



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.

30th Anniversary of the U.S. Family and Medical Leave Act



Attendees watch as former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) speaks to promote his paid family leave initiative at a rally in Manhattan, March 2016. (Getty/Spencer Platt)

The fight continues for Family and Medical Leave with pay.

Story on page 5

STOP THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PUBLIC POST OFFICE (see page 3 and 9)

It's more of a local thing than you think



Jonathan Smith

Members often talk about the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which is the agreement between the union (the American Postal Workers Union -- APWU) and management (the US Postal Service). The CBA provides information concerning employees' rights when it comes to wages, hours, and working conditions. Members often want to talk about overtime. They want to talk about bidding, transfers, FMLA and many other topics that are covered by the Contract.

But are you aware of what's contained in your Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU)? This is the agreement between your local union and local management. Our Local, NY Metro Area Postal Union, must negotiate four: DVD, NDC, Manhattan, and the Bronx. Because we represent three crafts, there is a particular LMOU for each craft. Many of the Items are the same for all three, but certain language is craft specific. Make sure that you are looking at the LMOU for your craft – Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle. This is usually negotiated by your Local President or Vice President, assisted by your Installation Directors and Assistant Directors along with the Craft Directors when needed.

Local negotiations are serious business. They are formal and minutes are taken by both sides. There are strict guidelines and procedures with forms to file during the process.

We negotiate with management's Installation Heads. For DVD and NDC that is the Plant Managers and/or their designees. In Manhattan and the Bronx, that is the Postmasters and/or their designees. Craft Managers participate as needed.

The LMOU must be negotiated after any new national contract is ratified. Sometimes the parties choose to leave it as is, only changing the specific dates for vacation bids. But updated signatures conforming to the contract years are required. Once local negotiations start, the parties must meet 30 days within a 60-day period. If no agreement is reached, they must declare an impasse because differences can't be resolved. The dispute is sent to "impasse arbitration." For management to eliminate any language that is currently in the LMOU they must prove that the language is an "unreasonable burden" or "in conflicts with the National Agreement." For the Union to make changes, we must show that new language will resolve an existing problem.

Now I hope that I have piqued your interest to ask what is covered in the LMOU? Great question. These negotiations are specific to 22 items listed in Article 30 of the contract. Many of you might think some of the privileges you enjoy on the job are negotiated nationally. Nope, many of your day-to-day rights are negotiated locally. [Look back at the September and October Union Mails for articles about NY Metro's 2022 local negotiations.]

So do me a favor, thank your local leadership team the next time when you wash your hands, when you don't have to bid for split days

off, when you are awarded that vacation bid, when you get Annual Leave for a day off, and so much more. You have no idea of the staffing packages that management proposed or the changes in work areas that would have really flipped your world upside down. But quietly, your local leaders worked behind the scenes and the proposal was either minimized or canceled, and they didn't get credit because you never had a chance to feel the pain.

So here is my salute to all the Directors, Assistant Directors and Craft Directors who helped me and EVP Joe Martir negotiate the Local Memoranda. On behalf of all the members of NY Metro, here is the thank you, you never get, but certainly deserve.

Thank you, thank you, thank you from the bottom of my heart! 🙏

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DeJoy is still the PMG

Chuck Zlatkin, Legislative and Political Director

As of press time, there have been no nominations from the White House for replacements for the two members of the Postal Board of Governors (BOG) whose terms have expired as they are now in their “walk years,” allowing them to stay on. As the BOG stands now, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy will not be challenged and will stay in office. Somehow, DeJoy, who was so close to being forced to resign or being fired has resurrected himself in the eyes of the BOG and even with the heads of the national postal unions. DeJoy’s Ten-Year plan is the means for the destruction of a thriving, public post office. Not taking DeJoy on and/or replacing him is a tragedy for postal workers and the public we serve.

As we detailed in the January, 2023, issue of *The Union Mail*, New York Metro Area Postal Union and the national APWU are supporting Brenda Lawrence for appointment to the BOG. That is still the case today.

On February 9, 2023, the Postal Board of Governors held a public meeting. DeJoy and BOG members made brief speeches. The overly respectful statements by the BOG members to DeJoy can be understood, but no less obnoxious to how they sounded. In addition to those in attendance at Postal Headquarters in Washington, DC, at the public meeting, people could attend the meeting online and make statements. People were limited to just 90 seconds to make statements. I was online and made

a statement on behalf of NYMAPU:

“I’m Chuck Zlatkin and I’m the Legislative and Political Director of the New York Metro Area Postal Union (APWU) and, like anyone associated with the Postal Service in any way, we hear from the public -- their unhappiness with their mail delivery and how much worse it has gotten. But at the same time the USPS is in the process of changing how mail is delivered with the implementation of Sorting & Delivery Centers. People have good memories; they remember the attempt to close post offices in the past years and they ask if this is just another way of getting their post offices closed. And how can we say to them that the S&DCs won’t do that? How long will their neighborhood post office stay open once the carriers are moved to the S&DC? And to senior citizens, small business owners and disabled veterans this is a very real concern, a real fear.

“We hear that this is necessary to save money just as the savaging of service standards in 2012 was supposed to save money. That came nowhere near the savings promised and I’m afraid that the S&DCs will be the same. S&DCs will mean post offices being closed, fewer jobs for postal workers. The Postmaster

General told the world: ‘Right now, to get to break even, I think we may need to get 50,000 people out of the organization.’ See, sometimes, even the Postmaster General tells the truth.”

Postal Jobs have meant equal opportunity

While PMG DeJoy is unaware or, worse doesn’t care, postal jobs have meant equal opportunity. On February 4, 2023, in *Common Dreams*, Sarah Anderson wrote a piece about Black employment in the USPS. Her article, “A Vital Reason to Protect the Postal Service from Privatization” details how the Postal Service has provided a road to the middle class for Black Americans for generations.

Anderson reports how the post office began employing Black workers after the Civil War and the role it has played up until the present day. She quotes from the Center for Economic and Policy Research that, “the wage gap between white and Black workers is narrower among postal workers than among private sector employees.” She also makes the case that if the Postal Service would expand financial services, Blacks would benefit most because they are now forced to use high-cost financial services, more so than other groups. Postal banking, “would provide affordable alternatives to predatory financial firms.”

Her article concludes with this wise thought: “Every community across the United States benefits from a strong USPS.”



PART 6

Postal History—The Post Office and the 1950s

Chuck Zlatkin, Legislative and Political Director

When World War II ended, hundreds of thousands of members of the military returned to civilian life, including postal workers. The 1950s would be a period of massive growth in the economy and thanks to the “baby boom,” there was huge growth in the U.S. population as well. But the 1950s would also have the undeclared war in Korea, the rise of the civil rights movement, and an anti-communist movement that would grow under the leadership of Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI) into a genuine threat to labor, including postal workers. The “red scare” hysteria was seized upon by white supremacist and anti-communist elected officials to investigate and intimidate anyone suspected of communist tendencies. “McCarthyism,” as it was known, reached deep into the labor movement. The CIO purged ten of its unions for alleged disloyalty to the United States, which was one-fifth of its total membership. Labor leaders were actually putting their members at risk to maintain positive relationships with the government. Labor wasn’t alone in this. The NAACP purged members who were suspected of being communists. Black workers were the main target for firings, but the NAACP was slow to defend them. The “McCarthy era” was not the proudest moment for labor or the NAACP.

In New York City, the post office was the largest employer of Blacks. The National Alliance was a union of Black postal workers that fought, as best it could, against the negative treatment of its members. Many

Blacks were targeted for dismissal as suspected members of the Communist Party. There was a point where the NAACP was actually considering abandoning the fired Black postal workers because of supposed “evidence” of ties with the Communist Party. At one point, the National Alliance stood alone as the defender of Black postal workers. But it wasn’t just Black postal workers who felt the wrath of this anti-communist madness.

Moe Biller began working in the Post Office as a substitute clerk making 65¢ an hour in 1937, at what is now known as Knickerbocker Station. He worked there until he entered the military to serve in World War II in Europe in the Army’s Adjutant General Corps. Upon Moe’s return, he was an outspoken unionist in defense of workers’ rights. In the 1950s, at the height of the anti-communist horror, workers were called before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) suspected of being disloyal or being communists. Moe Biller, because of his commitment to workers’ rights and social justice, was the subject of FBI investigations and was called before HUAC and ordered to testify. Biller and seven other postal workers were fired. He stated that he was out of work for about six months. Moe said, “Fortunately, the Supreme Court forced our reinstatement.” At the time, his union (Manhattan-Bronx Postal Workers Union) paid the salary for the fired workers; the NALC would not do so.

Moe Biller ended up “holding

numerous local positions, including chairman of the Membership Committee, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Executive Vice President. He was elected president of the 25,000-member Manhattan-Bronx Postal Workers Union (now called New York Metro APWU) in 1959 and was still at the helm over a decade later, during the Great Postal Strike.”

The 1950s also brought pragmatic changes to the Post Office. In addition to dealing with the economic boom that provided employment, the Post Office was able to finally buy new trucks after WWII. Because of the Depression in the 30s and the War, the Post Office had to make do with trucks that were purchased in the ‘20s and ‘30s and use them through the end of WWII. Things had been made worse when many postal mechanics were called off to war. The Post Office had no choice but to bring back retired mechanics who found themselves working on the same vehicles that they had worked on decades before. With what was about to happen in the U.S., these new vehicles were desperately needed.

The 1950s brought about changes in where people lived, as returning veterans bought their first homes. This did not go unnoticed as far as the Post Office was concerned. In his Annual Report to Congress in 1954, Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield wrote: “The unprecedented suburban growth throughout the country has made obsolete many of the old methods for delivering mail.” ☐

FMLA — the 30th anniversary of a tough struggle



By Flo Summargrad

The Family and Medical Leave Act was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on February 5, 1993. To celebrate the 30th anniversary of this landmark legislation, ex-President Clinton was invited to the White House to join President Biden and V.P. Kamala Harris in celebrating the anniversary.

But, it is important to remember that the signature of a President on a law is just the culmination of the mass effort that mobilized the pressure to win the particular piece of legislation. From 1984 to 1993, a movement grew to bring this country into line with the many nations that already had laws protecting workers who had to have time off due to serious illness of themselves or family members.

Women's organizations and labor unions played a major role in this struggle. NY Metro in those years had an African American female (Josie Macmillian) as President and a growing number of women as officers and stewards. In an industry that at that time was predominantly men, it took strong and committed women to be union leaders. The development of Post Office Women for Equal Rights (POWER) played a role in empowering our sisters.

On May 14, 1988, there was a huge rally in DC for the passage of the FMLA: *Strengthening Our Nation's Commitment to Families*. Buses full of union members and our children went to DC to rally for the FMLA.

At that time, the US and apartheid S. Africa were the only industrialized countries without family and medical leave. Many of our members, officers, and stewards who attended that rally have passed away, but the fruits of that struggle live on in the legislation that was finally passed.

On May 14, 1988, buses of NY Metro members and our children traveled to Washington, DC, to join thousands of other trade unionists and women's organizations in a rally for FMLA. Women's organizations like the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and the Women's Legal Defense Fund brought supporters to put pressure on the government.

A good many of our current workforce have grown up with the benefits of the FMLA and take it for granted. That protective legislation illustrates what can be accomplished by mass struggle. We also need to remember that these victories must be defended. In recent years, there have been set-backs like the gutting of the Voting Rights Act and overturning Women's Right to Choose. FMLA may be next.

Women can't wait another 30 years

We, as unionized postal workers, have a CBA that provides paid leave that can keep us afloat in the case of medical crises. But many Americans cannot afford to take advantage of the 12 weeks guaranteed under the law for serious illness or maternity

leave. The U.S. lags behind most of the world in protecting workers' jobs and families. In most countries, the law includes wage replacement. Countries in Northern and Eastern Europe grant a year of paid maternity leave. Canada has a formula for a new parent to get partial pay for either 52 or 78 weeks of missing work.

The gaps in the FMLA have the hardest impact on working women. 1 in 4 U.S. moms go back to work in 2 weeks after giving birth. This dangerous practice comes from economic necessity, not choice. Medical studies show this leads to physical problems as well as an increase in post-partum depression.

There is ongoing struggle to expand the law to include pay. Biden's proposed "American Families Plan," would phase in 12 weeks of paid parental, family, and personal illness leave. But the resistance is strong. Many politicians who preach "family values," balk at the cost of supporting workers' time off. Some conservatives object to any FMLA as "invasion of privacy."

As of this year, there are only eight countries in the world that do not include some pay during family and medical absence. These are Papua New Guinea, Surinam, and five tiny island nations in the Pacific Ocean. Shamefully included with these relatively undeveloped countries is the United States of America!

So the struggle continues. ☐

Stop the spread of the Attitude Virus!

By Peter Boyer

Long before coronavirus began to spread throughout the world, another dangerous virus was spreading at post offices across America. We'll call it the Attitude Virus.

The Attitude Virus doesn't affect your breathing or put you in the hospital. It comes after your job. And you can spread it to your coworkers without even realizing that you're already infected.

What are the symptoms? It starts with dissatisfaction. Do you find yourself thinking that the way management treats you and your coworkers is unacceptable? You're not happy about the disrespect and their lack of concern for you. You know the supervisors are so focused on the numbers in the computer that they can't seem to understand how their short-sighted decisions to meet made-up goals are to the detriment of the people who know how the job actually gets done.

The next stage in getting sick may be the most dangerous of all: complacency. You start to have thoughts like "If nobody else cares, why should I?" You stop focusing on what needs to be done because the next person can deal with it. You perceive the mail as an obstacle to be avoided rather than the entire reason the post office pays you. And after years of management being nasty and rude to you, you start to have that attitude towards others.

The last stage is the lethal one, and we often don't see it coming until it's too late. After slowly building up in subtle ways, you think you're immune to getting sick. You

might not have paid attention, but management has been watching and waiting for an opportunity to strike. All the times you weren't paying attention at the window has led to a letter of demand for your drawer being out of tolerance. The progressive discipline for your attendance has built up to a notice of removal. The bitter comment you made because you were having a bad day is perceived as a "threat" and you get emergency placed.

Even worse, the powers that be at L'Enfant Plaza have a plan to use the Attitude Virus to their advantage. Postmaster General DeJoy has made it clear that he wants to close post offices, consolidate facilities, and eliminate 50,000 clerk jobs by forced attrition. Your local supervisors are being told to get employees off the rolls by any means possible. One of their methods is to make things difficult for craft employees in an effort to encourage them to retire or resign. They're also targeting individuals infected with the Attitude Virus and using sinister methods to get rid of them too.

Those of us who witnessed the consolidation efforts made after the Great Recession may see where this is heading. DeJoy will claim that in addition to inefficient bureaucracy and outdated work methods, so many postal workers have the Attitude Virus that the only solution is to close down and start over with contractors. It's already happening with the new Surface Transfer Centers, which have postal management and non-union contractors doing what should be our

jobs. Sort and Delivery Centers are being built as we speak, and as stations consolidate into them, clerk jobs will disappear. DeJoy's ten-year plan spells out that he wants to close processing plants and relocate to new Regional Distribution Centers. Who will work there?

Unlike coronavirus, the Attitude Virus doesn't have a vaccine that will protect you from getting sick. It's up to all of us to do the right thing. When coronavirus was new, we were supposed to stay home and wear masks to protect not only ourselves, but everyone around us. We need to keep the same perspective on the job. Do the right thing and look out for one another. Fight back against the Attitude Virus. The job you save may be your own. ☐

Rx

FOR THE ATTITUDEVIRUS

Get active with your Union to Save the Post Office and defend Clerk work! The Union protects your rights. YOU protect your job! Don't make it easy for management to fire you. Come to work and take pride in your job. Remember, postal work is for the public, not for your supervisor. ☐

PANEL DISCUSSION

Labor rights are civil rights. Civil rights are labor rights.

On February 9, 2023, Anthony Harmon, AFT Vice President and President of the NAACP, NY Branch, moderated a discussion on Facebook to discuss Labor and Civil Rights. The panel included: Gloria Middleton, the first Black woman President of CWA Local 1180; George Gresham, President of 1199, SEIU; Edgar Romney, Secretary-Treasurer of Workers United, SEIU; and our own NY Metro Area Postal Union President, Jonathan Smith. This was an impressive group of giants in the labor movement, people who have spent long years leading workers in the fight for social justice.

The participants used their own histories to explain what unions meant to them growing up Black and poor in America. Their own experiences led them to the conclusion that “Labor Rights are Civil Rights. Civil Rights are Labor Rights.” The labor movement and the civil rights movement have the same roots, the same goals.

The panel addressed the impact of the COVID pandemic on their union members, with particular emphasis on the black and brown communities. In some ways, the deaths of co-workers hit hardest. To see healthy people who worked with you all day every day fall victim to the COVID plague, to be unable to hug and touch to share the grief, to read mounting statistics

of death, all created an atmosphere of continual stress. Jonathan Smith expressed his anger that the lasting emotional impact of the pandemic has been ignored. COVID’s collateral damage of isolation, fear, and loss has affected workers in every industry.

On the positive side, the pandemic experience taught people the value of unions. Polls show that Americans are much more pro-union than they were three years ago. While politicians floundered, the labor unions were on the front lines of fighting for health and safety. Our healthcare system was grossly unprepared in terms of space, equipment, and organization. But essential workers had the courage and commitment to keep things going. Photos of U.S. hospital workers wearing garbage bags because there was not enough PPE (personal protective equipment) was terrifying. Nurses were unable to change masks and gloves according to sanitary protocol, because there just weren’t enough. Hospital workers died in their commitment to save patients. Postal workers died in their effort to deliver supplies and medicine to America.

The labor movement recognized the value of essential workers whose courage kept things going. Through the fear and the heartbreak of losing relatives and co-workers to the virus, they did not give up. Certainly this played a role in the recent nurses’

strikes. Having seen the hell of equipment shortages and understaffing, workers realize the time to fix this is NOW. In the current negotiations with NY State, it is clearly on labor to lead the battle for education and healthcare.

And it is also the duty of organized labor to lead the fight against racism. This panel of Black trade unionists did not pretend that bigotry and discrimination have ended among working people. This is a struggle to win the hearts and minds of many Americans, including our own union members. The horror of the pandemic was exacerbated by an openly racist President who promoted hatred and disunity.

President Smith stressed the importance of mobilizing the youth to lead the struggle forward. In our own ranks, many young workers take today’s rights and benefits for granted. They don’t feel like part of the labor movement. “But,” Jon asked, “is there something wrong with the younger generations OR are we failing to deliver the message?” We have to educate them about the struggles it took to win what we have today. We have to ignite their passion for a better world. We have to teach that unions have power when the members fight together. What are our common goals? Money for education, not for war. Healthcare. Safe jobs. A living wage and a Union! ☑

DVD and Greater Newark working in Union solidarity

By *Howie Satterfield*

On September 1 of 2021, an unfortunate storm/Act of God caused massive damage to the USPS Greater Newark Facility in Kearny, New Jersey, which resulted in over a hundred displaced employees. Fortunately, just down the road, their DVD union brothers and sisters welcomed them in this time of distress and uncertainty. No one knew how long they would be domiciled at the DVD facility. Weeks turned into months, and now after almost a year and a half, the Greater Newark employees are preparing to return to their repaired facility.

As the APWU Director and 35-year employee here at DVD, this

circumstance turned out to be an unexpected but welcome chance to reconnect with old friends and co-workers, who had at one time been employees of DVD. One was Joe Nieto. Joe and I started at DVD around the same time back in the late '80s, but around 2000, when Greater Newark first opened up, he transferred down there. In 2021, when he was one of the employees displaced and sent to DVD, not only was it nice to see an old co-worker, but I was surprised to learn he was the APWU North Jersey Local Chief Steward for Greater Newark. Who knew?

As New York Metro Director of DVD, I extended our hospitality

and showed solidarity with our APWU family, allowing Joe and his stewards to share our union office so they could continue to provide representation to their members.

At the APWU National Convention, APWU North Jersey Local President Rick Slater, and members of their Executive Board personally thanked me and New York Metro Area Postal Union for all the assistance we provided in their time of need. This was demonstrating true union solidarity. I told him, we are New York Metro; we are UNION. That's what we DO!

I wish All our Greater Newark Brothers and Sisters well! ☑

HARASSMENT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ILLEGAL TO BE WRONG

Postal policy declares not every instance of inappropriate behavior may fit the legal definition of harassment. However, such behavior at work violates the Postal Service's standard of conduct.

APWU says: Make the Postal Service commit to their policy of providing a harassment-free work environment! apwu.org/fightingworkplace-harassment

Stand up for your rights! Contact your Union representative.

✓ REPORT IT ✓ PURSUE IT ✓ DON'T TOLERATE IT

The USPS Publication 553, Employee's Guide to Understanding Prevention, and Reporting Harassment – gives general Guidelines that the USPS is committed to follow. These are the suggested steps

1. Tell the harasser to stop. Let the person know that what they may see as friendly or joking is offensive to you, regardless of the intent. If you don't feel comfortable, take a union representative or a co-worker as witness.
2. Report the behavior to someone in authority (verbally or in writing). They must make a record of it. The Guide recommends the following list of where to report:

- a. Your immediate supervisor or manager
- b. The Manager of Human Resources
- c. A Special Agent of the Office of the Inspector General
- d. A Postal Service Inspector, when you believe that criminal misconduct is involved.

Keep a written record of witnesses and everyone you speak to. Now the responsibility is management's – to investigate and make sure the harassment is stopped.

- 3. EAP is available to provide you with emotional support.
- 4. File an EEO complaint.
- 5. In situations covered by USERRA (military rights) you can file with MSPB
- 6. File a grievance with your UNIO

Knowing that management often ignores its own policies, follow up! Involve your Union representative. ☑

Demand to return to 2012 Delivery Standards

By Flo Summergrad

Mail volume is down. Postal prices are up. With the current slow delivery standards, service is SLOW. Mail is delayed.

Official reports from the USPS are rosy. They present as good news that there was less income but less loss this quarter. Instead of looking at the higher cost and slower service as a cause of the drop in mail volume, they are rejoicing that steeper prices bring in more money with less mail. If postage continues to rise every six months as PMG DeJoy promises, then the Postal Service will reflect less income loss. This does not indicate economic health – just that charging more brings in more money.

In addition, every report since the change in delivery standards is greeted with cries of joy by the USPS. We are meeting and even exceeding the delivery standards! Of course this is because the bar has been lowered, not because the mail is moving well.

Our demand has been that the US return to the 2012 delivery standards. This would be a real test of postal efficiency and would answer the customer complaints of delayed mail.

Everyone knows the story of “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” A dishonest tailor charges a fortune for sewing a new suit for the emperor. When he is presented with the suit, the emperor shows it off by marching in a public parade. Of course, the tailor pretends the suit is a special wonderful material. In fact,

there is no suit. The emperor is naked.

But the courtiers and the public are afraid to admit they do not see the special suit. They hail the naked emperor as he parades up the avenue. Finally a small boy, too young to be dishonest, cries out, “But he has nothing on!”

The parallel is obvious. DeJoy is the deceptive tailor. He is “clothing” the Post Office in a new wonderful suit. The first S&DC opened in Texas this week with great fanfare. Meanwhile, 100 letter carriers from College Station have been absorbed into the S&DC. Goodbye College Station! The public and postal families were invited to a celebration of the opening. What a beautiful suit! Soon all the carriers in the region will be there. What will happen to the stations where they work? Half or more of the real estate in those stations revolved around carrier operations. This will result in station closings in the area.

Remember when DeJoy complained about why there are so many post offices close together in big cities like NYC or Philadelphia. Not to mention the small stations in rural areas that do not generate profits. There is no mention that these are critical to serve the public, to be accessible to the people in those communities.

DeJoy’s Plan is a way to close local post offices. It stresses the importance of saving money, not giving service. He has put the USPS on a track to be a big busi-

ness, not a public service.

The fact is that the public is NOT being considered nor served. At the recent meeting of the BOG, DeJoy and the Governors praised the “progress” that is being engineered. There is no mention of the complaints from the American people who rely on the mail until the second part of the meeting where customers could speak. NY Metro retiree Bill Bachman quoted the mission of the Post Office for over 250 years has been to provide universal and affordable service to every household and business in America. It is not a business to compete with Amazon or UPS financially. Its very core is being ripped out by DeJoy’s Ten Year Plan.

In January, 2023, Rick Larsen and Suzan K. DelBene, US Congressional representatives, wrote to PMG DeJoy that mail delays in NW Washington State have reached an unacceptable level. They remind the Postmaster General that their constituents rely on the USPS for packages, medication, bills, passports, and other important delivery. Similar complaints of slow service or even no service have been coming from people around the country. While there is some response from local media, the national media has generally joined the Emperor’s cheering section. It appears that the DeJoy spin is working. Even many postal managers have lost sight of our mission and are buying into the Ten Year Plan. It is only the people frustrated and angry with mail delays who get the real picture. ☹️

POSTAL PRIDE

We deliver everywhere, USA!

When the United States Postal Service says we deliver to Everyone, USA, we mean it. “The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is the only organization in the country to regularly deliver to every residential and business address.” This includes the huge Yosemite National Park in northern California, whose postmaster retired on January 31, 2023, after a lifetime at Yosemite and 44 years of postal service.

The Bay Area newsletter, SFGate, describes the enormous task involved. “The now-former Yosemite National Park postmaster battled record-setting floods, devastating wildfires, and sometimes deadly rockslides to deliver the mail across a park that’s roughly the size of Delaware!” His mother had worked at that post office and he worked his way up to become Yosemite’s postmaster in 2012.

The job brought him into contact with visitors from all over the world and the country who came to enjoy the vast beauty of this huge national park. This included the highlight of meeting President Barack Obama who came there on a Fathers’ Day Weekend.

Mail at Yosemite changed from the days when everyone wanted to mail a post card to the increase of packages through online shopping. But the thrill of the job for Reynolds was the challenge of battling the elements to deliver to the customers. He loved “the days when nature took over. I prided myself on getting the mail into the park.”

Postal workers understand his pride in providing a key service to the American people. Whether it is in a crowded urban area or among the glorious glaciers and wilderness of Yosemite, we deliver. 📧

Postal News Briefs

MANAGEMENT ENDANGERS BUFFALO WORKERS

Postal managers at several Buffalo, NY stations are facing charges that they endangered the lives of postal workers on December 23, 2022, during the worst blizzard in the area’s memory. Dave Groskopt, NALC President in that area, warned management to let workers leave at 8am. In those stations that complied, everyone got home safely. But in three post offices, they were kept on the job until 1pm. At that time, workers were ordered to vacate the stations immediately or be arrested! This put



them in life-threatening danger, including a 7-month pregnant woman who got stuck in a snowbank and had to be rescued by volunteer firefighters. The gross stupidity of these postal managers came from consultation with supervisors hundreds of miles away in

Albany and Pittsburgh. But USPS still claims safety is top priority.

POSTAL PROGRAMS FOR LONELY SENIORS

Our union has been fighting for expanding postal services to increase revenue. Some countries have already developed successful programs where postal workers check on senior citizens to support wellness and ease loneliness. Japan and France use paid subscription services; the Jersey (U.K.) program is subsidized by the Ministry of Health, which pays the post office. Often children of elderly people gladly pay for these services to make sure their parents are okay. Postal workers serve a useful-function while increasing the post office bottom line.



CONTRIBUTION LIMITS INCREASE FOR THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP)

In 2023, TSP participants may set aside up to \$22,500 in traditional tax-deferred or Roth contributions, up from a limit of \$20,500 in 2022. Those 50 and older may set aside up to an additional \$7,500 in “catch-up” contributions, up from \$6,500 in 2022. TSP Questions? Call 877-968-3778 or visit www.tsp.gov.



OSHA CITATIONS AT POST OFFICES

Chesapeake, VA had no running water and no usable bathroom for over a month due to non-payment of electric and sanitation bills.

Nashville, TN – 16 violations for endangering workers at 3 facilities. Violations included: missing machine cover leaving energized motor exposed; flexible cords used instead of fixed electric wiring, causing overloaded circuits; Employees operating powered industrial trucks without training; forklifts in service without working strobe lights and backup alarms; backed up sewers left raw sewage on floors. OSHA levied \$350,136 in fines. (Of course the USPS is contesting OSHA’s findings.) 📧



CALENDAR

Wednesday, March 15

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting
via Zoom

Wednesday, April 19

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting
via Zoom

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

Members Only!

- Download Zoom App
- Open link
- Enter Meeting ID #548-304-2304
- Mute audio
- Video must be on

APWU LOCAL 10 BLDG. CORP

Opening Balance December 1, 2022	\$1,351,975.16
Total Revenue for December 2022	\$ 429,140.06
Operating Expenses December 2022	\$ 403,455.71
Net Income December 2022	\$ 25,684.35
Ending Balance December 31, 2022	\$1,377,659.51

SISTERS! As an APWU member, you are a member of NY METRO P.O.W.E.R. (P.O.W.E.R. stands for Post Office Women for Equal Rights.) Prior to the pandemic, all sisters were invited to P.O.W.E.R. meetings at the Union Office at 1 pm, the 4th Wednesday of every month. Now, until further notice, the meetings will be held via ZOOM at 5:30 pm on the 4th Wednesday of each month – one week after the General Membership Meeting.

Next meeting s: March 22, 2023, at 5:30 pm; April 26, 2023, at 5:30 pm ZOOM Meeting ID# 239-026-1053 [Follow ZOOM instructions outlined for the Membership meeting on this page.]



NY Metro member has book published!



Valerie Seymoure is in her 29th year working as a Mail Processing Clerk at the post office, the NJ Network Distribution Center (also known as “the Bulk”). In 2022, she authored a book, *Fish Head and Grits*, about how she conquered her low self-esteem and drug addiction. She wanted to share the transition from bad times to good, in order to give courage to others who are suffering. The back cover explains: “This book is for all the people who feel like giving up. To the ones dealing with past or present issues. Defying the odds when they say you’re not good enough.”

The title *Fish Head and Grits* comes from her memory of times being so tough that her family couldn’t buy whole fish. The man

at the fish market gave her father the parts that were thrown away – just the head and the bare bones. She saw the fish eyes looking back at her from the plate. “It smelled good but it looked scary. It even had a tail at the end. In the middle you can still see the plate because the fish had no meat on it.” On the side was hot grits. This became the norm for dinner.

Valerie uses this as a symbol of her life. On the left of the plate is a fork showing the initials of BEAUTY to spell out the positive features of her life now. On the right is the knife with the initials of ASHES to stand for what she has cut out of her life – Abandonment, Sexual abuse, Homelessness, Emotional issues, and low Self-esteem.

Despite years of poverty, abuse, disappointment, beatings, divorce, and even rape, there are joyful memories of helping people who

were sick or less fortunate. Valerie found her strength through ministering to others; she found self-respect through her connection to God. Drug free, she reconciled with her daughter and found a marriage of mutual love and respect. Even working full time she has the energy to volunteer in hospitals and shelters, praying and singing in her beautiful voice to bring love and spirituality.

In just a few months, the book has sold out twice from Barnes and Noble and Amazon. 📖





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

COVID still here. But CA1 for COVID ends

Since 1/27/23, USPS will no longer pay Continuation of Pay for COVID. Now file directly for OWCP pay on CA2 – job related illness. A long process. Read the rules.

Workers’ Memorial Day: April 28, 2023

Mary G. Harris Jones, “Mother Jones,” was a white haired little old lady who put fear into the hearts of the mine owners. Mine workers suffer a high number of deaths on the job. In fighting for their safety, she coined the famous phrase: “Mourn for the Dead. Fight like hell for the Living!”

After losing her 7 children and her husband to yellow fever in 1867 and her dressmaking shop to the Great Chicago Fire in 1871, she did not give up. Instead, Mrs. Jones became a labor activist. She worked with the United Mine Workers (UMW), helped organize the IWW, and led a march of children to the White House to protest child labor. Her fierce fighting spirit has made Mother Jones a symbol for Workers’ Memorial Day, established by the AFL-CIO as April 28 (the day OSHA was founded) to commemorate those who died on the job. 



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