



## Jerry's Corner



Hello again fellow APWU members. I hope all enjoyed the holidays and the ample overtime opportunities. To begin the New Year I will attempt to place some perspective on our jobs and the future of the Postal Service. Many employees have approached me and asked "are they going to abolish my job and will I be excessed?" I cannot answer this question. What I do know is this. The Postal Service nationwide has projected an 8 billion dollar deficit for physical year 2010. I, as well as other Union officials, have observed the following management actions/policies that our local managers have taken or implemented to presumably lower the district deficit and eventually solve the money problems:

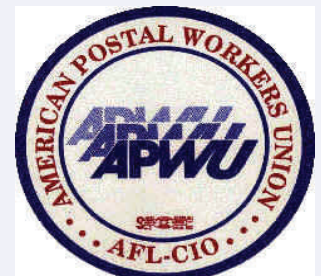
-A "two tour" SPBS operation that resulted in hundreds of hours of overtime, use of non-qualified personnel keying, use of unassigned full time regular employees as a supplemental work force and as much as 40% of the Christmas priority parcels being delayed because of management's failure to plan and find the necessary air transport for the excess mail. These decisions show two things. First,

management knowingly violates the contract (and pays the grievance if we catch them) and second, 40% of our customers that sent their loved ones priority parcels for Christmas were told a lie...specifically, that their packages would arrive in two to three days. Any "for profit" organization that lies to their customers will lose that customer. AS OUR SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS DECLINES WE FORCE THEM TO FIND ALTERNATIVES TO THE SERVICE WE PROVIDE.

-Many of our stations failed to staff the window operations correctly during the holiday season. Long lines and long waits were the norm. We've been providing window service for generations of customers and we still can't get it right. The Sales, Service and Distribution (SSDA) position was brought into our organization to provide the flexibility station managers needed to keep the windows properly staffed thereby eliminating long lines. The idea was to use the SSDA on the windows during high mailing periods and then use them on the distribution side (to include scheme when qualified) to process the station mail. This doesn't happen because many of  
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the supervisors and managers don't even appreciate or understand the flexibility built into the SSDA position. AS OUR SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS DECLINES WE FORCE THEM TO FIND ALTERNATIVES TO THE SERVICE WE PROVIDE.

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-Management has decided to fill ten of the residual clerk vacancies. What's wrong with this you ask? Well, it's a good idea because the contract requires this action but of course management must consider the contractual requirements and of course they didn't. First article 37.4.C states the residual must be filled within 21 days of the position becoming residual. That didn't happen. Second, all unassigned regulars are to be identified to include name, seniority and veteran's preference. This has been done incorrectly. Third, there are a significant number of vacancies that were not reverted or reposted. This means our installation unassigned regulars should have been offered all these vacancies prior to the assignment of residual vacancies. Another serious violation. So my message is this, all unassigned regulars that are placed incorrectly into residuals will be entitled to out of schedule premium as soon as they enter the hours and days off listed on the permanent bid. Many of the residuals are scheme bids and management has taken the position that failure to qualify when placed in a scheme bid warrants removal. The Union will successfully defeat this arrogant decision because the language in the contract and handbooks and manuals does not support this action. The point is this...the employees are not the problem. The management decision to ignore the contract when considering placement of unassigned employees into residual bids is a costly and ignorant decision. Thousands of dollars will be wasted paying the legitimate out of schedule grievances not to mention all the union time needed to investigate write and present the individual grievances. Wasted time and wasted money. AS POSTAL EMPLOYEES WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT MANAGEMENT TO MEET THEIR CONTRACTUAL, PROFESSIONAL AND MORAL OBLIGATIONS TO STAFF AS NEEDED AND ASSIGN THE WORK WITHIN THE UNIT PROPERLY. This rarely happens and if this is not corrected our institution will fail.

There are many other examples I could use to support my basic premise and if I haven't made myself clear here's my position: OUR LOCAL AND NATIONAL MANAGERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THE CONTINUED USE OF OUR SERVICES BY OUR CUSTOMERS DEPENDS ON THE POSTAL SERVICE PROVIDING GOOD, COST EFFECTIVE MAIL DELIVERY SERVICE AS PROMISED AND ADHERENCE TO THE CONTRACT TO AVOID COSTLY GRIEVANCE PAYMENTS. Every time a manager or supervisor "hides" mail to avoid responsibility for delay or every time a supervisor or manager directs the box clerk to

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“swipe” the section as complete when the box mail is not up, every time a supervisor or manager shows preferential treatment to an employee or group of employees thus reducing productivity and every time our supervisors and managers “cheat” they put another crack in the crumbling foundation of the Postal Service. And remember, they don’t cheat to make the Postal Service more efficient...they cheat to make themselves look better than they are. Of course the Post Master, Plant Manager and District Manager look the other way when subordinates “cheat” because it makes them look efficient and better than they are.

My point is this. It is up to us as concerned employees to save our jobs and the Postal Service. I ask all craft employees to envision the Postal Service 5 years from now if nothing changes. I see a Postal Service that will be partitioned into sections (plant operations, carrier mail delivery, station operations, plant maintenance, mail transport to stations, and elimination of vehicle maintenance). Each of these functions will be contracted, probably at the national level, and we will have lost many on the best jobs in America. What must we do? We must not allow our supervisors and managers to cheat and we must document and grieve every management decision that decreases service to our customers. At some point we will have the documentation to take to the Board of Governors and Congress to show Postal management has no process in place to effectively monitor the daily performance of local managers and supervisors. Further, there is certainly no requirement that postal managers and supervisors have sufficient education to read their own directives or any of the contracts of the various unions and sufficient writing skills to communicate effectively in a non-verbal discussion. Herein lies the problem. Intellect, education and experience should be the prime requirements for selection to every supervisor/manager position. It’s obvious to me these are not primary requirements in the selection process. This must change and we can make it happen by documenting all the stupid decisions and failure of supervisors and managers to understand and adhere to the contract. By the way every time you see a supervisor cheat that is a contract violation. It violates the Postal Standards of Conduct in section 6 of the ELM. I will investigate and go forward with every complaint brought to me involving ethics or inappropriate conduct. We are in this together and our future is in our hands. Apathy and sarcasm will not help our cause. We must all be pro-active and make a difference. More (or less) next month.

Jerry

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***“It is one of the characteristics of a free and democratic nation that it have free and independent labor unions.”***

— Franklin D. Roosevelt