



The

# Union Mail

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*"The Labor Movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress."*—Martin Luther King, Jr.

## *Uprising of the 20,000*



Dec. 4, 1909: Mary Dreier, Ida Rauh, Helen Marot, Rena Borky, Yetta Raff, and Mary Effers link arms during the march to NY City Hall to protest abuse by police and thugs including insults, intimidation, and physical assaults which were directed in part by company owners.

***Story on page 5***

***March is Women's History Month***

# What is perfect?



**Jonathan Smith**

Is it sitting on the beach (getting too much sun, can you say sunburn). Or eating an entire pizza (too much cholesterol and calories). Or driving a nice car way beyond the

speed limit (tempting fate). Must I go on? Lol

Now we look at working in the post office as so imperfect:

You come to a job that has never had a layoff (that sucks) The fulltime regular workforce is guaranteed 40 hours/week; 80 hours/pay period. (that is terrible). You are guaranteed health benefits, life insurance, and a pension (the post office is horrible.)

Many people complain of work-related stress, while dealing with stress at home every day -- with their finances, with their children, even at their church -- but accept this stress as normal. Why expect work to be perfect? We enjoy cars, homes and vacations because of the imperfect situation at the post office.

I would like to share a story with you about the last wishes of Alexander the Great on his death bed. Alexander summoned his army generals and told them his three ultimate wishes.

1. The best doctors should carry his coffin

2. The wealth he has accumulated (money, gold and precious stones) should be scattered along the procession to the cemetery.

3. His hands should be let loose, so they hang outside the coffin for

all to see.

Alexander explained his requests like this.

1. I want the best doctors to carry my coffin to demonstrate that in the face of death, even the best doctors in the world have no power to heal.

2. I want the road to be covered with my treasures so that everybody sees that material wealth acquired on earth will stay on earth.

3. I want my hands to swing free in the wind, so that the people will see that you come into this world empty handed and you will leave this world empty handed after the most precious treasure of all is exhausted, and that is time.

### How do we spend our precious time?

I know that the post office and even the union is not perfect. Such is life. But we should spend our time fighting to make things better not only for ourselves but for the future generations. We should spend our time helping the union fight for better wages, working conditions and benefits. We should spend our time fighting against privatization, against contracting out our work and closing postal facilities. We should spend our time serving the public and saving this service for the American people.

If we are honest and look at ourselves in the mirror, we will realize we work at the most perfectly imperfect place on earth. Imagine how much more perfectly imperfect it would be if we stick together, learn what our rights truly are (read the contract) and fight together to enforce them. Now, *that's perfect!*

## SALUTE TO APWU SISTERS

Since the '60s, the PO had to hire women equally with men. Sisters had to fight for respect at work and in the union. Our female officers and stewards have strengthened the APWU.

My grandmother used to always say, "When you're going through strife and struggle, the answer is always God and the price is always Love." This March, Women's History Month, I celebrate our dedicated sisters of APWU who have committed their sweat and blood to the strife and struggle of postal workers. 🌸

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Cover: photographer unknown, courtesy of the Kheel Center

# It's time to stand up!

By Tiffany Foster, Executive Vice-President



**Tiffany Foster**

I have received emails and telephone calls from workers who believe that management has committed a violation of the collective bargaining agreement, but

then have told me not to let management know they contacted me. What's interesting is that many of these same employees don't want to be anonymous when they are writing statements against their coworkers (even when we always advise them not to) or complaining about their stewards.

It's hard to get an employee to write a statement in support of a coworker or steward. I commend those who do step up and show support for their coworkers. (We recently had some workers voluntarily write statements in support of their steward about management's abusive treatment toward them.)

These emails and telephone calls of employees wishing to remain anonymous are disturbing to me because, just as our Local Memorandum of Understanding says that an employee cannot be disciplined based on an anonymous complaint, how do we as your union representatives begin to legitimately investigate your concerns and effectively file your grievances without your visible participation? It's not possible.

Who was violated, if you are anonymous? What are you afraid of? Management is prohibited from

retaliating against an employee, harassing an employee or creating a hostile work environment for an employee for reporting safety issues, wanting to speak to a steward and/or report a contract violation.

Many workers are afraid to tell their supervisor they want to speak to a steward. (If we're honest, some people don't ask for a steward because they don't want to create waves and mess up their "good deal.") But some are truly scared, especially if they are PSEs and management has told them they can fire them when they feel like it. The prohibitions against illegal reprisal mentioned above apply to PSEs as well!

Workers have many avenues available to pursue justice if management retaliates against them for reporting safety issues and/or contract violations. There's the grievance procedure, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the Labor Board. If you read and learn your rights, you won't be afraid.

EEO says "Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. Anti-discrimination laws also prohibit harassment against individuals in retaliation for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit under these laws; or opposing employment practices that they reasonably believe discriminate against

individuals, in violation of these laws." (From EEOC website)

Article 14 page 1 in the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) says "Supervisors and managers... should understand that postal policy prohibits disciplinary action that may discourage accident reports or the filing of a claim for compensable injury with the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP)."

Many times, in discipline letters management cites Chapter 6 section 660 in the Employee Labor Manual (ELM)—Code of Conduct. This manual applies to management also! Section 665.24 "Violent and/or Threatening Behavior" says, "The Postal Service is committed to the principle that all employees have a basic right to a safe and humane working environment. In order to ensure this right, it is the unequivocal policy of the Postal Service that there must be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats, or bullying by anyone at any level. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including removal." This applies to your supervisors and managers too.

When workers report management harassment, intimidation, unsafe conditions, or hostile work environments, but won't provide evidence because they want to remain anonymous, how does the union help fight to eliminate the abuse? When workers are afraid to ask for a shop steward, how can the steward represent them? It's time to stand up. "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything!" ☐

# Bernie Sanders introduces bill to expand Social Security

By Nora Taggart

**D**id you know that a billionaire pays the same amount into Social Security as someone who makes \$132,900 a year? While postal workers and other working-class folks pay payroll taxes on 100 percent of our incomes, ultra-wealthy figures like Jeff Bezos, who make most of their money on investments, pay only a minuscule proportion – as little as .00028 percent – for the same maximum benefits.

On February 13, Senator Bernie Sanders introduced the Social Security Expansion Act to ensure that seniors can retire in dignity and “everyone with a disability can live with the security they need.”

“In my humble opinion, a great nation is not judged, historically, by the number of billionaires it has, or by the number of nuclear weapons it has,” Sanders said. “It is judged by how it treats the weakest and most vulnerable people amongst us.”

“And when we talk about vulnerable people,” Sanders continued, “these are folks who are in their 80s and their 90s, people who have worked their entire lives... What we are saying today, to those senior citizens who are struggling economically to live out their last years with dignity: We will no longer turn our backs on you.”

Social Security plays a major role in safeguarding tens of millions of people from destitution – not just people over the age of sixty-five, but millions of children too. It is by far the most significant anti-poverty program in the country.

According to a fact sheet put out by Sanders' office, the legislation would:

■ **Extend the solvency of Social Security** for 52 years to the year 2071 by requiring the wealthiest American households to pay their fair share of taxes. Today, because of the earnings cap on Social Security taxes, a CEO making \$20 million a year pays the same amount of money into Social Security as someone who makes \$132,900 a year.

This legislation would lift this cap and subject all income above \$250,000 to the Social Security Payroll tax. Under this bill, 98.2 percent of wage earners would not see their taxes go up by one penny;

■ **Expand Social Security benefits across-the-board.** Under this bill, Social Security retirement benefits for low-income Americans would go up by about \$1,300 a year;

■ **Increase Cost-Of-Living-Adjustments (COLAs).** This bill would more accurately measure the spending patterns for seniors by adopting the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E). Older Americans, by and large, are not going out on spending sprees buying big screen TVs, laptops, or the latest high-tech gadgets. Rather, they spend a disproportionate amount of their income on health care and prescription drugs and that would be


reflected in the formula for calculating COLAs under this legislation;

■ **Improve the Special Minimum Benefit for Social Security recipients.** This bill will help low income workers stay out of poverty by updating the Special Minimum Benefit to make it easier for them to qualify and by increasing and indexing the benefit level so that it is equal to 125 % of the poverty line;

■ **Restore student benefits** up to age 22 for children of disabled or deceased workers, if the child is a full-time student in a college or vocational school. This legislation restores student benefits that were eliminated in 1983 to help educate children of deceased or disabled parents;

■ **Combine the Disability Insurance Trust Fund with the Old Age and Survivors Trust fund** to help senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

Sanders' bill is supported by many of the presidential hopefuls in the Senate, including Cory Booker, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Elizabeth Warren.

This is important legislation. We need to call our Senators and let them know how much we support the expansion of Social Security. If they have endorsed Sanders' bill, we need to thank them; and if they haven't, they need to be urged to do so. When the bill moves to the House, we need to do the same with our Representatives. Call 844-402-1001 to be connected to your elected officials. 



# Women's history: The Uprising of the 20,000

By Flo Summergrad

**A**s 29-year-old Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, the youngest woman ever elected to the U.S. Congress, carries out her promise of “speaking truth to power,” she will face attacks on her class, her ethnic background, her gender, and her politics. Of course, men also face hostility and



**Clara Lemlich**

insults from the anti-labor right wing. But particular to the attack on strong female leaders is that their appearance, their clothes, their shoes, become objects of ridicule. Trump insulted the looks of women who opposed him. And Ocasio-Cortez is mocked and criticized for wearing stylish clothes and shoes.

Labor historian Einav Rabinovitch-Fox drew a historic parallel: “the attention to Ocasio-Cortez’s clothing as a way to criticize her politics is an all-too-familiar line of attack. . . . Clara Lemlich [was] a young radical socialist who used fashion as a form of empowerment while she fought for workers’ rights.”

In 1909, Clara Lemlich rebuked male union leaders for being too passive. The conservative leaders (all male) of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) saw women workers as negligible. The 23-year-old Lemlich turned

that around when she led the largest strike of female garment workers in the NYC needle trades. The mass strike from November into February 1909, was dubbed, “The Uprising of the Twenty Thousand.”

The strikers fought “The Shirtwaist Kings,” the factory owners who forced 11-hour days, six days a week in dark and crowded conditions. They demanded shorter hours, higher wages, safer workrooms, an end to sexual harassment, and a place to hang up their good clothes during the work day.

On strike, the women marched in the streets wearing their best clothes and nice hats. This was heavily criticized by the media and even by the male union leadership as being “frivolous.” Working women were supposed to be meek and shabby examples of “the deserving poor.”

*Collier’s* magazine was shocked that striking women looked “attired for a festive occasion.” Just as reporters ridiculed Ocasio-Cortez’s clothes, *Collier’s* described strikers’ fashions in mocking detail, saying that puffed dresses and picture hats showed that the women did not have real grievances. The New York Sun sneered at “the unwonted leisure class—all dressed in holiday attire.”

Clearly, wanting more from life than basic survival was not acceptable from working women. Lemlich pointed out that spending 50cents on a pretty hat meant going for weeks on dry lunches. But she said, “We like new hats as well as any other young women. Why shouldn’t we?” As historian Rabinovich-Fox

explains, “Wearing a fancy dress or a hat signaled their economic independence and their respectability as ladies.” In *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*, Nan Enstad points out that fashion did not turn young working women into passive consumerists. “These women, in fact, went on strike in very large numbers. . . proving themselves to be politically active, astute, and effective.” By not presenting themselves as helpless victims, the 20,000 forced the bosses, the union, and the public to take them seriously.

The lengthy strike welded a disorganized workforce into a united, political force. The women were attacked by thugs hired by the manufacturers. The police arrested them and hostile judges sentenced them “for striking against God and nature.” These women who refused to “know their place” as second class citizens, forged an alliance with the upper-class women’s suffragists’ WTUL which organized mass rallies and gained public support.

Although the strike did not win all the demands, it achieved a shorter work week, 4 paid holidays, negotiation of wages, and many shop contracts. Most important, the ranks of ILGWU Local 25 had swelled from 100 to 10,000. It laid the groundwork for industrial unionism in the garment industry and forced the unions to accept women as legitimate union activists – even with their pretty hats!

In the same way, Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez will command respect as she fearlessly takes on the powers that be. ☐

Photographer unknown, courtesy of the Kheel Center

## NEW STEWARD TRAINING:

# “Knowledge is Power!”

**K**nowledge is Power! sums up what NY Metro Area Postal Union’s new stewards felt during the week of training from 1/31 – 2/4/19, provided by the Local officers and the NE Region National Business Agents. Clerk Sylvia Jordan described the five days of training as “very intense.” It was



“challenging, but very enlightening.”

All 16 new stewards are now certified to represent the men and women who work in their stations. They stepped up because they care about our jobs and they are ready to take on abusive supervisors and fight injustice. The training gave them some tools. Armed with real knowledge, they will sharpen those tools in practice. In every craft and every installation, these stewards will add strength to our front lines against management attacks.

Osama Sweilam, one of the new maintenance stewards at the NJI/NDC, said he learned that Shop Stewards have power, but “that power comes with huge responsibilities.” Regina Wilson, also a maintenance steward, put it another way: “The training taught us that people’s jobs, their livelihoods, are in our hands.”

All the trainees were impressed at how much information is in the stewards’ arsenal to argue and win cases. Even those with long time postal service were amazed at how much they did not know. Clerk Shawnta Woodburn described the training as “an abundance of knowledge.”

The class emphasized Articles 15,

16, and 17, those parts of the Contract that deal with the grievance procedure, discipline, and the rights of workers and stewards to file grievances on the clock. Any worker who believes s/he has a grievance or who receives a written disciplinary action should request a shop steward, and the supervisor must get a steward within a reasonable amount of time. It is not up to management to decide that a grievance does not exist. Investigating whether or not there is a grievance is the contractual right of the steward. This means that the union in the person of the shop steward may request whatever documents are needed to make this determination and must be given time on the clock for the investigation.

Many of the trainees had been told that “union time” is two hours. This is not true! The union has the obligation to develop the fullest possible case to represent the grievant. This means using whatever time is necessary to investigate.

National Business Agents (NBAs) Pete Coradi, Liz Swigert, and Bernie Timmerman, are the officers who represent the union at arbitrations. They taught that the steward’s work at the beginning is critical to win-

ning the case at arbitration. Pete Coradi gave examples of grievance files that gave the advocates no evidence to present. Liz Swigert explained that Article 16 (Discipline) requires that management have “just cause” for its action and afford the worker due process. In

discipline cases, the burden of proof is on the Postal Service. The officers taught the class how to “tell the story” to expose management mistakes and win grievances.

Many of the trainees used the *continued on page 9*

### NEW STEWARDS

#### By Facility and Craft

#### DVD

**Abdul-Haqq Ayub:** Maintenance

**Jennifer Caddle:** Clerk

#### NJI/NDC

**Keyonna Barfield:** Clerk

**Drusilla Crowley:** Maintenance

**Sylvia Jordan:** Clerk

**Allen McCord:** Motor Vehicle

**Osama Sweilam:** Maintenance

**Regina Wilson:** Maintenance

**Shawnta Woodburn:** Clerk

#### Bronx

**Gary Alexander,** Baychester, Esplanade, Hillside Stations: Clerk

**Camille Watson,** Tremont and Morris Heights: Clerk

**Desiree White,** Eastside of the Bronx: Maintenance; Riverdale: Clerk

#### Manhattan

**Brandon Christian,** Manhattan VMF: Motor Vehicle

**Tiffany Jarrett,** CPPF: Clerk

**Brittany Nelson,** Wall Street and Church Street Maintenance: Clerk

**Anne Rolling,** FDR: Clerk

*Photo by Kevin Walsh*

# We are the union, and we can and must save our jobs

By Chuck Zlatkin, Director of Communications

**E**arlene McWillis arrived at work at Port Authority Finance Station on 9th Avenue in Manhattan on Wednesday January 14, 2019, and saw that there was a makeshift flyer posted on the wall of the station. It was on USPS letterhead: “Potential Relocation of Post Office – Notice of Public Meeting and Comment Period.” Next to it was posted a copy of a letter to the Office of the President Borough of Manhattan dated January 15, 2019, signed by Kurtis Bullard, Real Estate Specialist for the USPS. What was being promoted was a public meeting regarding the future of Port Authority Station. Ms. McWillis immediately took a picture with her phone and texted it to Diane Erlanger, the Director of Organization, at the NYMAPU office. Her quick thinking and action set in motion a response from NYMAPU that would have major ramifications. President Jonathan Smith immediately called for action on the part of NYMAPU.

Congressman Nadler’s and Manhattan Borough President Brewer’s offices were contacted. Both elected officials were first learning of the meeting from NYMAPU. President Smith okayed the creation of a flyer in both English and Spanish to notify the community of the upcoming meeting. NYMAPU retirees from the Bronx Postal Banking campaigns distributed flyers—hundreds of flyers!—in the Chelsea community on January 28 and 29. Miguel Acevedo, President of the Robert Fulton



NYCHA Houses Tenant Association, was contacted.

January 30th turned out to be a subfreezing day in New York City. NYMAPU people had to put up a sign to let the public know where the meeting was being held. The Postal Service put out less than two dozen chairs for the meeting that drew about 50 people. It was a travesty. Bullard was the only speaker from the USPS. He was dreadfully unprepared and didn’t seem to care.

NYMAPU was represented by President Smith, Director Erlanger, Retirees Roberto Rodriguez, Bill Bachmann, Carol Thomas and Dennis O’Neil; Port Authority Window Clerks McWillis and Sylvia Pagan; and Director of Communications Chuck Zlatkin. Due to the quick work of NYMAPU, representatives from Congressman Nadler and Manhattan Borough President Brewer’s offices were in attendance and saw the disrespectful presentation by the USPS.

On February 5th, a letter was sent to Postmaster General Megan Brennan signed by Nadler, Brewer, NYC Council Speaker Corey

Johnson, NYS Senator Brad Hoylman and NYS Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried, protesting the poor treatment given to the postal customers. “Given the complete lack of information and outrageous lack of preparation on behalf of USPS at the Public Hearing,” they demanded that the USPS “must restart the comment process, beginning it with an informative meeting that provides the community with meaningful specifics on which to form an opinion. Anything less would continue this disservice to the community.”

On February 15, Congressman Nadler received a letter from PMG Brennan’s office telling us that the USPS “will be scheduling another public meeting soon.”

We won this battle, but we will have to stay vigilant at Port Authority or any other station where the USPS is trying to sell, close or downsize it. Because of Sister McWillis’ quick thinking and action, our entire union was able to mobilize to defend our jobs.

Every one of us needs to do the same. If you see a notice posted at your station announcing a public meeting or change in your workplace, please notify your shop steward or the union office. Don’t assume that the union knows. Often management will try to hide meetings like these from the union because they know that we will mobilize the public, elected officials and the media.

Your vigilance, your concern, your action is an important part of what our union can be. **Stay involved, stay strong, stay union!** ☑

*In Memoriam: John Dennie*

# Working Class Hero

Postal workers lost a warrior, a comrade, a friend, and arguably the most dedicated postal defender there has ever been, with the death of John Dennie on February 8, 2019. John died of pulmonary fibrosis at the age of 77. He was a retired postal worker who had been both a letter carrier and a mail handler in his postal career. In his retirement, he was the consummate activist and fighter for justice. To those of us who knew him and worked with him, we are having to come to terms with the loss we feel. And to those of you who didn't know him, well, with all he did for you, humbly and selflessly, his death is a loss for you too.

In March of 2016 at the membership meeting of New York Metro Area Postal Union, John was presented with a plaque commemorating his being voted to be an honorary member of NYMAPU!

When it came to defending postal workers and the public Postal Service, there was no one who did more than John Dennie. There was no action too small or too big that John wouldn't do for the cause, literally. If there was a post office that was being threatened by sale, closure, or downsizing in the Bronx or Manhattan John Dennie was there to fight to defend it. If it was needed to have someone leaflet to notify the people about a public hearing, John would do it. If numbers were needed at the public hearing, John would be there and bring people with him. If needed, John would be there to speak out as well. When Bronx GPO was being threatened



with being sold, John and his Postal Defenders were there week in and week out educating the public to the threat. When postal management's actions were attacking the well-being of the Postal Service and postal workers, John Dennie would go to Washington, D.C to be there as part of the postal hunger strikers. When the actions of postal management went to the extreme, John Dennie was there to attempt to place then Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahue under citizen's arrest for delaying the mail! And when the actions of anti-postal service legislators had gone too far, there was John Dennie sitting in at Congressman Darrell Issa's office in Washington, D.C. and getting arrested for his trouble.

When it came to fight to save the peoples' post office by mounting a campaign against putting fake post offices in Staples stores, John Dennie was there. He was the heart and soul of the retirees' group of NYMAPU that fought the good fight for years,

bringing about the victory that smashed that dirty deal between USPS and Staples.

When it was time to mount the campaign for Postal Banking and to bring that fight to the Bronx, John Dennie was there playing an active role with the veterans of the Staples fight in launching the petition drive that garnered close to ten thousand signatures. John was there even when his health was beginning to fail.

When other postal activists would take actions, John would travel to support them in Baltimore, Philadelphia, wherever the fight was. Locally, he was there to mentor, to teach, and be a friend to so many of us. And when he believed in the cause he was there for you. In 2012, John campaigned for the election of Jonathan Smith and his team to gain leadership at New York Metro by going to every post office where NYMAPU members worked on his own time at his own expense. And in 2013, John repeated the herculean effort for the election of Mark Dimondstein to be president of APWU.

We have concentrated on his service for postal workers, but John Dennie was a committed activist for social, economic and racial justice in every aspect of his life. He was deeply loved by his family and friends. Each of us understands what a unique, passionate, tireless, dedicated, and humble person he was. All of us are so saddened by his death, but we are also aware how fortunate we were to have him in our lives. ☹️



# Update your Union profile!

By Joe Martir, NYMAPU Secretary-Treasurer

**M**ake sure that you receive all important information from both the local and national union. You also want to make sure that you receive your copy of *The Union Mail*. 2019 is an election year for national APWU officers, you want to be sure that you will receive your election ballot in a timely manner. It is important that the union has accurate information for you. Your correct mailing address must be on file, so you can receive everything that you should. Please verify your information.

Your access to update your mailing information is just a few clicks away at the APWU website. Here's how to start: log in to APWU.org then, click on Members Only. This will prompt you to sign in: "USERNAME" is your Employee Identification Number (EIN); "PASSWORD" is your last name and the last four digits of your Social Security number.

Scroll down and in the middle of the screen you should see "My Addresses." If the address on file is incorrect, click on the pencil and

proceed to enter your current mailing address. Update your address and click SAVE and CLOSE. Your information will be processed and updated by APWU expeditiously. Should you encounter any issues and/or problems, please contact your Union representative for assistance.

**If you work with a member who hasn't received their latest copy of *The Union Mail*, suggest to them to contact Joe Martir immediately. Call: 1-212-563-7553 extension #107.**

## Attention Disabled Vets! Wounded Warrior Leave

**T**he Postal Service has continued the Wounded Warriors Leave program. 104 hours of WWL is available to those veterans with over 30% service-related disabilities. Wounded Warriors Leave is distinct from Sick Leave in that it is a special leave category for disabled veterans being treated for their service-related condition. It can be combined with FMLA if applicable.

All veterans with service-related disabilities of 30% or more will receive 104 hours of WWL at the beginning of the calendar year (this year as of January 5, 2019). This will expire at the end of the year, but a

new balance of 104 hours will be available in 2020. (Eligible new hires will get their 104 hours upon hiring).

To use these hours, the employee must submit Form PS3971 and PS Form 5980, "Treatment Verification for Wounded Warrior Leave," from a health care provider, stating that the employee was being treated for the covered condition. The 5980 must be submitted within 15 days of return to work.



## NEW STEWARD TRAINING: "Knowledge is Power!"

*continued from page 6*

word "awesome" to describe the officers who taught them. (MVS Steward Allen McCord says that "the group was so appreciative and impressed" that they bought "Thank You" cakes.)

The teachers were confident that the new stewards left the training ready to put it to use.

The union is a collective effort. an organization with a common goal. The core of NY Metro's fulltime officers, along with experienced leaders in the field, will be there to make sure they can hit the ground running.



Photo by Allen McCord

# APWU Women Have P.O.W.E.R.!



If you are a female member of APWU, you are automatically a member of

P.O.W.E.R. The initials stand for Post Office Women for Equal Rights, but the women’s committee of the union is also about POWER—empowering sisters as leaders and fighters.

P.O.W.E.R. was founded on April 28, 1979, out of the struggles of female members of APWU for recognition of women and issues particular to women workers. At the 1978 APWU National Convention, the sound was turned off when Eleanor G. Bailey came to the mic. Angry sisters had a meeting and decided to organize for change. We can be proud that the sisters of our own local, New York Metro, were the driving force in founding P.O.W.E.R. Our beloved Eleanor G. Bailey was one of the leaders. The current stewards – especially the young women – stand on the shoulders of those who broke the gender barrier in the post office and the postal unions.

Over the years, the committee has educated and strengthened our sisters, so that our union now has numerous active women stewards, officers, and even national Executive Board members. But there is still more to do.

March is Women’s History Month. Postal women should proudly represent the slogan: “A woman’s place is in her Union!” ☑

## DO WE NEED AN EAST COAST WALL?

While Trump obsesses about a wall on the Mexican border, drugs are pouring in from Europe—primarily Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. There has been a “significant uptick” in the so-called “party drugs” powder and pills containing MDMA. Nearly 45 kilos (about 100 pounds) of illegal drugs (“molly” and “ecstasy”) have been seized at the New Jersey International and Network Distribution Center (NJI&NDC) since October 2018. The latest shipment caught this February was packed with toys and was stopped by US Customs and Border Protection before it entered the mail stream.



## BILL TO MANDATE AC IN POSTAL VEHICLES

The “Peggy Frank Memorial Act” would require all vehicles owned or leased by the USPS to have air-conditioning no later than three years after the bill becomes law. The bill was proposed by US Representative Tony Cardenas (D-CA) and co-sponsored by US Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD) in response to the death of the 63-year-old Peggy Frank from hypothermia (overheating) on July 6, 2018, in her mail truck. Ms. Frank had been a letter carrier for 28 years. She died on a day that reached 117 degrees in Southern California.



On January 2, 2019, the Postal Service was fined for repeated violations involving the agency’s programs and procedures for employees working in high-heat situations. At the end of 2017, only 63,000 of the 230,000 postal vehicles had A.C. In response to the cry of losing money, the sponsors of the bill pointed out that this financial loss was due to the ridiculous pre-funding mandate and not to safety spending.

## 2018: HUGE INCREASE IN STRIKERS!

New data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics shows more US workers went on strike last year than any year since 1986. Nearly 500,000 workers took part in a major work stoppage in 2018!



## LABOR BOARD RULES FOR FIRED CCA

*(A CCA is equivalent to a PSE and is protected under U.S. labor law.)*

A National Labor Board judge ruled that the USPS in Katy, TX, committed an Unfair Labor Practice by firing City Carrier Assistant (CCA) Casnel for filing grievances with her union, the NALC. Filing grievances and/or EEO cases are protected activity under the law. Management was unable to prove that they would have taken the same action absent her protected activity and the Postal Service was ordered to restore her to duty with full back pay and a clean record. Ms. Casnel’s case had credibility because her co-workers made witness statements despite threats from the supervisor! ☑



*LA Teachers Strike photo: Wilson Pumpnickel*

## CALENDAR

### Wednesday, March 20

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Hotel Pennsylvania

401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets)

Paris/Zurich Room, 6th Floor

(check calendar in lobby for room change)

### Wednesday, April 17

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Hotel Pennsylvania

401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets)

Paris/Zurich Room, 6th Floor

(check calendar in lobby for room change)

### Wednesday, May 15

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Hotel Pennsylvania

401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets)

Paris/Zurich Room, 6th Floor

(check calendar in lobby for room change)

## APWU LOCAL 10 BLDG. CORP

Beginning Balance as of 01/01/2019	\$ 1,271,726.37
Total Revenue January 2019	\$ 120,193.58
Operating Expenses January 2019	\$ 112,985.17
Total Net Income January 2019	\$ 7,208.41
Ending Balance as of 01/31/2019	\$ 1,278,934.78

**SISTERS! Come to NY Metro P.O.W.E.R. meetings!** (As an APWU woman, you are already a member of P.O.W.E.R.)

**Where:** Union Office, 350 W. 31st Street, 3rd Floor

**When:** 1:00 pm, the 4th Wednesday of every month  
March 27 • April 24 • May 22



For 30 years, April 28th has been designated Workers Memorial Day in the U.S. to commemorate those killed on the job and to fight for workplace safety. In 2019, the AFL-CIO has called for workers to protest the cuts in regulatory protections, which have meant more deaths and injuries at work.

*Excerpted from the AFL-CIO report (2018): Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*

# Workers' safety and health protections are in danger

The Trump administration and the Republican majority in Congress launched a major assault on regulatory protections. They have moved aggressively to roll back regulations, block new protections and put agency budgets and programs on the chopping block.

Since January 2017, the Trump administration has:

- Issued Executive Order 13771 that requires two existing safeguards be repealed for every new regulatory protection issued.
- Repealed OSHA's rule clarifying an employer's obligation to keep

accurate injury and illness records.

- Proposed to slash the Department of Labor's budget by 21%, eliminate worker safety and health training programs, eliminate the Chemical Safety Board and cut job safety research by \$135 million. ☒





New York Metro Area Local, APWU  
350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
BUG

Periodicals class  
POSTAGE PAID  
at New York, NY

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION UPDATE

*If it is important to you to receive the latest information from both New York Metro and APWU; if it is important to you to receive your ballots in local and national union elections; if it is important to you to receive The Union Mail in a timely manner; please go to page 9. and make sure your personal information is up to date. ☰*

**APRIL 28th IS WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY (See page 11)**