

POSTAL CHATTER

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Orlando, Florida

October/December, 2023

Around The Local



**By Joe Paul,
President**

Within the intricate web of our daily lives at the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the enduring concern for the dignity and respect of our members remains at the forefront. We find ourselves facing a recurring challenge in dealing with management personnel who stray from the path of fairness and respect. This issue has led us to reassert our commitment to upholding the principles of dignity, respect, and fair treatment for all APWU employees.

We, as the American Postal Workers Union, stand united in our dedication to ensuring that every employee, whether an APWU member or not, is treated with the respect they undeniably deserve.

The quest for a workplace that truly values and honors its employees is one we will continue to champion. Together, we are determined to address the pressing issue of the hostile work environment that has, sadly, become far too common. As we navigate the complex path toward a workplace marked by dignity, respect, and unity, we shall persevere. Our collective dedication to the betterment of the work environment remains unshaken. Together, we will continue to advocate for change, fostering an atmosphere of respect and fairness for all APWU members.

In the ongoing effort to address and rectify workplace contract violations, we believe that joint training sessions, such as the forthcoming Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) training, serve as valuable tools to align both union and management in interpreting and adhering to the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Our goal is to minimize, if not eliminate, continuous violations and to educate those involved. Your Local Officers and Stewards remain steadfast in protecting our membership and the agreements that safeguard their rights, including the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), JCIM, and various Handbooks and Manuals.

In a comforting development, our Postal Support Employees (PSEs) continue to transition to career status under the '24-month automatic conversion' language. This shift is proving to be a life-altering opportunity for non-career PSEs, signifying the fulfillment of a career dream.

On another note, knowing your rights during Investigative Interviews is crucial. Requesting the presence of a Steward or union representation during these

interviews is essential for ensuring your protection and support. In cases involving the US Postal Inspection Service, understanding your rights and the established procedures is of utmost importance. Always remember to request representation promptly, as management is not obliged to provide it unless you make the request.

Within the last month, many of our dedicated union representatives attended the APWU Florida State Fall Seminar and the APWU National All Crafts Conference. These events were packed with valuable knowledge and insights, keeping your local APWU representa-

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Around The Local

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tives well-informed about the national landscape. The curriculum and discussions from these seminars have equipped us with fresh ideas and strategies to address the challenges we encounter daily on the workroom floor.

In this day in age, unions stand as strength and unity and play a large part for a better today and a promising tomorrow. The UAW (United Auto Workers) strike that we have been seeing this last month or so is a key example of how unions assert their power. Through structured efforts, union members can negotiate for fair wages, safer working conditions, improved benefits, dignity and respect, and job security. The impact of such actions echoes well beyond the picket lines, sending a clear and distinct message that all workers deserve dignity and respect. A few weeks ago, Vice

President Bob McSorley and I rallied with members of the UAW to show a force of solidarity, and the National APWU also supported the UAW cause as you can imagine.

Our Central Florida Area Local family is deeply saddened by the loss of one of our own members, Devery Grier, who tragically passed away while at work three weeks ago. Please keep Devery's family in your thoughts and prayers as they navigate this difficult and traumatic loss.

Consistently, I emphasize the utmost importance of every employee becoming a member of the APWU. I encourage you to take a moment this week to engage with non-members and convey just how critical their participation is in ensuring the enduring strength of our organization. Organizing our workplace stands as one of APWU's most vital objectives, particularly considering the persistent challenges we face from all angles. It is imperative that every one of us joins our ranks to contribute to the collective effort in securing our future. Stay safe and stay united!

In Solidarity.



Officers for 2022-2024

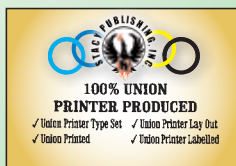
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Maintenance Craft Director	Ben Love
Clerk Craft Director	Denise Larson-Fischer
Assistant Clerk Craft Director	Victor Sanchez
Assistant Clerk Craft Director	Gamal Hussein
Motor Vehicle Craft Director	Jose Caban
Assistant MVS Craft Director	Vacant
Director of Safety & Health.....	Horace Nelson
Sergeant-at-Arms/Legislative Dir	Jeremy Armstrong

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CFAL WEBSITE

CFAL1462.org



The Power Of Collective Bargaining



**By Robert 'Bob' McSorley
Vice President**

The power of collective bargaining is a force to be reckoned with, and as proud members of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), we understand the immense advantages it offers. In a world where family and friends may be grappling with stagnant wages and dwindling benefits, we stand united to secure better wages, improved benefits, and safer working conditions.

Collective bargaining has the power to transform the lives of APWU members. Higher wages, comprehensive healthcare, robust retirement plans, and paid leave are not just distant dreams but tangible realities. We have witnessed the United Auto workers' strike, where workers took to the picket line to demand better pay and benefits. Similarly, APWU members have seen their incomes rise by approximately \$14,000 since the last cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), a testament to the union's unwavering commitment to its members.

But collective bargaining is not just about money; it is about job security too. The APWU's six-year layoff clause is just one facet of the comprehensive protection it provides. We recognize that job secu-

ity is perpetually under threat, with supervisors often assigning clerical tasks to non-clerical staff, misrepresenting work hours. However, dedicated individuals like Joe Paul are working tirelessly to curb these abuses, ensuring a stable and secure work environment.

Moreover, the APWU does not stop at financial and job security; it cares for the safety and well-being of its members. We actively monitor safety standards and work towards minimizing workplace hazards,

duties, investigating Line H hours, and finding solutions.

Beyond individual gains, the APWU fosters solidarity, offering support to those facing workplace disputes or challenges. In unity, we find strength, advice, and solidarity from fellow members.

In conclusion, as postal employees, we face countless challenges. Still, with the collective bargaining power of the APWU, we march forward toward fulfilling careers and secure retirements. The APWU is not just



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striving for a healthier work environment for all. We leave no stone unturned, scrutinizing custodians'

a union; it is a lifeline, a beacon of hope, and a promise of a brighter future for all its members.



Dollar And Sen\$e



**By Peter Fournier,
Secretary Treasurer**

We have exciting news for our APWU represented employees! The upcoming General Wage Increase, which is a substantial feature of our current Collective Bargaining Agreement, is set to come into effect on November 18,

2023. This increase promises a 1.3% raise for our dedicated regular career employees, and an even more substantial 2.3% increase for PSEs (in place of COLAs). It is yet another convincing reason to be a member of the APWU. For those of you aware of non-members within your facility, this serves as a wake-up call – everyone should contribute their fair share. There should be no excuses for any Postal

Service employee failing to pay their Union dues; it is a matter of united responsibility.

With Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's just around the corner, let us prioritize the safety and well-being of ourselves and our families as we bid goodbye to 2023. As we approach the year-end, let us remember that tax season is on the horizon – ensure that you process those tax forms promptly, as it is our duty to our Postal patrons. Looking ahead, 2024 marks another contract year for the APWU, and your support for the Union is essential.

Financially, as we approach 2024, our local union stands on a strong footing. The present administration operates as a well-informed, united team. Nevertheless, there exists an ongoing initiative to recruit dedicated individuals to fill certain roles such as Stewards and Alternate Stewards. If you are not actively involved, please avoid complaining about the Union – remember, “**U-N-I-O-N**” starts with “**U**” and “**I**.” Your involvement and commitment matter greatly.

In Solidarity.



Joe-Bob-Jose Caban- MVS Members.

Custodian Staffing



**By Ben Love,
Maintenance Craft Director**

It's that time of the year again when we review all the offices in our Local to verify Custodian staffing requirements. This is also referred to as Line H by many people. Line H was signed into existence back in 2014 when the United States Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union agreed to convert every PSE Custodian in the country to regular employees and placed a requirement on management to utilize a minimum of 90% of the hours called for in each facility's Custodian staffing documents. Truly a first of its kind, the 2014 MOU also contained a built-in penalty should management fail to make their 90% threshold during the fiscal year. This penalty was never expected to be paid because it was thought that management would adhere to the staffing limits to avoid creating negative financial impacts on their budgets. As usual though, the staffing requirement has been ignored in many facilities, resulting in some of our Custodians being paid thousands of dollars for the violations.

This does not mean that every Custodian is going to get money each year for Line H though. In fact, if management follows the MOU and works the Custodian(s) sufficiently to reach the established thresh-

old for their facility, there should be no penalties at all. In many cases management is overreacting and working the Custodians overtime the whole year, which actually earns them more than they would have gotten for a Line H violation.

There are a couple of things that you can do as a Custodian to help make sure that your office is properly staffed. First of all, make sure that you fill out a PS Form 4776 every day which explains what work you did and how much time was spent on each task. Some of you fill out the back of a 4776 and enter your total number of hours for the day, but that doesn't document any tasks you did that were not part of your route. For example, if a customer comes in your lobby and spills their coffee on the floor, you need to annotate that on your 4776 and put how much time was spent cleaning the floor. Some of you spend significant time each week changing locks or installing mailboxes etc. . You have to document that work and identify how much time was spent on those tasks so that at the year end review we can properly add up the Line H hours.

If your Postmaster or Supervisor does not allow you to write on your PS Form 4776s, you need to request a Steward to get that taken care of immediately. While you are waiting for that issue to be resolved, keep a notepad, and write down tasks you do on a daily basis and the time spent on each. Without your input, we are forced to accept management's word at the end of the year.

Another problem we are

hearing about is Clerks, Carriers and Management performing Custodian work in the stations. If you are a Custodian and this is happening in your office, do not wait until the end of the year for the Line H review to speak up about it. This issue needs to be addressed throughout the year whenever it comes up. If there are Postal Custodians available, then other Crafts should not be cleaning your facilities.

If you have any questions about Line H or Custodial duties in general, please reach out to me as I would be happy to address them with you.

I would also like to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season. I hope 2023 has been kind to you and yours and that you stay safe throughout the new year. I'm looking forward to working with you all to make 2024 a good year for the Maintenance Craft.

In Solidarity.







24-Month Automatic Conversions



**By Denise Larson-Fischer,
Clerk Craft Director**

Regarding the '24-Month Automatic Conversions' from PSE/Non-Career to FTF/Career. Currently, we have had approximately 65 conversions of Postal Support Employee (PSE's) to Full Time Flexible (FTF) within our Central Florida Area Local.

Full-Time Flexible (FTF) employees **are** career employees.

Full-Time Flexible Clerks are entitled to all the benefits of a full-time career employee since they are now career. Some of these benefits are, but not limited to: Pay increases, COLA (Cost of Living Adjustments), Night differential, Sunday Premium, (11) paid holidays, as opposed to the (6) that PSEs had as non-career, sick leave, annual leave, bidding rights, overtime, out of schedule pay, life insurance, thrift savings plan to name a few.

A FTF does not hold a bid, they are given an assignment/schedule. This also includes two off days per week. The 'flexible' term of the assignment allows management to change your schedule, however it must be changed by the Wednesday prior to the next work week. If management attempts to alter the schedule, such as changing your off days and/or work hours that you were given by the Wednesday prior, that would not be proper, so request a Steward in that instance. If that were to happen then it would be the position of the APWU that the employee would be entitled to out-of-schedule premium. You are no longer a PSE so your schedule should not be changed daily for your work hours or scheduled off days. The Full Time Flexible (FTF) assignments are nothing new since the rules and language for that assignment have been in

the Collective Bargaining Agreement for decades.

We are receiving many questions asking "*when am I being converted*". The conversion date is on the first day of the third pay period after the Postal Support Employees has reached his/her 24 months on the Relative Standing List.

Below are a couple of questions and answers relative to this from our Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM):

- With the full-time flexible (FTF) automatic conversion language is it the intent of the parties to change any of the existing contractual provisions regarding FTF employees?

Response: No. full-time flexible (FTF) employees are considered unencumbered and assigned schedules and duty assignments in accordance with Article 37.4.

- How is the PSE 24-month automatic conversion date determined?

Answer: The 24-month automatic conversion is triggered two (2) years from the PSE's relative

standing date in the installation. Example: A PSE hired on 4/28/2020, triggers the 24-month automatic conversion on 4/28/2022. The conversion to career would be the first day of the third full pay period after the 24-month requirement is met, in accordance with the Residual Vacancies - Clerk Craft MOU Questions and Answers #24, dated March 30, 2022.

We are experiencing quite a few problems/issues here locally, and nationwide, with these conversions. There has also been confusion with management on the FTF position(s). These are some of the issues we have been seeing with the new FTF status:

1. Form 50's not issued timely. This is causing incorrect pay, delayed career benefits, including changing your health plan, signing up for life insurance, and not being able to bid on vacancy positions.

2. Conversions to Level 4 Mail Handler

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News From The MVS/VMF Crafts



**By Jose Caban,
MVS Craft Director**

Most of you know me by my last name, 'Caban'. I was appointed by President Joe Paul to the position of Motor Vehicle Director this past month after Gil Vega's retirement. I joined the Post Office in Secaucus, New Jersey BMC International as a Tractor Trailer Operator (TTO) in 1994. I worked in New Jersey for three years prior to moving to Orlando. My experience came from my time here in Orlando, and as time went by, I learned more and more about the Collective Bargaining Agreement and about our APWU organization. I have seen many violations day in and day out that I felt I had to jump in and do what I could to combat these issues. I became a Steward a few years ago and then moved up to the Assistant Motor Vehicle Director (MVS), and here I am as your newly appointed MVS Director. I am responsible for both the MVS and Vehicle Maintenance Facilities.

Approximately 25 years ago the USPS here in Orlando violated Article 39 by assigning all the MVS drivers to one Level, which was Level 8. This in of itself, has created havoc in my opinion, and the USPS has been attempting to reverse it back from TTO Level 8 to MVO (Motor Vehicle Operator) Level 7.

This should never have happened and now our drivers are paying the price today. One of the ways management can try to reverse moving Level 8 TTO's to Level 7 MVO's, is when a driver (TTO Level 8) retires, then the USPS can attempt to change the bid to a Level 7 MVO. Another way is if a Level 8 TTO driver requests to demote themselves to a Level 7 residual vacancy, when a Level 7 MVO bid comes up that is a Level 7 MVO.

As your new Craft Director, I will make sure management stays within the boundaries of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (contract). There will be no DEALS that are not within the rules and regulations, we will abide by the Contract, Handbooks and Manuals.

Below are a few excerpts from

Collective Bargaining Agreement:

- Article 39.1.C.10 is basic in that Occupational Groups within the MVS Craft will be determined by position designation and level.
- Article 39.2.A.8 states that employees bidding pursuant to 6 or 7 above may bid only those duty assignments that have the same position descriptions.
- Article 39.2.A.10 states as follows: Residual vacancies for the following positions are to be filled by the senior qualified bidder, from the appropriate position(s) as indicated, except for the Motor Vehicle Operator and Tractor Trailer Operator assignments, total service seniority in the MVS craft will be used by employees when bidding to assignments in a different position description.

24-Month Automatic Conversions

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3. Holiday Pay missing
4. Sunday Premium Pay omitted.
5. Letter of Demands being issued for overdraft of Annual leave. These need to be grieved within (14) days of receipt. Make sure you request a Steward if you receive one in the mail from finance.

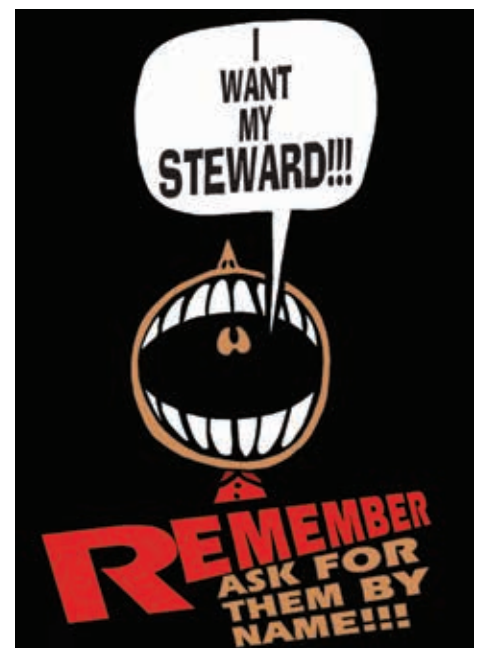
6. Annual leave being denied. Management is mistaken about there being a probation period for taking annual leave. Request a Steward if this is occurring.

When your Form 50 is corrected your pay, annual and sick leave, should be corrected automatically in the next couple of pay checks. Pay attention to your Employee Earnings Statement which can be found on Lite Blue under Payroll. Watch for any Letter of Demand(s) that you may receive as it should be delivered to the address you

have on file with the USPS.

Thank you for being a member of our Central Florida Area Local family.

Union Strong All Day Long.



Bullying, Harassment, & Intimidation

By Joe Paul, President

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to our former Motor Vehicle Director, Gilbert Vega, for his dedication to our members over the years. As many of you are aware, Mr. Gilbert Vega, known as Vega, is now retiring, though he has kindly offered his assistance on occasion. His departure leaves a significant void, and I am pleased to announce the appointment of Jose Caban, the former Assistant Motor Vehicle Services Craft Director, to the position of Motor Vehicle (MVS) Vehicle Maintenance (VMF) Director. I have full confidence in Jose's ability to carry the baton passed on by Vega and excel in his new role.

I am deeply concerned about the ongoing reports of bullying, harassment, and intimidation directed at our members in the workplace. Our dedicated APWU Officers and Stewards are actively engaged in the task of transforming this management culture within our Central Florida Area Local. Locally, we are taking proactive measures by introducing a "Workplace Environment Survey" specifically designed for our Central Florida Area Local #1462. I have sent out this survey on multiple occasions and have already started addressing the responses we have received thus far. If you experience any of the mentioned negative actions from management, I encourage you to complete the survey and send it to me via email or to the office address listed at the bottom of the form. Additionally, if you have specific concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

I want to go over the conversion process again for Postal Support Employees (PSEs) in Level 21 and above offices as I am receiving many inquiries. According to the information provided, PSEs in these offices

will automatically convert to Full-Time **Flexible** (FTF) assignments after 24 months. This conversion grants them **CAREER** status, which means they have the same contractual rights as Full-Time **Regular** employees. As a Full Time Flexible, you can bid on posted duty assignments, earn and receive sick and annual leave, sign up for health and life insurance, and participate in the Thrift Savings Plan, among other benefits. It is important to note that this FTF assignment is not a bid job duty assignment, but rather, it is an unencumbered (unassigned) assignment. The FTF assignment can have their hours and off days changed by Wednesday of the previous week, so I encourage you to bid on posted duty assignments (actual bid jobs).

The conversion date for PSEs will be the **first day of the third full pay period after reaching the 24-month requirement**. This typically translates to around four weeks after the two-year mark. However, there may be some delays in the USPS HR system, so if the bidding system indicates that you cannot bid after conversion, it is recommended to notify your supervisor immediately. They can assist you in manually completing the bidding process during this interim period and if that doesn't work request a Steward right away.

We are still conducting ongoing training for current Stewards and are working on another Steward class soon. If anyone is interested in becoming a Clerk Steward, Maintenance Craft Steward, or Motor Vehicle/Vehicle Maintenance Steward they can reach out to Denise Larson Fischer (Clerk Craft Director), Ben Love (Maintenance Craft Director) or Jose Caban (Motor Vehicle Director/VMF), Vice President Bob McSorley or myself. We are continually

looking for dedicated members with the initiative to learn and the willingness to have a voice on your Tours, or within your Stations/Branches or Associate Offices, and as you would imagine, applicants should be leaders who set good examples and are willing to defend our members and the contract. As we all know, the US Postal Service disregards the Collective Bargaining Agreement daily. Your local Officers and Stewards are having to file many grievances for our employees, and we will continue to do so. If you see members of management, Rural Carriers, City Carriers, or others doing our work, request a Steward. We all must do what we can to **PROTECT** our work!

I am currently in discussions with a company to organize another Retirement Seminar, like the one we hosted about a year or so ago. This upcoming event presents an excellent opportunity for our members. Holding the seminar in our local CFAL office should make it easily accessible for everyone. Once I have a confirmed date and time, I will let everyone know so you can plan accordingly. Depending on the number of registrations we receive (I will send out a notice), we may need to consider multiple sessions to accommodate everyone. I am pleased to announce that this seminar will be free for our membership. It is important to note that this class is not exclusively for seasoned members; it is also designed to benefit our younger members and help them set a strong foundation for their financial future.

Whenever you **change your mailing address** let us know so we can get it corrected for you at the local, state, and national levels. We send out newsletters and various other items so keep your address up to date with us. In Solidarity.

CENTRAL FLORIDA AREA LOCAL #1462 WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

Name: _____

Work Facility and Tour: _____

Work Status (FTR, PSE): _____

How long have you been employed with the USPS: _____

Have you been harassed by USPS management and when? If so, please explain:

Have you ever been intimidated by USPS management and when? If so, please explain:

Have you ever been bullied by USPS management and when? If so, please explain:

Have you ever utilized a PS Form 1767 to report any of the above to the USPS, and if so, what was managements response(s):

Please e-mail back to me at: JPaulAPWU@gmail.com. You could also mail it to the APWU office at the below address, or give it to your Stewards who will send it to me.

**Joe Paul, President
10501 S. Orange Avenue, Suite 117
Orlando, FL 32824**

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

POSTAL CHATTER

Central Florida Area Local 1462
10501 S. Orange Ave., Suite 117
Orlando, FL 32824



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Union Meetings are the 2nd Thursday
of every month at 7 p.m.

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Please mark your calendars and attend.

It is your Union.

Let your voice be heard!!!



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