

The

Union Mail

Vol. 63 No. 8 | Nov/Dec 2020

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.

Spreading the word on billboards and on the radio in the New York Metro Area



New York Metro Area Postal Union has created a media campaign to protect and support the People's Post Office. Outdoor advertising in coordination with local radio commercials are appearing in the New York area to promote our Union's message.

Trust goes beyond just delivering the mail



Jonathan Smith

This fall's elections will have a major impact on the future of the Postal Service, one of America's most trusted institutions. As November approaches, members of Congress and state election

officials have grown increasingly concerned that the USPS will fail at a critical moment: a closely contested vote that will involve a record number of people casting a ballot by mail. That worry was fueled by President Donald Trump's unfounded allegation that voting by mail leads to massive fraud. The newly appointed Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, warned state election officials in August that the USPS might not be able to meet deadlines for delivering ballots for the November elections.

Let us be honest about what is delaying America's mail. It is sure not the dedicated workforce. Until Congress forced reversal of some of PMG DeJoy's policies to leave mail behind and slash needed overtime, there was intentional mail delay. Even now, mailboxes and sorting equipment are not replaced.

This is part of a long planned effort to undermine the Postal Service and sell parts of it off for private profit. In late 2006, the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) passed with both Republican and Democratic support. It irrationally requires the USPS to prefund retirement health benefits for people who are not even born, yet Congress (whichever Party was in control) has not rolled it back. Since the Postal Service receives no

tax dollars, this put the agency more than \$60 billion in debt even before the COVID-19 crisis.

The next major attack was contracting out window clerk duties in a partnership with Staples, which paid poor wages to non-postal employees but charged customers the same rates. Staples got discounts from the Postal Service and pocketed the difference as profit. Meantime, the USPS slashed staffing, claiming the mail volume was down. But this was a lie to fool the American people.

Then, in 2015, the Postal Service lowered delivery standards which delayed the mail and opened an opportunity for private competitors. This was setting up the Postal Service for possible privatization. PMG DeJoy has escalated the mail delays with the same goal.

Yet despite these attacks from the very government that the Postal Service represents, postal workers have stayed committed to the American people, who depend on us to do our job. Every community in America has been able to rely on the Postal Service to deliver vital goods and services, including life-saving medications.

The Founding Fathers wanted a service that would bind together the scattered populations of the new United States. This is still its function. The Postal Service is a national treasure that serves the public and provides career opportunities in stable jobs. Postal workers have braved all conditions (hurricanes, wildfires, blizzards) to bring mail to every door at an affordable rate. This obligation and mission have not changed.

The Postal Service has assisted after disasters, thanks to employees' knowledge of the landscape. Postal

workers delivered despite mail bombs, anthrax, and shootings on their routes.

Now our challenge is COVID-19. As essential workers we have risked our lives. More than 40,000 postal workers have been quarantined; more than 3,000 have contracted the virus; more than 100 have lost their lives to keep the mail moving.

The world has changed in fundamental ways. But a stable, dedicated USPS workforce continues to deliver the mail through a network that runs through every city street and rural outpost. The public trust – already the highest for any federal agency – has grown during the pandemic. Postal employees provide a public service. Their function is too essential – and too delicate – to be jettisoned for private profit. Remember: trust goes beyond just delivering the mail. ☐

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Still no financial relief for Postal Service

Chuck Zlatkin, Legislative and Political Director

This is a very critical time for postal workers and those who depend upon a public Postal Service. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Postal Service is facing a substantial financial shortfall which jeopardizes its very future. The bottom line figures that postal advocates and the postal unions have been pushing for is \$25 billion in relief for the Postal Service.

For months, in discussions for further economic stimulus, financial relief for the Postal Service has been discussed by the leadership of both parties. As of press time, no financial relief for the Postal Service is forthcoming. But beyond that, financial relief for the American people was also on hold. Yes, the focus for NYMAPU is primarily on what impacts the Postal Service, postal workers, and our members. But sometimes, we have to look beyond our immediate goals, and look at what is important to the labor movement and the working class as a whole.

While financial relief for the Postal Service is essential, so is relief for Americans suffering from the impact of the pandemic. Millions are losing their jobs; millions are losing access to healthcare; many small businesses are no longer able to hold on. People are facing eviction. And yet there was no financial relief forthcoming.

The Democrats had gone through the motions in the House once again passing a Heroes Bill 2.0 with only Democrat support for \$2.2 trillion in

relief, which did include the \$25 billion for the Postal Service. The Republicans in the Senate were not moved. Earlier the Republicans had brought forth their “skinny” bill for \$650 billion, which included only \$10 billion in relief for the Postal Service.

There were encouraging signs at the beginning of October. There were serious discussions for a relief package among Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Chief-of Staff for the White House Mark Meadows, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. What appeared to be the stumbling block was the exact amount of the package. The Democrats wanted \$2.2 trillion compared to the Republicans \$1.8 trillion. Then, all of a sudden, President Trump announced, on Twitter, that he was calling off his representatives from negotiating for a stimulus package until after the elections.

The response from the public was swift and strong. Responding to the negative feedback he was getting, the same day that he called for no relief, Trump changed his tune with a possible call for a stand-alone bill for relief for the airline industry. Trump then tweeted that maybe there should be a package. He claimed

that he was unhappy with both the Democrats and the Republicans because their numbers were “too low.” Trump’s erratic behavior was not helping, other than making Americans aware that their needs were not being addressed.

Pressure began to grow on both sides of the aisle that the American people needed relief and needed it now. It appeared that more and more citizens were not satisfied with the apparent political games that both parties were playing. The Democrats, under the leadership of Nancy Pelosi, made it clear that they would only approve a package that met their proposed number. Was Pelosi more concerned with not giving a package that Trump could take credit for in his re-election campaign, than getting necessary relief for suffering citizens? At the same time, Republicans were pushing for their figure, knowing that there was a sizeable number of right-wing fiscal conservative senators who would not okay any package that included financial relief. Both sides were playing politics, while Americans are suffering.

As we go to press, it is not known what the results are of the Presidential election and what the makeup will be for the Senate and House in 2021. Whoever gets in, our work is not done. We will have to fight to make sure that the Postal Service gets the funds it needs regardless of which of the political parties is in power. ☐



Know your rights: “Get me a shop steward!”

These should be the first words out of your mouth if a supervisor is going to question you. If you want, you can say, “Please get me a shop steward!” but you must ask. Once you have requested a steward, no questioning can commence until a steward is present. These are your “Weingarten rights” based on a Supreme Court decision. (These hold no matter who is asking questions that you think may lead to discipline – including postal inspectors.)

The same is true if you are handed a written disciplinary action. You must request a steward. Do NOT think that your union representative knows and will come to you. There have been instances where a grievance is not timely filed because the employee expected the steward to mystically guess that a discipline was issued.

Article 17 Section 3 of the

National Agreement says that the steward’s request for union time “shall not be unreasonably denied.” The dispute arises about what is “reasonable.” In 2010, the Northeast Regional Coordinator for the APWU and the Manager of Labor Relations for the NE Area signed an agreement on February 10, 2010, stating that, ‘Reasonable,’ should be within 2 hours unless there is a real problem.

It is NOT the grievant’s responsibility to search for a steward. It is the supervisor’s duty. The employee must ask the supervisor to “Get me a shop steward,” and the supervisor (be it SDO, SMO, STO) is obligated to do so within a reasonable amount of time.

When the issue is urgent (for example, the worker needs to go home and is being denied), the supervisor cannot delay the request. If the worker is being placed on Emergency Suspension, a steward

must be gotten immediately.

Otherwise, the supervisor must obtain a union representative as quickly as possible. Excuses like, “I’m too busy,” or “wait until lunch,” do not fly. You have the right to a steward on the clock. A supervisor’s refusal or failure to make the effort to get a steward for the aggrieved employee should be filed as a separate grievance. Refusal to allow the steward to have union time is also a grievance.

The supervisor cannot tell you, “this is not a grievance.” It is up to the steward to investigate and determine whether or not a grievance exists.

Asking for a steward does not mean you stop work until the steward arrives. Keep track of the time you asked. If need be, make a second request and put this one in writing. But don’t give up. ☒

POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST? RETURN TO WORK AFTER COVID-19 ABSENCE?

These are the emails and phone numbers issued by management for the NY and NNJ Districts. If you email or leave a phone message, give your name and valid contact information. NJ also has a management designee and fax number to send medical documentation related to COVID.

NY District OHNA Contact Information:

[HR is Human Resources/OHN is the Occupational Health Nurse]

HR Manager: Reghuvaran Nair
reghuvaran.nair@usps.gov 212-330-2802

OHN: Kim Young Hee, RN 212-330-3447
Young.h.kim@usps.gov

OHNA: Rolando Pasag, RN 212-330-3642

NNJ District OHNA Contact Information:

HR Manager: Michael R Rizzolo
NNJ District

Michael.R.Rizzolo@usps.gov

OHN: Aleksandr /Alex/ Tsarik, RN
732-819-3667 M-Fr

OHNA: Lina Aranda, RN 732-819-3611 M-F

*NNJ: Management or employee must send the following information to:
Margaret.A.Hayes@usps.gov*

- Employee’s name and current valid contact information
- Any medical documentation related to COVID are to either fax or email to the OHNA at: 651-306-6127 (fax) 732-819-3524 (fax) NNJD-DL-OCCUPATIONALHEALTHSERVICES@usps.gov ☒

The First Female Recession

By Flo Summergrad

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned back the clock on decades of female economic progress. This is being called “the first female recession.”

In September of 2020, 865,000 women left the labor force. This means more women left the workforce than the total number of jobs added as the economy struggles to recover. This is approximately four times the number of men who dropped out of the workforce. In 2020, female unemployment reached double digits for the first time since 1948, with women of color hit the hardest. As of October, the unemployment rate for black women is 14%; for Latinas, it is 15.3%.

And we have to remember that unemployment statistics only reflect the numbers for people who are seeking work. Many women have given up the hope of work because there is no way to balance child and elder care with no social services.

This disparity has two main causes. Women still bear the primary responsibility for caring for the home, the children, and the elderly. The crisis has exposed the fact that our society has not equalized the gender roles in the family. So even those who have the skills to work from home are hampered by the demands of kids and parents who are home as well. Even in heterosexual, two-parent families, the burden of assisting with virtual learning while schools are closed falls more on mothers than fathers.

The second reason is that the majority of women workers are in jobs that are in the hospitality and service industries – like hotel workers, waitresses, salespeople. These are areas that have closed completely during the pandemic. And if those places reopen, they may hire fresh

labor instead of the employees they let go. In California, AB 3216, or "Right to Recall," introduced by Assembly member Ash Kalra, allows travel and hospitality employees – laid off due to the pandemic – to be given preferential treatment once rehiring commences.

When the Disney Co. announced it would lay off 28,000 employees from its Parks Division, workers and their families caravanned to the state capitol in Sacramento to demand the governor pass AB 3216. Their union, UNIITE-HERE, emailed a statement to Governor Newsom, saying, “Our members have given decades of their lives to companies like Disney. Now through no fault of their own, they are being laid off.” The Right to Recall Bill is being supported by SAG-AFTRA, the entertainers’ union, as well as the unions for Major League Baseball and the NFL.

There is a real possibility that jobs lost in this period will never come back. The analysts say that of the women laid off, about 8% have zero chance of being called back to the workforce (as opposed to 6.4% of laid-off men).

Women in the Post Office

Even though women in the Postal Service have jobs, the COVID-19 conditions create extra stress. For most women, the pressures of a life with no day care, closed schools, and little outside activities has made home a burden rather than a refuge. While many men have stepped up to share the burden of monitoring virtual classes, it is estimated that $\frac{3}{4}$ of this parenting/teaching is being

shouldered by women.

The ten-week federal childcare leave through the Families First Corona Response Act (FFCRA) was a help, but with the pandemic going on and on and many schools closed or closing this fall, workers are still stuck using unpaid time to be home during school hours. Many parents are forced to work to pay the bills. Accommodations by changing hours is helpful when possible, but awkward schedules with work and virtual school have left mothers sleep deprived and exhausted. Keeping children safe often means keeping them restrained because the threat of illness is everywhere. Again, this task usually falls on the female parents.

At the same time, the very existence of postal jobs is under threat. There is the need to stand up and fight to save America’s Postal Service, which means getting the word out to friends, relatives, and neighbors. All this with a collapsing system of social services.

But women have always been strong and resilient in times of crisis. Using online forums, Zoom, emails, and other forms of communication, women continue to find ways to lead the struggle forward. Our own union has thrived behind the leadership of many women stewards and officers. With the American Postal Workers Union, we have power, as well as P.O.W.E.R. (Post Office Women for Equal Rights.) It is critical that we preserve the gains that postal sisters have made by keeping our equal pay for equal work, our benefits, and – most important -- the USPS alive as a public service. ☐

Arbitration WIN uses Article 37.3.A.1 to defeat reversions

By Flo Summergrad

“Congratulations to APWU advocate, Christine Pruitt and the Great Bend Kansas Local in successfully winning a post-Das award case involving issues of a reversion/Article 37.3.A.1/maximization.” – Jonathan Smith

This win is significant, not just in successfully defeating a job reversion and winning a PTF conversion and back pay, but in dispelling the gloom and doom that had followed the Das arbitration decision last July 24th.

Arbitrator Angela D. McKee made a firm ruling in favor of the APWU position on Article 37.3.A.1 as it applied to the reversion of clerk craft jobs. In this case, the USPS reverted a NFFT position at the Post Office in Ellinwood, KS, when the incumbent retired after 8 years in the position. The clerk bid job was replaced by using two Part Time Flexies, which the Postal Service defended using the “earned hours.”

The Union demonstrated that the number of available clerk work hours had not been reduced and argued that “The Service’s desire to have more flexibility or cost containment by using PTFs is inconsistent with the contractual mandate that it make every effort to create desirable full time duty assignments from ‘all available work.’”

USPS management tried to invoke the national Das award, saying that 37.3.A.1 is not the basis for creating a new duty assignment. Arbitrator McKee ruled that this was “misplaced” because reversion cases are distinct from maximization cases seeking new positions. “Full time duty assignments should not be reverted if the work the previous incumbent performed still exists.” In 2011, the parties agreed that the work in Ellinwood be considered a fulltime NFFT duty assignment. The Postal Service did not show that the amount of clerk work had decreased

enough to warrant reversion. She summarizes that “Although Article 37 gives management the right to revert vacated positions, its discretion is not unfettered, and must accord with other provisions on the agreement, including the ‘every effort will be made’ language.” Neither Das nor any other arbitrator has upheld the “earned hours” argument. In fact, “The Service has not provided any authority that ‘earned hours’ must be the baseline.”

So, despite the moaning on the social media after the July Das arbitration “loss,” it is clear that Article 37.3.A.1 still has contractual teeth. APWU Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks told our stewards to be careful to keep the issue of new duty assignments separate “when we are defending duty assignments already in existence.” Grieving for new jobs is a different issue. It is important to run all major cases by the leadership to make sure we get this right. 📧

NY Metro Area Postal Union President Jonathan Smith answers PMG DeJoy with these videos.

WATCH & SHARE!

- Jonathan Smith, *Public Confidence*
- Jonathan Smith, *Procrastination*
- Jonathan Smith, *We Deliver America’s Mail*

View these videos (under 2 minutes each) on the NY Metro Area Postal Union Facebook page or YouTube Stand by Your Mail.



Lawsuits win against DeJoy's plans time and time again

By Chuck Zlatkin, Legislative and Political Director

Through NYAMPU's "See Something, Say Something, Do Something" campaign, our members have been able to provide essential information about mail delays. This information has been helpful in the lawsuit launched by the New York State Attorney General Letitia James against Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, President Donald Trump, and the United States Postal Service filed in August. In addition to New York State, the lawsuit was supported by the States of Hawaii and New Jersey, the City of New York, and the City and County of San Francisco.

On September 28, Judge Emmett G. Sullivan issued a temporary injunction in the *New York v. Trump* case. Judge Sullivan found that, "Plaintiffs have shown that there is a substantial likelihood that the ongoing non-speculative harms they allege caused by mail delays are 'fairly traceable' to the Postal Policy Changes." He also focuses on the fact that the USPS didn't follow proper procedure when it failed to request an advisory opinion as it is mandated to do.

The ruling in the New York case was similar to the ruling by judges in all the 12 lawsuits filed. In case after case, the arguments made by the plaintiffs were overwhelmingly convincing. The first case filed back on August 8, was by the Democracy Project, which was a Freedom of Information (FOIA) suit against the USPS for documents which the Postal Service refused to present. The suit sought an injunction on an



expedited basis, for "documents responsive to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests related to the agency's preparations for the anticipated surge in voting by mail in the 2020 general election."

August 18, 2020, Mondaire Jones and other individuals filed suit to reverse the changes instituted by DeJoy that impacted negatively on the Postal Service's ability to deliver mail in a timely fashion, including absentee ballots. On September 21, 2020, Judge Victor Marrero granted the injunction in *Jones v. USPS* requiring the Postal Service to restore overtime and to treat all mail-in ballots as First Class mail.

Additional lawsuits were filed by the NAACP; the National Urban League, joined by Common Cause and the League of Women Voters; the State of Washington, joined by 13 other states; the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, joined by five other states and the District of Columbia; Teresa Richardson and three other plaintiffs; Melvin Johnakin; Vote Forward and four other plaintiffs; Governor Steve Bullock of Montana; and 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East.

Most of the cases cite the Postal

Reorganization Act, 39 U.S.C. § 101(e), which says that "in determining all policies for postal services, the Postal Service shall give the highest consideration to the requirement for the most expeditious collection, transportation, and delivery of important letter mail."

In September, 14 Democratic elected officials including Senator Tom Carper of Delaware, filed amicus briefs in the NAACP and New York Attorney General lawsuits, two lawsuits challenging recent operational changes implemented by the Postal Service. The briefs argued that the USPS didn't follow procedure determined by Congress when it made national policy changes, and therefore, the changes were in violation of federal law.

As rulings by judges continued to favor the plaintiffs in all cases, the Postal Service appealed certain rulings, but in most cases the judges are also ruling in favor of the plaintiffs.

Because of the many lawsuits that have been filed successfully, the Postal Service has been forced to return to making mail-in ballots a priority in this election. Under this pressure, the Postal Service has made every attempt to assure the public that there is nothing to worry about in terms of voting by mail.

These have been important victories, but it is evident that DeJoy and the Postal Service only look at this as a delay in their plans to reduce service, reduce employees, and continue preparing for privatization. We still have our work cut out for us. Lots of it. ☒

BOOK REVIEW

A Pandemic Nurse's Diary

By Nurse T with Timothy Sheard/Hardball Press 2020

Review by Chuck Zlatkin

While many of us know what it is like to be an “essential” worker during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, and know what it is like to lose loved ones and maybe endure the virus ourselves, we have no idea what hell it is to be a healthcare worker in a New York City hospital's ICU during the height of the pandemic. *A Pandemic Nurse's Diary* takes us into these hellish conditions that healthcare workers are confronted with during this crisis, working in under-equipped hospitals without adequate PPE, not even being able to get fans in the ICU to help disperse the air of this virus. Written anonymously by Nurse T with the assistance of Timothy Sheard from Hardball Press, this work began as a need to get the true story out about what this disease was doing to patients and workers. Initially, a number of these stories were printed in the Labor Press. It has now evolved into this book—a very powerful read.

From the book's chapter entitled “FEAR,” “March 28, 2020 We are all terrified. Every nurse, doctor, every housekeeper and transporter, engineer and pharmacist—every worker stepping into the hospital knows they are risking exposure to Covid-19...risking severe illness for themselves and their families when they return home. Risking death.” All essential workers know those fears, but most of us did not work in an ICU where people were dying all around us. The frustration of not being able to prevent many of these

deaths was always with the workers. In addition, they were mandated overtime, four 12-hour shifts in a row. They were forced to work so much that the hospital put them up in a nearby hotel. We quickly learn that these healthcare workers are dedicated, committed professionals who take the oath they have taken to their work seriously.

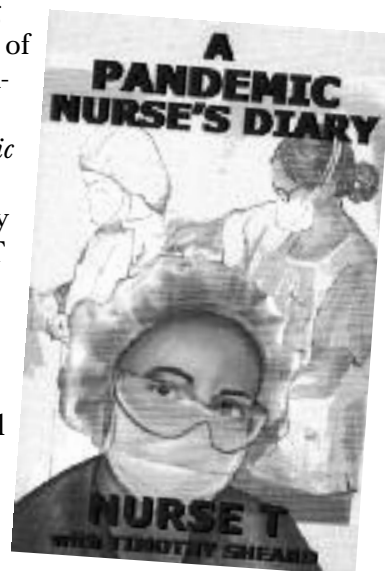
Nurse T shares the fear her colleagues face when they are told that they have to use the same PPE through their entire 12 hour shift! When Nurse O asks, is safe to wear the same mask for 12 hours? The head nurse replies by saying that she is doing what she has been told to say. Nurse T asks why there are no N95 masks? The response is that she is reminded to put up the Droplet sign; there was no need to post the Airborne Precaution sign.

The most powerful and disturbing elements of the book are the accounts of the rapid advancement of the disease in its victims, and the terrible reality of their deaths. We can feel the workers' frustration in trying to get personal protective equipment (PPE). When they detail to their supervisors that their patients are dispersing aerosols all the time as they receive treatment and therefore the nurses need PPE, the response is only that “it will be brought up at the monthly meeting.” Clearly, labor/management problems and supervisory indifference exist even in the hospital setting.

The book also contains personal

stories. There is the moving account of Lily, a nurse's aide who has worked for over twenty years in hospitals. She comes to work every day in the ICU even though she is an asthmatic. Eventually, she gets COVID-19 and is herself hospitalized. Her co-workers are concerned and show Lily how they feel by sending her little gifts. They are unable to visit her, working as much as they do in the ICU. They are happy to see that Lily isn't coming to the ICU and is getting released to go home to recover.

It is important for all of us to know about the truth of what COVID-19 has brought to healthcare facilities and the impact it has had on healthcare workers. It is important to know this as citizens, but also as members of the labor movement and the working class. As we fight for a public Postal Service, it is important for us to remember the ongoing struggle of all workers. *A Pandemic Nurse's Diary* by Nurse T with Tim Sheard is an essential tool in the struggle. ☑

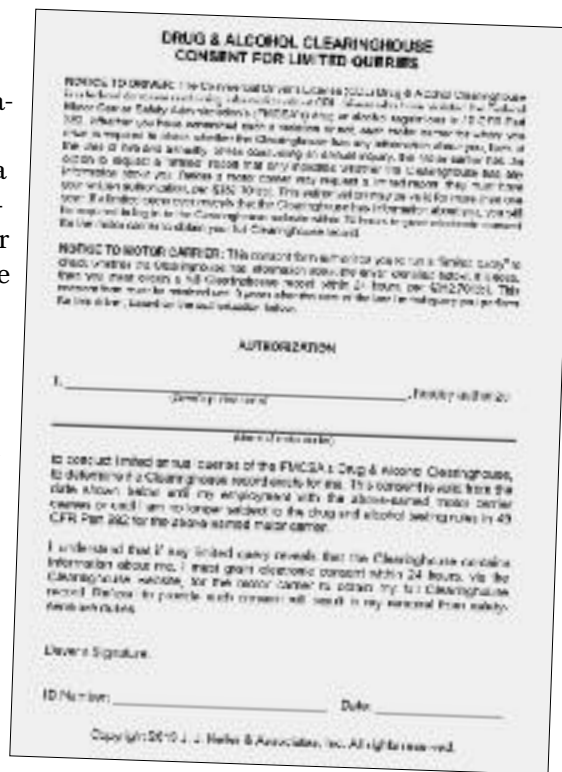


Union challenges unilateral implementation of Clearinghouse Consent Form and Program for Postal Drivers



At the beginning of the year, the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse became fully operational. The state driver licensing agency enters all drivers holding a CDL into the Clearinghouse database. Under the law, the employer (in this case the USPS) can ask the Clearinghouse if a record exists for a driver. However, this requires the driver's written or electronic consent. Without negotiating with the APWU, the Postal Service unilaterally drafted a letter to be mailed to all USPS employees holding a CDL. The notice indicated that this would be a requirement, without which drivers would be prohibited from driving.

Although the union had inquired about the "Consent for Limited Queries of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse," as far back as May, 2020, no information was forthcoming. "The USPS finally submitted the form to the Union on August 14, after its implementation." The Postal Service said it is requiring MV drivers to sign a consent form as a condition of their continued employment. Since this change in rules significantly



impacts working conditions, bargaining between the parties was required before implementation.

On August 28, Vance Zimmerman, APWU Director of Industrial Relations, wrote a letter to Doug Tulino, the USPS Vice-President of Labor Relations. He raised the dispute over the unilateral implementation of the FMCSA Clearinghouse consent form and program and demanded

that management set up a meeting with MV Director Michael Foster.

"The APWU is particularly interested in bargaining over the provisions of the consent form and the underlying program it implements concerning:

1. Authorization for using a third-party administrator
2. Authorization for conducting annual queries for the entire duration of employment.
3. Authorization for the Postal Service to choose the day it conducts an annual query."

The Motor Vehicle craft at the national level has filed a grievance on this matter. Failure to consult and negotiate with the Union on the creation of the

form, on the implementation of the form, on the program, or on the new requirement, are clear violations of Article 1 (the Union as the exclusive bargaining representative) and Article 5 (prohibition of unilateral action).

(NOTE: The Union Local and Regional cases that are filed on this should be held in abeyance pending APWU Case #HQTV20200376.) ☐

POSTAL PRIDE

Defiant workers reassemble sorting machines

In July, 2020, without knowledge or training to evaluate the workings of the nationwide postal industry, new PMG Louis DeJoy enacted changes that hamper the delivery of America's mail. In addition to policies that removed mailboxes, leave mail behind, and cut needed overtime, irreversible damage was done by dismantling hundreds of high speed mail sorting machines that handle envelopes, which of course includes ballots. In the Congressional hearing, Senator Gary Peters asked DeJoy if he intended to restore any of the processing machines. Twice DeJoy responded: "No. They are not needed, sir."

Postal workers disagree. Even during DeJoy's promised pre-election roll-back of his directives, an email was sent to all managers forbidding them to reconnect or reinstall these machines. But determined postal workers in several locations defied the orders and put some of the sorters back into use. They were successful in Washington State, where high speed processors were reactivated at plants in Seattle-Tacoma and Wenatchee, WA.

In Dallas, TX, APWU President Yared Wonde said that workers there had tried to get the machines back online, but found that critical pieces were missing, apparently sabotaged to prevent repair. Dallas workers held a protest outside the facility, letting the public know that they care about moving the mail.

This October, workers at the Southern Maine P&DC in Scarborough, reassembled one of the two letter sorting machines that had been dismantled over the summer. The other sorter had been sold as scrap metal, but the restored machine is sorting mail. The APWU at the plant had pushed management to help deliver election mail, which is now being processed. ☐

Postal News Briefs

DeJOY ALLEGES "POTENTIAL OVERTIME WASTE" BY WORKERS

A court order directing the use of overtime to ensure speedy delivery of mail-in ballots was challenged by DeJoy on the basis that it "could be abused by postal workers." In a filing before US District Judge Marrero in Manhattan, lawyers for DeJoy and President Trump asked that the injunction to reinstate overtime to ensure speedy delivery of mail-in ballots be modified. They said that the court's order "could be construed in ways that require the approval of overtime unrelated to election mail, impose impracticable administrative and financial burdens on the Postal Service, and create confusion amongst its employees and managers."

The plaintiffs who filed the original suit called it "wild speculation" that "significant numbers of the dedicated workers at the Postal Service will, essentially, engage in mass fraud." DeJoy's concern is "almost laughable given the ten-day limitation of the [court] order."

This gratuitous insult to postal workers from the Postmaster General exposes his total ignorance of who we are and what we do.



2 to 1: POLL SHOWS AMERICANS WANT USPS TO BE A SERVICE, NOT A BUSINESS

A Washington Post-University of Maryland poll showed that Americans, by a more than 2-to-1 margin, view the USPS as a service and reject the notion that it should be "run like a business." The survey covered views on the Postal Service and the upcoming voting process. 1,929 Americans were polled from August 24–31 using the nationally representative KnowledgePanel, which is known to have a very small margin of error. Despite President Trump's disparagement of the USPS and controversy in the news, most people responded favorably based on their direct experience. Similar to surveys in 2014 and 2017, the USPS is still rated as doing an "excellent" or "good" job. 73% said coronavirus should be a reason to vote by mail and more than 2/3 had confidence in the process.



USPS MISMANAGED HCR COMPLIANCE

An audit done by the OIG revealed that the Postal Service had not effectively managed and tracked the routes of Highway Contract Routes (HCRs) which are outside the routes driven by our own USPS drivers. This meant that the costs were not computed properly for SV (Surface Visibility). To correct this, USPS started a new national HCR Trailer Validation initiative on 6/25/20. This requires field transportation personnel to review, validate, and update SV barcodes and vehicle information. ☐



CALENDAR

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Via Zoom

As per the NYMAPU Constitution:

No Membership Meeting in December

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Via Zoom

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

Members Only!

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

ALL COVID-19 MOUs extended through December 31, 2020

September 2020 Building Corp figures will appear in the January 2021 issue of *The Union Mail*.



SISTERS! As an APWU member, you are a member of NY METRO P.O.W.E.R. (P.O.W.E.R. stands for Post Office Women for Equal Rights.) Prior to the pandemic, all sisters were invited to P.O.W.E.R. meetings at the Union Office at 1:00 pm, the 4th Wednesday of every month. We are working on alternatives.

Diane Erlanger, Director of Organization and Chairperson of NY Metro P.O.W.E.R., told the Union Mail: "In light of the COVID 19 Pandemic P.O.W.E.R. meetings are canceled until further notice. Stay tuned for more information."

👉 APWU Health Plan Virtual Health Fairs

During Open Season, every Tuesday and Thursday from 12-2pm EST, a Health Plan staff employee will be online to answer questions and discuss plan features.

Register Now! for any of the APWU Open Season Health Fairs!

To register, type in your search engine: **2020 APWU Health Plan Virtual Open Season Health Fairs!** Then click on the date you want. You will be sent a link and then a reminder.

Tuesdays 12pm–2pm November 10, 17, 24 December 1, 8
Thursdays 12pm – 2pm November 12, 19 December 3, 10

Thank you Vito!

Vito Fallacara worked at the NJI&NDC for 43 years until retiring at the end of September. Vito saw it all. He was a Mail Handler, flexi clerk, then a full time clerk. He worked as a keyer, then spent most of his career as "the greatest dock tech."

We thank Vito for his efforts as Shop Steward, Assistant Director, and Director at the NDC. We will miss Vito's honesty, sense of humor, and working class fighting spirit.

He fought for everybody, regardless of race, gender or religion. There was never a question which side he was on.

NY Metro wishes Vito Fallacara many years of Happy Retirement to enjoy his life and his family! 📧





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



Season's Greetings to all!

*T*his has been a stressful and sad year, but we have all been fighting the good fight.
Take some time to enjoy your loved ones. **STAY SAFE!**

*We wish all our members and their
families health and
happiness and a wonderful 2021!*

