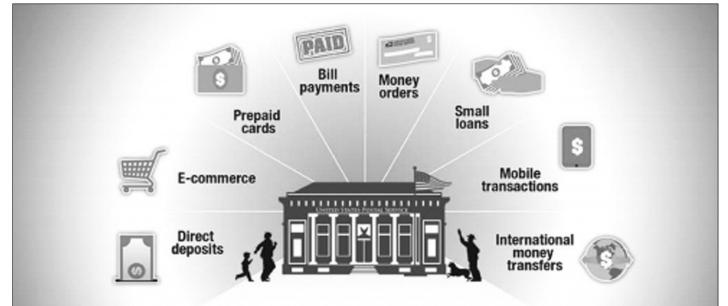


"The Labor Movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress."-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Postal Banking-We Can Do It!



The OIG says: "Underserved Americans need financial services that work for them, especially in today's tough economy. The Postal Service is in an excellent and, in some ways, unmatched position to meet these citizens' needs."

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

2016: Resolve to fight together



s we start the new year, let's see our union as part of the big picture.

Postal workers are under attack. But if you watch the news, you see that there is a concerted assault against

Jonathan Smith

the standard of living and rights of the vast majority—"the 99%." As part of an active national and local union, we can be an organized force to stand up and fight back.

What's going on in this country is extremism at its worst-from voter suppression to tax breaks for billionaires to women being told what they can and can't do with their bodies, to the exacerbation of racial and religious differences. In contrast, our union stands for democracy and social justice. In the words of Bernie Sanders, to rebuild America, this country has to invest in jobs and education, not incarceration.

The goal of the 1% is to destroy all unions. What good is a job without decent wages, health care, pensions, benefits, and safe working conditions? Isn't that the reason you work? You want a decent way of life, the standards that were fought for and earned—not given to us.

It's our responsibility to continue the struggle of the people who came before us. Labor leaders, civil rights organizers, and social activists, backed by masses of ordinary citizens, fought and sacrificed to win the basic rights we have today.

United we stand; Divided we fall

Every time I visit a facility, people

tell me what they want. The PSEs want to make regular. But they get upset by long work hours—not realizing that work hours are how we get career jobs. Regulars want to stay in their bid section; they want the work and the jobs to stay. But they don't want PSEs converted because that might cut into their overtime. But without converting PSEs to career, postal jobs have no future. So moving them into the regular work force is our common goal.

Everybody wants a contract with a money raise. But if any extra responsibility gets added to a duty assignment, they say, "No, it's not my job." That's how we lose work. Keeping clerk jobs and preventing subcontracting in maintenance and MVS is our common goal.

So, this is my question: When are you going to want what you already have? Stop wanting more and more without helping our union fight. Think about it. At minimum, career postal employees have a job with a living wage, a guaranteed work week, benefits, pensions, entitlement to federal workers' compensation.

You've heard the expression – "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." That is what a union is –an organization that brings individual workers together so we can have collective strength. The more each member contributes to the effort, the stronger we are.

Resolve to do your part

Union Thursdays are a chance to show our solidarity. Show up on Thursday in a union t-shirt or wearing a button or sticker. Get your fellow members to wear them. For window clerks and drivers, there are APWU wristbands.

Voting in government and union elections—shows that we are a force to be reckoned with. It gives us power. When we call on our elected officials, they look at the voter registration rolls, to see if we have a voice at the polls. If you're not registered, do it in minutes on line.

Support our new stewards! It's good that people stepped up to do the job. But it takes time to get experience. Remember which side you're on. Give statements when needed.

As we look back at the old year, let our attitude be gratitude. What we want from life can't be bought. Dignity and respect must be earned and sometimes fought for. The real tragedy would be to lose what we already won.

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Cover: January 27, 2014 OIG Report: Providing Non-Bank Financial Services for the Underserved

Don't blame the Union, blame Management

By Tiffany Foster, Executive Vice-President

write articles

membership, but

how many of our

members take

the information

from The Union

Mail and apply it

purposely to

educate our



Tiffany Foster

to your dealings with management or become enlightened on the workings of your union and the role you play in it?

Just recently, management has been implementing staffing changes using the Network Rationalization and the new Mail Arrival Profile as its reason for these changes. Back on January 10, 2015, when the Net Rat was implemented, management detailed some of its employees to begin work earlier than their bid Begin Tour (BT) to accommodate the new mail arrival times and their mail processing plan. The changing of the employees tours were carried out without the union being made aware as required by Articles 5 and 25. Most employees were fine with these changes for various reasons, like it paid them Out-of-Schedule Premium or they were able to get off earlier or in some cases be paid overtime. Management was looking at it as getting the work out and meeting their goals. The union looked at it as something that was soon to become permanent and how it would affect the employees. We knew once these changes became permanent, some employees would be at risk of losing

their bid assignments.

The staffing changes management is implementing affects the Begin Tour (BT) of some employees by one hour or less, some by more than an hour and some by BT change and/or Rest Day change. Article 37 which applies to the Clerk Craft says if the change of an employee's BT is one hour or less, the duty assignment does not have to be "reposted." This means that the occupied duty assignment does not have to be posted installation-wide for the entire Clerk Craft to bid on. If the BT change is more than one hour and/or the Rest Day is changed, the duty assignment shall be reposted installation-wide for the entire Clerk Craft to bid on. Shall means MUST. Management is aware of this language. When we attend meetings regarding why management wants to change your bid duty assignment, NY District management will say the manager said he needs this change in order for his or her operation to run efficiently. So questions like: Why is my job being abolished? Why are they changing my bid duty assignment? Why are they not posting that vacant duty assignment? Why are they excessing me out of the section or the station or the installation? These sorts of questions should be directed to your station or plant managers, especially because they are aware of what changes would constitute a duty assignment to be reposted installation wide. Maybe, you'll get the real reason as to why they are making

these changes.

Management always goes after the misinformed employees who don't know that staffing is the exclusive responsibility of management and fills their heads with rhetoric like "the union agreed to this." The union doesn't participate or have a hand in ANY staffing decisions. Staffing is strictly and exclusively management's responsibility. The CBA mandates management to meet and discuss these changes with the union. The union doesn't have to agree or disagree with management when they want to change your duty assignment, even though it may have an adverse effect on your family life. The stewards are always provided with the staffing proposals presented to us and instructed to discuss management's intentions with the affected employee(s). What I'm trying to get across to you all is that your blame is being focused on the wrong party.

Again, the union does not change, revert, abolish or repost duty assignments or excess anyone in any craft. The union's obligation is to police the CBA and make certain that the bargaining unit employee rights are not violated when management is making these changes. If there is a violation within this process, the union must follow the steps within Article 15 regarding the grievance procedure.

It is my hope that going forward, you don't blame your union for a decision we didn't make.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT: Congress fails the Postal Service again

By Nora Mendez, Legislative and Political Director

n December 16, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) quietly unveiled the "omnibus" spending bill aimed at averting a federalgovernment shutdown and keeping the government funded through September.

The bipartisan deal would make permanent a sweeping list of tax breaks while lifting a 40-year ban on the export of US oil, a longsought victory for Republicans. However, the agreement does not include two GOP-backed provisions that Democrats considered poison pills: a moratorium on accepting Syrian refugees and on funding for Planned Parenthood.

Missing in the massive, 2000page, \$1.1 Trillion spending bill was any language to ensure the timely processing and delivery of mail. Despite America's growing epidemic of delayed mail which is hurting businesses and citizens across the country, once again Congress refused to act to restore service standards, threatening the future of America's public postal service. **Postal Board of Governors is** down to one member

The USPS Board of Governors is starting the new year with only one member, James Bilbray. By statute, it is supposed to have nine governors on its board. This is not a trivial matter. The board sets policy for this gigantic operation that oversees \$67 billion in annual revenue and more than 500,000 employees. Actually, the board hasn't had a quorum in over a year.

President Barack Obama does not seem to care much about the US Postal Service even though it is the second largest civilian employer in the country. During his administration over 200,000 good postal jobs were lost, dozens of postal facilities were closed, and the delivery service standards were reduced. Not only has the administration not done anything to help save America's Postal Service but they have actually

favored policies that hurt those who are served by and those who work for the Postal Service.

President Obama's latest nominations to the BOG will do little to improve things. As a matter of fact, the nominees are being blocked by Senator Bernie Sanders due to objections over two of the nominees in particular: former governors James Miller and Mickey Barnett. Miller is a notorious privatization advocate and Barnett is a payday lender lobbyist.

APWU has officially gone on record that the Postal Board of Governors include two (2) representatives of labor organizations that represent postal employees, and two (2) representatives of organizations with at least 50,000 members that represent postal patrons who depend upon the Postal Services and live in communities (including urban and rural) throughout the nation. Hopefully our next president will agree. 🖃

NY Metro hosts Serrano fundraiser

n December 14, 2015, NYMAPU hosted a fundraiser for U.S. Congressman José E. Serrano (D-NY), who has long been a staunch fighter for postal workers and all his constituents in the South Bronx. The event was attended by officers of the local and national APWU. Leaders of John Dirzius, APWU NE Regional the sister unions, Kevin Tabarus of the NPMHU and Pat McNally and Tony Ortiz of the NLAC joined in support for Congressman Serrano.



Postal Banking—America's best weapon against our criminal banking system

By Nora Mendez

n 2011, an audit of the Federal Reserve revealed the U.S. provided a whopping \$16 trillion in secret loans to bail out American and foreign banks during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Yes, you read that right: trillions with a "T". And while the taxpayers were left to foot the bill to save the too-big-to-fail banks, these same banks breached the social contract that had existed between banks and the government since the early days of the republic of offering lowcost credit to enable low-income Americans to escape poverty. These big banks abandoned low to moderate income neighborhoods in droves, leaving more than a quarter of American households partially or completely outside the traditional banking system and dependent on high-cost, usurious, and predatory check cashers and payday lenders. These fringe banks exploit the poor and further bury them in debt.

In January, 2014, the Office of the Inspector General published a white paper titled Providing Non-Bank Financial Services for the Underserved, which floated the idea of re-introducing postal banking services as a means of expanding financial inclusion. This report caught the eye of Senator Elizabeth Warren. She immediately wrote an op-ed in a major news outlet endorsing postal banking which focused on the OIG's findings that 68 million Americans have either no or limited

access to banking services, leaving them vulnerable to financial predators like payday lenders and check cashers.

Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders is also a huge supporter of postal banking. "I want to see our post office be reinvigorated," said Senator Sanders in a recent interview. "It's one of the ways that I think we can help not only the U.S. Postal Service, but help a lot of lowincome people. Banks don't want you. People are forced to go to payday lenders who charge outrageously high interest rates. Yes, I think that the postal service, in fact, can play an important role in providing modest types of banking service to folks who need it."

Postal Banking is not new

The USPS successfully operated a postal savings bank from 1911 to 1967. Postal banking, in fact, was so central to our banking system that it was the alternative to federal deposit insurance. It helped fund two world wars and reduced a massive government deficit after the Great Depression. At its peak in 1947, four million users had \$3.4 billion deposited in the postal banking system.

However, despite being America's most successful experiment in financial inclusion, it was quietly abolished in 1966 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's streamlining of the federal government.

Looking globally, the United States is very much the outlier in not having a postal banking option. 139 countries offer some form of postal banking.

Why Postal Banking is a good idea

Postal banking has the advantage of the best retail branch network of any business in the country, with a post office in every ZIP code and an existing cash handling system. More importantly, if the postal bank would serve primarily low-income consumers, as the Inspector General's report suggests, the USPS can turn a profit while offering simple and low-cost products. It would free the poor from the exploitation of payday lenders, shore up the Postal Service, and not cost taxpayers a dime.

Thousands agree

On December 17, the Campaign for Postal Banking and the APWU delivered over 150,000 signed petitions to USPS headquarters demanding the Postmaster General restore and expand postal banking in the post offices. The coalition is comprised of consumer, worker, financial reform, economic justice, community, civic, and faith-based CAMPAIGN organizations.

Deputy Postmaster General Ronald A. Stroman received the petitions. 🖃

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NYMAPU Executive Board endorses Bernie Sanders

By Nora Mendez

n December 16, 2015, NY Metro Area Postal Workers Union's Executive Board voted unanimously to endorse U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Sanders, an independent who caucuses with the Democrats in the Senate, will compete in the Democratic primaries for

the Democratic nomination. The Senator has been a strong friend and ally to postal workers, to other union members and to workers in general. He has stood on dozens of picket lines, and has worked closely with organized labor in advancing organizing victories and collective bargaining rights.

Sanders has been a strong voice in American politics against excessive corporate power and economic inequality. He's introduced legislation to protect and expand Social Security. He supports expanding Medicare by creating a single-payer system of national health insurance, raising the minimum wage to \$15, reducing student debt, changing federal law to make it easier to organize, and has pledged to dismantle the



Citizens United decision which enables corporations and wealthy donors to give unlimited dollars to political campaigns. Bernie Sanders fought to oppose NAFTA and other bad trade agreements. Now he's fighting against the TPP.

The Senator, who is running as the strongest progressive in the race, has an extensive plan to protect and improve women's rights and has included the concerns of Black Lives Matter activists into his core platform.

Recently the APWU National Executive Board voted to endorse Bernie Sanders for president. The endorsement followed Sanders' enthusiastic speech before 2,000 activists at the union's All-Craft Conference in late October.

"Bernie Sanders is a fierce advo-

cate of postal reform. He staunchly opposes postal privatization, and supports enhanced postal services, including postal banking," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "Based on his Senate record, we are confident he will appoint good people to public office and end conflicts of interest. He has already blocked the

slate of nominees to the Postal Board of Governors that includes the 'king of postal privatizers' James Miller and payday lending industry lobbyist Mickey Barnett. No other candidate has his record of exposing the rule of the billionaire class," Dimondstein said. "Sanders is refusing all corporate money. He doesn't have a super-PAC."

We are pleased with the way Senator Sanders frames these issues and the worker-based set of policies he is offering, in contrast to the procorporate policies of the other Democratic and Republican candidates.

We encourage NYMAPU members to take a serious look at Bernie Sanders's campaign and to consider their active participation in it.

SHOP STEWARDS PUMP IT UP TO START 2016

By the time this issue of *The Union Mail* is in your hands, Shop Stewards will have attended 40 hours of training from January 4–8. This provided new stewards with the tools to take on the job. Selected experienced stewards also attended to hone their skills and share experiences with the new reps. A list of certified stewards was submitted to management and issued to members in a newsFLASH. All our representatives have hit the ground running to begin the struggle in 2016.

(The February issue of The Union Mail will have coverage of the training.)

NY Metro Area Postal Union Holiday Party 2015

December 11, 2015: Members were able to take a break from the December mail madness at the post office to enjoy hot music, great food, and good companions at the annual Union Holiday Party. The officers and volunteers put in a lot of work, but it was worth it. People from all our stations and tours found time to drop by and have fun.



Photos by Gloria Wilson

HONOR VETS BY SAVING AMERICA'S POSTAL SERVICE Vets to USPS: honor us by saving jobs

By Flo Summergrad

The United States Postal Service is the largest civilian employer of military veterans. For Veterans Day, 2015, Postmaster General Megan Brennan saluted the 113,000 USPS employees who are military veterans by sending each one a special badge and lanyard to wear with their Postal ID.

The badge proudly displays the USPS eagle logo on one side, with the words; "We honor your service and are proud you chose to be an employee of the Postal Service. Wearing this badge signifies your service to our country. Thank you for your service." The other side shows the stars and stripes and proclaims the wearer a VETERAN, under the words: "The US Postal Service Salutes its Veterans."

Ironically, the very officials and politicians who are quick to wave the American flag have been those aggressively seeking to take away our national treasure, the public Postal Service. Behind the rhetoric of honoring veterans, the campaign to privatize the USPS has meant station closings, plant consolidations, and delayed mail. Since the USPS is not funded by taxes, the push to privatization is aimed at destroying the hiring and employment protections of the Veterans Preference Act.

Attacks on postal employment are de facto attacks on the obligation to hire veterans into living wage jobs

with contractual and MSPB rights. To truly honor our veterans, PMG Brennan must reverse gears on the march to disable the USPS. In practical terms, this means expanding

postal services and using resources to recruit veterans to the Postal Service.



FEBRUARY 2016 ONLY-JOIN THE UNION LEGAL PLAN!

APWU VOLUNTARY BENEFITS PLAN GROUP LEGAL SERVICES PLAN COST: ONLY \$7.75/Pay Period

How many times do we hear people say, "Oh, I wish I had the Union legal plan!"

But...this plan is available only during infrequent open enrollment periods. So, DON'T MISS OUT! All APWU members in good standing can enroll. See your steward or call the union office 212-563-7553.

Read the brochure for full understanding of the coverage provided. You can access it on the NY Metro Area Postal Union website www.nymetro.org

Honor MLK by fighting domestic terror!

By Flo Summergrad

n January, we celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Ir. The history of Dr. King's fight against segregation and injustice has become sanitized, as if his "dream" smoothly transformed America. In fact, the struggle for Civil Rights was met with violent opposition, fueled by white supremacist hatred and backed up by the force of the state. African American voters who had long been disenfranchised through economic and political chicanery were beaten and lynched for organizing voter registration. People demanding the right to sit on a bus or at a lunch counter were assaulted, arrested, and attacked by dogs and clubs. Houses and churches were burned. Black people were murdered-covertly by Klansmen in hoods; openly by police and state troopers.

That opposition was exposed for what it was-domestic terrorism.

Today, while the fear of international terrorism is used as an excuse for depriving Americans of civil liberties, domestic terrorism is being incited by mainstream politicians. What was once the hate language of fringe groups and crazies is now openly on the floor of Congress and in nationally televised speeches. Overt racism, sexism, religious discrimination, and xenophobia are defended as legitimate political positions.

The horrific murders last June of 9 black parishioners at the Emanuel AME Church in South Carolina,



Martin Luther King, Jr.

should have been a lesson for our nation to stand together against extremism. Instead, Fox News and bigoted politicians denied that t this was a white supremacist act of terror, twisting it into an "anti-Christian" killing.

Although Donald Trump has become the most blatant example of right wing bigotry, the reactionary attacks on women, African-Americans, immigrants, and Muslims did not originate with him. With the rise of the "Tea Party" in 2009, there has been a steady increase in attacks on the fundamental civil rights won over the last three generations in the U.S.

"The Police Executive Branch Research Forum, a non-profit policing think tank, surveyed almost 400 police departments who reported Right-wing extremists as almost

twice as much of a terror threat as 'Al Queda or like-minded terrorist organizations." (Mike King, "White Terror Matters," www.counterpunch.org 12/15/15) A study by A. Perlinger from the U.S. Military Academy's Combating Terrorism Center in 2012, reported an average of 337 attacks by white extremists in the U.S. every year – a number that has been rising sharply in 2015. Right wing vigilante groups are carrying out acts of violence which reflect the political views of the current Republican presidential candidates and much of the Congress.

Attacks on women have focused on Planned Parenthood, which has been demonized with (admittedly) false accusations of selling fetal body parts. In the last two months, there were fire-bombings and vandalism of clinics across the nation; and in late November, the murder of three people and wounding of nine at Planned Parenthood in Colorado Springs.

This criminal violence is a direct result of the vicious anti-woman campaign in Congress which made defunding Planned Parenthood a seminal political issue. The Planned Parenthood organization has existed for a century, providing reproductive health care to nearly five million people a year. Destroying access to safe and reliable female services is aimed at disempowering and subjugating women.

Only a few days before the *continued on page 10*

Honor MLK by fighting domestic terror! Postal News Briefs

continued from page 9

Planned Parenthood shooting, white supremacist gunmen shot into a peaceful "Black Lives Matter" demonstration of a racially mixed crowd in Minneapolis. At a December 14th Trump rally in Las Vegas, NBC News and The NY Daily News reported that white supporters beat and kicked black protestors, yelling racist slurs like, "Light the MF up!" and giving the Nazi salute.

Instead of fighting these homegrown neo-fascists, the Congressional response to the ISIS attack in Paris was to deny refuge to the Syrian families escaping the ISIS violence in their own country. The same shameful anti-immigrant hysteria kept Jews from asylum fleeing the Nazis. It allowed for the internment of Japanese-Americans during WWII, what Obama called betraying "not only our fellow Americans but our deepest values."

The next rabid message of hate was Trump's proposal to exclude all Muslims from the United States. Elected officials from both parties repudiated this as a suggestion that stabs at the very heart of our democracy. Yet Trump's extremism is consistent with the right-w political rhetoric that has been laying the basis for religious hate crimes.

Terror does not occur in a vacuum. Leaders cannot preach discrimination and pass reactionary laws, then distance themselves from the violent results of their rhetoric. Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968 was an act of domestic terror. In the spirit of the MLK holiday, expose and oppose the political basis of today's rising domestic terror.

We shall overcome! 🖃

IMPORTANT ARBITRATION WIN IN FIGHT AGAINST PLANT CLOSURES

Arbitrator Shyam Das ruled on Dec. 3, 2015 that the American Postal Workers Union and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union may now go forward with their Step 4 grievances challenging the Postal Service's decision to close or consolidate approximately 82 mail processing facilities starting January of 2015. The grievances had contended that the consolidations violated the PO-408 Handbook, Closures and Consolidations Area Mail Processing (AMP) Guidelines.

FTC SUES TO BLOCK STAPLES OFFICE DEPOT MERGER



The Federal Trade Commission filed an administrative complaint to block the proposed \$6.3 billion merger of Staples and Office Depot, saying the deal would hurt competition in the market for office supplies and would violate antitrust laws. Soon after the announcement, Staples

shares fell as much 14 percent, the most since May 2014, and Office Depot plunged as much as 18 percent.

APWU FILES SUIT TO ENFORCE BMC STAFFING AWARD

On October 19, 2015, the APWU won a critical arbitration on BMC (NDC) maintenance staffing. Arbitrator Ira Jaffe directed the USPS to "cease and desist" using MMO 112-10 (eWHEP) to staff the BMCs (NDCs) and return to using MMO 022-04 (BMC Gold) to correct the current understaffing.

The Postal Service has arrogantly refused to comply with the ruling, advising managers in writing **not** to change or update the current wrongful understaffing at BMCs (NDCs). On December 11, APWU Maintenance Craft Director Steve Raymer filed a complaint in federal court seeking enforcement.

APWU CONTRACT UPDATE

Bargaining between the APWU and the Postal Service went well on noneconomic issues but broke down during the economic discussions. It is

now going to interest arbitration, where a three-member panel hears presentations by both sides. The panel is comprised of a union-appointed advocate, a management-appointed advocate, and a neutral arbitrator agreed upon by both parties. The neutral arbitrator will decide the

Service! GOOD JOBS!

new contract. The hearings are expected to begin soon after the new year. Until the new contract is resolved, the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement remains in effect.

CALENDAR

Wednesday, January 20, 2016

5:30 pm General Membership Meeting Hotel Pennsylvania 401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets) Paris/Zurich Room, 6th Floor (check calendar in lobby for room change)

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

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 BUILDING CORP FINANCIAL REPORT:

Due to the transition of the new APWU Local 10 Building Corp. management company, an audit is being performed by the NY Metro Local 10 Building Corp. Info will return as soon as the transition audio is completed.

January/February

Don't Buy Staples! Rallies

will be scheduled throughout our area. For locations and times, check www.nymetro.org or call Union office, Kevin Walsh, 212-563-7553

Scholarship raffle winner

Tammie Rambert, Shop Steward, Cooper Station, was the happy winner of Knicks tickets and a tablet. This raffle was the first of a series of events that will raise funds for this year's NYMAPU scholarships.

Thanks to all who bought raffle tickets to help our kids get a college education! +



Retirement and Federal Benefits Seminar

RETIREMENT SEMINAR for our members and their spouses only. This seminar will help you understand your government benefits and help you make educated decisions.

This is **NOT** just for people ready to retire! This is for **ALL MEMBERS**. It is never too early to plan for retirement. So, even if you have many years to go before retirement, this seminar would be very beneficial to you. Retirement is about preparation, not age.

Food and Drinks will be provided. REGISTER EARLY, SEATING WILL BE LIMITED.

Please fill out the registration form and submit a **\$10 commitment fee** (cash o money order) to your union representative. Or bring the form in person to the NY Metro Office. Upon attending the seminar, your \$10 will be returned; however, if you are a **No Show**, your commitment fee won't be given back.

NAME	PHONE	
SPOUSE OR PARTNER IF ATTENDING _		
Tues. 1/26 @ 10AM	Wed. 1/27 @ 12PM	Thurs. 1/28 @ 6PM



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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.

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