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Time running short: Make Election Day preparations now!

By Tony Carobine, President

As of this writing, the 2016 election is shaping up to be a close election for the Office of President and control of Congress.

In the remaining days before November 8, we as union communicators have a re-

sponsibility to convey to our members and their families the significance of this election and where the candidates stand on issues important to postal workers and all working families.

can Dream was commonplace in America. Unfortunately this has changed. Today, for more and more working Americans, the possibility of ever achieving the American Dream is fast becoming just that, a dream. Millions of good paying jobs that sustained

Citizens United Supreme Court continues to keep the flood gates open for billionaires and big business to spend literally as much as they want trying to influence elections and take over our democracy; all of this further hindering the ability of electing individuals that will stand up for working people.

In Washington, obstructionism by the Republican majority continues, as it has for the past several years, preventing any meaningful legislation from being passed that would benefit working class Americans.

In another segment of society the situation is much different. According to a report from Oxfam International, since 2010 wealth has become more concentrated in favor of the rich. The wealth of the richest 62 people in the world grew by more than a half a trillion dollars in the last five years, while those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder have seen their positions worsen. Collectively, this ultra-wealthy group controls \$1.76 trillion, which is about the cumulative worth of the poorer half of the world's population, or around 3.5 billion people. According to the study, income and wealth are being sucked upwards at an alarming rate.

“Communication is the key. The best way to increase turnout is to educate members about the issues and candidates.”

We must also be wary of attempts to distract attention away from issues affecting working people. We must not allow ourselves or our members and their families to be misled and as a result cast a vote not based on which candidates are better suited to address the important and critical issues facing postal workers and all working people but instead a vote based on so-called wedge issues and untruths.

It is not difficult to pinpoint which major political party supports a vibrant Postal Service and protecting the livelihood of postal workers. (See page 5 for the platforms of the Democratic and Republican Parties.)

The term “American Dream” used to be a common phrase in the American vocabulary. What was this in reference to anyway? Some wild fantasy or unrealistic fable? Not at all. This term was used to describe what most working Americans aspired to in life; having a decent paying job, owning a home, the ability to send their children to college, and after their working years, a comfortable retirement.

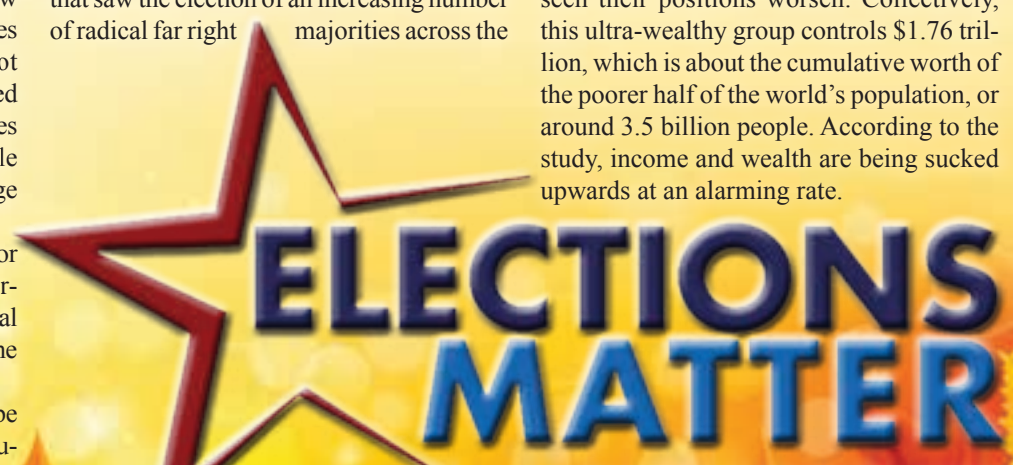
For many years, achieving the Ameri-

generations of Americans gone, the majority replaced by temporary employment paying a little more than minimum wage; employers discontinuing pension plans; millions of workers are also either unemployed or underemployed.

As a result of the 2014 midterm elections that saw the election of an increasing number of radical far right majorities across the

country, (especially on the state level) the situation has gotten worse.

Laws have been passed or introduced in some states restricting or stripping workers of their collective bargaining rights. Voter suppression legislation has also been adopted that will potentially disenfranchise, minority, elderly, and young voters. The



The primary reason for this growing problem is the share of earnings going to workers continues to fall while the share of income given to owners and top executives is rising. Three-fourths of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck, with little to no emergency savings to rely on if they lose their job. Income inequality is now as

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((ILCA))



Why should we have a newsletter?

By Jenny L. Gust,
Editor-at-Large

Has someone ever suggested the local could save some money if they didn't have a newsletter? I am part of a NARFE group that is dropping their newsletter because of costs. Permit room fees, postage, paper, ink, labels all cost money. I don't like it but I was only one vote. It remains to be seen if it will affect the group or not. I personally feel that we will get less people to our meetings in the future. Time will tell.

As far as our union goes we collect dues from our members, a good amount in most cases. I think they deserve something back for that money besides the filing of grievances. Not everyone files a grievance – I think I had one in 40 years of service. People are busy and don't always attend meetings. The meetings aren't held at a time when it is convenient for them or they just have other more important things to do. I know I hear you – well it is their job – it should be important. But in real life most people don't come to meetings and that's a fact!

The newsletter is there to let them know of the current situation regarding their workplace. The Postal Service is always changing; once in a while for the good and

more than not, for the bad. The members need to be aware of the changes and what they need to do to deal with them.

Your publication also can help prepare the members for the future. Inform them about their retirement and benefits available. Encourage them to look up this information for themselves so they become educated but also instruct as much as you can. Give them enough to get them going.

A few things you can put in your paper include: Meeting notices (keep trying to get them there), what happened last meeting, who the officers are and how to reach them, contract information, election news (local, state and/or national), articles from officers, holiday greetings, announcements about union gatherings such as picnic, Christmas party, open house, etc. Tell them when the next few meetings are going to be, new members that have joined, get well, sympathy, baby, grandchildren and other types of congratulation notices.

The paper is there to remind them they are UNION! Remind people to be proud of that fact! Remind them we are in this together. It can also thank them for belonging. If not for them and their dues, none of us would have a job as editors!

Time running short . . .

Continued from page 1

bad as it was in 1928, just before the Great Depression.

The study emphasized that it's in everyone's best interest to fix the problem of economic inequality as prolonged periods of a widening wealth gap are bad for entire countries.

The reality for postal workers and all working Americans is that we must vigorously fight back or assuredly the American Dream will be forever taken away from us.

We must endeavor to score a win for working people on Election Day. We cannot afford to have any "low-information" voters among our ranks; members and their families who base their vote on emotional issues; or those who unknowingly vote against their own self-interests.

Therefore, in the short time remaining before the election, we need to make one last

effort to educate members and their families about the issues, encourage contributions to APWU COPA, advise them about how candidates stand on issues important to postal workers and all working families, help them become registered voters, and remind them about the significance of voting on Election Day, Tuesday, November 8.

As the late labor leader Walter Reuther said, "There's a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls."

Communication is the key. The best way to increase turnout is to educate members about the issues and candidates. Armed with this knowledge, members and their families are more likely to participate and will make informed choices when going to the polls on Election Day.

The editorial: Essential element of union publications

By Edward J. Brennan,
Secretary-Treasurer

One of the main benefits of being an editor is that everyone has the benefit of receiving your opinion free of charge every time you put out an edition of your newsletter. As editor, you have the inherent right to represent the thinking of your local or state organization through your editorial columns. Yet, today, how many of our editors actually take advantage of this personal duty and privilege?

When an editor publishes a newsletter, it should not only impart information to the local, state, or national readers, but should also be the spokesperson and voice of the members represented by that publication. Hence, there should always be an editorial in the publication expressing the views of

the members concerning issues of major importance since the last issue of the newsletter.

Editorials are very often controversial since every item of current importance has two sides to the issue. If your members

the editor and their opinions should always be reflected in his or her writings.

Writing a good editorial is a thing of pride for an editor, but consistently writing good editorials will be looked upon as the sign of an outstanding editor. I was an

“Good editorials can influence members throughout the country in their thinking on subjects of major importance.”

agree with what the union officers are doing on a local or state or national level, then the editorial should reflect that opinion. If the members think oppositely, then the editorial should reflect that opinion. The paper is the property of the members, rather than

editor for twenty years and worked hard every month to find subjects for my next editorial. Today there is more material than an editor could ever cover. Material for editorials is limitless. Yet, how many do we see in newsletters today? Don't our members have opinions anymore? Is everything in our country or the Postal Service that great? What happened to editorial opinion?

Good editorials can influence members throughout the country in their thinking on subjects of major importance. I can remember a series of editorials on the so-called “Right-to-Work” issue that led to a nationwide boycott resolution that passed at one of our national conventions that called for the boycott of the Brookfield Uniform Company. The president of that company was a major supporter of the so-called “Right-to-Work” issue in Missouri.

Good editorials win awards. Good editorials are reprinted over and over again. Good editorials are a constant source of readership for publications. Members throughout the nation look for certain publications just to find out what the members represented by that publication are thinking. Good editorials make a person want to read their newsletters. Without good editorials, you have publications that copy all their material from other sources. There is nothing original.

If you want your publication to become the subject of local, state, and national interest, give it a pick-me-up with a thought provoking editorial. Ask your members their opinions on issues, and then put the opinions into print in the form of an editorial. You will be surprised how many more people will be reading your newsletter. After all, you're entitled to express an opinion.

Back to the caves

By Hank Greenberg, Honorary Member
PPA Advisory Council

When you watch television or listen to any media you will have a hard time finding anyone who speaks in complete sentences without using slang expressions and/or end each sentence with “you know”. It seems “you know” has replaced the period at the end of a sentence. How did this miscarriage of the English language ever get started in the first place? Here's a question for you: are we losing our ability to communicate accurately? How many times have we had to write a second time to explain what we meant the first time?

PPA President Tony Carobine wrote an excellent article in a recent issue of the PPA Newsletter entitled “Communication: Key to loyal membership”. Tony made a number of excellent suggestions that can be helpful to all of us who have a responsibility to keep our members **informed**. The question is, how can we keep our members informed if we write in a way the reader no longer understands or is unsure of what you mean? (If you write a monthly or quarterly paper, that's a long time to follow up with “what I meant was”).

In 1961, the head of the Federal Communications Commission wrote that “television

is a vast wasteland”. He would be surprised to see how vast that wasteland is today. And unfortunately, television has become the “teacher” of English to the viewer. Cable television has compounded the problem because it lacks the FCC restrictions which apply to the network channels (CBS, NBC, etc.). Cable television doesn't seem able to express itself without using profanity or slang to express itself. That “vast wasteland” continues to grow.

Commercial companies contribute to the language problem by “inventing” words that do not exist, when they advertise their products. They “create” words and they also intentionally misspell words and this has become “acceptable” English. It's surprising that anyone knows how to correctly spell a word or write a complete sentence.

No one, absolutely no one, has bastardized the English language more than the Internet and mobile phone text messaging. Abbreviations and images have replaced the ability to say just what the hell you mean in clear, understandable language

We are moving at the Internet speed of light using cartoon faces (and profanity) to express ourselves. Like the pictures on the walls of a prehistoric cave, we are losing our ability **to communicate in words**.

The rich get richer; the poor get drug tested

Joe-the-Stock-Broker celebrated his \$1 million bonus with a trip to Vegas. The tables in Nevada were not as kind to the broker as The Street in Manhattan, but no biggie. His gambling losses are a tax deduction. Thank goodness for those government benefits.

Laura-the-Laid-Off-Factory-Worker celebrated a successful application for food

Moore's core objective is to "engage the American public in a substantive dialogue regarding the struggles of working-and middle-class families."

Republicans tend to wage a "war against the poor" with their views concerning those they deem "less than." They eagerly hand out benefits to their rich buddies on Wall Street, yet push back when advocates pro-

This doesn't even include all of the members of Congress who abuse their positions by accepting money from lobbyists like the NRA and big banks in exchange for legislation that serves special-interest groups.

Meanwhile, hard-working Americans pay taxes that fund the salaries of these crooks and quacks.

Whether it's pure delusion or a complete disregard for those not as wealthy as themselves, it really doesn't matter. It's just plain wrong to place this judgment on welfare recipients, most of whom are working single mothers and the elderly.

By equating welfare recipients with criminals, the GOP continues their mission of dividing the American people by pitting the rich against the poor and falsely defining struggling Americans as delinquents.

So if the GOP wishes to go with this discourse and believes Americans must be drug-tested before receiving benefits, then they should be fine putting their money where their mouth is and they should pass legislation requiring Congress members to pee in a cup before receiving their taxpayer-sponsored paychecks.

— USW.org

"They eagerly hand out benefits to their rich buddies on Wall Street, yet push back when advocates promote providing assistance to the nation's neediest citizens."

stamps. Furloughed for a year, her unemployment benefits had run out. She'd been unable to find another job in her small, rural town and had gone through all her savings supporting her two kids. In desperation, she applied for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps.

Joe and Laura both use America's benefit systems. Republicans don't treat them as equals, though. They revere Joe. They smear Laura. They call her a taker and demand that she jump through hoops to receive her benefits, including drug testing. They want to screen her, monitor her, vet and investigate her in ways they would never subject Joe.

There's a Democrat who wants to change that. It's Wisconsin Rep. Gwen Moore. She says if the government tests the poor for their benefits, they should test the rich for theirs too.

Moore recently introduced the Top 1% Accountability Act of 2016, a bill that would require drug testing for all tax filers claiming itemized deductions over \$150,000.

"Sadly, Republicans across the country continue to implement discriminatory policies that criminalize the less fortunate and perpetuate false narratives about the most vulnerable among us," said Moore, a former welfare recipient, in a press release. "These laws serve only one purpose: Stoking the most extreme sentiments and misguided notions of the conservative movement."

The bill has little chance of passing the Republican-controlled Congress, but

mote providing assistance to the nation's neediest citizens. Many of those in the GOP say they don't want taxpayer money to "subsidize illegal behavior."

Well, ain't that the pot calling the kettle black?

Members of Congress and politicians at all levels have been abusing drugs and other substances for decades. ...

...Aside from drug use, the list of illegal or downright unethical behavior committed by U.S. politicians is seemingly endless. ...

Union decline lowers wages of nonunion workers

The overlooked reason why wages are stuck and inequality is growing

According to the results of a study released by the Economic Policy Institute, private-sector union decline since the late 1970s has contributed to wage losses among workers who do not belong to a union. This is especially true for men, particularly non-college graduates. For nonunion private-sector men without a bachelor's degree or more education, weekly wages would be an estimated 8 percent (\$58) higher in 2013 if union density remained at its 1979 levels. These lost wages due to declining union power eclipse non-college graduates' estimated 5 percent wage loss from increased trade with low-wage nations, signaling that decline in union power must receive more attention in the debate over wage stagnation and growing inequality. Nonunion workers are losing \$133 billion in wages annually due to the decline in unions.

A copy of the study is available on the Economic Policy Institute website www.epi.org.

Who is in favor of maintaining a vibrant Postal Service and protecting your job?

2016 Democratic Party Postal Service Platform:

Revitalizing Our Nation's Postal Service

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is a national treasure. That is why Democrats embrace a vibrant, public Postal Service that offers universal service, and reject any effort to privatize or marginalize it. We are committed to eliminating the unsustainable mandate to “pre-fund” retiree health costs. And we will work to restore service to appropriate levels, including overnight delivery of first-class mail and periodicals within the same metropolitan area, maintaining six-day and door-to-door delivery, and appointing members to the Board of Governors and the Postal Regulatory Commission who champion a strong public Postal Service. Democrats also advocate for expanding postal services. This includes offering basic financial services such as paycheck cashing and removing statutory restraints on services the USPS may offer. It also includes promoting vote-by-mail to increase voter participation and to help address the scourge of voter suppression.

2016 Republican Party Postal Service Platform:

None

VOTE
Tuesday,
November 8th!

Editor's toolbox: Helpful ideas for APWU communicators

Disclaimers and libel

"Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writer and not necessarily those of the union." The preceding statement (or similar wording) known as a disclaimer is commonly found in newsletters published by APWU local and state organizations. Does such a statement excuse the organization from responsibility should the issue of libel arise? No! This statement merely informs the reader that the union may not agree with opinions expressed by contributors. It provides no legal protection whatsoever.

Another misconception involves the deletion of names as a means to escape a possible lawsuit for libel. If the identity of the person is readily determinable, even if the person is not named, defamatory statements in the article will be libelous. Similarly, if someone makes libelous statements about a group of persons, each person in the group may be defamed, depending upon the size of the group and the nature of the statements.

Keep in mind that the legalities of reprinting a libelous statement are the same as for the party that originated it. Also, just because a statement is true it does not mean that it's OK to print it. If a defamatory statement is published there must be a justifiable reason why the statement was published. In some states it's illegal to publish a true statement for no good reason and with the intent of damaging someone's reputation. In other states it's considered an invasion of privacy if there is no justification for publishing the statement.

Further information on the subject of libel and invasion of privacy is available from the PPA. If you are unsure of whether or not an article is libelous, your Postal Press Association can help. Upon request, (if the material has not already been published) the PPA will provide a confidential review and offer an opinion. Over the years this service has helped to avoid many potentially costly lawsuits.

Nameplates a matter of identity

Every publication benefits from a distinctive nameplate (also called banner or

flag) announcing with vigor the name of the publication. Therefore, it should stand out and grab the readers' attention.

It also gives the organization identity as owner of the publication. Along with the name of the paper in big, bold print, the nameplate should include, in smaller print: who the paper belongs to, such as "Official Publication of the Anytown Local, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO."

Volume and Number. (The volume is used to record how many years the paper has been published. The number would indicate what issue it is for the current year. For example: Volume 5, Number 9 means this is the fifth year the paper is being published and the ninth issue of the current year.

Punch and polish

Every new story we tackle – whether to edit or write – challenges us to be wary of a tumble into a comfortable, but boring, rut. Expert communicators still strive to avoid the "Fourth-Grade Book Report Syndrome" and its tendency to begin each essay with deadening phrases such as "This book was about." A reminder now and then about how to add punch and polish to written material helps keep us on our toes.

Try asking yourself these questions with each story and issue; they may help you keep your publication's perspective fresh.

What do your readers most want (or need) to know? Capture attention with topic sentences that communicate succinctly and invite readers to delve further. Keep messages sharp and to the point. Balance fact with opinion, and make sure readers can tell the difference.

Which words best describe ideas? Passive word selections and sentence structures confuse readers. Overuse of jargon and meek verbs such as *is* or those ending in *-ing* are stupefying. Keen imaginations and a thesaurus serve the most experienced reporters in good stead. On the other hand, watch out for adjective-itis and exclamatory excesses!!!

How to highlight strong arguments?

Gone are the days when ALL CAPS and ugly underlining were our only tools for emphasis. Now we have at our disposal boldface sentence fragments, memorable callouts, photo captions, informative sidebars, catchy titles, an array of typefaces, and a vast selection of bullet styles, plus artwork, to add sparkle. Be wary of clutter, though.

When is enough consistency enough?

Most editors are fussy, and rightly so. At the same time, variations in style, and even an occasional surprise, results in a more interesting publication. Concentrate on the positive and keep it simple, but remember that rules can be broken, or at least bent.

Review your listening skills with this checklist

One-on-one communication is a two-way process, and the part most often neglected is listening. Following are eight poor listening habits. Are you guilty of any of them?

Editing. You hear only what you want to hear, selectively blocking out the rest of what the person is trying to communicate:

Rehearsing. As the person speaks, you are preoccupied formulating what you will say next.

Delving. Instead of listening, you focus on trying to discover a hidden message.

Daydreaming. Failing to concentrate, you allow your mind to wander which often leads to an embarrassing request for the person to repeat what he or she just said.

Personalizing. You relate what is being said to your own experience and allow your thoughts to go off on a tangent. What the person is saying becomes about you, not the speaker.

Switching. You are too quick to change the subject, sending the message that you are not interested in what the other person has to say.

Arguing. You are quick to disparage or ridicule what was just said. You are more interested in verbal sparring than communicating.

Agreeing. You nod and mumble agreement to everything that is said, just to avoid conflict.

Attend the 2017 Biennial PPA Conference!

**Thursday, August 3 – Saturday, August 5
(Pre-conference session Wednesday, August 2)**

**The Meadows Events & Conference Center
at Prairie Meadows Hotel, Racetrack & Casino
Des Moines, Iowa**

A guestroom rate of \$129.00 per day for king or double queen occupancy will be in effect throughout the conference, in addition to three days before and three days after the actual meeting dates. Current tax rate is 12%. Prairie Meadows will provide free shuttle service from Des Moines International Airport, complimentary Internet access and no charge for parking a vehicle. To make room reservations, please visit their website, www.prairiemeadows.com using group code 08022017APW or call 1-800-325-9015.

This intensive four-day event will help you and your organization:

- Better inform and educate members and their families.
- Create a communications system that will stimulate membership participation and build a stronger union.
 - Conquer the challenges of public speaking.
- Learn how to establish a working relationship with the media & methods for generating public support.
 - Develop highly effective internal & external communication strategies.
 - Map out ideas for developing an editorial policy.
- Explore the subject of electronic communication and how it can complement a print publication.
 - Avoid costly lawsuits by studying the subjects of libel, copyright and internal union elections.
- Infuse the union's publication with style and personality so members will read every issue.
 - Harness the tools for conducting interviews that get noticed.
- Become skilled at writing news stories, eye-catching headlines and high-interest feature stories.
 - Discover how labor history can be used to improve union involvement.
 - Master techniques for reporting on issues affecting the membership.
 - Inspire union loyalty through the art of photojournalism.
 - Use communication as a means to stamp out membership apathy.
- Meet others who perform similar work and share experiences, problems and ideas.
- Get recharged and eager to put dozens of new communication ideas to work.

All of this and much, much more!

Return Service Requested

Considerations for Election Day

Working people must come together to elect a president who will raise wages and advocate for the issues that help working families build better lives. Donald Trump is not that candidate.

Donald Trump is running a campaign fueled by oppressive and hateful rhetoric. He has offered anti-American “solutions” to banish citizens based purely on religious beliefs. He has derided women, immigrants and veterans, and made juvenile remarks about people with disabilities.

All people should be treated with dignity and respect and our president should share these most basic values. Donald Trump does not share the values of working fami-

lies. Trump is one of the most anti-worker presidential candidates in American history. In fact, Trump:

- Thinks wages are too high;
- Thinks corporations should threaten to move production to force down the wages of working people;
- Supports right to work, the CEO-written law that guts unions and takes away power from working people;
- Refuses to recognize a union election at his hotel;

- Promises to put union-busting corporate CEOs in charge of trade negotiations;
- Outsources his own products to low-wage countries like Bangladesh;
- Exploits immigrant workers in the United States.

Donald Trump as president would make the lives of working people measurably worse for those of us who count on a paycheck to support our family. By working together, we can beat back the threat of Donald Trump and all that he represents, and fight for good jobs, better wages, stronger unions and shared prosperity for all.

— AFL-CIO



VOTE November 8th!