



The

Union Mail

Vol. 61 No. 8 | Nov/Dec 2018

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.

Rally and Press Conference for Postal Banking. Petitions to Bronx Postmaster Not Accepted!



Participants at press conference (L to R): Congressman Joseph Crowley, NY Metro President Jonathan Smith, Congressman José E. Serrano, NYCCLC President Vinny Alvarez, MC Chuck Zlatkin, NY Metro Executive VP Tiffany Foster, NPMH Local 300 President Kevin Tabarus, Campaign for Postal Banking Katherine Isaac (not in picture)

See pages 5 and 6

When will we matter? "Stand Up for Safe Jobs!"



Jonathan Smith

We come to work to earn a living and to provide a service to the public. Management has a legal and contractual right to provide a safe work environment. We have to

police them to make sure this happens. *Don't wait until it's a tragedy!* In fiscal year 2017, alone, 12 postal employees died on the job and 42,594 injury claims were approved! In the history of our own local, four workers have been killed on duty in *preventable accidents*. APWU says, "Everyone has the right to leave work in one piece."

Article 14.1 of the JCIM states "It is management's responsibility to provide safe working conditions."

Does this happen? NO! For years, we have seen postal management put production over safety, profit over people. When will our safety matter?

Here are some recent problems in our local where the employees' safety and health did not matter to management:

■ **Hurricane Sandy** During Hurricane Sandy, management had employees working in the dark and in some cases flooded conditions. There was no heat.

■ **DVD Parking Lot** Clerk Nadia Assad was hit and killed in the parking lot of the DVD facility in Kearny, due to unsafe conditions in the lot. Management made a big show of going to the employee's funeral, BUT for more than two years they refused to put up stop

signs at the end of each lane! (Thank you to Plant Manager Thomas for at least getting this done!) Worse yet, management made changes that created more hazardous conditions for pedestrians, yet they still haven't converted the lanes back to allow one-way traffic. This mistake was made because they did not involve the union although that is required by both Article 14 and the DVD Local Memo of Understanding (LMOU).

■ **Bronx Legionnaires' Disease** There was an outbreak of legionnaires' disease in the Bronx. Yet management did not notify and educate the employees who may have been affected until the union demanded it.

■ **NDC flooding** In the NDC facility the employees parking lot is always flooded when it's a heavy rain and high tide. One or the other entrance may be closed without notification, causing workers to have to take a long way round to the other side. Yet the employees are punished when they don't have the ability to show for work on time.

"Safety Ambassadors" are not part of the solution

The Postal Service has created Positions that they call "Safety Ambassadors." This program is being challenged by the national APWU. This is nothing more than an attempt to violate the union's contractual rights as per articles 1, 5, and 14. Management is soliciting the people *they* want from the bargaining unit to try to circumvent the authority of the union. This is in direct contradiction to the cooperation on safety demanded by Article 14. The Safety Ambassador Program gives the illusion that there are co-workers

advocating on the workers' behalf. In fact, the Program causes a drop in 1767s and grievances being filed—not because the place is safer, but because the union is cut out of the loop.

"Stand Up for Safe Jobs!" is an APWU campaign that calls on workers to stand up and fight back. Use pen and paper. Fill out "Report of Unsafe Condition or Practice," PS Form 1767. This is a legal form which your supervisor must return to you within 24 hours. If the condition does not get corrected, you can file a safety grievance directly to Step 2. Get the union involved!

Past generations have fought for us to have the right to job safety. When will we matter? We will matter when we start to matter to ourselves! ☒

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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



"A convenient contract"

By Tiffany Foster, Executive Vice-President



Tiffany Foster

While we were giving out the NY Metro Union t-shirts, a worker came up to the officers to discuss a problem. He said he had a grievance that he had been passed over for a maintenance promotion but was performing the duties of the higher level position and not getting paid for it. We asked, "Who did you speak to? Did you go to management? Did you go to the Union?" He said no. He just didn't bother. Then it turned out that this had happened two or three years ago!

We explained that there are time limits on filing a grievance. He was annoyed that we couldn't grieve now for then. We told him, "You made a decision not to pursue the grievance. The contract gives you 14 days to file once you are aware. It's way past that now."

His answer was "I don't care what the contract says, I am going to keep on doing what I'm doing."

What's the problem with this? Employees want us to file a grievance because they feel they were wronged. But they let the issue go beyond the 14-day time limit to file a grievance. Sometimes there is something wrong but they've allowed years to pass until it became a problem for them. Some employees want to use the contract to work for them only when it's convenient.

They want to throw away the parts that they don't like. (How do you handle your personal life when things don't go the way you want?)

For example, clerks know the supervisor is not rotating the Overtime Desired List in the area as required by the contract. The clerks don't say anything, because they are getting extra hours of overtime.

In one station we uncovered that employees have made personal deals with management to shorten their bid lunch from one hour to 1/2 hour to get a half hour of overtime! This is a violation of our contract. Management is in charge of creating the work schedules. In this station, they posted the bid lunches as an hour. If they wanted to change the lunch breaks, management had a contractual obligation under Article 5 to notify and meet with the union to make this a staffing change, but the employees chose not to say anything to their union.

Another example is when the employee makes a deal with management to work beyond six hours without taking a lunch because they want to leave early. This is a violation of not only the contract but the law. But the employees do it because it benefits them at the moment. Then how do they challenge management when they are directed to "work through lunch"?

When we pick and choose those parts of the contract that are to our advantage and then let management violate the contract when it doesn't work for us, we show that we don't

care. This opens the door for the Postal Service to violate the contract whenever they want.

Ask yourself:

- ***Is the contract necessary to protect our rights?***
- ***Is the Union necessary?***
- ***Do I want the union to fight on my behalf or do I not?***
- ***Do I want the union to ensure that I have S/L, A/L, vacation, bidding rights—or not?***

If the answer is YES, then everything applies whether we like it or not. The contract covers everyone, so it can't be altered to suit an individual.

We have to ask ourselves: when every day around the world, unions are under attack, when unions are literally fighting for survival in an anti-labor climate, how do we get the strength to preserve our rights? This is how: We stand together; We force management to honor our contract; We honor our own contract! By doing this, we show we are strong.

When we let management violate the contract because a particular action benefits us as individuals, we become their accomplices. This sends a message that we are divided. We're weak. We don't need a union.

Really? Think about your job without a contract, without rights, without guaranteed benefits, work hours, and pay. That's what it means to work without a union! Remember, we NEED OUR UNION! Support your union! ☑

The U.S. Mail is not for sale!

By Nora Taggart, Legislative and Political Director

“Our postal system has never belonged to any president, any political party, or any company. It's belonged to the people of this country.”

The quote above is from Julie Bates, a 22-year postal worker, who was one of thousands of postal workers that participated in one of many rallies held across the country to oppose the Trump Administration's proposal to privatize the U.S. Postal Service.

Back in April, President Donald Trump ordered the creation of a task force to study the postal service, saying the agency is on an “unsustainable financial path” and “must be restructured to prevent a taxpayer-funded bailout.” Although President Trump received the report in early August, he is withholding it from the public until after the midterm elections.

Then, in June, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a report that claimed the USPS “can no longer support” the current universal service requirement that requires daily mail delivery, six days a week, to 157 million U.S. addresses and proposed that the US Postal Service be privatized.

At the rallies, which were held in over 140 cities nationwide, postal workers were joined by community supporters and even members of Congress. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Congressman Luis Guterrez (D-IL) both spoke at the rally in downtown Chicago. Reps. Grace Meng (D-N.Y.) and Dwight Evans (D-PA)—joined demonstrations in

their states. In Washington, DC, Rep. Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-DC) told rally members that it was unlikely the plan would actually make it through Congress. She added that companies like Amazon and eBay have already come out in opposition of a privatization plan.

Trump's plan to privatize the U.S. Postal Service has received bipartisan push back in both the House and the Senate. House Resolution 993 and



The next generation needs the public postal service!

Senate Resolution 633, to “ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization” has been gaining a lot of support from both sides of the aisle.

The fight is just beginning

These rallies are only the latest in a series of ongoing actions taken by unions and members of Congress to halt the administration's privatization plans. However, it's going to depend

on each and every one of us to keep the momentum going. Continue to proudly support the #NotForSale movement against Privatization by wearing your shirt proudly, sharing on social media, and voting in November. We need to elect a Congress that believes in supporting workers and in a strong Public Postal Service.

To see the images the APWU National has received of postal workers out in the streets on Oct. 8, go to:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/apwunational> 📧

CONTRACT UPDATE: Negotiations extended to November 20, 2018

10/20/2018—The APWU and the USPS have agreed to keep talking for another 30 days.

APWU President and lead negotiator Mark Dimondstein explained that, “We are still working towards our goal of reaching a negotiated settlement that can be voted on by the members. . . . Our goals remain consistent and we are still demanding fair wage increases, COLA, job security, bridging the gaps of the divisive three-tier wage structure, addressing concerns of hostile work environments, seeking better career and full-time opportunities for both PSEs and PTFs, and expanded postal services.”

Director of Industrial Relations Vance Zimmerman thanked the members for our visible support of the contract campaign. “We need to keep it going!” 📧

Bronx Postal Banking: Supported by Labor, Elected Officials, and the People

By Chuck Zlatkin, Director of Communications

A press conference was held on October 16, 2018, outside the Hunts Point Post Office in the

retirees!) have been actively involved in this petition drive. More than 52% of Bronx residents are underserved by banks. They need affordable, non-profit, consumer-driven financial services.

The press conference featured Jonathan Smith, President of NYMAPU; Kevin Tabarus, President of Local 300, National Postal Mail Handlers Union; Vincent Alvarez, President of the New York City Central Labor Council; Katherine Isaac of the Campaign for Postal Banking. Political clout came from Bronx Congressmen José E. Serrano and Joseph Crowley who

today were unveiling a letter they had co-authored, along with

Representatives Adriano Espaillat and Eliot Engel, to the U.S. PMG supporting the Campaign for Postal Banking and expressing the critical need for postal banking in the Bronx.

Disrespect for the people

Just prior to the press conference, a delegation of attendees, accompa-



Congressman Joseph Crowley, NYMAPU President Jonathan Smith, and Congressman José E. Serrano

Bronx in support of the Bronx Campaign for Postal Banking. The plan was to present Bronx Postmaster Scott Farrar the petitions addressed to him and US Postmaster General Megan Brennan, signed by over 5,300 Bronx residents. The petition, "Make Postal Banking in the Bronx a Reality Now!" calls upon the Postal Service to "take immediate action to provide affordable financial services including ATMs, paycheck cashing, bill payment, and electronic money transfers" to the people of the Bronx.

NY Metro Area Postal Union and APWU are part of the Campaign and members (especially



NYMAPU at Hunts Point Station



Attempting to deliver petitions to Bronx Postmaster

nied by video crews from NY 1 and Bronx 12 News and other members of the press, went into the Hunts Point Post Office to present the petition signatures to the Bronx Postmaster's representative.

Although Bronx Postmaster Farrar had turned down an invitation to attend the event, the inexplicable refusal to have a representative accept the petitions from the community, was another example of postal management disrespecting the people they serve!

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Bronx Postal Banking: Supported by Labor, Elected Officials, and the People continued from page 5



President Smith speaking at press conference

It was decided that Congressman Serrano would submit the petitions to Postmaster Farrar later, and see if Farrar would refuse to accept them from him, as well. The crowd thought this was an appropriate move because the Bronx needs postal banking now!

Katherine Isaac of the Campaign for Postal Banking detailed the need for a public banking alternative. The big banks have abandoned communities across the United States, let-

ting exploitative financial businesses fill the void to the detriment of working-class people in neighborhoods like those in the Bronx. She added that, “Postal Banking in the Bronx would be a win, win for the people of the community.” Kevin Tabarus and Vinny Alvarez both talked about the importance of a strong Postal Service and the role of expanded financial services in the Postal Service for working people throughout the nation.

NY Metro President Jonathan Smith gave an impassioned call for preserving and strengthening a public Postal Service. “Affordable finan-



Campaign for Postal Banking's Katherine Isaac.

cial services, available in public post offices across the country, would be a great benefit to working families,” said Smith. “That’s especially true here in the Bronx where half the population either does not have a bank account or is using alternative financial institutions, often at great expense.”

President Smith’s conclusion was carried on Bronx News 12 and received tremendous response from the pub-



President Smith being interviewed

lic. “Residents of the Bronx need affordable banking services—and the women and men of the U.S. Postal Service are ready to deliver!”

THE PETITION DRIVE IN SUPPORT OF POSTAL BANKING IN THE BRONX CONTINUES

People can obtain blank petitions from the Campaign for Postal Banking, PO Box 872, Parkchester Station, Bronx, NY 10462. NY Metro members can get petitions from their shop stewards or from the Union office.

Coverage of the Hunts Point Press Conference and action on Postal Banking included stories on New York 1, Bronx News 12, NPR, WFUV, the *Labor Press*, *Riverdale Press*, *WBAI*, *The Independent*, and the *New Hampshire Labor News*.



Diane Erlanger, Exec VP Tiffany Foster, and Denise Willis

Union Gear

The shirts have sparked some sense of pride in Morgan P&DC. Today is Thursday and at the clock I'm seeing clerks wearing their shirts knowing that it's Union Gear Day. As I walk thru the building I see different crafts wearing the shirts that pay union dues to the APWU and wearing it with APWU pride! ☑

-TYRONE BLOUNT



NJI&NDC



NJI&NDC clerk, maintenance, and motor vehicle



"Pumpkin Man" a member at the NDC



Church Street Station

Union Pride

By Kay-Ann Walker, Shop Steward

To be proud, first you must be aware. Going around to the stations with the officers, handing out union t-shirts, was an awakening experience for me. It was also an awakening experience for most of

Benefits, Good Service” show what we are fighting for in contract negotiations.

With the shirts, we informed them of Union Thursdays and let them know we are one in solidarity.

They were excited to hear that APWU members across the nation were going to be wearing union gear at the same time they would. Learning they were not alone sparked a prideful smile and quiet strength in them.

Knowing that all over the country we would stand together and show our strength in numbers made them stand tall. I

watched as members came up with more reasons, more days, more pride for their union gear (“Solidarity Tuesdays,” “Union Pride Fridays,” “Just Because Wednesdays”)! It was absolutely

inspiring what a t-shirt had done, what a symbol had awakened in them. I left every station fired up and ready to go to the next and they didn't disappoint. For I am not my sister's keeper, but I *am* my sister. ☐



Morgan P&DC

our members. The message on the back that “WE DESERVE: Respect, a Safe Workplace, Good Jobs, Good



West Farms Station

Why a contract matters

By Flo Summergrad

Just over 10% of workers in the United States have a negotiated contract, a “Collective Bargaining Agreement” (CBA). Most Americans are covered by U.S. labor law—“employment at will.” Under “employment at will,” the boss can dismiss a worker for any reason and without warning. The employee has only one right—the right to quit.

With a union, workers together can modify the absolute power of the employer through negotiating a contract agreement. Without collec-

tive bargaining, management's authority is unlimited. This is the reason corporate America is attacking the right to collective bargaining.

Postal workers in the United States were denied this right until the Great Postal Strike of 1970. Those who worked the U.S. mail had to appeal to Congress about wages, hours, and working conditions in the post office. The crippling impact of the week-long postal strike forced the government and postal management to recognize four national postal

unions as bargaining agents. The first CBA (negotiated in 1971 by all four major postal unions together) laid a solid basis for our current contract.

Even though the unions now bargain separately, postal workers still have powerful national contracts that show people in every state the power of collective bargaining. No wonder the privatizers want to destroy our unions and our CBAs. Right now, our negotiators are continuing the fight for a good contract in 2018. ☐

Thanks to the Union! Custodians win money from 2015 Line H Cases

Custodians are noticing extra money on their checks for PP20/18. This payment is not out of postal good will! It is a result of a regional grievance settlement made by APWU NE Regional Maintenance NBA Dave Sarnacki. If you are a custodian, this extra money is thanks to the Union that negotiated this language, grieved for the payment, and then won it.

In 2015, postal management failed to comply with the TL 5 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of June 14, 2014, in a number of offices – including those represented by NY Metro. This settlement is a big WIN for “Line H” cases which came from the hard work of the APWU Locals. NY Metro, with the most custodial employees, had to research a lot of data.

What is Line H?

In October, the start of the Postal Fiscal Year (FY), the total custodial work hours for the previous year are

taken from the reports for custodial work recorded as Labor Distribution Code (LDC)38. This is compared with 90% of the custodial work hours required, which are shown on Line H of PS Form 4852. For each hour that this falls short of 90% of Line H, financial compensation must be made to the custodians. This agreement was made to make management accountable. They were able to slightly cut the custodial staffing, but they still had to complete the same amount per cleaning standard. If they don't, they will pay. Being hit in the pocket will eventually give them no choice but to increase the custodial staffing.

Since management resists making these required payments, grievances have been filed. In this case, those grievances for FY 2015 in the Northeast region were still pending. APWU Maintenance NBA Dave Sarnacki came to an agreement to pay all custodians who were on the

rolls on September 30, 2015. The Settlement Agreement includes the language: “The parties agree that they will work to process FY 2016 and FY 2017 grievances expeditiously.” This should eliminate the long wait for payouts.

Just as “an injury to one is an injury to all,” a win for one is a win for all. Each victory is an example of the power of having a fighting union.

We Deserve a Clean Workplace!

Management must clean stations to acceptable OSHA standards. We know they are not. We know that the TL-5 cleaning products and equipment do not work properly. We encourage all postal workers to fight for clean, sanitary conditions. Fill out Form PS 1767s (“Unsafe Condition or Practice”) and demand that you work in a safe and clean environment. It is your Article 14 contractual right! ☑

VOTE in NY Metro Steward Elections! November 11–20, 2018 • Your VOTE is your VOICE!

Rules for the NY Metro Area Postal Union were issued by the Election Committee and posted in all stations by October 18, 2018. By now, interested members have submitted their candidacy. If there is more than one candidate for shop steward in the P/Ls designated for a steward, there will be an election. The information for where and when to vote in your station is posted.

We are a democratic union. Our Local believes that the members have a right to elect the stewards who represent them. If there is an election in your area, it is important that you VOTE! In every election, your VOTE is your VOICE.

By using the right to vote, you strengthen the fight for democracy. This includes voting in union elections at every level.

 **VOTE!**


PERF is ours.
Give today!



In the aftermath of natural disasters, along with emergency responders, it is postal workers who track down the missing and bring mail and supplies to those suffering loss and damage. Through the post office, they are able to restore a feeling of normalcy through the all-important USPS communications network. Better than anyone, postal workers know who really lives where. When electricity is out, phone lines are down, and roads are blocked, somehow the carriers, clerks, mail handlers, and drivers get letters and packages through.

Yet postal workers who live in the areas impacted by hurricanes, mudslides, wildfires, and other disasters are also suffering damage and loss. The Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF) is a fund to aid postal workers themselves. It is equally managed by all postal unions and management associations; it is funded almost entirely by postal workers, retirees, and their friends.

Over its 28 years, PERF has provided more than \$19 million in assistance to postal workers and their families. The funds go to rebuild their homes and replace necessities. But with the increasing number of calamitous storms – most recently in the Carolinas and Florida, the need for help is rising.

The tempo of natural disaster is increasing but the tempo of giving to PERF has not kept pace. Only 1% of postal workers donate to this fund that is for our own postal family. The Unions are making this a call to our members. You can make PERF your choice for a CFC donation or just give directly. 

No one thinks disaster will happen to them.

***Take two minutes. Give two dollars.
Recruit two co-workers.***

To give to PERF:
www.postalrelief.com

Postal News Briefs

CANADIAN POSTAL WORKERS START ROTATING STRIKES

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has been in contract negotiations with Canada Post which deadlocked on Monday, October 21, 2018. Outstanding issues are forced overtime, job security, better health and safety, and expansion of services. Unlike their sisters and brothers in the U.S., Canadian postal workers have the right to strike and have already taken a strike vote.

The union, which represents the nation's 50,000 postal workers of all crafts, has begun to put pressure on Canada Post by staging 24-hour strikes in 4 cities at a time. Nancy Dodsworth, President of CUPW's Edmonton Local, explained: "By doing rotating strikes, there is less impact to the Canadian public because we're still open for business, we're still processing mail, but things will just take a little longer to get through."



USPS PROPOSES PRICE HIKE OF 5 CENTS, BIGGEST SINCE 1991


The U.S. Postal Service is seeking to increase the price of its first-class mail forever stamp in the biggest price hike since 1991. The USPS Board of Governors requested a 5 cent increase to the forever stamp, up to 55 cents. Priority Mail flat rate prices could also increase by an average of 5.9 %. For example, a medium flat rate box that now goes for \$13.65 would increase to \$14.35.

The Postal Regulatory Commission must approve the changes before they can go into effect.



USPS REALIZED JUST 5% OF PROJECTED SAVINGS FROM SLOWING MAIL DELIVERY

The U.S. Postal Service realized just 5 percent of the savings it projected over a two-year period from a controversial decision to slow mail delivery to enable facility closures, according to a new audit.

Postal management told its regulatory body it would save \$1.6 billion in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 by eliminating overnight delivery of regular, first-class mail and pushing back some of its two-day delivery to a three-day window, but the mailing agency's Inspector General found it did not even come close to reaching that estimate. USPS instead saw about \$90 million in savings, only about one-twentieth of its estimate. 



CALENDAR

Wednesday, November 21

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

As per the NYMAPU Constitution:
NO MEETINGS IN DECEMBER
Have a healthy and happy holiday season!

Wednesday, January 16, 2019

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

APWU LOCAL 10 BLDG. CORP

September 2018 Building Corp figures will appear in the next issue of *The Union Mail*.

ALL SISTERS WELCOME!



Wednesday, November 28

1:00 pm
Monthly P.O.W.E.R. Meeting
NY Metro Union Office
350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

1:00 pm
Monthly P.O.W.E.R. Meeting
NY Metro Union Office
350 West 31st Street, 3rd Floor

➔ **Photos for *The Union Mail* can now be sent to: UnionMail@nymetro.org**

**** Holiday Party ****

You are cordially invited to join NY Metro Officers in celebrating the holidays!
Friday, December 7, 2018 3pm – 11pm
AFSCME Building
420 West 45th Street, NY, NY 10036
(between 9th and 10th Avenues) First Floor

PLEASE PRESENT MEMBERSHIP ID AT THE DOOR

Food and Beverages provided
NY METRO MEMBERS ONLY!!!
RSVP by November 27, 2018
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*The Officers of NY Metro Area
Postal Union Wish You and Your Loved
Ones a Healthy and Joyous Holiday
Season and All the Best for the Coming
New Year!*

