



The

Union Mail

Vol. 62 No. 5 | July/August 2019

Published by the NY Metro Area Postal Union

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



Art comes to NY Metro. Artist Mike Mateo's mural is unveiled on May 23rd at NDC.

See page 11

The union makes us strong



Jonathan Smith

Many postal workers take our union for granted. I all the time hear people talking about their “rights” and that “they [management] can’t do that.” Well, the fact is that without a union, U.S. labor law is “employment at will”—that is, at the will of the employers. They make the rules. They decide when you work and how you get paid. If you complain that it’s unsafe or that someone else is getting treated better than you, well. . . there’s the door. You can leave.

Labor unions change this dynamic. Workers organized together have power. That’s what solidarity is about. Together we can move mountains. Alone, we can’t move at all.

Today we can’t take unions for granted. A hundred years ago, U.S. courts prosecuted labor organizations as “conspiracies.” Now the clock is being turned back to that thinking. Over the last ten years, we have seen states take away collective bargaining rights from public sector unions. We’ve seen more than half the 50 states pass so-called “right to work” legislation to bust existing unions. We have seen the President pass Executive Orders to disempower federal unions. The AFGE, fought this in court and won the battle. But the war is not over, especially for postal unions. The dream of the postal privatizers is to destroy our national unions. Postal workers in every community are the living symbol of the strength of

union jobs. Smashing our unions would be a terrible blow to organized labor.

Our current strong contracts are not even 50 years old. They were the fruit of an illegal strike of postal workers in 1970. That struggle started in New York City with many of the workers who became New York Metro Postal Union. Their courage and sacrifice laid a basis for better wages, hours, and working conditions for us today.

The same qualities that make a good marriage are the qualities that make a good union. Sometimes the only thing that is wrong is your perspective. If you are looking for the perfect job you will never be happy at the postal service; in fact, you may even grow hopeless and instead of looking at how you can make the union stronger, you will begin to look for ways out. The truth is that life isn’t perfect. If we accept that fact, then why is it so hard to accept the reality that your job and/or the union also will not be perfect.

Most must admit that marriage takes work, so do your relationships at the workplace and in your union. The reality is that the work is not overly difficult for the members to handle; it’s juggling the different personalities in such small places that’s hard.

At home we must accept that this is the husband’s, wife’s and children’s distinct roles in the family structure, or the family will not function properly. On the job and in the union, we must work together to be successful. This in a nutshell is our challenge.

You don’t find a good marriage/union. You make one.

What makes us strong is sticking together. All we have is each other. A union helps make the members’ hours, wages, working conditions, and benefits better—not perfect! Together we can keep making it better.

Union wages are 30% higher than companies doing the same work. Grievance rights, seniority, leave, overtime and days off were negotiated by unions.

Unions created the middle class in America. Everything that the post office has become was earned through the workers’ blood, sweat and tears. It is our obligation to honor those that came before us to preserve our rights and pave the way for those coming after us. Failure is not an option for it’s the union that makes us strong! ☑

Official publication of the New York Metro Area Postal Union.

The Union Mail (ISSN 0049-5298) is published monthly except combined in March/April, May/June, July/August, November/December by the New York Metro Area Postal Union at 350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10001.

Periodical postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
The Union Mail, New York Metro Area Postal Union,
350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10001.

Flo Summergrad, editor

Chuck Zlatkin, acting managing editor

Bernadette Evangelist, graphic designer

To contact your officers, call 212.563.7553.

www.nymetro.org

President

Jonathan Smith Ext. 108

Executive Vice President

Tiffany Foster Ext. 110

Dir. Ind Relations

Kevin Walsh Ext. 106

Secretary-Treasurer

Joseph Martir Ext. 107

Dir. Organization

Diane Erlanger Ext. 105



Protect yourself and your job

By Tiffany Foster, Executive Vice-President



Tiffany Foster

Management is at it again. Reverting duty assignments. As the lead person for filing reversions grievances, I can tell you this is a fight we will not run from and

will take head on once again. With your help, we will continue to be successful in fighting against the assaults on not only protecting and preserving our jobs but fighting to continue the conversion of PSEs.

The overtime is skyrocketing in most areas. Penalty overtime is being authorized at an all-time high. Management is still hiring PSEs. The lines are still long. Customers are still complaining about not receiving the services deserved. Carriers and drivers are still returning from the street late. Everywhere is grossly understaffed. Upper management expects the employees to work harder and do more with less. Some in local level management will tell the union, I need more help can you help me get some more employees. They talk to the union, because many are too afraid to stand up to their bosses and say I can't run my operation without the proper staff. Those in management that do stand up and say I need more employees are ostracized and then there are some that get the help they are requesting. Management has no justification for reverting any duty assignment with the overtime being authorized daily.

We need your help. When you

witness management performing bargaining unit work and other crafts crossing craft go to your supervisor and make a request for a steward. Statements are essential to the steward's investigation, please make certain to have one prepared when the steward arrives.

The union consists of us all. Without you, there is no union. Help us to help each other.

Management has implemented an aggressive all out discipline writing attack on the employees. From what the union is told, this mandate is coming from the USPS Headquarters. Management in the field are told if they don't issue the discipline, they will get disciplined. So much for the Workplace Harassment and Zero Tolerance Policy.

There was a time when management would give the union a copy of the discipline issued to an employee. The union has now learned that this will cease effective immediately. Therefore, ***you must request a steward when you are issued any type of discipline. Even when the discipline is sent to your home.*** Management is attending training on a regular basis to perfect their discipline writing skills. This is due to the union's success rate in arbitration.

So, as we have stated many times, your supervisor may like you but when they are threatened with their job believe me there is no question who will come out unscratched.

Life situations happen that are out of our control. If you must call out, please make certain to have documentation to support the absence and take down the confir-

mation number from ERMS. The confirmation number is your proof that you called the system. I can't say it enough, protect yourself and your job.

Requesting a steward is not only for when management issues discipline, but also if you have questions and/or concerns about work, policies and procedures. Always get the facts from your union and know for sure what is contractually sound.

Your union is here to help you

Some employees qualify for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and aren't made aware of this. Employee must have been employed with the company for 12 months. The employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months prior to the start of FMLA leave. If you believe you or a family member have a qualifying FMLA condition, protect yourself and get FMLA. The APWU.ORG website provides the approved FMLA forms. Just follow the instructions and take to your doctor.

40 Years of POWER

This year makes 40 years of POWER (Post Office Women for Equal Rights). "POWER is a women's committee within the American Postal Workers Union and was founded in St. Louis, Missouri on April 28, 1979 and incorporated in APWU's National Constitution in . . . 1980." POWER is still necessary. Currently in the APWU, "women hold fewer elected offices at the local, state and national levels." [Joyce Robinson in *American Postal Worker May/June 2019.*]

We need you to be an active POWER sister! (See *Calendar p.11.*) ☰

LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL REPORT

The struggle continues nationally and locally

By Chuck Zlatkin, Director of Communications

In the last edition of *The Union Mail*, the importance of HRES 33, a bill which expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that “the United States Postal Service remain an independent establishment of the Federal government, not subject to privatization,” was highlighted. This bill is now supported by a majority of the members of the House with 253 co-sponsors (as of press time). The news got even better when on June 4, 2019, the companion bill introduced by Gary Peters (D-MI) in the Senate (S RES 99) received its 51st co-sponsor, giving the bill majority support in the Senate. Both houses now oppose privatization of the Postal Service with bi-partisan support. These are important statements being made in support of a public Postal Service, especially in the Senate, where the Republicans hold the majority and the chair of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is Ron Johnson (R-WI), an avowed enemy of a public Postal Service and unionized postal workers.

We must stay vigilant, active and ready to mobilize whenever the forces of privatization act against us on the federal level, whether in either House of Congress or at the White House. The bottom line is that when push comes to shove, the American people want a public Postal Service and have become more and more suspicious of privatization as an answer.

We also must stay active and

aware at the local level when the Postal Service wants to close, downsize or relocate a postal facility. NYMAPU has been active in defense of such facilities, but it is an ongoing struggle. We have been successful recently in attempts to sell and relocate College Station and Old Chelsea. We have fought the good fight in attempting to stop the relocation and closing of Port Authority Finance Station in Manhattan.

As detailed in the March/April issue of *The Union Mail*, with the help of the employees at Port Authority, our retirees, the community and elected officials, NYMAPU was able to force the Postal Service to schedule a second public meeting on the fate of Port Authority. It was held on April 22 and the behavior of Postal Management was as disgraceful as it was at the January 30 meeting. Kurtis Bullard, the Real Estate Specialist for the Postal Service, was as arrogant and disrespectful to the members of the community as ever. This time he had an added dagger, while the lease for the station was not up until May 31, the Postal Service was closing the station on May 17.

Under questioning by Robert



Atterbury from Congressman Nadler’s office, Bullard admitted that the Postal Service did not explore extending its stay with the landlord until a suitable replacement site could be found, even though at the previous meeting, he had promised the community that the Postal Service would do so. Employees were told to report to Old Chelsea station.

NYMAPU’s leadership was outraged and is going forth with a request that the USPS Office of the Inspector General institute an audit of the whole process regarding the relocation of Port Authority. On June 5, a letter was sent to Postmaster General Megan Brennan, signed by Congressman Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Brewer, NYC Council Speaker Johnson, NYS Senator Hoylman and NYS Assembly members Gottfried and Glick, protesting the actions of the USPS regarding Port Authority Finance Station and demanding “written confirmation 1) of USPS’ intent to reopen the Port Authority Finance Station in the immediate area by a date-certain, 2) that the replacement facility will have the same services and staffing as the former Port Authority Finance Station, and 3) that USPS will place a temporary retail service truck outside of the former location until the new, permanent facility is opened. We also strongly urge the agency to find a location within the 10011 zip code.”

The struggle continues! ☑

Contract update: Gear up for arbitration!



By Flo Summergrad

When there is no negotiated contract, the parties (labor and management) must go through a process – first mediation, and then interest arbitration. Mediation ended on June 7th. The APWU and the USPS are preparing for the stage of interest arbitration.

Interest arbitration is different than grievance, or “rights” arbitration. When hearing a grievance, the arbitrator is like a judge, who is bound by the rules of the existing contract in rendering a decision. In “interest arbitration,” the actual contract language can be rewritten by the arbitrator. He or she has the power to change the language that affects pay, benefits, and work rules. The word “interest” refers to the arbitrator’s consideration of the interests of the parties as presented in their proposals.

In this case, the process requires a panel of three arbitrators. One is picked by the Postal Service; one is chosen by the APWU; and the third is a neutral arbitrator who is selected jointly to chair the panel and run the hearings. Obviously, the selection of the neutral arbitrator is difficult, with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service tasked with providing a list of arbitrators if agreement cannot be reached.

The arbitration panel will hear proposals from both sides. Critical to this process is the facts, data, and arguments prepared by the APWU for the union’s proposals. Much of the groundwork has already been done over the last year by the core negotiating team and the craft offi-

cers, who did the research for negotiations. The union has engaged a team of economists who will be able to detail the current economic trends as well as cost comparisons to combat the arguments of the Postal Service. Panels of employees from every craft will testify as to the specifics of their jobs and the craft officers will explain our needs to the arbitrators.

For an effective presentation, the APWU prepares hundreds of exhibits, dozens of witnesses, and data compiled by economists and attorneys. Our craft officers and the core negotiating committee will weld this into coherent argument to convince the arbitrators of the union positions and to rebut management’s proposals.

The strength of the APWU during interest arbitration is the solidarity of the workers who have stakes in this contract. The April/May national magazine has a page of APWU Members “Geared Up” for Arbitration in their union shirts. We can be proud that a good third of the page shows the bright orange tees of the New York Metro Area Postal Union.

Good talking points to encourage solidarity are the achievements of a union listed on the page of APWU Organization Director Anna Smith. Her call to “Stay Strong Going into Arbitration” stresses the importance of unity. Yes, there is conflict in the workplace and in the union, but we have to keep our eye on the prize. “When we choose to let the conflict divide us, the only one who wins is management.” ☐

ARBITRATION CONTRACT DEMANDS

- Annual Pay Raises
- Maintain COLAs
- Increase Career Workforce
- Preserve No-Layoff Protection
- No Subcontracting
- Stop Harassment
- Keep 50-mile Excessing Limit
- Lower Health Care Premiums
- Raise PSE Base Pay
- and more. . . .

Vote for APWU national officers!

Ballots for the national elections for the American Postal Workers Union will be mailed out in September 2019. Unlike many unions, the APWU gives each member a direct vote. This is an important democratic right. Don’t waste it!

Two of our Local officers are in the running for national office. The candidates for those positions are:

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT:

Debby Szeredy (I), Mid-Hudson New York Area Local (NY)

Jonathan Smith, New York Metro Area Postal Union (NY)

Sam Wood, Southwest Florida Area Local (FL)

REGIONAL COORDINATOR, NORTHEAST REGION:

Scott Adams, Portland Area Local (ME)

Tiffany Foster, New York Metro Area Postal Union (NY)

Jonathan Smith, President of NYMAPU, was endorsed for APWU Executive Vice President at the NY Metro May 2019 General Membership meeting. ☐

"There are no jobs on a dead planet"

By Flo Summergrad

In a panel entitled, "Climate Chaos, Labor's Duty," the message was clear from all the participants. Moderator Lara Skinner of Cornell opened with the bad news that leading scientific bodies say climate change is accelerating. The pace and scale of warming over the "safe" level of staying under a change of 1.5 degrees centigrade to prevent the worst impact is being exceeded. And it is the people of color, the poor, the working class who are hurt first and worst by the impact of increasing weather disruptions.

NY State Senator Jessica Ramos summed it up, "Only workers can save the planet." The planetary crisis and social crisis are linked. While labor unions and individual workers may initially resist responding to this crisis, the argument that there will be jobs to build pipelines avoids the fact that the pipelines themselves are harming our communities, poisoning our water, making our air unfit to breathe. Instead, we can look at jobs (at prevailing wages!) that will update and improve the way things are done.

Todd Vachton, a union carpenter who is teaching at Rutgers, pointed out that the same wealthy people who exploit workers in the pursuit of profit are the ones who are destroying the earth. Fighting for greening the planet is a fight for our lives and for jobs. It is the fight against increasing inequality. The forces that exploit the environment also exploit the workers. It is the



LaborDay2019 350.org

workers who have the deepest knowledge of how to make change in the basic structures of the energy industry. It is the workers who have the resiliency to meet the challenge.

Jim Slavin, President of UWUA Local 1-2, which represents utility workers in NYC and Westchester, had concrete suggestions for how to make this fight part of contract language. For example, greenhouse gases are an inherent part of Safety and Health issues. Demands can include training like that for "Green Supers" from Local 32BJ of SEIU. They are learning to make huge strides in keeping their buildings on track to use less energy by more efficient use of electricity and HVAC.

Sean Sweeney, who teaches at the Murphy Institute, reported that the international Annual Energy Report gave a perspective of failure in this crisis. Even in those countries where government subsidies began to create sources of renewable energy, it has now flatlined. As soon as the subsidies were withdrawn, the com-

panies did not make a profit, so deployment and investment levels plummeted. Germany, for instance, which was the world leader, is now going in the opposite direction.

This is because capital markets exist on the "build and sell" model. Privatization, which demands profit, makes risk part of the equation so there is no stake in improving the environment. Instead, people have to fight for public renewable

power. For example, much of the United States would not have electricity today were it not for the 1933 establishment of the federal Tennessee Valley Authority which made energy a public concern, building dams and hydroelectric generators for 7 states.

To win this battle, we need to keep ahead of the issue instead of trailing. This means developing a class agenda, a people's agenda. Public utilities must be public. Unfettered capital control of energy will only push the planet to disaster. It is up to workers and our unions to call for a system that will end poisonous greenhouse gases and foster forms of renewable energy. The proposal for a "Green New Deal" is a radical mandate for government control of making this transition. A shift in resources to save the planet will advance economic and social equality.

Impossible? The panelists opened up our thinking that this task is in fact necessary for there to be a future. ☐

In Memoriam

Dave Vergaretti, fighter for social justice



Dave Vergaretti came into the post office at the New Jersey Bulk Mail Center shortly after his service in the U.S. Army from 1971 to 1973. There was never any question which side he was on. From Day One, Dave was UNION all the way. He was always ready to challenge management when they violated workers' rights. At the same time, he raised his voice inside NY Metro to protect policies he thought were right and oppose those he thought were wrong. In the late '70s, when the union leadership tried to change the Local Constitution to end the election of shop stewards, Dave organized workers to attend the membership meeting. The hall was so packed that it was Standing Room Only. When a roll call vote was taken, the members solidly supported the democratic process for choosing stewards. Moe Biller, the Local President at the time, was so

impressed that he vowed that this issue would never be raised again.

Over the years Dave was a Clerk Shop Steward and in 2012 was elected Assistant Director of the NY Metro Area Posta Union at the NJI&NDC. After he retired in 2014, Dave continued attending the AFL-CIO Labor Day parades with our Local. During the "Stop Staples" struggle, he brought information to his wife's teachers' union to get them to boycott Staples. He joined the NY Metro contingent at the "Black Lives Matter" rally in front of the Newark courthouse

Workers remember Dave Vergaretti, as a fighter. He fought for social justice at home and beyond our borders. For over twenty-five years, Dave went to Haiti every year with his Church's "twinning program," where he climbed over rough terrain to assist in building a clinic and helping Haitian children have access to education. He encouraged co-workers to donate so kids could attend elementary school (with lunch) and then go

on to high school.

Dave was not about speeches or appearances, he was completely honest and direct. No pretense. He was deeply loyal to his friends, his family, and the members he represented. Dave cared deeply about the fight for the public postal service and got the word out to his co-workers and neighbors. He was an avid reader and kept up with current events, participating in rallies and marches whenever he could.

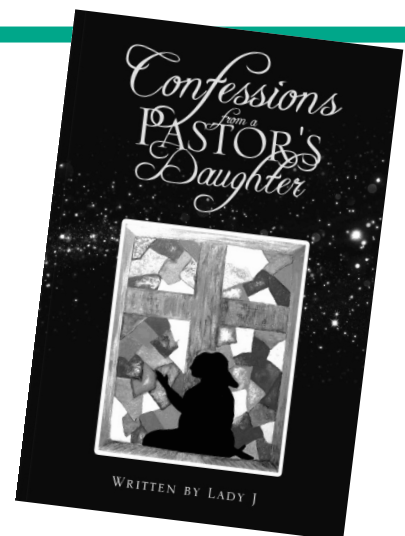
Dave Vergaretti didn't do anything halfway. He was a dedicated husband, father, and brother. As an active parishioner of St. Joseph's RCC, he sang in the choir and became ordained as a Eucharistic Minister. He was a town councilman in Matawan and had been a beloved Pop Warner football coach and tried to get us all to his yearly touch football games.

Most important, Dave was never afraid to speak up and stand up for what he believed. You couldn't find a better role model for a union brother. ☹

Jackie LeGree publishes her first book

Jackylyn LeGree is a U.S. Army veteran who worked at DVD for over 32 years. After retiring from the Postal Service in May, 2019, Jackie dreams of becoming a great author and screenwriter in the next chapter of her life.

Her dream has already begun to come true with the publication of her first book, *Confessions from a Pastor's Daughter*. The book can be ordered in Amazon Digital and Barnes & Noble. ☹



New York State Educational Conference

New York State APWU held its Educational Conference from May 31st through June 2nd in Albany, NY. All crafts were represented. Our Local sent 17 people—11 officers and 6 stewards. The officers were: President Jonathan Smith;

ards from each craft, as follows: Regina Wilson and Desiree White (Maintenance); Shawntai Downs and Brittany Nelson (Clerks); Cassandra Black and Howard Thompson (Motor Vehicle).

Delegates picked classes that would help them in their work. All NY Metro’s participants benefitted from the wealth of knowledge that was shared by the NBAs and craft officers.

Some of the training was general and some was craft specific, led by National Business Agents (NBAs) who handle our grievances at the highest level. This included Joe LaCapria (Motor Vehicle NBA); Dave Sarnacki (Maintenance NBA); and the three Clerk NBAs (Pete Coradi, Liz Swigert, and Bernie Timmerman). Northeast Regional Coordinator Ron Suslak and national officers President Mark Dimondstein, Vice-President Debby Szeredy, Director of Industrial Relations Vance Zimmerman, and Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell were there during the weekend.

General topics included Defense & Discipline, Dealing with the Inspection Service and OIG, and Shop Steward Training. Many clerks took the course in “Defending and Preserving Clerk Duty Assignments.” APWU Maintenance Director Idowu Balogun updated Maintenance stewards on recent arbitration decisions. He explained the APWU’s position, “Custodial Team Cleaning Doomed to Fail,” and distributed a useful handout comparing the old TL-3 cleaning methods with the new TL-5.



Seated: Cassandra Black, Joe Martir; Standing: Tiffany Foster, Brittany Nelson, Regina Wilson, Latonya Kindall

This conference was a chance for NY Metro to enjoy solidarity with our sisters and brothers from other locals in New York. We have common cause in fighting for our mem-



Desiree White, Shawntai Downs members’ rights and saving the US Postal Service for the American public. ☐



Seated: Desiree White; Standing: Regina Wilson, Cassandea Black, Glenda Morris

Executive Vice-President Tiffany Foster; Director of Industrial Relations Kevin Walsh; Secretary-Treasurer Joseph Martir; Director of Organization Diane Erlanger; Maintenance Craft Director Glenda Morris; Motor Vehicle Craft Director Denise Holland; Assistant Clerk Craft Director Naimah Mustafaa; Bronx Director Daisy DeGout; DVD Assistant Director Sharon Tyrrell; and Trustee Latonya Kindall. There were two shop stew-

Steward Benders beats capricious firing

By Flo Summergrad

On April 21, 2019, Arbitrator Joseph A. Harris, sustained the Union's grievance and overturned the grievant's Notice of Removal. He also awarded full back pay.

This victory was due to the savvy and hard work of Shop Steward Diana Benders. Diana is a clerk steward who is also filling in the gaps to handle Maintenance cases. In grieving this Removal, she focused on the weaknesses in the supervisor's write-up.

In disciplinary action, the burden of proof is on management. Diana Benders showed that the supervisor violated the Just Cause principles, spelled out in the JCIM on Article 16. Just Cause Principle #6, "Was the discipline taken in a timely manner?" was not met. In this case, the supervisor claimed that she "immediately" found the employee's med-

ical note suspicious when she received it on December 28, 2016. She allegedly thought that the dates seemed to be written in two different handwritings. However, she did not act on this serious issue until a month later, forwarding the note to the Labor Relations Specialist with her suspicions.

The grievant was interviewed by Postal Inspectors in February; the OIG's report of investigation was February 8, 2017. Based on this investigation, the supervisor issued a Notice of Removal on March 23, 2017. Once again, this violated the Just Cause Principle #4, which says management must conduct a fair and objective investigation. The steward pointed out that relying on the investigative report without interviewing the grievant or the doctor who wrote the note violated Article 15, p. 10 of

the JCIM, which requires management to "do an independent review of the facts prior to the issuance of disciplinary action. . . ."

Maintenance NBA Dave Sarnacki presented Steward Benders' case before Arbitrator Harris. The arbitrator ruled that "Management did not have Just Cause to issue the NOR." He summed up that "a removal action requires a preponderance of the evidence to meet the Just Cause standard."

This win is important, not just to the grievant, but to all of us. It shows that we do not have to allow management to subject workers to frivolous and subjective discipline. Thanks to Diana Benders and Dave Sarnacki, postal management cannot get away with arbitrary and capricious firing of our members. ☑

Arbitration Advocacy Class

During the first week in June, seven NY Metro stewards participated in a class of Arbitration Advocacy in Baltimore. Our group included *[in alphabetical order]*: Diana Benders (DVD Clerk and Maintenance Steward); Deborah Bethea (Coordinating VP); Eveyana Cortez (Morgan Clerk steward); Diane Erlanger (Director of Organization); Andrew Henry (VMF Motor Vehicle Steward); Kim Smith (Morgan Assistant Director); and Sherell Taite-Pridgen (NJINDC

Maintenance Steward). They came back better prepared to fight management.

The whole group worked hard at learning to prepare cases for arbitration. Days were for absorbing information from experienced advocates. Nights were for homework, with students staying up into the wee hours doing assignments. Just as in law school, the

classes culminated in "mock" arbitration, playing the roles of labor and management. ☑



Left to right: S. Taite, D. Erlanger, D. Bethea, A. Henry, D. Benders, K. Smith, E. Cortez

POSTAL PRIDE

“Don’t sell out veterans by selling off the Postal Service!”

In defense of the public postal service, the American Postal Workers Union makes the call: “Don’t sell out Veterans by selling off the Postal Service!” Privatization of the USPS saves no tax dollars because the post office is not funded by tax money. Postal privatization puts profit ahead of the rights of veterans.

The United States Postal Service is second only to the Department of Defense as a civilian employer of military veterans. Over 100,000 veterans, who served in the armed services, continue their public service as postal workers. They make up over 20% of the postal workforce.

US Veterans Magazine has listed the Postal Service among its “Best of the Best” veteran-friendly companies for many years. Organizations like the VFW, the American Legion, and the DAV acclaim the importance of postal jobs for the nation’s vets. By federal law, the USPS is obligated to give preferential hiring to veterans, particularly disabled vets, and the surviving spouses of deceased veterans.

Privatization of the public Postal Service would mean hardship for the 100,000+ veterans who currently perform these jobs in every corner of the country, and unemployment for future vets. The USPS website hails the employment of these service-tested men and women as an asset to the organization. “We value the leadership, reliability, and high-tech skills veterans bring to the organization, as well as their loyalty and integrity.”

Many of these veterans have suffered injury through their military service. Postal workers who are Disabled Veterans rated at over 30% are entitled to a special leave category called Wounded Warriors Leave.

Like all postal workers, these veterans have the benefits of national union contracts and earn a living wage to support themselves and their families. Millions of vets also depend on the public mail service to deliver their prescription medicines and other medical needs.

The scheme to privatize the USPS is a direct attack on our nation’s veterans. Those politicians who claim to support military servicemen and women but push to dismantle the public Postal Service are hypocrites. They pose for photo ops while laying wreaths on graves and waving the American flag, but are actively seeking to betray the men and women who served. ☒



Postal News Briefs

POSTAL SERVICE AMERICANS’ FAVORITE FEDERAL AGENCY

In a Gallup poll released this May, Americans rated the US Postal Service the most popular government agency. This is the third year in a row that the USPS ranked the highest with the public. Three out of four felt the USPS does an “excellent” or “good” job.



SUPREME COURT REJECTS UPS TRY TO RAISE POSTAL PRICING

On May 20, 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected an appeal from United Parcel Service (UPS) that aimed to force the Postal Service to raise its price for handling parcels. UPS sees the people’s post office as unfair competition and wants the public to pay more. UPS lawyers demanded a “level playing field with private companies for package delivery” instead of the rates set by the Postal Regulatory Commission. The judges rebuffed this appeal without comment.



RURAL CARRIERS REACH CONTRACT AGREEMENT WITH USPS

The National Rural Letter Carriers Association (NRLCA) has successfully negotiated a 3-year contract for the 131,000 rural carriers it represents. The Agreement is good until May 2021 and includes retroactive pay and COLA increases. The general wage increases will add up to 4.3% over the life of the contract and the current COLA formula remains in place. The RCAs (similar to our PSEs) will now have a non-career health plan paid for in part by the employer. A Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) addresses a system of rural route evaluation, called RRECS. ☒



CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 18

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)

WINNERS! May 15, 2019

General Membership Meeting

1. 50/50 winner was Jacquelyn Owens \$54.00

2. \$100.00 gift winner was Jim Wu

3. COPA contribution \$52.75

Come be a WINNER at the next meeting!



SISTERS! Come to NY Metro P.O.W.E.R. meetings! 1:00 pm, the 4th Wednesday of every month. (As an APWU member, you

are automatically a member of Post Office Woman for Equal Rights—P.O.W.E.R.)

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

1:00 pm, the 4th Wednesday of every month:

When: 1:00 pm, September 25

APWU LOCAL 10 BLDG. CORP

Beginning Balance as of April 1, 2019	\$1,208,548.89
Total Revenue April 2019	\$ 211,809.96
Operating April 2019	\$144,747.58
Total Net Income April 2019	\$ 67,062.38
Ending Balance as of April 30, 2019	\$1,257,611.27

APWU LOCAL 10 BLDG. CORP

Beginning Balance as of May 1, 2019	\$1,257,611.27
Total Revenue May 2019	\$ 183,173.42
Operating Expenses May 2019	\$ 126,567.67
Total Net Income May 2019	\$ 56,605.75
Ending Balance as of May 31, 2019	\$1,332,217.02

A big win for labor!



Justice for Farmworkers

In June the NY State Senate passed the Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act to grant collective bargaining rights, workers' compensation, and unemployment benefits to farm laborers!

Veterans' Mural at the NDC

Mike Mateo, a Tractor Trailer Operator at the NJI&NDC and member of the NY Metro Area Postal Union, is also a talented artist. He created a beautiful mural of veterans' history, which was unveiled to all after the May 23rd Memorial Day Ceremony to honor the facility vets. The mural is rich in detail—with everything from Iwo Jima to the POW flag. It shows a soldier carrying a fallen comrade, a close-up of a Tuskegee airman, the Statue of Liberty, a bugler playing Taps, and other moving words and images.

This mural is visible as soon as visitors enter the Administration

side of the building. It is also fully accessible to the NDC workers, since it is in the hallway between the Bulk and International buildings, directly across from the Union offices and on the way to the Credit Union. Mike put in many hours of intense work, much of it in a cramped position. He added loving touches which make the mural truly memorable.

In the center of the wall is a flat screen television, which has commemorative photos from the NDC Memorial Day ceremony. In the future, it will display past and present photos of the facility veterans.

Mike is currently working on a mural for the DVD facility.



Sections from the Veterans' Mural



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

The Union Mail wins 8 awards!

In the 2018 Metro NY Labor Communicators contest, *The Union Mail* won a record eight (8!) awards!



Shop Steward Walker

On Friday, May 10, 2019, at the annual ceremony, we were presented with 8 certificates which will be framed and hung in the NY Metro office. Individual awards were given in the following categories: Best Editorial (Jonathan Smith); Best News Writing and best Photograph (Flo Summergrad); Best Feature Writing and Best Headline (Nora Taggart); and Best Work by a Millennial writer (Kay-Ann Walker; Denise Willis) Best of all, we placed Second in the category of General Excellence which is a credit to everyone who contributes to the newspaper.

Kay-Ann Walker, our youngest winner, was presented her certificate at the May General Membership meeting. She was pleased when Nora Taggart pointed out that her article was selected in competition with professional journalists hired by most other unions. *The Union Mail* is written by full-time postal workers! 📧

