



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.

## Stay Union Strong & Proud

*Interest arbitration is a fact of life when there is an impasse between the union and management.*

*As this is being written, the APWU is still engaged in interest arbitration with the Postal Service. Presentations are still being made to the arbitrators by the Postal Service with rebuttals from APWU. Postal management is presenting witnesses saying that postal clerks are unskilled and overpaid. The USPS argues that postal workers should receive less pay and benefits.*

*APWU will present testimony that contradicts the USPS argument.*

*An interest arbitrator has the power to write contract language—to change rights, determine pay, benefits, and work rules. In doing so, he/she considers the interests of the parties in various proposals.*

*Show your solidarity by wearing union gear throughout this important process. **Stand Union strong and proud!***

# APWU

See page 6

# Prepare for war



**Jonathan Smith**

**A**n uncertain future for the Postal Service has just gotten even more cloudy. Postmaster General Megan Brennan has announced her retirement effective January 31, 2020.

The new

Postmaster General will be chosen by the Postal Board of Governors. This is very concerning since the individuals appointed to the Board of Governors by president Donald Trump may be pro-privatization and anti-labor appointees.

APWU has been trying to lead what I like to call a postal revolution. We introduced in contract negotiations the idea of Postal Banking. 1 in 4 Americans are either unbanked or under banked, if the Postal Service would provide simple banking services this problem can begin to be addressed while at the same time provide an important service to poorer American communities and create additional revenue and good paying jobs.

What makes postal banking great is that it's not a new idea. America had a postal banking system from 1911-1967. The Post Office has a mandate to serve every household regardless of their income. Regular banks and the pay day loan industry are for profit and could care less about the community they serve. Therefore, they usually abandon lower income communities.

Let's not forget that after the 2008 financial crisis many of the banks were bailed out by the American taxpayer. Unlike the Postal Accountability and Enhancement

Act which pretended to address postal financial concerns, this was not a manufactured crisis. This crisis was created because of the deregulation of the banks. Banks would do anything to make money—such as outrageous overdraft fees, minimum balance requirements, or unreasonable ATM fees to access your own money. This is not a service but a disservice to the American people.

Many surveys have shown the Post Office as the most trusted of all the government agencies. The Post Office is obligated to serve all Americans regardless of geography, at a uniform price and quality. Every citizen must be treated equal no matter their race, religion or sex. Unlike the banks, postal employees put people before profit. It is not a postal business; it's called a Postal Service for a reason. The Postal Service has a skilled workforce, that goes through intense training and background checks, and takes pride in serving the American people.

While Brennan was better than Donahoe, she only had to be breathing to accomplish this goal. But at least she agreed to a moratorium on the closing and consolidation of postal facilities until the recent expiration of our current contract. She also agreed to a moratorium on contracting out motor vehicle services work; she agreed to language that would provide a career path to our non-career workforce. She also agreed to an all career workforce in maintenance and the motor vehicle craft.

I personally believe this was because she was old school, a career postal employee for 33 years. I fully expect that the Board of Governors will be pressured to appoint a non-

postal person to be the next Postmaster General. (If you notice, every Trump appointee to his cabinet has been anti whatever department that he has put them in charge of.)

There is a storm that's brewing, and we are in for the fight of our lives. This fight will not be about hours, wages or benefits. This fight will be about our very existence. If we are going to win this fight it will take all our collective blood, sweat and tears. Warning: Prepare for war!

***I want to thank everyone who participated in the APWU national elections. For those of you who voted for me, I thank you. For each member of New York Metro, I want to commit to continue to spend every waking moment working for the best interests of our union. I value your ideas, your help, and your support in the battles ahead. Onward!***

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# Moving forward

By Tiffany Foster, Executive Vice-President



**Tiffany Foster**

This will be my last article as the Executive Vice President of NY Metro Area Postal Union. On November 12, 2019, I will begin a new chapter in my union career as the APWU Northeast Region Coordinator. A familiar saying goes like this, “to whom much is given much is required.” This is a responsibility that I don’t take lightly and I thank the membership for trusting and believing in me to do the job. Although, my responsibilities and area of representation will change, the attention, dedication and fight will be the same. The Northeast Region Coordinator represents parts of New York and New Jersey, all of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

I became a union steward in 1999 at West Farms Station in the Bronx. I was friends with the steward of record for our station but felt my coworkers needed more attention and stated this to our steward. She responded to me by saying, “if you think you can do better step up, steward elections are going on now send in your information.” The thought of being a steward never entered my mind before. I had no issues with management. I knew how to speak up for myself and at times I would speak out for my

coworkers. I had a decision to make step up or shut up. I stepped up and the rest is history.

In retrospect, I believe I saw what my steward said to me as a challenge. What I deemed as a dare pushed me to make a call that turned out to be one of the best decisions that I could have made in my postal career. I got to do what came naturally to me, defend those who couldn’t stand up and speak up for themselves.

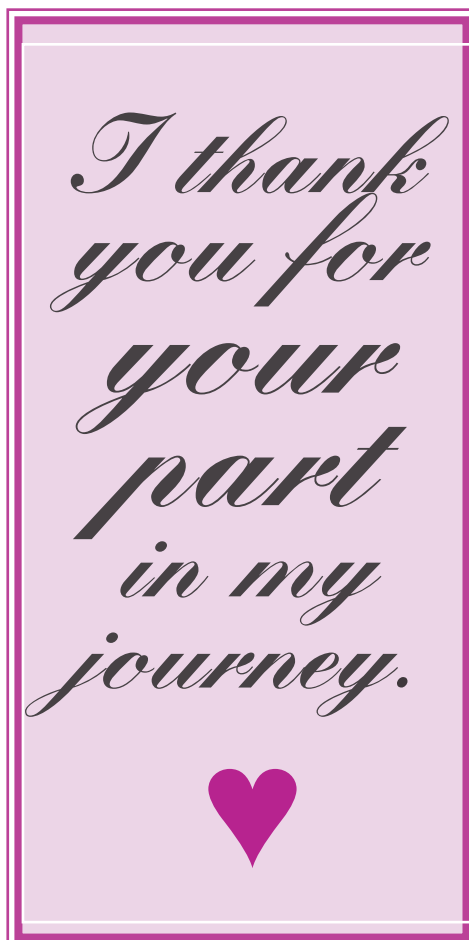
At the beginning of my union

career, no one could have told me being a steward would bring me so much joy. Every time an employee got their job back, joy. Each time the union was successful in keeping a post office from closing, joy. Helping an employee to get the assistance they needed to make their lives a little bit better, joy. I can go on. You have no idea how the letters, cards and phone calls I have received throughout my twenty years from you to say thank you were reminders to me of why I became a steward and encouragement to keep going on. I thank you.

These last few weeks have been very emotional for me. I am physically leaving what has been my home for seven years. This will be an adjustment for us all. Don’t get me wrong NY Metro will also be my home and be in my heart. I was told Metro is in my DNA and this is the truth. I may not be your Executive Vice President any more but I will still be active in the local as a full dues paying member.

The future is bright for us all. Maybe, you can be that nudge or push that someone needs in order to step up. There is always opportunity for everyone to get involved. The union is important. You are the union. This is not a dare or a challenge, but a request to think about the future of our union and what part you can play to make it better and stronger.

I love you all and there isn’t anything you can do about it. ☺



# A lot on our plate

Chuck Zlatkin, Director of Communications

As most everyone is aware, 2020 is an election year. Not only is the President up for election, so is every member of the House of Representatives and some key Senate races as well. In our area, the only Senator facing reelection is Cory Booker (D-NJ). In addition to elections for the politicians who represent us nationally, state-wide, and locally, there hopefully will be legislation at the national level that will have a positive impact on postal workers and the people we serve.

### Update on House Resolution (HR) 2382

As of press time, HR 2382, the USPS Fairness Act, has 270 co-sponsors. This is far beyond the majority (218) needed to pass the legislation in the House. This bill repeals the requirement that the Postal Service annually prepay future retirement health benefits. It would, in effect, reverse the most damaging part of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) of 2006 that has been used by pro-privatizers to jeopardize the financial health of the USPS. It isn't enough to introduce a bill and get co-sponsors. Let's see how long it takes the House to bring this legislation up for a vote. For a bill to become law it must be brought to the floor for a vote in the House, then pass the Senate and have the President sign it into law. What will Democrat leadership do with HR 2382?

### The race for president

In the 2016 race for President, the APWU Executive Board endorsed Bernie Sanders for President on

November 5, 2015. This followed his rousing speech during his appearance at that year's All Craft Conference. This is a very different election. There are over 20 declared Democrat candidates vying for the nomination to oppose President Donald Trump.

There is no way for us to know how many members of this union voted for Trump in 2016. With his targeting of postal workers, postal unions and his call for the eventual sale of the Postal Service to private corporations (the sale will be made more appealing to buyers by eliminating collective bargaining rights for postal workers, reducing pay and benefits) it is assumed that Trump will have less support among APWU members this go round. (Much more to follow on the presidential race in future issues of *The Union Mail*.)

### Congressional races

With every member of Congress facing reelection, it is important for NYMAPU to be involved in elections in our area that affect our members. There have been members of the House who have been good friends to us. They vote with us on legislation that is of concern to

us. Some of them introduce legislation that NYMAPU and APWU need to have before the House. And others of them get directly involved with issues of importance to us -- such as postal banking -- and join with postal workers in fighting station relocations and station and plant closings.

### Deciding which candidates to support

Sometimes it is a no-brainer on deciding which candidate to support. A good example is outgoing Congressman Jose E. Serrano (D-15) who is retiring because of health reasons at the end of this term. Serrano has always been there for us. He voted the right way; he introduced legislation that we supported; he appeared at our events; his office worked with us on issues like postal banking; and he fought hard to try and keep Bronx GPO open. NYMAPU supported Serrano easily. It now appears that there will be many candidates vying to replace Serrano in the Bronx. Deciding which one to support in the Democrat Primary, if any, will be a big task for NYMAPU. To do this process correctly, each potential candidate will be sent the union's questionnaire to ascertain their positions on our issues. This will be followed by interviews with the candidates. While NYMAPU works closely with the APWU Legislative and Political Department and its Director, Judy Beard, our Local endorsement is our decision and responsibility alone. ☐



# 2019 APWU National Officer Election Results



**A**lthough incumbent officers did not all run on the same slate, the results left most incumbents in place. The main change was in the Clerk Craft, where Lamont A. Brooks was elected Clerk Craft Director, and his position as Clerk Assistant Director (A) was filled by Sam Lisenbe. Health Plan Director is now Sarah Jane Rodriguez. NE Regional Coordinator is Tiffany Foster. [For full list, see [apwu.org](http://apwu.org)] ☰

*President* **Mark Dimondstein**  
*Executive Vice President* **Debby Szeredy**  
*Secretary-Treasurer* **Elizabeth “Liz” Powell**  
*Industrial Relations Director* **Vance Zimmerman**  
*Legislative/Political Director* **Judy Beard**  
*Organization Director* **Anna Smith**  
*Research and Education Director* **Joyce B. Robinson**  
*Human Relations Director* **Susan M. “Sue” Carney**  
*\*Health Plan Director* **Sarah Jane Rodriguez**  
*Retirees Director* **Nancy E. Olumekor**  
*\*Northeast Regional Coordinator* **Tiffany Foster**  
*\*Clerk Division Director* **Lamont A. Brooks**  
*Motor Vehicle Division Director* **Michael O. Foster**  
*Maintenance Division Director* **Idowu Balogun**  
*\*New to the position.*

## Tiffany Foster elected Northeast Regional Coordinator

**I**n the recent APWU national elections, our own Tiffany Foster was elected to the position of Northeast Regional Coordinator by a substantial margin. Tiffany has been the Executive Vice President of NY Metro Area Postal Union since 2012, when she was part of United for Change slate that has led our Local for the last seven years.

Tiffany Foster is now moving on up to a position that will demand her skills on a larger stage. The NE Regional Coordinator “is responsible for union activity in parts of New York and New Jersey, and

Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.” The Regional Coordinator also serves on the Executive Board of the national American Postal Workers Union.

Before becoming NYMAPU’s Executive Vice President, Tiffany Foster worked as a Service and Sales Associate (window clerk) at West Farms Station in the Bronx where she was an active shop steward. She attributes her growth to P.O.W.E.R. (Post Office Women for Equal Rights), which has developed

strength and leadership skills in APWU sisters. She served a term as the NE Regional Coordinator of P.O.W.E.R. and has helped lead the NY Metro P.O.W.E.R. Chapter in empowering our union sisters. In 2013, she was honored as one of the distinguished woman leaders in the APWU, who has been a “shining star” in the struggle of postal workers against management.

The Executive Board and membership of NYMAPU had endorsed Tiffany for the position of NE Regional Coordinator and wish her success in her new position. ☰

# 2020: A crucial year for postal workers

Chuck Zlatkin, Director of Communications

**A**s we approach 2020, it is a good time for us to take stock of exactly what kind of struggles postal workers will have to deal with in the upcoming year.

Our enemies are as emboldened as ever. We should expect no retreat from postal management, the postal privatizers, the anti-worker think tanks, the corporate media and the hardline elected officials who don't value their own constituents when it comes to the Postal Service.

## Interest Arbitration

As this is being written, the APWU is still engaged in interest arbitration with the Postal Service. Presentations are still being made to the arbitrators by the Postal Service with rebuttals from APWU. Postal management is presenting witnesses saying that postal clerks are unskilled and overpaid. The USPS then argues that postal workers should receive less pay and benefits. The APWU will present testimony that contradicts the USPS argument. Interest arbitration is a fact of life when there is an impasse between the union and management. As Vance Zimmerman, APWU Director of Industrial Relations reminded the membership, "... an interest arbitrator has the power to write contract language –to change rights, determine pay, benefits, and work rules. In doing so, he/she considers the interests of the parties in various proposals." Unfortunately, the arbitration award that results will not be voted on by the membership. That only happens when a contract is negotiated, and the rank-and-file advisory bargaining committee finds that it can make a recommendation for ratification. It is hoped that we

may have a contract by the end of the year.

## Postmaster General to leave

At press time, there was an announcement that the Postmaster General of the United States, Megan Brennan, will leave her position as of January 31, 2020. While the initial reaction to this might be to say, "good riddance," the reality is that what we could end up with could be worse. Looking back at the two PMGs prior to Brennan, John "Jack" Potter and Patrick Donohoe, we know what totally hostile PMGs in power can be. Potter submitted the USPS Transformation Plan to Congress in 2002 which led into the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), which crippled the Postal Service. In 2009, Potter claimed that the USPS needed to cut delivery to 5 days. When Potter announced his retirement in 2010, he had managed to advance a retirement package that would pay him initially a quarter of a million dollars followed by payments of another \$800,000 in severance and "lifetime achievement" bonuses.

PMG Potter was replaced by his deputy, Patrick R. Donohoe. Donohoe was even more outrageous than Potter. He announced the implementation date of 5-day delivery without the go-ahead from Congress. He was stopped. Within weeks of negotiating a contract with APWU which included \$4 billion dollars in worker givebacks, he called upon Congress to enact legislation that would take back even

more from postal workers. He failed. He initiated plant closings which further damaged the USPS ability to serve the public and eliminated job opportunities. He was a staunch opponent of postal banking and was the cheerleader for the Staples fake post offices.

Donahoe was the target of a grass roots movement to get him out of office. "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Donahoe Has Got to Go!" When he retired he specifically mentioned the APWU for stopping his plans for privatizing postal retail. PMG Megan Brennan succeeded Donahoe and carried out the plant closings he had started. She failed to stop the harassment of postal workers on the work floor. On the plus side, Brennan would talk with the postal unions. She would hold regular meetings with the postal unions to work together legislatively. While she was not an advocate of postal banking, Brennan refused to close the door on discussing it.

Hopefully, the next PMG won't be as bad as Potter and Donohoe. Postal workers deserve better than that. No matter who is in the position, we must stay vigilant and fight the PMG every step of the way when the welfare of our members is threatened on the work floor, and we must fight to protect our jobs, wages and benefits when management attempts to sell us out. We must stay united to prevail in our struggles against USPS management. We have no other choice.

## Postal privatization

The postal privatizers are a combi-



nation of large corporate interests who can't wait to get their hands on the income and resources of the Postal Service for their own financial gain, and ideologues who are opposed to the federal government and want to tear down the Postal Service because of its popularity with the American people. We see the role that UPS, FedEx, DHL have played in the push for privatization. The Trump Task Force and the OMB's call for postal privatization are the most blatant attacks on a public Postal Service in recent memory. This combined effort has been preceded by the insidious work of think tanks funded by these and other corporations that spend large sums of money to create so-called "studies" that justify privatization. These studies are used by privatization-friendly elected officials to advance the cause. (See Legislative and Political Report in this issue of *The Union Mail*, p.4)

Privatization of the USPS would mean less service and higher prices for the American public. It would also mean the elimination of living wage jobs with benefits for 600,000 employees, replacing them with at will minimum wage employees with no benefits and no union protection. Privatization would have a devastating impact on communities and families across the nation. The Postal Service is an important part of local economies. This is of no concern to the think tanks like the Heritage Foundation which have been targeting the post office for sale for almost 50 years. It is, therefore, essential that the APWU and its allies, including the members, both national and local, of A Grand Alliance to Save

Our Public Postal Service maintain a fierce anti-privatization campaign that educates, agitates and mobilizes people to fight to maintain a public Postal Service. This is a struggle we must be engaged in, not just in theory but in practice. Look to play your part in the anti-postal privatization movement.

### Postal Banking

We know that the postal privatizers want to stop anything from making the Postal Service more attractive to the American public. They are confounded by how highly the public still rates the Postal Service as their favorite government agency and most trusted one as well. What is confounding to us, is why postal management would fail to embrace more business, more people using post offices, furthering serving the public by meeting a great need that exists in urban neighborhoods as well as in rural ones. Postal banking is a win-win-win for the Postal Service, the communities it serves, and the employees who work at post offices.

The momentum for postal banking is growing steadily. With support from elected officials like Senators Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Kirsten Gillibrand, and House of Representatives members, José E. Serrano and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, more and more people are seeing that postal banking makes sense. Providing a low cost, public option to the corporate banks and financial institutions that have targeted working people with poor or no service and enabled them to be exploited by predatory financial

institutions like pay-day lenders, check cashers, title loan scam artists, and pawn shops, is what postal banking offers to the American people. It brings with it more security for our existing jobs and the need for more jobs to be filled by our members.

There are those who ask how can you expect to take on the big corporate banks who have fought against postal banking since they were successful in stopping the postal savings system in 1967? As the big corporate banks abandon communities across America, they find they have less and less support for their practices. We heard similar arguments when APWU began its plan to fight against the Staples plan to privatize postal retail. We were in the streets and the suites fighting against Staples, and we are using the techniques to educate and mobilize the public to understand the common purpose and positive impact that establishing postal banking will have in their communities.

In New York Metro, we are proud of the role that we played, led by our retiree members of the Moe Biller/Eleanor Baily Retiree Chapter, in both the

Staples and Postal Banking Campaigns. Working with the APWU and the Campaign for Postal Banking, New York Metro Area Postal Union is right where it needs to be—at the center of the campaigns to save the jobs of our members and maintain a public Postal Service. ☐



# Stop the attack on public sector workers

By Flo Summergrad

September 24, 2019, hundreds of federal employees rallied on the Capitol grounds to protest the union busting tactics of federal employers. Although Trump's Executive Orders taking away the rights of federal workers were over-ruled in court, the injunction against them has expired and the federal Agencies have stepped up the attacks, often superseding existing contract language.

This is straight up union-busting of public sector unions at the national level. Unionized federal workers are those who serve the people at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Veterans' Administration (VA), the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Department of Justice (DOJ), civilian workers at the Department of Defense (DOD), Departments of Education, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Health, and Human Services, and other federal and government employees. Trump's logic, supported by the employers, is that dealing with unions and grievance rights is a waste of time and money.

Management of these agencies is cutting off contract negotiations and unilaterally changing the terms of labor agreements. The EPA, for instance, blames the union (the AFGE) for using "delay tactics" in opening the terms of the contract. Employees facing disciplinary action, work rule changes, or poor performance reviews will no longer have recourse to a grievance procedure. Job cuts will look at "performance," rather than seniority if there is a Reduction in Force. Management claims these measures will "stream-



line" the appeals process, in other words, deprive workers of a legal way to protect themselves. Most significant is the scaling back of official union time, so that union representation cannot happen on the clock.

The Office of Personnel Management has issued an Order that employees cannot use union time to prepare or pursue grievances. Union time that exceeds time in excess of one hour will not be considered "effective and efficient" or "reasonable, necessary, and in the public interest." The Trump administration is also urging the traditionally independent Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) to expand "open shop" laws to allow workers to drop out of their union at will. (Currently, like postal workers, they are permitted to leave the union only one time a year.)

The VA has used this new language to refuse to bargain in good faith with the union, the AFGE. They would not agree to traditional ground rules for negotiations, sent items to an impasse panel immediately before any discussion, ending local grievances, requiring that many leave requests be made 60 days in advance, and eliminating existing Memoranda of Understanding and past practices.

This flaunting of union and worker rights is being strengthened by the National Labor Relations Board. On September 10, 2019, the NLRB adopted a "contract coverage" standard to allow employers to change terms and conditions of employment without first negotiating with the union. If something is not specifically spelled out in the contract, management can just do as it wills.

Although postal workers are not paid out of taxpayer money, it is clear that the ramifications of these Orders can affect our postal unions as well. Many of our grievances on work standards depend on the prohibition of unilateral action.

"Fed Up Feds" carried signs demanding R-E-S-P-E-C-T for their work and their unions. At the September 24 rally, the workers were supported by the AFL-CIO, other unions, as well as Senators and Congressmen. Last July, 34 Senators wrote to the VA, arguing that "The extreme tactics are not in the interest of the VA's front-line employees, nor are they in the interests of the veterans these people serve." American Federation of Government Employees President David Cox, representing 700,000 government workers, said that these attacks deprive government workers of a "safe and fair work place." Poor working conditions for those who serve the public will cause a corresponding drop in public service. TSA workers, for example, whose job is to protect security in the skies, already have a high rate of attrition due to poor pay. The efforts of unions enhance the morale of government agencies. ☐



# NY Metro's long-term future secured! Lease to CLC makes OUR building a hub for NYC unions



## History: Our building at risk

In 2012, when the current administration of our Local, NY Metro Area Postal Union, took the reins of leadership, we found that our building at 350 W. 31st Street was in a precarious financial position. The APWU Building Corp (which is a separate entity from the union itself) had been terribly mismanaged. Its income and expenditures had been kept completely secret from the members and even from the Executive Board.

Taxes had not been paid; NYC fire and safety codes were not met; much of the space was vacant and poor conditions forced us to rent at below market value. The building management company was setting us up for failure. To our horror, the building was on the verge of being sold.

By 2019, NY Metro Area Postal Union was on more solid footing with the building finances. It was a struggle that was a drain on the energy of our fulltime officers, whose main duties were to run the union. In order to keep afloat, the 6th floor which had been a meeting place, was rented out and our membership meetings were held in the Hotel Pennsylvania; our holiday parties or large training classes also required rental space. Our home base was limited to offices and conference rooms.

## Future: Lease signed with CLC

The NYC Central Labor Council has signed a lease with the NY Metro Area Postal Union to rent

space and all vacant space in the future to labor unions who have been seeking office space in NYC. They will be investing a huge amount of money to make needed repairs, pay the taxes, and bring the building up to code.

The Central Labor Council is a coalition of local AFL-CIO unions in a city that has more power than any individual union. The NYC CLC is the largest in the country. The NYC CLC was looking to buy or lease property for their office. NY Metro proposed that they could lease space in our building, and from this, an idea took shape that will make 350 W. 31st Street the center of the labor movement in New York City.

The 30-year lease with CLC will provide financial security for the NY Metro Area Postal Union's building well into the future. The building is NOT being sold! It will remain the property of NY Metro but the CLC will assume many of the responsibilities that have made ownership a headache. We will no longer have to scramble for tenants. The tenants will be Unions and the CLC will fill the spaces as the current leases expire.

The lease negotiated with the CLC will enable the building to get much higher rents. In the past, because we were unable to afford the "build-out" on the spaces for new tenants, the APWU Building Corp had to give price breaks to recruit tenants who had to spend on their own buildouts. The current leases are

for between \$30 and \$40/square foot, which is well below market rate. The new leases will start at \$52/square foot, with an escalation of \$5/square foot every five years.

Plans are for the CLC to convert the first floor into a labor center that can be used for meetings, films, lectures, etc. Since it is NY Metro's building, the lease grants our Local liberal use of the space, so that we can have our membership meetings, training, films, speakers, or whatever. No more traipsing to the Hotel Pennsylvania and it wouldn't cost us an extra cent.

Most important, NY Metro's building will be the hub of local labor. 350 West 31st Street will be a physical symbol that working people can own something that is a center for union activism. Politicians will come to our building to make their pitch for union votes and opinions.

This transition has already begun. It will take time and money before we start seeing the results. But the process will be exciting for our members and will invigorate our Local both financially and politically.

The New York Metro building will soon be the symbol of unionism in New York City. There is power in numbers. Imagine how powerful the unions of NYC will be once we are under one roof. We can do together what we can't do alone. ☐

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## POSTAL PRIDE

# Workers fulfill mission of the Postal Service

**T**wenty eight current postal workers from all crafts and parts of the country testified before the interest arbitration panel to give living examples of the day to day service. Management testimony that clerks are overpaid was rebutted. President Dimondstein commented that “Every member should be proud of your co-workers. Through their eloquent testimony, it was crystal clear that postal workers are skilled public servants, deeply dedicated to our jobs, to the mission of the public Postal Service.”

Each craft panel spoke about what the mission of the USPS means to them. Some panelists described severe problems on the job – with safety, training, understaffing, and bad management – but getting the work done for the sake of the customers.

The Clerk Craft panel included window clerks who explained the many kinds of interactions with the customers that go above and beyond simple sales. Stephani Clark, of the NE Mississippi Area local stressed that, “The service we provide is not a service that you’d find at Walmart or Target. . . . These services are wrapped up in the mail our customers send. We are sending smiles and hugs and love.” Another retail clerk described how she assisted a bereaved mother to find out the regulations for mailing her daughter’s ashes to another country.

Skilled maintenance workers spoke of how much training is needed to deal with the mechanized postal system. Labor custodians talked about trying to do the work with understaffed crews. Area Maintenance Technician Parker Rauch, from the Northern VA Area Local, said, “If I make it a better environment for our employees, they will be able to give better service to our customers.”

The Motor Vehicle craft was represented by drivers and vehicle maintenance workers. They move the mail in spite of problems with safety and contract drivers. “We are the beginning and end of everything with the Postal Service,” said Marvin Gooch, of the Montgomery County Area (MD) Local. Tiwana Rogers, a Detroit Motor Vehicle Operator spoke with pride that “Truck drivers are on the front line.”

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# Postal News Briefs

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## POST OFFICE FIDDLES WHILE MAIL TRUCKS BURN

So far this year, 26 USPS delivery trucks have caught fire, which makes 145 over the last six years. These are Grumman LLV models, which are no longer manufactured, but are still in the postal fleet. Plans to replace the aging vehicles have been delayed by bureaucratic indecision as to which trucks to purchase. Some of this revolves around disputes about gas vs. electric engines and pressures from the Trump administration. The National Association of Letter Carriers has urged carriers to file complaints with the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) to force investigations.



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## CONTRACTS EXPIRE FOR MAIL HANDLERS AND CITY LETTER CARRIERS

Contracts for the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) expired in September 2019 without success at the bargaining table with the USPS. The Mail Handlers agreed to extend the negotiations. The Letter Carriers have moved into the mediation stage of the process. The NALC dispute involves pay and benefits, use of non-career employees, no lay-off, but especially a new “pilot program” that puts carriers on the street for longer hours. It seems that none of the parties is ready to settle while the APWU Contract is going through interest arbitration. In the meantime, the Postal Reorganization Act protects postal workers under the old contracts.



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## 2019 HOLIDAY STAMPS RELEASED

Forever stamps honoring diverse ethnic and religious holidays have been released by the USPS. These range from holiday wreaths, a menorah, Kwanzaa, Madonna and Child, a candle for the Diwali Hindu festival of lights, EID greetings, and scenes from Ezra Jack Keats children’s book, *A Snowy Day*. These are beautiful and colorful; and using them reminds our friends and family about using the Postal Service for holiday mailing. 



## CALENDAR

**NOTE:** Due to the severe rain and flooding, the October 16 General Membership Meeting was canceled.

Come to the November General Membership Meeting and WIN the "Turkey Raffle"—25 money prizes!

### Wednesday, November 20, 2019

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

#### Annual Turkey Raffle

Hotel Pennsylvania

401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets)

Paris/Zurich Room, 6th Floor

(check calendar in lobby for room change)

#### Win COPA 50/50 and DOOR PRIZE raffle!

As per the NYMAPU Constituion:

#### NO DECEMBER MEETING

### Wednesday, January 19, 2020

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

September 2019 Building Corp figures will appear in the January 2020 issue of *The Union Mail*.

## ALL SISTERS WELCOME!



### Wednesday, November 27, 2019

1:00 pm

Monthly P.O.W.E.R. Meeting

NY Metro Union Office

350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor

### Wednesday, January 26, 2020

1:00 pm

Monthly P.O.W.E.R. Meeting

NY Metro Union Office

350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor

### APWU members: Group Legal Services Plan

Open Enrollment Until November 30, 2019

**ACT NOW!**

\$7.75/pay period

(\$16.80 a month for retirees and associate members)

[www.VoluntaryBenefitsPlan.com](http://www.VoluntaryBenefitsPlan.com)

For questions or to enroll over the phone: 1-877-229-0451

*N*Y Metro has a history of having an annual party for our members at the holidays. This is the time of year that postal workers put in long hours and enjoy socializing with sisters and brothers. Unfortunately, we just learned that the large space where we had our last several parties, is no longer available. We are currently looking hard for a new location.

Keep your eyes out for a Flash, an email blast, and a posting on the union bulletin board. If we are able to secure something for December, we will let everyone know immediately.

No matter when we are able to have the annual party, now is the time that:



*The officers of NY Metro wish you and your families the Happiest Holiday Season and A New Year filled with Joy! May you all be Healthy and Safe!*





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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## STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR UNION:

*Sign up for Metro email blasts. Get the latest information including regular reports from NY Metro leadership.*

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Fill in below and give to any NY Metro officer or steward or mail to NY Metro Area Postal Union,  
350 West 31st Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10001.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FACILITY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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