

# Postal Press Newsletter

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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## Pandemic axes PPA Conference, Awards Program being held

Due to the ongoing pandemic that is not projected to decrease to a safe level by the summer months, it has been decided to cancel the 2021 PPA Conference scheduled for August 4-7 at The Meadows Events & Conference Center at Prairie Meadows in Altoona, Iowa.

Plans are underway for presenting some conference workshops via video conferencing. Further details, including registration information will be forthcoming.

The next PPA Conference is scheduled for the summer of 2023 at Prairie Meadows.

Although the conference is not being held, the PPA Awards Program will take place. The Awards Committee is currently making preparations. The rules and entry forms will be sent to editors upon completion.

Serving on this year's Awards Committee are: Jenny Gust, editor, *Ohio Postal Worker*, *Black Swamp Outrider*, Toledo Ohio; Cathy Hanson, editor, *Minnesota Postal Worker*, *The Northern Light*, Minneapolis, Minnesota; James Krivonak, editor, *The Virginia Postal Worker*, Mount Vernon, Virginia; Patricia Sartain, editor, *Newscaster*, Panorama City, California; James Gabe, editor, *The Spectrum*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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**EXTRA! EXTRA!**  
HELP SUPPORT  
THE PPA  
RESOLUTION!!

*See page 4*



## Exercise 'power of the press' to benefit members

By Tony Carobine,  
President

Picture just one member in your organization – a clerk, maintenance person, motor vehicle operator or mechanic. Now take a few minutes and put yourself into that member's shoes. Ask: If I were this person ... what would I know about the day-to-day workings of my union other than dues are deducted from my paycheck and I can file a grievance? What other information would entice me to be more supportive and interested in becoming involved?

Shouldn't I be continually reminded

that the union, not postal management, has made it possible for me to enjoy good pay and benefits and in these disastrous economic times protected my job? If I have a question or a problem, would I know how to get in touch with the local's officers for help? What member-only benefits and services does the local union provide and how can I participate? When and where are union meetings held? Does the union exist for the sole purpose of filing grievances? Why does the union get involved with the election of candidates for public office?

Please see 'power of the press', page 2



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**This publication is 100% union printer produced: Union typeset, Union layout, Union printed.**

((ILCA))



# New year, new look

By Cathy Hanson,  
Editor-at-Large

Is it time to give your paper a makeover? After years of something, (even when it's great!) I get the urge to make it look a little different. I experiment in my off months we don't publish but when we have a Postal Press Conference coming up I get a little excited to see what everyone else is doing with their paper. Since we're skipping the conference due to COVID concerns this summer I'll miss Stacy Publishing, who is always there with a workshop on how to make your paper look its best.

I hope you all get papers from around the country so you can see what other editors are doing with their paper. Even though our conference isn't happening this year, looking at other's papers is a way to get ideas for your own. And remember, reprinting articles is not only allowed but encouraged,

so if you see one you want to reprint, make sure you give credit to the original writer.

Writers, officers and stewards alike, come and go in the locals so as you get different writers, do you put them in the same formats you used for the person before them or do you change it completely? I've tried a "group theme" header for all officer and steward articles...sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, depending on how many articles there are. Being flexible about what goes where in your paper keeps interest so people don't see the same thing all the time. And conversely – is there something in your newsletter you want people to see all the time, or first thing when they open it? Make it big! Make it bold! Use color if you can. Try a unique centerfold. People will comment so you can see what works and what doesn't. Good luck!

## Power of the press

*Continued from page 1*

How much members know depends upon the effort put forth by the union to keep them informed. Because learning and being informed are cumulative processes, they aren't limited to an orientation session when a person joins the union. Rather, it is an ongoing endeavor.

That's where you, the editor, come in. You can be part of the members' continuing education. With the power of the press, you can expand the knowledge of all members with a continuous flow of well-planned, well-chosen stories that tell what goes on throughout the organization. You can explain everything the union does and why it is so important to the members and their families and over the course of time, give a fuller picture of all that goes into making the union work.

Equipped with this knowledge, members will more likely be supportive and stand a better chance of becoming in-

involved. Putting yourself in your readers' shoes is a valuable exercise for every edi-



tor. Do it periodically to be sure that you're on target and communicating at the right level for your audience.

## Biannual or biennial?

**Biannual** means twice a year and is a synonym for the word semiannual.

**Biennial** means every two years. Example: The local's officers will attend the Biennial All Craft Conference in Las Vegas.



# Take the initiative to compete for a PPA award

By Jenny Gust,  
Editor-at-Large

Although the Postal Press Conference will not be held this year due to the pandemic, the PPA Awards Program will be held. In the coming weeks, rules and instructions for entering the awards program will be sent to each editor. I have served on the awards committee for a number of years. Following are some hints and tips for entering and hopefully winning an award.

**1. First and foremost, read the instructions!**

**2. Second – read the instructions again!** Really sit down and read each page and make sure you understand the rules. If there are any questions, call the chairperson of the awards committee. That person is there to help!

**3. Read over the guidelines for judging.** These are included in each mailing. I know this is a lot of work but winning an award

***“Last but not least –  
ENTER THE AWARDS!  
Don’t think that anyone  
has it locked up. You can’t  
win if you don’t enter!”***

will be worth it. You could also go over each issue you publish and put a post-it to remind you – Oh yea, this issue I had a great editorial. Or inside this issue is a great photo or cartoon. If you keep on top of this it won’t be as much work in the end.

**4. Next is a real no brainer – meet the deadline.** Now look, we all work for the post office so you know about how long it takes for a package to get from here to there. You also know crap happens! We are talking about the post office – remember? Don’t wait until the last minute then rush out and pay for Express Mail. If it doesn’t make it – it doesn’t even get opened! Everyone else made sure they got their entries in on time. Just because you paid the big bucks doesn’t mean you get a pass! Give yourself enough time to properly get your entries together and mailed in a timely manner.

**5. Last but not least – ENTER THE AWARDS!** Don’t think that anyone has it locked up. **You can’t win if you don’t enter!** Those members who win awards are

just as busy as you but they did the work needed to submit their publications. You can do it also!

These hints are not guaranteed to get you an award. But if you take them into consideration and give it a try you just might surprise yourself. Wouldn’t it be nice to bring home an award? I can see your smile now when you are holding up your award. Go for it!



## How to write a cutline

The photographer’s responsibility ends with the photographs. Not the editor’s. Copy and cutlines (or captions) have to be written. And, a layout has to be worked out. Then the picture story has to be assigned logical positioning.

Cutlines, in particular, are “exercises in super condensation.” The story is told about a famous sculptor who was once asked how he could create such beautiful statues out of huge blocks of marble. “It’s simple,” he replied. “I chip off every bit of marble that isn’t needed in the statue!”

So it is with writing cutlines. You chip off everything you don’t need. Has a fact about the photo been covered in the text? You may not need to repeat it in the cutline. There is no need to identify the obvious. A handshake is a handshake.

Cutlines should help the photograph tell its story. It should provide the five “W’s” and the “H” if any of these are important and not evident to the viewer. It should guide the reader’s eye and indicate what is worth noting. It should serve as a linking device to maintain continuity when pictures appear in series. It should supplement the text and add new information.

Start out with a colorful word or phrase. Eliminate articles and conjunctions unless your copy seems too abrupt. Try to recreate conversations, colors, smells, sounds associated with the picture.

Tie-in with body copy where pertinent. Some editors don’t mind repeating facts in a cutline they’ve already used in a story; other editors make it a practice to avoid repetition of this nature.



## *A matter of cents (sense) . . .*

# Resolution seeks two cent PPA funding adjustment

For the first time in **11 years** the APWU National Postal Press Association (PPA) is asking national convention delegates to support an adjustment in its funding. Currently, Article 16, Section 2(e) of the APWU Constitution provides that *"The APWU shall remit eight (8¢) cents of the national per capita tax, per month, per member to the Postal Press Association."*

The resolution (printed at right) calls for increasing the national per capita tax remittance to the PPA by 2 cents, from the current eight cents per member per month to ten cents per member per month.

This resolution will not increase union dues. It will simply change the amount of the national per capita tax remitted to the PPA from the national union. Adjustment of union dues is addressed in the APWU Constitution which provides increases for the national union, locals and members-at-large of state organizations whenever there is a negotiated salary increase (nine since 2010). Such dues increases do not affect PPA funding.

Funding for the PPA remains at the same level (eight cents per member per month) as established at the 2010 convention. Due to changes in APWU membership, PPA funding is over \$29,000 a year less than when the last funding adjustment was adopted in 2010.

Adoption of this resolution would restore funding to the 2010 level and provide a modest increase enabling the PPA to continue its important services to the membership.

### **Your help is needed**

Please introduce this resolution at your local union meeting and move that it be adopted. Also, if you reside in a state that will be holding its state convention this year, please submit the resolution for consideration by the delegates at your state convention. If adopted on the local and/or state level, please ask the appropriate officer to forward it to the APWU Secretary-Treasurer's office (via the procedure outlined on the APWU website) <https://www.apwu.org/apwu-national-convention> for inclusion in the convention resolution book.



## **RESOLUTION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT APWU NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION**

- Whereas:** The APWU National Postal Press Association has effectively served the membership of our great union for fifty-seven years, and
- Whereas:** The APWU National Postal Press Association has evolved into one of the largest and most respected labor media organizations in the country, and
- Whereas:** The APWU National Postal Press Association provides important and necessary services to our union with its ongoing program of education, assistance and information in the field of communication; including newsletter production, social media, libel, copyright, internal and federal election guidance and many other important subjects which are vital to the interests of our union, along with continually working to advance the goals and objectives of the APWU, and
- Whereas:** The APWU National Postal Press Association has demonstrated integrity in encouraging its members to be objective, honest and accurate in reporting information to the membership, and has established a record of nonpartisan achievement setting a standard that is without equal, and
- Whereas:** The APWU National Postal Press Association has continually provided these many services to our membership and our union at a cost that is far below the level of service it provides, and
- Whereas:** The APWU National Postal Press Association has been honored to receive the recognition and support of the APWU national organization and local and state organizations throughout the APWU both in membership affiliation and via resolutions at past state and national conventions of this union, and
- Whereas:** The APWU National Postal Press Association has operated for eleven years without an increase in the APWU National Constitution per capita structure of 8 cents of the national per capita tax per month, per member that was established at the 2010 APWU National Convention, and
- Whereas:** The APWU National Postal Press Association has worked diligently over the past fifty-seven years to operate within its means and to keep operating costs as low as possible but no organization can continue to properly function and render necessary services without adjustments in financial support from time to time;

**Therefore Be It Resolved:** That the delegates in attendance at the October 2021 APWU National Convention amend Article 16, Section 2(e) of the APWU Constitution to read: "The APWU shall remit ten cents (10¢) of the national per capita tax per month, per member to the Postal Press Association."





# PPA: a proud tradition of service

The American Postal Workers Union National Postal Press Association (PPA) is an educational organization dedicated to assisting editors, publicity directors and all APWU representatives engaged in the activity of communicating with the membership. Since 1964, the PPA has proudly fulfilled this mission by providing its members with a variety of assistance to meet their needs. Following is an overview of programs and services:

- **A nationwide communications network.** The PPA has a well-established network consisting of local, state, national, retiree, auxiliary publications and websites.

- **PPA Newsletter.** This publication provides assistance to PPA members with the performance of their duties as communicators and promotes the goals and objectives of the American Postal Workers Union. All aspects of newsletter publishing from writing and layout to legal issues and suggestions for content are addressed, along with other forms of communication.

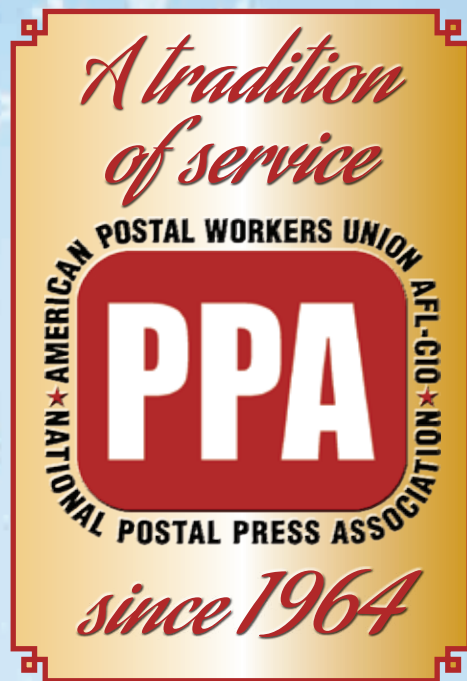
- **Reference material.** In-depth material especially prepared for APWU communicators that explains and offers guidance on the subjects of responsible journalism, editorial policies, editorial policy committees, internal union elections, libel, invasion of privacy, copyright, reprints, writing and publication layout/design.

- **Federal Elections, Union Publications and Websites.** Updated and published each federal election cycle and available in booklet form and the Members Only section of the PPA website. Covered are federal regulations regarding the inclusion of material in a union publication or on the Internet pertaining to elections for federal office, plus the proper procedure for publishing APWU COPA solicitations. Also included are suggestions for educating members and their families about the candidates and issues in the campaign and techniques for increasing member/family turnout at the polls on Election Day.

- **Advertising for the Union Publication.** Recognizing that some APWU af-

filates need to consider advertising to help offset the cost of producing a paper, the PPA booklet *Advertising for the Union Publication* is a step-by-step guide; from techniques for selling ads, to rates, to ethics, etc.

- **Graphics and labor history material.** Posted in the Members Only section of



the PPA website, this material is designed to help editors enhance their efforts to deliver the message of unionism and promote the goals and objectives of the union through the use of graphic images and labor historical information.

- **Confidential review of articles.** When called upon, the PPA provides a confidential review and recommendations for an editor who receives material for publication that he or she feels is inappropriate or potentially libelous. This service has successfully helped avoid a number of costly law suits.

- **Assistance with establishing a communications program.** Information and individual assistance is available to APWU affiliates that desire to establish a publication or other forms of communication links with their members.

- **Publication critique.** Upon request,

the PPA provides an editor with a critique of his or her publication. The findings are prepared in a detailed written report with constructive suggestions for possible improvement of the publication.

- **Individual assistance.** A widely used service for PPA members and union officers that helps resolve problems or answer questions that arise regarding their responsibilities as communicators or union administrators.

- **Workshops.** As part of a continuing educational program, workshops are conducted upon request to help members improve the quality of their publications and keep current on the latest changes and trends in the world of communication, labor journalism and legal responsibilities involved with publishing.

- **Biennial PPA Conference.** Instituted in 1966 this intensive four-day event features general sessions, workshops and discussion groups covering a variety of topics; such as: internal communication strategies, mainstream media/public relations, publication design, legal issues, photography, labor history, writing, social media, union publication administration, all crafted to help participants improve their communication skills and knowledge about the Labor Movement.

- **Awards program.** Established in 1967, the awards program recognizes outstanding work in newsletter production, writing, editing and website content and design.

- **PPA website.** With general information about the PPA and the many services it provides, the site features a Member Resources section that includes downloadable information for use in publications, resource material, links and a variety of other items of help to APWU communicators.

- **Periodic mailings/PPA email network.** PPA members are kept informed about PPA activities and information of relevance to their duties as communicators.



# Who cares about headlines?

How often have you written what you consider to be a fine article, only to discover that a handful of people read it? In this article you may have researched a problem with management that everyone should be aware of or it could be a piece on some accomplishment that your local should be recognized for, yet very few know it. For the life of you, you cannot seem to understand why. Well, maybe it is the way you titled that particular article.

Headline writing is one of the most important areas that part-time journalists have to work on. With just a few extra minutes, you can come up with a suitable headline that will grab your readers' attention and make them want to read the piece that you

***“Headline writing is one of the most important areas that part-time journalists have to work on.”***

or another officer worked so hard to produce.

One common practice repeated over and over in PPA affiliated publications is the use of the same headline for each regular contributor. Headlines like “President’s Report” or the “Editor’s Corner” are just a few. On other occasions the writer’s name will be incorporated into a catchy slogan that identifies the writer. The problem is that repeated column headings say nothing about the content of the article.

With just a little more time, a suitable headline could be run that will let the reader know something about the article. The use of bylines like “President’s Report” can still be used but would be secondary to the main headline. A proper headline may mean the difference between whether or not an article gets read, especially if readers see a headline that lets them know the article contains useful information.

What do you do if your contributors write a little about several subjects in their articles? This is a regular occurrence with officer reports but it should not be a problem. All you have to do is pick the topic that is most dominant, or what the most important subject is and write your headline

based on that. Subsequent subjects can be identified by using subheads in the body of the article.

We need to do all we can to entice mem-

bers to read the union publication. Devoting a little more effort and imagination into creating interesting headlines will increase readership and therefore be time well spent.

## Free riders club

If you know someone who is always badmouthing unions and blaming the woes of the world on organized labor, then you might want to give them this statement. Ask them to sign it and you’ll see just how strong their convictions really are.



**“I am opposed to all unions, therefore I am opposed to all benefits unions have won through the years, such as: paid vacations, paid holidays, sick leave, seniority rights, wage increases, insurance plans, overtime pay, job security.**

**I refuse to accept any benefits that were won by the unions and therefore authorize my employer to withhold the amount of all union-won benefits from my paycheck and donate it to charity.”**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Editing . . .

# Acronyms and initialisms

There are many acronyms also known as initialisms used in the United States Postal Service (USPS), especially among the various crafts. When found in an article, clarify the acronym as there are likely readers not familiar with the term and this could cause

the article not to be understood or even read.

Write out the term when first used in an article [Example: Tractor Trailer Operator] followed by the abbreviation in parenthesis (TTO) and then use the abbreviation TTO thereafter in the article.



# Editor's toolbox: Helpful ideas for APWU communicators

## When you can't get started

If, like many, you occasionally hit a wall when you're trying to write and just can't get started, you might want to:

- **Write** a letter to someone about what you would say if you could only get started.
- **Decide** on a reward you'll give yourself if you write a page; then get started and really give yourself the reward if you earn it.
- **Open** a dictionary randomly, and without looking, point to a word, and use that word in your first sentence to get started – even if it's silly.
- **Talk** your article or report into a recorder.
- **Begin** in the middle or the end if the beginning is too difficult for you to get under way.
- **Do something** that bores you for twice as long as you think you can stand it; then write.
- **If you're** immobilized by having to correct everything as you go, get two hats, one labeled "writer" and the other labeled "editor." Tell yourself you can't edit when wearing the "writer" hat and vice versa. Switch at increasingly longer intervals.
- **With a recorder** going, have someone interview you about what you'd like to say. Transcribe the recording and use that as a rough draft.

## Write clearer, more readable paragraphs

Paragraphs should make reading easy. Put the topic sentence first; follow with supporting material, held together with conjunctions; and finish with a summary.

Here are some tips:

**Think** of paragraphs as units of thought. Give each main idea its own paragraph.

**Keep** paragraphs fairly short. The breaks between paragraphs are stopping points for readers; don't stretch their patience by making paragraphs more than 4-5 sentences long.

**Vary** paragraph length. This will help maintain your readers' attention. Use single-sentence paragraphs sparingly to emphasize important ideas.

## Solving the gender problem

Writing "he and she" to avoid using the generic "he" is one way writers solve the gender problem. Unfortunately, the usage is wordy and distracting.

Others use dull passive constructions. Still others use "they" in second reference, a trend that is accepted in informal language only.

If you want to avoid the "he" problem, consider these rewrites:

- **Rewrite** the sentence in the plural. "A careful editor will couch his queries in neutral terms" can be rewritten as "Careful editors will couch *their* queries in neutral terms."
- **Recast** your sentence using *we/us/our*. "Each must do his best" can become "We must all do *our* best."
- **Rewrite** your sentence in the second person. "No man knows what he has until it's gone" can become "You don't know what *you* have until it's gone."
- **Replace** he with such words as *someone, anyone, one, the one, no one, etc.* You can also omit the pronoun entirely. "Everyone can laugh at a pratfall except he who has fallen" could be changed to "...except *the one* who has fallen."
- **Replace** the pronoun with a noun. "He who betrays a friend loses him" could be changed to "To betray a friend is to *lose a friend*'."

## Publication tips

To get the highest possible readership for an article:

- Put the title in question form instead of statement form.
- Scatter copy breaking devices throughout a long article. But don't overdo them. Use boxes, bullets, borders, subheads, boldface type.
- Write titles in an optimistic or pleasant mood instead of a pessimistic one.
- Use captions under all photographs. They get more readership than text areas. Avoid cropping photos in the shape of a square. Readers prefer rectangles.
- Avoid using long blocks of reverse type (light type on a dark background). Al-

though they appear dramatic, long reverses slows reading by about 11 percent.

## Dramatic conclusions for your next story

The conclusion of your news story can be just as important as your lead. A strong ending can make the article memorable; a weak one can drain the energy from your entire story. Here are some useful tips for creating an effective ending:

- **The inverted pyramid ending.** You probably learned in school that most news stories start with the most important facts and close with the least important so that the story can be easily cut to fit the available space. Thus, the story just fades away. This works best for a straight news story.
- **The punch line.** Tell the story in chronological order, but hold back the most dramatic moment for the ending. You can hint at the punch line a bit so it won't be totally unexpected, but save the last one or two paragraphs for some piece of information that puts everything into perspective.
- **The delayed gratification ending.** Ask a question in your lead that relates to your story. Describe a situation. Set up a conflict. Then go on with the rest of the story, and, answer the question only at the end. Be sure that your opening question (or situation, or conflict) is strong enough to be memorable and hold interest throughout the story.
- **Echo the lead.** Repeat a phrase from the lead of your article. Be sure the phrase is memorable enough for readers to remember, and use it only if it makes sense on its own in case readers don't recall it.
- **The striking image ending.** Find a significant visual image that sums up the story as a whole. Take the time to polish for maximum effectiveness.
- **The "In Conclusion" conclusion.** This ending works best for straight news stories and information-heavy features. Summarize the information presented in the story. This reinforces your message. You might want to echo the lead.



# Evaluate your own publication

## Appearance

- Does your publication have a pleasing appearance?
- Does layout make reading easy and inviting?
- Is nameplate (logo) distinctive and discreet in size?
- Is paper stock suitable for publication?
- Are columns wide enough and uniform throughout?
- Is typeface attractive and readable in size and family?
- Do you stick to one or two type families throughout?
- Is there contrast between black heads and gray text?
- Are facing pages (spreads) laid out as a unit?
- Do you use white space effectively, not as "holes"?
- Do you avoid tight crowded pages?

## Content

- Do you plan each issue in advance?
- Do you plan several issues ahead?
- Do you strive for editorial balance in each issue over the year?
- Do you present material in order of importance?
- Do you pace material (serious, light; long, short)?
- Do you have at least one major story per issue?
- Do you review each issue to see if you are meeting objectives?
- Do you conduct surveys to determine reader reaction?
- Do you report results from survey to readers?
- Do you make changes based on survey results?
- Do you sometimes include negative or controversial news?

## Writing

- Do you vary writing styles (non-fiction, fiction, editorials)?
- Do you organize thoughts before writing?
- Do you research each story carefully and pick best data?
- Do you avoid pompous, heavy-handed propaganda?
- Do you write clearly so that ideas are comprehensible?
- Do you write naturally, avoiding jargon or lingo?
- Do you write interestingly, luring the reader through the story?
- Do you write more short than long sentences, usually one idea per sentence?
- Do you illustrate ideas with examples, anecdotes?
- Do you indicate significance of the story to your reader?
- Do you use simple words instead of fancy ones?

- Do you avoid generalizations and cite specifics?
- Do you lure readers through story by revealing facts slowly?
- Is there good transition from last and first sentences of paragraphs?
- Do you end the story with a good closing sentence or paragraph?
- Are your facts and details correct?
- Do you break up lengthy copy with subheads, layout, and photos?
- Do you include background material to give readers perspective?
- Do you occasionally update a story from a previous issue?
- Does your publication appear consistently on time?
- Is material timely, up to date?
- Do you offer readers a change of pace (special issue, new look)?

## Headlines

- Do you write headlines carefully for maximum impact?
- Do you write short, punchy heads of two or three lines each?
- Do you avoid passive voice and use strong nouns and active verbs?
- Do you avoid headlines that are only titles (e.g., President's Report)?
- Do headlines lure readers into story without giving it away?
- Do you vary headline width (one, two or more columns)?
- Does major story have largest strongest head?
- Do you avoid side-by-side heads that confuse readers?

## Captions

- Are all photos captioned?
- Do you avoid "ganging" captions for several photos in one block?
- Do you avoid captions that tell readers what's obvious in photo?
- Are captions short and provocative?
- Do captions start off with interesting words, not names and titles?
- Do captions avoid repeating what's in headline or story?
- Do you correctly identify people in all photos?
- Do you avoid using initials, using both first and last names?
- Do you avoid overly long captions that should be stories?

## Miscellaneous

- Do you invite feedback through special features such as Questions and Answers, Letters to the Editor, etc.?
- Do you read consumer and other union publications to get ideas?
- Do you review past issues to see how you have progressed?