWFAL APWU office at 239-275-1007.

We encourage members to email



information to the editor regarding marriages, graduations, special events or achievements of our employees, or their families. Please email information to *The Eagle's Eye* at [Edswfal@aol.com](mailto:Edswfal@aol.com). We will be pleased to include as many member announcements as possible.

## In Remembrance

Danielle E Santana, wife of Bernardo Santana passed away recently. She left behind 3 sons, Thomas, Jason and Nicholas, and her loving husband of 10 years, Nicholas Bernardo Santana. Send your condolences to: Bernardo Santana and sons, 4622 Elaine Avenue North, Lehigh Acres FL 33971. The SWFAL APWU wishes to extend our deepest sympathy to Bernardo and his family and friends.

## Understanding Your Postal Benefits

Mr. Brad Pate has offered to help our members better understand our Postal benefits.

Brad Pate, from Federal Employees Benefits Agency, (not affiliated with the USPS) has given over 50 seminars, hosted a daily financial planning radio show for 3 years and has worked with Postal/Federal employees for over 15 years.

Mr. Pate has previously conducted a number of seminars regarding Understanding and Maximizing Your Postal/Federal Benefits. At those seminars Brad addressed our member's questions concerning their Postal Service benefits.

Many of our members have attended these informational seminars and have learned much about financial topics of interest to Postal employees.

Our SWFAL APWU recently sponsored a seminar in July, which was presented by Brad Pate.

"I want to first thank everyone that attended the seminar I presented July 19 at the Crowne Plaza at Bell Towers", Mr. Pate said.

The turnout was great; there were about 80 members at the 11am seminar and 45 at the 4pm event.

"We had a lot of questions on all different types of subjects from your TSP, CSRS/FERS benefits, surviving spouse benefit, FEGLI, along with questions of interest to veterans such as, 'does buying

military time help with the FERS special supplement' and a whole lot more", added Mr. Pate.

Seminar highlights included:

### Information on the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

- Did you know there are two portfolios inside your TSP?
- The new Roth Account, tax free growth.
- What it takes to double your money and how the Rule of 72 applies to your TSP.
- Your three payment options you have at retirement.
- Income layering with IRAs after retirement.
- The 59 1/2 non-hardship TSP rollover.

### Special FERS Supplemental Benefit

- Retire early, maybe? We will show you how to calculate your monthly amount.

### FERS/CSRS Retirement

- What is this and how it works.
- We can calculate your FERS/CSRS monthly pension amounts.
- Spousal options for maintaining health insurance coverage in retirement.

### FEGLI: Your Federal Life Insurance

- Learn how much you can save on premiums
- Did you know your premiums increase 2,000% as you get older?

We appreciate Mr. Pate's willingness to help our members better understand our Postal benefits.

If you have a topic you would like for Mr. Pate to address, please email your questions to *The Eagle's Eye* at [edswfal@aol.com](mailto:edswfal@aol.com).

We will be pleased to include as many responses as possible in upcoming editions of *The Eagle's Eye*.



**Brad Pate**  
Federal Employee Benefits Agency