



The

Union Mail

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

*F*irst they came for the Communists,
and I didn't speak up ~
because I was not a Communist.

*T*hen they came for the Jews,
and I didn't speak up ~
because I was not a Jew

*T*hen they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn't speak up ~
because I was not a trade unionist.

*T*hen they came for the Catholics,
and I didn't speak up ~
because I was a Protestant.

*T*hen they came for me ~
and there was no one
left to speak up.

PASTOR MARTIN NIEMOELLER, *Nazi victim*

See article on page 10

Management's rush to Injustice



Jonathan Smith

Management is rushing to make negative changes to clerk jobs throughout our Local. Many workers have a misconception of the role of the union in this.

Article 3 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) gives "the Employer the exclusive right. . . to determine the methods, means and personnel by which such operations are to be conducted." That means that we don't make those decisions; we can only fight them.

But Article 5 prohibits "unilateral action." Management is obligated to inform the union prior to making changes, giving us time to review those changes, and then meeting with us to get input. In terms of the current staffing, management is purposely rushing to implement arbitrary and capricious changes. Instead of honoring their obligation to adhere to the principle in Article 12, that "dislocation and inconvenience to employees in the regular workforce shall be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of the service," they are willfully creating chaos and disruption.

The union has received a clerk staffing package from every installation in our local: DVD, NDC, Manhattan and the Bronx. Our officers have not even been able to take vacation. We have been going to every station we can to address your concerns, but we can't meet with management and meet with the members at the same time. Our cal-

endars are booked all the way up to October! Management is sending these very large staffing packages and demanding that the union meet within 5 days of receiving their staffing proposal. They know that this is an impossible expectation; we could not possibly be prepared that fast. But we realize that this is part of management's strategy (especially the NY District) to try to overwhelm us, because they clearly can't outfight us on a fair playing field. We have been kicking management's butts in arbitration, and we will do it again.

The contract gives the union the right to investigate the information provided in these staffing packages. Management is trying to rush the union to meet because they know that when we have time to thoroughly review and investigate their staffing proposals, they are always wrong. But their agenda is not to do the staffing changes right but to do them quick, without any regard for the effect on the Clerk craft workforce.

The union has filed Labor Board charges because NY District management has made many changes to the bargaining unit employees' duty assignments without consulting with the union. This is in clear violation of Article 5 of the CBA which says that management must first meet with the union before making changes concerning employees' wages, hours, or working conditions, which they purposely haven't.

At the same time, the union has to police and enforce the contract. Management has a contractual right to determine the work hours of the operation but not to decide how assignments are awarded. Even while we grieve improper rever-

sions, abolishments, and unilateral changes, we make sure that clerk craft seniority (Article 37) is followed because what other fair standard do postal workers have to separate one employee from another?

I have to be honest and tell you this situation will only get worse before it gets better. These actions are union-busting tactics. Managers are playing mind games with our members, telling them the union has agreed with the changes they're making. *That's a lie.* Many workers believe that management needs the union's permission to make these changes. *That's a lie.* Some believe that the union is not fighting. *That's a lie.*

Our members will see through the lies and will rise to the challenge as they always have. We will survive and we will win. Solidarity makes us strong; the struggle continues. ☑

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Liars!

By Tiffany Foster, Executive Vice-President



Tiffany Foster

On July 25, August 4, and August 10, 2017, management notified the NY Metro Area Postal Union of their intentions to change the staffing in many of the stations in the Bronx and Manhattan—in forty-one (41) stations to be exact. They wanted us to meet within five (5) days—although they did not send a shred of information as to why they needed to make such changes.

That was impossible. It was not reasonable to think the union would be prepared to meet with management when they gave us no supporting documentation of why these changes were operationally necessary. And we weren't able to come out to the 41 stations to speak to you, the workers, personally to find out what is going on in your building that management would want to make these kind of changes.

On August 8, 2017, we sent the NY District Team an email giving several dates that we would be available to meet with them. We also advised them of their contractual obligation to meet with us – not just notify us. They had to provide us with documented reasons for the proposed changes, and provide us the opportunity to give input. We also let them know that if they went forward with these changes, the union was prepared to file grievances on behalf of each and every one of the clerks affected. We would be demanding out-of-schedule premium pay for each of these clerks and also that they be returned to

their original bid duty assignment. We also informed the NY District that we would be filing Labor Board charges. Article 5 in our Contract prohibits management from taking unilateral action in any way that affects the wages, hours, and working conditions of the bargaining unit.

They never responded to this email. Never responded.

Why? Because they had a date in mind that they had already decided to implement these moves without union input.

They refused to meet with us. I say refused because they never responded confirming a date to meet. Management of the NY District took the position that they didn't care about our contract; they just threw it out the window. Instead, Manager Tonette Duncan sent an email on August 9, stating the following:

"This correspondence is a follow up to today's schedule meeting that the union failed to attend. Kindly note, management was prepared to discuss at this meeting the impending Manhattan and Bronx stations Clerk staffing changes. As stated in the notification package that was provided to you, the schedule changes are needed to realign bids. The impending schedule changes will improve the efficiency of the operation.

"Please note management will implement the schedule changes effective August 19, 2017. The employee notices will be issued on or before August 15, 2017 and copies will be forwarded to your attention."

This was a straight up lie. There was no scheduled meeting with the union! Furthermore, on August 9th, they already had notices prepared to send to the affected employees within the week.

For the next week, management

ignored our continuing requests for information on the rationale for the changes. Then, on August 17, 2017, after 2:00 pm, they sent the union an email saying they wanted to meet with us prior to implementing the changes on August 19th. Really? Is this reasonable? Did they really want to meet with us? I don't think so. I think they were just trying to cover their tracks because they know that the grievances we are filing will harm them financially.

We've also been told that the managers and supervisors in the stations are telling the workers that the union agreed to these changes. They are LIARS! The Union sees this as union busting and we will be pursuing this through the Labor Board. Management wants you to be mad at your union. Don't believe the hype. Don't fall for their lies. How can you agree to something if you never even had a discussion?

If management in Morgan and the Manhattan and Bronx has told you this lie, please provide your steward with a statement. Bring or mail it to the Union office. I am personally filing the grievances for each and every clerk who has been affected. The union has already requested a Step 1 designee for these grievances from the Bronx and Manhattan.

That being said, we have a lot that we need you all to help us with. The grievances will be filed. They do not happen overnight; they take some time to be resolved. We ask that you work with us and be patient with us during these trying times. You need to be part of this fight and not fall for the lies that management will continue to spread. ☑

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

APWU supported legislation

By Nora Taggart, Legislative and Political Director

The American Postal Workers Union continues to work hard to help advance the union's cause on Capitol Hill. APWU advocates the union's position on the urgently needed postal reform legislation that will address the unsustainable prefunding mandate, before the USPS continues to diminish services by delaying America's mail. The APWU also monitors all legislation that affects worker safety, retiree benefits and many other issues important to APWU members. Following are a few bills now in the 115th Congress that APWU supports. Now, more than ever, our collective action is needed to help us achieve our legislative priorities.

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2017, H.R. 756

H.R. 756 addresses the pre-funding mandate through "Medicare integration." A "Postal Service Health Benefit Program" will be created within the Federal Employee Health benefits Program (FEHBP), managed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). It would place Medicare-eligible postal workers in Medicare Parts A and B. In addition to expanding Medicare's role as a primary payer, FEHBP plans would be given access, through the law that created Medicare Part D, to discounted prescription drugs subsidized by an Employer Group Waiver Plan.

At this time, approximately 80% of Medicare-eligible postal workers and retirees are voluntarily enrolled into Medicare A and B. Many APWU members say that having a

FEHBP plan and Medicare saves them money in the long run.

The bill achieves the following goals for the union:

- The program remains part of FEHBP;
- Prescription drug coverage results in no additional costs to employees and retirees;
- The PAEA prefunding mandate will be virtually eliminated.

Whether or not they are enrolled, postal employees have long subsidized Medicare, paying over \$30 billion in Medicare taxes since 1983.

Expanded & Improved Medicare for All Act, H.R. 676

- The United States is the only country in the developed world that does not guarantee health care as a basic human right.
- This legislation will guarantee free health care to all those residing in the United States and U.S. territories.

Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 1205

- Repeals the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provisions (WEP).
- The GPO reduces Social Security benefits to spouses or widows by two-thirds if they are currently receiving a retirement or disability

pension based on prior employment, during which they did not pay in Social Security.

- WEP affects those who receive a pension from employment where they did not pay into Social Security but did qualify for Social Security benefits from other employment.
- These two provisions produce undue hardship for those who have met the requirements for Social Security benefits but are penalized for previous employment under the CSRS.

Social Security Expansion Act, S. 427

- Extends the solvency of the Social Security trust funds.
- Increases benefits.
- Scraps the cap on payroll income above \$250,000.
- Applies a 6.2% Social Security tax on investment income for high-income households.

CPI-E Act of 2017, H.R. 1251

- COLAs are currently based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners (CPI-W). This measure of inflation does not adequately take into consideration the spending habits of seniors.
- CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for the Elderly) has been calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics but has never been applied.
- Using the CPI-E would more accurately reflect what seniors spend the bulk of their money on, such as healthcare. ☐



You can find more information at the Legislative & Political Department's webpage at www.apwu.org.

Fake news Part 2: Bad policy, lies and denials

By Chuck Zlatkin, Director of Communications

Fake news Part 1 documented how the Postal Service has been a victim of a sophisticated, ongoing fake news program to damage the Postal Service's reputation and facilitate its privatization. The silence of Postal Service management in the face of this ongoing attack is amazing. As the "think tanks" and non-profits served their corporate masters with study after study demeaning and devaluing the Postal Service, its own management did nothing to combat the lies.

The reason has become clear as to why the Postal Service was remaining so silent in the face of fake news attacks. The USPS was deploying the very same tactics itself to fool elected officials, mislead postal unions and misinform the public that the USPS is mandated to serve.

While think tanks cherry-pick information, create supposedly unbiased reports, funnel them to specific targets and establish an echo-chamber effect that parrots their created fiction as fact, the Postal Service takes it a step further.

Huge postal fake news exposed

On August 10, 2017, The Office of Inspector General issued a damning general audit report with the relatively tepid title of "Delayed Mail Validation." What is revealed in this audit is the systematic failure of the Postal Service to report accurate statistics on how much mail is delayed nationally. The OIG audit "projects that nationally from March 1, 2016, through February 28, 2017, mail processing facilities under reported

late arriving mail by about 2 billion mail pieces." The Postal Service is required by law to have standards for mail delivery—collecting, collating data, and reporting those findings to show whether it is meeting those standards or not. Fake news is not an acceptable substitution.

The Postal Service embraces fake news as part of its way of doing business. In 2012, the USPS initiated Phase 1 of Network Rationalization, including the closing of 141 mail processing plants and a reduction in service standards. Almost immediately, there were complaints of delays in the mail nationally but, most egregiously, in rural areas. The Postal Service steadfastly denied any problem, and maintained that everything was going well. In 2014, a full six months before Phase 2 was supposed to go into action, closing an additional 82 plants and further reductions in service standards, the Postal Service sent a letter to its customers stating that the Phase 1 rationalization "was highly successful, resulting in negligible service impact."

Negligible service impact?

While the USPS was using denial as its cover for its lack of transparency, there was such a growing customer dissatisfaction and frustration from members of Congress by 2015, that the General Accountability Office (GAO) did a study on mail delivery. The report was not made available to the public but the Washington Post received a copy. In the report, the GAO found the Postal Service's figures on delivery time were "far

from complete" and that the Postal Service needed to have "quality delivery performance." Other startling tidbits were that only 55% of the mail is even measured by the Postal Service and that the data accumulated is neither sufficiently transparent or readily available. Does the Postal Service do what it is supposed to do?

Deny, deny, deny

The Washington Post reported that in response, the Postal Service issued a statement that it "strongly disagrees with the conclusion that our current service performance measurement is not accurate." "The Postal Service is strongly committed to transparency and the regular publication of our service performance results. . .," and, "We continue to work with the Congress and our regulator to develop enhanced methods for evaluating delivery performance that are already robust and accurate."

This didn't convince Senator Carper (D-DE), Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) nor Senator McCaskill (D-MO)), nor Senator Tester (D-MN). They introduced legislation that would require measureable improvements to mail delivery across the country. But no postal reform bill has passed in 2015, 2016, or so far in 2017.

The future of fake news from Postal Headquarters

The August 10, 2017 OIG report ends any doubt that the Postal Service failed to report accurate figures on mail delays. Unfortunately, the OIG doesn't have enforcement

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Once Again, A Call to Arms

By Scott Hoffman, Director NE Region ABA

Dear Sisters, Brothers, Stewards. This article is a “Call to Arms.” The Service has announced intentions to cut 3500 jobs in the Northeast Area in the Clerk craft. They will accomplish this by indiscriminately reverting any vacated or residual positions. These will be bids opened up by the bidding process, retirements, deaths, resignations, and removals. The purpose is clear: reduce the conversions of PSEs to career, make life difficult to induce voluntary retirements, and simply reduce their manpower costs and numbers. How can they possibly maintain customer service by doing so, you ask! Answer is – they can’t! Truth is—THEY DON’T CARE!

The branch of postal management that is responsible for staffing and labor costs is ruling the roost. The mandate from postal headquarters is to CUT. They have empowered this branch of management to do so. They set up monetary incentives for this branch. Local management, and I mean from the District Manager to the supervisor in your location, have no real say in it. They are on this ride, as well. They have no power.

Some local management will try to convince you they have some sway. They don’t. They may try to convince you to “be a good team player,” or, “if we work harder for now, it will go better for us in the future.” IT WON’T. You are being lied to, to make life easier for them. It is time to realize what team you are really playing for. It is clearly the job of the workers to save the Service from itself. Just like we had

to with Staples, which was the biggest threat ever to the health and longevity of the Postal Service. Management as a whole was for it; we were not. We saved the Service from itself, for not only our continued employment, but also for the public who we were designed to serve. We are a public service, not a corporate, private, money maker.



It is not time to panic; it is time to wake up. APWU has the antidote to this venomous course of action. Just like a real antidote, it takes time. The body will suffer for a bit, it will be sick, but it will be restored. We have the tools to re-establish the lost jobs; we have the winning formulas. We need the members and stewards to hand us the ingredients to make the antidote. We need you to grieve, report, and, most of all, follow the rules and regulations. Usually you only hear of a rule or regulation when the boss is spouting one he claims you broke. Management is very selective of the rules they seem to know, or want to enforce only the ones convenient that very moment, or one that falls on your shoulders.

However, the fact is that most rules and regulations are management’s responsibility. They are in place to protect all parties involved

– us, them, and especially, the public, by ensuring service and standards are upheld. Amnesia runs rampant in management for those rules. Look at your registry case security, accountable items; management’s responsibility to ensure employees are on correct operation numbers to properly account for all aspects of necessary work performed. They will encourage scan falsification on all up-times, box-lines, arrivals and attempted scans, because they will not have the manpower to do it on time, properly, and by the rules. This is where we step in. GRIEVE. REPORT. This shows something is wrong. It needs to be fixed. Local management can’t fix it. Regional and National management don’t want it fixed. This is their plan. We have to prove it needs to be fixed and force it down their throats.

Volumes of grievances, documenting problems, falsification, not following established rules, regulations and protocol is part of the antidote. You will be directly affected by these cuts. You will now start to notice annual leave denials because you lost a body where you work. You will be harassed for sick leave use, regardless of your history because now they can’t afford you to be sick. They will try to force you to do the work of two, or three! If you do, you are not only a sucker, but a traitor. This is equal to ignoring early stage cancer, not addressing the problems to try to cure it, but allowing it to fester unchecked, rotting away the core.

They will try to farm away our

work to other crafts, or have the supervisor steal segments of our work. **DO NOT LET IT HAPPEN. GRIEVE IT!** Give statements. Part of their plan is to count on our apathy, lack of fortitude, or “go along to get along” mentality. Those are fatal attributes.

They will manipulate overtime rules. Even though the workload everywhere is the same, or maybe growing due to package and parcel work, they will expect somehow that the work will be done without penalty, pay, or expansion of NTFT hours, or PSE hours, at the expense of the overtime desired list, or job creation. These are not only winning issues that put money in our pockets, but are also indicators of problems. **GRIEVE IT.** Be aware that attendance problems will be han-

dled more aggressively and harshly. Upper management will not allow local management to have a heart. It is a win-win scenario in their eyes. They can shed what they feel is a problem child, and then also kill the job that was vacated by the removal.

I cannot begin to enumerate all the ancillary problems and violations that will occur due to short-staffing, but they will be clear to all of us. They will affect all of us. The fight belongs to all of us. Part of my job as Local President is to report back what I see from my scouting missions. This is what I see, what I know. I would not be doing my job if all my reports were rosy and all good news. In good times merely paying dues is good enough. In tough times it means all hands on

deck. It is time for full involvement. Full involvement means engaging in the grievance procedure, attending rallies called by the union, participating in the political process, and maybe even stepping up for a stewardship. There is no magical benevolent force that will just appear and make it right. The force necessary is our membership united and involved. Our senior and retired brothers and sisters have gone through times like these before. They fought, and survived. It is also our job to leave behind a Postal Service and functioning union for the future. God forbid we be known as the ones that rolled over, snuck out the back door, and left nothing behind. Give the APWU your involvement and we will give you victory!

In Unity. ☒

The Bronx wants first-class postal service

By Chuck Zlatkin, Communications Director

Whenver USPS management decides to cut back service to the public by eliminating our jobs, the Bronx is always a major target. Going back to 2005 when the AMP for the elimination of mail processing in the Bronx GPO was first announced, through 2012 when New York City was earmarked for the closing of 34 post offices (17 were to take place in the Bronx), to the inclusion of the historic Bronx GPO as one of the landmark buildings to be sold off to private real estate interests, the Bronx is always in the crosshairs of the Postal Service.

On April 20, 2017, the Office of the Inspector General of the Post Office published an audit of 9 Bronx post offices. The audit, requested by City Councilman Rafael Salamanca of the Bronx, focused on service to

the public. One of the most startling aspects of the audit was the extended wait time on line at Bronx stations, especially Tremont.

Despite these statistics, Postal Management decided to revert 5 vacancies at Tremont Station. The Postal Service was telling the patrons of that post office that they didn't give a damn about them.

Unfortunately, this isn't the only example of postal management abandoning the people that they are mandated to serve, as more and more stations are facing service cuts.

The Bronx community is gearing up to fight for its postal services. If you have family members and friends who are Bronx residents, please have them connect with Bronx Save Our Community Postal Service at:

saveourpostservice@mail.com or 718-670-3226. And if you live or work in the Bronx, please get ready for the struggle which will begin this September. ☒

Fake news Part 2: Bad policy, lies and denials

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authority and can only make recommendations. And in this case, the recommendations made let top postal management off the hook. ☒

[Next issue, Part 3: *Local postal fake news: At the local level, the USPS outdoes itself creating fake news in order to push through plant consolidations, station closings and relocations, and staffing cuts.*]

NY Metro Picnic 2017

After a rainy week, the weather turned glorious – sunny and dry. It was warm enough to enjoy the little beach, the boats, and the water rides, but cool enough to just stroll through the colorful attractions. Lines weren't long. Adults rode the roller coaster and the parachute jump; children enjoyed the kiddy rides, the little train, and fun places to climb and slide.

Over 1,500 NY Metro workers and invitees attended the picnic.

For those who didn't want to drive, there were 26 buses provided—leaving from all five boroughs and New Jersey.

President Jonathan Smith got on each bus to welcome members and their families as they arrived. He told us to relax, socialize, and have fun. This was a chance to be a union family with people from all over the Local. The food kept coming and it was delicious! Each person also got a ticket to get an ice

cream or cotton candy from the Quassy Park concessions. Clowns painted kids' faces and twisted balloons into headgear that made everybody smile.

Even the “business” part of the day was fun. The volunteers at the COPA table talked and joked with those coming to buy raffles or make donations. In mid-afternoon, the NY Metro officers honored the union scholarship winners. By then, we all felt like family. ☺



Photos by Jimmy Colas



Black postal workers, civil rights unionism and white supremacy

By Nora Taggart

“My vision for the labor movement and APWU as a whole is to be more inclusive. Fights like Black Lives Matter and Immigration Reform, those are all fights that matter to labor unions because we are all part of our communities.”

—COURTNEY JENKINS, member of the APWU Young Workers Advisory Council, Local 181, Baltimore, MD

The deadly violence committed by white supremacists and neo-Nazis at their “Unite the Right” riot in Charlottesville may have shocked some. But it didn’t shock the millions of people for whom discrimination is a daily reality: African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, immigrants, Muslims, Jews, women, disabled people and the LGBTQ community. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, an organization that monitors hate groups, between 2016 and 2017 the country saw a rise in white supremacist groups. These domestic terrorists have been emboldened by Trump’s hateful rhetoric, policies and far-right members of his administration, such as Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller.

The white supremacists and neo-Nazis’ tiki torches, military-style assault rifles, shields, Confederate flags and swastikas did not achieve the intended results of intimidation and fear. On the contrary, tens of thousands of people from all backgrounds immediately mobilized and organized counter-demonstrations in cities across the country sending a loud message that hate, bigotry and fascism were not going to be tolerated in this country.

“White supremacy is not just about the hateful actions of individuals or groups of individuals. White supremacy is first and foremost a system—a system which puts the belief that white people are superior to other races into practice. White supremacy is in our workplace, our school system, our government and our prisons. It is in our books and movies and television. White supremacy has been woven into the fabric of our nation from the moment that white settlers decided that their claim to land was more important than the lives of indigenous people. This is not a new problem. This is America,” said Ijeoma Oluo, feminist blogger.

We must understand that racism is linked to economic and political inequality. Discrimination in the labor market has resulted in the exclusion of African Americans from many good job opportunities, even when they are as qualified as white applicants. And when they did get the jobs, Blacks were paid far less than their white co-workers.

In the U.S. Postal Service, the second largest civilian employer in the United States, postal workers have equal access to jobs and equal pay regardless of race or gender. That wasn’t always the case. In the book *There’s Always Work at the Post Office, African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice, and Equality*, the author Philip F. Rubio uses the term “civil rights unionism.” He defines this as “unionism engaged simultaneously with striving for decent jobs and equal political

and legal rights.” The book chronicles how mostly unionized Black postal workers led the fight against white supremacy—from the federal law that banned Black workers by restricting postal work to “free white persons,” to President Woodrow Wilson’s 1913 order to segregate post offices, to the postal unions that either tolerated Jim Crow locals or actually contained “Caucasian only” clauses in their constitutions.

At last year’s National Convention, NY Metro submitted a resolution to support the Black Lives Matter movement. It was passed at the convention without opposition. At a time when our schools and churches and communities remain segregated, we remember Martin Luther King, Jr’s words: “The two most dynamic and cohesive liberal forces in the country are the labor movement and the Negro freedom movement. Together we can be architects of democracy.”

The working class can learn a lot from those brave postal workers/civil rights activists who confronted hate, bigotry and prejudice in the Post Office and in their communities. We must continue to fight for fairness, justice and equality for all. ☑

Philip F. Rubio borrowed the term “civil rights unionism” from Robert Korstad’s book Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South. Rubio reveals how Local 22 of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers of America-CIO confronted a system of severe racial discrimination, economic injustice, and political oppression as employees of the massive R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. Ed.

In Memoriam

CARL ROSS



All of us throughout the APWU are mourning the sudden loss of our friend and shop steward Carl Ross. Jackie Owens, Director of Morgan P&DC, said, “I met Carl in orientation and knew that he was someone who would be an asset to the Union’s goals and beliefs. . . . Carl had a presence about him. He seemed just as comfortable talking smack with the other PSEs on the workfloor or in the cafeteria as he did talking to any official. As a new steward, Carl quickly familiarized himself with the

contract language on PSEs, and saved many from being removed. Carl Ross was a person that all the workers respected and trusted. In a short time, he had a profound impact on everyone he touched.”

In March, 2016, Carl was selected to speak before Arbitrator Goldberg at the interest arbitration for our national contract. At the membership meeting, NYMAPU President Jonathan Smith expressed our Local’s pride in the role Brother Ross played: “His contribution spoke for the PSEs and for all of the APWU.” In fact, Carl’s testimony made such a powerful impression at the hearing that the arbitrator himself was moved to come down to

shake his hand!

When Goldberg’s decision showed that he had heard the voice of the PSEs, Carl Ross texted: “Yes. Yes. I’m stoked! This is awesome news!” How can that dedication and enthusiasm ever be replaced? The loss of our beloved brother is heart-breaking. His children and grandchild will always carry his memory as a shining example of a strong, good man. We, his APWU brothers and sisters, must take it a step further. We have to keep his fighting spirit in our hearts. Carl, we miss you terribly. But we will turn grief into energy to continue the struggle, never give up, and make you proud of the union you represented so well. ☒

“Earned Hours” defeated in regular arbitration!

By Flo Summergrad

APWU Assistant Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks congratulated National Business Agent Pete Coradi for an important union win in a grievance arbitrated for an improper reversion of a clerk job in Tarrytown, NY. Pete is the lead NBA in the NY Region, assigned to assist the Locals in our fight against unjust cuts to the clerk craft.

Arbitrator Robert T. Simmelkjaer, Esq., agreed with the union’s argument that management’s reversion of the job violated Article 37.3.A.2. The Arbitrator’s remedy is: “the Service shall post for bid the vacated position.”

Even more important, using Article 37.3.A.1, the union won an additional 40 hour FTR duty assign-

ment. The data presented via MDAT showed that PSEs had been regularly working enough hours to justify the creation of a full time clerk job.

This win validates the APWU position on the meaning of Article 37.3.A.1. Arbitrator Simmelkjaer rebutted the USPS attempt to substitute “earned hours” (from management’s Dashboard/JBM programs) for the contractual language of “all available hours.” Page 20 of the Simmelkjaer decision is clear: “the Arbitrator concurs with the union that the concept of ‘earned complement’ has neither been identified in contract language nor in case law as a rationale that can be used to eliminate a duty assignment. . . .”

Arbitrator Simmelkjaer specifically refers to National Arbitrator Stephen Goldberg’s award in Case #Q10C-4Q-C 12320729 (2013) where he found that “the negotiators of the 2010 Agreement knew how to impose on the Postal Service the obligation to combine PSE hours when doing so would yield duty assignments for career employee. They did so for bidding purposes in Article 37.3.A.1.”

Lamont writes: “The Postal Service went in with the idea of eliminating a duty assignment (reversion) via Dashboard/Job Bid Management (JBM) and the final result: Drum roll! The Union ends up with a net gain of 2 duty assignments!” ☒

Call to young workers!

By *Quanisha McNeal, APWU Young Workers Committee Representative, NE Region*

Attention, members of the NY Metro Area local!

Are you someone who is 35 years of age or younger and looking to make your voice heard within but not limited to our local union? If so, we need you to help make up the Young Members Committee at the local level.

This committee was established at the national level during the 2016 APWU National Convention. A motion was made in which our workforce youth was called to come together and organize and continue to fight and defend, in solidarity, our national contract. The motion was unanimously passed.

Taken in part from the national article addressing this committee, noting that "... young people have been at the forefront of major movements throughout the history of this nation..." the resolution sought to tap into the fighting spirit of the organization's youngest activists. Approximately 25,000 members of the American Postal Workers Union are between the ages of 18 and 35.

Millennials, or the 18-35 generation, make up one-third of the American workforce, the resolution pointed out, and is on its way to becoming the majority of the American electorate. Millennials share a favorable opinion of unions as the Postal Service studies have shown."— *Web News Article #229-2016*

This opens up a great opportunity for our young members to rise through the ranks of this great union. It is not only an opportunity but our **RESPONSIBILITY** as young unionists to carry the torch



Quanisha McNeal

passed down from our current leadership as past generations have done, to lead with honor and dignity and to continue to push forward in the name of all who have come before us and all who will come after us.

Over 35? No problem! We are an all-inclusive group. If you're a seasoned member, we'd love to have

you pass along your knowledge and experience. Older than 35 but new to the postal

service? Still no problem! The purpose of this committee, besides education, is to support the causes of the APWU. These could be legislative, or even issues similar to the "Stop Staples" campaign. Education and activism know no age. The retirees

are already in the trenches fighting these fights, and I believe it's time we come in numbers to support our collective future.

As the Young Workers Committee, we have great resources at our disposal. We have great leadership at the local, state, and national level. One of the best ways to learn and move forward starts right there, by tapping into the wealth of knowledge that our union officers and even many seasoned members have. I ask that anyone who reads this and may have a desire to learn more about our union, or perhaps maybe you know of someone who would excel in a leadership role, that you contact me,

(Quanisha.McNeal@nymetro.org) or Local President Jonathan Smith (prezjsmith2012@nymetro.org) and tell us a little bit about yourself (including tour/work location/etc.).



Young members step up at 2016 APWU Convention

Knowledge is power, and I see our union moving forward becoming even stronger and more powerful than ever before. We are setting the stage for our own future and the future of postal workers everywhere. ☐

Arbitration advocacy training benefits NY Metro

By Flo Summergrad

Seven NY Metro Area Postal Union stewards spent a week in Albany (7/31–8/5), taking Arbitration Advocacy Training under the instruction of Joyce B. Robinson, APWU Research & Education Director. The classes were conducted by current and retired National Business Agents as well as a retired arbitrator. All our stewards did us proud, passing the course with flying colors.

Participants came out of this training with an entirely different mindset about grievance work. In addition to benefiting as individuals, they achieved a level of solidarity and respect for each other that strengthens our local and the APWU. The NY Metro group met stewards from all over; they learned about different experiences while sharing a common goal as postal unionists. Our seven returned to a spread of crafts and stations where they will be raising the level for all of us. Glenda Morris (Bronx) is a Maintenance rep; Rosa Ragin (Manhattan VMF) and Cassandra Black (NJI&NDC) are in the Motor Vehicle craft; Daisy DeGout (DVD), Naimah Mustafaa (Planetarium), and Joe Martir (Bronx Director) are Clerks; Kevin Walsh is Director of

Organization, who oversees all our grievances moving forward.

The training was “intense.” The rigorous curriculum included: Introduction to Arbitration; Preparing the Case; Identifying and Framing Issues; Threshold Issues; Exhibits and Stipulations; Opening and Closing Statements; Rules of Evidence; Objections, and Direct and Cross Examinations. Participants had to commit to working together during the evenings to prepare a mock arbitration case. There were group and individual homework assignments. When they were first placed in groups with strangers, Cassandra admitted, “We were all really nervous. . . but we worked it

out and learned a lot.”

She joked that “It was like going to college and studying for exams!”

Naimah Mustafaa added, “It was a lot of work and hard work but I really loved it and learned so much.” Joe Martir said, “As a team, we were up all night every day. But, it was well worth its weight in gold.”

Understanding how arbitration works makes stewards better able to prepare winning cases. Joe spoke for everyone when he said, “I believe I am a better steward today than I was before. With the knowledge I gained, I look forward to helping our Sisters and Brothers out in the battlefield with their grievances.” ☑



Left to right: Daisy DeGout, Kevin Walsh, Naimah Mustafaa, Joseph Martir, Glenda Morris, Cassandra Black, Rosa Ragin

PROBLEMS WITH ON-THE-JOB INJURY? WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

Participation in the August 2017 training course (taught by APWU Human Relations Director Sue Carney) has enhanced the skills of some of our union representatives. NYMAPU has added to the “go-to” people knowledgeable about the rights of injured workers.

BRONX: Joe Martir (Bronx union office) 718-239-5740 / **NYC:** Renee Bost (NY Metro office) 212-563-7553 ext.103
NEW JERSEY: Diana Benders (DVD Tour 2 union office) 201-991-0493

POSTAL PRIDE

Postal workers are family

Most of us have family. Clerk Anthony Zuvich didn't. For Tony, co-workers at the post office were his family. For 42 years, he commuted by PATH from NYC to the BMC/NDC in Jersey City. He worked different tours and jobs. But no matter where he worked, Tony was always dependable. That's why his supervisor and co-workers worried when he was no call/no show on a Sunday in mid-June. His NY Metro stewards made calls and finally contacted the police. Tony was found dead. With no relatives to claim him, his union and postal family went to work. For two frustrating weeks, they tangled with the NYC bureaucracy to get Tony's information. They were determined to honor his wishes. They spent time, AL, carfare, and ran around to police stations and court. Finally, one of the stewards, using the internet and telephone, found the right cemetery.

Tony Zuvich was buried with his mother, just as he wanted. Calls to HRSSC got a check for funeral expenses. Three co-workers attended the interment at Calvary Cemetery in Queens. A beautiful floral piece covered the coffin. The priest who performed the mass asked the mourners to say good-bye. "Tony, you do have family. Your family is the people who worked with you at the Postal Service."

Over 60 co-workers contributed to a donation to Guardian Angel Church, which Tony attended regularly. They arranged that a mass would be said in his name and a candle lit for a year in his memory. When she heard the story of the search and saw the long list of signatures on the card, the Parish Manager was deeply moved. She said, "There are truly good people at your job who care about each other!" ☐

Postal News Briefs

2017 FEHB OPEN SEASON

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) officially announced the dates for the 2017 FEHB Open Season which will run from Monday, November 13 through Monday, December 11, 2017.

During the annual Open Season, employees can enroll in, cancel or make changes to their Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS), Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), and the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program.

OPM will post FEHB and FEDVIP premium rates for 2018 in early October. Participants will find specific federal benefits open season information—including 2018 FEHB health plan brochures—on its website, <http://www.opm.gov/insure>, by the first week in November.



USPS REPORTS FISCAL YEAR 2017 THIRD QUARTER RESULTS

The Postal Service reported in August a net loss of \$2.1 billion for the third quarter of 2017, an increase in net loss of \$573 million, compared to the same quarter last year. However, the postal unions noted that while



USPS is slightly in the red this fiscal year it actually would have turned an operational profit of \$1.5 billion if the Postal Regulatory Commission had not forced the Postal Service to roll back an emergency price hike it instituted in 2014.

"These figures reflect the impact of last year's rollback in stamp prices. Without the 2-cent reduction in stamp prices, this quarter's revenue would be \$500 million higher and the year-to-date revenue would be \$1.5 billion higher," said Fredric Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers. "The April 2016 rollback in stamp prices was the first since 1919, and it makes little financial sense because the Postal Service already has the industrial world's lowest rates."

APWU CONTRACT 2018—FIRED UP AND READY TO GO

The current union contract between the APWU and the USPS expires on September 20, 2018. In June of 2018, the APWU will open formal negotiations with management. APWU preparations are already underway.

Some of the major goals for the upcoming negotiations: a) Job Security including protection of the no lay-off provisions and limits on subcontracting; b) Fair pay raises that reward postal workers for our hard work and contributions; c) Bridge the gaps between the divisive "three tier" wage and benefit structure; d) Protect and expand career jobs; e) Uplift the PSE workforce; f) Hold abusive managers accountable; g) Expand and enhance postal services.

All members need to become active, stick together and stay determined. Together we can win! ☐



CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 20

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Hotel Pennsylvania

401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets)

Paris/Zurich Room, 6th Floor

(check calendar in lobby for room change)

Wednesday, October 18

5:30 pm

General Membership Meeting

Hotel Pennsylvania

401 Seventh Ave (between 32 and 33 Streets)

Paris/Zurich Room, 6th Floor

(check calendar in lobby for room change)

APWU LOCAL 10 BLDG. CORP

Beginning Balance as of 06/01/2017	\$ 463,812.14
Total REVENUE June 2017	\$ 153,612.79
Total Operating Expenses June 2017	\$ 129,306.76
TOTAL NET INCOME	\$ 24,306.03
Closing Balance as of 06/30/2017	\$ 488,118.17

Beginning Balance as of 07/01/2017	\$ 488,118.17
Total REVENUE July 2017	\$ 130,338.24
Total Operating Expenses May 2017	\$ 146,644.93
TOTAL NET INCOME/LOSS	\$ -3,149.23
Closing Balance as of 07/31/2017	\$484,968.94

Field Hearings

A GRAND ALLIANCE

TO SAVE OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE



A Grand Alliance to Save Our Postal Service has released their report—The Future of the U.S. Postal Service—and a new video featuring highlights of community field hearings. You can watch a video of the highlights of the field hearings and read the full report at agrandalliance.org/field-hearings

2 Postal Press awards for The Union Mail

The APWU Postal Press Association (PPA) shares resources among the local and state newspapers of our great national union. The PPA provides graphics, cartoons, health plan updates, and other information to hundreds of APWU publications, including ours. The PPA web site posts *The Union Mail* and other newspapers that are submitted every month.

Every two years, the PPA hosts a conference for editors around the country. This August, the event was in Altoona, Iowa. PPA President Tony Carobine put together an outstanding event of active workshops taught by experts in the field of media and labor studies. *The Union Mail* editors Flo Summergrad and Nora Taggart were privileged to attend the conference and enjoyed a stimulating exchange with other labor communicators.

The final day was filled with activity. Since 1968, a PPA feature has been a press conference with the APWU president. President Mark Dimondstein answered questions from the floor, then addressed the editors at the PPA banquet. After dessert, awards were presented. It was a special thrill that both Nora and Flo won PPA awards for NY Metro's publication! The editors attribute the strength of *The Union Mail* to the collective effort of our officers, stewards, and members. ☐



PPA President Tony Caribone, Flo Summergrad, Nora Taggart, APWU President Mark Dimondstein

Photo by Lianne Colas



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