



# STRAIGHT TALK



As management staggers towards the next phase of its AMP initiative the levels of anxiety among impacted mail handlers increases. Mail Handlers in the Southeastern, Reading, Lancaster, Scranton, and Williamsport await management's next move. While we still hope for the legislative intervention that would preserve mail processing operations in each of the impacted facilities, that hope is certainly diminishing. I think it is important to note that the fates of mail processing facilities who have been targeted by some faceless Postal Service wonk in a gray partitioned cubicle within L'Enfant Plaza could have been changed by our Members in Congress. They failed you, they failed us and we should hold them accountable on November 6th. While we intend to continue to lobby those in the Lame Duck session to do the right thing, we now prepare for the worst-case scenario. In this context it is the intention of Local 308 to minimize the dislocation and inconvenience to mail handlers by securing sufficient duty assignments

within a reasonable commute from the impacted facilities. Does this suck, there is no question about it, but we must prepare for what appears to be the inevitable involuntary movement of mail handlers. I would be remiss if I did not address those few who somehow find your Union at fault or at least complicit with this management initiated disaster. I would suggest to you that while we continue to find ways to minimize the impact to your lives and fully recognize the anxiety this upheaval has and continues to cause, we urge you to remember that the no lay-off clause is a collectively bargained and negotiated right that would not exist if not for your Union. This is more than unpleasant and we get that, but to hold this Union even remotely responsible is simply unjust.

As we move forward, the beginning date for the movement of operations from the identified facilities is set for February of 2013, the exact details of movement including the specifics of remaining operations, if any, in these impacted plants has not yet been de-

termined, or at the very least, not been shared with this Union. A recent meeting with Philadelphia District Manager Falling-Star regarding the Southeastern plant revealed that the exact plans for any remaining employees is still being decided at the Eastern Area level. During that meeting the Union specifically requested the number of employees that management anticipated would remain following the movement of mail processing operations as well as the timeline for that movement. The response was something less than concrete. According to management officials in Harrisburg the same is true within the Central Pennsylvania District. You can be sure that as soon as information becomes available we will immediately share it with you. In the interim please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or concerns regarding this or any other Union related matter.

In Union Solidarity,  
John Gibson

## MODIFIED ARBITRATION PROCESS

The greatest frustration of the grievance-arbitration process is the length of time it takes for our disputes to be resolved. The axiom, *Justice Delayed is Justice Denied*, flourishes within the United States Postal Service and may be truer today than ever before. This is a process failure that management has taken full advantage of using it as a tactic to thwart our efforts and deny Mail Handlers their bargained rights. Scheduled this November, all representatives who either present grievances at step two of the grievance arbitration process or advocate grievances in arbitration will participate in the joint national level training for the Modified Arbitration Process (MAP). Local 308 has agreed to enter into this pilot program with two main goals in mind, shorten the period of time it takes to resolve grievances and reduce the costs associated with bloated case dockets and escalating arbitration costs. As with most new programs the MAP has its pros and cons. The positives are obvious and significant, faster resolution of disputes and reduced arbitration costs. The potential drawbacks include stricter enforcement of the discovery and disclosure requirements of Article 15. Currently, a number of Local Unions participate in the MAP Pilot program including Locals 301, 305, 311 and 334 with identifiable success. As its name implies the traditional grievance arbitration process is modified and will change the way we prepare and argue grievances for the better. MAP will address the grievance procedure, the pre-hearing process, the hearing scheduling process and the types of arbitration hearings. Under the MAP and beginning with the step two meeting, the parties create a Joint Grievance File (JGF) and stipulate to the facts and documents as they attempt to fully develop the case. This focus at step two of the grievance process and greater latitude at step three will serve only to strengthen our ability to represent our members.

## AFCS 200 DISPUTE STATUS

As recently announced, the Postal Service has sided with the APWU on the assignment of the Operator Position on the new AFCS-200. The Mail Handlers Union at both the National and Local levels intends to dispute this assignment under the Regional Instruction 399 jurisdictional procedures. As stated by National President John Hegarty to the Local Presidents "It does not make sense to take Mail Handlers, who have been efficiently operating the AFCS machinery for decades, off of the "operator position" and switch that over to the clerk craft. One can only guess at the rationale behind this blunder by the USPS." Mail Handlers in facilities with an AFCS-200 will unfortunately be affected, at least on the short term, by this misguided decision by the Postal Service. Local Union Headquarters continues to directly assist those Branch Presidents impacted by this assignment instructing local representatives to immediately call for a meeting of the installation's Local Dispute Resolution Committee so that the process of challenging this "blunder" can begin. Although, the National Office is also challenging the assignment of clerks to the operator position, it is also necessary for each affected facility to do likewise and that is exactly what we are doing. There is no doubt that this decision by the USPS is motivated by factors outside of the jurisdictional framework and as Brother Hegarty stated this "is not the final word in this dispute". As always we will keep you notified on this and other important Union matters.

## CONTRACT UPDATE

The National parties have now finalized the selection of the three arbitrator panel, adding the USPS-appointed arbitrator Robert Dufek and the NPMHU appointed union lawyer Robert Weinberg, to work alongside neutral arbitrator Herbert Fishgold. As reported by the National Office, a meeting was held on October 15, 2012 to plan out the hearing schedule, which is set to begin November 9, 2012 with as many as twelve dates occurring over the next several months. Please continue to check your Union bulletin board as well as the National's web site at [www.npmhu.org](http://www.npmhu.org) for updates as the parties hammer out a successor National Agreement.

*NPMHU, Local 308  
President's Report  
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