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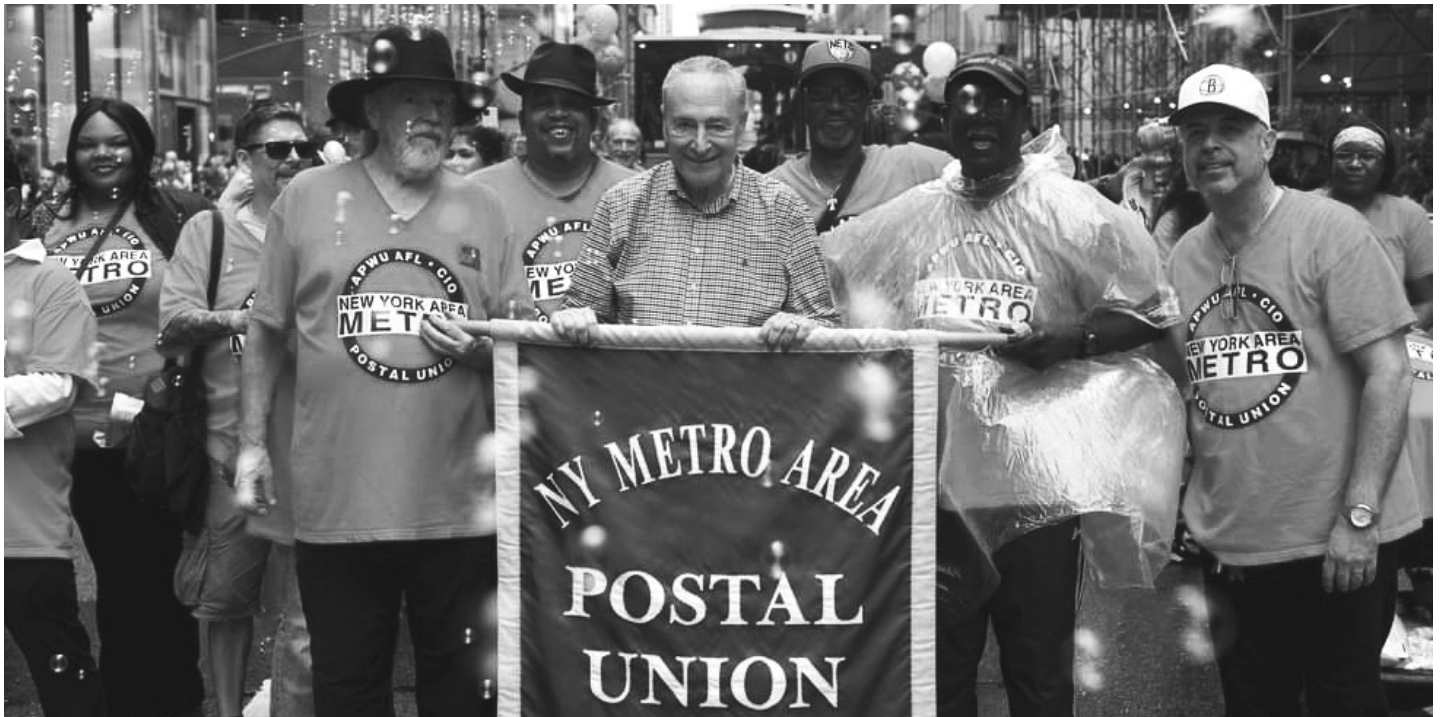
Union Mail

Vol. 67 No. 6 | September 2024

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

All Workers, Many Voices, One Fight ***Labor Day Parade & March 2024***



Don’t confuse notification for permission.



Jonathan Smith

There is no language in the contract that requires management to get the union’s permission to take any action whether it be discipline or staffing changes. So, when employees say the union allowed management to do something that is simply not true.

There are many contract changes happening concerning the fate of duty assignments, most when vacated(reversion) There is a concerted effort underway to reduce the bargaining unit workforce across the country. It is real and it’s happening quicker than ever.

The intent of this article is to educate the members on how the staffing(reversion) process works.

When a vacancy is anticipated, the installation head must determine if a continuing need exists for the position. Consideration must be given to whether the personnel complement can be adjusted downward by one vacant position through the elimination of the position. If a decision is made to eliminate a position, action is taken to revert the position

When a vacant duty assignment is under consideration for reversion, the local union president will be given an opportunity for meaningful input prior to a decision, this language applies to the clerk craft. In the maintenance and motor vehicle crafts, the union must be notified but the president is not given an opportunity to give input.

The decision to revert or not to revert the duty assignment shall be made no later than 28 days for the clerk and motor vehicle crafts, 30 days for the maintenance craft, from when the duty assignment becomes

vacant. If the vacant assignment is reverted, a notice shall be posted advising of the action taken and the reasons therefor.

For the union to have meaningful input, we need to investigate and review the purported reasons they are considering reversion. This is why the union needs statements from the employees that are doing the work, because the reasons that management gives are usually lame. Management will say the mail volume has dropped while overtime is through the roof. Often, the PSE workforce is getting full-time regular hours. Management will say we don’t have the staffing, while contractors do our work. We must be vigilant and take management’s reasons/actions as a form of disrespect.

Let me be clear, there is no contractual requirement to send the union president the final reversion notice. The requirement is to post the reversion notice on the bulletin boards for all employees to see. Management must post the reversion notice on all boards where bid sheets are posted in the installation (plant and all stations). This is why the union depends on the members to be our eyes and ears.

The notice must include management’s reason for the decision to revert. If management’s reason is proven to be untrue, or management fails to provide any information to back up their alleged reason, this is how the union wins the grievance and protects your Jobs.

Clearly, management must notify the union when they make staffing changes, but they are not obligated to get the union’s permission to make these changes. This is what the grievance procedure is for. The most important part of this process is not outlined in the contract, it’s the

members’ vigilance and involvement. The union representative needs your assistance, without membership participation our chance of victory is greatly decreased.

This is why management uses intimidation and scare tactics by creating a hostile work environment that often turns employee against employee. This tactic is often used to turn members against their union by falsely making the members believe that the union agrees with the elimination of good bargaining unit jobs.

Ultimately, ask yourself this question, how would it benefit the union to have less employees instead of more? There would be less dues, less job security, and less need for me to do what I love to do, fight for you to have better wages, hours and work conditions! ☒

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Chuck Zlatkin, editor
Francesca Adams, graphic designer

www.nymetro.org

To contact your officers, call 212.563.7553.

President	
Jonathan Smith	Ext. 108
Executive Vice President	
Joseph Martir	Ext. 110
Dir. Ind Relations	
Edward Dalton	Ext. 106
Secretary-Treasurer	
Denisha Dobbins	Ext. 107
Dir. Organization	
Diane Erlanger	Ext. 105



LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL REPORT:

Why is Louis DeJoy still Postmaster General?

By Chuck Zlatkin, Legislative and Political Director

Currently, there is much going on that directly impacts postal workers and those who depend on a public Postal Service. Here are two examples. The first focuses on Postmaster General Louis DeJoy’s behavior and the second details much needed legislation for the protection of postal workers.

How is Postmaster General Louis DeJoy’s Delivering for America plan impacting the Postal Service?

“We are making solid progress in generating a sustained revenue growth trajectory in our mailing and shipping businesses, which is validation of the product and pricing strategies, and network capabilities enabled by our Delivering for America plan.”

Unfortunately, the facts tell a different story. On August 8, 2024, the Postal Service announced that it suffered a net loss for the quarter totaling \$2.5 billion, compared to a net loss of \$1.7 billion for the same quarter last year. Of course, they were anxious to tell you that all the loss wasn’t their responsibility. Controllable loss... was \$1.1 billion for the quarter, compared to \$860 million for the same quarter last year, as expenses related to network modernization and deferred maintenance and continued inflation increased controllable operating expenses.

DeJoy claims, despite the negative statistics, that his work is successful, “We continue transforming and modernizing our processing, transportation and delivery networks, which will enable the Postal Service to operate more efficiently and effectively and at lower cost. Despite inflationary headwinds impacting our costs, we remain committed to finding a path to return the Postal Service to long-term financial sustainability.”



Joseph Corbett, the Chief Financial Officer of the Postal Service concludes, “We reduced work hours by approximately one million hours reflecting a continuing three-year trend of work hour reductions during the implementation of the Delivering for America plan. This reduction, in conjunction with lower transportation expenses for the quarter, reflects continued progress under the plan.”

DeJoy, when he spoke to the Postal Board of Governors did manage to tell the whole story, “While we are growing revenue and cutting costs at an aggressive rate, it is still not enough to overcome the historic trajectory, the substantial inflation, our difficulties in making changes and the cost of doing so.”

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act

According to the USPS, there have been more than 2,000 crimes committed against letter carriers on the job just since 2020.

On May 16, Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Josh Hawley (R-MO) introduced the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 7629/S. 4356). The Senate companion bill comes after Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Greg Landsman (D-OH) introduced the bill in the House in

March, which currently has 71 cosponsors.

The bipartisan legislation, which mirrors H.R. 7629, would provide \$7 billion in funding for the Postal Service to secure its infrastructure, including the installation of high-security collection boxes and the replacement of items carried by letter carriers with more secure electronic versions. The funding would be appropriated over five years, \$1.4 billion annually in fiscal years 2025-2029. When key infrastructure is devalued and more secure, letter carriers will be safer on their routes.

Additionally, the legislation would increase prosecution rates for these crimes by requiring the Attorney General to appoint an assistant U.S. attorney in each judicial district to prioritize any case involving an assault or crime against a letter carrier. Their principal responsibility in the district would be to coordinate and supervise the investigation and prosecution of these crimes.

The bill would also strengthen sentencing guidelines for these crimes, ensuring that they are treated in the same manner as assaults on federal law enforcement officers. ☒

Project 2025 and Working People

By Chuck Zlatkin, Legislative and Political Director



■ Republican presidential candidate, former U.S. President Donald Trump. Brandon Bell/Getty Images

Project 2025 has gotten so much publicity lately that people are now aware that it is a threat to unions and working people in general. The presumptive republican nominee for President, Donald J. Trump, is attempting to distance himself from Project 2025. He has gone as far as to say that he has “nothing to do with them.” Trump has called some of its ideas “absolutely ridiculous and abysmal.” According to CNN, more than 140 former members of the Trump Administration are involved with Project 2025 including six of his former Cabinet secretaries.

But what is Project 2025? It is a 922-page plan to reshape the executive branch of the federal government, its title: Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise. In its own words Project 2025, “...is a creation of the Heritage Foundation”, the right-wing think tank founded on February 16, 1973, by Paull Weyrich, Edwin Feulner and Joseph Coors. It has been promoting a right-wing policy agenda going back to the Ronald Reagan administration. From its inception, the Heritage Foundation has been singing the praises of postal privatization, and it is no different today.

Parker Sheppard, PhD is the

Director for the Heritage Foundation’s Center for Data Analysis. Earlier this year, Sheppard wrote a piece, “Do We Still Need the Post Office?” It called upon the government to sell the post office and allow it to move forward as a private business. Sheppard states, “With modern technology and many companies performing similar services, the government doesn’t need to be in the mail delivery business.” He goes on to say that the post office, which was included in the Constitution, “nearly 250 years later, we no longer rely on the post office to deliver news or communicate with people in other states.” And Sheppard added, “Since 1970, it has generally operated at a deficit—meaning it costs more money to run than it makes. The situation is predicted to get even worse.”

“We need to flood the zone with conservatives,” said Paul Dans, director of the 2025 Presidential Transition Project and a former Trump administration official.

Project 2025 proposes turning up to 50,000 career civil servant jobs into politically appointed positions. Trump, if elected, would reissue the directive that would re-categorize career civil servants as at-will employees, giving employers the ability to terminate employment for any reason without warning and fill those jobs with new people.

Project 2025 also wants to overturn the existing appeals process for employee dismissals. It claims the current system prevents management from firing the right employees.

The anti-worker, anti-union policies of Project 2025 are detailed quite clearly in the document itself

as pointed out by the AFL-CIO:

- **Banning unions for public service workers (page 82).**
- **Firing civil service workers and replacing them with Trump anti-union loyalists (page 80).**
- **Letting bosses eliminate unions mid-contract (page 603).**
- **Letting companies stop paying overtime (page 592) and allowing states to opt out of federal overtime and minimum wage laws (page 605).**
- **Eliminating child labor protections (page 595).**
- **Urging Congress to pass Sen. JD Vance’s bill to let employers create their own sham company-run unions (page 599).**

The status of Project 2025 is very different now. The original director of Project 2025 from the Heritage Foundation, Paul Dans, stepped down from his position after Trump attempted to distance himself from the plan. Heritage Foundation president Kevin Roberts tried to put a good face on it by stating that it “completed exactly what it set out to do.” Roberts continued, “Our collective efforts to build a personnel apparatus for policymakers of all levels — federal, state, and local — will continue.” Roberts will now run Project 2025 operations.

It is evident that there is a great need for working people to stay focused on the Project 2025 plan and not assume that it will not be carried out. The forces behind it will not be deterred by some recent setbacks. Working people must stay vigilant. The struggle continues. ☐

Response to PMG DeJoy’s Op-Ed in The Washington Post

By Peter Boyer

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy recently wrote an op-ed in The Washington Post congratulating himself on his success. He started off by stating “I am fascinated by the U.S. Postal Service and its opportunities to serve the American people.” In the four years that he has been in charge, however, he seems fascinated only by opportunities to serve himself.

While giving a speech at the right-wing American Enterprise Institute in July 2022, DeJoy said “I think we may need to get 50,000 people out of the organization, but that’s OK.” This downsizing doesn’t seem to be affecting management, however, since the Postal Service announced they were creating an additional 4,300 supervisor jobs. In addition, DeJoy wants more mail to be transported on trucks instead of airplanes, partly because he is heavily invested in trucking companies like XPO Logistics, which have contracts with the Postal Service to transport mail across the country. As a result,

the post office spent \$432 million more on trucking in the 2023 fiscal year than the year before, but they considered that “relatively immaterial” in their 10-K financial report.

DeJoy openly admits that under his plan, the Postal Service currently anticipates a loss of \$65 billion over the next ten years and his consolidations have caused “degraded operating conditions” even with reduced service standards, but claims that “there was no plan to address this crisis anywhere, from anyone.” His solution has been to cut service and eliminate craft jobs while simultaneously finding ways to expand management and implement policies that solely benefit himself and the management ranks that cater to his every whim. His reported salary, including management bonuses, is over \$480,000 each year.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of watching DeJoy in action is his disregard for any ideas other than his own. In his op-ed, he wrote

that his ten-year plan “is the only comprehensive strategy in existence that can save the Postal Service.” He seems to have forgotten that a decade ago, the Office of Inspector General noted that the post office could increase revenue by \$8.9 billion every year by providing financial services to the public. That one action could change a projected deficit of \$65 billion to a surplus of \$24 billion or more over ten years.

A Grand Alliance to Save our Public Postal Service, an organization which APWU is part of, has released their own plan. Called “A People’s Postal Agenda,” it seeks to innovate and create a strong public Postal Service that works to serve the public. Instead of cutting back to save money, this plan expands the post office to provide additional services, which would create more revenue. The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 contains language which now allows the post office to partner with other federal and state agencies to provide nonpostal services to the public.

There are opportunities for the Postal Service to expand and thrive, even as mail volume has declined. Louis DeJoy is correct in saying that continuing to change nothing and stagnate will hurt the Postal Service, but his ten-year plan has clearly been a path to disaster. We need to push our Congressional representatives to follow through in expanding out post office and providing additional services to the public. In stopping DeJoy’s destructive plan, we can save the Postal Service, help serve the public, and create new union jobs. That’s what The Washington Post should be writing about. ☐



■ U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy speaking in Washington, D.C., in December 2022. Photo: Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

Morgan's Change: Laird's Reconstruction

By Shevon McKnight

With the summer season of 2024 coming to an end and peak season approaching, Morgan has experienced significant changes. The return of Plant Manager Laird has brought about unexpected alterations, leaving many employees questioning the benefits. Mixed emotions are evident among the staff, and the biggest question of all is, “Is my job in danger?” The removal of operations, machines, and redirection of mail, along with the new tall, authoritative figure walking the floor, has caught the union’s watchful eye.

Morgan has undergone a whirlwind of changes recently, all under Laird’s direction. So, what exactly has changed? As of June 2024, the unannounced removal of pouching took place. Thirteen PSEs, three unassigned regulars, and two pouching bid regulars were surprised to find their operation upended. Postcons and pouching racks are now in chains. With no direct explanation from the SDOs, this has left our members confused. The only response from the SDOs has been, “It was Laird’s doing.” Keep this statement in mind, as it seems to be the standard explanation. The removal of the pouching operation left the two regulars who held the bids without an assignment. They are currently working on the Level 7 Fly mail operation. The PSEs who frequented the operation now work in manual letters or provide lunch coverage in the 3rd-floor Fly mail or automation. Not only have the bodies on the work floor been shuffled around, but the elephant in the room



■ Street view of 341 9th Avenue; Map data ©2019 Google

remains: Where did all the mail go? From my investigation, the pouching mail has been redirected to the APBS machine to be manually keyed in. This has increased the load on the APBS machine and raised concerns about potential impacts on efficiency and equipment longevity. As you walk onto the 2nd floor, a new open space appears where the dedicated City Bullpen operation used to be. The City and Bronx bullpen operations have been combined and moved to the south building. Once again, when asked about it, the same response was given: “It was Laird’s doing.” It seems Laird began making moves the moment he reentered Morgan. It has been about two weeks since this change occurred, and the space has been cleared and repainted into staging rows. Triwalls from the APBS 3 machine are now staged in these dedicated rows so that Jeep

drivers can whisk them away. From my observation, this change is beneficial. Previously, staging the triwalls was dangerous as they were left in the middle of the walking path, and BMCs holding oversized packages became a constant hazard. Our members have expressed that this change is positive. Another change is the removal of the dedicated city manual letters section. This section has been moved and consolidated with outgoing letters—three rows of cases for both. A new painted dispatch lane has been created in the section where the city letters were. The LCRUM was also moved next to the City and Outgoing letters. According to one SDO, the relocation was done to streamline the flow of letters. The LCRUM was originally located on the 10th Avenue side of the building. In August, two of these machines were relocated to

manual letters. From my perspective, it seems the Manual Letters area is now tighter and more cluttered. Employees report that while the adjustment has been challenging, it is manageable, and the overall workflow seems to be functioning adequately. Finally, around mid-August 2024, we noticed the removal of two DBCS machines in automation. There has been no word on why they were removed or where they are going. However, the machines have been wrapped up and are ready to be shipped out. Some members have asked if this means fewer bids for the 2nd-floor automation. As of now, this cannot be confirmed or denied, but

the concern remains. I have inquired whether the same will happen on the 3rd floor, but no information has been provided yet. For now, this remains to be announced. These four major changes highlight the significant reconstruction carried out by Laird. Only time will tell if these changes will benefit or harm the clerks’ craft. With the upcoming batch of PSEs turning over and peak season hiring upon us, it remains a mystery whether new unassigned regulars will be in the building for a prolonged period. The security of clerks’ jobs is always a concern. Will the removal of manual mail sorting benefit management’s

numbers while reducing clerks’ jobs? Will Laird’s new Morgan create an environment of productivity and safety for our members? Will the increased flow of mail damage our already vintage machines? These are questions circulating among the employees at Morgan. Change is always welcome; let’s see if Laird’s changes will stand the test of time and mail. As of now, when something changes, just know “it was Laird’s doing.” In times of change, it is crucial for management to communicate clearly and address employee concerns. Only time will tell how Laird’s decisions will affect the future of Morgan and its employees. ☐

NEW YORK METRO POSTAL UNION

APWU

2024

AFL-CIO

★ = PAYDAY UM= UNION MEETING ● = HOLIDAY

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The Impact of Regional Processing and Distribution Centers on Mail Delivery

By Chuck Zlatkin, Legislative and Political Director

Postmaster Louis DeJoy's latest "plans to improve mail processing and transportation" is dependent upon slower mail in rural ZIP codes across the country. DeJoy promised that the changes would "boost service, reliability, cost efficiency, and overall productivity" while it would save the Postal Service \$30 billion over the next decade."

Philip Bogenberger, spokesman for the United States Postal Service (USPS,) stated in response to concerns from people that Richmond, VA, the first region in the country to receive a Regional Processing and Distribution Center, that their mail delivery will be delayed, "The slowdown will affect mail being picked up from rural areas, rather than delivered to rural areas." Bogenberger explained that, "if a mailpiece enters the mailstream near a USPS Regional Processing and Distribution Center and delivered to a rural area, it will get there

as fast, if not faster, than current delivery. If mail enters the mailstream from a rural area, it may take 12-24 hours extra but still within our service standards."

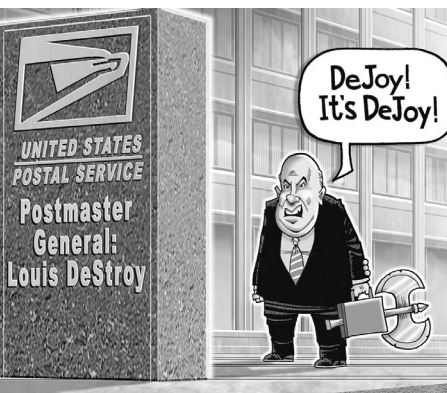
You can't blame the people of Richmond, VA for being concerned. They were part of the pilot region for the "optimized collections" plan, aka Local Transportation Optimization (LTO), which eliminated the evening pickup of mail at post offices for transportation to a processing center. Mail and packages sent at these offices, as well as the mail collected by carriers on their routes, will need to wait until the next morning for collection, when the truck from the processing center drops off the day's mail for carrier delivery and PO boxes.

Under optimized collections 58% of post offices in Richmond lost evening mail collections. Mail dropped off in the afternoon would sit overnight, an analysis of the pilot program proved. Regulators with the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) had asked for the Postal Service to supply a list of specific Richmond-area post offices that had lost evening collections. USPS gave the commission a list confidentially, citing competitive business information. The newspaper the Richmond Times-Dispatch requested the information from the PRC listing the affected post offices, but the PRC did not share the information. The newspaper requested the information from Bogenberger but he also declined.

Steve Hutkins of "Save the Post Office" creates a true public service for those who want to know what is going on with the Postal Service. He said that the USPS has been dressing delays in the guise of improvements and that the latest announcement is no different. Hutkins says the proposal, "totally obscures the extra day. It makes it sound like we're not changing anything, like the service standards are going to be the same." Hutkins goes on to say, "Oh, and by the way, it's going to be an extra day for not only rural, but a lot of the country, it is going to be quite extensive."

And if you aren't confident in Postmaster DeJoy's comments regarding the reality of Regional Processing and Distribution Centers, you should take his words about the coming elections with a grain of salt. DeJoy told the Associated Press, "We're going to be in great shape for the election. I'm pretty confident about everything that we are doing. The American people should be confident."

The 2020 election was handed well by the Postal Service. While DeJoy will take the credit for the success, the reality is that the dedicated work performed by postal workers during the election season is the biggest reason for the positive results. There is no reason to believe that the upcoming election won't bear the same results as far as the Postal Service is concerned. We can only imagine what it will be like in 2028 under the reign of DeJoy's successor. ☞



Cartoonist Mike Thompson comments on USPS changes under Trump-appointee Mike DeJoy.

JOIN NEW YORK METRO AT THE

OCTOBER 1 DAY OF ACTION

WE WON'T BE SILENCED

JAF FACILITY

8TH AVENUE BETWEEN
31ST STREET AND 33RD STREET

11:00am - 12:30pm



Postal workers are taking to the streets to fight for better staffing, better service, the right to public comments, and a good contract now!

Will you stand with us in our fight for a better Post Office?



POSTAL PRIDE

Postal Spotlight:
Brett E. Swanson

Brett E. Swanson is an artist who works primarily in comic book and cartoon art. He has published 18 books in his POWER KID COMICS series. Swanson has also recently begun teaching kids how to create their own comic books.

For more than 30 years, Swanson has worked for the U.S Postal Service and since 2008 he has been working a regular route that includes more than 600 residential and business addresses in downtown Mystic, CT. Swanson 's route has him walking 9 miles a day as he became a regular and familiar face to those he serves.

“Brett is such a personable and charismatic person, it’s impossible not to like him,” said customer Martha Lane. “He is always looking out for his customers and goes out of the way to make sure everyone is safe and well.”

Swanson is eligible to retire in a year-and-a-half, he says that he is not looking forward to leaving his customers. He joked he may still have to take occasional walks along the route just to help both himself and the friends has made adjust to the change.



Brett E. Swanson, www.sickpuppystudios.com

Postal News Briefs

Florida Postal Worker Awarded Huge Settlement

Postal worker Christy Trimbath was struck by a city garbage truck while she was removing mail from her van and was thrown 15 feet. In the subsequent trial, Lake Worth Attorney, Ann Breeden argued that the video from a surveillance camera should not be allowed to be seen by jurors. Trimbath’s attorney, Scott Smith argued that the video was the “best evidence to provide the jury to try our facts in this case.” The video was allowed to be played and the Palm Beach County jurors ended up awarding Trimbath \$5,647,314!

Trump-Era Anti-Union Proposal Finally Shut-down by EEOC

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission closed a controversial chapter of its history Friday when it formally withdrew a regulatory proposal that would have barred federal employees who are union officials from accessing official time to help their colleagues pursue discrimination complaints. In 2019, when the EEOC, then under Trump’s control, proposed the rule. For decades, the agency has guaranteed official time—to federal employees working on their own or their colleagues’ discrimination claims, a policy intended to help victims feel more comfortable and better navigate a complicated adjudication process.

Post Office to be named for postal worker

A post office in Melrose, FL is being dedicated to Pamela Jane Rock, a letter carrier who died in 2022. Rock was attacked by dogs while delivering mail in Interlachen. “Pam had a servant’s heart, and it was obvious in the way she lived her life. While her time on this earth was tragically cut short, she served the U.S. Post Service with passion and integrity,” Congressman Aaron Bean said in a news release. In May, President Joe Biden signed into a law that dedicated the post office to Rock.

CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 18

5:30pm
General Membership Meeting
Via ZOOM

Wednesday, October 16

5:30pm
General Membership Meeting
Via ZOOM

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

Members Only!

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

**For news, upcoming events and more, visit our website at nymetro.org

APWU LOCAL BLDG. CORP

Beginning Balance July 1, 2024	\$	775,791.16
Total Revenue July 2024	\$	150,937.97
Operating Expenses July 2024	\$	164,687.98
Total Net Income July 2024	\$	(13,750.01)
Ending Balance July 30, 2024	\$	762,041.15

SISTERS! As an APWU member, you are a member of NY Metro P.O.W.E.R. (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 on the 4th Thursday of every month at 1:00pm. Because of social distancing concerns, Diane Erlanger, Director of Organization, and Chairperson of NY Metro P.O.W.E.R., told the Union Mail that we would be holding the P.O.W.E.R. meetings on ZOOM at a later time -- 5:30 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

September 25th, 2024 at 5:30 pm
ZOOM Meeting ID #239-026-1053
[Follow ZOOM instructions outlined for the Membership meeting on this page.]



SCAN ME



FOR UNION NEWS, EVENTS,
RESOURCES AND MORE, VISIT
OUR WEBSITE AT
NYMETRO.ORG



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

Periodicals class
POSTAGE PAID
at New York, NY

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR UNION:

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

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

NAME: _____ FACILITY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS: _____

